



PEER REVIEW  
IN SOCIAL PROTECTION  
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION  
2010

MAKING A SUCCESS OF  
INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS INTO  
THE LABOUR MARKET

OSLO, 18–19 NOVEMBER 2010

**SYNTHESIS REPORT**



On behalf of the  
European Commission  
Employment, Social Affairs  
and Inclusion



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## Summary

Migration is currently the main source of population growth in the European Union. This, together with the economic downturn and its impact on the labour market, has served to heighten the importance of well-managed and effective integration policies at the national and EU level.

A Peer Review was held in Oslo on 18-19 November 2010, to discuss Norway's integration policy in general and three schemes in particular which target the integration of immigrants and refugees into the labour market: "Norwegian language training and social studies" courses; "The Introductory Programme for refugees", and the "Second Chance Project".

The Peer Review was hosted by the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) and the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (VOX). Together with the host country, six peer countries participated; they were Austria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Latvia and Malta. Participants also included representatives from the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Women Lobby (EWL) and the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

This synthesis report summarises the contributions of the host country and discussion papers on the main aspects of the Norwegian approach within the European policy framework, the peer countries' and stakeholders' reports and the discussions at the Peer Review meeting, with the ultimate aim of discerning key lessons to take forward.



## A. Policy context at the European level

According to Eurostat data, in 2009 the EU27 countries were home to almost 32 million foreigners<sup>1</sup>, or 6.4% of the total European population, approximately 63% come from non-EU27 countries<sup>2</sup>. In addition, about 8 million illegal immigrants are estimated to reside in the EU. The composition and incidence of the foreign population is very different across European countries. In Western Europe, migration inflows are mainly labour immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. In most Eastern European Member States, immigration is a limited and recent phenomenon and ethnic minority groups make up a significant proportion of their number.

Immigrants face a greater risk of social exclusion than the native population, especially with respect to accessing employment, education, health and social services. Within the immigrant population some groups are particularly at risk and thus require tailored integration measures. This is especially the case for third-country nationals, refugees and beneficiaries of international protection, low-skilled immigrants, women, and irregular immigrants.

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The integration of immigrants in a host country is multidimensional; it involves their socio-economic integration, i.e. the convergence between the immigrant and native population with respect to access to the labour market, earnings, education and training, housing, social benefits, and social services, but also legal and political integration, i.e. citizenship rights, and, in the more extensive form of assimilation, cultural integration, through the acceptance of the host country's values and beliefs.

The Norwegian schemes discussed in the Peer Review focus on labour market integration, the single most important step towards socio-economic integration, even if it is still no guarantee. Integration into the labour

- 1 According to Eurostat's definition, foreigners or non-nationals are "persons who are not citizens of the country in which they are usually resident"; while immigrants are "those persons arriving or returning from abroad to take up residence in a country for a certain period, having previously been resident elsewhere". (Eurostat Yearbook 2010). Non-EU nationals or third-country nationals refer to persons who are usually resident in the EU27 and who have citizenship of a country outside the EU27.
- 2 Eurostat (2010), Foreigners living in the EU are diverse and largely younger than the nationals of the EU Member States, Statistics in Focus n. 45. See [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-SF-10-045/EN/KS-SF-10-045-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-10-045/EN/KS-SF-10-045-EN.PDF).



market usually requires the acquisition of country-specific human capital (including knowledge of the language of the host country), it often involves the recognition of the migrant qualifications and educational level, and it comes with the possession of legal status, housing, and sometimes access to education and training. In certain countries, employment is instrumental in the acquisition of residence permits and civil rights. Labour market integration should also involve access to good jobs which pay decent wages and/or social security benefits, including unemployment benefits or other contribution-based benefits, especially in countries where social benefits are related to the employment status and social assistance is residual, as in certain Southern European countries (Greece and Italy, for example). In the case of self-employment and entrepreneurship, labour market integration requires access to financial services.

## The European policy framework

The integration of third-country nationals has come to the forefront of the European policymaking process relatively recently. Starting with the Amsterdam Treaty (1999) and the Tampere European Council that followed, the EU's legal competence has been extended to cover the integration of third-country migrants legally residing in EU countries.

The role of the European institutions in this field follows the principle of subsidiarity; European institutions may set minimum rights, define European priorities, and support the exchange of experiences and technical cooperation across Member States, but ultimately migration legislation and policymaking is in the hands of Member States. European institutions are gradually moving towards a governance system akin to the Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

The EU approach addresses the following areas in order to encourage best practice for integrating immigrants:

- The definition of minimum standards using legislative instruments for the protection of immigrants' basic rights;





- The implementation of a common framework for the integration of third-country nationals, involving specific tools to support the development of common priorities, policy cooperation, and coordination, and mainstreaming integration across all policies;
- The adoption of dedicated financial instruments to support integration policies at the European and national levels.

The main European legal texts relating to immigrants are: the Family Reunification Directive (Directive 2003/86/EC), the Directive concerning the Status of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons needing international protection who are long-term residents (Directive 2003/109/EC), and Directive 2004/81/EC concerning victims of trafficking. The non-discrimination directives, such as the Racial Equality Directive (Directive 2000/43/EC), the Employment Equality Directive (Directive 2000/78/EC) and the European legal framework on anti-discrimination and gender equality are also extremely relevant for the legal rights of immigrants, ethnic minorities and immigrant women as they recognise the right to access employment, education and training, and equality of treatment for third-country immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Recently three additional Council Directives have addressed the admission of highly qualified immigrants: Directive 2004/114/EC on the admission of students; Directive 2005/71/EC for the facilitation of the admission of researchers in the EU and Directive 2009/50/EC on the conditions of entry and residence in the case of highly qualified workers.

A Common Framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the EU has been implemented since 2004 based on the mutual rights and obligations approach. The common framework is based on a combination of different instruments, including:

- A set of 11 non-binding Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU (CBPs) to assist Member States in formulating integration policies. For labour market integration, the most relevant are CBP 3 and 4: CBP 3 states “employment is a key part of the integration process and participation of immigrants”,



while CBP 4 states that “basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history and institutions is indispensable for integration” and that “enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential for successful integration”.

- Dedicated tools to support technical cooperation among the Member States, including exchange of experiences, practices and information, project partnerships and funding, the development of indicators and monitoring activities.
- Ministerial Conferences on integration have continued the political debate initiated at the first ministerial Conference of Groningen in 2004.
- In addition, an intergovernmental Network of Contact Points on Integration (NCPIs), a Handbook on Integration for policymakers and practitioners, the European Website on Integration, the European Integration Forum and a set of common indicators to monitor and benchmark integration policies in the EU have been organised.

