

**RESPOND**

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### **Global Migration: Consequences and Responses**

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#### **The integration of asylum seekers and refugees in the field of education and the labour market**

#### **Comparative Thematic Report**

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# Contents

<b>CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>ABOUT THE PROJECT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>STATE OF THE ART IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES</b> .....	<b>17</b>
REFUGEE CHILDREN IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS: A GENERAL COMPARISON AMONG COUNTRIES .....	17
COMPARISON OF THE RESEARCH AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF RESPOND .....	19
ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION .....	22
<b>HOST-COUNTRY-LANGUAGE LEARNING</b> .....	<b>26</b>
ACCESS TO HOST-COUNTRY-LANGUAGE LEARNING .....	26
CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND TO ACQUISITION OF THE LANGUAGE .....	29
GOOD PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED IN THE RESPOND COUNTRIES .....	31
<b>ACCESS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES TO THE LABOUR MARKET</b> .....	<b>33</b>
LAWS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS .....	33
THE ROLES OF DIFFERENT ACTORS IN LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION .....	37
VALIDATION OF SKILLS, RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE, AND GAINING NEW COMPETENCES .....	43
FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS WHILE ACCESSING THE LABOUR MARKET – THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE REFUGEES .....	48
GOOD PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED IN THE RESPOND COUNTRIES .....	51
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>REFERENCES AND SOURCES</b> .....	<b>63</b>

## List of figures

Figure 1 Change of type of performed job between origin and destination country.....	46
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## List of tables

Table 1 Skills and the labour market area of integration – characteristics and indicators...	16
Table 2 Child refugees' access to school education.....	19
Table 3 Micro-level respondents (asylum seekers and refugees) who obtained a host country language certificate .....	28
Table 4 Number of male asylum seekers and refugees who were offered and participated in training .....	48
Table 5 Number of female asylum seekers and refugees who were offered and participated in trainings.....	48
Table 6 The importance of law and its effects for the situation of asylum seekers in the labour market in EU countries in light of the 7 EU Member States thematic country reports .....	55
Table 7 The importance of law and its effects for the situation of beneficiaries of international protection (refugee status, subsidiary protection status) in the labour market in EU countries in light of the 7 EU Member States thematic country reports.....	58
Table 8 The importance of law and its effects for the situation of forced migrants on the labour market in non-EU countries in light of the thematic country reports for Turkey and Iraq ....	59
Table 9 Type of last job performed in country of origin.....	60
Table 10 Type of job performed in destination country.....	60
Table 11 Type of job performed in destination country – Men .....	61
Table 12 Type of job performed in destination country – Women.....	61

## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full name
AMIF	Asylum Migration and Integration Fund
CoE	The Council of Europe
CPIA	Centri provinciali di istruzione per adulti
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EEA	European Economic Area
EQPR	European Qualifications Passport for Refugees
EMN	European Migration Network
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
EU	European Union
HAU	Hellenic American University
IIP	Individual Integration Program
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs Council
KOMVUX	Kommunal Vuxenutbildning
MIPEX	Migrant Integration Policy Index
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLI	National Labour Inspectorate (in Poland)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PES	Public Employment Service
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RESPOND	H2020 Project entitled Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond
TCNs	Third country nationals (non-EU citizens)
TPS	temporary protection status
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
wiiw	Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies

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## About the project

RESPOND is a Horizon 2020 project which aims at studying the multilevel governance of migration in Europe and beyond. The consortium is formed of 14 partners from 11 source, transit and destination countries and is coordinated by Uppsala University in Sweden. The main aim of this Europe-wide project is to provide an in-depth understanding of the governance of recent mass migration on the macro, meso and micro levels through cross-national comparative research and to critically analyse governance practices with the aim of enhancing the migration governance capacity and policy coherence of the EU, its member states, and third countries.

RESPOND studies migration governance in five thematic fields:

- (1) Border management and security,
- (2) Refugee protection regimes,
- (3) Reception policies,
- (4) Integration policies, and
- (5) Conflicting Europeanization.

Each thematic field reflects a juncture in the migration journey of refugees and is designed to provide a holistic view of policies and their impacts and responses given by affected actors within. In order to better focus on these themes, we divided our research question into work packages (WPs). The present report is concerned with the findings related to WP5 Integration and aims to compare the results of research carried out in the nine investigated countries into integration in the areas of education and employment.

## Executive summary

This report is based on a meta-analysis of nine national reports on integration from countries along the so-called Eastern Mediterranean Route. It includes two countries beyond the EU, Turkey and Iraq, which have played an important role as source and transit countries of refugees, the transit countries of Greece, Italy and Poland, and the destination countries of Austria, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (before Brexit). It takes into account two out of five indicators of integration formulated by Aeger and Strung (2004), namely education and the labour market.

In this comparative report, we focus on forced migrants, who have different legal statuses under the national laws of the nine investigated countries. In the EU countries studied, there are usually two legally defined groups: asylum seekers and refugees. Asylum seekers are people who have applied for international protection and are in the so-called asylum procedure. Persons who have received a positive decision for international protection are considered beneficiaries of international protection; these are persons granted refugee status and subsidiary protection. In this report, the above-mentioned group of beneficiaries of international protection in the EU countries is often interchangeably referred to as 'refugees' (which is obviously an oversimplification). The concept of a 'refugee' is also used for the cases of Turkey and Iraq, although here it refers to forced migrants in general and not to specific legal statuses as in the EU countries under EU law.

RESPOND research shows that in all the analysed countries of the EU primary school is compulsory for all children, regardless of their nationality or legal status. Out of the analysed countries, only in Turkey and Iraq are refugees (of different statuses) not obliged to go to school. It turned out that compulsory education covers different age groups in the nine countries of our research. The time period covered by compulsory education ranges from the ages of 4 to 18, but only in Germany, Sweden and Poland it reaches 18 years, with Turkey coming close at 17 years. In some of the compared countries compulsory education ends at the age of 16 (Italy, the United Kingdom) or 15 (Austria, Greece). The shortest period of mandatory education was reported in Iraq, covering six years, from the ages of 6 to 12 (six grades of primary education). However, not all the countries in the RESPOND research have imposed school obligations on asylum seekers and recognized refugees, and even when they do so, there are various impediments which preclude children's attendance at school.

RESPOND research confirmed the findings from the previous studies about the many existing obstacles to refugees' access to higher education (Koehler, 2017; Ferede, 2018). The key obstacles turned out to be highly complicated and sometimes impossible procedures for recognising diplomas from refugees' countries of origin (especially in Poland and the United Kingdom), and language requirements (in all the researched countries but especially Greece and Turkey). It needs to be emphasised that even though Iraq is presented in the comparison, it is hardly possible to compare it with other countries of the RESPOND research due to the serious economic and political difficulties being experienced by the country. This indicates that more effort should be put into not only programmes addressed to refugees in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries, but also on the development of these countries.



The access of forced migrants to labour market institutions is largely conditioned by their legal status and the rights and obligations attached to it – while refugees in many countries have rights almost equal to citizens in terms of employment opportunities, this is not the case of asylum seekers, who usually receive access to the national labour market later (after a few months) and under certain conditions (for example, when they do not receive a final decision in their asylum procedure within the legally stipulated deadline). For asylum seekers in the EU member states, access is associated with numerous limitations and obstacles regarding access time to the labour market (for example due to the stage and duration of the asylum procedure), and access to specific occupations/professions and certain sectors/industries. In general, the asylum seeker is in a more difficult situation than the refugee. The EU countries follow, to varying extents and under varying conditions, the Common European Asylum System and its implications regarding the access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour market. The two non-EU countries of Iraq and Turkey are subject to their own laws in this regard. In general, asylum seekers and refugees are, in any host country, willing to work as soon as possible despite all the circumstances that make their economic integration difficult, such as legal limitations, trauma, lack of language knowledge, or cultural background.

The beneficiaries of international protection who manage to find a job usually perform jobs that do not demand high skills. This is a common trend in all the investigated countries, which was confirmed by both the literature review and the research of the RESPOND project. Most asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection prefer informal work. This is a rule in countries like Iraq and Turkey. In other countries, the most popular jobs for refugees are unskilled workers or craftsmen, where they face a ‘problem of qualification mismatch in the sense that there are low-skilled people employed in industries that are not theirs’ (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020 p. 23).

In all the investigated countries refugees were able to find some support during their process of inclusion into the labour market. This help is made possible thanks to government organizations or NGOs. In countries like Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Poland, where the states’ services dedicated to refugees is limited, NGOs play a crucial role in filling the void. On the other hand, in countries more experienced in the field of refugee integration, such as Austria, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, state institutions play a central role and their activities are only supported by the activities of NGOs. On the national level the support is most often limited to registration in the national equivalent of an employment agency responsible for linking unemployed people with job offers and the provision of language and training courses. Their support is, however, in the majority of countries ineffective, and refugees and asylum seekers mostly found employment through wider social networks. Universities are another body of concern, as they are responsible for the recognition of diplomas. This procedure was, however, in all countries perceived as complicated and difficult, especially for those who had not brought their documents with them from the region of origin. In such cases it is useful to map the skills of asylum seekers (as applied in Sweden), which then helps with the development of an individual establishment plan. Finally, the role of NGOs is important, as they try to cover all necessary areas not covered by the state, such as language courses and legal advice.

All nine country reports highlighted the role of duration of asylum application procedures as an important barrier in integration into labour markets. If the procedure

takes too long (sometimes even a few years) and asylum seekers have no or very limited access to the labour market during his procedure, their chances of successfully returning to the labour market are much lower.

Finally, we have observed significant gender differences in employment, and in the sectors in which male and female refugees and asylum seekers are employed. Men are mostly employed in the primary sector and in construction, while women are mostly employed in the informal sector – care services, cleaning services and domestic work – which leaves them in precarious situations. This situation changes only slightly after receiving protection status.

## Introduction

As a consequence of the so-called refugee crisis in Europe, recent years have influenced increased interest in the issues of asylum seekers and refugees and their integration into the EU member states. The challenge of increased numbers of refugees intending to reach some countries of Europe and pass through others has evoked a need for adequate integration policy response. Education and labour markets are two of the five indicators of integration, as distinguished by Ager and Strang (2004). The first plays a crucial role in the creation of a sense of economic security, is important for improving the mental health of asylum seekers, and allows for better integration if the decision on their asylum application is positive. Full integration on the labour market is, however, impossible without recognition of diplomas and qualifications as well as adequate knowledge of the host country's language, which allows not only communication in official situations (e.g. visits in public institutions), but also interaction with locals on a daily basis. Knowledge of language is often crucial in accessing education and the job market in a new place, and this is just as important for voluntary and forced migrants. Access to education is especially important for integration of migrant children, as schools are their main window to the host society.

This report aims to present selected findings from comparative analysis of refugees' integration in education and labour markets in the nine countries of the RESPOND project: Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Iraq<sup>1</sup> (Atto et al., 2020; Cetrez et al., 2020; Chemin and Nagel, 2020; Ibrido and Marchese, 2020; Josipovic and Reeger, 2020; Leivaditi et al., 2020; Rottmann, 2020; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020; Warda and Almajraji, 2020). Another aim is to conceptually understand and discuss the importance of education and employment for the process of refugees' integration based on selected examples. In this context, we look at the differences and similarities in laws and practices in the countries studied. As such, the analysis is based on the country reports on integration, which incorporated the methodology of multi-level interviews. The comparative quantitative part is based additionally on the quantification of qualitative interviews carried out within the RESPOND project in ten countries, the nine discussed above, with the addition of Lebanon, which report on Integration was not included in wider analysis. In total, the country teams conducted more than 220 interviews with meso-level stakeholders involved in migration governance (central governments, local governments, NGOs, schools, social welfare institutions) and 474 micro-level interviews with asylum seekers and recognized refugees (of different statuses). The common methodological guidelines and common interview questionnaires adjusted to the category of respondents (meso- and micro-level) allowed us to see the challenges and opportunities facing refugees regarding both educational and labour market inclusion through wide lenses. This allowed us to compare the country cases and find similarities and disparities among the examined countries. Although this data cannot be generalized on the entire refugee population, since the representative sample has not been applied to the empirical research, this report reveals the main aspects of the above-mentioned issues.

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<sup>1</sup> The case of Iraq was included only in the analysis of refugee children's access to education and access to the labour market. It was excluded from the comparison of access to higher education and language education provided for adult refugees.

Before commencing with the comparison of country cases, it should be noted that the individual RESPOND country reports differ in their range of details regarding their experiences, and this stems from specific country contexts. They also discuss the investigated topics with varying levels of thoroughness and attention to detail, putting some limitations on the meta-analysis. A qualitative content analysis method was applied using themes and categories in a deductive mode, with empirical material providing examples.

The report is structured as follows: Its first part is dedicated to some literature-based theoretical deliberations regarding integration in the areas of education and labour markets. The next section compares the situations of refugees (both children and adults) while accessing education in the countries under investigation. Special attention is also paid to host-country-language learning, as discussed in the third part. The focus is on the access to opportunities and challenges and barriers faced while learning the host-country language. In this part we also offer some ideas for improving the process of acquisition of the host-country language. The fourth section of the report is dedicated to a comparison of the investigated countries in the area of the access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour markets. We zoom in on the legal frameworks and their implications, and we discuss the roles of actors on different levels regarding economic integration. Following the approach taken in the comparison of access to education, we also indicate here the main facilitators and barriers that are indicated by refugees, and ideas that are worth pursuing.

In order to deal with the challenges faced by refugees while learning the host-country language and accessing the labour market, different solutions have been implemented in some of the analysed countries. Although we are aware that they often depend on the country context and cannot be universally repeated regardless of specific conditions, the last part of the report is dedicated to those good practices which may serve as an inspiration for policymakers and practitioners in the field of refugee integration in education and access to labour markets.

## State of the art in the areas of education and labour market integration

The issue of integration – both as a process and a subject of public policy – has for many decades been one of the leading research topics in migration studies. The literature in this field is very rich, and approaches are evolving (see e.g. Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016, 1-5, 11-13; Gońda, Pachocka, Podgórska 2021, 241-244). However, this does not change the fact that to this day there is no single definition of ‘integration’ or ‘integration policy’, and the applied understandings and conceptualizations are often conditioned by the tradition of a given scientific discipline (such as sociology, anthropology, economics, law, political science, public policy). Integration, usually as it relates to the population described as (im)migrants/foreigners/newcomers/refugees (regardless of the degree of voluntary nature of their migration movement), covers different dimensions/areas and involves various state and non-state actors in the host society.

While attempting to define integration, the works of Rinus Penninx (also in co-authorship with other experts) are often referred to, especially in European academic circles (see e.g. Penninx 1989, 2005, 2007, 2013; Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016). This is also true for the RESPOND project and its conceptual, theoretical, and methodological frameworks. Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas (2016, 13-14) propose ‘an open non-normative analytical definition’ of integration understood as ‘the process of becoming an accepted part of society’. This process covers three dimensions – political-legal, socio-economic, and cultural-religious – which correspond, respectively, to the institutions (categories) of the state, the market, and the nation (Entzinger 2000; Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas 2016, 14). Of key importance is how migrants are positioned in each of these areas. As each dimension is important and subject to other rules and conditions, it is difficult to give priority to or indicate the superiority of any one of them: They are complementary; their importance may differ, however, depending on the individual profile (characteristics) of a given immigrant and his/her situation (regarding, for example, age, sex, education, language skills, legal status in the host country, health condition), as well as on factors/conditions beyond the migrants themselves, such as the political and economic situation in the host country (attitudes towards receiving migrants, basic macroeconomic indicators, the state of the labour market), migration and integration legislation and practices (such as access of foreigners to the labour market, also depending on their status), and the main actors in immigration and integration policy and their competences/roles or availability in integration support.

The political-legal dimension is focused on the issues related to residence, political rights, and statuses, while the cultural-religious dimension considers ‘perceptions and practices of immigrants and the receiving society as well as their reciprocal reactions to difference and diversity’ (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas 2016, 15). The socio-economic dimension plays a crucial role for both national and foreign residents, as it concerns the access to and participation in institutional facilities in the fields of the labour market, education, social security, health care, and housing. It is also an integration dimension that is often subject to empirical research and is easier to operationalize and measure.

The process of immigrant integration does not take place in a vacuum; it is part of the space of interactions between the two parties involved – immigrants and the receiving

society – within the three areas discussed, on three different levels: 1. individuals – migrants and natives; 2. organizations representing both parties, such as NGOs, migrant organizations, trade unions, and churches; and 3. institutions – both general public institutions and group-specific institutions including religious and cultural. There is also, of course, the time factor to be considered (Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas 2016, 16-19).<sup>2</sup>

The group of newcomers deserving more attention are forced migrants, including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of different forms of international and national protection in the host country (refugees, persons granted subsidiary protection), among whom we often deal with people with special needs (vulnerable groups). The issue of their integration has gained in particular importance in Europe after 2011 in relation to mass migration to this region and the sharp growth in the number of people applying for international protection. It has also put into question the capacity of national systems and their preparation for the reception of a large number of forced migrants in a short time. Mass migration to European countries has resulted in increasing integration challenges to third-country nationals facing barriers in the education systems, housing, and the labour markets.

The integration of immigrants is an area of interest for the EU as well. As Gońda, Lesińska and Pachocka (2020, 38) state:

The review of EU legal and political documents shows that integration is, in general, understood as a dynamic, two-way process based on the mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally resident third-country nationals in EU member-states and the host society. In its December 2003 opinion, the European Socio-Economic Committee confirmed that integration is a bilateral process which involves gradually bringing the scope of immigrants' rights and obligations, as well as their access to goods, services and methods of civic participation, closer to those enjoyed by the rest of the population, with regard to equal opportunities and equal treatment. Since then, this understanding of integration has been regularly mentioned in different EU documents and has become the core component of the EU approach in this regard.

While this understanding seems to be well-documented at the EU level and is often referred to, Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas (2016, 1-3) point to an evolution in the EU's approach to integration, from being understood as a strictly two-way process to a three-way process, recognizing, in addition to immigrants and the host country (community), a third party in the phenomenon: country of origin.

The socio-economic dimension of integration has played an important role in the EU's approach from the beginning. This can be seen in the example of, among others, the set of 11 Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, adopted in November 2004 by the Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA) (Council of

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<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that the concept of integration and research approaches to it are also criticized in the literature on the subject, leading to interesting academic discussions such as those in "Comparative Migration Studies", see: Springer, Comparative Migration Studies, Who needs integration? Debating a central, yet increasingly contested concept in migration studies, <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/whoneedsintegration>.

the European Union 2004). These principles are considered an important milestone in the development of EU integration policy. Employment – which corresponds to economic integration – became recognized as the cornerstone of the integration of migrants in a receiving society (principle 3), while efforts in education were considered critical in order to prepare immigrants and their descendants to be more successful and active participants in a new society (principle 5). Later on, in its Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals, adopted in June 2016, the European Commission mentions, among its main six priority action areas, education and employment with vocational training.

The 2015 European Agenda on Migration of the European Commission focused little on integration, and mostly in the context of a planned new policy on legal migration; its priorities were instead on irregular migration, EU external border management, and asylum policy. However, the agenda underlined that successful EU migration policy is conditioned by effective integration policies, and the EU's role is mostly expressed in the financial support it can provide to different state and non-state actors in its member states through programs and funds. The agenda envisaged that in the EU budget for 2014-2020 at least 20% of the European Social Fund

will contribute to social inclusion, which includes measures for the integration of migrants with a particular focus on those seeking asylum and refugees as well as on children. The funds can support targeted initiatives to improve language and professional skills, improve access to services, promote access to the labor market, inclusive education, foster inter-cultural exchanges and promote awareness campaigns targeting both host communities and migrants (European Commission 2015, 16).

It is evident that among the key areas of possible funding to support migrant integration were the improvement of language and professional skills and promotion of access to the labour markets, with priority for forced migrants.

How does one measure and assess the integration of migrants (including forced ones) in the areas of education and labour markets, especially from a comparative perspective? Synthetic aggregated indicators that allow comparisons between countries and their integration policies are useful here. One of the most-referenced instruments to measure and compare integration and corresponding policy in a comparative way is the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), which consists of 58 core policy indicators (there were 167 in MIPEX 2015) in eight policy areas<sup>3</sup>. Among these areas, two cover labour markets and education<sup>4</sup>. The area of 'labour market mobility' (policy area 1) includes the following detailed indicators: 1.1. Immediate access to labour markets; 1.2. Access to the public sector; 1.3. Access to self-employment; 1.4. Public employment services; 1.5. Education, vocational training, and study grants; 1.6. Recognition of academic qualifications; 1.7. Economic integration measures of TCNs<sup>5</sup>; 1.8. Economic integration measures for youth and women; 1.9. Access to social security. Education

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<sup>3</sup> Each policy area is scored on a scale from 0 to 100 where the maximum of 100 is awarded when policy meets the highest standards for equal treatment (that is immigrants can receive such support in the host country to enjoy opportunities comparable to those of nationals).

<sup>4</sup> See: MIPEX. The other six areas encompass Family reunification, Political participation, Permanent residence, Access to nationality, Anti-discrimination, and Health.

<sup>5</sup> TCNs – third country nationals (non-EU citizens).

(policy area 3) encompasses: 3.1. Access to compulsory and non-compulsory education; 3.2. Access to higher education; 3.3. Educational guidance at all levels; 3.4. Provision of support to learn languages of instruction; 3.5. Measures to address the educational situations of migrant groups; 3.6. Teacher training to reflect migrants' learning needs; 3.7. School curricula to reflect diversity; 3.7. Measures to bring migrants into the teacher workforce; 3.8. Teacher training to reflect diversity. (Solano & Huddleston 2020).

While discussing the comparability of outcomes of integration policies, the so-called Zaragoza indicators have to be discussed<sup>6</sup>. These common European immigrant integration indicators aimed at monitoring the results of national integration policies were identified in four areas of relevance to integration: employment, education, social inclusion, and active citizenship<sup>7</sup>. The 2010 Zaragoza Declaration indicates employment rates, unemployment rates, and activity rates as the core employment indicators. For the policy area of education, the key indicators encompass highest educational attainment (share of population with tertiary, secondary, primary, or less than primary education); share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics, and science; share of 30 to 34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment; and share of early leavers from education and training (Declaration 2010, 15-16). In addition, among the other education and labour market related indicators important to monitor were the share of employees who are overqualified for their jobs, self-employment, and language skills. The Zaragoza indicators were the inspiration and the basis for the common efforts of the EU and the OECD to monitor and compare the integration outcomes of immigrants and their descendants in the countries of the EU, the OECD, and the G-20 (OECD 2015, 299-300). As a result, the three editions of the OECD publication *Settling In: Indicators of Immigrant Integration* were announced – for 2012, 2015 and 2018 (OECD/EU 2018, 3). In the most recent edition, the international comparison covers 74 indicators based on three dimensions (domains): labour markets and skills, living conditions, and civic engagement and social integration. The area of skills and labour markets is measured by a long and exhaustive package of indicators (see Table 1). This publication does not distinguish integration and its results specifically for forced migrants: asylum seekers or refugees who simply blend into the immigrant population. Immigrants are defined as the foreign-born population (OECD/EU 2018, 18).

Immigrant characteristics and some immigrant-specific determinants are often an important prerequisite for understanding integration outcomes. They include for example 'category of entry', which distinguishes forced migrants (called "humanitarian migrants" in the OECD methodology) from typical economic (labour) migrants (OECD/EU 2018, 23, 27). '(...) Refugees came through forced migration and are "selected" only with respect to humanitarian considerations, while labour migrants are selected on the basis of their skills and/or their job in the host-country. These and other contextual information are crucial to the proper interpretation of immigrants' actual outcomes and observed differences with native-born populations' (OECD/EU 2018, 23). Depending on the host country, forced and voluntary migrants are subject to different regulations and procedures, which from the first days in the new country determine their situation (e.g.

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<sup>6</sup> They were included in The Declaration agreed at the European Ministerial Conference on Integration in Zaragoza in April 2010, which was later incorporated by the Council Conclusions adopted at the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 3-4 June 2010. See more: (Declaration 2010).

<sup>7</sup> See more: (European Commission 2011).



when and on what terms they have access to the national labour market) and prioritize various dimensions of immigrant integration.

**Table 1 Skills and the labour market area of integration – characteristics and indicators**

Description	Indicators
<p>Immigrants' skills and how they integrate into the labour market are fundamental to becoming part of the host country's economic fabric. Skills and qualifications are obviously indicators of immigrants' ability to integrate into the host society. They have a strong bearing on career paths and influence what kinds of jobs they find. Employment is often considered to be the single most important indicator of integration. Jobs are the chief source of income for immigrants, and employment confers social standing in the eyes of an immigrant's family and with respect to the host-country population. However, while employment is important in itself, job quality is also a strong determinant shaping how immigrants find their place in society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Distribution of the immigrant population by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educational attainment</li> <li>- Place of education</li> <li>- Host-country language proficiency</li> <li>- Foreign language proficiency</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Language-course attendance rates</li> <li>● Participation in adult education and training</li> <li>● Participation in early childhood education and care</li> <li>● Literacy scores</li> <li>● Low school performance in reading</li> <li>● Share of resilient students</li> <li>● Share of early school leavers</li> <li>● Employment rates</li> <li>● Labour market participation rates</li> <li>● Unemployment rates</li> <li>● Long-term unemployment rates</li> <li>● NEET (young people neither in employment nor in education and training) rates</li> <li>● Share of inactive people who wish to work</li> <li>● Share of unemployed receiving benefits</li> <li>● Share of employees working:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long hours</li> <li>- Part-time</li> <li>- Part-time involuntarily</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Jobs distribution by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Types of contracts</li> <li>- Physical health risks</li> <li>- Job skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Rates of over-qualified workers</li> <li>● Share of self-employed workers</li> <li>● Firm size</li> <li>● Share of employment in the public services sector</li> </ul>

Source: based on: (OECD/EU 2018, 24).

## Access to education for asylum seekers and refugees

This part of the report presents findings from comparative analysis of the integration of asylum seekers and refugees in education in the selected countries of the RESPOND project: Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Iraq<sup>8</sup>. The following sections present a general comparison regarding access to education for refugees, both children and adults, in the countries of the RESPOND project. A thorough analysis will be made of host-country language education and the opportunities and challenges it bears for adult refugees.

### Refugee children in educational systems: a general comparison among countries

In 2018, in the world there were around 3.7 million refugee children out of school – more than half of the total number of 7.1 million school-age refugee children. At primary level, the number of refugee children enrolled in school in that year was 63 per cent, in comparison with the global figure for all children of 91 per cent (UNHCR, 2019). The situation is even more worrisome in reference to secondary-level education, which is attained by less than one-quarter (24%) of refugee adolescents in comparison with the global average of 84 per cent. Given that secondary school is the gateway to further education and improved employment opportunities, this shows the great significance of providing asylum seekers and refugees with this level of education (UNHCR, 2019).

The right to education for all, including refugees and asylum seekers, is recognized as a basic human right and as such is documented in the following international agreements:

- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948, states that ‘everyone has the right to education’. The ‘development of the human personality’ and the ‘strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms’ shall be core elements of education (United Nations, 2015a, p. 54).
- Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, recognises the right to education with the same understanding as Art. 26 of the UDHR and makes provisions for free and compulsory primary education for all and the general availability and accessibility of secondary education to all (OHCHR, 2016b).
- The Refugee Convention of 1951, Article 22, makes provisions for the access of refugees to elementary, secondary, higher and other education, and for the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, and financial support for education and the quality of teaching (OHCHR, 2016a).
- Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, emphasises the significance of regular school attendance, the reduction of dropout rates, and

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<sup>8</sup> The case of Iraq was included only in the analysis of refugee children’s access to education, while it was excluded from the comparison of access to higher education and language education provided for adult refugees.

‘access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods’ (OHCHR, 2016c).

In addition, the UNHCR Education Strategy 2012-2016 further calls on receiving countries to promote the inclusion of refugee and stateless children in national education systems or, where this is not possible, to develop responsive, quality education opportunities (UNHCR, 2012). Goal 4 of the United Nations’ (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets education and instructs states to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ (UNHCR, 2019).

In the European Union (EU), a number of policies and regulations are in place to ensure the education of refugees and asylum-seeking children, youth, and adults. The right to education is supported by the following directives:

- Article 14 (1) of the Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council provides that children of asylum seekers and minor asylum seekers should be granted access to the education system ‘under similar conditions as nationals of the host Member State’.
- Article 27 of the Council Directive 2011/95/EU provides that minors granted refugee or subsidiary protection status should be granted access to education “under the same conditions as nationals”. It also provides that adults granted international protection should be allowed access to the general education system, and further training or retraining under the same conditions as legally resident third-country nationals.
- Article 14 (2), Directive 2013/33/EU requires that children entering a member state should be included in education within three months and that ‘preparatory classes, including language classes, shall be provided to minors where it is necessary to facilitate their access to and participation in the education system’. The proposal adopted in 2016 to revise the Reception Conditions Directive maintains these guarantees, and is further strengthened, as the rules under the Qualification Regulation will be directly applicable.

In 2015 the European Commission adopted the European Agenda for Migration (2015-2020), which emphasized the necessity of integrating those refugees and asylum seekers who are eligible for protection into EU societies (European Commission, 2015). In 2020, the agenda was replaced with the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which does not include any new guidelines for integration but promises instead that integration will be developed in the future Action Plan on integration and inclusion, to be adopted in 2021 (European Commission, 2020).

As an extension of the Agenda for Migration, the European Commission adopted the Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in 2016. This action plan aims to provide a framework for member states in order to strengthen and develop their integration policies, with a special emphasis on refugee integration. There are also specific actions in the area of education to be taken either by the EC or the Member States: providing language learning and preventing educational segregation, promoting recruitment of teachers with migrant backgrounds, recognition of academic qualifications and integration into higher education, enabling access to vocational training, and the

assessment, validation and recognition of skills and qualifications of third-country nationals (European Commission, 2016)

Last but not least, in 2017 the EC adopted the Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration, which prioritises safe access to formal and non-formal education and calls for reducing the length of disruptions to the education of minor asylum seekers. The documents also underlines the significance of access to inclusive, formal education, including early childhood education and care, for successful inclusion of children in the hosting society (European Commission, 2017).

## Comparison of the research among the countries of RESPOND

RESPOND research shows that in all analysed countries of the EU and the United Kingdom, primary school is compulsory for all children, regardless of their nationality or legal status. Out of the analysed countries, only in Turkey and Iraq are refugees (of different statuses) not obliged to go to school. It turned out that compulsory education covers different age groups in the nine countries. The time period covered by compulsory education ranges from the ages of 4 to 18, but only in Germany, Sweden and Poland does it reach 18 years, and Turkey comes close at 17 years. In the majority of the compared countries compulsory education ends at the age of 16 (Italy, the United Kingdom) or 15 (Austria, Greece). The shortest period of mandatory education was reported in Iraq, covering six years, from the ages of 6 to 12 (six grades of primary education) (Table 2). However, the above groupings can be misleading in relation to refugees, as not all the countries in the RESPOND research have imposed the school obligation on asylum seekers and recognized refugees, and even when they do so, there are various impediments which preclude children’s attendance at school.

**Table 2 Child refugees’ access to school education**

Country	Compulsory schooling for asylum seekers	Compulsory schooling for refugees	Starting and ending age of compulsory education <sup>9</sup>
Austria	Yes	Yes	6-15
Germany	Yes	Yes	6-18 <sup>10</sup>
Greece	Yes	Yes	5-15
Italy	Yes	Yes	6-16
Poland	Yes	Yes	6-18
Sweden	Yes	Yes	7-18
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	4 or 5-16

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2020), Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>

<sup>10</sup> Depending on the particular state of Germany.

Turkey	No	Yes	5 or 6-17
Iraq	No	No	6-12

Source: own compilation based on RESPOND country reports on Integration

In Iraq, a country which is not a party of the 1951 Refugee Convention, it is not mandatory for refugee children to attend schools, but if they have valid residency in the country they have the right to be enrolled in primary and secondary education. In the Kurdistan Region, temporary education centres in refugee camps offer lessons in arithmetic and literacy in addition to sports and recreational activities, but they are not a substitute for formal education. The report by Warda and Almafraji (2020, p. 27) identified a lack of capabilities in the education system, a lack of sufficient financing, overcrowding of classes, and the differing culture and customs of Syrian refugees as the biggest obstacles to integration of education in Iraq.

Similarly, in Turkey there is also no obligation for Syrian refugee children to attend schools, and only since 2016 have migrants under temporary protection been eligible to attend schools, including universities (AIDA 2019, pp. 138-140; Kaya 2020a, p. 52). Although the participation has improved since then, approximately one-third of Syrian children are still not participating in the educational system. The gap between population size and participation rates is particularly high for high school students (Rottmann, 2020, p. 40). As Rottmann (2020, p. 41) argues, the biggest problem is that some Syrian children have to work in order to support their families.

In Italy, school attendance is mandatory for both Italian and foreign children up to the age of 16. Foreign pupils can opt out of Catholic religion courses (as can Italian students) (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 31). Unaccompanied minors and children of refugees and asylum seekers are also integrated into the national education system (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 32).

In Greece, both asylum-seeking children and refugee children have the same obligation to attend public primary and secondary education units as nationals; if they do not comply, sanctions may be imposed on their parents. If the enrolment of asylum-seeking children is not completed within three months from their registration, they may be deprived of reception conditions, and administrative sanctions may be imposed on their parents (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 17).

In Poland, education is compulsory for all children, irrespective of their nationality or legal status. Full-time compulsory education lasts nine years and it applies to pupils aged 7-15 years. It comprises the last year of pre-school education and eight years of primary school education. Later on, there is part-time compulsory education (obligation to be in education) for pupils aged 15-18, and it may take place either in school settings (attendance in an upper-secondary school) or in non-school settings (such as following vocational training offered by employers) (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 63–64).

Education is also compulsory in Germany. It starts at the age of six or seven and covers up to 12 years, depending on the regional state. Although the obligation is imposed on all children, regardless their nationality or legal status, it turned out that asylum-seeking children in reception centres face obstacles in realisation of their right to education:

The right of refugee minors to school education is uncontested in Germany, although it is not always interpreted as a right to attend a general public school. In general, the right to education is often only granted when education becomes compulsory, which may involve a waiting time of several months. There is no regular education in preliminary reception centres. Waiting times for regular school places differ – they have reduced with declining numbers of newcomers, but they still exist. Moreover, access to education before and after the age of compulsory schooling is characterized by multiple barriers. (Vogel & Stock 2017, 33) (Chemin and Nagel, 2020, p. 34)

In Austria, all children who are permanent residents of the country do not only have the right to attend school but are obliged to do so by Federal Constitutional Law, irrespective of their (migration) background and the legal status or the citizenship of their parents. Compulsory schooling lasts nine years from the age of six. Besides that, in 2017 Austria introduced an obligation towards skills training or further education of young people until the age of 18. Parents or legal guardians must ensure that young people who have completed compulsory schooling receive further training. They can either attend a secondary school, complete an apprenticeship, or take some other kind of training (e.g. an internship). However, asylum seekers are explicitly excluded from this obligation, one which would guarantee access to diverse educational and employment institutions (Josipovic and Reeger, 2020, p. 35).

In Sweden, asylum-seeking and refugee children have full access to the school system even during the asylum process (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 33). The government's objective is that all youths start and complete their upper-secondary school education. Another key measure is to facilitate matching, connecting foreign-born job seekers with employers. Apart from the age limit – upper-secondary education should begin before the end of the first half of the calendar year one turns 20 – access to upper-secondary education is tied to a number of requirements (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 34)

The last country of our research is the United Kingdom, where it is compulsory for all children in the age group 5-16 to attend school full-time, irrespective of immigration status (Asylum Information Database, 2019: 72; UK Government, 2018: 12). Due to the political system of the United Kingdom, there are differences between regions/countries in providing education. In England, the requirement of participation in education continues after the age of 16, with children between the ages of 16 and 18 required to be in either full-time education or employment that has educational elements (UK Government, 2018: 12) (Atto, Hirst and Hall, 2020, p. 40).

Since we did not conduct interviews with minors who attend schools, our micro-level data on the education of refugee children are limited. However, available secondary sources revealed that refugee children face more obstacles than other children with an immigrant background (Bloch et al., 2015; European Commission, 2013). Not only do they have to adapt to a new language and culture, but also they often deal with disrupted or minimal prior education (Block et al., 2014). Challenges might also include a lack of documentation of their education, credentials, and diplomas. This makes it difficult to place them into the right programme/grade without a systematic assessment of their skills (Cerna, 2019). In addition, refugee children are often suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) caused by trauma, pain, and a protracted lack of stability (Essomba, 2017).

It is argued that the education systems of OECD countries are not well-prepared to receive asylum seekers and refugees. The school curricula often do not provide the basic language skills and social competences that refugees need. Additionally, the education system is responsible for schooling refugees in a social context that is not always supportive of welcoming these newcomers (Essomba, 2017). Furthermore, refugees are often affected by trauma and pain, which, in the case of children can considerably impact the construction and the development of their personal identities (Essomba, 2017). Therefore, it is very important to provide refugee children with a strong emotional and affective component of teaching, which is not often possible to implement. As a consequence of these impediments, the educational expectations of refugee children and their families are not always met (Essomba, 2017). Unaccompanied minors face additional challenges stemming from separation from their families (OECD, 2019).

These general observations about the education of refugee children in OECD countries pertain to all countries of our research.

## **Access to higher education**

As of 2018, only 3 percent of refugees (87,833) were enrolled in higher education in the world, in comparison to the global figure of 37 per cent. One of the reasons for this low number of refugees attending universities or other forms of higher education is the knock-on effect of the gap in secondary education. Even though the 2018 figure improved from 1 percent of refugees in higher education in the previous years, this was an effect of greater acceptance on the part of states, higher education institutions and their partner organizations towards the importance of higher education in nurturing leaders among the refugee population (UNHCR, 2019).

The situation depicted above partially derives from a lack of universal regulations on providing refugees with access to higher education on the same terms as citizens of the host country. The 1951 Geneva Convention focuses on granting refugee children rights to primary education (Article 22 (1)), whereas in reference to secondary and tertiary education states are only encouraged to 'accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships' (Article 22 (2)). In practice, granting refugees the same rights as third-country nationals does not facilitate their access to higher education, since fees and the need to present recognized school certificates or diplomas still apply.

The need to provide refugees with access to tertiary education has been explicitly stipulated by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989): 'Member States are to make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means' (Article 28 (1)). The recently adopted Global Compact on Refugees (2018) affirms that 'in line with national education laws, policies and planning, and in support of host countries, States and relevant stakeholders will contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems to facilitate access by refugee and host community children (both boys and girls), adolescents and youth to primary, secondary and tertiary education.' The importance of

these two, although the latter is only a declaration and not a binding international agreement, lies in their recognition of higher education as a level which should be accessible to all refugees.

With regard to refugees' enrolment in higher education, RESPOND research shows substantial differences among countries. However, before analysing the reasons behind that, it is worth looking at the educational data of our micro-level respondents (asylum seekers and refugees). When asked about the highest level of education they had obtained, 42 percent of them (226 out of 534) pointed to higher education, whereas 17 percent had accomplished secondary school and nine percent only elementary school. Although this data cannot be generalized on the entire refugee population, since a representative sample had not been applied to the empirical research, it shows that refugees are eager to learn and they are not uneducated and/or unskilled, as it is sometimes presented in public discourses. In addition, since we interviewed asylum seekers and refugees who came to the host country after 2011 and we asked them about their educational backgrounds, we know that some of them had accomplished tertiary education in a host country. Nevertheless, the majority of our respondents with a higher education diploma had acquired it in their countries of origin.

The countries compared in this report have different policies and approaches to granting and facilitating access to higher education to asylum seekers and refugees. Whereas Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Poland, and Greece apply the national treatment of beneficiaries of international protection, giving them the right to access universities on the same terms applicable to citizens of their countries, Italy, Turkey, and Iraq treat refugees as third-country nationals, offering them facilitating measures to varying extents.

Special credit should be given to Germany as the country with the most comprehensive policy approach, which is mirrored by the national strategy for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the German higher education system adopted in 2015. The strategy aims to facilitate the access to higher education for asylum seekers and refugees who are willing to begin their studies or were previously enrolled in university. There are a number of initiatives addressing the recognition of qualifications and prior learning, bridging programmes, guidance and counselling services, and financial support. As of 2019, more than 10,400 scholarships for university enrolment were available (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). These scholarships were launched by several research agencies within special funding schemes for 'scholars at risk'. For example, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants fellowships of 3,500 EUR to 'threatened researchers' for a period of up to 24 months. Furthermore, many universities have acted of their own accord. For instance, the University of Göttingen offers special office hours and contact persons, language education such as guest-student status to learn German, and workspaces. In addition, there are numerous student initiatives, such as Conquer Babel, which has developed from a translation and language learning service into a comprehensive mentoring measure, and a so-called 'Refugee Law Clinic', which offers legal advice and administrative support (Chemin and Nagel, 2020, p. 34).

Although no other country out of the RESPOND countries has developed such a comprehensive strategy, Sweden can also be considered a positive example, since it has adopted several instruments, such as recognition of educational qualifications and



supporting language learning, with the goal of facilitating smooth access to higher education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). In addition, refugees in Sweden have the same access to universities as the citizens of the country: 'Once people receive residency (permanent or temporary), attending university is free of charge (as it is for Swedes and EU/EEA citizens), and they are able to take student loans' (CSN) (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 39).

Similarly to Sweden, refugees in the United Kingdom can access higher education on the same basis as British citizens (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017: 32). This means they are charged domestic fees and can take out student loans (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017: 32) (Atto, Hirst and Hall, 2020, p. 41).

Poland and Greece also consider refugees and citizens as equal in their right to access universities, although there are different obstacles of other than legal nature that can hamper the enrolment of refugees or render it practically impossible. One serious problem in Poland is the procedure of recognition of prior education of refugees. Although confirmation of a degree, in principle, should be made easier for refugees, there is a requirement to attach documents to the application which certify graduation, completed classes and grades obtained, exams passed, professional qualifications or qualifications obtained, and completed apprenticeship or employment (Ordinance of the Minister of Science and Higher Education, 2018, para. 9(2)) (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 69). In Greece, both beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers have the right to access universities on the same terms applicable to Greek citizens. However, key barriers to refugees' access to higher education are language requirements and bureaucratic procedures. According to an OECD report, the number of non-Greek students in Greek universities is small in comparison to the overall number of domestic students, and adults with an immigrant background (including refugees and asylum seekers) are less likely to enter higher education institutions in Greece (OECD, 2018) (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 38).

Italy has a relatively limited policy approach, focusing on procedures to recognise foreign qualifications (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). In addition, Italy does not use the national treatment of refugees in terms of access to universities; instead it equates adult beneficiaries of international protection with other third-country nationals (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 32). The beneficiaries of international protection can only request recognition of the equivalence of their educational qualifications (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 33).

In Turkey, people with Temporary Protection status are allowed to attend Turkish universities, but there are additional requirements they need to fulfil, such as passing a foreign-student exam and a Turkish-language competence exam. Despite these requirements and barriers they cause, Turkey has reached 6 percent enrolment of refugees in higher education, in comparison to the global 3 percent (UNHCR 2019). The government has adopted facilitation measures such as language education for young adults (Syrians and non-Syrians) who want to pursue higher education and scholarships for university education, including one year of language education and special scholarships only for Syrians (Rottmann, 2020, p. 46).

In Iraq, refugees' access to universities is seriously hampered. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the percentage of admitted students to universities is very low. There are a limited number of seats allocated to them due to the large number of applicants and

the limited government budget. Some help in this regard is provided by the European Union, which has allocated USD 350,000 in study grants for Syrian refugee students to study in the universities of the Kurdistan region (MHE-KRG, 2017) (Warda and Almajraji, 2020, p. 29).

RESPOND research confirmed the findings from the previous studies about the many existing obstacles to refugees' access to higher education (Koehler, 2017; Ferede, 2018). The key impediments turned out to be the impossibility of, or complicated procedures for, recognising diplomas from refugees' countries of origin (especially in Poland and the United Kingdom) and language requirements (especially in Greece and Turkey, but also in all other countries of research). It needs to be emphasised that even though Iraq was presented in the comparison, it is hardly possible to compare it with the other countries of the RESPOND research due to the serious economic and political problems experienced by the country. It proves that more effort should be put into not only programmes addressed to refugees in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries, but also on the general development of these countries.

## Host-country-language learning

Knowledge of the host country's language is commonly perceived as an indispensable factor for successful inclusion of migrants (including refugees) into a host society. Various studies have confirmed the positive long-term benefits of early participation in a language course, meaning within four years of arrival in the host country (Hoehne and Michalowski, 2016). Furthermore, a communicative or working level of competence in the host-country language is often a precondition for the right to long-term residency or citizenship. Many EU countries provide and fund language courses for adult migrants. The Council of Europe (CoE) points out the importance of tailoring such courses to the particular needs and learning patterns of adult learners (Council of Europe, 2017b) (Koehler, 2017, p. 24).

Under the EU law, the Qualification Directive (Article 34) stipulates that integrational support provided for beneficiaries of international protection must consider their specific needs. Knowledge of the language of the host country has been recognized as such a need by the fourth Common Basic Principle for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU. The document considers knowledge of the language, the history, and the institutions of the host country as essential to successful integration (Directive 2004/83).

## Access to host-country-language learning

It turned out that the practice of providing access to free language courses for adult refugees differs among countries. Free language courses for beneficiaries of international protection are guaranteed in Sweden, Germany, Austria, and Italy. In Poland, language course tuition is reimbursed for participants in the Individual Integration Program (IIP). In England, English courses are free only for those refugees who are unemployed and over the age of 18. In Turkey, adult refugees can attend Turkish-language courses provided for free by the Ministry of Education or municipal centres, but they are optional. In Greece, there are no publicly-funded Greek-language courses for adult refugees; the only way to learn the language is attend tuition-free classes run by NGOs, or enrol in paid private language lessons.

In Sweden, Swedish-language courses are provided by Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) and are available (and mandatory if one wants to receive financial compensation) to all adults and newcomers above the age of 16 who have residence permits, including beneficiaries of international protection (Barthoma et al. 2020). SFI is intended both as preparation for integration into higher education and the labour market as well as an introduction to Swedish society. The programme is designed and funded by the Swedish National Agency for Education but is organised and offered by the municipal adult education divisions, called KOMVUX (Kommunal Vuxenutbildning) (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 36). Both municipal adult education schools and private school providers such as Folkuniversitet can provide SFI. Courses are offered on levels from A to D, and students can enter each level based on a placement assessment. SFI courses are flexible and can be combined with studies and work programmes. Apart from that, several other institutions provide similar language acquisition courses as part of sprinter/fast-track programmes for more highly educated migrants (Cetrez et al. 2020, p. 33). However, there is a gap in providing language education for adult asylum seekers, since they do

not have access to SFI and the only Swedish learning opportunities for them are created by civil society organisations (Cetrez et al., 2020).

In Germany, those refugees who cannot prove that they possess sufficient German language skills are obligated to attend 'integration courses', an early integration measure which combines language training with an overall introduction to the German political system. In addition, the courses are also available, though they are not mandatory, to asylum seekers with good prospects of staying (Chemin and Nagel, 2020, p. 39). The language classes are provided by public institutions (the *Volkshochschulen* or community colleges) NGOs, and volunteers (Chemin and Nagel, 2020, p. 35).

In Austria, attendance and participation in German-language courses as well as value and orientation courses are mandatory for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, as part of the Integration Declaration they sign. In the 50-Point Plan for Integration adopted in 2015, language acquisition was made one of the core issues of integration, along with access to the labour market and the communication of values (Josipovic and Reeger, 2020, p. 30).

Italy, like Austria, introduced an integration agreement obligatory to be signed by all immigrants over 16 years old with a residence permit valid for at least one year (including beneficiaries of international protection). By signing the agreement, refugees are obliged to acquire adequate knowledge of the Italian language (at least the A2 level as ascertained through a test) (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 15). The courses in language and civic education are provided by the state and run by the provincial centres for adult education and training (CPIAs – *Centri provinciali di istruzione per adulti*). The CPIAs employ instructors with specific experience in adult education appointed by the Ministry of Education. In addition, language courses are provided by many civil society associations (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, pp. 33–34).

In Poland, beneficiaries of international protection are obliged to learn the Polish language if they are participants in the Individual Integration Programme (IIP) and if their knowledge of Polish is insufficient. Since the IIP cannot last longer than twelve months, the obligation to learn Polish does not extend this period. Since there are no publicly funded courses of the Polish language for refugees, beneficiaries of IIP should cover the expenses of Polish language instruction themselves, using the cash benefits received through IIP (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 69–70). In practice, participants in IIP either enrol in paid courses in a private language school or attend tuition-free courses run by NGOs (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 82–86).

In the United Kingdom, there are no obligatory classes for adult refugees and asylum seekers and there are differences among the countries of the kingdom in terms of access to language courses. In England, refugees are entitled to attend free classes on the same basis as other UK residents: ESOL classes, up to and including Level 2, are free to those who are unemployed and over the age of 18 (All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017: 28; Foster and Bolton, 2018: 4, 6-7). While in Northern Ireland and Scotland all asylum seekers are entitled to free ESOL classes, in England they can only receive funding for classes once they have waited more than six months to receive a decision on their application. Refugees in Northern Ireland do not have to be unemployed in order to access classes (Atto, Hirst and Hall, 2020, p. 42).

In Greece, like in the United Kingdom, it is not obligatory for refugees to attend language courses. Like in Poland, there is no public institution which provides language lessons for adult refugees, and the only opportunity to learn the language is provided by non-governmental organisations, refugee groups, and other actors in urban settings which organise courses (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 41).

In Turkey, refugees (including those under the Temporary Protection Status) do not have an obligation to learn the Turkish language. However, there are centrally organised language courses for adult refugees offered for free under the Ministry of Education's lifelong learning umbrella. They are run by the Ministry's Public Education Centers or at municipality centres for vocational training, such as the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality's *Sanat ve Meslek Eğitimi Kursları* (İSMEK) (Rottmann, 2020, p. 45).

The above analysis depicts not only the differences among the RESPOND countries in providing access to host-country-language education, but it also explains the varying numbers of asylum seekers and refugees who obtain language certificates in the host country. The overall percentage of our micro-level respondents with a host-country-language certificate in the analysed countries is 33, although it differs substantially among the countries. In Austria and Germany the numbers surpassed 50 percent (72 and 57 percent, respectively) and in Sweden they were close to it (49 percent), but they fell below 30 percent in all the other countries. Whereas the low number of respondents with a language certificate in Italy can be explained by the methodology of the research (the interviews were conducted only in asylum seekers accommodation centres so they did not include recognized refugees eligible for free language courses), 5 percent in Greece is certainly a result of the lack of obligation to attend Greek-language courses and a lack of publicly funded facilities in which to run such courses (Table 3).

**Table 3 Micro-level respondents (asylum seekers and refugees) who obtained a host country language certificate**

Country	Number of micro-level respondents	Number of respondents who obtained a host-country-language certificate	Percentage
Austria	29	21	72%
Germany	77	44	57%
Greece	42	2	5%
Italy	29	1	3%
Poland	30	6	20%
Sweden	71	35	49%
Turkey	103	19	18%
United Kingdom	15	4	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>33%</b>

Source: own compilation based on RESPOND data

## Challenges and barriers to access to language education and to acquisition of the language

Although in some countries, like Austria, Germany and Sweden, the numbers of refugees who have acquired at least communicative knowledge of the host-country language, as confirmed by a certificate, are quite high, none of our countries can be presented as a model of language education for refugees. Even in these countries we discovered challenges impeding both participation in language courses and the language-learning process itself. In two-thirds of the analysed countries (Sweden, Germany, Austria, Poland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom) our micro-level respondents pointed out the following barriers: the courses they had attended were inappropriate to their level of language competence (or their level of education), and a lack of specialised solutions which would adjust the language courses for refugees with specific needs (especially elderly people and parents of young children).

This Syrian man in Sweden did not find the Swedish for Immigrants effective and he would prefer to attend a language courses adjusted to his career:

My opinion about the SFI school isn't very positive. As I told you, instead of two years I'd prefer that the time was shorter and more time was devoted to career language learning. Maybe the Job Centre would send you to a career course but they do that until you finish SFI, and this is the wrong way in my opinion because a person can learn the alphabet and some other things in six months, and then learn the language during your career. It would be better this way. You'll learn the career language faster. I have a lot of reservations about certificates of equivalence here. It's a very difficult thing. (Syrian man, age group 50+, No.19, Permanent residence permit) (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 39).

For the next quoted respondent, a refugee mother in the United Kingdom, a lack of childcare made impossible for her to continue the language courses:

I went [to English classes] for about a year, but then the children arrived and because of my son I can't go any more. The shifts don't work out, since if I go to college it's till 1 pm, but I need to be at home at 12 to take my son to the nursery and go and get him at 4 pm, and so it is quite difficult to manage it. ... [Y]es, as I said I was on the waiting list for over a year to go to an English class. Even for my children, it took 8 or 9 months for them to be assigned to an English class, so what should they do during these 8 or 9 months? It was quite hard, and if there was an English class then it would have been much better. (Interview 22) (Atto, Hirst and Hall, 2020, p. 50).

It turned out the situation of non-availability of language courses tailored for refugees with specific needs was especially difficult for elderly people, like for this man from Syria in Poland:

In the beginning one should learn the language. And for us, I am 65 years old, my wife is 62 years old, it is difficult, and there are no schools which would teach us the language. Our Polish language level is barely A1. Because I was not attending schools, the only place where I studied is the foundation, and as I

told you if I learned something today, tomorrow I would forget half of it. That's because there we don't use the language, we don't have people that we can talk to on a daily basis (PLMISy24) (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 33).

With no obligation to learn the language and no language courses provided by public institutions, respondents in Greece, at both the micro- and meso-levels, pointed towards serious drawbacks in Greek language acquisition by refugees, and their integration with the host society: 'Adult education is largely fragmented, project-restricted and not integrated into a general state policy, the aforementioned programmes [language courses provided by civil society organisations] and projects lack sustainability, and their effectiveness is largely hindered' (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 40). In addition, 'the educational facilities in Lesvos are not enough to cover the needs of the population. As such, asylum seekers have to wait a long time for enrolment [in a language course]' (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 41).

The situation of host-country language learning in Turkey was also very problematic, and the main reason behind it was the lack of sufficient funding which would allow all willing refugees to enrol in language courses. Lack of appropriate funding explains many of the following shortcomings reported by Rottman (2020): not enough capacity in the available language courses, not enough teachers or classrooms, teachers in the centres are often not trained to teach Turkish as a second language, and students who are different levels in terms of age and ability are sometimes grouped together. The lack of childcare services was the primary reason for refugee women to not attend courses (Rottmann, 2020, p. 46). In addition, many refugees are unable to reconcile their work with attending courses, like this man from Syria:

Now here, the problem is I can say that Turkish language courses.... You can't do them if you are working. For example, I calculated it a lot. If I wanted to take Turkish language courses, it would have to be during the day. And, during the day, I am working so I won't be able to take the course (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi\_1) (Rottmann, 2020, p. 46).

This last issue was also often pointed out by respondents in Poland, as even those obliged to attend Polish-language courses during their Individual Integration Programme had to choose between work and a course, most often at the expense of the latter. Interestingly, it was fully acknowledged by the social workers who tracked the integration progress of IIP participants:

Of course, if someone takes up a job and works from 8am till 4pm and it's impossible for him or her to attend a Polish language course, then we recognize that work is more important. They will also have some contact with Polish at work, so they will naturally learn, and still become independent. And that's okay (PLMZP1) (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 82).

Last but not least, micro-level respondents in all the analysed countries often expressed their awareness of the importance of learning the host-country language for their life in that country and integration with the host society.

## Good practices implemented in the RESPOND countries

In order to deal with the challenges faced by refugees in their host country language learning, many of the analysed countries have implemented special solutions. While we are aware that they often depend on the country context and cannot be repeated everywhere regardless of the specific conditions, they can serve as an inspiration for policy makers and practitioners in the field of refugees' integration in language education.

In Sweden, there are two solutions aimed at facilitating Swedish-language learning which deserve special credit: Swedish-language courses provided for asylum seekers, and classes for children in their mother tongue in schools. There are two types of courses aimed at asylum-seekers, *Swedish from Day 1* and *Everyday Swedish*, and they are organised by the civil society study associations and folk high schools. They aim to provide asylum seekers with the opportunity to learn Swedish before they receive an asylum decision (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 37). Both types of course are conducted in a large majority of municipalities (Folkbildningsrådet 2019)<sup>11</sup>.<sup>[1]</sup> The second instrument facilitating the acquisition of the host-country language are, surprisingly, classes in schools for children in their mother tongue. The classes can be organised by a school for a group of a minimum of five children who speak the same language and live in the same school district. This measure helps to improve their performance in school and in learning Swedish (Barthoma et al. 2020) (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 34)

In the United Kingdom, a civil society organisation developed an idea to overcome the barrier of lack of childcare for parents wanting to attend language courses. They have started informal classes for mothers and toddlers run by retired English teachers on a voluntary basis, and have opened a small creche so the children can be close to their parents attending the course:

We pay for a venue, and provide a small creche which is also volunteer-run.

There are of course safe-guarding issues, so the creche is in the same room as the adults with a half-folded dividing door. These classes are three days per week, totalling nine hours (Interview 2) (Atto, Hirst and Hall, 2020, p. 44).

Germany is a good example of a country with many actors involved in providing language education to refugees and asylum seekers. In addition to the public community colleges and NGOs, universities and higher education institutions have opened themselves up to welcoming asylum applicants, allowing them to use their facilities and working to integrate those with academic potential with their own students. As reported by Chemin and Nagel (2020, p. 41), many universities have come up with their own initiatives geared towards inclusion of refugees by offering more flexible, skills-based entry requirements, free quality language learning, and even spaces for interaction and use of rooms and computers.

In Greece, despite all the drawbacks depicted in the above section, there are two measures worth highlighting. The first is the HELIOS programme, an initiative implemented by the IOM aimed promoting the integration of beneficiaries of international

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<sup>11</sup> Folkbildningsrådet, *Folkbildning med asylsökande* (2019), can be downloaded at <https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/om-folkbildningsradet/publikationer-och-remissvar/rapporter/Rapporter-till-regeringen/rapporter-till-regeringen-2019/>



protection through integration courses and other measures. Within HELIOS, refugees are provided with courses consisting of 360 teaching hours (for a period of six months) with modules on Greek-language learning, cultural orientation (Greek culture, history, traditions, and contemporary customs), job readiness (information on job searching through different sources, practical matters in preparing for job applications, and the relevant soft skills), and life skills (IOM, 2019) (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 40). Another measure are the Second Chance Schools (numbering 56 in 2020), which are conducted in the afternoon and include classes in Greek Language, Mathematics, English Language, Information Technology, Social Education, Environmental Education, and Physical Sciences. Upon completion of a two-year study programme, students may obtain a certificate equivalent to that obtained upon completion of a lower secondary school (UNHCR, 2020) (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 38).

## Access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour market

The integration of refugees and those under international protection on the labour market depends on different factors on the macro (law and the socio-economic environment), meso (practices of different types of actors), and micro (refugees' response) levels. The following sections elaborate on selected aspects regarding the access of forced migrants to national labour markets in the analysed countries. Our focus is on the information provided by the nine country research reports on integration policies and practices developed under the RESPOND project. The information collected, compiled, and presented in the national reports is varied, and its scope is wide, which means that not all issues can be discussed in this report with equal thoroughness. Bearing in mind the above, we emphasize that this part of the thematic cross-country report, focusing on the labour market, does not exhaust the topic; it instead illustrates general tendencies referring to some/specific examples. To enrich and contextualize this section, we refer to secondary sources, including reports and other publications by the EU, the OECD, the ECRE, and others.

### Laws and their implications

Although the labour market is one of the core elements in the socio-economic dimension of integration, the access of forced migrants to labour market institutions is largely conditioned by their legal status and the rights and obligations attached to it. In addition, non-legal factors often prevent or limit the effectiveness of law application.

The countries covered by this report and RESPOND project include countries of origin of forced migrants (Iraq and Turkey), countries of transit/entry (Poland, Italy, Greece), and destination countries (Germany, Sweden). The migratory nature of a country (immigration countries such as Germany, and emigration-immigration countries such as Poland) and its role in the migration path of refugees (as mentioned above) also influence the approaches of national authorities towards labour market integration and the scope of integration support offered according to the laws of the country.

The regulations often reflect a state's strategy regarding (non)-admission of forced migrants, including the approach to early labour market integration. The significant increase in numbers of asylum applications in the EU in 2015-2016 has led some governments in host countries to introduce changes to laws aimed at reducing the waiting time for a decision in the asylum procedure. As the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in its synthesis report on Integration of Refugees into the Labour Market of 2017/2018 (European Commission 2018, 6) informs:

Some countries (e.g. Germany or Italy) amended legislation to shorten the waiting time for labour market access for asylum seekers and countries such as Austria, Germany and Sweden have significantly stepped up their integration efforts, both in scale and scope. However, so far, only Germany provides early intervention measures for asylum seekers.

Swift, legally regulated access to labour markets is of key importance for asylum seekers and refugees. Lack of access or late access during the asylum procedure affects not only the socio-economic dimension of integration, but also other areas. From the point of view of the migrants themselves, this can lead to:

- 'Damage to the psychological, economic and social situation of asylum seekers;
- Squandering of many potential skills and competences that are needed in the labour market;
- Increased risks of depression, anger and frustration due to inactive waiting periods;
- Exclusion from cultural and social life and prevention of personal development;
- Dependence on funding from the government, which could arguably be reduced if asylum seekers were more economically independent.' (Akari 2019, 3)

In the EU-member countries there are two key legal documents concerning forced migrants' access to the labour market. The first is Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) (the so-called 2013 Reception Directive). It targets asylum seekers applying for international protection in the EU member states. Article 15 regulates employment-related issues, stipulating:

1. Member States shall ensure that applicants have access to the labour market no later than 9 months from the date when the application for international protection was lodged if a first instance decision by the competent authority has not been taken and the delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.
2. Member States shall decide the conditions for granting access to the labour market for the applicant, in accordance with their national law, while ensuring that applicants have effective access to the labour market.
3. For reasons of labour market policies, Member States may give priority to Union citizens and nationals of States parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, and to legally resident third-country nationals.
4. Access to the labour market shall not be withdrawn during appeals procedures, where an appeal against a negative decision in a regular procedure has suspensive effect, until such time as a negative decision on the appeal is notified.

Article 16 deals with a topic relevant to the labour market – that of vocational training:

Member States may allow applicants access to vocational training irrespective of whether they have access to the labour market.

Access to vocational training relating to an employment contract shall depend on the extent to which the applicant has access to the labour market in accordance with Article 15.

According to these regulations, asylum seekers, if their first-instance asylum procedure lasts longer than expected, have the right to access the national labour market and it must be granted no later than nine months after submitting the asylum application;

this access must be maintained during the appeal proceedings against decisions issued. This is to be real access to the labour market, taking into account national laws and labour-market policies (e.g. priority for EU and EEA citizens). In this way, the Directive guarantees that member states engage in early labour-market integration, even before a person formally receives (or does not receive) the status. Asylum seekers can also benefit from vocational training, even if they do not have access to the labour market, if it is allowed by the member states.

Another key document is Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast), the so-called 2011 Qualification Directive. It refers to the situation of those migrants who benefit from international protection in the EU member states, meaning those who have received refugee status or subsidiary protection. The following provisions of the 2011 Qualification Directive deserve attention:

#### Article 26 Access to employment

1. Member States shall authorise beneficiaries of international protection to engage in employed or self-employed activities subject to rules generally applicable to the profession and to the public service, immediately after protection has been granted.
2. Member States shall ensure that activities such as employment-related education opportunities for adults, vocational training, including training courses for upgrading skills, practical workplace experience and counselling services afforded by employment offices, are offered to beneficiaries of international protection, under equivalent conditions as nationals.
3. Member States shall endeavour to facilitate full access for beneficiaries of international protection to the activities referred to in paragraph 2.
4. The law in force in the Member States applicable to remuneration, access to social security systems relating to employed or self-employed activities and other conditions of employment shall apply.

#### Article 27 Access to education

1. Member States shall grant full access to the education system to all minors granted international protection, under the same conditions as nationals.
2. Member States shall allow adults granted international protection access to the general education system, further training or retraining, under the same conditions as third-country nationals legally resident.

#### Article 28 Access to procedures for recognition of qualifications

1. Member States shall ensure equal treatment between beneficiaries of international protection and nationals in the context of the existing recognition procedures for foreign diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications.
2. Member States shall endeavour to facilitate full access for beneficiaries of international protection who cannot provide documentary evidence of their

qualifications to appropriate schemes for the assessment, validation and accreditation of their prior learning. Any such measures shall comply with Articles 2(2) and 3(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications.

The main assumptions of Articles 26—28 in terms of access to employment, education and recognition of qualifications are that beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to equal treatment and opportunities as nationals (in cases of education of refugee adults as third-country nationals legally resident), and they can also count on facilitating the use of support instruments on the labour market and the recognition of qualifications that are difficult to prove due to a lack of documents. Access to legal employment is immediate upon obtaining the protection (at least in the normative dimension). Of course, one has to remember that the law does not have to be translated into reality, and in practice, for various reasons and due to many factors, access to the labour market can be significantly difficult and differ from what the regulations provide.

Tables 6, 7 and 8 show, on the basis of selected extracts from national thematic reports, the importance of law and its effects on the situation of forced migrants on the labour market (especially through the prism of their legal status). The EU countries follow, to varying extents and under various conditions, the Common European Asylum System regarding the access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour market. The two non-EU countries of Iraq and Turkey are subject to their own laws in this regard. Consequently, Tables 6 and 7 separately examine asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in terms of their access to the labour market in seven EU member states. At the same time, no distinction was made for forced migrants due to their legal status in the two third countries examined in Table 8.

When it comes to asylum seekers in the EU member states, it is more legitimate to talk about their access to the labour market than their situation on the labour market, because the access itself is associated with numerous limitations and obstacles regarding, for example, time of access to the labour market (e.g. due to the stage and duration of the asylum procedure), and access to specific occupations/professions and sectors/industries. In general, asylum seekers are in a more difficult situation than refugees. Asylum seekers in Sweden, Italy and Germany seem to have the fastest and easiest access to the labour market. The same was true in Greece, but a change to the law delayed this access by six months. In addition, there are numerous formal and administrative obstacles (required documents, procedures, etc.) that can completely block access to legal employment. The rules of access to the labour market have been legally tightened in Austria, which means that, in principle, this country does not meet the EU requirement of effective access to the labour market for asylum seekers as stipulated in the 2013 Reception Directive. In Poland, access to the labour market is foreseen after six months, if the asylum procedure is not finished within that time. Asylum seekers work under temporary conditions, uncertain about tomorrow. A large percentage of them may not get international protection, and then lose any formal access to the labour market. In Turkey, Syrians with Temporary Protection Status (TPS) have been recently permitted to work as a result of changes to the law. However, obtaining work permits is complicated and costly, and informal work is common. In Iraq, the asylum system is not yet complete from the legal point of view. Different groups of migrants are in different situations. So-called political refugees have the same rights as Iraqi citizens.

Others must obtain a residency permit to be eligible for an annual, renewable, right-to-work permit.

## The roles of different actors in labour market integration

The list of actors involved in the integration of forced migrants (both the process and activities/policies) is long, and it varies from country to country. It is conditioned by political systems and laws, history and tradition, socio-economic situations, and sources of financing in each country. In general, the main groups of actors of integration include intergovernmental organisations (such as the EU, the UNHCR, the ILO, the IOM, the OECD), public administration institutions at different levels (such as ministries, migration offices, cities, communes, social support/welfare centres, labour offices/employment centres, primary and secondary schools, universities), and other stakeholders like NGOs and civil society organisations, the private sector (employers' unions, workers' unions, chambers of commerce, language schools), local communities, religious organisations, and other entities. In this context, Penninx & Garcés-Mascreñas (2016, 16-19) indicated three levels of immigrant integration, while in this section of the report our interest lies in organizations (of both parties such as NGOs, migrant organizations, trade unions, churches) and institutions (general public institutions and group-specific institutions including religious and cultural ones). Another classic division of integration-related actors is into state and non-state actors, or into public sector actors, private sector actors, and NGO/civil society actors.

If we focus on economic integration, the labour market lies at its centre and access to it and functioning within it are key aspects to consider. The activities of some actors result from national regulations and are common to everyone who has access to the labour market in a given country, regardless of nationality or legal status. Such actors are, to give a few examples, ministries competent in the labour market and social policy, labour offices, social welfare centers, and trade unions. Some actors support foreigners in particular, including asylum seekers and refugees (migration offices). A separate group are NGOs, whose support is generally non-institutionalized and often project-based. International organizations can have influence by, for example, shaping the law on access to the labour market and non-discriminatory practices (the impact of the EU on the law in the Member States), setting standards, disseminating good practices, and financing specific projects.

Looking more closely at the main findings of the cross-country report on Labour Market Integration of Third Country Nationals in EU Member States developed by the European Migration Network (2019, 15-19) (European Migration Network, 2019) and focusing exclusively on the EU countries covered by the RESPOND thematic national reports (7), we can state<sup>12</sup>:

1. Integration is defined in relevant national legislation and strategic or policy documents in Austria, Greece, Italy, Sweden, and the UK; this definition corresponds to the EU approach to immigrant integration and the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in Austria, Italy, and Sweden.

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<sup>12</sup> The EMN report covered the situation as of mid-2018 mostly based on the material from EMN National Contact Points.

2. Immigrant integration strategies were developed in Austria, Germany, Greece, Sweden, and the UK; action plans in Austria and Germany; and policy models in Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the UK.
3. Some countries – Austria, Germany, Sweden, and the UK – apply a mainstream approach to the broadly understood integration of non-EU citizens, while Italy has adopted a more individualised approach via (mandatory) integration programmes. Moreover, Germany was identified as a country offering additional tailored integration measures (such as the so-called one-stop shops). No specific approach, strategy or policy for immigrant integration was noted for Poland<sup>13</sup>.
4. If we focus only on labour market integration strategies/policies targeting immigrants, they have been integral to the general integration strategy/policy/plan in the EU countries of Austria, Germany, and Greece. There was no specific strategy in Sweden and the UK, but they followed a mainstreaming approach with specific tailored aims. Italy adopted ad-hoc measures with the strong financial support of the AMIF. Poland did not have or implement a specific labour market integration strategy.
5. Labour market integration is a cross-cutting, cross-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder activity. The institutional framework in this regard can be centralised (it does not apply to any of the seven EU countries analysed in the country reports on integration within the RESPOND project) or decentralised. Decentralised institutional frameworks were observed in Austria, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the UK. In a decentralised setting the key state actor responsible for labour market integration policy is usually the ministry of labour (employment, etc.) as it is in Italy, Austria, and Germany (jointly with other Federal Ministries), and the responsibilities in implementing policies are spread across federal/regional and local authorities. 'In all Member States, the public employment services are mandated to support job placement, skills training and counselling. Education institutes and agencies are responsible for recognising qualifications and providing training. Across all Member States, non-governmental organisations and educational institutions emerged as important partners driving the implementation of employment integration services' (EMN 2019, 19). This was observed for Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK.

According to the above-quoted EMN report on Labour Market Integration of Third Country Nationals in EU Member States (EMN 2019, 5): 'Employment centres and non-governmental organisations emerge as key partners in the implementation of labour market integration measures. Most of the measures are financed through national and/or EU funds, but examples exist of privately funded measures, including new tools such as social impact bonds and sponsorship'. This opinion refers to the situation in the EU countries in general, and it covers various migrants, not only forced migrants.

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<sup>13</sup> This is true if we consider the national integration strategy covering all categories of migrants. However, in Poland, there is a specific integration program (sometimes even referred as "a policy") dedicated only to beneficiaries of international protection, the Individual Integration Programmes (see: Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020)

Bearing all this in mind, it is worth paying attention to the role of some actors in selected countries covered by the nine national integration reports, including the seven EU countries and the two third countries.

**In Sweden**, it is the **Public Employment Service (PES)** that deals with the establishment of newcomers in the labour market both during the asylum procedure and after positive decisions on asylum claims, and its scope of competencies is wide and comprehensive:

Already during the asylum period, it starts mapping the asylum seekers' skills (i.e. education and work experience) using a skills mapping tool. After the asylum decision, this skills-mapping helps with the development of an individualised establishment plan, which includes (a) Swedish for Immigrants (SFI – Svenska för invandrare), (b) civic orientation, and (c) work preparation (e.g. validation, internship). This establishment plan is implemented in collaboration with other actors such as the counties and municipalities (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 21).

In practice, the work of PES is perceived as facilitation and a source of support by some migrants, and as a difficult experience by others:

(...) people experience the contact they have with the PES in many different ways. While some feel they have been much helped, others feel that they have not received sufficient guidance: (...) There are many who have experienced that they do not get the support they need, either because they find that the assistance is not well-organised for the given group of job-seekers, or because they feel that the PES did not have the relevant capacity to actually help them: (...) However, many also experience that they have been helped by the PES, and that they would not have been able to find employment without this help: 'Nobody would employ me without the Job centre.' (Syrian man, Age group 27-50, No.39, Permanent residence permit). (...) The PES has different programmes where they fund a part of the salary for companies who employ refugees. While this can facilitate entry into the labour market, it can also contribute to a sense of insecurity, as employment ends when the PES programme ends: (...) Short-term contracts with no real safety, internships or employment where the salary is paid by the PES, are often terminated when the time is up, leaving people feeling exploited and insecure in their place of work (Cetrez et al., 2020 p.28).

**In Greece**, unemployed asylum seekers and refugees searching for employment have the right to be registered in the Registry of the Manpower Employment Organisation of the Ministry of Labour and, as a result, benefit from its services (in ways that include being referred to a job if there is a vacant position in line with their qualifications and interests, receiving an unemployment bulletin, CV registration, preparation of an individual action plan, participation in employment or vocational training programmes) (Leivaditi et al., 2020 pp. 30-31).

**In Italy**, the Public Employment Services and the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR–SIPROIMI) are the two main public bodies



competent in the area of integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market. PES coordinates employment services at a local level. Asylum seekers and refugees – holders of residence permits – can register at this institution to receive information about job placement opportunities and the support of cultural and language mediators. SPRAR–SIPROIMI's support aims to foster integration into the labour market through, for example, engagement in specific professional training and internship programmes organised by the actors involved in the SPRAR–SIPROIMI network (voluntary sector, municipalities, and others) (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 24).

**In Germany**, the integration area is very complex both horizontally and vertically: Policymaking and monitoring take place at the federal level with the involvement of various federal ministries, while policy implementation happens at the level of states (Lander) and municipalities (Chemin and Nagel, 2020, p. 20). With reference to labour market integration, an important role is assigned to labour market actors, such as employment agencies, employer associations and labour unions, and intersectional networks/consortiums. There are also many projects aimed at fostering the employment of refugees. A good example presented in the German report is the “FairBleib” project. This regional consortium covers the municipalities of Goslar, Göttingen, Northeim and Osterode in Lower Saxony and includes actors such as NGOs, education providers, welfare associations and public administrators on the municipal or city level (Chemin and Nagel, 2020, p. 20).

**In Iraq**, the most important actor providing support to forced migrants in access to the labour market is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The country report also mentions the involvement of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the ILO (Warda and Almafraji, 2020, pp. 24–25).

An important but often forgotten actor in the area of economic integration **are state bodies responsible for supervision and control** over compliance with labour law in the workplace. Their activity may support care for the employment/labour rights of foreigners, but it can also limit their work in the informal market (which is observed in many of the analysed countries). **In Greece**, the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate (HLI) is the agency responsible for the regularisation of the informal employment of refugees in the country. It monitors and controls the implementation of labour law and safeguards the labour rights, safety, and security of employees, as well as their health security (Leivaditi et al., 2020). **In Poland**, this is the task of the National Labour Inspectorate (NLI) that:

has increased the number of inspections among employers to minimize employment irregularities, including the employment of foreigners. According to the impression of one of our NGO interviewees (PLMZSO2) the increase of those controls positively affected the number of legally employed foreigners – including beneficiaries of international protection. At the end of 2019 NLI also activated a helpline for migrants, where migrants can obtain information on conditions of stay and work in Poland. Information is provided in several languages: Arabic, English, French, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese (PIP, 2019) (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020 p. 43).

**Universities** are another actor worth mentioning, such as Hellenic American University (HAU), which provides the Certificate of Attainment in Greek for candidates from Vocational Training Centres (Leivaditi et al., 2020 p. 31). Also, the (increasing) role of **local authorities** is crucial to the integration with the local labour markets. It concerns not only big cities but also small towns and communes in rural areas. Very often this is done through **cooperation** with other local partners and as part of dedicated projects. **In Sweden**, this happens in key employment hubs such as Stockholm and Uppsala where cooperative projects between the municipalities and other public entities can be implemented much more easily. This is the case of the From Newcomer to Newly-employed Teacher project developed between Stockholm City Hall and Stockholm University (Cetrez et al., 2020 p. 24).

Actions for the economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection were also taken in Warsaw, the **Polish city** with the largest number of foreigners in the country. The Office of Assistance and Social Projects of the Capital City of Warsaw implemented a pilot project called Warsaw Test Project of Integration of Foreigners with regard to the Needs of the Labour Market in 2017-2019, coordinated by the Warsaw Family Support Centre, local social policy unit. The project involved partners from the public administration sector, the NGO sector, the private sector, and the higher-education sector. It aimed at preparing some foreigners who have received refugee status or subsidiary protection in Poland for quick and permanent entry into the local labour market in a direction as close as possible to an assessment of their professional (vocational) potential and the planned individual path to achieving employment, allowing the foreigner to operate independently socially and economically in Warsaw (Gać and Pachocka, 2019; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, pp. 33–34). **In Greece**, the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee Issues (ACCMR) has been functioning since 2017. It aims at the efficient coordination of municipal authorities and other actors in the capital city (national and international NGOs, international organisations, migrant and refugee community groups), to allow for smooth integration of migrants living in Athens (Leivaditi et al., 2020). Cross-sector cooperation is also promoted **in Italy** through the Territorial Councils for Immigration, encompassing employers' organisations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, various organisations operating in the area of reception and integration, and other actors. They examine integration-related challenges and possible solutions (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020). Sometimes integration into the labour market is easier outside of large urban areas, especially if one can count on the support of local actors and the local community. This is shown by examples of two Syrian beneficiaries of international protection finding employment in a rural area in Upper **Austria** (Josipovic and Reeger, 2020). In the **UK**, local authorities and devolved administrations play a key role in the field of integration. Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMPs) are of interest here, being local authority-led partnerships cooperating with partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors (Atto et al., 2020, pp. 19–20). The crucial institution in labour market integration is Jobcentre Plus, the UK-wide body responsible for providing support to all eligible jobseekers in finding employment, including forced migrants. It does not specifically target asylum seekers or refugees. Its scope of services includes: 'training allowances, help with CV writing and job searches, work trials, assisting with travel costs to job interviews outside their area, English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) courses, programmes tailored to single parents

transitioning in to work and assistance with benefits (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010)' (Atto et al., 2020, pp. 23–24).

**Non-governmental organizations** and **civil society organizations** play an important role in the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees. The extent of their support and their role in comparison with public sector actors varies from country to country. In **Greece**, NGOs and CSOs are considered:

(...) the main, and often the only, providers of employability services and vocational training. Various stakeholders – civil society organisations, NGOs, refugee communities and other actors – implement relevant projects targeting refugees and asylum seekers. The focus is mainly on language courses (as knowledge of the Greek language is considered a crucial factor to ensure access to the labour market), job searching techniques and writing strong CVs, rather than actually finding jobs for the people concerned. In addition, NGOs have been providing skills for the development of training, including computer skill programmes, whereas public bodies have done little in this field (Leivaditi et al., 2020 p. 30).

**In Italy**, the significance of CSOs has increased after the migration crisis. They are actively engaged in labour market integration and their efforts **are complementary** to services provided by the public institutions (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020 p. 28):

In particular, they offer several fundamental services (language courses, cultural mediation, identification of skills and aptitudes, voluntary work, training and education, education about the rights and duties of workers, internships, legal assistance, etc.) which facilitate integration into the labour market.

This is also true for **Poland**, where NGOs are active in supporting labour market integration of migrants in different ways: legal advice, career advice, vocational training, networking with employers, and internships. Many of these activities are project-based and financed from EU programs (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 46). **In Turkey**, NGOs – discussed along with international organisations – are also present and support refugees, including in the field of vocational training or language education. However, it seems that their role is focused on filling the gaps between the official policies and the reality (Rottmann, 2020, p. 24).

The situation is different **in Sweden**, where the public system of integration support is widely institutionalized and provided. NGOs and CSOs are more focused on activities like creating connections between newcomers and residents, developing networking opportunities for migrants with regard to the labour market, matching them with the private sector, and organizing start-up meetings. 'Most NGOs focus on helping newcomers establish a network' and CSOs 'can have a potential for linking newcomers and industry' (Cetrez et al., 2020 pp. 25-26).

Finally, the support provided by international organisations, often by financing and coordinating various projects, should be borne in mind. An interesting example is the capacity-building project known as the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), implemented by the **Council of Europe in Greece** (Leivaditi et al., 2020 p. 27). Another is the Helios project, conducted by the IOM in the same country. Its objective is

to promote the integration of beneficiaries of international protection staying in temporary accommodation places such as Open Accommodation Centres or Reception and Identification Centres through such activities as: ‘the provision of individual employability and job readiness support, including job counselling, access to job-related certifications and networking with private employers’ (Leivaditi et al., 2020 p. 27). **EU funds** are widely used in EU countries to support the integration of migrants on the labour market. This also applies to third countries like **Turkey**, where the public authorities – the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Turkish Employment Agency – have implemented various programmes with EU funding to increase the regular employment of forced migrants (Rottmann, 2020, p. 36).

## **Validation of skills, recognition of qualifications and prior work experience, and gaining new competences**

The type of work performed by asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection depends not only on their skills and qualifications, but on their validation and recognition in the destination country as well. According to the OECD report, in order to achieve a level of employment and income similar to those who immigrate for family reunion, a refugee needs six years. A period of almost three times longer is needed to reach the level of citizens in the same domain (OECD, 2016; Sobczak-Szelc, 2016). The reasons for this are complex and are often related to the psychological distress and disabilities which compromise the ability of refugees to integrate into the labour market. This can be exacerbated by the period of suspension and uncertainty about their future during the asylum procedure. No less important is a lack of language proficiency and/or social and professional networks.

Other studies carried out in Austria by the wiiw (Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies) (Jestl et al., 2019) between 2009 and 2018 on the four groups of migrants – European third-country migrants, European third-country refugees, non-European migrants, and non-European refugees – and Austrian-born people, show that refugees face their biggest problems during the first five years after arrival. After that, refugees start to catch up with labour migrants and with those born in Austria. After seven years, the differences between the four groups and the Austrian-born group more or less disappear. This difference between the results of the OECD and the wiiw may indicate the success of the Austrian integration system and/or a demand for foreign labour, including refugees, on the Austrian labour market. The same authors, however, found that among refugees there are specific groups who have greater difficulties accessing the labour market than other subgroups: women, the elderly, and highly educated persons (Jestl et al., 2019, Josipovic and Reeger, 2020). This last group is particularly unfortunate: they are vulnerable because their qualifications and work experience have often been gained in very difficult labour market conditions, and they are unable to provide proper documentation to prove their level of education and skills (OECD, 2016). Italian researchers even indicated that lack of documentation and the inability to recognise skills and qualifications is one of the main barriers to gaining access to the labour market, ‘a barrier which impacts the actual capacity of the Italian labour market to integrate foreigner workers concerns’. It is even indicated that ‘if the migrant does not have the documents he always remains on the informal job market and does what his community offers him. He has no chance to do anything else. He cannot be regularly

employed and his degree cannot be recognized, so we have professors who sell umbrellas...' (Ibrido and Marchese, p. 27). In this part, we particularly focus on challenges related to the recognition of qualifications and validation of skills in investigated countries.

Most often, refugees do not come with their school certificates or evidence of their previous work and qualifications, and this is the most serious barrier to validation of skills and recognition of diplomas. Such persons are treated as not having a college or high school diploma (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 48). This issue is challenging in all the investigated countries, although more significantly in Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Poland, and slightly less in the so-called western European countries. In some of the examined countries, experts underlined the widespread problem of mis-qualification and/or overqualification while taking up available jobs. This means that in many cases financial need compels migrants to accept any employment conditions (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 24), and many refugees perform jobs that are not in line with their qualifications, which squanders the potential they can offer the economy (Ibrido and Marchese, 2019). Lack of documents even compels refugees to work on the informal labour market and makes them dependent on offers from their community (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020). This lack of adequate employment may be the reason to decide to move on and discontinue the integration process in the current place of residence. It was particularly mentioned in case of Turkey and Poland, where a lack of suitable employment for highly qualified people commensurate with their qualifications was one reason for migrants to move on to western Europe (Rottmann, 2020, p. 36; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 49).

(...) the biggest difficulty here is not finding work according to your skills. A highly qualified friend couldn't find work in his field, so he was forced to go to Europe. Turkey was just a stop-over for him.... (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SR11\_19) (Rottmann, 2020 p.36).

When refugees provide their certificates or diplomas, different countries offer them different options for formal recognition of qualifications. However, in many countries legislation requires migrants to go through long and complex procedures to obtain recognition of their skills and qualifications. The Italian, Polish and British research reports in particular emphasize that the lack of government support in acceptance of original qualifications leads to not making full use of the available potential of immigrants (Atto et al., 2020, p. 29; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 50). The Italian National Coordination Board adopted the National Plan for Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection, where the recognition of qualification and diplomas was stressed, although no further steps towards facilitation of legislation procedures were taken (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020).

Some countries offer refugees rights equal to those of state citizens regarding the recognition of foreign diplomas, certificates, and proof of formal qualifications. In Greece it is even guaranteed by law that if a refugee cannot provide evidence, the relevant authorities should facilitate the process. In practice those rights are hard to implement, as often they are not followed by relevant procedures. Particularly, those regulations do not take into consideration the difficult situation of asylum seekers and refugees, when

obtaining any relevant documents is in practice impossible, so the validation of their skills and the recognition of their qualifications is greatly hindered.

In Poland, 'a diploma of completion of studies abroad may be recognized as equivalent to the relevant Polish diploma and professional title on the basis of an international agreement determining equivalence, and in the absence of it - by recognition procedure' (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 41). This process is, however, as it is in many other countries, perceived as expensive and complicated.

Some facilitating actions are nonetheless carried out. In Greece, the authorities are currently implementing the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), a capacity-building project. This initiative was executed for the 2018-2020 period, after a pilot phase, with the aim to 'assess the education level, work experience and language proficiency of refugees, in absence of full documentation'. It is available for those asylum seekers or refugees residing in Greece who 'have been accepted by an establishment of higher education and have concluded at least one year of university studies'. An EQPR, valid for five years, is issued following an evaluation procedure, and it includes the refugee's qualifications. It should be noted that the EQPR is not recognised as an official document and cannot be considered a substitute thereof; Greek public universities do not accept it as such, so it does not grant access to higher education (Leivaditi et al., 2020, p. 27; Ministry of Education, 2018).

Another example is the fast-track procedure implemented in Germany and Sweden, which aims to facilitate recognition of qualifications and delivery of licences for highly skilled refugees, which should facilitate and speed their inclusion into the labour market. Regulated professions such as doctors or lawyers are even harder to access, as even citizens need to go through additional verifications. There is a major practical problem in the transfer of licences for this kind of job (Cetrez et al., 2020, p. 25). In the United Kingdom this practice functions as a provision of NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre), which allows for the transfer of refugees' qualifications and outlines how their overseas qualifications compare to the UK qualifications. In 2020 the fee for service was £59.40 (Atto et al., 2020, p. 24). It is thus possible for a person with an Afghan doctor's qualifications, for example, to work in the UK (Atto et al., 2020, p. 30). Some qualifications, such as for lawyers, demand studies from the beginning, regardless of country of destination.

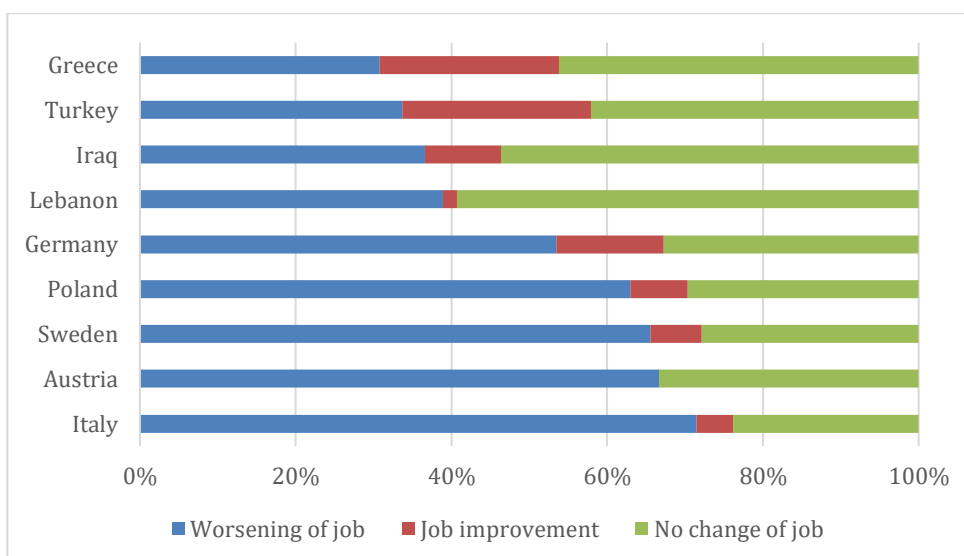
Problems with validation of skills and recognition of qualifications primarily influence the inaccessibility of employment in positions equivalent to those held in the country of origin, which leads to the mismatching of qualifications, so there are low-skilled people employed in industries outside of their own (for instance a digger operator working as a security guard). There are also highly skilled people employed far below their competences. This may further lead to alienation and/or marginalisation of people from the system, and it can feed into social inequalities as most people in this situation take up jobs that do not demand special skills. Significant differences in employment trends/patterns between men and women, and in the sectors in which male and female refugees and asylum seekers are employed, can be seen in all countries. Men are mostly employed in the primary sector and in construction, while women work in household and care services (Numerato et al., 2019). Women are mostly employed in the informal sector, approximately half of them in care services, cleaning services and domestic work – which leaves them in precarious situations (Bontenbal and Lillie, 2019). Additionally,

in countries where it is culturally justified they are often treated by the institutional framework as dependent family members, rather than as autonomous and active actors. This combined with a lack of education and cultural biases constitutes an additional obstacle in accessing the labour market. In general, we have observed a tendency that women face more difficulties while entering the labour market, and this is primarily due to family responsibilities (more information in the Appendix Tables 11 and 12). Different studies have indicated that the proportion of women among refugees neither taking part in any form of education nor employed or looking for a job was much higher than among refugee men.

Looking at the sample of 543 asylum seekers and refugees investigated within the RESPOND project, 26% were not employed in their country of origin and a quarter of them were usually women not working due to family responsibilities. Further, 29% of the investigated asylum seekers and refugees were working in jobs that did not demand high skills, and 33% were working as specialists and managers or were self-employed. Of those from the latter group, and over-average share was found in Austria (26%), Poland (30%), the United Kingdom (50%) and Sweden (34%) (more information in the Appendix Table 9). This partially confirms the above information that better-qualified forced migrants are more willing to move on to western Europe.

This proportion changes significantly when considering countries of residence. Despite official permission, refugees in all the investigated countries perceive entering the labour market to be a challenge. Rarely are they able to work in positions commensurate with their qualifications, received education, and their positions in their countries of origin. This is well-observed in the investigated interviewees in all the RESPOND countries, where a significant number of interviewees declared deterioration of their situation in comparison to that of the region of origin (Figure 1). Over half of all the investigated interviewees (54%) were unemployed. A lower share, although still close to 50%, was found in the respondents in Iraq (45%), Lebanon (53%), Turkey (43%), Poland (48%) and the UK (46%) (more information in the Appendix Table 10). In those countries, however, the lower unemployment rate is compensated for by higher rates of employment (over 20%) as unskilled workers, and/or work in the informal sector (in almost all of those countries).

**Figure 1 Change of type of performed job between origin and destination country**



Most asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection prefer informal work. This is a rule in countries like Iraq and Turkey, where conditions are not only difficult but also may result in 'injuries for which migrants have little recourse for compensation' (Rottmann, 2020, p. 33). In other countries, the most common jobs performed by refugees are those of unskilled workers or craftsmen, where they face a 'problem of qualification mismatch in the sense that there are low-skilled people employed in industries that are not theirs' (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 23).

In general, refugees are working in low-wage, informal jobs. In Turkey these are in construction, factories, and agriculture (Rottmann, 2020, p. 33); in Greece in cleaning, agriculture or unskilled employment in the tourism sector; in Italy they work as warehouse workers, dockers, plumbers and bricklayers, low skilled workers in hotels and restaurants, agriculture and construction (Leivaditi et al., 2020). (...) Only a very limited number of foreign workers occupy top positions in Italy as managers or executives (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020, p. 23).

In Poland, obtaining the status of protection does not influence the type of job and the sector where refugees are employed. Most jobs are in construction, transportation, gastronomy (simple jobs), domestic work, and car repair. Quite often they are performed on an undocumented basis (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 43). In Austria, the common practice is participation in accessible economic activities such as seasonal work in the catering and hotel industry, non-profit employment with municipalities, or apprenticeships in sectors with labour shortages (Josipovic and Reeger, 2020, p. 27). Although according to an NGO interviewee the majority of beneficiaries of international protection in the UK work as taxi drivers or in fast-food restaurants (Atto et al., 2020, p. 28), among the investigated interviewees one-third worked as specialists. This may raise a question regarding the sample (as none of them were unemployed in their countries of origin).

Another important issue is the opportunity to gain new competences, such as through vocational training. Depending on the state's involvement in these actions and a given country's policy, a refugee may learn new skills either through self-commitment, the support of an NGO, or an offer by the state. This diversity of situations is demonstrated by the results of the interviews with migrants. Among those who mentioned the issue of training, the majority admitted that they had neither participated (75%) nor were offered (71%) the opportunity to take part in any form of training aimed at gaining new competences. This proportion, although high in regard to all investigated interviewees, is even more significant in the case of women: 75% had not been offered training, and 80% had not taken part in any (Tables 4 and 5).

Further differences can be observed between the countries. In these three countries, no more than 20% of the forced migrants interviewed were offered any training: Lebanon (5%), Turkey (10%) and Italy (20%). Training was offered to at least 40% of such interviewees in three other countries: Germany (40%), the UK (46%) and Sweden (60%). The situation is not much different when it comes to actual participation. In Lebanon and Turkey hardly any interviewees have participated in a training program. In Lebanon, Greece, Italy, Poland, and Germany between 22% and 30% of interviewees took part in vocational training, while in Sweden and the UK this share is 47% and 65%, respectively. Interviewees from Austria provided interesting examples, as among them 28% of male



migrants had taken part in a training program, while among women this share was significantly lower, reaching only 13% (Tables 4 and 5). These numbers show once again that in the origin and transit countries where the possibility to gain new competences depends on the self-commitment and/or NGO support, very few people have opportunities for training. Only in the countries where training is organised by the state institutions does it allow for wider participation and further, easier inclusion into the labour market.

**Table 4 Number of male asylum seekers and refugees who were offered and participated in training**

Training	Iraq	Lebanon	Turkey	Greece	Italy	Austria	Poland	Germany	UK	Sweden	Total Male
<b>Offered</b>											
<b>No</b>	75%	96%	90%	71%	80%	72%	73%	53%	54%	31%	68%
<b>Yes</b>	25%	4%	10%	29%	20%	28%	27%	47%	46%	69%	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Attended</b>											
<b>No</b>	88%	100%	95%	71%	62%	78%	65%	65%	44%	26%	72%
<b>Yes</b>	12%	0%	5%	29%	38%	22%	35%	35%	56%	74%	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>339</b>

Source: Own elaboration

**Table 5 Number of female asylum seekers and refugees who were offered and participated in trainings**

Training	Iraq	Lebanon	Turkey	Greece	Austria	Poland	Germany	UK	Sweden	Total Female
<b>Offered</b>										
<b>No</b>	52%	92%	90%	67%	87%	71%	76%	0%	50%	75%
<b>Yes</b>	48%	8%	10%	33%	13%	29%	24%	0%	50%	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Attended</b>										
<b>No</b>	65%	95%	88%	67%	88%	75%	87%	100%	46%	80%
<b>Yes</b>	35%	5%	12%	33%	13%	25%	13%	0%	54%	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>230</b>

Source: Own elaboration

## Facilitators and barriers while accessing the labour market – the perspective of the refugees

Based on the review of the nine country research reports on integration, the refugees' experiences regarding facilitators and barriers while accessing the labour market can be grouped into the key categories of language, agency, social networks, family and children, psychological conditions, education, and gender.

The first barrier that emerges from the interviews with refugees in different countries is the long duration of the asylum application procedure (Chemin and Nagel, 2020; Ibrido

and Marchese, 2020; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020). This very illustrative example was given by an Italian expert:

the greatest problem [asylum seekers] perceive is the length of time they wait. It might happen that [asylum seekers] apply in 2015, the Territorial Commission schedules a meeting in 2016, and gives them an answer in 2017... this is social exclusion (MELI no. 1).

The situation is especially evident in Italy, where within the sample of 29 asylum seekers who arrived in Italy between 2015 and 2017, 20 had still not received a final decision in 2018/2019, as the majority of them had received a negative first-instance decision and therefore submitted an appeal (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020). This has its consequences. For instance, in Germany asylum seekers are not allowed to move within the country during the procedure. Therefore, if there are no jobs in line with their area of skills and experience, they are not allowed to travel among regions in order to find a more suitable position (Chemin and Nagel, 2020).

Another important factor, common in all countries and even perceived as the most crucial factor influencing access to the labour market in the host country, is knowledge of the language. Although it is usually perceived as a barrier, in some cases, knowledge of a foreign language (other than the official one(s) of the host country) in a favourable environment can serve as an advantage and multiply one's chances on the labour market. As mentioned in the Iraqi and Polish reports, for example, knowledge of the Arabic language is an advantage for some migrants who are lucky enough to be employed in translation in NGOs, international companies that need translation services, independent translation, and transcription for research projects (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020; Warda and Almafraj, 2020). However, despite these rare situations, lack of knowledge of the host country language 'is the first and main problem' (PLMICH14) (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020), as mentioned by one of the Polish interviewees. Knowledge of the host-country language is considered a crucial factor in ensuring access to the labour market by both investigated actors and refugees, and is perceived as difficult on all stages of inclusion, regarding:

- contact with state institutions, where information is provided only in the language of the state or in selected foreign languages, and where officers do not have sufficient knowledge of foreign languages, or there is no interpreter available,
- job searching, as the majority of job advertisements are in the host-country language, and job interviews often demand knowledge of the language,
- the work environment, which is not always multinational and/or multilingual.

Although the challenge is common to all the investigated countries, the solutions to overcome it are not. The state solutions have already been extensively described in the section on host-country language learning (p. 26), and, as far as some countries do not facilitate the process of language learning (for instance Greece and Iraq), or the possibilities are limited (Turkey), in others it may also be a 'matter of choice, rather than systemic discrimination or barrier for asylum seekers and refugees' (Atto et al., 2020, p. 33). In Poland, for instance, language courses are offered at limited times, so refugees need to choose whether to work or participate in a language course (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020, p. 84). However, in countries such as Germany, Austria, and Sweden, refugees

willing to learn the language will find a variety of options to suit their needs and time limitations.

This leads us to the agency of refugees. Here we mean not only their capacity to act independently and to make their own choices, but also their capacity to take the initiative for change, their determination in searching for better solutions. The self-undertaken actions of refugees is the most important factor in facilitating labour market inclusion. Depending on the country and its socio-economic environment, these actions take various forms, although they are most important in countries where the external support is limited. Therefore, in Iraqi and Turkey refugees undertake various forms of self-employment and small entrepreneurship (Rottmann, 2020, p. 16). Self-employment often is the preferable option in other countries as well. In Sweden self-employment is very common, even though a refugee may count on significant support from the state (Cetrez et al., 2020). Some refugees look for opportunities to participate in non-profit activities, which are more common in the so-called western European countries. As justified in the Austrian report, it is a way to show their active willingness to integrate into the labour market. This way of participation provides opportunities “to learn German, to gain new skills, and to show a willingness to integrate and contribute to society” (Josipovic and Reeger, 2020, p. 27). Agency is also important in Poland and Greece, where when support from employment services is lacking, the best opportunities are found through self-taken actions such as searching through web pages and social networks (Leivaditi et al., 2020; Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020).

And this brings us to the next very important factor, social networks, which often relate to the migration history of each country. Previously settled communities facilitate finding a job in some, usually less-demanding, sectors, at least at the beginning, for example Chechens in Poland working in the security sector (Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2020). In other cases, one needs to know a ‘gatekeeper’ to some types of employment, such as ‘*torpils*’ in Turkey, who help in finding teaching jobs (Rottmann, 2020). Further, in Austria, Germany and Sweden respondents mentioned a lack of connections and insufficient familiarity with the host country culture a significant barrier. Acquaintance with a native was perceived as being of exceptional value (Cetrez et al., 2020; Chemin and Nagel, 2020; Josipovic and Reeger, 2020).

As it was already justified, refugees encounter different options in different countries. However, there are also important factors regarding cultural roles assigned to specific gender in some refugee groups. In all the investigated countries childcare and family responsibilities have hindered women’s participation in the labour market. Some states, however, provide ways to overcome this. For instance, for displaced Syrians in Turkey the most frequent solution was night work at home (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SR11\_22), but when they moved on to Sweden, it was in some cases described as ‘a liberating experience, where one is able to work and participate in society to an extent that was impossible in Syria for example’ (Rottmann, 2020). In Poland, Greece, and Italy some projects aimed at fostering the inclusion of foreign women have been implemented. Although these were limited, fragmented, and often of a pilot nature, the activities, if they were attended, were usually perceived to be of great value. For example, micro-credit for ethnic minorities in Italy was mentioned as an important policy issue (Ibrido and Marchese, 2020). In Poland, one of the projects gave wide-ranging support, from childcare through psychological support to assistance during the recruitment process.

All the examples given above show difficulties that refugees face while accessing the labour market. Those who do not have permission to work legally are in even more difficult situations. This mostly concerns asylum seekers, and it becomes the reason to engage in illegal or highly precarious activities. Formal employment is perceived as challenging due to competition with other migrants whose situation is easier with regard to legal regulations.

## **Good practices implemented in the RESPOND countries**

Asylum seekers should be offered formal access to the labour market in the host country as soon as possible, as it partially shapes their sense of agency and economic independence. In order to facilitate the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees, a state should focus on how to overcome two most important obstacles: language barriers and recognition of qualifications. In order to achieve the best results, this process should be started as early as during the asylum procedure, which our research has found to be possible.

One option is to make a variety of language courses available, so asylum seekers and refugees have the opportunity to choose courses which suit their levels and schedules. Good results can be achieved through the implementation of collaborative and multi-actor labour market integration-oriented projects on local and regional levels, as it has been done in Sweden and Germany, or through assistance in the opening of alternative business opportunities, as has been provided by Polish NGOs.

Different countries either use and benefit from or mention as a weakness the lack of a monitoring system to map the asylum seekers' skills and competences. Therefore, each country dealing with economic integration of forced migrants is encouraged to monitor their skills and competences from the very beginning and as much as possible support them in finding jobs commensurate with their education and competences. Access to vocational training that develops their skills and competences to meet the demands of the local labour market is needed. Such an approach would be of mutual benefit.

An interesting option worth implementing widely is the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), which aims to assess the education level, work experience and language proficiency of refugees, in absence of full documentation

Worthy of mention is an opportunity given to refugees in Great Britain where they can apply for interest-free loans to put towards rent, rental deposits, essential household items, training or retraining, basic living costs while retraining, and work clothing and equipment.

In Sweden different programmes not only link refugees with employment opportunities but also aim to facilitate their employment by partially funding the payrolls of companies who employ refugees. Such an approach may facilitate access to legal employment rather than 'cash in hand' types of jobs, which is common among refugees, especially at the early stage after arrival, and does not over the long term lead to proper integration into the labour market.

No less important is special attention given to vulnerable groups like single mothers, people with disabilities, and those at a more advanced age who are still able to work.

Special programs dedicated to those groups allow for their better inclusion. As was shown above, those groups require great support, and any special projects make their inclusion more possible.

## Conclusions

Integration of children and adults into the education system and labour market is among the main pillars of integration mentioned by Ager and Strang (2008). This is guaranteed by international agreements on human rights and the Geneva Convention, but access for forced migrants varies in the countries investigated within the RESPOND project.

Whereas the analysed countries provide similar access to education for child refugees (with the two exceptions of Turkey and Iraq), they differ substantially in providing access for adult refugees. In some countries the differentiation starts at the secondary level (by limiting compulsory education for children reaching the age of 15 or 16), in others it is seen at higher education, when facilitation measures for refugees are indispensable for their enrolment in a university or other institution of higher education. Certainly, there is a correlation between the high rates of our micro-level respondents who obtained either a higher secondary level or a tertiary level of education in Germany (53%) and Sweden (69%) and the policies facilitating access to universities in these countries. These rates are significantly higher than the average rate in all the RESPOND countries of 42 percent, even though some respondents had completed their education in their countries of origin.

With respect to host-country language education, the analysed countries used different models: from the model of obligatory participation in language courses provided by the public institutions for free (Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy), through the model of semi-obligatory courses (or obligatory only on paper, but not provided for free) for participants of special integration programmes (Poland), a model of courses available for free but without obliging refugees to attend (Turkey), to a model of no regulation, where there is neither obligation nor availability of publicly funded courses for refugees (Greece). When we look at the data showing the numbers of refugees who had already obtained a certificate in the host-country language (in Austria, Germany, and Sweden, 72, 57 and 49 percent, respectively, and only 5 percent in Greece) we can clearly see that the first model proves to be the most successful.

The access of forced migrants to labour market institutions is largely conditioned by their legal status and what follows from that in the light of the law. For asylum seekers in the EU member states, access is associated with numerous limitations and obstacles regarding, among others, access time to the labour market (e.g. due to the stage and duration of the asylum procedure), and access to specific occupations/professions and sectors/industries. In general, the asylum seeker is in a more difficult situation than the refugee. The EU countries follow the Common European Asylum System, and its implications regarding the access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour market, to varying extents and under various conditions. The two non-EU countries of Iraq and Turkey are subject to their own laws in this regard. In general asylum seekers and refugees, in any host country, are willing to work as soon as possible despite all the circumstances that make their economic integration difficult, such as legal limitations, trauma, lack of language knowledge, and cultural background.

We can observe that in all the investigated countries refugees were able to find some support during inclusion into the labour market. This help was possible either thanks to state or NGO organizations. In countries like Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and Poland, where the state's resources dedicated to refugees is limited, NGOs play a crucial role.

On the other hand, in countries more experienced in the area of refugee integration, such as Austria, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, state institutions play a crucial role and their activities are only supported by NGOs. On the national level the support is most often limited to registration in the national equivalent of an employment agency responsible for linking the unemployed with job offers and offering language and training courses. Their support, however, was ineffective in most of the countries, and refugees and asylum seekers mostly found employment through a wider social network. Another body are universities, which are responsible for the recognition of diplomas. This procedure was, however, perceived as complicated and difficult in all countries, especially for those who had not brought their documents from the country of origin. In that case it is useful to map the skills of asylum seekers (as applied in Sweden), which then helps with development of an individual establishment plan. Finally, NGOs have an important role in trying to cover all necessary areas not covered by the state, such as through facilitating language courses and legal advice.

All nine country reports highlighted the role of duration of asylum proceedings applications as an important barrier to integration into the labour market. If the procedure takes too long (sometimes even a few years) and asylum seekers have no or very limited access to the labour market during this procedure, their chances of successfully returning to the labour market will be much lower.

Finally, we have observed significant differences between male and female migrants in employment. Refugee men are mostly employed in the primary sector and in construction, while women are mostly employed in the informal sector – care services, cleaning services and domestic work – which leaves them in a precarious situation. This situation changes only slightly after receiving protection status.

The above comparison proves that the integration of forced migrants cannot be successful without instruments facilitating forced migrants' access to education and the labour market. Although education and labour market comprise only two markers or means of integration (Ager and Strang 2008), to some extent they can be also considered determinants of successful inclusion into the society. However, there are numerous deficiencies in granting adult refugees' equal access to these two areas of integration in all RESPOND countries, albeit to varying degrees. As other research has proven, refugees are often better-educated than 'regular migrants', but they also more often work below their qualifications, which leads to feelings of greater alienation and exclusion (citation will be added). Not to undermine Pennix's definition of integration – 'the process of becoming an accepted part of society' – but greater focus should definitely be put on the receiving society component to be accepting and welcoming towards forced migrants. With regard to education and labour market, openness to refugees would mean a system which not only provides them with equal legal access to schools, universities, and various types of jobs, but also facilitates access through specific instruments provided by the state and tasks delegated to other actors of multi-level integration governance, including regional and local governments, NGOs, religious organisations, and private enterprise.

