



Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers: Current status and future needs for research

An account of key information provided and main points raised at Eurofound's workshop, Brussels, 27 March 2017

Workshop on labour market integration of refugees – identification of future research (based on the results of Eurofound's report on ['Approaches to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers'](#))

Contents

Introduction	1
First session: “Opportunities for better labour market integration: Lessons from national experiences”	1
Second session: “Research and information needs at EU level”	7
Closing session: “An agenda for policy-related research to support labour market integration of refugees”	9
References	11
Appendix – agenda and list of participants	12

If citing this working paper, please use the wording: Fóti, K., Eurofound, (2017), *Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers: Current status and future needs for research*, Dublin.

Author: Klára Fóti (Eurofound)

Research project: Workshop on labour market integration of refugees (identification of future research, based on Eurofound’s project of 2016)

© European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2017

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies. Eurofound was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75 to contribute to the planning and design of better living and working conditions in Europe.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Telephone: (+353 1) 204 31 00

Email: information@eurofound.europa.eu

Web: www.eurofound.europa.eu

Introduction

The workshop was planned as part of Eurofound's 2017 Work Programme. The participants represented key research centres as well as national and EU policy makers.

The workshop started with a short outline of the key findings of Eurofound's research. The presentation included the following questions for the participants of the workshop:

- On the basis of research findings by Eurofound and other organisations, to what extent were Member States able to respond to challenges posed by the refugee crisis?
- In particular, how successful were those measures that directly aimed at labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers?
- What was the context in the individual Member States and what were the other measures which proved to facilitate labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers?
- What was the role of Social Partners and civil society organisations in the process of labour market integration?
- What are the main lessons learnt from research in the area (for example, need for specific data and information)?

The introductory presentation also contained some ideas for further research. They are as follows:

- To what extent **social services (housing, education, health, etc.)** help (or not) in facilitating refugees' labour market integration? A holistic approach is needed - where does integration start?
- **Profile of the newly arrived refugees.** Depending on that, they could avail of **different social services**;
- **Migrants at the workplace:** examining **recruitment practices** in some more detail;
- **Local level practices and the interaction with local communities.** This is important due to **fear of the population** which is manifested at local level
- **Types of jobs/activities** refugees are involved in, including **self-employment**
- **Evaluation of integration measures** – when could they be looked at on a systematic basis?
- **Role of the social partners in integration** – a topic to be further elaborated

First session: “Opportunities for better labour market integration: Lessons from national experiences”

During the session presentations of experiences from three Member States were delivered and discussed: **Austria, Sweden and Germany**. All the three countries are facing challenges of integrating refugees, even if the number of asylum applicants has substantially decreased since the peak year of 2015.

In **Austria**, for example, after the very high level of about 89,000 asylum seekers who applied for asylum in 2015, in 2016 their number declined to 44,000, and in 2017, during the first two months of the year their number stood at 4,000 (during the same period in 2016 it was

11,000). Unaccompanied minors make up about 11% of total applications – this is apparently one of the highest percentages in Europe.

As regards integration challenges, although the Voluntary Integration Year looked promising in Austria last year, up to now, 173 people have started the programme and, only 5 finished it. The requirements for this were too strict (e.g. language and qualifications).

Important changes in legislation were introduced in the country in Mid-May of 2017 (at the time of preparing this working paper): [Labour Market Integration Law and Integration Law](#) were adopted on 16th of May. There is a distinction between recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection on the one hand, and asylum seekers with high probability to stay. The first two groups are obliged to participate in the so-called integration year, starting already from September 2017, whereas programmes for the asylum seekers may start in January 2018, and depend on budgetary resources.

The changes include for example that for the first time it would be the public employment services (AMS) which is to be responsible for providing labour integration measures for asylum seekers with a high probability of staying in the country (see more details in Vidovic).