Besides dedicated policies, the integration of immigrants and refugees has also been mainstreamed across a wide range of EU policies and it is now a priority in the OMC for labour and social policies. It has been among the priorities of the European Employment Strategy since its launch in 1997. A High Level Group on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market was established to monitor existing barriers and support the exchange of good practices. The European Commission and the Member states also established an Ethnic Minority Business Network in 2003 in order to facilitate the exchange of information on ethnic minority and migrant businesses. In addition, the Roadmap for Equality between Men and Women 2006–2010 and the Women’s Charter adopted in 2010 address the protection of women rights, which is especially important for migrant women, who represent more than half of the current immigrants in the EU and usually face multiple forms of discrimination.

The EU has employed different financial instruments to fund integration related priorities. Targeted integration policies for legal third-country



national residents were financed by the transnational actions of the INTI — “Integration of third country nationals” — programme which spent 18 M€ on 64 projects between 2003 and 2006. In 2007 the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals was formally adopted with an allocation of 825 M€ for the 2007–2013 programming period to finance Member States’ annual programmes (768 M€) and Community Actions (57 M€). The Integration Fund supports national integration strategies, giving a special focus to newly arrived third-country nationals, and the management of migration flows. The European Refugee Fund targets the integration of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (asylum seekers and displaced people) through social and economic integration measures — for the period 2005–2010. In the first implementation period, 28% of the funding was for integration measures, including language training. Somewhere between 250,000 and 350,000 people have been involved in projects financed by the fund.

Besides targeted funds, some mainstream financial programmes address integration. For example, the EU Structural Funds and Community programmes and initiatives for the labour market and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, such as the European Social Fund and the Community Initiatives — EQUAL, URBAN II, URBACT —, and the current PROGRESS programme.

The current debate is increasingly focused on labour shortages and iterating demand for high-skilled migrants, with an increasing recognition of the advantages of immigration for the competitiveness of EU countries. To this end, the Stockholm Programme for 2010–2014 and the Europe 2020 Strategy underlines the potential human capital offered by migrants, while the European Union Blue Card Directive (2009) aims at attracting high-skilled workers by facilitating residence and work permits.

## National integration policies

Notwithstanding the increasing role of European institutions, Member States have the most extensive competences in immigration and integration policies. European countries are developing a certain degree of convergence



in their approaches to integration policies, and in recent years a clear trend towards an “activation” approach is visible in most EU countries, whereby access to residency and citizenship rights is conditional on the obligation to adapt to the new country, participate in the introduction programmes and language courses and, in some countries, to pass language and citizenship tests. However, national and often regional differences remain considerable, reflecting the specific characteristics of immigrants, different past and present immigration flows, the legal framework, the structure of national welfare regimes and the national integration models which range from the French assimilation model to the multiculturalism model of the UK.

The main policies can be summarised as follows:

- **Anti-racism and anti-discrimination legal provisions.** All European countries have developed specific legal provisions, in some cases as a result of adopting the European directives. However, the legislative framework is rarely implemented, especially in those countries which do not have a longstanding tradition of non-discrimination and immigration policies.
- **Legislation on immigration** is also relevant. Access to social benefits and services in many European countries depends on obtaining a work permit, which is only possible with a regular work contract. Moreover long-term residence permits are usually conditional on having a regular work contract, and/or having passed a language test or having participated in an introduction programme (as in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). The recent tightening of eligibility conditions for residence and work permits and for access to welfare benefits in some European countries have increased the difficulties faced by women and low-skilled immigrants, who are usually more dependent on social benefits.
- All European countries adopt specific **integration policies** targeting immigrants and descendants of migrants. Most integration policies are aimed at newly arrived immigrants and emphasise language and qualification courses, job-orientation, placement services and wage subsidies. In recent years there has been a trend towards mandatory



participation in integration programmes and language tests as a condition for residency and citizenship. Introduction programmes, including language and civic education courses, are the single most important measure specifically targeted at legal immigrants and are increasingly a requirement for obtaining a work visa. According to a survey from 2009<sup>3</sup>, 23 out of 31 European countries have linguistic requirements as part of their integration regulations. Language courses are provided by 19 countries and in 8 countries language courses are obligatory. In 15 countries a language test is required when applying for permanent residency and citizenship. In certain countries (especially the Nordic ones) introduction programmes and language training are provided free of charge by municipalities, while in others immigrants have to provide for the language training themselves, which are offered by private training organisations, often at high cost. Very few Member States carry out in-depth evaluations of these activities.

- Immigrants are also one of the target groups for mainstream **active labour market policies**, which are often based on personalised services and wage subsidies. In many countries employment services for immigrant workers include mentoring and networking activities, training and support for entrepreneurs, and placement services. Reaching immigrants, especially the most disadvantaged among them and immigrant women, can be difficult as a result of their greater isolation and/or segregation. Another active labour market policy, the recognition and certification of qualifications, is particularly important for third-country nationals, as in many cases their formal and informal qualifications are not recognised in receiving countries. Research has shown the recognition of skills increases the likelihood of labour market integration and better skill-work compatibility.
- **Measures to attract highly skilled migrants** have been promoted in many European countries recently. “Green Cards” schemes have

3 Van Avermeat, Piet, Language requirements for adult migrants. Results of a Survey. Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. See [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/ConfMigr10\\_P-VanAvermaet\\_survey.ppt](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/ConfMigr10_P-VanAvermaet_survey.ppt).



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been implemented to attract highly skilled migrants for sectors with labour shortages, such as the ICT, engineering, biotechnology, healthcare, and education sectors.

- In relation to **welfare policies**, legal long-term resident immigrants are usually eligible for social benefits on the basis of their socio-economic situation or specifically because they are asylum seekers. Rules increasingly stipulate eligibility for benefits depends on proof of job searching and participation in job training programmes, potentially damaging the likelihood of certain groups (namely women) qualifying for benefits.



## B. Integration policies in Norway

### Background

Norway has a relatively good record in integrating immigrants, although substantial differences between foreigners and natives persist, they are less pronounced than in other European countries. In the reading of this summary, Norway's high GDP per capita, robust labour market performances and the generosity of the Nordic welfare state should be taken into consideration.

The latest figures from Statistics Norway show that on January 1, 2010 the number of foreign origin residents in Norway was 552,000 — 11.4% of the total population. Immigration first gained impetus in the 1990s; between 1990 and 2008, 377,000 non-Nordic citizens were granted residence in Norway. Of these, 24% came as refugees, 24% were labour immigrants (immigrants seeking employment opportunities), and 23% came to Norway to join family (family and humanitarian migrants usually have lower participation in the labour market compared to labour migrants, which will be relevant when assessing the effectiveness of labour market integration policies). The recent surge in immigration flows has been accompanied by a diversification of origin countries and the motivation to migrate. Since 2002 there has been an increase in labour immigrants who come, in large part, from Eastern European Member States. Since 2004 Polish immigrants have been the largest immigration population in Norway (representing 8% of total immigration in 2008). Currently, almost half of all immigrants come from Asia, Africa, or Latin-America. Among them refugees and their families still account for a large share, the majority coming from Iraq (4.8% of total immigration in 2008), Somalia (4.3%), Pakistan (4.2%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3.4%), Iran (3.3%), and Vietnam (3.3%).

In Norway the differences in labour market outcomes between immigrants and the native population is most pronounced for women and the low-skilled. As in other Western countries, the labour market position of immigrants varies significantly in relation to the country of origin and length of stay: immigrants from non-EEA countries are particularly disadvantaged, again, especially women. National data also show that first- and second-



generation young immigrants have very high drop-out rates from education and vocational training. As in other western countries, the current downturn adversely affected labour market conditions, especially for the newer labour migrants from EU countries.

## Key features of integration policies

Integration policy was developed quite early on in Norway. It was based on a **civic integration approach** (common to Nordic countries) with legal immigrants entitled to a whole spectrum of rights, for example immigrants with at least 3 years residence in Norway have had voting rights in local elections since 1983. Since the mid-'70s municipalities have organised a wide range of help for immigrants including housing, infrastructures for integration, support for the establishment of immigrants' associations, language and civic courses, care facilities, and mother tongue education for the children of immigrants.

Norway's approach is to **mainstream immigrants' needs** into general labour and social policies to enable new arrivals to enter the labour market and participate in society as quickly as possible. In fact, immigrants are a priority group for active labour market policies which provide training, work practice measures and wage subsidies for the unemployed or the "vocationally disable", and they constitute an important share (as much as 36% in 2008) of beneficiaries of the policies. The Qualification programme<sup>4</sup> is a particularly important active labour market policy for immigrants. The programme (revised in 2007) targets people dependent on social benefits with reduced working capacity and provides personalised counselling, training and employment services to improve their employability.

Since 2003, **targeted integration policies**, which support immigrants' access to the labour market and implement anti-discrimination measures, have been introduced. They provide more targeted language training, vocational training, and improved procedures to recognise foreign qualifications,

4 A Peer Review of this Programme was held in Oslo in October 2009. See <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews/2009/developing-well-targeted-tools-for-the-active-inclusion-of-vulnerable-people>.





together with specialised employment services for job seekers with an immigrant background and pilot programmes targeted at those groups most distant from the labour market. In addition there have been efforts to promote the employment of immigrants and their children in the public sector (further strengthened in 2008 with the introduction of affirmative action on a trial basis).

**Language and civic education** is considered a pillar in integration policies for newly arrived immigrants, since the majority of employers require mastery of the native language and basic knowledge of social norms. Language training, civic integration and advisory services have been promoted by the Introductory Act in 2005. The Act states that refugees and persons granted residence on political and humanitarian grounds, or for family reunion, have a right but also an obligation to take courses in Norwegian language and cultural studies. Services are provided by municipalities with the financial support and technical advice of the IMDi. Currently immigrants may take a language test having concluded language training; but a Norwegian language test and a citizenship test (as well as the increase of compulsory language and civic training to 600 hours) may soon become mandatory if policy proposals are adopted. According to the proposal those who pass the language test would be exempt from the citizenship test.

A comprehensive **Action Plan for the Integration and Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population** came into force in 2007, with a total budget for the 2007–2009 period amounting to approximately 103 M€. The Action Plan includes measures to improve the education of young first- and second-generation immigrants; the expansion of integration subsidies to local authorities for the settlement and integration of refugees and the setting up of specific language courses and integration training. In addition the plan encourages entrepreneurship and employing immigrants in the public sector. The plan involves the responsibility of different sector ministries, while its coordination is the responsibility of IMDi.

An important feature of the Norwegian approach to integration is the **settlement policy for refugees** which facilitates an even distribution of refugees and their families across the country following negotiations between



municipalities and the IMDi because the capacity of municipalities to provide good quality services is a crucial determinant of their effectiveness.

The implementation of integration policies in Norway is based on **extensive policy monitoring and evaluation**; the establishment of standards for measuring results, the training of teachers and advisors and the implementation of users' feedback.

Different governmental levels are involved in integration policies, from the national level (IMDi) to the municipal level. **A high level of autonomy is granted to municipalities, while national institutions mainly provide guidelines and technical assistance** — the quality of service delivery is thus very different across municipalities.

Important organisations are the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV), the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (VOX), the social partners and the Contact Committee for the Immigrant Population and the Authorities (KIM), which involve state representatives, immigrant representatives and NGOs.

## Main features of the programmes under assessment

The three Norwegian programmes proposed for the Peer Review represent the main training and labour integration programmes directly targeting the foreign born population in Norway. They address the difficulties facing newly arrived immigrants, refugees and long-term resident immigrants in entering the labour market.

- **Norwegian language courses and social studies** provide basic language skills and insights into Norwegian society as preparation for the labour market. All newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers between 16 and 55 years old who have been granted a temporary residence or work permit and who have not mastered Norwegian have the right and obligation to attend 250 hours of Norwegian language classes and 50 hours of civic education classes in order to get a permanent settlement permit. The municipalities are obliged to



provide these courses free of charge to non-EEA immigrants within three months of an application being submitted or of an entitlement to training being declared. Since 2005 three different courses are available depending on the level of education of participants and their mother tongue. The 300 hours of training must be completed within 3 years. Municipalities will also provide up to 2700 more hours to be completed within 5 years for those who require it. According to VOX about 30,000 immigrants per year participate in these courses, approximately 6% of the adult immigrant population, and 61% of them are women. Since 2008, participation in these classes has been a pre-requisite even to apply for citizenship. Immigrants who have concluded language training may take a language test which is used for admission to further education, vocational training and employment. However, passing the test does not guarantee employment or admission into further education, and is actually barely known among firms.

