



## 2 Employment

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a synthesis of academic and grey literature on the topic of labour market integration of migrants in Europe in the past 10 years. Integration into the labour market is seen by many integration theorists as an essential element of the whole multi-dimensional integration process. All over the world, both academic and applied research has been interested in migrant labour market integration for decades, and the resulting corpus of knowledge is truly vast. This chapter intends to summarise more recent literature investigating from various perspectives the labour market integration of post-2014 immigrants in European countries, including the EU and affiliated states, such as UK, Norway and Switzerland focusing mainly on literature that directly and indirectly investigates governance of labour market integration, closely studying policies, policy instruments and practices facilitating or hindering participation of immigrants in the labour market of receiving countries.

Labour market integration of migrants is a well-established area of research. Research has examined how migrants fare on labour markets and how this varies according to migrant category, status, gender and how the labour market participation levels develop over time. The analysed evidence highlights the importance of labour market participation for newly arrived migrants because it allows them to become financially independent and is constitutive of an

individual's identity (Ager and Strang 2008). Besides, it enables social interactions both with the host population and among other ethnic groups and enhances social cohesion.

The literature agrees that ensuring participation of immigrants in the labour market is highly desirable for receiving European societies. Labour shortages, prevention of long-term welfare dependency and facilitation of self-reliance tend to be the driving forces behind current labour market integration policies. The economic integration of newcomers is seen as crucial for the long-term sustainability of the European workforce (European Migration Network 2019). A myriad of policies and programmes have been developed in Europe to aid the labour market integration of newcomers, and these too have received growing scholarly attention. However, the research also notes that there is also a political demand to protect nationals from foreign competition for jobs. Immigrants are often seen by populist rhetoric as those taking jobs away from the citizens. So, those opposing demands lead to a difficult balancing act between measures facilitating migrant's access to the labour market and those protecting the jobs of a nation's own citizens.

This chapter begins by reviewing what has been researched with regards to the integration of post-2014 migrants in relation to employment. It discusses the current state of affairs of labour market integration of post-2014 migrants as evidenced in the literature, and the inequalities which the literature addresses. Further, it describes how labour market integration is discussed in public and policy debates, and how these issues are framed. Lastly, it gives an overview of the most commonly used instruments and tools, then outlines how these have been evaluated by the literature, and whether conclusions can be drawn from this on their sustainability and recommendations made.

## **2.2 Research on integration into labour market**

In the past 10 years, the literature on labour market integration of migrants has been driven by academic as well as policy interests. European policy-makers at regional, national and local level have invested in evidence-based recommendations to improve measures in this area. Both academic institutions and policy-oriented think-tanks have received funding from the EU, national governments and foundations to research this topic. Several large-scale research projects have recently been conducted, such as the SIRIUS project (Skills and Integration of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Applicants in European Labour Markets), launched in January 2018. The goal of this cross-national research project is to produce evidence-based knowledge for practitioners about which aspects play enabling and obstructing roles in the labour market integration of post-2014 migrants (Mexi 2021). In addition, there have been several studies taking stock of policy measures and research on policies, such as cross-national report produced by the European Migration Network in 2019 to provide an overview of existing labour market integration policies in Member States targeting third-country nationals (European Migration Network 2019). Employment-focussed networks at the EU level, such as the PES (Public Employment Services) also regularly conduct studies on this issue (European Network of Public Employment Services 2018). The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development) regularly publishes reports in its Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper series that evaluate labour market integration and labour market integration measures (OECD 2022). Large-scale evaluations are also carried out at the national level, such as the recently published report commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs evaluating active labour market policies for refugees in Germany since 2015 (Bonin et al. 2021).

Labour market integration continues to receive scholarly attention also beyond such large-scale regional and national research projects. Many quantitative studies examine how migrants fare on the European labour market across countries and how this developed over time (Fasani, Frattini, and Minale 2018). Large-scale national data both from surveys and administrative registries is also often used to analyse labour market participation of migrants and refugees. The EMM database lists over 500 surveys on both national and sub' national level looking into the issues of labour market integration (Morales et al. 2020). An example of a national longitudinal survey conducted in Germany is IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees, which started since 2016, and is used to produce yearly reports on their level of integration (Graf 2021). Studies on policy measures targeting labour market integration are generally carried out on a national level, and most frequently in northern European countries, possibly due to better data availability (Arendt 2020; Auer and Fossati 2020; Battisti, Giesing, and Laurentsyeveva 2019; Bilgili 2015; Bjerre, Pace, and Sen 2021; Bontenbal and Lillie 2021; Aumüller 2016; Ortlieb et al. 2020; Fossati and Liechti 2020; Roland Hosner, Irina Vana, and Golschan Khun Jush 2020; Spehar 2021; Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen 2016). However, the study of Zwysen and Demireva (2020) is an exception, since it analyses the impact of receiving country's policy context on various groups of migrants across the EU. Using EU Labour Force Survey data from 2008-2014, they compared the effect of labour market policies, family reunification and humanitarian reception policies on economic and non-economic migrants, both from the EU/EEA and from outside the EU (Zwysen and Demireva, 2020).

