



# ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYERS IN THE HIRING OF REFUGEES

**A multi-stakeholder action plan for employers,  
refugees, governments and civil society**

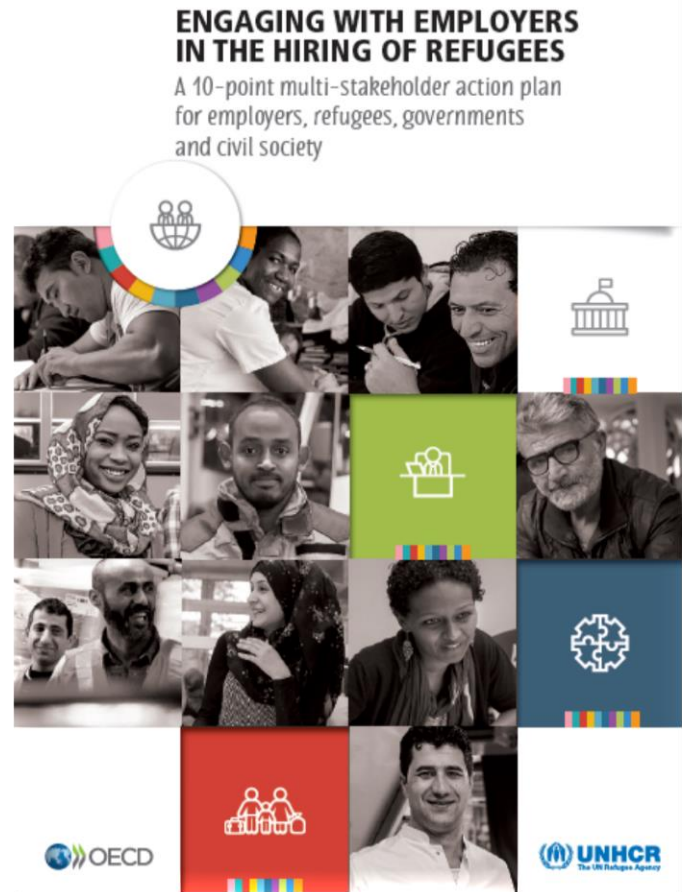
Brussels, 23 October 2018

Eva Degler  
International Migration Division  
Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs



# Engaging with employers in the hiring of refugees

- 10-point action plan on how to boost refugee employment
- Joint work with UNHCR to
  - enhance understanding of the challenges employers face
  - identify good practices in overcoming them
  - provide concrete advice on how to boost employment
- Based on regional dialogues with employers and employers' associations
- Additional consultation with trade unions, service providers and civil society, including refugee organisations





# What challenges do employers see?



In 2015, the number of refugees and asylum-seekers entering Europe reached record levels. In just a few months, more than a million people, the majority fleeing war, violence and persecution, made the perilous journey across the Mediterranean into Europe. As these trends continue in 2016, it is imperative that all actors – public and private – recognise and adjust to this new reality and contribute to making integration work.

Recognizing the challenges of integration, and building on their collective experience in this area, UNHCR and the OECD wish to jointly support the successful labour market integration of refugees. While public policies play a key role in facilitating the integration process, the private sector can make a critical contribution by training and employing refugees. Therefore, it is essential to engage the business community, learn from its experiences and hear its concerns.

This edition of Migration Policy Debates presents the first findings of a joint consultation process with employers started by the OECD and UNHCR, in order to: enhance understanding of the challenges faced by employers when employing refugees; identify good practices in overcoming them; and provide inputs into strategies and approaches being developed by participating businesses and organisations.

## Hiring refugees - What are the opportunities and challenges for employers?

Unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers came to the OECD in 2015, and many of them will be recognized as refugees or receive complementary protection. Their labour market integration, however, will take time and to a large extent depends on employers being able to recruit and integrate them in their workforces. In order to better understand the challenges employers face in hiring asylum seekers and refugees and to design appropriate policy responses, UNHCR and the OECD co-organised a series of dialogues with employers and employer associations.