During the discussion, it was mentioned that a lot of data are collected on integration measures, and these are conducted by various Austrian institutions, including both monitoring/evaluation activities that are part of practical projects as well as dedicated research activities. Thus, following two pilot surveys, a group of institutes is developing a follow-up panel survey which not only covers labour market integration, but also other aspects, such as social services, including housing, health and education. In terms of non-research-oriented data collection, the Youth college (Jugendcollege) project was mentioned, which is accompanied by an extensive data collection internally. This could be used for studies/internal evaluations. In a similar vein, analyses of results of the so-called “competence checks” implemented by the public employment agency, AMS (Arbeitsmarktservice) are already undertaken. A qualitative research focusing on Afghan and Syrian refugees, implemented by ICMPD (Perspekt), is starting now – perspectives on employment and training are to be examined and the investigation will be based on observed difficulties and challenges people face, concerning longer-term vocational training and placing refugees elsewhere than Vienna. In addition, a best practice collection is also envisaged. Within this exercise, practices in Sweden and Germany will also be examined. Respondents will be asked about their expectations, and return migration will be an important subject of research, as well as experiences at the workplace such as discrimination will be investigated. These will be extensive studies, but most of them have just now started.

As regards the planned new legislative changes, to some extent, they are prompted by evidence. Thus lessons learnt from experiences with the competence checks were part of policy learning: it has been recognised by now that the public employment services (AMS) should be more proactive to assess the profile of refugees. Many of the changes, however, seem to be driven rather by the large inflow.

It remains to be seen what will be the results of the so called “b. mobile” activity (see Vidovic, 2017, slide nr. 4), which is a nationwide apprenticeship placement in Austria. Apprentices are lacking in the Western and Southern part of Austria, whereas many young people arrived to Vienna. So the aim of the scheme, which is supported by the Chamber of Commerce, is to convince those refugees who went to Vienna, to settle rather in those parts Austria. For this, from its part the Chamber of Commerce tries to persuade its members in these provinces to employ refugees. As regards the apprenticeship system, at least when persons start their training there, the training is placed somewhat between school education (i.e. not remunerated) and work – in other words, it is not considered proper employment. The remuneration is thus more like an internship subsidy, and the tacit expectation is that apprentices still stay with their parents and thus do not need to cover food and lodging.

In relation to experimenting with various policies and measures, a participant voiced his impression that a lot of policies are being tried out in different places of Europe, and there has not been much coordination as yet between the different schemes and learning from each other in a systematic way (i.e. what works and what does not). There are, however, regular exchanges between public employment services (PESs) in Austria and Germany (twice a year).

In realising the importance of starting integration support measures as early as possible, asylum seekers are also increasingly considered as target groups and a differentiation made between those who have a high probability of staying and those, who are not. What the exact criteria are to determine this group is not defined in law. Presumably, the 75% threshold used for relocation will be a possible yardstick, but in any case, the authorities applying it have a considerable discretion, not least since integration support measures can be offered, but there is no entitlement.

It was also discussed what restrictions asylum seekers should face in accessing higher education. Although in principle they have an access, but in practice, very few, if any will be able to meet the conditions (e.g. proof of a comparable university place in the country of origin, no subsidies for German language training, etc.)

In **Sweden**, according to a recent media report, last year the number of economically active persons increased by almost 250 thousand people, and almost all the newly created jobs were taken up by foreign-born people. The country received many asylum seekers in recent years, including a very high number of unaccompanied minors. Despite many new integration measures for recognised refugees, a source of concern could be that a lot of those asylum seekers, who are rejected will eventually stay – their living conditions and chances for joining the labour market could be a subject for future and further research.

In Sweden, most social benefits and services are residence-based, meaning that they are available for anybody who is legally residing in the country, including beneficiaries of international protection. The Swedish government has, however, recently changed its policies concerning this group. Earlier, almost everybody who was granted protection could get a permanent residence permit, but now temporary residence permits are issued for them, meaning that recognised refugees can get a permit for 3 years, whereas beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, can get it for 13 months (more than 1 year, so that they can access social benefits, health care and make use of integration arrangements). However, despite the initial temporariness, if a person finds a job and can support him/herself, s/he can get a permanent permit, meaning an exit from the temporary asylum status. This obviously means a strong incentive to find a job. Trade unions have, however, warned that in a desperate job search, these people could accept almost any job offer, which could aggravate their vulnerability and increase exploitation (poor working conditions and/or low salaries). On the other hand, within the context of better and quicker labour market integration, the current debates in Sweden also raise the issue of a possible conflict of political objectives. Despite the incentives for job search, some recent restrictions, like the granting of temporary permits and restricted rights to family reunification, could have an unintended, opposite effect on labour market integration, since separation from family members and insecure residence statuses can divert refugees' attention away from focusing on integration (it is obviously easier to focus on it, when one has a secure, permanent status).

As regards the fast-track initiatives for refugees into shortage occupations in Sweden, they are largely regarded as successful (especially in certain professions, such as health-care jobs). It has to be acknowledged, however, that the initiative has so far benefitted a relatively low number of people (2804 newly arrived refugees). The initiative also requires a lot of resources both from the employment services and the employers themselves (for example, as part of the initiative, after having worked for a company for about 3 months, people get assessed by the

employer regarding their qualifications, and even if the companies are paid for that by the state, this means they must have a mentor or supervisor in place, a person who assesses the performance of the newly arrived persons).

Answering to a question, it was confirmed that in Sweden in principle it is possible for rejected asylum seekers to achieve a legal status change through finding a job, but this has concerned a small number of people so far; most likely because the negative decisions are usually quite quick and people do not have time to find a job, before the decision on the refusal of their application is taken (especially people who came from countries which are regarded as safe often get a negative decision rather quickly). The idea behind the status change measure was not of a humanitarian nature, but rather to make it easier for employers to retain their staff even if they are initially rejected as asylum seekers.

At the same time, the government is considering introducing another type of status change, which targets unaccompanied minors, with the aim at enabling them to go to school, meaning that when they enter secondary schools and perform well, they can get a permit to finish their high school education and find a job afterwards.

As regards the fast-track initiative, language learning is still part of that, in a more targeted manner, towards specific professions. Courses are adapted to specific skills profiles. There are, for example, specific language courses for academics in the bigger cities. The fast-track initiative is not a separated scheme; integration courses are still part of the integration plan that every beneficiary of protection is offered.

In Sweden, the public employment agencies have traditionally a strong role in labour market integration of migrants, including refugees. The results are, however, mixed, even if a lot of additional funding was made available for them. As regards the individual integration plans, its effectiveness seems to depend in part on the workload of the local branches of the employment agencies and the local labour market characteristics: it could be efficient, but in those localities where the staff members are overburdened, there is very little time left for the individuals.

During the discussion, the differences between Austria and Sweden were touched on, as regards wage subsidies. It seems that in Austria the employability of refugees was in focus in the provision of services by public institutions, whereas in Sweden it was realised that if labour market integration of refugees is a public good with positive externalities, the state should invest in it, hence the higher role of wage subsidies. An OECD study was quoted which concluded that in Sweden wage subsidies proved to be effective in facilitating the labour market integration of refugees. It is, however, a controversial issue since it also matters how employers use the subsidies. It was also mentioned that even if they don't continue to hire refugees when wage subsidies have expired, that work experience could still be beneficial for the refugees to find other jobs. In case of Austria, it was confirmed that wage subsidies do not play a significant role; only 5% of persons who were registered with the PES, got these.

Recently (compared to 2015 and 2016, respectively) more women asylum seekers arrived to Sweden, presumably because of restrictions of family unification (they now tend to arrive themselves as asylum seekers and not as family members). This results in a more equal gender balance among asylum seekers.