In light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, several studies have closely examined, on the one hand, the contribution of migrants the functioning of essential services across Europe (Fasani and Mazza, 2020; Fernández-Reino et al., 2020), and on the other hand, highlighted the detrimental effect of the pandemic on labour market integration services, which negatively affected migrants with a distance to the labour market (Bešić, Diedrich, and Aigner 2021; Falkenhain et al. 2021).

Figure 3: Groups of migrants in focus of literature



**experience more difficulties** in finding employment in the receiving countries than the citizens because of a combination of personal and institutional factors. And therefore, their **pathways towards employment** are a subject of attention for both academics and policy-makers.

Research on labour market integration of migrants has tried to understand what are the reasons for those difficulties, why some newcomers start participating in the local labour markets faster and more successfully than others, and how can the receiving societies facilitate this process (Zwysen and Demireva, 2020). Some literature understands **integration into the labour market** as the process by which immigrants actively join the labour force of the new country of residence. Others, understand

integration as the process by which immigrants become similar in their chances of employment to the receiving population, thus they **assimilate** into the labour market. However, just being employed is not seen as the only indicator of successful integration. Much research highlights the importance of finding a job that matches one's level of qualification, a job that is full-time, that is formal (thus not paid in 'black'), and even better that is well-paid. Needless to say, among citizens of the receiving countries, such ideal combinations of job characteristics are also rare, and the frequency of such scenarios differs across labour markets.

The attention to labour market integration among researchers has been drawn to various migrant groups, that are diverse in their origins, socio-economic characteristics, immigration status, gender and skill-level. In the past 10 years, research especially focused on the labour market integration of groups, whose initial immigration reason was not employment: asylum seekers, refugees, family migrants and sometimes irregular migrants. While the employment of

While the concept of integration has become increasingly contested in academic debate, many national and local policies have been developed in the past decades using this concept. There are various goals that policies aim to achieve, and they will be outlined in the section 4 of this chapter. While different research disciplines use various synonymic concepts, such as, inclusion, participation, facilitation, transition and incorporation of newcomers, there is a shared bottom line and an understanding of labour market integration as **participation of migrants in paid employment** or other economic activity, i.e. entrepreneurship. The shared view of research is that newcomers are found to

Figure 2: Geography of studies in this literature review



low and high-skilled labour migrants from within and from outside the EU has not been much studied in terms of integration, but rather in terms of quality and the conditions of their employment. This is because those immigrants usually come specifically for the reasons of employment and most already have a job offer before they arrive. For other groups mentioned above, employment is not guaranteed pre-arrival, and therefore they experience more legal, social and personal barriers towards a successful labour market integration. That is why in this literature review we will focus mainly on labour market integration of asylum-seekers, refugees, family migrants and irregular migrants.

### **2.3 Integration situation (inequalities) in employment**

As mentioned before, asylum-seekers, refugees, family migrants and irregular migrants face harder obstacles compared to other types of migrants in integration in the labour market. The right to employment in highly regulated European labour markets depends on gaining an official permission to stay. Without such permits, the pathways of legal employment for immigrants are blocked (Fasani, Frattini, and Minale 2021). In most of the countries there were so many applications in the period of mass-arrivals of asylum seekers after 2014, that the backlog of cases led to very long waiting times before the outcome of the asylum application was known. The newly arrived migrants were, therefore, prevented from prompt entry into the labour force due to frustrating administrative time lags, including waiting to be accepted as a refugee and having the right to work (Mulvey 2015). In the countries with less rigid control of employment (i.e. Italy) asylum seekers were sometimes able to find informal employment, while in others, like Germany and Netherlands, this was not possible (Schenner and Neergaard 2019; Weber 2016). For asylum seekers whose application have been rejected after the long waiting time that meant becoming irregular, or undocumented. The systems in many EU states are designed in such a way to block all pathways to integration, including employment for undocumented migrants. More details can be read about it in the Chapter 'Rights and legal status' of this report.

