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WHERE THERE IS A WILL, THERE
IS A WAY

26.04.2017

Private Sector Engagement in
the Employment of
Beneficiaries of International
Protection

[UNHCR Bulgaria](#)

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This study aims to fill information gaps by gathering up-to-date data on the needs and attitudes of employers, trade unions, and employer associations to working with and hiring refugees, and issues that affect these attitudes in the Republic of Bulgaria. It is based on an analysis of national policies and practices as well as an empirical approach. The results of the study will be used by UNHCR and partner organizations and institutions in the country to support their efforts to inform not only UNHCR's policy and advocacy decisions on employment activities and programs, but also other actors' decisions as to how employment programmes, practices, policies and legislation might be developed and improved in the future so that they better respond to the needs of asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection and stateless persons.

On the author of the report:

Stana Iliev is a PhD candidate at the New Bulgarian University in the field of Diversity Management and Governance. Thesis: "Employment Policies for Social Inclusion: The Case of Roma and Refugees in Bulgaria". Stana has eight years of experience as a program and project officer in the international nonprofit sector, including the Bulgarian Red Cross, Bilitis Resource Center Foundation and the Trust for Social Achievement as well as an MBA with a focus on entrepreneurship. Her interest lies in the intersection of economics and human rights and innovative practices in integration such as social enterprises and vocational education and training. She is the initiator and organizer of the 2012-2013 Business Incubator for Roma & Refugees based at the Bulgarian Red Cross. The project has been recognized as a best practice on integration by the European Commission and the VERSO (Volunteers for European Employment) network under the European Regional Development Fund.

She is also a committed Human Rights Activist in Bulgaria. Her main areas of action are LGBTI and women's rights as well as refugee and Roma empowerment. On the basis of her work, the prize "Activist of the Year" was awarded to her by the Helsinki Committee on Human Rights in Bulgaria in December 2016.

The author expresses her gratitude for the support provided by the staff at the reception centres of the State Agency for Refugees in Sofia as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Employment Agency for their cooperation and input. Special thanks to the colleagues from all involved civil society organizations, the Bulgarian Red Cross, Caritas Sofia, the Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants, and the Council of Refugee Women. The author is especially grateful to all private businesses as well as economic interest groups that agreed to participate and contribute to the research.

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Introduction

Since August 2013, Bulgaria has experienced a big increase in asylum applications from predominantly Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, which the national and regional institutions were not fully prepared to manage.

Consequently, Bulgaria has been faced with a set of challenges concerning especially integration, which will remain a difficult task to handle for years to come. The social and economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection presents great challenges but also great potential for Bulgaria's society and economy.

Employment of is one of the most important tools for social and economic inclusion and participation in society. Qualification, re-qualification and job matching of those disadvantaged people in order to mobilize their potential for inclusion, are among the most powerful ways to foster integration. Supporting people to be independent from welfare and become an active part of the economy and workforce will be a very important instrument to tackle social exclusion and to foster a healthy economy.

This, however, is an issue that requires radical rethinking of public and private sector integration and employment politics. How we decide to deal with this situation will not only determine the fate of thousands of people, but also define our self-understanding as a society in the 21st century.

While integration and employment programs for refugees applied so far are failing to effectively reach their target group, this publication focuses on the role and potential actions of the private sector in the employment of refugees, humanitarian status holders and asylum seekers in Bulgaria.

The present research provides an empirically grounded understanding of the attitudes of employers, trade unions, and employer associations when it comes to recruiting and employing refugees in Bulgaria. Resulting from these insights, policy recommendations have been formulated for the private, civil and public sector on how to improve the integration of refugees on the labor market in the country.

On the one hand, the research proposes measures in which employers and refugee job-seekers can be put in touch with one another for their mutual benefit. On the other hand, it identifies socially responsible activities benefiting refugees and the host society at large, and recommends ways of raising awareness of refugee employment rights and challenges in Bulgaria.

To do so, the research also takes a closer look into the obstacles that refugees face in accessing the labor market as well as the political and economic framework in which private companies operate in and the communication channels used to articulate their market needs.

What is more, it provides basic information for the private sector on legal and administrative framework of recruiting and employing refugees, in addition to providing insight on the structure and workforce potential of job-seekers among refugees in Bulgaria. Best practices of companies that have been working with refugees and that have successfully included them in their work force and company culture underpin our findings.

Methodology

Aim of this research is to understand the attitude of the private sector in Bulgaria when it comes to working with refugees. It will explore challenges, concerns and potentials that businesses face when trying to include beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers in their workforce as well as consider general workforce needs and employment market trends in the country.

For the purpose of this paper, the term refugees will be used to refer to the categories of beneficiaries of international protection, referring to both refugee and humanitarian status holders. The State Agency of Refugees will be abbreviated (SAR).

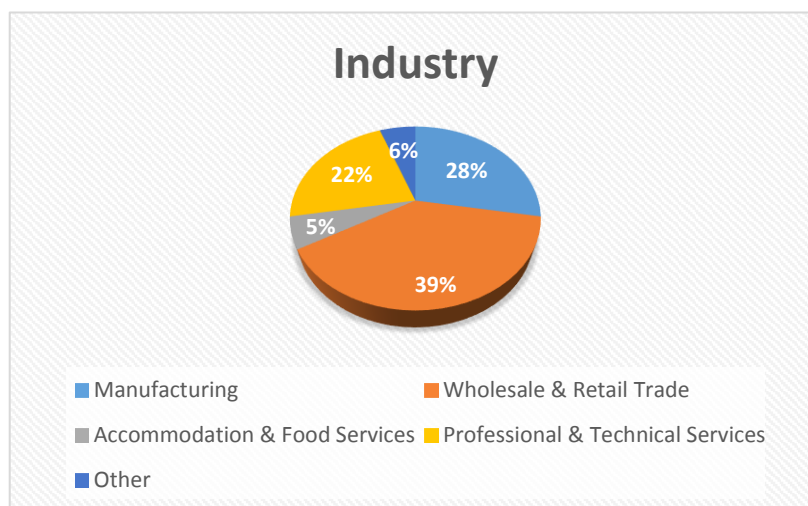
The research is based on a survey including 15 private companies, 2 human resources and recruitment companies, 7 chambers of commerce and political & economic special interest groups, 6 civil society organizations working with refugees as well as the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, the Bulgarian Employment Agency, Invest Bulgaria Agency and the State Agency for Refugees.

The employers where selected in such a way that there is an equal representation of businesses that have experience working with refugees and employers interested in hiring refugees. These companies included foreign investors and Bulgarian businesses.

The survey itself was conducted in two phases. The first round of the survey consisted of face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questionnaires. The second round was an online questionnaire collecting input and opinions about the findings of the interviews and on the policy recommendations developed from these findings.

In addition to the survey, a desk study on the policy framework around the employment market for beneficiaries of international protection was undertaken.

The seventeen interviewed employers and recruitment companies consisted of 11 large-sized businesses, 6 small and medium-sized businesses and 1 micro-sized company from various industries such as IT & Software development, textile industry, production and manufacturing, food and farming industry as well as retail industry and professional service providers.



The findings of the survey and policy analysis are reviewed, discussed and translated into recommendations on enabling the private sector to become engaged in the employment of beneficiaries of international protection and for private companies wishing to include beneficiaries of international protection into their workforce. Special attention is paid to gender aspects.

Refugees in Bulgaria

Who is an Asylum Seeker or a Beneficiary of International Protection?

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers are people who claim before the Bulgarian state to have a fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a specific social group in their country of origin or for whom there is a real risk of suffering serious harm, such as death penalty or execution, or torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or serious threat to their life by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict.

While the relevant state institution, the State Agency for Refugees (SAR), is assessing their claim, asylum seekers have, among others, the right to a legal stay, shelter, food, and medical insurance. In Bulgaria an asylum seeker is permitted to work 3 months after they filed their application. Within a period of 6 months (or up to a maximum period of 21 months in complicated cases) and based on the assessment, the SAR issues either a positive decision granting a refugee or humanitarian status, or a negative decision rejecting the application claim. Asylum seekers retain the above-mentioned rights during appeal procedures following a negative decision on their asylum applications. In the relevant legislation there is an indicative period within which the respective courts should take a decision on a case. However, in reality the duration of the appeal procedures depends on the workload of the courts and may last for years before a final decision on an asylum claim is taken.

Asylum seekers have temporary residence documents, called registration cards. Registration cards are issued for a period of 3 months and physically renewed every nine months. They are extended for the length of the period of assessment of the application claim. Expiration of the validity of the Registration card does not equal an end of the asylum procedure. Asylum seekers have the obligation to collect their extended Registration cards. In case of a negative decision at the end of an appeal procedure, the card is retrieved by the SAR.

As mentioned, asylum seekers are entitled to access the labour market three months after applying for protection. This also includes the right to participate in programs and projects financed by the state budget or under European funding. Upon the end of the third month, asylum seekers are issued a certificate by the State Agency for Refugees, which serves as proof of their right to work.

During the process of assessment of the asylum application, the State Agency for Refugees covers the health insurance monthly instalments from the state budget.