- The **Introductory Programme for refugees** provides personalised integration measures including language and vocational training, work practice and counselling services. Since 2005 full-time participation in the programme has been compulsory for all newly arrived immigrants with a permit based on asylum, and for their family members from non-EEA countries aged between 18 and 55, who lack basic qualifications. The programme can last up to 3 years. Participants are entitled to an introduction benefit equivalent to about 18,000 € per year, conditional on full-time attendance. The benefit is reduced in certain cases: for younger people, in cases of absence not due to illness or other welfare reasons, in cases where the participant receives other welfare benefits or is involved in paid work as part of the programme. The programme involves between 8,000 and 10,000 participants per year (approximately 2% of the adult immigrant population). In 2009 most participants were aged between 26 and 35, and one third had less than lower secondary education (women and men were equally represented). Municipalities have to provide the Programme for the refugees settled in their territory with the financial and technical support of NAV, IMDi, and VOX.



- **The Second Chance Project**, launched in 2005, is a pilot full-time qualification programme aimed at people with an immigrant background who have no link with the labour market. In 2009 the target groups included: persons dependent on social benefits living in Norway for a long time, young immigrants between 18 and 25 years, and stay-at-home mothers not receiving assistance benefits. The programme combines language training with work experience, and some elements of mentorship according to the individual needs of the participants; physical and health promotion activities are also included. The maximum length of the programme is two years, varying according to the needs of the target group. Participants are closely monitored by case workers, who are in charge of (maximum) 15 participants and must assure continuity. Indeed, the close individual interaction between case workers and participants and the follow up of participants is the main feature of this pilot programme, together with personalised intervention. Participants receive a benefit independent of their situation, tax free and set at the level of the Introduction benefits. Funds are administered by the IMDi, which selects the projects proposed by the municipalities. In 2009 a total of 39 Second Chance projects were financed in 26 municipalities, involving 626 participants. Among the participants, 71% were women, and the three largest groups were immigrants with Somali background (40% of participants), from Iraq (17% of participants), and from Pakistan (10% of participants). The average length of participation was 9 months in 2009 (7 months for men and 10 months for women).

**Municipalities** are the principle authority in the organisation of these programmes and each municipality is obliged to provide tailor-made introduction programmes and language courses for newly arrived immigrants resident in their municipality. They are given the right to use their discretion in the design and implementation modalities of programmes.

According to the data presented in the host country paper, overall the 2010 state budget for social and language courses was almost 745 M€. Of this budget almost 71% went to municipalities providing integration programmes,



28.5% was for the implementation of the language courses, 0.2% for the language tests, and 0.3% for improving the quality of teaching. State grants to municipalities for the provision of language and integration courses take the form of per capita grants, which vary according to an immigrants' country of origin and are at the top-end compared to other European countries. In addition, municipalities receive state integration grants for the settlement of refugees equivalent to approximately 72,376 € per person over a period of 5 years. The Second Chance programme involves between 2.5 and 4.4 M€ per year. The amount allocated to each project depends on the number of participants, the target groups involved, and the number of case workers. In 2010, a total of close to 3.3 M€ were distributed amongst 31 projects.

Norway has a strong background in **policy monitoring and evaluation**. However, few evaluation results are available for the Integration and the Second Chance Projects, due to their short lifespan. According to monitoring data the following has been recorded:

- The majority of the participants of the language courses needed more language training because the level of proficiency in Norwegian demanded on the labour market is high even for low-skilled workers. Women appear to perform less well than men in tests as do candidates who have not completed education (only 30% passed the Norwegian 2 test in 2008). A problem which emerged in the past surveys and evaluations was the high variation in the quality of courses provided by different municipalities and little attention to immigrants' needs.
- The Introductory Programme shows good results; in 2008 53% of participants leaving the programme went directly into work (34%) or education (19.6%) — the results for those leaving the programme in 2009 were probably lower because of the economic crisis. The outcomes one year after leaving the Programme are better still; 63% of participants from the 2007 Introductory Programme were either employed or in further education one year on. Men and young people are more likely to benefit from the programme. Women's poorer performance is probably connected to family responsibilities and the lack of child care facilities. In some ethnic groups (such as the



Somalis), a particularly low educational attainment of women is an additional barrier to participation. Participants' results are different according to the country background: Somali women, for example perform very badly, however participants' outcomes are usually higher than the 2008 employment rates registered by the overall population of the same background. Results vary greatly across municipalities, in part due to the varying quality of the programmes provided but also as a result of the characteristics of the immigrant population settled in the area. There is a high risk that the generous introduction benefits for participants which require full-time participation, will be better than alternatives so that some immigrants may be ready for employment before the two years but stay enrolled nonetheless.

- The Second Chance programme presents relatively good results, considering the population involved are those who face the most challenges. Of the 157 participants who completed the qualification programme in 2009, 42% either entered employment (37%) or education (5%), while most of the others proceeded to the NAV as job seekers or entered other labour market programmes. Overall results were slightly higher for men than for women, and for the long-term unemployed on subsidies (43%), than for the youth (35%). Among the stay-at-home women no one had completed the programme within one year after it started, partly because recruiting women was time-consuming and difficult. Overall, these results are encouraging considering the target groups and the difficulties in reaching them. The projects also showed the importance of adapting counselling methods to the specific target group and induced IMDi in 2010 to finance research in developing counselling methodology, recruitment work, and the involvement of recruitment agencies. One of greatest challenges of the programme was the recruitment of stay-at-home women, who were not registered as benefits recipients. New recruitment channels had to be considered; in many cases it was necessary to involve the entire family to explain the importance of the programme. Childcare services and/or part-time qualification programmes also had to be provided. At the same time, the projects drew support from potential female participants and many appeared

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to be willing to participate even without the participation allowance. Regarding the youth projects, the main problem was high drop-out rates and the need for role models. Start-up courses have proven successful for young people, as were projects involving everyday life with “participant zones” (rooms equipped with sofas, a coffee corner, computers, etc.) and meditative exercises.

The main issues that are potentially relevant for other countries are summarised in the discussion paper and are covered briefly here.

- Targeting: paying attention to the different needs of newly arrived immigrants, refugees, and long-term residents with no links to the labour market works well. Excluding labour immigrants from integration programmes, free language and civic courses on the other hand, is questionable.
- Making the integration programme and language courses mandatory is deemed necessary because of their potential to aid social integration for otherwise low-skilled immigrants and their children, and because the take-up rate amongst the neediest would probably be low. These programmes are particularly important in Norway where low-skilled jobs are less common than in other countries and language proficiency (in addition to language qualifications) is a requirement for most jobs. Where there are mandatory requirements, however, there are usually free courses and benefits available for participation, especially when full time participation is required. Implementing a similar programme in other countries, especially when the size of the population with an immigrant background is high, presents difficulties.
- Many evaluations have underlined the risks of lock-in effects, where generous integration benefits available to programme participants discourages early labour market entry. Introducing greater flexibility in the programme’s design, faster tracks into employment, and introducing incentives to take up employment, at least for the more skilled, are possible options for improvements.