Within the context of families, during the discussion the example of Armenia as a host country of Syrian refugees was mentioned. Armenia provided a humanitarian corridor for Syrian refugees by issuing entry visas in Armenian Consulates in Syria. Therefore, many of the refugees came by plane. They were able to keep their own resources – which were regarded as collateral for banks for giving loans for setting up a business. Linked to this, about half of those individuals, who are employed in Armenia, own a business, or planning to start one. One of the reasons why they did not want to move within Armenia is that they did not want to leave their relatives in the cities where they have been settled. Families could

have an important role not only when setting up a business, but also in job search: according to a survey in Armenia, 40% were looking for jobs through friends and relatives (an important network they can rely on). Family approach is therefore also important in research, besides focusing on individuals.

In Sweden the focus is more on employment and less on setting up a business, therefore access to loans for that purpose is not high on the agenda at the moment but should perhaps be promoted.

As regards lessons learnt in **Germany**, the key question is how these lessons could be assessed. From a budgetary point of view, the net effects of labour market integration is important, so the balance between costs and outcomes. According to past experiences, in Germany, 8% of refugees have a job in the first year of integration, and 50% after 5 years and 70% after 15 years. One of the lessons is that when labour market integration is assessed, the overall economic situation is often underestimated. It has to be taken into account that success of labour market integration depends much more on the capacity of the labour market to absorb additionally large number of people than on direct measures. This should be looked at from a quantitative perspective, and also from the point of view of a qualitatively matching economic environment (for example, skill match). The reason is that as regards refugees, the receiving country has no opportunities for steering (i.e. influencing the skill pattern of the new arrivals), whereas in migration policy, a steering mechanism is in principle could be in place. The specific measures have certain limitations, since integration takes time (depending very often also on the profile of refugees).

Although the German economic situation is now favourable, success depends on the vacancies and their composition. In addition, many other groups now need jobs: long-term unemployed, youth unemployed, other migrant groups. You can give vacancy to one person only, so it is inevitable that one person, or two, will be left behind.

Another important question is when the intervention should start. Even if early intervention is common sense, one could ask whether the intervention could begin earlier, for example establishing reception centres in Africa with profiling, self-assessment, external assessment. So the question is whether it makes sense to start this process already before arrival, or because the destination countries are so different from the countries of origin, this is not worthwhile.

A third question is in what order the integration process should be pursued, for example, in a linear way, in pre-defined sequence A, B, C. In Germany, some courses/measures are conducted simultaneously. Another dilemma is motivation. If refugees are motivated to start work immediately so that they could earn money as soon as possible in order to pay back the money they owe to traffickers, or transfer it to their families, they are not interested in a three-year apprenticeship scheme. Importance of the traumatic experiences the refugees have undergone, i.e. mental health issues are also often underestimated from the perspective of their ability to focus for example on a 6-8-hour language course. The high drop-out rate may be linked to trauma.

As regards the dual apprenticeship which is highly regarded, it is either passed or not; partial qualifications are not accepted (it would raise a lot of problems with trade unions and chambers).

The dilemma of mainstream vs. targeted measure should also be considered. In Germany, the public employment services are not targeted at certain specific groups. In profiling, the individual's distance from the labour market is assessed and the socio-economic characteristics are not taken into account. In case of refugees, however, this mainstream approach has been given up, and the German PES has targeted measures, designed for younger, the elderly, for women. With the refugees, this approach worked.

Another question is whether the measures should be provider-based or cooperation models with the enterprises should be preferred. The latter might have been an easy answer, but it turned out to be not as simple. Companies have usually a procedure in place how to hire new employees, with workers councils and other stakeholders (trade unions) having a voice in that, and they make sure that no-one could get a privileged position in the process: all the defined criteria should be met by all the applicants. Due to these strict rules especially in larger companies, the first approach to turn to them has failed. So the initial approach has shifted towards the small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs) – PES appeals to SME employer association and cooperates with them. As regards bigger companies, however the employment services turn to them for asking apprenticeship places, which they are willing to offer and increase those.

The German PES has recently directed increased investment towards developing an IT-based system (not only were new apps developed, but their job portal with vacancies was also translated to the most common languages of the refugees). In addition, in order to better communicate, the competence assessment tools is based on pictures and not verbal communication. A translator call centre has been created as well. The capacity of the German PES has been expanded for example by hiring an additional 2,800 staff, and invested a lot in qualifications, a guidance services (i.e. competences to conduct guidance interviews) plus intercultural competences and also in skills how to communicate with traumatised people.

Finally, some experiences from Germany were shared on those (or related) questions which have already been asked and discussed within the context of the other two countries. As regards specific treatments, concerning for example exemption from minimum wage, although there were some requests from some industries to do that for long-term unemployed and refugees, this was rejected. In terms of wage subsidies, even if research shows it could be successful, if the issue is looked at from the perspective of sustainable integration, there is no clear evidence as to what extent wage subsidies could really help.

Two points were raised for further discussion and perhaps also for future research: the first concerns the role of refugees themselves in their own (labour market) integration; to what extent their participation can be enforced? The question is not only about values. Formal qualifications are definitely needed for successful, sustainable labour market integration especially in Germany and Austria. The question is, however, how much refugees could be obliged for achieving a formal qualification, how this could be enforced, whether sanctions are needed for those who do not achieve that. It is still open what can be regarded as successful integration. Even if it can be measured, the question is what the benchmark is. For example, after having participated in an active labour market policy measures, the integration rate can be measured; as regards the long-term unemployed, it is 25%. This means that 75% of the cases, if there had not been any measure in place, the same result would have appeared.

At the moment in Germany there is no effect of the inflow of refugees on the overall labour market, all the less so, because now most of them are not really getting into the labour market. The estimated number of those people who were recently getting into the labour market is about 30,000 – 40,000 – this is marginal, if it is taken into account that in Germany the total number of employed people stands at 42 million. It was clarified that the public employment services are not focusing on treating people with trauma, since that is not their job, but it was found that during labour market-related interviews, the interviewers should be sensitive towards the issue.

As regards pre-screening, not doubt that integration is needed, the question is not IF, but rather WHAT (to do). It was just an idea, that perhaps it would be easier for some countries to accept those refugees whose profile matches their labour market needs.

There is a recognition law in Germany and it is part of the process that when the recognition is not given, the authorities should inform the applicant what is missing. In this way, it could be established what should be done to achieve full recognition.

Subsidies are not target group-related. In principle, all active labour market policy (ALMP) instruments in Germany are for everyone, and this has not changed. As long as the person fulfils the general criteria, does not matter what group that person belongs to.

During the discussion, it was emphasised that over-emphasis in language training should be avoided, since without linking it to jobs may result in the deterioration of the acquired language skills, since the refugees who participated in the language course may forget what they have learnt.

Second session: “Research and information needs at EU level”

As an introduction to the presentation by Commission (DG EMPL and DG HOME) officials, it was highlighted that the mandate of the EU with regard to integration policy is rather limited to incentives and support to actions by the Member States, even if some parts of the EU legislation contain obligations for the Member States. A recent tool for policy coordination is the Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals, adopted in June 2016. The Commission presentation outlined plans for revising the current asylum legislation. Within the Reception Conditions Directive, one of the proposals is to include the principle of equal treatment, which refers to for example the recognition of qualifications and diplomas.

Some of the areas which could be regarded from the Commission’s point of view as fruitful avenues for research are the following:

- **Inclusion of families of refugees in integration courses:** to what extent family members are able to participate in these courses, in particular if they did not arrive with the refugees themselves? Should the integration courses be available for refugees and their family members be extended also to family of migrants in general? (The initial research results show they face similar difficulties on the labour market as refugees do.) In Sweden, family members of refugees do have access to integration courses but this is not necessarily the mainstream approach across the EU.
- **Detail of the integration courses** that are available: for example, how flexible are integration courses? This could be in particular linked to provision of integration courses for female refugees. For example, is childcare provided, under what conditions, in what times? Is its time schedule flexible enough for refugees to participate in an integration course? Does an integration course immediately end when obtaining employment during the integration course? What does it mean for their outcomes in general?
- **Content of civic courses** (i.e. introduction to the country, to how the whole system works, etc.) For example, is workplace culture part of the course? Are certain values included in the curricula?
- **Recruitment practices** – discrimination;
- **Attitudes of the host population**, in particular in the workplace (how this is framed);
- **Methods to integrate illiterate refugees** – what gaps need to be bridged, and how best to do it?
- **More information on the recent inflow** (for example their participation in integration courses);
- **Refugees’ involvement in the process of policy-making**

During the discussion it was mentioned that there are some ongoing research projects; many are longer-term programmes, and some of them are in finalisation phase. As regards current research, there is, for example, one project being conducted by REGIO with OECD on local dimension of integration as well as an attempt with Eurostat to publish more integration

indicators at infra-national level (for instance NUTS 2-level); a project developing indicators of refugee-specific policies in various Member States (i.e. a kind of MIPEX for refugees), and the OECD is also conducting one on family migrants in their forthcoming International Migration Outlook. Research planned within the framework of HORIZON 2020 was also mentioned, indicating that in principle, this could give an opportunity of examining labour market outcomes of those refugees who arrived in 2015, but the resources, although they are substantial, might not make this possible. Therefore, a question was asked whether the European Commission plans to launch a larger panel survey on this topic. As was explained this could be useful, since even if relevant surveys are conducted in several Member States they all have different concepts, issues raised, so comparability is limited, whereas such an EU-wide survey would be able to produce comparable data. At the same time, launching an EU-wide refugee-specific survey in all Member States may be very costly and will not be as efficient as integrating refugee-specific variables in mainstream surveys (such as the EU-Labour Force survey). It was raised in the debate that even if research within the framework of HORIZON-2020 can be very relevant, it will not help with current policy dilemmas because the results will not be available before 2020. As regards evaluations, there was a concern that those institutions are commissioned (such as OECD which is intergovernmental), where there could be a strong institutional bias, i.e. they are not independent. Therefore, according to one participant, they cannot necessarily be trusted. In his view, research in these organisations is most appropriate for identifying best practices.

The representative of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) highlighted that FRA is an independent agency, conducting surveys and research. Currently, the data of the EU-MIDIS II Survey is being analysed. The survey is centred on discrimination, victimisation and, for the first time, integration of migrants, minorities and their descendants in the 28 Member States. The results will be launched at the beginning of next year, and the data set is rich enough for further analysis as well, to cover for example employment which is one of the aspects examined. At the same time, research is starting, which turns to the right holders, i.e. the refugees, who have been through the process of the last two years. They will be asked to identify the policy responses, and assess them from their own point of view: what worked, what worked less, how they could access basic services (from a fundamental rights perspective, of course – understandably, employment is central in this process). In addition, the agency had discussions with Eurostat what questions to add to the LFS module to get more detailed information about migrants, for example, labour market position of refugees.

It was mentioned that there is a need for systematic and rigorous evaluations, but whose responsibility is to fund those evaluations?

There are also relevant data and information available at EU level. One of them is the [JRC KCMD Migration data catalogue \(100 data sets\)](#), the other is a [dynamic data hub](#), hosted by the European Commission. This is an interactive tool. These tools can support well-informed policies. However, that is an overload of information, so there is a need to review critically all the existing data sets. These two tools could be regarded as first steps to build and then to evaluate policies related to migration.

On the data side, however, it was acknowledged that there are limited EU-wide data on the integration of migrants. Indeed, it is the LFS which is used in general. The next migration module, which is to be held in 2021, will be richer (results in 2022). The ‘reason for migration’ variable, however, will be included in every two years, as part of the core LFS. There is an effort to collect data on education level of recently arrived asylum seekers or beneficiaries – this is being discussed with the Member States in a working group on migration statistics. These two examples illustrate a firm intention and commitment to set up a good monitoring system.