Asylum seekers may or may not have national identity documents. If they do, these are submitted to the State Agency for Refugees for the period of the assessment of the application claim. An asylum seeker may make a specific request to have the national identity document returned for a specific period of time and for a specific purpose (such as signing a labour or a rental contract, opening a bank account). In case an asylum seeker does not possess a national identity document or cannot retrieve it from the SAR, they cannot open a bank account and should be looking for alternatives to receive the agreed upon monthly salary in case they are employed.

Beneficiaries of International Protection

There are three procedures for granting asylum in Bulgaria. These are an individual application with either the SAR or the Office of the President, or a decision by the Council of Ministers to grant temporary protection on a group basis. As asylum through the Presidential procedure was granted only in a few cases in the past about 20 years¹ and temporary protection has so far not been granted, the current report focuses only on the two categories of international protection that can be granted as a result of the asylum procedure with the SAR: refugee status or humanitarian status. Holders of refugee and humanitarian status are referred to as beneficiaries of international protection.

In order to be able to enjoy their rights, including to employment, beneficiaries of international protection are obliged to register in a municipality of their choice in order to be issued identity cards for refugees and for humanitarian status holders (containing a Personal Identification Number). Although the identity cards are only valid for a limited and specific time period, both refugee status and humanitarian status do not have a limited validity and only end in accordance with an exhaustive number of criteria as described by law.²

Refugees

According to the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees of the United Nations a refugee is a person who being outside of the country of their nationality (or if stateless – outside of the country of former habitual residence), owns a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group and political opinion or conviction.



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Refugees are people who have received a favorable decision on their asylum claim and are granted indefinite leave to remain in Bulgaria. A refugee has the same rights and obligations as Bulgarian citizens, excluding the right to vote and be elected; establish political parties or join existing parties as a party member; hold public office at positions for which Bulgarian citizenship is required by law; and serve in the Bulgarian army. Family members of a refugee (husband/wife and children aged under 18) also have the same rights. A refugee has the right to receive permission to reunite with their family who reside outside Bulgaria in the country.

People with refugee status are obliged to cover their health insurance themselves.

¹ Foreigners who have been granted asylum in the Republic of Bulgaria have equal rights and obligations as foreigners who have been granted refugee status.

² The status can only be terminated because the individual does not need that protection any more or the situation in the country of origin has steadily improved, or, if the status is revoked by the Bulgarian state as a sanction for giving false information during the application process. Status termination is a separate administrative procedure.

In Bulgaria a refugee has full employment rights, and can claim benefits and take part in government-funded programs, for example for the unemployed. They are employed under the same legal framework applicable to a Bulgarian citizen, and therefore there is no need for a special permission by the Employment Agency to sign an employment contract.

Humanitarian Status Holders

A person may receive humanitarian status, if they are forced to leave or to remain outside their country of origin, if they face a real risk of serious harm in their country, such as death penalty or execution, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Humanitarian status is also granted if there is war in the country of origin and/or people face a serious and personal threat to their life as civilians because of violence arising from an international or an internal armed conflict.

A humanitarian status holder has the same rights and obligations as a foreigner with permanent residence in Bulgaria. Family members (husband/wife and children aged under 18) also have the same rights. A humanitarian status holder has the right to receive permission to reunite with their family in Bulgaria.

People with humanitarian status are obliged to cover their health insurance themselves.

In Bulgaria a humanitarian status holder has full employment rights, and can claim benefits and take part in government-funded programs, for example for the unemployed. They are employed under the same legal framework applicable to a Bulgarian citizen, and therefore there is no need for a special permission by the Employment Agency to sign an employment contract.

Statistics & Skill Profiles of Beneficiaries of International Protection in Bulgaria

Europe has been facing a dramatic rise in numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the past five years. The reception, accommodation and integration of asylum seekers and refugees has posed enormous challenges to South-East Europe, and to the European Union and its member states in general. In addition to the economic and administrative strain on the receiving countries, there have been backlashes of right wing parties in Europe and in Bulgaria which puts further restraints on the states to fulfil their international, regional and national obligations in the reception and integration of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

Since 2013, the number of asylum applications in Bulgaria amounted to just over 58 000 at 28.02.2017 – an average of 14 500 per year, compared to a total of 1 387 asylum applications in Bulgaria in 2012³.

Despite these relatively high numbers, Bulgaria remains a so-called transit country. Only a small fraction of those asylum seekers and status holders are staying in the country permanently.

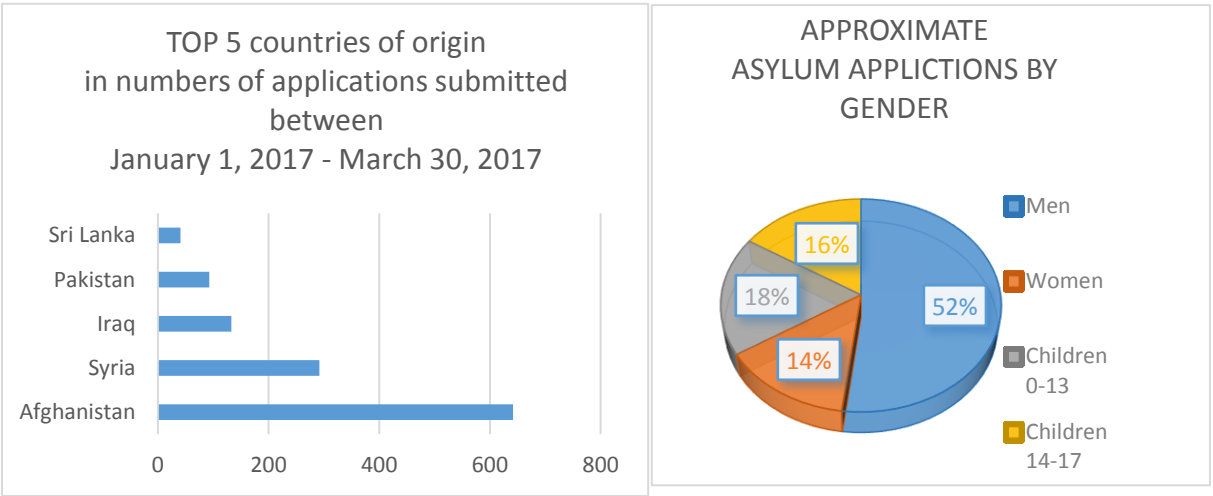
In a qualitative survey of UNHCR⁴ from 2016, less than 10% of the 400 participating asylum seekers and status holders articulated the wish to stay in the country.

Even though the actual number of people staying in the country is unknown, there are only a couple of hundred refugees per year who remain in Bulgaria. Most of them settle in the capital, Sofia.

³ State Agency for Refugees Bulgaria <http://www.aref.government.bg/?cat=8>

⁴ AGD PA Report 2016, UNHCR Bulgaria

Since 2013, the main countries of origin for asylum seekers in Bulgaria are Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.

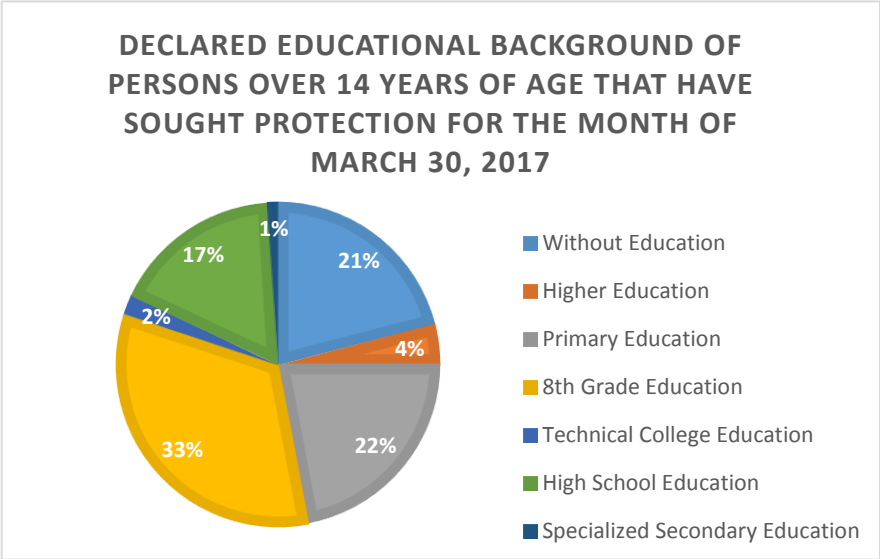


According to the State Agency for Refugees, approximately 14% of asylum seekers are women. Children make up 34% of applications for international protection, of which 18% are aged 0-13 years and 16% 14-17 years old. About 52% of asylum seekers are men aged 18 and older.

There is no coordinated, centralized system of collecting skill profiles and educational qualifications of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in Bulgaria. This is done only sporadically. The latest data from State Agency for Refugees⁵ from March 2017 indicates the level of education of asylum seekers: 33% 8th grade education; 22% were with elementary education; 21% without education; 17% with high school education; 4 % with University education and 3% with technical or specialized college or secondary education.