- The quality of the services provided is differentiated across municipalities. There are few incentives for municipalities to upgrade their services. Often the offered programmes are not flexible enough to cater for the different needs of an extremely heterogeneous immigrant population; for example catering for the highly educated presents problems.
- The cost of the programme is high compared to other countries and this may hinder transferability to countries with more immigrants and limited resources.
- The governance system is based on a clear division of roles between public local providers (municipalities), who are given the freedom to implement as they see fit, and national agencies (VOX, IMDi and NAV) who produce guidelines, technical assistance and monitoring services. However the strong political autonomy of municipalities makes the coordination role of central institutions difficult. The role of private providers and NGOs is limited compared to other European countries. This may present an obstacle for transferability as local authorities may not be equipped to provide these kinds of programmes.





## C. Policies and experiences in peer countries and European stakeholder organisations

Six countries were involved in the Peer Review besides Norway, they were: Austria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Latvia, and Malta. Their country reports briefly present the legal framework for obtaining residency permits and citizenship; the main integration programmes adopted at the national and local level, and finally discuss the lessons learned and potential transferability of the Norwegian approach.

These countries illustrate the vast differences in the incidence and composition of the population with an immigrant background, which in turn affect the integration policies adopted and the transferability of the Norwegian model. In **Austria**, 10.3% of the total population is of foreign origin, 16% of the workforce was born abroad and 20% of children have parents who were born abroad. Immigrants from former Yugoslavia are the most numerous group (more than a third). Labour migration has been dominant in the past, while currently family reunification is the dominant motive. **Finland**, on the other hand, has traditionally been a “sending country”. Despite an increase in the last decade, immigration inflows are still very low (2.7% of the total population) and come largely from neighbouring countries (Estonia, Russia and Sweden). **Malta** has a relatively low share of foreigners in their population (4.4%) and non-EU27 nationals are only 2.4% of the total population. **Greece** and **Italy** have been “sending countries” for a long time, but since the early ‘90s they have registered rapid growth in immigration, with a large share made up of illegal immigrants. In 2009 the proportion of non-nationals out of the total population reached 8.3% in Greece and 7% in Italy (where the number of immigrants has reached 4.2 million, plus some 560,000 illegal entrants). Immigrants are mainly third-country nationals arriving for work or to join family. Asylum seekers and refugees represent a smaller share in Greece and Italy than they do in Nordic countries. The situation in **Latvia** is completely different: the main integration challenges do not relate to immigration (which is only 2% of total population, mainly from former CIS countries), but rather to return migrants and, especially, to a large Russian-speaking minority, which includes a large component (equivalent to 16% of the population) of stateless immigrants.



The peer countries have very different institutional and socio-economic conditions for the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, but some common concerns and trends can be detected, namely:

- The increasing adoption of language tests for citizenship and residency permits.
- The importance of combining language, counselling and vocational training for integration in the labour market and to start language learning at a young age;
- The need for targeting and personalisation of services and policies according to the specific needs of different groups of immigrants;
- The increasing concerns for the integration of second-generation immigrants;
- The importance of a governance system able to coordinate the numerous actors and policies involved in the integration of immigrants;
- The lack of funding and the effects of the current crisis.

## The peer countries' experience

In **Austria**, the legal framework currently incentivises the acquisition of work and residence permits for highly qualified migrants (only). The length of the residence permit (temporary or unlimited) is conditional on the reason for immigration. Language is seen as a key element of integration. Since 1998 basic German language skills have been a condition for citizenship, and since 2006 it has been necessary to fulfil an Integration Agreement as a first stage in passing the citizenship test. Citizenship requires German language skills at B2 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages — CEFRL — system), while the Integration Agreement requires the acquisition of A2 level German and a mandatory language course in German, comprising 300 hours to be completed in 5 years (but extended in some cases). 50% of the cost is provided to those who successfully finish the course within 2 years, and 25% is offered to those finishing in 3 years. Highly educated and highly skilled immigrants are exempt from this requirement.



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Currently, the Government is considering making basic knowledge of German (A1) compulsory for new immigrants before entering the country (as in Germany).

Most labour market programmes targeted at immigrants are provided by the Austrian Federal Employment Service (AMS) and sometimes they are organised in cooperation with NGOs. Migrants have the same rights of access to AMS services as nationals. A National Action Plan for integration (NAP-Int) was enacted in January 2010 to support the coordination of all integration measures at the national, province, and municipality levels, and among public institutions, social partners, and NGOs.

Some integration programmes specifically target particular groups, such as second-generation and female migrants. Mentoring programmes providing role models appear to be effective for young and second-generation immigrants. To improve the language skills of second-generation immigrants, the Government introduced in 2009 a compulsory year in Kindergarten for all 5-year-old children, free of charge. As for programmes targeted at immigrant women, the Vienna's 'Mummy learns German' programme, where mothers can take language classes in the same location as their children, has been successful. In addition, gender consultants have been involved in counselling and training programmes aimed at job seekers and Vienna's 2007 Diversity Programme requires the presence of diversity consultants in tenders submitted by training organisations. In order to reach the immigrant population, employment services are also starting to visit mosques and place articles in migrants' newspapers, and have produced a DVD in Turkish and other languages.

The evaluation of these programmes is difficult because statistics do not register the ethnic background of participants.

In **Finland**, as in Norway and Sweden, induction and training programmes, free language courses and social benefits are all available for immigrants. In order to gain Finnish citizenship, immigrants have to prove their knowledge of the Finnish or Swedish language in a language test. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the planning, steering, coordination, and monitoring of integration policies, while municipalities, employment and



local development offices are responsible for drawing up, implementing, and monitoring measures to support the integration of immigrants in their areas. The division of responsibilities between municipalities and employment and local development offices is the subject of discussion. The involvement of all stakeholders, including social partners and NGOs, is well implemented – shown by the draft legislation on integration, which involved the consultation of 160 organisations and entities. According to the 1999 Integration Act (which is being revised) only unemployed immigrants or those receiving social assistance have the right to participate in an Integration Plan to be signed within 2 months from registering for unemployment and/or social assistance; the Integration Plan provides personalised services to support social inclusion through language learning and training lasting for 3 years (5 years in some cases). The plan is drawn up jointly by the migrant and the responsible agencies (municipality and/or employment office), and participants receive an “Integration assistance” subsidy equivalent to an unemployment benefit. A new Integration Act, which comes into force spring 2011, extends eligibility to all immigrants with residence permits or a registered right of residence. It also includes provisions for a mandatory language course or test for migrants, which is currently only necessary for those applying for citizenship. A preliminary assessment of the immigrant’s employment, education, and other knowledge/skills (such as language) is also set to be carried out within two months of receiving the immigrant’s request. A separate act will deal with asylum seekers. The main problems with integration plans are: the difficulty in reaching immigrants, limited resources and the lack of coordination between targeted programmes and mainstream policies. In recent years more attention is paid to monitoring and evaluating integration measures, and a new pilot project is under way to develop an integrated monitoring system, including a survey on recently arrived migrants and the integration programmes carried out by municipalities.

