

# EMN INFORM

## The Integration of Beneficiaries of International/Humanitarian Protection into the Labour Market: Policies and Good Practices

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This EMN Inform summarises the findings from the EMN Study on *'the Integration of Beneficiaries of International/Humanitarian Protection into the Labour Market: Policies and Good Practices'*.<sup>1</sup> The Study was based on contributions from EMN National Contact Points in 24 Member States<sup>2</sup>, collected via a common template to ensure comparability. The key findings are set out below.

### 2. KEY POINTS TO NOTE:

- ★ The significant rise in asylum applications lodged in the EU in recent years, in combination with a higher recognition rate, has placed the integration of beneficiaries of international/humanitarian protection at the top of the political agenda.
- ★ Results of the EU Labour Force Survey show, however, that the labour market participation rate of beneficiaries is low, especially in the first four or less years of residence. On the other hand, beneficiaries' employment rate increases over time and after 20+ years the employment rate becomes almost the same for all categories of migrants.

- ★ Although beneficiaries are, in all Member States, granted the legal right to access the labour market, administrative requirements and practical obstacles specific to the situation of beneficiaries impede access in practice.
- ★ Member States provide beneficiaries access to a wide range of employment-related support measures. Significant differences exist however across Member States as to the organisation, the type/content of the measures, the extent to which they are tailored to beneficiaries, as well as the extent to which they are accessible in practice.
- ★ The large majority of Member States apply a mainstreaming approach and provide access to employment-related support measures in a similar manner to all TCNs. Several others apply a hybrid approach by combining generic measures for migrants with specific tailored measures to beneficiaries, whereas only few provide specific measures tailored exclusively to beneficiaries.
- ★ Core measures provided by most Member States include language courses, orientation services, employment services (including counselling), housing assistance, and assistance in obtaining recognition of professional qualifications.

The precise focus of these courses and nature of the services still differs significantly across Member States.

<sup>1</sup> Available from the [EMN website](#)

<sup>2</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

★ The majority of employment-related support measures are generic (i.e. similar as those offered to TCNs/nationals), but the Study crucially shows an increasing trend of policy initiatives to develop more tailored measures in response to the current migration/refugee crisis. Most of these have however yet to be translated into specific measures/practices in the coming years.

★ **Good practices** in the provision of employment-related support measures include:

- **Linking language learning to the job market;**
- Providing **orientation services** with the aim to **directly support workplace integration;**
- Provision of **tailored** measures to facilitate beneficiaries' access to **education;**
- Provision of **'complementary' education** and training (**bridging courses**) specifically for beneficiaries or TCNs;
- Provision of **tailored vocational educational training;**
- Provision of employment **counselling** by a **wide range of actors** and in **different foreign languages;**
- Provision of **tailored** schemes for the **recognition of qualifications** and accreditation of prior learning, including tailored information and assistance;
- Provision of **additional/tailored housing assistance** to beneficiaries;

★ Despite availability of a wide range of employment-related services, beneficiaries face numerous **obstacles to access** these in practice. Some employment-related support measures are not widely available to *all* beneficiaries (e.g. offered on a project basis, restricted to geographical areas etc.). Other factors which impede participation in support measures include financial costs (both direct and indirect), lack of language proficiency, low educational levels, lack of educational qualifications and/or documents to proof qualifications etc. Additionally, due to high financial and human resource costs, the **implementation** of support measures is in some Member States also **sub-optimal**.

★ Certain **differences in the treatment** between the various categories of beneficiaries exist. The main difference between refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection relates to the

length of the residence permit with many Member States granting residence permits of shorter duration to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Also, beneficiaries of humanitarian protection are in some Member States subject to more administrative conditions in comparison to refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

### 3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of the Study was to present a comparative analysis of Member States' policies and practices to facilitate the labour market integration of beneficiaries of international/humanitarian protection.

The Study addresses:

- ★ Labour market access rights in legislation as well as in practice;
- ★ The availability and type of employment-related support measures;
- ★ Identification of good practices and obstacles in Member States' policies and practices to realise labour market access and participation of beneficiaries;
- ★ Differences in the treatment of the different statuses (refugee, beneficiary of subsidiary protection, humanitarian protection).

### 4. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT TO THE STUDY

[Why is labour market integration of beneficiaries so important \(background/context to the Study\)?](#)

Labour market integration is a key concern for beneficiaries, Member States and a successful EU, including an effective protection system for beneficiaries of international protection. From the perspective of refugees, having a job is one of the most important factors for successful integration as it fosters feelings of pride to provide for oneself, facilitates acceptance by the wider society, and supports refugees with other dimensions of integration. From the perspective of Member States, labour market participation of beneficiaries can also reduce costs associated with the welfare system. In a context of ageing populations and labour shortages, Member States also face the challenge to make optimal use of the labour force present on their territory.

Most crucially, the current context with migratory challenges and the growing number of beneficiaries also underlines the importance of labour market integration of refugees. The EU Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals underlined this when it stated: “national economic and social policies will need to cater for the recent inflow of third-country migrants and refugees. This will be a challenge for many Member States, but with the right conditions [...] it is also an opportunity, especially for Member States undergoing demographic changes. That includes on the economic front as evidence shows that third-country nationals have a positive fiscal net contribution if they are well integrated in a timely manner, starting with early integration into education and the labour market<sup>3</sup>”.

#### How is the EU currently faring when it comes to labour market participation of beneficiaries of international protection?

Statistics on labour market participation of beneficiaries are scarce and very little empirical research has been done. Nevertheless, the 2014 European Union Labour Force Survey indicates that participation rates of beneficiaries are low (only 27%) in the first four or less years of residence, but that these increase over time. After 20+ years of residence the employment rate becomes almost the same for all categories of migrants. Moreover, most Member States indicated that those beneficiaries who do secure employment usually work below their qualification level and hold low-skilled/low-paid jobs of temporary nature. This illustrates that more could and should be done to ensure more effective labour market integration of beneficiaries.

## 5. LABOUR MARKET ACCESS RIGHTS IN LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE

#### To what extent are beneficiaries confronted with obstacles (in legislation and in practice) when accessing the labour market?

As required by the recast Qualification Directive (QD), all Member States grant beneficiaries of international protection the **legal right to employment**. Although the recast QD requires Member States to “immediately” authorise beneficiaries access to the labour market, **in practice**, certain **administrative conditions** first have to be met. For example, all Member States except Croatia require beneficiaries to be in possession of a residence permit, whereas some (AT<sup>4</sup>, BE<sup>5</sup>, EL<sup>6</sup>, ES, MT,

SE) also require a separate work permit. Whilst the procedure including the length of time it takes to obtain such documents differs per Member State, requirements such as these can **delay the process** of accessing the labour market. In Spain and Sweden however beneficiaries apply and are issued the residence and work permit at the same time (in one single procedure), thereby avoiding additional administrative delays.

Next to administrative conditions, beneficiaries also face **practical obstacles** to access the labour market owing to their specific circumstances and experiences of persecution and harm resulting from the loss of protection from their own state and their flight to Europe. These include, in particular, psychological and physical distress, lack of documentation proving qualifications, lack of a social network, lack of language proficiency, etc. As a result, beneficiaries are in a more disadvantageous position to access the labour market vis-à-vis immigrants (and of course nationals). Such practical obstacles underline the importance of **employment-related support measures** and provide a strong argument for the necessity of **tailoring** measures to the **specific situation of beneficiaries**.

## 6. EMPLOYMENT RELATED SUPPORT MEASURES

#### Do Member States offer beneficiaries access to employment-related support measures?

In line with the recast QD, all Member States provide beneficiaries access to a wide range of employment-related support measures. Significant differences exist however across Member States as to the organisation, the type/content of measures, the extent to which they are tailored to beneficiaries as well as the extent to which they are accessible in practice.

#### How are employment-related support measures organised?

In all Member States, employment-related support measures for beneficiaries form part of labour market integration policies for *migrants*. Within this broader framework, **different organisational approaches** exist as to how Member States make such measures available to beneficiaries. Whereas the majority of Member States (BE, BG, CY, EE, EL, FI, IE, LU, LV, MT, SK, UK) apply a mainstreaming approach and provide access to measures in a similar manner to TCNs, several others (AT, DE, ES, FR, HU, NL, SE) apply a hybrid approach by combining generic measures for migrants with specific tailored measures to beneficiaries, whereas only a few (CZ, IT, LT, SI) provide specific measures tailored exclusively to beneficiaries.

<sup>3</sup> COM (2016) 377 final

<sup>4</sup> Depending on the residence permit granted, some beneficiaries of humanitarian protection may need a work permit. This obligation does not apply to refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

<sup>5</sup> BE requires beneficiaries of subsidiary protection to be in possession of a work permit, whereas this obligation does not apply to refugees.

<sup>6</sup> Until 3rd April 2016 when a new law was passed on asylum and migration which abolishes the requirement for a work permit.

## What type of employment-related support measures are available?

A wide range of **different types of employment-related support measures** are offered across Member States. Core measures provided by most Member States include language courses, orientation services, employment services (including counselling), housing assistance, and assistance in obtaining recognition of professional qualifications. The exact focus of the courses, and nature of services provided by each Member State differs significantly. Additional support measures provided by some include outreach to potential employers (e.g. EE, ES, SE), access to internships/apprenticeships (e.g. AT, EE, ES, SE), training on social/professional skills (e.g. EE, LT, LV, SE) etc.

## Are employment-related support measures tailored to the specific needs of beneficiaries of international protection?

The review of a selection of employment-related support measures shows that the large majority of employment-related support measures are **not specific to beneficiaries**, but are available in general to all third-country nationals and/or nationals. This is especially the case with language courses<sup>7</sup>, access to education<sup>8</sup> and guaranteed minimum income<sup>9</sup>. In contrast, the provision of tailored measures was more frequently identified for orientation services<sup>10</sup>, recognition of qualifications<sup>11</sup>, counselling<sup>12</sup> as well as access to housing<sup>13</sup>.

The Study crucially shows an increasing **trend** however across Member States to develop **more tailored measures** in response to the current migration/refugee crisis. Most of such initiatives are still in exploratory stages (i.e. establishment of Task Forces, working groups) and have yet to be translated into specific measures/practices.

## 7. GOOD PRACTICES AND OBSTACLES

### Can any good practices be identified in the provision of employment-related support measures?

Several **good practices** for the provision of employment-related support measures could be identified, including:

- ★ **Linking language learning to the job market** to increase the likelihood that learning supports employment;

<sup>7</sup> Tailored measures identified in three Member States.

<sup>8</sup> Tailored measures in four Member States.

<sup>9</sup> No tailored measures.

<sup>10</sup> Tailored measures in seven Member States.

<sup>11</sup> Tailored measures in 11 Member States.

<sup>12</sup> Tailored measures in 15 Member States.

<sup>13</sup> Tailored measures identified in 13 Member States.

- ★ Providing **orientation services** with the aim to directly **support workplace integration** in order to help the beneficiary to prepare for the workplace;
- ★ Provision of **tailored measures to facilitate beneficiaries' access to education**, e.g. by financial assistance or exemption from course fees, guidance during studies etc.;
- ★ Provision of "**complementary education and training**" specifically for beneficiaries or third-country nationals (e.g. on the job-training) as a means of acquiring additional learning and getting qualifications recognised;
- ★ Provision of **tailored vocational training** which help to increase participation rates of beneficiaries of international protection;
- ★ Provision of (employment) **counselling** by a **wide range of actors** and in **different foreign languages** to ensure an optimal level of services;
- ★ Provision of **tailored schemes** for the **recognition of qualifications and accreditation of prior learning**, including tailored information and assistance to beneficiaries to identify and access suitable schemes.

### To what extent do obstacles impede access to and participation in employment-related support measures?

None of the Member States were able to provide statistics on the number of beneficiaries who participate in employment-related support measures. However, what is clear from the Study is that **obstacles** to access employment-related support measures are numerous and common in all Member States. Most importantly, some employment-related support measures are not widely available to *all* beneficiaries, for example because they are offered on a project-basis, are only offered in certain geographical areas, or are simply restricted to a certain number of beneficiaries. Other factors which impede participation in support measures include:

- ★ **Financial costs** (direct and indirect) to participate in e.g. language courses, education, vocational educational training, recognition of qualifications etc.;
- ★ Insufficient level of **language proficiency**, which was identified as an obstacle to access orientation services, education, vocational educational training;
- ★ Low **educational levels** which are an obstacle to access e.g. language courses and vocational educational training;
- ★ Lack of **credible documents to prove qualifications** which is in particular an obstacle to access further education and certain occupations;

★ **Administrative burden** and **lengthy procedures** e.g. to get qualifications recognised or to get access to guaranteed minimum resources.

Obstacles were also identified in relation to the **implementation** of support measures. The **delivery** of support measures are **in some Member States sub-optimal** due to a **lack of resources** and **capacity** to implement them. There is therefore **scope to improve** both **access to** employment-related support measures as well as their **delivery**.

## 8. DIFFERENCES IN TREATMENT

To what extent do differences exist in the treatment of the different statuses?

The Study identified certain **differences in the treatment between the various categories of beneficiaries** researched in this Study (refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and humanitarian protection). The main differences between refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection relates to the length of residence permits with many Member States (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, EE, FR, HR, LT, LV, SI, SK) granting residence permits of shorter duration to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection as opposed to refugees - as also allowed by the recast Qualification Directive. This may hamper the labour market integration process of these beneficiaries, given that residence permits of a short duration undermine the facilitation of long-term integration and also present practical obstacles when accessing employment-related support measures. There may therefore be further scope to reduce such differences, especially because ten Member States (EL, ES, FI, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, SE, UK) do not currently make a difference related to the length of residence permits between the statuses. Furthermore, in a few Member States (e.g. AT, IT) beneficiaries of humanitarian protection are subject to more administrative conditions vis-à-vis refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. This notably relates to the requirement of a work permit including a labour market test to access the labour market. No significant differences between the categories were identified in relation to accessing and participating in employment-related support measures.

## 9. FURTHER INFORMATION

You may obtain further details on this EMN Inform and/or on any other aspect of the EMN, from [HOME-EMN@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-EMN@ec.europa.eu).

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