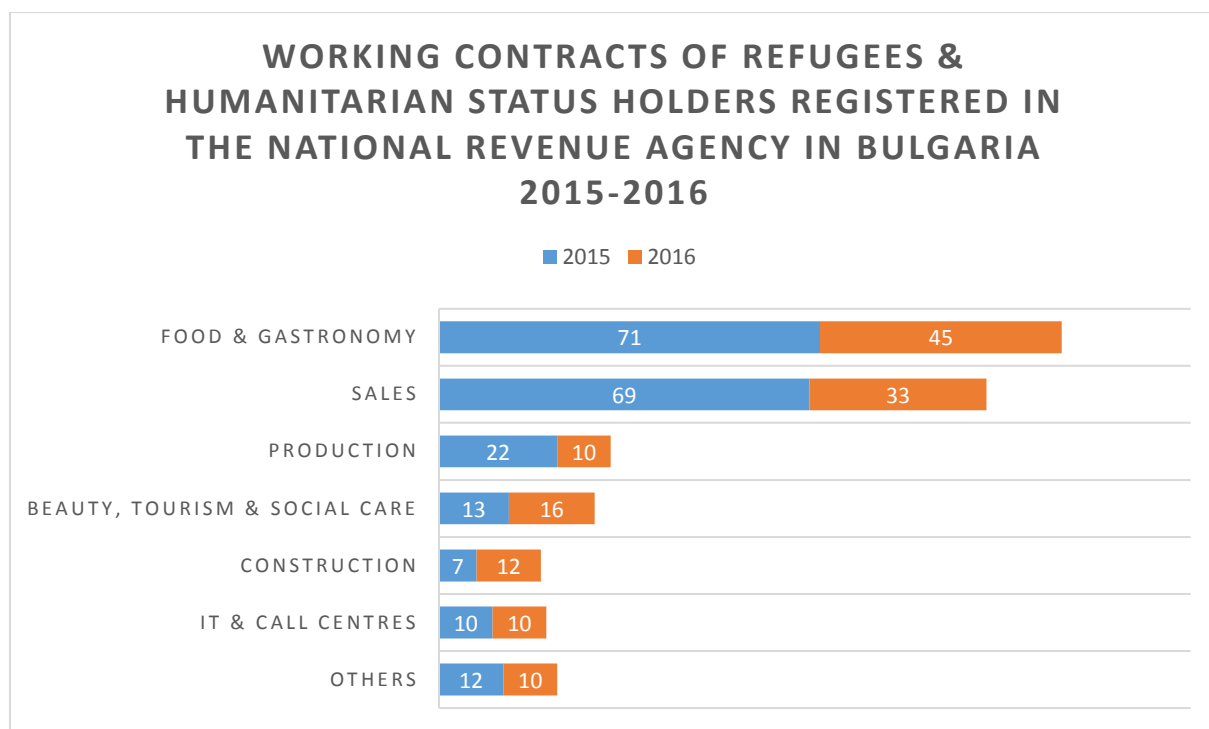
Refugees and humanitarian status holders with registered working contracts are

few. In 2015 the National Revenue Agency registered 175 men and 17 women with working contracts, adding up to 204 working contracts as some of them where holding more than one contract at a time. In 2016, the number of working contracts decreased slightly to 136 men and 26 women with working contracts.



⁵ State Agency for Refugees - 67th coordination meeting for managing the refugee crisis in Bulgaria

Furthermore, according to observations of Caritas Sofia, an approximate of 60% of asylum seekers and refugees work without a contract, which exposes them to great risk of exploitation.



Based on Focus Groups sessions conducted as part of the 2017 UNHCR “Age, Gender and Diversity Participatory Assessments” (with so far more than 30 refugees) and according to social workers from the Bulgarian Red Cross, the Council of Refugee Women and Caritas, the economic sectors status holders most desire to work in are the following:

- Construction
- Food preparation
- Transport
- Textile Industry
- Factory work
- Sales
- Beauty Services



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This observation is backed up by the previously mentioned data from working contracts registered at the National Revenue Agency as well as from information collected by social workers in five reception centres in Bulgaria: Voenna Rampa, Harmanli, Vrazhdebna, Bania and Ovcha Kupel. For the purposes of the Study, a list of professional experiences and the desired occupations of job-seekers living in these centres have been collected in February and March 2017.

From the results it can be deducted that most asylum seekers and refugees are seeking work in the area of their expertise as there was a great overlap of desired positions and previous experience, marked in green below. What is more, it was also found that job seekers due to their particular social circumstances displayed a great willingness to accept work that is more unique and common to Bulgaria such as factory work, translation services for refugee-oriented NGOs and call centres with projects in the Middle East.

Desired Occupations		Professional Experience	
Sales	4	Sales	4
General Worker	3	General Worker	3
Farmer/ Breeder	6	Farmer/ Breeder	6
Construction	6	Construction	6
Welder	1	Welder	1
Seamstress/ Tailor	8	Seamstress/ Tailor	6
Car Mechanic	3	Car Mechanic	3
Cook/ Baker/ Kitchen Worker	5	Cook/ Baker/ Kitchen Worker	5
Leather works	1	Leather works	1
Gardening	1	Gardening	1
Jewellery making	1	Jewellery making	1
Ceramics	1	Ceramics	1
Carpenter	1	Carpenter	1
Driver	2	Driver	3
Hairdresser	2	Hairdresser	2
Painter	1	Painter	2
Computer Technician	2	Computer Technician	2
Paver	1	Paver	1
Administration	1	Electrician	1
Call Centre	1	Accountant	1
Translator	2	Civil Engineer	1
Car Wash	1	Marketing Manager	1
Social Worker	1	Assistant doctor's office	1
Factory worker	2	Nurse	1
Anything	15	Accountant	3
		Teacher	1
		None	2

Access barriers for Beneficiaries of International Protection to the Employment Market

Since the beginning of 2014, the Bulgarian state does not offer targeted integration support to beneficiaries of international protection. Integration services such as Bulgarian language classes, housing support, professional education classes or help with child care and enrollment of children in school – which are essential for successful realization and integration into national workforce – are not provided by the state. As a result refugees are most often unprepared for the Bulgarian employment market.

There are several barriers preventing refugees to quickly enter the employment market in Bulgaria. A lack of Bulgarian language skills and a low educational background are the primary and biggest barriers that beneficiaries of international protection face for entering the labour market in Bulgaria. On the other hand, highly skilled refugees looking for higher-level jobs face difficulties securing such positions, as they are unable to prove their formal education documentation. Legal recognition of skills and qualification are almost impossible to secure for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. In Bulgaria, the legalization and accreditation process for educational degrees is extremely long and complicated, including high fees and additional costs such as translations and notary fees. Oftentimes, the persons do not have their original documents nor can they obtain the original documents from the respective education institutions at home. Even if the documents are available at home, refugees will generally be unwilling to contact their diplomatic representations for the purposes of legalization of their diplomas and qualifications. This can jeopardise their security and that of their relatives in the country of origin. Moreover, such a contact may be considered, under the Law for Asylum and Refugees, grounds for termination of their international protection.



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Another major obstacle is the disconnect between the available job offers and job-seekers. Due to the cultural divide and the language barrier, job seekers often rely on word of mouth recruitment channels only and are not able to use more common and official job seeking options such as online job portals, newspapers and job fairs.

Aside from these obvious barriers, there are several other challenges making it harder for refugees to participate in the employment market. These challenges include less developed social networks, difficulties securing housing, health conditions caused by trauma and violence during flight and social discrimination. Additionally, the need to first get acquainted with Bulgarian culture and communication styles are factors that make it harder for job-seekers to integrate into new company cultures smoothly.

Aside from the traditional factors that contribute to inequality such as pay gaps, time spent in unpaid work, work-life balance, access to employment, levels of employment, career development opportunities, recruitment policies and equity at the work place, women from refugee communities often face additional hurdles such as lack of education, traditional and patriarchal family structures and lack of professional experience.

In addition to that, after securing a job, refugees oftentimes do not have the opportunity to continue language classes due to their working times, once again, stalling their integration process.

Best Practice – Pirin Tex

Pirin Tex LTD specializes in manufacturing high quality man's and woman's clothes in Bulgaria. With a total of nearly 3000 employees, it is among the biggest employers in South-West Bulgaria. Its production facilities are located in Gotse Delchev serving customers in Germany, France, Switzerland, Greece, Netherlands and Italy.

Pirin Tex was one of the first companies to reach out to refugee and asylum seeker communities after the start of the refugee influx in 2013. In cooperation with SAR staff and social workers, the company started recruiting directly in the reception facilities of the State Agency for Refugees, translating job offers and interviewing people on the spot. The company runs its own training facility and offered up individual support (incl. free housing for the refugees) and additional language classes to the new employees. The management also supported their refugee employees by helping with dealings with municipality, schools and police, facilitating the dialogue between employees and the regional authorities.

Of ten employees, some of which were families with family members in other countries that decided to move on to other countries, one young man decided to stay and settle in Gotse Delchev. According to the management of Pirin Tex, the crucial factor for that person to stay, was him being able to build connections in the community.

Climate of the Bulgarian Employment Market

Employment Policies

Bulgaria's employment policies are based on the National Employment Strategy, the National Employment Plan and the Strategic Goals of the European Union.