In **Greece**, third-country nationals applying for long-term residence permits and/or citizenship have to prove their language knowledge, by passing level A2 exams and, for citizenship, they also have to prove knowledge of Greek history and culture, in addition to having resided legally in Greece for at least 7 years. In order to take the language test the candidate must have completed 150 hours of Greek language courses and at least 25 hours of Greek history



and culture courses — both of which are free. The current immigration policy is under review in order to: a) simplify the procedures for residency and work permits and reduce the risk of losing permanent resident status, and b) support the full socio-economic participation of immigrants, especially second-generation immigrants. Most language, vocational training and labour market programmes targeted at immigrants are implemented with the support of the European Social Fund, the Equal Community Initiative, and the European Integration Fund. The two principle shortcomings of these programmes are that they only target documented immigrants and they do not address problems with recognising immigrants' skills and experience. In addition, the lack of financial resources is an obstacle to the provision of free access to introduction programmes and language courses to all newly arrived migrants; however these programmes could be extended to refugees and asylum seekers (of which there are few). As for the governance system, in Greece policymaking has been highly centralised until very recently; with the reform of the Public Administration, municipalities have a higher degree of autonomy in social and educational policies. In 2008 a comprehensive Action Plan was set up by an interdepartmental national committee to improve and coordinate policies aimed at the integration of immigrants.

In **Italy**, integration programmes are implemented at the local level by NGOs and local authorities, while the central government regulates immigration inflows using an annual quota system. In order to acquire citizenship immigrants have to legally reside in Italy for at least 10 years. Residency is conditional on the possession of a work permit and a legal job. In 2010 the legislation changed so that new arrivals must pass an A2 level language test within two years. This will be a condition for permanent residence. Integration policies at the local level mainly relate to: employment services and language training, integration of second-generation immigrants in education, access to housing and essential services. Guidance and training programmes are also available in the countries of origin. The Ministry of Labour's technical agency, Italia Lavoro, is currently developing tools and methodologies to support targeted public employment services; it is providing technical assistance and coordination services to migrant associations and NGOs; and implementing pilot projects providing incentives to companies hiring immigrant workers and raising awareness.



In **Latvia** the political, legal and institutional framework for the inclusion of immigrants is still in its initial stages and specialised governmental agencies at the regional or local level are so far little developed. The main issue in Latvia is the naturalization of a large stateless minority (who originally came from the former USSR), and their children (who are permanent residents in Latvia but do not have Latvian citizenship nor that of any other country). Their integration is a politically sensitive issue in Latvia. For this reason Latvian integration policy is strict and conservative. The main barrier to the labour market integration of immigrants is not the lack of language knowledge — as Russian is still popular in Latvia and recently immigrants tend to come from former CIS countries — but the expirations of work permits, which require the immigrant and his/her family to leave the country within 10 days. In addition, third-country nationals without a permanent residence permit are not granted any social, health, or training services. Integration policies for immigrants and third-country nationals surfaced on the political agenda in 2007 as a result of EU pressure to develop more targeted integration measures in the Member States. Most activities are project-based and co-funded by the European Integration Fund. Municipalities have started to pay greater attention to the social and cultural integration of third-country nationals since the late '90s. By the end of 2003, 25 different municipal governments had their own social integration programmes and another 29 had sectoral programmes that were linked directly to social integration. The projects are mainly implemented by NGOs in cooperation with local institutions. In October 2010 a new framework was designed for 2011–2017, based on a public consultation on integration policy.

**Maltese** policy on immigration is similarly restrictive. Third-country national labour immigrants are accepted only when they are employed in jobs for which they are fully qualified and when there is no native or EU citizen available. For this reason third-country nationals are not allowed to participate in public training and integration programmes. New legislation outlines that for the application and renewal of residency visas, all immigrants have to pass courses in Maltese, English and Malta's society, organised by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), a government agency (language and training courses are also provided by trade unions and NGOs). The central government is usually not involved in these programmes,



but local councils with a large concentration of foreigners try to assist those residing within their locality in collaboration with the ETC.

## The contribution of stakeholder organisations

The **European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)** raised a number of key issues:

- There is a need to adopt a **rights-based approach** to secure socio-economic integration. Conditioning residence permits and citizenship rights, or language and civic education tests, discriminates against the most disadvantaged among immigrants and risks increasing the size of the black economy. A rights-based approach requires ensuring access to social rights and services starting with the needs of children and early education for immigrants, followed by the introduction of **adequate minimum income support** to enable immigrants to follow language and integration programmes. Spain and Sweden (with the EXIGO project) are examples of good practice in this area.
- **The full participation of migrants in society should be the final goal of integration policies**, with labour market integration as a means to this end rather than the final goal. This implies that integration programmes should build on the skills migrants have and support their professional choices. Accepting and valorising cultural and social diversity could also be advantageous for the host countries, as it improves economic, social, and cultural life.
- **Inclusive labour markets** are considered a pre-requisite for labour integration. In many Member States there is no connection between language proficiency and labour market outcome; and discrimination and not recognising immigrants' educational and professional qualifications are barriers to the integration of immigrants in quality jobs. This leads to a waste of resources, negative selection of low-skilled immigrants (as high-skilled immigrants will avoid closed labour markets) and potential social unrest when second- and third-generations of immigrants reach adulthood. The proposal



is to introduce a **legal framework for the recognition of diplomas and qualifications** in Member States on the basis of existing EU instruments, such as the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO in 1997.

- Governance systems should integrate labour market and social inclusion policies through **broader partnerships, including NGOs and the participation of migrants themselves**. The Norwegian approach is an example of best practice in this respect, although more involvement of ethnic minority and migrant organisations in all stages of integration policies, and better coordination and the setting of quality standards at the central level could further improve effectiveness. According to the EAPN paper, another good example is the Spanish Intercultural model.
- In many European countries the main problem is the **lack of resources for integration programmes**, a problem aggravated by the economic crisis. Migrants and ethnic minorities have been amongst the groups most affected by the crisis and the budget cuts are mainly affecting social expenditure, which include integration and anti-discrimination measures.