It was emphasised that at national level there is a lot of information available and sometimes it is even difficult to prevent overlap in research. Although there are efforts, certain constraints impede to create a new EU-wide survey. In order to get quick information

relevant to decision-makers, experts' networks were mobilised by the Commission. From them, the relevant information can be obtained within 3-4 months.

No evaluation of a programme can be done within a month, at least 6 months is needed, but they could even last up to 2 years. The different funding instruments of the EU already require that there is some evaluation in place. Monitoring systems need to be in place in the Member States and this is one of the topics to be discussed at peer learning events.

Closing session: “An agenda for policy-related research to support labour market integration of refugees”

There is a clear need for compilation of national level research and databases, so more incentives are needed from EU-level for the authorities of the Member States to disclose more information and make it available for the wider research community. Critical analysis is crucial for comparability of data and information. The monitoring systems on the profile of the refugees have still not been adapted to the challenge which the large inflows pose. Due to the magnitude of the problem, substantial changes are needed also at all level of services, such as for example in the vocational education systems, in the public employment services systems. In this regard, systemic changes are needed in the way of providing services, who provides them, and the kind of services provided in order to face challenges of labour market integration of refugees.

Research is needed on the wider context of labour market integration, for example, the role of housing, legal status, and psycho-social assistance. Even if there is much investment in ALMPs, little attention is paid for packaging them with other type of support the refugees may need in order to be integrated to the labour market.

Additional topic for research is incentives for labour market integration. Micro-level research is lacking on this issue. The question is how to calibrate the incentives, i.e. the impact of a more generous system vs. that of a restricted one – how do these systems work? This research could give important messages on phasing in and phasing out support and benefits in relation to refugees' labour market integration prospects and progress. Similar research is needed for analysing the impact of subsidies.

Evaluations of support measures are not being conducted on a systematic basis. Most evaluations are carried out by the beneficiaries themselves. Since they are self-justificatory, vital information is lacking and this prevents to carry out independent evaluation. Only Sweden can be mentioned as an exception in this regard.

Conflicting objectives between integration and migration policies, such as fast labour market integration vs. increasing temporariness and other legal restrictions have already been mentioned in the case of Sweden and Germany respectively. The conflicts should be more explored. Within this context, the effectiveness of integration policy needs to be analysed - both its impact on the refugees themselves, and also whether integration policies are relevant instruments to manage migration flows (there could be other tools, such as external border management, assistance to countries of origin, etc.). The policy makers can assess the cost and benefits of the policies. In short-term, benefits seem to emerge from restrictions, since it helps containing the inflow. Since, however, the restrictions may limit integration opportunities of those who are in the country, in the long run, they could prove costly. Therefore, very concrete evaluation studies can be helpful.

As has already been mentioned, in terms of effectiveness of labour market integration, the status of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection is important. Within this context, the question is how recent changes, such as re-evaluating the asylum claim every 1-3 years would affect the persons' willingness or motivation to take part in integration measures. To

what extent an individual is motivated to invest in integration if his/her status is continually under threat? And how does it motivate the employers? So the interplay between policy choices and the outcome that they have is important.

As regards anti-discrimination measures, it would be interesting to see what role the equal opportunity authorities are playing, i.e. what they are doing in terms of helping labour market access for refugees and asylum seekers. What tools are available for them (for example, supporting training either for employers or refugees themselves)?

In the debate, it was added that temporariness is a feature also for other third country migrants than refugees: they have to apply for renewal for their residence, which can hamper integration efforts.

It was raised whether research should focus more on experimentation at small scale in the Member States. It was agreed that both quantitative and qualitative research is necessary. Although, as mentioned, there is an overload of information, it is important to expand comparative data base for making quantitative analysis.