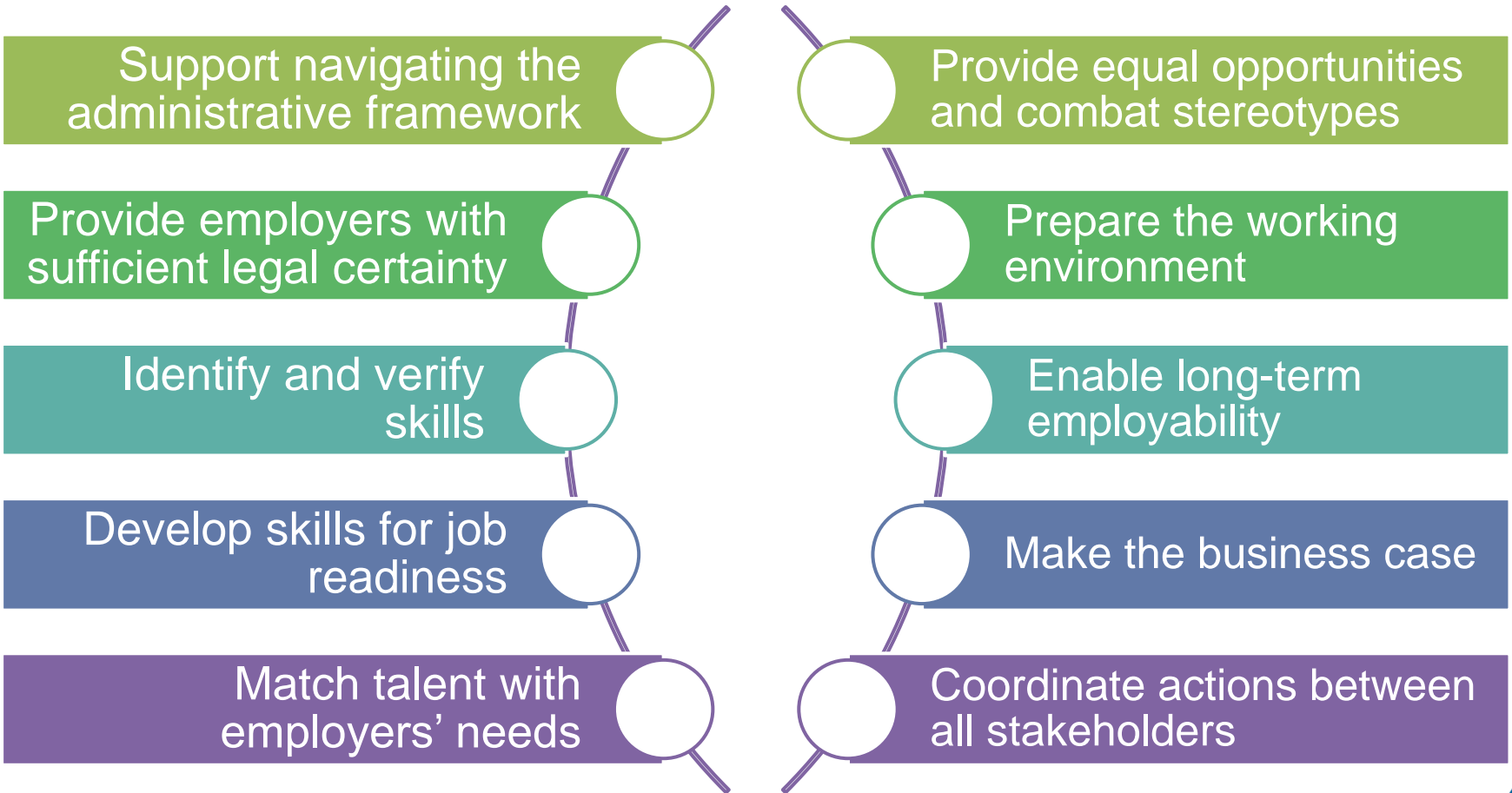
### Key findings include:

- Many employers do not see an immediate business case for hiring refugees or asylum seekers.
- Particularly among larger employers, the main motivation for employing refugees is currently corporate social responsibility, rather than meeting labour needs. While many employers are willing to support refugees through training and internships, hiring – especially into more skilled occupations – has so far been limited.
- Employers cite several reasons for the slow up-take of employment of refugees and asylum seekers, ranging from: uncertainty about the rules governing the refugees and asylum seekers' rights to labour market access, and uncertainty about their skills and qualifications, to lower productivity due to a lack of host-country language skills, at least initially, and a public opinion that is sceptical about hiring refugees or asylum seekers.
- In order to overcome these challenges, employers would benefit from:
  - Assessment of asylum seekers' and refugees' skills, ideally in co-operation between employers and the public employment service, with subsequent upskilling provided where needed, and with a specific focus on shortage occupations,
  - More transparent and more accessible information on refugees' right to work, the recognition of foreign qualifications and the availability of training support for refugees, including through one-stop shops and hotlines,
  - Stronger co-operation between public employment services and social partners, to facilitate the matching process between refugees' skills and local demand, and
  - Ongoing support after initial work placements to ensure long-term employability.

- Insufficient language skills
- Uncertainty regarding
  - labour law and labour market access
  - length of stay in the country
  - applicants' skills and qualification
- Additional support is often needed
- Negative attitudes among other employees or customers
- What's the business case?



# 10 points for action





# Thank you!

For additional information: <http://www.oecd.org/els/mig>

We are interested in hearing your feedback and questions: [eva.degler@oecd.org](mailto:eva.degler@oecd.org)

## Finding their Way

### LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN GERMANY



In 2015, the number of refugees and asylum-seekers entering Europe reached record levels. In just a few months, more than a million people, the majority fleeing war, violence and persecution, made the perilous journey across the Mediterranean into Europe. As these trends continue in 2016, it is imperative that all actors – public and private – recognise and adjust to this new reality and contribute to making integration work.

Recognising the challenges of integration, and building on their collective experience in this area, UNHCR and the OECD wish to jointly support the successful labour market integration of refugees. While public policies play a key role in facilitating the integration process, the private sector can make a critical contribution by training and employing refugees. Therefore, it is essential to engage the business community, learn from its experiences and hear its concerns. This address of Migration Policy Debates presents the first findings of a joint consultation process with employers started by the OECD and UNHCR, in order to: enhance understanding of the challenges faced by employers when employing refugees; identify good practices in overcoming them; and provide inputs into strategies and approaches being developed by participating businesses and organisations.

#### Hiring refugees - What are the opportunities and challenges for employers?

Unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers came to the OECD in 2015, and many of them will be recognised as refugees or receive complementary protection. Their labour market integration, however, will take time and to a large extent depends on employers being able to recruit and integrate them in their workforces. In order to better understand the challenges employers face in hiring asylum seekers and refugees and to design appropriate policy responses, UNHCR and the OECD co-organised a series of dialogues with employers and employer associations.

##### Key findings include:

- Many employers do not see an immediate business case for hiring refugees or asylum seekers.
- Particularly among larger employers, the main motivation for employing refugees is currently corporate social responsibility, rather than meeting labour needs. While many employers are willing to support refugees through training and internships, hiring – especially into more skilled occupations – has so far been limited.
- Employers cite several reasons for the slow up-take of employment of refugees and asylum seekers, ranging from uncertainty about the rules governing the refugees and asylum seekers' rights to labour market access, and uncertainty about their skills and qualifications, to lower productivity due to a lack of host-country language skills, at least initially, and a public opinion that is sceptical about hiring refugees or asylum seekers.
- In order to overcome these challenges, employers would benefit from:
  - Assessment of asylum seekers' and refugees' skills, ideally in co-operation between employers and the public employment service, with subsequent upskilling provided where needed, and with a specific focus on shortage occupations.
  - More transparent and more accessible information on refugees' right to work, the recognition of foreign qualifications and the availability of training support for refugees, including through one-stop shops and hotlines.
  - Stronger co-operation between public employment services and social partners, to facilitate the matching process between refugees' skills and local demand, and
  - Ongoing support after initial work placements to ensure long-term employability.

## ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYERS IN THE HIRING OF REFUGEES

A 10-point multi-stakeholder action plan for employers, refugees, governments and civil society



## Working Together

### Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children



## Making Integration Work

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND

