

**SESSION 4: Building tools for Labour INT.****GROUP 2: FROM RECEPTION TO WORK. What is needed to bring a refugee at work? What conditions should be fulfilled?****Background note (abstract from the [EUROFOUND REPORT](#) Approaches to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers)**

The sudden and massive influx of asylum seekers in 2015 initially posed a humanitarian challenge. The longer-term issues around the successful integration of the new arrivals quickly came to the fore, prompting an increased interest in social inclusion measures.

As social inclusion is closely linked to successful labour market integration, the question of how to ensure swift access to and integration in the labour market has become a prominent issue on the policy agenda in many EU Member States. Moreover, some hosting communities experience high levels of unemployment.

In many countries, the average duration of the asylum procedure has increased (in some cases quite substantially). Nevertheless, various measures have been introduced to ease the effects of delays in obtaining a decision; in some cases, the procedure has been accelerated for specific groups of asylum seekers.

Delays in obtaining asylum can have far-reaching consequences, as legal access to the labour market is usually linked to the status of international protection, meaning that it is open just to refugees. Due to the sudden and high inflow of asylum seekers, however, access to the labour market for this other group has had to be eased.

This is generally the approach adopted by the Member States most affected by the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, they face a number of challenges, linked to the current crisis.

- Living conditions in reception centres are often inadequate to prepare people for joining the labour market. Overcrowding and poor conditions are reported, as well as a lack of accommodation. There are problems with the availability of externally provided services, and coordination with these services can be difficult.
- Although the geographical distribution of asylum seekers and refugees is planned, in most cases proximity of jobs cannot be taken into account due to housing shortages.
- Funding for employment services for asylum seekers is often less well established than that for refugees. Access and the rules for participation are also not as straightforward.
- Social security entitlements for working asylum seekers vary across countries, and sometimes the rules are less favourable than for other migrant groups, including refugees.
- For asylum seekers, opportunities for self-employment are very limited, mainly due to the uncertainty of their status.
- Employers are only sporadically given incentives to employ asylum seekers; increasing red-tape causes administrative delays; the use of wage subsidies as a tool is entirely lacking.
- Although the school-age children of asylum seekers are entitled to attend compulsory education in all Member States, special arrangements for these children are not always guaranteed. Some countries reported that schools are ill-prepared to receive these children.
- The language barrier remains more persistent than anticipated, which creates a problem even for some low-skilled, yet safety-relevant jobs
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In many countries, the granting of asylum has become temporary in the wake of the crisis. Provision of temporary asylum can weaken refugees' position in the labour market since it may deter employers from hiring them or offering them longer-term contracts or investing in training.

## POLICY POINTERS

- When new housing opportunities are explored, the availability of jobs should be taken into account.
- attention should be paid to providing access to social services (for example, specific education for asylum seekers' children, other family support, adequate healthcare), and if services are externally delivered, better coordination with the providers is needed in reception centres.
- Specific measures targeting refugees and asylum seekers (for example, language training, on-the-job training and mentoring by earlier migrants) are needed.
- flanking language trainings with a specific occupational/professional impetus during job preparation schemes
- Integration plans should be realistic: low-skilled jobs may come first (for initial work experience), but career paths should be offered for more sustainable integration.
- The potential to involve private labour market intermediaries or temporary work agencies in offering employment services (possibly in cooperation with public employment services) should be explored.
- better coordination with and among social partners as actors (together with other relevant players) could also lead to a more efficient implementation of the integration process.
- The EU-level platforms could prove useful tools not only for exchange of experience of promising measures, but also for monitoring and evaluating the existing initiatives

Considering that Labour-INT actions have the ambition to involve tens of refugees in concrete actions aimed at better including them in the Labour market some criteria are needed to proceed toward an effective selection of candidates.

In particular Labour-INT actors have specific capacities and competences but cannot provide assistance for all the integration measures that a person with a refugee background may need. That is why Labour-INT actions should not go beyond what is in the economic and social partners specific capacities. In this sense it would be useful to set some common criteria to identify people with a migration background that may be involved in the Labour-INT actions and for whom Labour-INT actors can actually deliver a concrete support.

OUTCOMES: please set a checklist of pre-conditions that candidates should meet to be admitted in Labour-INT actions.

This are preconditions that are built thanks to a successful reception process. People involved in Labour-INT actions should be ready to go through a path that bring them to the labour market and possibly to the workplace (e.g. people admitted to training course or other activities should be in good health conditions, have a decent accommodation, etc.)

CHECKLIST