## Appendices

**Table 6 The importance of law and its effects for the situation of asylum seekers in the labour market in EU countries in light of the 7 EU Member States thematic country reports**

EU country	Key information
Greece	<p>(...) asylum seekers have immediate access to the labour market as employees or service or work providers, as soon as they lodge an asylum application and are provided with an asylum seeker card</p> <p>(...) since January 2020 (...) a six-month time limit before access to the labour market is granted to applicants</p> <p>In order to gain access to the labour market, one (including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection) must obtain a Tax Registration Number (AFM) and a Social Security Number (AMKA) (AIDA, 2019). (...) Numerous administrative obstacles and delays in the issuance of a Tax Registration Number for both categories of persons, mostly related to identification and proof of residence, have been reported (AIDA, 2019). The situation with regards to the issuance of a Social Security Number (AMKA) is complex and problematic.</p> <p>Finally, further preconditions may apply for the access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour market depending on the work position, such as obtaining a National Insurance Number or opening a salary bank account, a common requirement in the private sector (Joint Ministerial Decision 22528/430/2017). Obstacles in the ability of asylum seekers to open a bank account have been reported; major banks in Greece have repeatedly refused to open accounts for asylum seekers, even in cases where a certification of recruitment is submitted by the employer (AIDA, 2019).</p>
Italy	<p>(...) asylum applicants can already start working 60 days after they have submitted an asylum application</p>
Poland	<p>Asylum seekers cannot work for the first six months from the date of submission of an application. After that time, they may request a certificate (statement) in case a decision of granting protection has not been issued within that period of time, and the proceedings extended for a reason beyond applicant's control. This statement accompanied by the temporary certificate of identity of a foreigner, entitles person to work within the territory of the Republic of Poland according to the Law on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (Law on Employment, Article 35(1)). The certificate is valid until the date by which the decision on granting international protection becomes final, that is, until the moment when the decision is upheld or overturned by the Refugee Board (second-instance decision) (based on the Law on Protection) or earlier, if the asylum seeker decides not to appeal to Refugee Board. Foreigners who apply for international protection are exempt from the obligation to have a work permit, by providing the abovementioned certificate (Pachocka et al., 2020). (p. 39)</p>



Austria	<p>Whereas asylum seekers generally do have options for obtaining an employment permit three months after the beginning of their procedure, a 2004 decree (“Bartenstein Decree”) of the Federal Ministry of Economic and Social Affairs limited the scope of permits to seasonal employment.</p> <p>So-called non-profit employment constitutes another possibility of securing employment. This is compensated with a small recognition contribution (3 to 5 EUR per hour).</p> <p>Furthermore, decrees issued in 2012 and 2013 allowed asylum seekers under the age of 26 to obtain apprenticeship permits in economic sectors displaying a shortage of employees. Under the ÖVP -FPÖ-led government, this provision was abolished, leading to a broad public debate about persons in apprenticeship who had received a negative decision on their asylum application and could be deported.</p> <p>In May 2020, the High Administrative Court (VwGH) ruled that there must be effective access to the labour market for other asylum seekers who have not yet received a decision on their asylum application. This creates a certain ambiguity. Arguably, if the first-instance decision is negative, there shall be no access to a job, according to the Court.</p> <p>To start with asylum seekers, the interviewed experts agreed that Austria’s de facto ban of asylum seekers from labour market participation is legally questionable and problematic both in political and social terms (Josipovic &amp; Reeger, 2020b). According to the Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU, asylum seekers must receive effective access to the labour market no later than nine months after they have filed an asylum application.</p>
Germany	<p>(...) the access of refugees to the labour market depends on their legal status. (p. 23)</p> <p>After a general waiting period of three months, asylum seekers and refugees with a toleration status can apply for a work permit at the immigration authority (“Ausländerbehörde”). (p. 23)</p> <p>(...) reception centers should provide work opportunities (“Arbeitsgelegenheiten”) for asylum seekers to contribute to the maintenance of the facilities or to work for other municipal or public-interest organizations. In contrast to regular employment the basic rationale of these measures seems to be the occupation and utilization of asylum seekers, which is reflected in the symbolic allowance of 80 cents per hour (reduced from 1,05 EUR by the Integration Law in 2016). Persons who can work and are not subject to compulsory education can be obliged to work or to participate in early integration measures, such as so-called integration courses or preparatory language or vocational training or internship. (p. 23-24)</p>

Sweden	<p>(...) Asylum Seekers can be exempt from a work permit, if they can prove that Sweden is responsible for their asylum application and if they can provide identity documentation. With the work permit exemption - AT-UND - asylum seekers are able to work immediately after arrival. As found in AIDA (2018), the exemption can cease to apply upon a final negative decision of the asylum claim if the asylum seeker cooperates with the Migration Agency to leave Sweden voluntarily. In a case where the person has been employed for four months according to labour market rules prior to the final decision there is a possibility to switch immigration tracks and apply for a work permit as a labour migrant. This application has to be made within two weeks of the final decision and a work contract for at least one year must be offered by the current employer on terms that meet the collective agreements signed by the unions. Another requirement is possessing a valid passport.</p>
UK	<p>An asylum seeker may apply to UK Visas and Immigration (a branch of the Home Office) for permission to work i) if an initial decision on their application takes more than one year, or ii) if their application has been refused but they have not received a response to further submissions lodged more than 12 months previously (Gower, 2016: 3). In both cases the delay must be due to circumstances beyond the applicant's control in order for them to receive permission to work (Gower, 2016: 3; Home Office, 2017: 4). Asylum seekers in these circumstances who have received permission to work are limited to jobs on the shortage occupation list – an eclectic list ranging from geophysicists, to old age psychiatrists, from visual effects animators to specific categories of dancers and musicians (Home Office, 2017: 4 and 2016).[1] Asylum seekers are allowed to volunteer while their claim is being processed (Home Office, 2017: 4). (p. 23)</p>

Source: 7 EU country reports.

**Table 7 The importance of law and its effects for the situation of beneficiaries of international protection (refugee status, subsidiary protection status) in the labour market in EU countries in light of the 7 EU Member States thematic country reports**

EU country	Key information
Greece	<p>Beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries) have access to wage employment or self-employment on the same terms and conditions that apply for Greek citizens, provided they hold a valid residence permit (...)</p> <p>In order to gain access to the labour market, one (including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection) must obtain a Tax Registration Number (AFM) and a Social Security Number (AMKA) (AIDA, 2019). (...) Numerous administrative obstacles and delays in the issuance of a Tax Registration Number for both categories of persons, mostly related to identification and proof of residence, have been reported (AIDA, 2019). The situation with regards to the issuance of a Social Security Number (AMKA) is complex and problematic.</p>
Italy	<p>(...) foreigner nationals who have been granted refugee or subsidiary protection status “are entitled to the same treatment provided for Italian nationals regarding paid employment, self-employment, and inclusion in professional registers, vocational training and on-the-job training.” (p. 24)</p>
Poland	<p>The access of beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and those under subsidiary protection) as well as members of their families to the labour market and different vocational activation instruments (with some exceptions) is held equal to citizens of Poland as defined by the abovementioned Law on Employment . The beneficiaries of international protection have access to jobs in public sector such as work in education or health services, unless there are specific regulations requiring Polish citizenship, for instance in so called “core of public sector” as civil servants or police (Pawlak, 2019a; Sienkiewicz, 2016). Contrary to asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection may take up and pursue economic activities, and particularly self-employment (Law on freedom of economic activity, Art. 13 ust. 1) . Since beneficiaries of international protection have rights close to Polish citizens on the labour market, the rules of the labour law, job protection mechanism and other legal regulations, such as right to minimum wages and safe and healthy conditions also apply to them. (p. 39)</p>
Austria	<p>(...) once asylum seekers are granted a formal refugee status, they have full access to the labour market and enjoy equal labour rights as do Austrian citizens. (...) the Public Employment Service (AMS) has to support them in their job search and in the development of skills.</p>
Germany	<p>(...) the Federal Employment Office (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) is supposed to check that there is no disadvantage of refugees compared to domestic employees. If refugees are eligible for a EU Blue Card or have been in Germany for more than 15 months, there is generally no proof of precedence required. Finally, no approval is required if a person is eligible for the Blue Card, has entered a vocational training measure or has been in Germany for more than four years. (p. 23)</p>

Sweden	A successful applicant will receive a temporary residence permit of up to two years. After 4 years on temporary permits, a person who still has a job can then apply for a permanent residence permit, provided he or she has sufficient means to support and accommodate his or her family. These temporary permits allow for family reunification and the right of the spouse to work but do not require sufficient income to support and accommodate the family. This policy was introduced as part of an effort to allow highly qualified persons with required proficiency, knowledge and skills needed in Sweden, to access the labour market (AIDA Report 2018).
UK	The ability to work in the formal labour market is determined by legal status. For example, asylum seekers are generally unable to work, including in self-employment. They receive access to work after receiving asylum status. (p 23)

Source: 7 EU country reports.

**Table 8 The importance of law and its effects for the situation of forced migrants on the labour market in non-EU countries in light of the thematic country reports for Turkey and Iraq**

Turkey	Iraq
<p>Syrians with TPS [Temporary Protection Status] were permitted to work in Turkey for the first time when the law governing work permits for migrants (Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under TP - Law no. 4817) was passed in January 2016. This law in principle, ensures that refugees' rights are protected from exploitation and that they receive at least minimum wage. The law allowed Syrians in Turkey to obtain work permits and legally work at least 6 months after they are given the TP status and subject to a limit of 10% of a given company's workforce. Lawmakers and commentators hoped that the law would decrease participation in the informal labor market (cf. Icduygu and Simsek 2016), however it seems to have had little effect. For 2018, DGMM's (most recent) official figures list just 16,783 work permits for Syrians. This number was just 65,000 at the end of 2019, according to news reports. There are several barriers, preventing Syrians from receiving permits. In the first place, working informally is socially accepted and widespread in Turkey (Senses, 2016). Second, the law brings about complicated and costly bureaucratic procedures for obtaining work permits (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017). Permits are only</p>	<p>Iraq has not joined the International Refugee Convention of 51 and its 1967 protocol, nor does it possess a comprehensive and clear legal framework to deal with refugee affairs in general. (p. 16) (...) Iraq does have a law for political refugees only, regulating their humanitarian, economic, social and educational conditions, namely, Law 51 of 1971, which accords political refugees the same rights that Iraqi citizens and enable them to benefit from health and cultural services, the practice of professions, business, employment and the right to family reunion or reunion with their legally dependent individuals. These people are granted the right to reside as long as they have the right to asylum. This law also gives the right to refugees to obtain agricultural land in accordance with the provisions of the Agrarian Reform Law. (p. 16-17)</p> <p>Because of the policies in Iraq, asylum seekers have access to the labour market after obtaining residency and security investigation, just as the Political Refugees Law No. 51 of 1971 has given refugees the right to work and access to health and educational services as they are Iraqis. There are provisions in the Residence Law in the Kurdistan region of Iraq that grants asylum applicants the right to enter the labour market when they obtain residency, and that those who reside in the camps according to the data of the Ministry of Immigration who are (38%) can work freely in the camps even if they do not obtain residency. At the same time the Iraqi authorities allow them to work outside the designated camps after they are sponsored by known Iraqi people, or if the employer guarantees them to work in companies, institutions or the private sector. (p. 20)</p> <p>The residency permit gives the refugees right for work for one year (renewable) - obtaining residency gives the right to work.</p> <p>In general, integration into the labour market differs among refugee groups, as well as in terms of their place of residence. As for the Palestinians, they have integrated in the labour market in Iraq, and the Syrians in the KRI as well. But the residency permit gives them the right to work for one year (renewable), so obtaining residency confers the right to work. The refugees have the right to</p>

granted if Turkish workers cannot be employed in the specific job, and only limited numbers of Syrians are allowed to be employed. Finally, as our interviews also show, many employers do not wish to pay minimum wage and social security insurance (see also, Akgündüz, van den Berg, & Hassink, 2015). (p. 32)	work according to the law. As for asylum seekers, they are subject to Residency. Permanent residency does not exist. Even Palestinians depend on temporary and renewed residency, and there is no granting of the Iraqi citizenship to them. (Irq-2KWV-Meso-F-NO.2) (p.22)
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Source: 7 EU country reports.

**Table 9 Type of last job performed in country of origin**

Type of work	Iraq	Lebanon	Turkey	Greece	Italy	Austria	Poland	Germany	UK	Sweden	Total
Unemployed	26%	28%	36%	19%	23%	32%	7%	32%	0%	16%	26%
Unskilled worker	21%	40%	8%	19%	27%	5%	19%	17%	38%	6%	18%
Skilled worker or craftsman	5%	12%	13%	19%	18%	16%	15%	14%	0%	8%	12%
Service employee or salesperson	12%	0%	4%	0%	5%	0%	7%	3%	13%	8%	5%
Office worker, technician, and other middle management	16%	2%	1%	5%	0%	16%	7%	8%	0%	11%	6%
Specialist	19%	11%	21%	19%	5%	26%	30%	18%	50%	34%	21%
Manager	0%	2%	3%	5%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	6%	2%
Self-employed	2%	5%	14%	14%	23%	5%	11%	9%	0%	11%	10%
Total	43	57	95	21	22	19	27	66	8	64	422

Source: own elaboration

**Table 10 Type of job performed in destination country**

Type of work	Iraq	Lebanon	Turkey	Greece	Italy	Austria	Poland	Germany	UK	Sweden	Total
<b>Unemployed</b>	45%	53%	43%	55%	82%	67%	48%	61%	46%	60%	54%
<b>Unskilled worker</b>	32%	28%	20%	10%	11%	25%	21%	20%	8%	4%	19%
<b>Skilled worker or craftsman</b>	6%	5%	8%	0%	4%	0%	10%	9%	0%	6%	6%
<b>Service employee or salesperson</b>	4%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	2%	0%	6%	3%

<b>Office worker, technician, and other middle management</b>	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	5%	8%	10%	3%
<b>Specialist</b>	9%	5%	11%	34%	4%	4%	17%	5%	31%	10%	11%
<b>Manager/supervisors/director</b>	0%	5%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Self-employed</b>	2%	2%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	3%	4%
<b>Total</b>	53	57	103	29	28	24	29	66	13	68	470

Source: own elaboration

**Table 11 Type of job performed in destination country – Men**

Type of work in dest country	Iraq	Lebanon	Turkey	Greece	Italy	Austria	Poland	Germany	UK	Sweden	Total
<b>Unemployed</b>	11%	19%	19%	50%	80%	69%	38%	52%	40%	53%	40%
<b>Unskilled worker</b>	59%	50%	28%	14%	12%	23%	13%	24%	0%	0%	24%
<b>Skilled worker or craftsman</b>	11%	8%	9%	0%	4%	0%	19%	14%	0%	11%	9%
<b>Service employee or salesperson</b>	7%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	6%	3%
<b>Office worker, technician, and other middle management</b>	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	5%	10%	8%	3%
<b>Specialist</b>	4%	8%	13%	36%	4%	8%	25%	2%	40%	17%	13%
<b>Manager/supervisor/director</b>	0%	12%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
<b>Self-employed</b>	4%	4%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	6%	6%
<b>Total number</b>	27	26	53	22	25	13	16	42	10	36	270

Source: own elaboration

**Table 12 Type of job performed in destination country – Women**

Type of work in dest. country	Iraq	Lebanon	Turkey	Greece	Italy	Austria	Poland	Germany	UK	Sweden	Total
<b>Unemployed</b>	81%	81%	68%	71%	100%	64%	62%	74%	67%	69%	72%
<b>Unskilled worker</b>	4%	10%	12%	0%	0%	27%	31%	13%	33%	9%	12%
<b>Skilled worker or craftsman</b>	0%	3%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
<b>Service employee or salesperson</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	6%	2%

<b>Office worker, technician, and other middle management</b>	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	13%	3%
<b>Specialist</b>	15%	3%	8%	29%	0%	0%	8%	9%	0%	3%	8%
<b>Manager/supervisors/director</b>	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Self-employed</b>	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Total number</b>	26	31	50	7	3	11	13	23	3	32	199

Source: own elaboration

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