For refugees and family migrants, who already received a permit to stay and work, the barriers to labour market integration stem from other factors, beyond the legal access to work. The reviewed literature highlights that non-economic migrants, including refugees, asylum seekers and family migrants are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market (Bakker, Cheung, and Phillimore 2016; Zwysen and Demireva, 2020). Meaning that they have lower chances to participate in the labour market of receiving country than economic migrants (Zwysen and Demireva, 2020). There is a lot of research conducted in the past decade and earlier that investigated those barriers in detail. Factors that prevent the integration of newly arrived migrants in Europe to the labour market include a lack of language skills, lack of knowledge of the receiving country's labour market, psychological issues and trauma (more often in the case of refugees), non-recognition of qualifications from the countries of origin, lack of bridging networks that can facilitate employment, inadequate of support from facilitating institutions (Friberg and Midtbøen 2018).

In a 2008 study of humanitarian migrants in the UK, it was determined that having an insufficient grasp of the English language held back many migrants from successful labour market



integration (Bloch 2008). However, evidence from Germany demonstrate that with time immigrants improve their knowledge of receiving country's language if there is sufficient offer of language courses (Brücker et al. 2019). Also, the study of Zwysen, W. and N. Demireva (2020) found that acquiring good command of receiving country's language helps all kinds of migrants, including non-economic ones, to gain paid employment and access higher quality jobs.

Differences in personal and socio-economic characteristics of these immigrants also play a role in determining their pathways to the labour market. Evidence showed that level of education is a very important predictor of immigrant employment. The higher the level of education, the more likely migrant's chances to be employed across European countries (Belegri-Roboli et al. 2018). Nevertheless, deskilling is commonly experienced among newly arrived migrants, when they work in positions below their skill or qualification level (Mexi 2021). In general, the level (in terms of occupational ladder, payment and prestige) of immigrant employment is lower than that of citizens, a high proportion of immigrants are employed in secondary labour market (Schenner and Neergaard 2019). This can happen for several and intertwined reasons: non-recognition of the pre-immigration qualification, less than perfect professional knowledge of the receiving country's language, biased guidance that happens when immigrants are directed towards jobs that are always in demand (dirty-difficult-demeaning = 3D jobs), and also it could be that the individual's level of education or qualification only allows low-skilled employment. Due to absence of formal qualifications certificates, it becomes hard to evaluate which competences newly arrived migrants possess, namely, what kind of tasks they actually know how to implement. Mismatches between formal credentials and actual skills also happen, therefore, some receiving countries require alternative ways to evaluate competences in the situations when the official credentials are absent or not recognized (Pfeffer and Skrivaneck 2018).

A further barrier mentioned was that of discrimination, which a more recent Norwegian study has taken a close look into. Unveiled were the ethnic preferences that many employers would align to, demonstrating their racial discrimination and prejudice. Within this 'ethnic hierarchy' it became apparent that, whilst Swedish and eastern European migrant workers were largely suited to particular employment types, refugees and non-western migrants were often considered unwanted in any industry. These assumptions may have been formulated in line with the fact that, on an aggregate level, refugees and non-western migrants generally do have lower education levels and also are culturally further from Norway (Friberg and Midtbøen 2018). Yet, this 'rules of thumb' about a group of people has led to discriminatory and stereotyping towards individual members of the group, hindering their labour market integration. Similar feelings of discrimination have been felt by refugee teachers in Scotland (Smyth and Kum 2010).

Newly arrived migrant women experience less chances of employment (Ala-Mantila and Fleischmann 2018). This is clearly demonstrated by the comparative report of SIRIUS project (Mexi 2021), in which was shown that men, especially with higher level of education, are more likely to be employed in the European labour markets. For many female migrants, their status and ethnicity does not stand alone in holding them back from full integration into the labour market. Once overcoming the legal barriers to join the labour force, female migrants often experience double-layered discrimination. Not only do they encounter nativism and a need to

understand local cultural norms, delaying their upward mobility, they also have to fight against the entrenched gendered stereotypes of some industries oriented towards men, as it is explained in the study of STEM professions (Grigoleit-Richter 2017).

Given all these obstacles, it is not surprising that scientific evidence speaks of a rather unequal position of newly arrived immigrants compared to average citizens. The reviewed literature continuously points at the higher levels of unemployment among newly arrived migrants, as well as higher levels of part-time or temporary employment (Ager and Strang 2008; Belegri-Roboli et al. 2018). The research highlights that it takes immigrants longer time than the receiving population until adequate labour market participation (Bakker, Cheung, and Phillimore 2016).

The Covid-19 pandemic also has had a negative effect of the support services available in the receiving countries, which meant that more immigrants in need of labour market integration received less support or were inadequately supported during the period of pandemic. This has extended their distance to the labour market even more. In Germany, the pandemic led to the temporary shutdown of services provided by jobcentres, such as training programmes and language courses. For unemployed refugees, this particularly increased feelings of insecurity and being 'put on hold', whereas the refugees in stable employment, with no need for the services provided by the jobcentres, were not impacted by this shutdown. This pause in available support services for refugees was also felt elsewhere in Europe, due to the furloughing of support staff and reduction in volunteers. Evidently, without these vital support services, refugees have an impeded ability to develop the vital skills and networks they need to become a competitive applicant in a time of high unemployment. Hence, this has reduced their ability to integrate into the host countries' labour markets (Bešić, Diedrich, and Aigner 2021; Falkenhain et al. 2021).

## **2.4 Framing interventions and policy objectives**

The reviewed evidence shows that the lack of labour market integration of newly migrants has been largely seen as a policy problem because it leads to welfare benefits dependency and prevents further social integration. Participation in paid employment is seen as crucial especially for asylum-seekers, refugees and family migrants because states want to prevent long-term dependence on welfare support. Therefore, participation in paid employment has been framed as a beneficial goal for the receiving European countries and the migrants themselves to strive for. Labour market participation is seen by European policy-makers as essential tool to fill in labour shortages in the receiving countries and ensure self-sufficiency of the newly arrived immigrants. Moreover, participation in the labour market is framed as a way to enhance social cohesion between the newly arrived and established population because a job is a place where not only professional but also informal relationships could emerge among employees (European Migration Network 2019). Bridging with host population and other ethnic groups, and bonding among migrants of the same groups facilitate social cohesion, formation of support networks and well as allows learning about each other's culture.

However, research points at many institutional and individual-level challenges to successful labour market integration of newly arrived migrants. The institutional challenges include issues

stemming from ineffective policies and legal barriers such as provision of right to work, non-recognition of qualification certificates from the countries of origin as well as hostile socio-political climate, including public attitudes and political rhetoric around the issue. The individual level framings of the problem point at a migrant's own (lack) of skills and knowledge, such as poor command of the receiving country's language and lack of specialised education, illiteracy, which all together lead to worse employability of migrants. Also, discrimination and prejudice are individual-level obstacles from the side of the employers and front-line workers (Lee et al. 2020).

The result of a European Commission sponsored peer review of labour market inclusion of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection clearly recommends granting of the right to work for asylum seekers and refugees in the member states to facilitate labour market integration (European Commission 2016). The EU supports its member countries by providing guidance in policy decisions, offering informational support and funding. Immigrants with a granted refugee status have a full right to work and access the labour market, but the process takes very long. Yet policies on the right to work for asylum seekers still vary amongst the states. According to the EU Reception Directive (Directive 2013/33/EU) asylum seekers should not need to wait longer than nine months following their application to be allowed to access the labour market. Nevertheless, Italy allows a worker access to the labour market after a two month wait, yet Ireland and Lithuania forbid asylum seekers' employment during the entire period of application. Many EU countries do place various attempts to speed up the asylum seeker's application process for better labour market access, such as Sweden, where applicants who have skills that are in high demand are 'fast-tracked'.

The European Parliament's report on work and welfare for asylum seekers and refugees list further challenges to labour market integration: lack of knowledge among employers that both groups are allowed to work, insufficient language knowledge of migrants, absence of certificates and diplomas to acknowledge specialised skills, and reduced mobility of asylum seekers and refugees living in remote reception centres (Poptcheva and Stuchlik 2015). To improve the labour market integration of these groups, The European Network of Public Employment Services (PES) (2018) address four key areas: language, skills and qualifications, partners and institutions, employers. Language training should fit with the vocational skills and experience of the refugees and be coordinated alongside training or employment itself. This has been the focus in Belgium, with foreign speakers given the opportunity to learn Dutch whilst at work (European Network of Public Employment Services 2018).

Another very common institutional problem is a lack of recognition of qualifications. The rigid policies make it very difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to get their qualifications authenticated due to lack of documents and limited recognition of qualifications achieved in third countries. PES also addresses this struggle of many migrants in getting their qualifications recognised. Skills assessments, such as the Vocational Competence Tests in Germany, can help to determine the skills that a refugee's lack of official qualification documents obscure (European Network of Public Employment Services 2018).



Evidence highlight that the efficient coordination and cooperation of partners and institutions involved with integrating newly arrived migrants is key in facilitation efforts towards labour market integration. Partners often include NGOs, municipalities, immigration offices, and PES itself often taking a coordinating role. Through successful coordination, the needs for newly arrived migrants can be addressed efficiently and promptly. In Spain, government funded refugee reception centres work in a network, called ARIADNA, alongside NGOs such as the Red Spanish Cross to assist asylum seekers' labour integration. Besides collaboration with NGOs and public actors, working with employers is also crucial. By helping match refugees and asylum seekers with appropriate employers, a 'win-win' situation occurs. To support this is the need to ensure the migrant is sufficiently trained to match where there is a labour demand (European Network of Public Employment Services 2018).

The problem of labour shortages has been largely shared across the EU member states. It could be addressed via projects such as the 'Triple Win' in Germany is aimed at filling the gaps in the country's health care sector (Angenendt, Bither, and Ziebarth 2015). Research however, highlights that not enough is done to address the labour demand across all skill-levels in the EU. Demographic changes in European receiving countries, such as ageing populations and low fertility, create a need for both high and low skilled labour. While countries compete for highly-skilled talent, low-paid labour is the one much in demand but not welcomed (Weber 2016). The policies of many EU states towards asylum seekers and their access to the labour market are restrictive and work towards exclusion of both high and low skilled workers that the receiving countries desperately need.

There are two distinct service provision approaches to labour market integration: mainstream approach and group-specific approach. Some Member States, including UK, the Netherlands, and Estonia, aim at providing migrants with equal access to mainstream public employment services. While other Member States adopt a more targeted approach. This tailored approach focuses on providing specific measures targeting specific migrant groups. Such measures include examples like language training for those experiencing a language barrier in finding employment. Most EU member states use these targeted approaches alongside mainstream policies. Belgium, Finland, and Italy are among the EU member states that demonstrate more targeted policies, adopting policies such as customised support, integration programmes, and language courses (European Migration Network 2019).

## **2.5 Overview of commonly used instruments and tools in employment**

### **(1) Regulatory instruments**

For the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers, some Member States have implemented laws and regulations facilitating their legal access to employment. For example, in Germany, the *Act on the Acceleration of Asylum Procedures* of 2015 allows asylum applicants and those with tolerated stay permits ('*Duldung*') to take up employment three months after arrival, subject to approval of the Federal Labour Agency. Formerly, this approval had a condition that there are no other preferential candidates for the job, since 2019 it is based solely

on employment conditions according to which humanitarian migrants may not be employed under worse conditions than comparable native employees (Aumüller 2016). In Belgium, asylum seekers who do not receive a decision on their asylum application within four months can access a temporary work permit card, which lasts for 12 months and is renewable. It expires automatically if the outcome of the asylum procedure is negative (European Commission 2016). Regarding measures that do not specifically target refugees or asylum seekers, the EMN synthesis report states that most measures were either long-term programmes or ad-hoc projects, and that only nine of the 95 measures reported were of legislative character (European Migration Network 2019).

Civic integration requirements make up another indirect, legal or regulatory tool through which Member States encourage newly arrived migrants to take up employment. Literature on civic integration policies distinguish rights-based and responsibilities-based frameworks, and in the latter one long-term or permanent residency is conditional upon successful demonstration of economic integration, i.e. employment. Under responsibilities-based civic integration framework refugees are ‘pushed’ towards take up of jobs because it helps them secure continuous residency in the country of asylum. However, evidence from Sweden shows that under the rights-based civic integration framework, when permanent residency is guaranteed to the refugees, more people enter into education trajectories, which secures higher level jobs and less unemployment on the long run (Jutvik and Robinson 2020).

For highly-skilled newly arrived migrants EU has a Blue Card Directive that is meant to facilitate employment of highly skilled and highly earning migrants in the EU (Cerna 2018). Until 2021 this regulation required the applying migrant to demonstrate an employment contract with a higher-than-average wage in that receiving country. With the exception of Germany, which has offered more convenient and flexible conditions for applicants, the scheme was largely a failure in attracting highly skilled labour migrants (Weber 2016).

## (2) Economic or market-based instruments

Most measures targeting labour market integration are funded through national governments or EU funding or a combination of these. A smaller number of initiatives is funded through private-public sponsorship.

Language training and civic integration courses is a very common type of measures, which together with mastering of the language has the labour market preparation component. For instance, in Sweden, immigrants are taught professional Swedish - a six-month language course, in which participation is voluntary and free of charge. It is funded through a grant programme managed by Swedish Employment Service (European Migration Network 2019).

To facilitate the match to the labour market professions, instruments of skills assessment or qualification recognition are employed (Andersson 2021). In Austria, a ‘competence check’ is conducted from 2015, which entails a survey for refugees to assess skills, qualifications and language knowledge. It aims to recognise skills and qualifications and provide information on

Austrian employment and education system (European Commission 2016; Ortlieb et al. 2020). In Germany, there is a programme called “Integration through Qualification”. It involves counselling on credential recognition and job training. Its goal is to ‘bridge’ vocational training of people with foreign qualifications with the receiving country’s qualifications. It is implemented through a network of NGOs, employers and competence centres, and involves supplementary trainings for the migrants, intercultural competence trainings for employers and job centers’ staff (European Migration Network 2019). Career counselling and job-search assistance are also very common instruments, that are provided either through Jobcentres, who receive specialised training and increased funding, or through civil society organisations (Battisti, Giesing, and Laurentsyeveva 2019).

Financial incentives for migrants or employers in Germany is another measure to promote entry into the labour market. Those are called Integration grants (Eingliederungszuschuss/EGZ) and are paid to employers if they hire unemployed people. This benefit is used for both refugees and other groups. This subsidy is paid directly to employers by the jobcentre or recruitment agency, the refugees often are not aware that their employment is subject to EGZ. This financial measure incentivises employers, who are hesitating about hiring refugees without employment history in the receiving country, to do so. Refugees are often reluctantly hired for jobs because there are doubts about the knowledge or language or qualifications from the side of the employers. An argument often brought forward for the use of EGZ is that it enables further language learning within employment, and that it allows refugees to gain work experience in the receiving country soon after arrival. Even if the subsidised employment is not long-term, this work experience is beneficial for future applications (Bonin et al. 2021).

Support for self-employment or entrepreneurship of migrants is also a commonly discussed measure to promote economic integration. Starting a business or becoming self-employed is an alternative to employment of migrants, which still leads to their self-sustainability. Moreover, some businesses can create more jobs for both other migrants and locals. Evidence from Sweden, showcase several initiatives aimed at promotion of self-employment. One is called the “National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment 2007-2013” is aimed at encouraging start-ups’ access to capital and to promote Sweden as an international leader in entrepreneurial opportunities. Other strategies saw the “minimum share capital in private limited companies” halved - particularly benefitting immigrant entrepreneurs. Overall, the study found that these policies led to growth of incomes for immigrant entrepreneurs over time (Kazlou 2019).

‘Outsourcing’ of integration projects to civil society organizations is a rather common financial instrument that is used by receiving countries’ governmental bodies. In some countries with a lesser involvement of the state actors, this practice is more widely spread than in others, with a state-controlled implementation of policies. Provision of employment services to the whole population of migrants who need it is expensive and often politically complicated. Therefore, governments use funding schemes to encourage the provision of labour market integration services by NGOs. Often the funding is competition based and is rather limited, which enables to make the service provision ‘cheaper’ but possibly reach wider populations. The disadvantage

of such instrument is that those services are often short-term and small-scale, and are provided by volunteers who do not have professional qualifications to provide such consultations to migrants (Bontenbal and Lillie 2021).

Another type of instruments aims to bring information to various target groups in order to encourage behaviour and attitudes helping labour market integration. For instance, there are campaigns and workshops for employers meant to raise awareness about diversity, providing trainings how to handle diversity of cultures in their businesses and efforts to inform them about employability of refugees and migrants. For instance, in Cyprus they organized seminars for employers within sectors containing a high concentration of immigrants. The seminars focused on how to handle cultural diversity within teamwork and job recruitment. Reviews of the project demonstrate that the employers' cultural, ethnic, and religious biases had decreased (European Migration Network 2019).

Many instruments oriented at engaging employers and businesses in migrant integration have a very short-term focus, such as creating an internship placement. However, longer-term initiatives are likely to prove more sustainable. In Denmark, the 'step model' aims to assist with labour market integration of immigrants beyond the initial hiring. This involves government support for employers who set up mentorships for newly arrived migrants, as well as subsidising wages of permanently employed migrants for up to a year. Another initiative builds on the feeling of social responsibility as the reason for employers to hire refugees. Such social responsibility is rewarded by Italian office of UNHCR with a logo 'Working for Refugee Integration, which companies that hire refugees can use to distinguish them in their market (OECD and UNHCR 2018).

Participatory measures in labour market integration are also utilized to facilitate employment of immigrants, though volunteering, mentorship and community building. As mentioned above, knowledge of receiving country's language is an essential skill to gain employment. To help migrants practice their language skills they are matched with 'language friends'- native volunteers, this instrument has been used in Sweden and Ireland (European Migration Network 2019). Other initiatives are aimed at providing migrants opportunities to gain work experience in the new country. They encourage newly arrived migrants to take up voluntary employment or internships as a step towards employment. Such instrument in Sweden involved a governmental regulation requiring public bodies to offer internships for recently accepted asylum seekers, so that they gain work experience and practice Swedish language. No financial incentives to organize those internships were given to the employers, and no payment to the interns. Since, these migrants do not have many alternatives to enter paid employment, without experience and without knowledge of language, the internships are seen as an altruistic gesture to help asylum seekers make first steps in the labour market (Alaraj et al. 2019).

## 2.6 Effectiveness and Outcomes of instruments and tools

### in labour market integration

Overall, there seems to be consensus regarding the policy goals of labour market integration of migrants in the EU countries – the pursuit of employment participation for regular migrants. It is also clear that both institutional and individual factors shape the integration process of migrants. Therefore, it is necessary to consider evaluation studies of instruments tackling challenges on both levels, in order to provide a comprehensive picture.

Evidence confirms that in the case of refugee migrants it is essential to start integration measures as soon as possible after the arrival (Engbersen, Jennissen, and Bokhorst 2015; Fasani, Frattini, and Minale 2021). Delayed in integration measures results in unnecessary welfare dependency and waste of human capital. Moreover, according to an Austrian study comparing long and short term interventions (i.e. skills assessment), comprehensive and long-term programmes are more effective than short-term interventions (Ortlieb et al. 2020). Other research also confirms that stable and long term fundings streams to NGO-service providers are key in ensuring effective and sustainable practices of integration. If civil society organisations provide the lion share of labour market integration, public policies need to recognize their added value and ensure steady funding streams (Mexi 2021).

With regards to evaluation of effectiveness of mainstream versus targeted approach to integration. Three studies claim that tailor-made integration pathways are more effective in bringing migrants into employment (Degler, Liebig, and Lenner 2017; Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen 2016; Zwysen and Demireva, 2020). A study in Finland found that the allocation of resources away from traditional ALMPs towards trainings specifically targeting immigrants had a largely positive impact on the earnings of disadvantaged immigrants. And a report on Germany (Degler, Liebig, and Lenner 2017) notes that labour market integration programmes tailored for refugees with different skill and language level are more effective in preparing people for the receiving country's labour market. For instance, illiterate refugees without basic qualifications need longer and more comprehensive programmes to be able to enter the labour market. Zwysen and N. Demireva (2020) find that it is important for receiving states to invest in language, vocational training and employment support specifically for refugees and family migrants, since this clearly increases their chances of better integration into the labour market. Lower-qualified, non-economic migrants benefit greatly from acquisition of receiving country's qualifications and attendance of language courses, thus policy measures facilitating access to those should be developed and applied.

Migrants' participation in language courses of the receiving country leads to better chances of employment and higher-quality jobs, the effect is especially strong for refugees and family migrants (Zwysen and Demireva, 2020). A large-scale evaluation in Germany, positively evaluated the Active Labour Market Policies, both in terms of labour market and social integration, and particularly the improvement of language ability. According to this study, the most successful instruments are those measures where **employers are directly involved**, as



opposed to measures occurring with third parties. Another positively evaluated measure is assistance accompanying vocational training or education, which leads to higher likelihood of completion of training or education. These are deemed essential for sustainable labour market prospects. Integration subsidies ‘Eingliederungszuschüsse’ are also regarded as particularly successful, with participants being employed almost 14 months longer on average and no longer relying on social assistance almost eight months earlier. Besides, vocation-specific language training is assessed as the single most-effective language training that significantly improves labour market outcomes. Measures evaluated negatively are employment-creating for refugees, which are also rarely used. The effects of such measures are in some cases negative rather than simply neutral. The report also highlights low participation of women in these measures, which is because of structural barriers, such as lack of childcare, and gendered perceptions of child-rearing obligations (Bonin et al. 2021).

An evaluation study from the Netherlands found no significant effect of a more intensive integration programme on labour market participation of refugees. In the case of the evaluated programme, more individual and tailor-made support did not necessarily lead to better outcomes of refugee integration. The period of analysis was short, only two years, and it is known that refugees need more time to integrated effectively in the labour market, however, the authors maintain that this case proves that very intensive support may lead to dependency paradox, depriving refugees from relying on their own agency. The study suggests that there should be a balance between provided integration support and giving incentives to evoke individual’s agency in integration process. Also, the study confirms the need for dual trajectories where language is taught and applied in the work context, and not separately from it (Dagevos and Linden 2021).