The Bulgarian Constitution recognizes the right to work as a fundamental right of its citizens. The Labour Code is the document regulating the relationship between employers and employees. Labour legislation is implemented only after obligatory consultation with employees, employers and their special interest groups. This is essential, when considering a more active involvement of the private sector in advocating for improvements in employment policies. It means that employers unions and special interest groups are entitled to provide input into the process.

During this policy design process, the government developed a national Employment Strategy as well as other relevant strategies, national employment programs and a national strategic framework for the implementation of European funding in the country, under consideration of targets and recommendations of the European Commission.

The legislation is implemented by the General Labour Inspectorate and the Minister of Labour and Social Policies through the Employment Agency.

Employment and SME support as well as employability, qualification and job matching activities are implemented through the Operational Programs Human Resource Development and Competitiveness. The operational programs and the indicative plans, which are available only for the ongoing year, do not foresee specialised programs for beneficiaries of international protection or special measures to make existing programs more accessible for them.

After Bulgaria's accession to the European Union in 2007, the economic situation has generally improved in comparison to the pre-accession years regarding economic growth and foreign direct investment. According to the National Statistics office of Bulgaria, the unemployment rate has been decreasing from 11.5% in 2014 to 7.6% in 2016⁶ and is expected to continue to marginally decrease in the next couple of years. The country has been recovering slowly from the global economic crisis in 2008. After some growth in the years between 2011 and 2014, the gross domestic product once again fell to a little over 50 Billion USD in 2015 and 2016⁷, the same as immediately after the crisis. As of January 1, 2017, the minimum monthly wage in Bulgaria is 235.20 EUR per month. The country's main drivers are manufacturing and service industry. Most concerning is the country's high youth unemployment rate, which now nears 23%.⁸

Even though legal regulations and taxation laws are very favourable for foreign direct investments, they have been decreasing in recent years. Aside from corruption and the weak rule of law⁹, main challenges reported by the private sector are a lack of qualified work force and the harsh and somewhat obsolete labour regulations.

⁶ National Statistics Institute Bulgaria; Unemployed and unemployment rates of population aged 15 years and over in 2016, <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6503/unemployed-and-unemployment-rates-national-level-statistical-regions-districts>

⁷ World Bank Data <http://data.worldbank.org/country/bulgaria>

⁸ National Statistics Institute Bulgaria <http://www.nsi.bg/en/content/6509/specific-indicators>

⁹ European Commission Report to the European Parliament and the Council On Progress in Bulgaria under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism COM(2017) https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/com-2017-43_en.pdf

What is more, the general rise in anti-refugee sentiment and negative stereotypes attached to them is giving way to discrimination and increasing xenophobia, which makes it difficult for refugees to secure employment.

“The combination of socio-economic problems and xenophobic attitudes prevent the active work with low-skilled people and minorities. Bulgaria has a general problem with education and integration of minorities in the labour market. Integrating people from other cultures, which are even less equipped for the local market, with the insufficient tools available is illusory.”

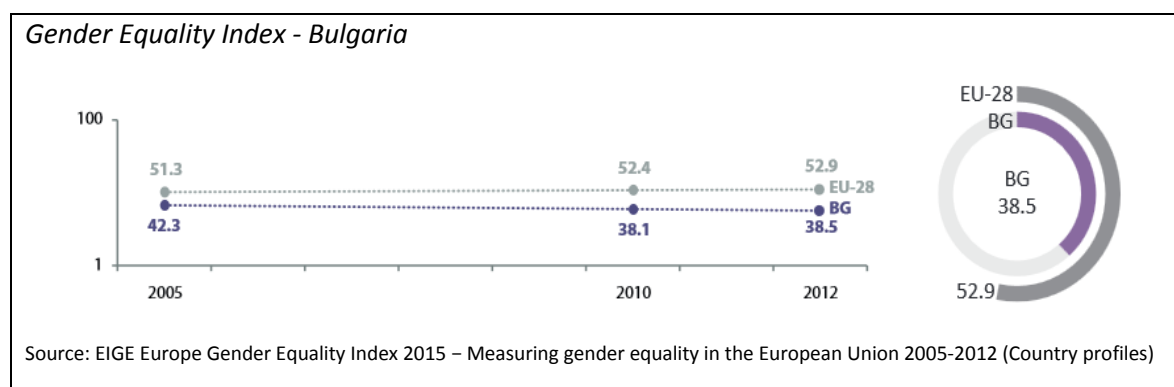
Daniel Kaddik, Project Director, Friedrich Naumann Foundation SSE

Addressing those discrepancies and investing in the improvement and access to education and employment for all, including economically inactive groups such as refugees and ethnic minorities, should be prioritized in the upcoming orientation of the use of European Structural Funds. The active facilitation and strategic support for self-employment, cooperation with private economy and requalification should be spearheading the future employment policies and structural efforts of the country.

Gender Equality

Gender equality in employment is something that is often overlooked, and its complexity ignored. Especially in marginalized communities and amongst the community of asylum seekers and refugees, inequality arises from multi-dimensional factors. Women’s disadvantaged status is likely multiplied or magnified for members of a disadvantaged subgroup within an already marginalized community.

In comparison to the EU average of 52.9, Bulgaria’s gender equality indicator rates rather poorly at 38.5. This number is formed by combining gender indicators, according to a conceptual framework, into a single summary measure. Roughly, this number can be read as percentage of gender equality reached in the respective areas. What is most concerning is that Bulgaria is one of the only countries in the EU, whose equality index has worsened after the entrance to the European Union.



The biggest discrepancies arise from quality of work, economic power, access to finance and life-long learning opportunities as well as the disproportionate share of non-paid work exercised by women. In the area of employment, indicators rate especially low when it comes to segregation and level of work. Another important factor is the discrepancy in equal pay for equal work indicator. Though the gender

pay gap is smaller than in most EU28 states, in contrast to the trend in most countries of reducing the gap, Bulgaria has actually increased its pay gap from 12% in 2007 to 15,4% in 2015¹⁰. Bulgarian employment policies must therefore include efforts to eliminate gender inequality by providing equity measures in their employment policies, with a special attention to the specific needs of women from disadvantaged groups.

Key Employment Issues

Documentation

A big challenge is the lack of information about job opportunities for the refugee community and the lack of information about the administrative process on hiring refugees for the private sector.

Half of the companies that have experience with hiring refugees have had some administrative difficulties during the hiring process, such as misinformation at the level of the responsible local institutions or delays in the issuing of necessary ID documents of the refugees. Those difficulties however often date back a while. Initial problems in the process seem to have ceased. At present, companies hiring refugees have not been experiencing many problems, as local and regional administrative bodies have caught up with the situation and are more familiar with the administrative requirements.

Companies with experience in hiring third country nationals have bad experiences with complicated documentation procedures and assume that hiring refugees would be even more complicated. Furthermore, human resources is often under the impression that asylum seekers and some status holders either need a special permit to work or do not have the right to work at all. As elaborated previously, that is not the case. Refugees and humanitarian status holders have the right to work and indeed do not need special permits to do so. The ID documents are sufficient documentation as proof of their right to work. Working contracts and social security taxes for refugees are handled under the same legislation as for Bulgarian citizens.

The situation of asylum seekers is slightly more complicated. They have the right to work, but only three months after their application for asylum. Work contracts and social security are handled as follows. Temporary ID cards of asylum seekers are administratively extended every three months and physically renewed every nine months. However, working contracts are handled the same as those of Bulgarian citizens. Health insurance for asylum seekers is covered by the state.

However, most companies are not willing to sign a contract for longer than the date on the asylum seeker's document. Therefore, in practice, companies would renew the working contract every three months, which poses a big administrative burden. This could be avoided, by providing proper information to companies and an additional clause in a long term contract considering the case of a final negative decision on an asylum claim which has entered into force.

Furthermore, asylum seekers are often not able to open their own bank account which makes payment of salaries more complicated to private companies.

¹⁰ Eurostat gender pay gaps

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tsdsc340&plugin=1>

Language/ Qualifications

There is a consensus that early language trainings and civic education are a strong basis for effective integration. Language skills and soft skills are essential on the job market. Almost exclusively, all employers questioned require a minimum of Bulgarian language skills.

If prospective employees possess basic language skills and literacy, further qualification opportunities open up quickly. 100% of the questioned businesses offer introduction trainings or offer the opportunity for further qualification.

Best Practice - Convoy

Convoy is a leading manufacturer and distributor of a range of consumer goods, including a variety of sponges and cleaning supplies. The company is the producer of many of the private label brands in the sector for leading retail chains in Bulgaria as well as inside and outside the EU. The production side is in Novi Iskar, near Sofia.

