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7.12.8 Access to employment

A few countries developed comprehensive measures to increase the participation of third country nationals in the labour market, involving also specific, targeted measures for beneficiaries of international protection.

Among the more robust initiatives, the government in Sweden increased funding for fast tracks, which were established to support entry into the job market for beneficiaries of international protection who have education, work or training experience. It also continued the development of entry agreements to support newly-arrived migrants and long-term unemployed people to establish themselves in the labour market. Under the initiative, which will be launched in the second half of 2020, employees would receive an indirect wage subsidy and agreements could be made with companies without collective agreements and recruitment agencies.

Other initiatives continued throughout 2019 in Sweden, including bridging programmes for persons with foreign qualifications who needed complementary training to engage in professional activities in the host country, for example in the field of medicine, nursing, dentistry, engineering, teaching or law. To be able to further build on lessons learnt, the Swedish Public Employment Service evaluated a 2014-2015 pilot project which used a systematic method to support labour market integration. The agency found that the approach was especially beneficial for women who had increased rates of employment and overall the method reduced gender differences in the programme.[634]

Temporarily-admitted persons in Switzerland may work anywhere in the country since January 2019 if the employment conditions for the specific location, profession and sector are fulfilled.[635]

Austria continued to focus on the labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection, for example with targeted employment fairs[636] and mentoring programmes specifically tailored to migrant women.[637]

The Public Employment Services in Belgium worked closely with integration and civic integration agencies to expedite the labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection, for example through intensive or tailored language classes.

The Integrated Communities Action Plan in the United Kingdom focused, in particular, on supporting beneficiaries of international protection in acquiring employment. For example, with funding from the UK Home Office and the National Lottery Fund, a refugee entrepreneur pilot

programme was launched with the Centre for Entrepreneurs to identify local business support organisations which can provide tailored start-up programmes assisting refugees from business idea to launching. The centre worked with academia to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot programme.[638]

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies in Italy launched a project, *Protezione Unita a Obiettivo Integrazione*, which provided effective pathways to the labour market for beneficiaries of international protection, persons with humanitarian status or persons who entered the country as unaccompanied minors.

The Greek National Integration Strategy announced ambitious actions to improve labour market access to beneficiaries of international protection, including a pilot programme for vocational training for 8 000 persons and an employment programme in the agricultural sector for another 8 000 beneficiaries. These programmes are still to be launched.[639]

The Ministry of Science and Education in Croatia offered professional training programmes for applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, while the Croatian Employment Service provided targeted on-the-job training in cooperation with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

The Cyprus Refugee Council and UNHCR Cyprus launched an e-platform to connect employers and training providers with beneficiaries of international protection.[640] With a similar objective, the Information Centre for Newcomers in Latvia hosted Open Door Days in five regions to inform employers about hiring third country nationals and provided information to third country nationals about employment opportunities.[641]

UNHCR published a report on the employment of asylum seekers and refugees in Malta and formulated recommendations to address the list of main challenges, including the reduction of administrative costs for work permits, employer site-specific language courses and the recognition of skills of refugees lacking certification documents.[642] The employment agency, Jobsplus, continued to offer employment-related English and Maltese language classes.

The Knowledge Platform on Integration (KIS, *Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving*) in the Netherlands, together with Divosa, published its annual monitoring report on the labour market participation of refugees. The report revealed that 17 % of refugees who arrived in 2015 had a paid job in 2019 (4 % higher than in 2018), but many of them were employed below their educational and skills levels.[643] The 2019 update of the AIDA report on the Netherlands also signalled that beneficiaries of international protection remained in a weak position in the labour market, with only slight improvements being noted in 2019.[644] At the first Dutch Business Summit on Refugees, 15 Dutch multinational companies made concrete pledges to employ more beneficiaries of international protection and support them in setting up businesses.[645]

Language barriers, administrative obstacles, a lack of information and discrimination in general continued as the greatest obstacles for beneficiaries of international protection to access employment. But the Croatian Employment Service also pointed out challenges with a lack of fluency with the language, sometimes limited motivation to learn the language and lack of

motivation to undertake employment.[646]

In France, the Republican Integration Contract (CIR) is concluded between France and any non-European foreigner admitted to stay in France who wishes to settle permanently in order to promote integration into the French society. Since 1 March 2019, professional orientation schemes within the CIR and the personalised integration programme have been strengthened. Moreover, different programmes targeting refugees specifically are funded by the state, for example the HOPE (Housing, Orientation and Process to Employment) programme is an experimental state-sponsored programme which provides housing, French lessons, vocational training and assistance to access accommodation for four months followed by a practical workplace experience for four months. In 2019, the programme supported 1 500 refugees with integration through work.

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