The main contribution of the **European Women Lobby (EWL)** was to emphasise the fact that women immigrants face greater barriers to integration than men, because of traditional gender roles, their position as dependents in family reunion and the scarcity of affordable and accessible care services. The lack of language skills perpetuates women's isolation and social exclusion, impedes the knowledge of their rights, reduces access to public services and also affects the integration of children in the host country. According to the EWL, to **improve the effectiveness of integration programmes**, Member States should:

- Provide free of charge, accessible programmes catering for the specific needs of women and disabled migrants in relation to: location, timing of courses, provision of care facilities;



- Involve migrant associations at all stages of the policy cycle;
- Provide high-quality tailored programmes based on needs-assessment (see the Canadian approach);
- Ensure the contents of integration courses includes advice on how to get access to public services and participate in civil society; that it outlines migrants' rights, as well as counselling and mentoring services to facilitate access to vocational training, further education, lifelong learning and good jobs. A good example of this in practice is the Danish Mentor Network.

The EWL contribution also underlines the need to **supplement integration programmes with other policies**, such as:

- Removing the legal obstacles to work in the formal labour market by insuring effective citizenship rights for migrant workers, independently of their legal status (if they pay taxes they should benefit from the same rights as native workers);
- Adopting a positive approach to the benefits of a multicultural society in the media and in political campaigns;
- Adapting public services to the needs of a diverse population through multicultural training for workers in public services;
- Adopting a gender mainstreaming approach to migration policies (for example the Blue Card Directive supports high-skilled migration in EU countries which implicitly favours men as it is based on earnings and employment sectors, rather than education and language attainment);
- Implementing an efficient system for the recognition of qualifications;
- Implementing effective anti-discrimination policies with a gendered perspective and developing positive discrimination where necessary;



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- Ensuring that at every stage of the migration process, women obtain individual rights, not just rights as family members (as per family reunion legislation in most of the Member States);
  - Involving migrant and women's organisations in policymaking and supporting them with specific funding and tendering procedures.



## D. Discussions at the Peer Review meeting

The Norwegian schemes under scrutiny show that integrated and personalised programmes targeting the needs of specific groups of migrants are effective in improving their labour market performance. All participants considered the Norwegian approach to integration good practice, but agreed there was room for improvement in two areas: flexibility in delivery (to avoid lock-in effects) and quality standards for municipalities. As for language and civic education training, it was deemed important that policies increase the number of hours and focus on the labour market and vocational training, as well as involving immigrants, together with their NGOs in the provision of training.

The transferability of the Norwegian approach to the peer countries was discussed, and two constraints were highlighted, the first resulting from limited resources (a problem aggravated by the crisis) and the second born from the large numbers of immigrants in some countries. In addition, migrants tend to concentrate in large urban areas, which presents a challenge for the capacity of projects.

The debate then focussed on the relation between Integration programmes, citizenship rights and governance systems, starting from the Norwegian proposal to introduce a mandatory language and civic test for the acquisition of citizenship rights; an approach increasingly popular across Europe.

### Integration programmes, language courses and citizenship rights

Increasingly mandatory **language courses** and civic tests are used across Europe as a tool for labour market integration and as part of the process of acquiring citizenship rights. One issue in the debate is the effectiveness of language courses for labour market integration. As language and civic education tests are increasingly required for citizenship they may become a barrier for low educated immigrants. A related more general issue is whether citizenship could be in itself an instrument for enhancing labour market integration or, as it is currently in most European countries, a way to certify successful integration.



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The discussion of mandatory language courses for labour market integration was based on the following elements (which are also presented in the discussion paper):

- Language proficiency is an important tool for economic and social integration, even if positive effects on low-skilled immigrants and their children may take years to bear fruit. However, when residency and citizenships rights are attached to certain standards of language knowledge and acculturation, they may become a barrier to integration. The main question is then: what is the aim of mandatory language courses and tests? If language testing is designed to improve the employability of immigrants as in Norway, it may be justified, but when language tests become a condition of citizenship, they can become a barrier to integration and are employed as a means to control immigration flows.
- The way test requirements for citizenship are designed is also relevant. There are substantial differences between the Dutch system where the test is costly, demanding and only three attempts are allowed and the German, UK and Danish cases where courses are free, test materials (including answers) may be easily downloaded from the internet and there is no limit to how many times you can do the test.
- Furthermore, the link between language proficiency and labour market outcomes (employment and earnings) is questioned by research carried out in Norway and elsewhere. Language proficiency does not necessarily equal integration and, in turn, integration does not necessarily imply full linguistic competence. The recognition of vocational qualifications (including the recognition of skills acquired formally and informally for the assessment of real competences) is actually very pertinent for immigrants' integration in the labour market. In addition, as shown in the Norwegian case, making language courses relevant to the workplace presents a practical step in improving employability. Research shows that programmes combining language training with work training, and/or with wage subsidies, have strong positive effects both on income and employment.



- The heterogeneity of the migrant population — different competencies, skills, educational and cultural backgrounds — is a challenge for language and vocational training. As recognised in the Norwegian programmes, different teaching and communication tools are required to address learners' specific needs and this is a challenge for the focus of courses, especially when resources and competences are scarce. Flexibility in training provision is also necessary to accommodate the family and work commitments of male and female immigrants, various arrival times and high mobility. These issues gain importance when participation in the language and civic courses and the passing of language tests is an obligatory aspect of obtaining residency and citizenship rights.
- Quality language and integration courses targeted at adult migrants require counsellors and motivated teachers who are properly trained, but the importance of their job is not often reflected in their working conditions, pay, working hours, type of employment contracts, recognition or reward.

A discussion of the relationship between **citizenship rights** and **integration** was initially centred on findings that the acquisition of citizenship improves the labour market integration of immigrants — controlling for differences in education, age and country of origin. This may be the result of a positive signalling effect for employers, or the decrease in the administrative costs associated with employing foreigners; it could signal improved eligibility for public or regulated professions and educational support. On the one hand these findings could be taken to show that barriers to the acquisition of citizenship should be lowered and eligible candidates should be encouraged to take up the nationality of the host country, because this would improve their labour market integration and affiliation to the country, and, thus indirectly it would be beneficial for the public budget. Rapid access to citizenship could also be an effective way to attract and retain highly skilled immigrants. On the other hand, naturalisation in itself does not necessarily guarantee integration, and for the signal to remain credible, it might need to be selective. Specific integration policies should be pursued, and research carried out.