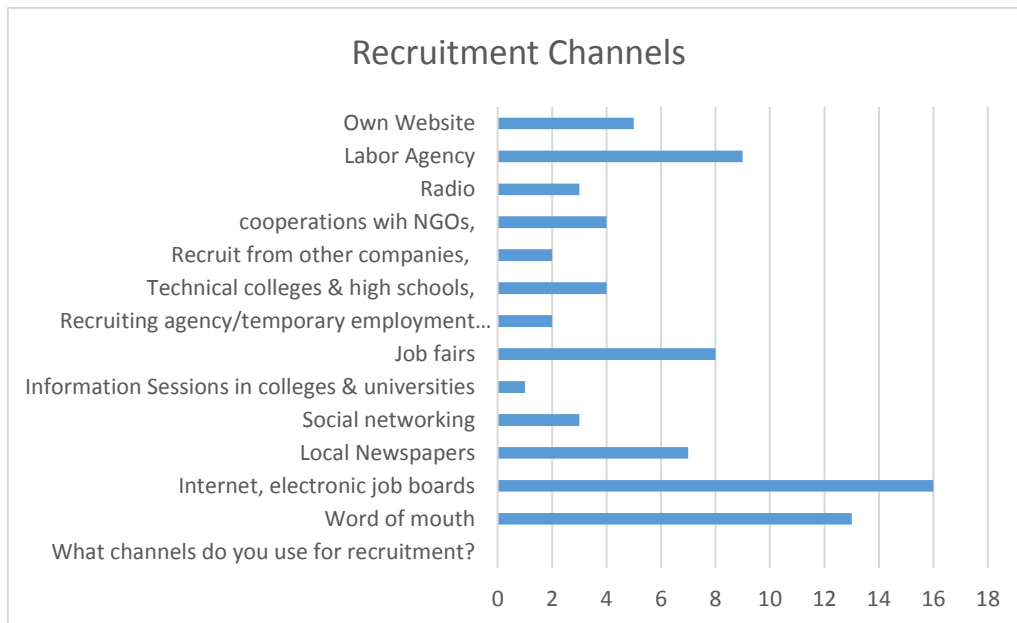
Convoy's management has established a very good communication with the State Agency for Refugees, the Bulgarian Red Cross Integration Centre, Caritas and others, promoting their vacancies via social workers. The company further has offered relocation support in the form of the provision of housing at a reduced rent, the coverage of transportation costs and a commitment to a flexible management. What is more, the management helped some employees to enrol their children in the local school.

The company has identified heavy administration and slow response time of local public institutions as a problem when it comes to working and recruiting refugees. Of twenty people hired originally, one refugee woman and two men remained in the company.

Recruitment

When it comes to recruitment, most companies rely on a mix of classic and modern channels, depending on the workforce needs. Most popular are online job markets as well as job fairs and word of mouth. The Labour Bureaus are used from time to time. However, cooperation with these Bureaus was reported most fruitful in areas where pro-active economic interest groups are facilitating communication, as is the case in Plovdiv.

Technical companies and foreign direct investors have also started relying on cooperation with educational institutions and social media. Recruitment of marginalized workforce via NGO partners is used in a few cases where cooperation is established via special projects.



Retention

Bulgaria is considered a transit country for refugees. This means that the majority of refugees do not have the intention to stay in the country. In fact at least 80-90% of people applying for asylum in Bulgaria move on or plan to move on to Western countries.

Nevertheless, some 10% of people do stay in Bulgaria and are willing to settle in the country for a longer period of time. The skill profiles and educational level amongst the people that choose to stay are various. A higher percentage of people have either low level or maximum high school level of education. A few have specialized higher education and language skills.

As stated, most refugees prefer to stay in the capital, since there are established refugee communities as well as non-profit organizations that can provide support to them. However, people that wish to stay in Bulgaria, especially families, are oftentimes willing to move to another location, given there is settlement support, a secure employment contract and a positive attitude towards them.

When it comes to asylum seekers, employers might shy away from hiring them, due to the risk of their asylum claim being rejected. Every contract also means an investment into an employee which would be lost in case their right to stay in the country is denied. In reality however, asylum seekers that are denied status do not immediately leave the country. As outlined above, documentation after a negative decision on an asylum claim is served, the person has the right to appeal the decision at two instances, before an Administrative court and then before the Supreme Administrative Court.

Best Practice - TELUS International

TELUS International Europe is a premium BPO (business process outsourcing) and ITO (information technology outsourcing) provider, delivering high quality services since 2004. The company has more than 3,500 team members across seven delivery centres located in Bulgaria, Romania and England. TELUS International Europe offers contact centre solutions, ITO and innovative customer service support for global customers in over 35 languages.

At the moment, TELUS International Europe employs 100 refugees and humanitarian status holders in Bulgaria alone. Alongside a wide range of social services, TELUS also facilitates cultural, social and sporting events for their team members as well as offers active career development support to create a good company culture that embraces a diverse workforce.

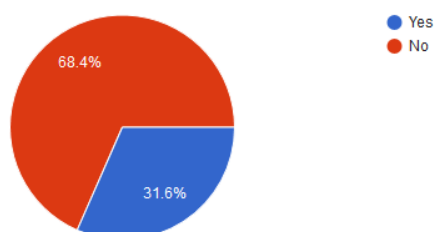
Economic Challenges

After collecting input from several chambers of commerce, public institutions as well as civil society on the topic of facilitating access to the employment market for refugees, there was a consensus on four main areas that should be improved in order to encourage businesses to hire more refugees, humanitarian status holders and asylum seekers.

- Lack of information about refugees as well as about regulations and administrative requirements
- Targeted job-matching
- Effective facilitation of existing employment programs
- Communication & consultation with the private sector

The state offers one specialized measure on employment for refugees: the National Programme for Refugee Employment and Training of the Employment Agency. It includes language classes, professional trainings and salary subsidies up to 12 months. However, in reality, only very few refugees are able to benefit from the program. In 2015 and 2016 combined, only 2 refugees have undergone the program.

Do you know what documentation is necessary when hiring refugees or people with humanitarian status?
(19 responses)



The available targeted measures meant for refugees systemically lack appropriate design to accommodate the needs of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection such as low access barriers and translations. Vocational education is only available in Bulgarian language, classes are scheduled to take place in the Integration Centre of the State Agency for Refugees which has

ceased operating in 2014. Separately, the Employment Agency organized 4 specialized job fairs in 2015, two of them in the SAR reception facilities which resulted in 20 matches for job interviews.

Even though refugees are entitled to social and administrative support, they often lack information and/or translation services in order to register at the Labour bureaus. Furthermore, vocational training and the available employment support programs require a good level of Bulgarian language skills. Consequently, they rarely benefit from any programs available to job-seekers and in general do not register at the Labour Bureaus. This is the biggest challenge for the Employment Agency. Without those registrations the Employment agency does not have an overview of the needs and skills of such job-seekers. One way to meet people half way would be to provide translation services and navigation support on a regular basis by cooperating with civil society, that is already providing such support, in order to lift the barrier for refugees to register.

When it comes to job matching, the services of the Employment Agency were multiple times criticized as non-sufficient by the questioned companies. It was reported, that employers and job-seekers have been connected without the necessary “matching” of requirements and skills. Active outreach to refugee job-seekers or the adaption of existing public programs have not been undertaken and are not planned.

The Employment Agency does send job offers to the State Agency for Refugees on a regular basis. The State Agency for Refugees then directly connects job-seekers with employers whenever possible.

At the same time, social workers from different civil society organizations have started communication with private companies and are collecting job-seekers’ skill profiles and employment requests. The same organizations have started offering CV-writing trainings and individual job-seeking support. They provide interpretation services, mediation with institutions and accompany job-seekers to the Labour Bureaus.

What has been considered the most fruitful practice by employers are the specialized job fairs. Almost all questioned companies have expressed the wish to participate in more of those events. Another recommendation was to tailor information materials and skill profiles of disadvantaged communities to private sector needs and pro-actively distributing this information.

Businesses are willing to hire refugees, however the basic integration premises in order to prepare people for the job market are not given. In order to match job-seekers and employers, not only do we have to prepare refugees for the market, but also to manage expectations and provide information to the private sector.

Mariana Stoyanova, Head of Refugee/ Migrant Service of the Bulgarian Red Cross

When it comes to the facilitation of existing programs, political and economic interest groups stressed the fact that existing measures and strategies need to be put into action more effectively, through the

provision of easy access, the promotion of existing opportunities among refugees and the widening of scope of employment support measures to combine the needs of job-seekers and employers. This includes the implementation of existing operational programs and employment measures, especially on local and regional levels.

The example of Plovdiv was mentioned by Industry Watch, where 30 000 vacancies fail to match with 20 000 unemployed. Some pointed out that the more efficient and flexible facilitation of existing programs would already provide a solution to these discrepancies. Measures designed for the unemployed such as vocational training vouchers and job seeking skill trainings are potentially useful for refugees, however such are not being actively offered to them. The operational program Human Resource Development foresees a wide variety of qualification measures, job matching services and incentives for employers investing in the training and qualification of their staff. However, very few companies questioned have taken advantage of these programs, as application and reporting procedures are heavy and complicated.

None of the priorities of the existing employment programs are tailored specifically to disadvantaged groups such as refugees. As of now, no plans are mentioned of including or designing these employment measures in a more inclusive way. Programs designed for general groups such as youth, long term unemployed etc. will attract few applications targeting the above mentioned groups. If no special points are given to a specific marginalized group of people, the employers who apply focus on outlined criteria in the calls. Designing some of the measures specifically for refugees will ensure the inclusion of such groups in the workforce and establish good practices and career paths that are usually closed to them due to discrimination and high entry barriers.

An existing training voucher scheme under the operational program Human Resource Development for unemployed could for example be expanded to include Bulgarian language classes and be promoted to refugees. Furthermore, several economic interest groups and an HR company have stated, that the provision of incentives and recognition to companies hiring refugees would be a big step toward more inclusive employment measures.

Human resource and recruitment companies were identified as the most fruitful cooperation partner and a potential bridge between state-run programs such as operational programs and special interest groups from the private sector, as they serve both those stakeholder groups on a regular basis. These HR companies need to be sensitised to working with refugees and sought out by NGO and community interest groups in order to make them aware of this untapped workforce.

The potential of the private sector is considerable, if businesses become more active and self-organize in order to push public policies to reach out to new potential workforce.

“Looking at the demographic changes Bulgaria is facing, inclusion policies must be an essential part for the countries employment politics. This requires political will and active corporate social responsibility.”

Ulrike Straka, Commercial Counsellor, Advantage Austria

Economic interest groups have stated that inclusion for them is a priority when it comes to employment policies in order to counter-measure negative demographic trends and emigration. After political will and administrative reforms, it was also stressed that employment and qualification measures need to consider market needs more actively and seek input from non state-run economic interest groups and the private sector.

According to Industry Watch Bulgaria, market-driven unions such as the Thracia Economic Zone have had good experiences with getting state-run institutions such as the Regional Labour Office involved.

Best Practice – Aladin Foods

Aladin Foods is a fast food production and store chain, established in 1998. The company operates 32 fast food restaurants in the entire country and a production site in Plovdiv region, while continuously expanding. Aladin employs 870 people and is committed to a rich Corporate Social Responsibility strategy.

The company has been reaching out to the refugee community via civil society in order to promote their vacancies to asylum seekers and refugees, providing additional incentives such as housing, food vouchers and transportation for night shifts and in rural areas.

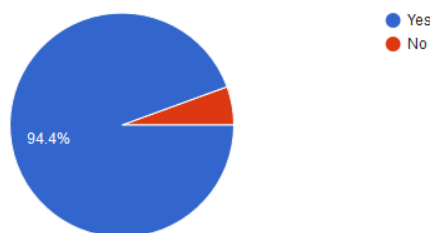
Needs on the Current Employment Market

The companies interviewed during this survey are mostly production, manufacturing and retail companies. Almost all private enterprises questioned where either constantly looking for staff or were planning to hire people in the next 12 months.

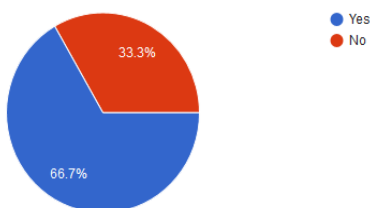
More than two thirds of them have stated that they have been having difficulties to secure adequate staff.

Of course there are different challenges in different regions and depending on the industry in question. Firstly, rural regions face challenges connected to negative demographic trends.

Are you planning to hire within the next 12 months? (18 responses)



Have you had hiring difficulties in the past 12 months? (18 responses)



Recruiting and sustaining personnel ranging from low-skilled to high-skilled employees proves most difficult. In big urban areas, recruiting and sustaining mid-level personnel and specialized technical personnel is reportedly the most challenging aspect. Sales and Service personnel with high-school

education and some language skills are highly sought-after and due to competition, the fluctuation of staff is high in bigger cities.

Secondly, when it comes to manufacturing and production, a main problem is insufficient education. Obsolete job profiles and vocational education curricula fail to answer real market needs. Many companies have moved on to providing in-house technical qualification, starting from high school level cooperation and dual education models to high level qualification exchanges. Industry Watch stressed the importance of the promotion of innovative qualification measures and adaption of policies to real market needs.

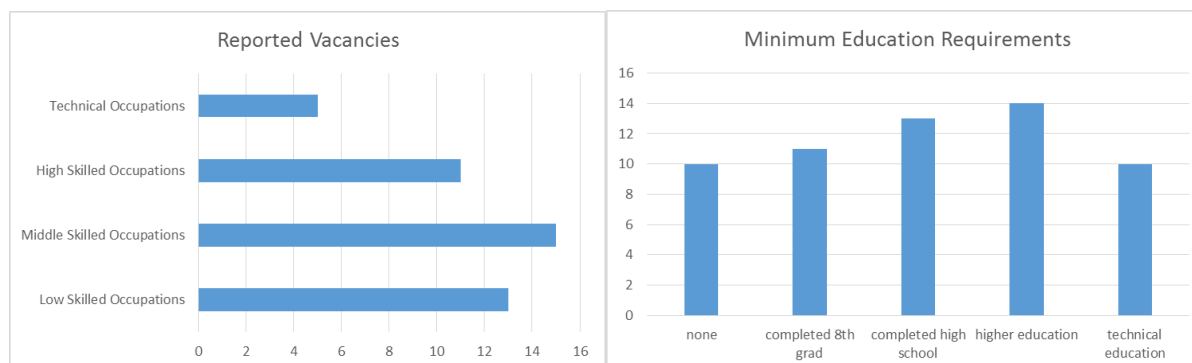
“The promotion and expansion of dual education is one of the most promising and important labour market policies for Bulgarian businesses and Foreign Direct Investors in the upcoming years.”

Georgi Stoeff, Founder and managing partner of Industry Watch Group Bulgaria

The employment market in Bulgaria, according to the questioned businesses also suffers from a general lack of motivated workforce, meaning that several employers have complained about a decline in numbers of motivated youth willing to work and to learn.

Thirdly, economic interest groups and HR companies have identified as an issue the protective legislation which is heavy in administrative regulations. This includes, heavy reporting standards and complicated hiring and dismissal procedures. Therefore, employers request to be given easy access to job-seekers’ profiles and a good understanding of how to check and understand applicants’ legal status. An easy step-by-step guide to hiring refugees and a popular focal point would be a possibility to provide that information.

According to the current survey, employers are looking for middle-skilled and mid-level technical staff in big numbers. Following are low-skilled occupations, but more articulated are high-qualified technical occupations. Most reported vacancies required either 8th grade, high school or higher education.





Almost all interviewed businesses expressed that the lack of formal documents is not a reason to dismiss a candidate, provided they can otherwise prove their skills. In fact, many companies already conduct their own tests in order to assess a candidate's skills. Documentation proved only necessary in cases of further need for professional certification. However, basic Bulgarian

language knowledge was an almost unanimous minimum requirement. What is more, other factors such as motivation, physical fitness and soft skills weighed much higher for employers than experience, proving that basic integration services are a premise for labour market participation.

Businesses and economic interest groups agreed that the main gap on the Bulgarian employment market that must be addressed more effectively in employment policies is the general and professional education.

As mentioned, the main motivation for businesses to hire from less obvious communities and to invest in qualification and their inclusion in the company culture is the lack of adequate staff and their corporate social responsibility policies (CSR). However, only a few of the questioned companies interested in hiring refugees included diversity in work force in their CSR strategy. Corporate social responsibility was more common in foreign-led businesses.

Considering, that many of the mid-level occupations and technical positions sought-after at the Bulgarian market at the moment do not require a university degree, short and medium-term vocational qualification measures would be sufficient to integrate low qualified people in the workforce.

"Most skill profiles needed by the private sector today do not require university education. In fact, the most sought-after mid-level technical occupations require only short-term qualification measures, which some companies are often equipped to provide themselves, if needed."

*Nadia Vassileva, Country Managing Director,
Manpower Group Bulgaria*

To enable businesses to do so, the first step is to inform them about the uncomplicated administrative procedure of recruiting and hiring of refugees. Alongside that, information about job-seekers and their skill profiles must not only be made available but actively provided to employers.

The next step is to facilitate job matching via the organization of specialized job fairs and the joint design of alternative CVs to access skill sets outside of formal education. Additionally, the service of recruitment and HR agencies are of use when it comes to the design of specialized training programs and future public employment policy designs.

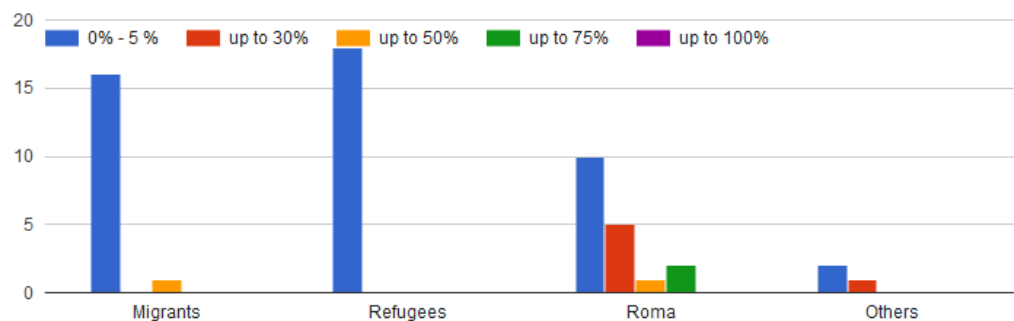
For the future, two additional measures were proposed by the respondents. First, the extension of vocational education and dual education programs to refugee communities. Secondly, self-employment support tools should be designed especially for beneficiaries of international protection.

“The road to self-employment should be promoted and encouraged more. There is a lot of potential for economic success in entrepreneurship that leans on the cultural heritage and unique skills and experience of refugees.”

Aleksandra Popova, Council of Refugee Women

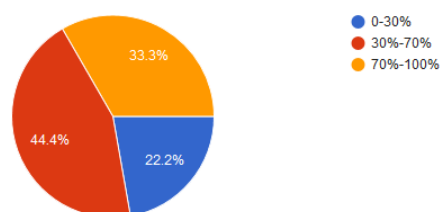
Examining the share of work force of the questioned companies in Bulgaria, migrants and refugees rank at less than 5% often close to 0% of the staff. Ethnic minorities or Roma, which make up between 5% and 8% of population are represented sporadically in some companies at up to 5%, up to 30% in others and in one company at more than 50% of the workforce. Companies with high numbers of ethnic minorities are predominantly a result of demographic circumstances based on geographic location of the businesses. Positions held by Roma in the questioned companies are mostly low level occupations. However, through the interviews there was no correlation witnessed between the willingness to hire refugees and Roma people.

What is the approximate share of minority groups in your work force?



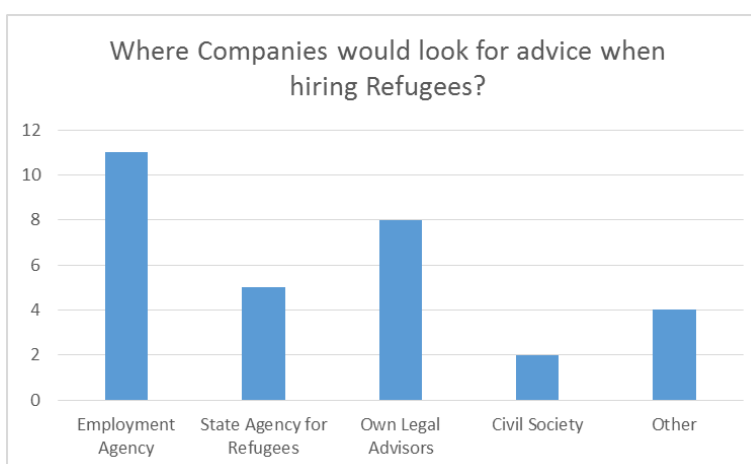
Gender Balance at first glance seems good in the questioned companies. However, at a closer look, the positions held by women are mostly in specialized areas of work such as textile industry and sales positions, while technical positions and physical work is undertaken almost exclusively by men.

Approximately, what share of your employees are female? (18 responses)



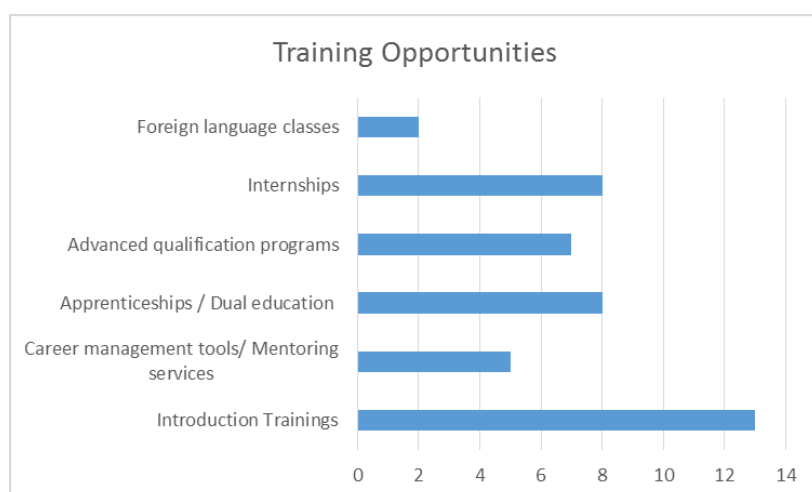
Attitudes of Employers

Companies with experience of hiring refugees, which are about 30% of the surveyed ones, have articulated that procedures are relatively easy. The mayor problem is the change or inconsistency of regulations. Almost three quarters of the questioned businesses were not aware what documentation would be needed when hiring refugees. When asked where they would look for advice on that topic 60% of businesses referred to the Employment Agency, 30% to the State Agency for Refugees and 45% would consult their in-house lawyers.



One third of the questioned employers have reported recruitment difficulties in the past. Those difficulties had two mayor reasons. One was the lack of applicants for low and middle-skilled positions and the other was a lack of adequately qualified people, especially in mid-level technical occupations.

Considering the background of those hiring difficulties and workforce needs, the main minimum requirements from employers are a basic or good level of Bulgarian language skills and a good working attitude. Only few companies insisted on legalized proof of education. As mentioned, most companies



are ready to accept workers after exams or proof of adequate qualification. This is valid for low but also high-skilled occupations such as engineers and technical specialists. Aside from the obligatory introduction course, many companies offer a variety of training opportunities for their employees.

Many of the questioned employers expressed willingness to extend or adapt their training process to refugee job-seekers in case of demonstrated good work attitude and the willingness to commit to employment for a longer time.

Best Practice - Transformify

Transformify is a global corporate social responsibility platform partnering with socially responsible businesses to provide virtual projects and contract jobs to people in disadvantaged position or people willing to work remotely.

Therefore, via Transformify's platform, refugees may work remotely and get paid into a virtual account linked to a prepaid card. The organization partners with Payoneer, a financial services business that provides online money transfer and e-commerce payment services, to offer alternative payment solutions. If refugees change location, they continue to work on the same project remotely. The same is valid if refugees move back to their home country.

"It takes months for the refugees to settle in a new country. They are relocated multiple times, rely on social payments, lose skills, etc. It is hard to get a job, integrate in a new culture or even open a bank account as they don't have a permanent address." (Lilia Stoyanov, CEO Transformify)

Stakeholders & Coordination Framework

Only a small proportion of civil society actors and economic interest groups reported being pro-actively consulted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and other public institutions when it came to strategy making or the participation in working groups on operational programs. Even though there is a direct contact between some businesses and the Employment Agency, there is no sustainable communication process informing programs of the Employment Agency.

For example, feedback on the needs of the employment market in terms of qualification is not collected via economic interest groups, the Bulgarian Investment Agency and international Chambers of Commerce in the country. Very few questioned institutions had been asked to comment or input in program plan making or working groups on strategies for employment policies or operational programs. That consequently results in lesser input by these stakeholders regarding employment market needs and the needs of refugee communities in terms of employment. Feedback is only requested and provided from governmental institutions or in indirect ways via open research or policy recommendations.

Four out of five civil society organisations reported that they do not have an active consultation process with governmental institutions but would be open to such. More cooperation is reported when it comes to cooperation with the private sector. Almost all civil society organizations have experience with communicating and cooperating with private businesses or economic interest groups. Several businesses have even started the practice of approaching civil society themselves for special projects or in order to communicate job offers to specific communities, including refugees.

With regard to the consultation process on refugee-related employment policies, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Bulgarian Business Leaders Forum (BBLF) and Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency were invited to comment, but opted for not participating and providing input to the present Study, arguing that they would not be able to provide relevant information and that their members have not articulated an interest in the topic. Therefore, the coordination process with other stakeholders of the employment market and needs of their members could not explicitly be considered.

Best Practice - Europe

Good practices from abroad include, for example, a subsidy paid directly to employers under the condition of employing an asylum seeker for a certain period of time. This is the case in Denmark where employers receive a bonus of €2,000–2,700 after six months of employment, and again after 12 months. The amount of the bonus depends on the refugee's length of stay in the country (the shorter this is, the bigger the bonus).

A similar system is implemented in Sweden where employers are entitled to reimbursement of the payroll tax if a refugee is employed under the New Start Jobs scheme.

In Finland employers may be exempted from non-wage labour costs such as social security or health insurance contributions for asylum seekers.

The German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) has also set up a dedicated website providing information on labour rights in several languages.

In Italy, private businesses have played a crucial role in working with communities in smaller rural areas to prepare them for the integration of refugees, working with municipalities to elaborate explicit workforce needs and skill profiles in order to invite respective refugees to work in the region.

Policy Recommendations

In Bulgaria, it is of utmost importance to enable the private sector to include asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in their workforce, one the one hand via the provision of information on legal requirements. Additionally, businesses can be provided with incentives and support for the integration of these refugees via language and professional qualification trainings, organized by the private sector. Positive images and good examples have proven to be an efficient way to tackle stereotypes and to overcome prejudices. Therefore, making visible the efforts of companies working with refugees and recognize their success is an essential step to eliminate fears and to encouraging more companies to follow their example.

For Relevant State Institutions to Enable Private Sector Engagement in Employment of Beneficiaries of International Protection

Info Focal Point/ Hotline

- ✓ A centralized Info Focal Point will be established, providing basic information and advice on hiring refugees, legal info, and contact information to other NGOs for businesses. This Focal Point will be announced via an easily visible link at the Employment Agency's homepage.
- ✓ Basic information will be available as a download file via the website of the Employment Agency and the Info Focal Point in Bulgarian, English, French, Farsi and Arabic.
- ✓ The Focal Point will cooperate actively and facilitate dialogue between Employment Agency, Chambers of Commerce, Private Sector, Recruitment Agencies and Civil Society Actors including Bulgarian Red Cross, Caritas Bulgaria, CVS-Bulgaria, the Council of Refugee Women and UNHCR.

Vacancy Announcements

- ✓ The Focal Point actively collects vacancy announcements on a weekly basis with the support of Chambers of Commerce and Recruitment Agencies.
- ✓ Announcements of vacancies will be expected to be processed via the Employment Agency's online template without additional phone confirmation and forwarded to the Focal Point and to all partner institutions such as SAR, BRC, Caritas, Council of Refugee Women, CVS-Bulgaria etc. online on a weekly basis.

Database of Job Seekers & Job matching

- ✓ The Focal Point and SAR centers are expected to collect job-seekers information in a harmonized way and make that database available to private sector partners and recruitment companies.
- ✓ SAR, the Focal Point and the Labor Bureaus are expected to support social workers to organize regular visits to the Labor Bureaus of job-seekers registered in the SAR database in order to register at the Labor Bureaus, including translators.

- ✓ The Focal Point together with partners from the Private Sector are recommended to develop and alternative assessment method for skill sets of job-seekers suitable for different industries. This will include the design of alternative CVs.
- ✓ The Focal Point together with partners from the Private Sector and other NGOs are recommended to organize joint application workshops in order to prepare job-seekers for the employment market.
- ✓ Speed-dating events for low skilled occupations are expected to be organized by the Focal point and other NGOs on a regular basis in cooperation with Job tiger and other Recruitment companies.
- ✓ The Focal Point will seek out and use innovative digital employment options.

Subsidies to Hiring & Incentives to additional social services

- ✓ The operational program for human resource development should be facilitated in a way that salary subsidies provided to employers hiring and training unemployed can be used for hiring beneficiaries of international protection under the indicative program 2018.
- ✓ Social Security Tax and Health insurance should be subsidized by the state for the first year of every first working or apprenticeship contract of a beneficiary of international protection.

For Private Companies Wishing to Include Beneficiaries of International Protection into their Workforce

Recruitment

- ✓ Extend your recruitment offers to NGOs working with refugee communities and use recruitment channels suitable to reach this groups. e.g. message boards, specialized Job Fairs
- ✓ Add appropriate inclusive language in job announcements
- ✓ Consider implementing a test to evaluate skills of job-seekers through interviews and practical tests instead of collecting only credentials

Language Classes

- ✓ Provide or subsidize additional Bulgarian Language classes to employees with different mother tongue

Vocational Trainings

- ✓ Consider cooperation with NGOs working with refugees in order to provide vocational training classes to potential employees
- ✓ Widen the scope of dual education programs to schools with high level of ethnic minorities and to asylum seeking and refugee students.

Administration

- ✓ Inform yourself about the legal framework of hiring asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection
- ✓ Pro-actively consult with Chamber of Commerce, economic interest groups and civil society to establish a network to offer employment opportunities to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection and to exchange best practices
- ✓ Communicate good practices of including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in your workforce with your Chamber of Commerce, local Labor Bureau and civil society partners
- ✓ Communicate good practices of integration programs, diversity measures in HR & Recruitment strategies with your Chamber of Commerce, local Labor Agency and civil society partners
- ✓ Private Companies' efforts to include refugees in their workforce will receive special recognition by Chambers of Commerce and other special interest groups

Company Culture

- ✓ Inform yourself about the country of origin of your potential employee
- ✓ Establish a Mentoring program or buddy system for asylum seeking and refugee employees
- ✓ Pro-actively create supportive team environments by
 - Preparing your workforce with information about potential cultural differences.
 - Clearly communicate the company's commitment to a tolerant and diverse workforce
 - Host cultural events and team buildings

Integration Services

- ✓ Companies are recommended to provide re-location support to employees and their families
- ✓ Companies are recommended to provide housing for the first couple of months to get settled
- ✓ Companies are recommended to cooperate with the local municipality and educational institutions to ease the integration process to families of employees
- ✓ Companies are recommended to support combined work and language activities
- ✓ Companies are recommended to cover transportation, if needed

Include a Gender Aspect

- ✓ Add appropriate inclusive language in job announcements
- ✓ Consider the option of an on-site child care facility
- ✓ Consider providing administrative assistance to school enrollment of children of employees in rural areas

Useful Contact Information

Information Centre (UNHCR & BRC)

Address: Blvd. Hristo and Evlogi Georgievi 165, Sofia

Tel.: (+359 8) 84 623 526

Email: l.milanova@redcross.bg

Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC)

Address: Blvd. James Boucher 76, Sofia

Web: www.redcross.bg

Email: m.stoyanova@redcross.bg

Tel.: (+359-2) 816 4814

Council of Refugee Women, Consultation- Information Centre

Address: Ul. Ekzarh Yosif 95, Sofia

Web: www.crw-bg.org

Email: l.awanis@crw-bg.org

Tel.: (+359 8) 78 136 321

Caritas – Sofia, Center for Social Rehabilitation and Integration „Sv. Anna“

Address: Ul. „Struma“ 1, Sofia

Web: www.caritas.bg

Email: info@caritas.bg

Tel.: (+359-2) 944 1858

CVS - Bulgaria

Cooperation for Voluntary Service - Bulgaria

Web: www.cvs-bg.org

Email: office@cvs-bg.org

Tel.: (+359-2) 989 98 46

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC)

Address: Ul. Uzundjovka 1, Sofia

Web: www.bghelsinki.org

Email: refunit@bghelsinki.org

Tel.: (+359-2) 981 3318, (+359-2) 980 2049

List of Interviewed Stakeholders

Private Companies

- Eurofoam Bulgaria OOD
- Art Colenta Bulgaria Ltd.
- Trastena Wine
- Gameloft Bulgaria
- Pirin Tex LTD
- Liebherr-Hausgeräte Marica
- Convoy-World S.A.
- Aladin Foods Bulgaria
- Job Tiger
- Manpower Recruitment Agency
- Deichmann in Bulgaria
- DM Drogeriemarkt in Bulgaria
- Billa Bulgaria
- Lidl Bulgaria
- Avon Cosmetics Bulgaria
- TELUS International Europe
- IKEA

Chamber of Commerce & Economic & Political Special Interest Groups

- Advantage Austria, Austrian Trade Commission in Bulgaria
- America Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria Board Member
- America Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria HR Committee
- CCI French- Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce
- Friedrich Naumann Foundation SSE
- Konrad Adenauer Foundation
- Industry Watch Bulgaria

Governmental Institutions

- Employment Agency
- Ministry of Labour & Social Policies
- State Agency for Refugees
- Invest Bulgaria Agency

Civil Society

- Bulgarian Red Cross, Refugee Migrant Service
- Bulgarian Red Cross Integration Centre
- Council of Refugee Women
- Caritas
- Multi Kulti Collective
- UN Global Compact

Document samples

Documents demonstrating eligibility to work in BG for asylum seekers

Bulgarian temporary residence permit Document of a person seeking asylum

Настоящ адрес

РЕПУБЛИКА БЪЛГАРИЯ
ДЪРЖАВНА АГЕНЦИЯ
ЗА БЕЖАНЦИТЕ
ПРИ МИНИСТЕРСКИЯ СЪВЕТ

РЕГИСТРАЦИОННА КАРТА НА
ЧУЖДЕНЕЦ

в УСКОРЕНО ПРОИЗВОДСТВО
ЗА ПРЕДОСТАВЯНЕ НА СТАТУТ

Национален документ за самоличност:

Има право да остане на територията на
Република България на основание чл.29 ал.1 т.1
от Закона за убежището и бежанците

Език за комуникация с лицето

№

Придружаващи лица под 14 г.:

Идентификационен №

Имена/Names

Регистрационната карта е издадена
от Държавна агенция за бежанците
при Министерски съвет

113

важни до

Роден на/Date of birth

Има/Sex

Месторождение

Гржданство/Nationality

Религ

Център на окуп

Срещу с пръв път

до

Срещу с пръв път

до

Подпис и печат

Подпис и печат

Подпис и печат

№

Documents demonstrating eligibility to work in BG for refugees

Bulgarian ID Document of a person with Refugee Status

РЕПУБЛИКА БЪЛГАРИЯ REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
КАРТА НА БЕЖАНЕЦ CARD OF REFUGEE

№ 810042612

Имена/Names
ИВАНОВА РАЛИЦА РАДНЕВА
IVANOVA RALITSA RADNEVA

Пол/Sex Ж / F ЕГН/Personal № 7608010133

Гржданство/Nationality АФГАНИСТАН / AFG

Дата на раждане/Date of birth 01.08.1976

Валидност/Date of expiry 15.04.2009

Подпис/Signature

Documents demonstrating eligibility to work in BG for humanitarian status holders

**Bulgarian ID Document of a person
with Humanitarian Status**