WORKING PAPER - UNEDITED

References

All Eurofound publications are available at www.eurofound.europa.eu

The presentations are available upon request (addressed to Klara Foti - her e-mail address: klara.foti@eurofound.europa.eu)

Fóti, K. (2017), 'Labour market integration of refugees: Different approaches in Europe', workshop presentation, *Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers: Current status and future needs for research*, Eurofound's workshop 27 March, Brussels.

Parusel, B. (2017), 'Labour market integration of refugees in Sweden', workshop presentation *Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers: Current status and future needs for research*, Eurofound's workshop, 27 March, Brussels.

Tanay, F. and Aujean, L. (2017), 'Refugee integration', workshop presentation *Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers: Current status and future needs for research*, Eurofound's workshop, 27 March, Brussels.

Vidovic, H. (2017), 'Austria', workshop presentation, *Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers: Current status and future needs for research*, Eurofound's workshop, 27 March, Brussels.

WORKING PAPER - UNEDITED

Appendix – agenda and list of participants

AGENDA

Expert workshop

Labour market integration of refugees: Current status and future needs for research

27 March 2017, 09:15-16:00

Eurofound's Brussels Office, 20, Avenue d'Auderghem, B-1040 Brussels
Room 6

09:30	Welcome and introduction by Chair (Robert Anderson)
09:40	Approaches to labour market integration of refugees: Lessons from Eurofound's research (Klára Fóti)
09:55	Panel discussion: <i>Opportunities for better labour market integration: Lessons from national experiences</i> (National experts from Austria – Hermine Vidovic, WIIW; from Sweden – Bernd Parusel, Swedish Migration Agency; from Germany – Dr Wolfgang Müller, Director of the European Representation of the Federal Employment Agency)
11:05	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:20	Discussion/Q&A
12:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:30	Roundtable discussion – <i>Research and information needs at EU-level</i> (Filip Tanay, Member of the Refugee Task Force, European Commission; Laurent Aujean, DG HOME; Marco Cilento, migration expert at ETUC, Robert Plummer, BusinessEurope)
14:30	Concluding panel: <i>An agenda for policy-related research to support labour market integration of refugees</i> Chair: Robert Anderson, Head of Unit, Social Policies, Eurofound Speakers: Iván Martín, GRITIM, University of Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona; Jukka Ahtela, member of LMO and the permanent study group on Migration and Integration at EESC; Mikkel Barslund/Nadzeya Laurentsyeva, researchers from CEPS; Jean Lambert MEP
16:00	Close of meeting

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Expert workshop on Labour market integration of refugees: Current status and future needs for research

27 March 2017, 09:15-16:00

Eurofound's Brussels Office, 20, Avenue d'Auderghem, B-1040 Brussels

Name	Professional Affiliation
Jukka AHTELA	Member of LMO and the Permanent Study Group on Migration and Integration at the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels
Robert ANDERSON	Eurofound, Dublin; Research Unit C – Social Policies
Laurent AUJEAN	European Commission - DG HOME B.1, Brussels
Mikkel BARSLUND	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels
Marco CILENTO	ETUC, Brussels
Ana DUMITRACHE	European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels
Klára FÓTI	Eurofound, Dublin; Research Unit C – Social Policies
Sona KALANTARYAN	Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, Florence
Albert KRALER	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Vienna
Jean LAMBERT, MEP	European Parliament
Nadzeya LAURENTSYEVA	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels
Iván MARTÍN	GRITIM – Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration, University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona
Silvia MIGALI	European Commission Joint Research Centre, Demography, Migration and Governance Unit, Ispra
Wolfgang MÜLLER	German Federal Employment Agency (European Representation)
Bernd PARUSEL	Swedish Migration Agency, Borlänge
Miltos PAVLOU	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Vienna
Robert PLUMMER	BusinessEurope, Brussels
Afaf RAHIM	Kiel Institute, Kiel Institute for the World Economy
Filip TANAY	European Commission - DG EMPL A.4, Brussels
Hermine VIDOVIC	Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies
Ahmad Wali Ahmad YAR	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels

WPEF17001