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The discussion concerning the link between immigration and integration policies prompted these remarks:

- Using participation in integration measures as a test to assess whether an individual deserves a secure immigrant status makes these measures ambiguous and difficult to implement, as they become an instrument for restrictive immigration practices. A rights-based approach seems more favourable to the integration of migrants, according to the EAPN and EWL representatives.
- In many countries the level of language knowledge required is so high and citizenship tests are so hard that even some of the natives would struggle to pass the tests. Moreover, without economic support, immigrants cannot afford to take the time off work to attend classes. In cases where language tests are used, family members, especially those with particular conditions (related to literacy, old age, disability and health conditions, etc.), should be exempt. These exceptions could actually enhance labour market segmentation, as employers could identify individuals with special problems. EU citizens do not have to pass a test to live and work in another Member State even if they do not speak the language, which means third-country nationals face more institutional barriers.
- A few note a contradiction between the approach adopted by many EU countries regarding ethnic minorities and that regarding immigrants from third countries. For the former support is given for the maintenance of cultural diversity, for immigrants from non-EU countries full integration into the majority culture is the goal.
- In countries where ethnic minorities are a significant share of the population, special language courses have often not been effective and participation in integration programmes has been low. The question is how can one encourage participation? Acquisition of citizenship may be one incentive, but if the procedures become too hard, involving exams and qualifications, this can be off-putting. Language and integration courses could be designed to motivate immigrants to get involved and thus improve the knowledge base in

the host society, who have a better educated workforce and signals of their ability.

- Pre-departure language tests for people seeking family reunification are often adopted to prevent low-skilled immigration. Family reunification should not be made conditional on language and civic knowledge, as individuals have a right to family life, which in itself forms an important component in integration. Such rights are granted automatically to high-skilled workers.

### **Governance systems and funding in the present crisis**

A second point discussed focussed on how governance systems could be improved, bearing in mind current budget constraints. The Norwegian approach, based on the autonomy of municipalities in providing integration programmes has pros and cons which have been explored already, but an additional point is that the political independence of Norwegian municipalities makes the adoption of common standards and benchmarks difficult.

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The shortage of resources (accentuated in the event of economic crises) makes the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of integration programmes vis-à-vis other types of labour market policies directly aimed at the employment of immigrants, all the more important. Currently there is little evaluation of the net impacts of integration programmes on the labour market performance and socio-economic integration of immigrants, because evaluations of the outcomes and impacts of integration programmes are particularly difficult to carry out.

The Peer Review debate underlined the importance of involving social partners and NGOs in integration programmes. The more employers and trade unions cooperate in the provision of integration programmes, the better the results and opportunities for migrants. Also NGOs and immigrant organisations should be involved in all stages of policymaking. This is especially relevant for those countries where there is less intervention by public institutions (as in Latvia, Italy and the UK).



## E. Conclusions and key lessons

Participants gained from hearing about the Norwegian approach; the Second Chance Project and Integration Programme were particularly important because of their ability to get people out of the grey economy, into legal employment and on the right track to citizenship.

More broadly, a rights-based approach appears to be most favourable to the integration of migrants and their children, and received strong backing from the EAPN and EWL representatives. According to the EWL and EAPN associations, Member States should explore the use of positive incentives to speed up the process for renewing temporary residence status, and the acquisition of long-term resident status or citizenship, rather than making the acquisition of residency or citizenship more difficult. The use of civic integration and/or language tests as a condition for long-term residence and family reunion is not advisable because it is part of a negative approach that regards migrants as problems and because it has potential to discriminate against women and low-skilled immigrants contradicting their fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights.

To improve the effectiveness of integration programmes, the discussion has highlighted the need to take into account the differences between immigrant groups, which include long-stay and temporary immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, labour migrants and family reunion arrivals, ethnic minorities living within countries, sometimes for generations. All have specific integration problems. Needs assessment and the recognition of skills acquired in foreign countries should be part of designing effective and efficient integration policies.

The Peer Review revealed the importance of adopting a dual approach, combining the mainstreaming of immigrants' needs in all policies influencing their socio-economic inclusion and specific targeted policies. A number of specific initiatives are proving successful in some countries and could be transferred elsewhere. These include mentoring schemes and social support networks; intercultural training for service providers and the use of diversity consultants; the combination of free (labour market oriented)



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language courses, job orientation, counselling and vocational training to support social and economic integration. The question of women's participation in integration programmes shows the need to consider gender roles and the specific needs of immigrant women in the design of integration policies. As for second- and third-generation and/or young immigrants, the early promotion of language knowledge, from pre-school, and the provision of role models through mentoring appear to redress disadvantages, to some extent. Providing immigrants with information on available services and their rights should also be a priority.

More research is needed on what policies work, and the shortage of resources makes a closer assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of integration programmes in relation to other types of labour market policies aimed at the employment of immigrants, all the more important. Many participants emphasised the need to increase EU funding and encourage NGOs, immigrant associations, private service providers, and social partners to contribute to integration policies to counteract the severe lack of funds.

40 Adopting holistic and mainstreaming approaches has implications for the governance of integration policies. It requires the strengthening of the interactions between labour market policies with social inclusion and education policies both at the EU and national/local levels. It also requires the involvement of actors from the civil society: local authorities, the social partners (including employers), and NGOs, together with immigrant and ethnic minorities associations, who should be involved in policymaking given their first-hand knowledge of the issues for migrants. The coordination and implementation challenges of a multi-level framework have to be specifically addressed in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of policies. Multiannual Action Plans could be effective in coordinating the different actors and measures involved in integration strategies.





<http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu>

## Making a success of integrating immigrants into the labour market

Host country: **Norway**

Peer countries: **Austria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Malta**

Norway's social inclusion policy, under which it is compulsory for all newly-arrived adult refugees and immigrants to participate in Norwegian language training and civic education, in order to enable them to rapidly contribute to, and participate in the labour market and in society in general, has delivered positive results.

65% of people who participated in the country's introductory programme in 2006 were either employed or enrolled in further education in November 2007. The programme has also proved successful in increasing overall labour market participation and in raising the share of immigrant women in the labour market.

With a number of European countries having already introduced similar citizenship tests or considering doing so, the Peer Review will enable a debate on how these types of tests can contribute to a more inclusive society by improving individuals' skills and opportunities. It will also raise a number of important questions relating to the methods used, the content and quality of the training courses provided, the level of difficulty of the tests imposed, and the monitoring and evaluation of policy results.