

Evidence on approaches to labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers

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Definition: Who are in focus?

Beneficiaries of international protection or “humanitarian migrants”:

Refugees: a refugee is someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”.

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection: they do not qualify as refugees, but also in their case “substantial grounds exist that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in the EU Qualification Directive”.

Asylum-seekers:

those persons, who have applied for international protection (refugee status, or recognised as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection), but the application is still pending.

EPRS-study, 2015, p. 4.

Eurofound project: Key research questions

- Are there any recent changes in *legislation* with special regard to labour market integration, in *response to the current refugee crisis*?
- *Which systems and processes are in place to support reception of asylum seekers and refugees* and the implementation of the rules regarding labour market integration?
- *What policies or measures have Member State governments and social partners introduced in response* to the recent refugee crisis with regard to labour market integration (if any)?

Tasks of the Network of European Correspondents

In line with the research questions, the key tasks are as follows:

1. To provide an update of the most recent changes in legislation concerning labour market access of asylum seekers and refugees respectively
2. To document those rules which may pose obstacles for smooth access to the labour market of asylum seekers and refugees (for example, lack of eligibility for certain benefits, or lack of access to certain support measures)
3. To identify recent practices and initiatives, which aim at creating basic conditions for labour market integration – even if not directly facilitating employment (housing initiatives, education for children, geographical dispersion, etc.)
4. To identify those proposals submitted by the social partners which facilitate labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees

Evidence from other research

European Parliament – Dec. 2015 – 8 Member States – Work and social welfare for asylum seekers and refugees

European Migration Network – 2015-2016 – all Member States - Integration of beneficiaries of international/humanitarian protection into the labour market: policies and good practices

OECD – Jan. 2016 – Making Integration Work: Refugees and others in need of protection

DG EMPL (EEPO) – Feb. 2016 – 30 countries – labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees – 10 questions

Migration Policy Centre – Feb. 2016 (draft) – 9 Member States – Mapping labour market integration support measures for asylum seekers and refugees: policies and practices (incl. measures by NGOs, employers)

National regulations for waiting time for labour market access to asylum seekers after their application is lodged

Waiting time	Countries
Immediate access	EL, PT, SE
3 months	AT, DE
6 months	BE ^d , CY, CZ, EE, ES, FI ^d , IT, NL, PL, DK ^a
9 months	BG ^b , HR ^b , FR, HU, LV, LU ^d , SK, SI
One year	MT ^c , RO ^c + UK ^a
No access	LT + IE ^a

Notes: ^a Countries not bound by the Reception Conditions Directive; ^b assuming that draft laws (reducing duration) that have been announced have effectively been adopted and entered into force; ^c have announced that legislation would be put in conformity with Directive 2013/33/EU, but no information confirming it. Source: EMN ad-hoc query 654 - access to the labour market to asylum-seekers (quoted in: Savary et al. 2015) ^d Reducing further the waiting time is being considered. (Source: Eurofound, 2016)

Integration support for asylum seekers in selected EU countries in 2015 or latest available year

Support measures	Countries
Language training	EL*, DK, EE, FI, DE, IT, LU, PL, SI, ES, SE, NL**
Adult education combined with long-term language training	BE, EL, IT, LU, PT, ES
Skills assessment	BE, FI*** (just planned), DE, PT, ES
Civic education	AT (in Vienna only), BE, DK, PT, ES
Job-related training	EE**** EL*, PT, ES

*Not systematic; ** Provided by volunteers only; ***Just planned; ****After 6 months access to regular labour market services. Source: OECD, 2016

Messages for successful labour market integration from research studies

- Host country language knowledge is key and needs to be offered early
- Experience of employment is more important than vocational education
- An individualised/tailored integration plan must be carefully developed
- Recognition of skills and qualifications may demand alternative methods of assessing informal learning and work experience
- Targeted entry subsidies and quality mentoring can assist job search
- Many refugees need help to address personal, social and economic disadvantages associated with flight

e.g. E.P. (2016) Labour market integration of refugees: strategies and good practices

But highlights **policy** and **research gaps**

Approaches towards the labour market integration of refugees in the EU

EurWORK topical update 7 January 2016

Based on reports from Eurofound's Network of European Correspondents (third quarter 2015)

Governments and **social partners** have proposed/taken initiatives to:

- Reduce waiting times to access work (e.g. DE, HU, BE)
- Fast-track workers with skills in demand (e.g. SE)
- Reduce social benefits for asylum seekers as motivation to work (e.g. UK)
- Training, coaching and assessment of skills (e.g. LU, AT, PT)
- Publish information for employers regarding employment of asylum seekers (e.g. CZ, FI, DE)

Added value of Eurofound research

- Update on legislative changes
- Specific attention to roles of employers and trade unions – and how they can be supported
- Considers access to housing, social benefits/services, location in relation to available jobs, education for children
- Seeks to identify specific measures for refugees and asylum seekers
- Focus on effective implementation including coordination
- Covers support for self-employment

Thank you

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