Attitudes and biases seem to have an important role in effectiveness of measures. According to a survey experiment conducted in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, the attitudes of employers play a more significant role than the types of active labour market policies that refugees participated in (Fossati and Liechti 2020). A Swiss study on assigning of ALMPs found that caseworkers assign labour market activation measures based on a competition logic driven by economic rationale. The staff tries to find job seekers who they perceive to be the easiest to employ, because the numbers of employed persons are linked to performance evaluations. Consequently, individuals whose distance from the labour market perceived larger are not placed in training programmes. Such practice does not provide effective upskilling and employment service to those immigrants who are already disadvantaged in the labour market from social, geographical and educational perspectives (Auer and Fossati 2020). Another study confirms that migrants feel a certain degree of coercion in countries with strong active labour market policies, such as Finland, Denmark or Switzerland. Since, they felt to be pushed into jobs deemed appropriate by case workers, however not fitting from the point of view of migrants themselves (Mexi 2021).

Financial incentives, such as employment grants for employers have been found as one of the best measures to encourage employment of refugees. However, is it not able to change the decision of employers, but rather it facilitates the decision for employers already considering

employing refugees. A downside of this programme is that it can be used as a form of salary-subsidy by employers, who will swiftly fire recipients after the programme ends and replace them with another subsidized employee. Evaluation study also suggests that the use of such instrument alone is not sufficient, but it is most effective when implemented alongside further instruments such as individual coaching and language courses (Bonin et al. 2021).

Some remarks on the difficulty to evaluate effectiveness of instruments as measures are often assessed based on output. Meaning, that the numbers of beneficiaries or numbers of conducted activities are counted, rather than results of the beneficiaries and outcome, i.e. as the post-programme employment rates, or how satisfied participants were with the programmes (European Migration Network 2019). Besides, often the studies lack a design that could enable evaluation. Moreover, to measure impact of concrete measures is especially hard as they are part of complex multi-component programmes (Iván Martín et al. 2016).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This review report has shown that there is a great wealth of studies on labour market integration of migrants. There is a strong consensus in the literature on the importance of labour market participation not only for (economic) independence but also for broader integration of migrants. In this review we focused in particular on labour market integration of newly arrived migrants, in particular asylum-seekers, refugees, family migrants and irregular migrants. Often for these migrants, access to the labour market is regularized, which can delay labour market participation. Also, the literature refers to various barriers to participation, such as related to language, recognition of qualifications, but also discrimination. The labour market position of newly arrived migrants is generally unequal, and when participation takes place, deskilling is common.

A broad variety of policy practices can be identified for supporting labour market participation of migrants. This includes regulatory policy instruments, such as aimed at facilitating access to employment, but also civic integration measures targeted at labour market participation. Economic policies include a variety of practices, including the language training and courses, skills assessments, career counselling, financial incentives for migrants but also for employers, support for entrepreneurship, and outsourcing of integration projects. Furthermore, there are practices oriented at the provision of information, helping migrants navigate the labour market.

The assessment of such practices in the literature suggests that still the delay in access to the labour market limits the participation potential of newly arrived migrants, resulting also in increased welfare dependency. Studies are overall positive of involvement of civil society organisations but also employers on a structural basis in enhancing labour market participation. For instance, employment grants for employers are seen as a clearly promising practice. Also, practices seem to be more effective when they are tailored more specifically to the needs of newly arrived migrants. There is, however, no clear evidence supporting that civic integration programs enhance labour market participation.

Given the abundance of policy practices in the domain of employment, there is a clear need for more evaluation studies. This has the aim of taking into accounts results from the perspective of the beneficiaries and long-term outcomes for them, not just the output of policies per se. More systematic evaluation is required.

Our review has provided a birds-eye perspective on practices to enhance labour market participation of newly arrived migrants. It suggests that newly arrived migrants, because of their vulnerable position on the labour market (when opposed to most labour migrants), require a targeted approach. This can be targeted to specific newly arriving groups (such as recent Syrian refugees), or to refugee women. Promising are in particular practices that involve employers and civil society organisations and are structural of nature. Facilitating access to the labour market and preventing deskilling are positive examples. However, in order to truly accumulate knowledge on what works in terms of labour market participation, a far more systematic approach to policy evaluation is required.

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