



# European Cities Network on Migration: Getting the Skills Synchronized

Edited by  
Prof. M. Murat ERDOĞAN



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN  
FOUNDATION For Freedom.



Graphic design:  
Serbest Kitaplar  
[www.serbestkitaplar.com](http://www.serbestkitaplar.com)

Publisher:  
European Liberal Forum  
Rue d'Idalie 11-13, boîte 6, 1050 Ixelles, Brussels (BE)  
[info@liberalforum.eu](mailto:info@liberalforum.eu)  
[www.liberalforum.eu](http://www.liberalforum.eu)

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit  
Karl-Marx-Straße 2, 14482 Potsdam, Germany  
[service@freiheit.org](mailto:service@freiheit.org)  
<https://www.freiheit.org/>

Published by the European Liberal Forum with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation

Co-funded by the European Parliament. Neither the European Parliament nor the European Liberal Forum are responsible for the content of this publication, or for any use that may be made of it. The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) alone. These views do not necessarily reflect those of the European Parliament and/or the European Liberal Forum.

© 2022 the European Liberal Forum (ELF). This publication can be downloaded for free on [www.liberalforum.eu](http://www.liberalforum.eu).

ISBN: 978-2-39067-045-2

# Contents

## PRESENTATION

**About the Authors** 6

**About ELF** 12

**About FNF** 13

INTRODUCTION 14

## COUNTRY REPORTS

### CHAPTER 1

**Turkey** 20

M. Murat ERDOĞAN

### CHAPTER 2

**Greece** 28

Constantinos SARAVAKOS

### CHAPTER 3

**Germany** 38

Ciler FIRTINA

### CHAPTER 4

**Spain** 48

Juan PINA

GENERAL EVALUATION 56

M. Murat ERDOĞAN

# About the Authors



## Turkey

### M. Murat Erdoğan

Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN is Faculty Member of Political Science and International Relations Department of Turkish German University since November 2017. He was also the founder and director of the Migration and Integration Research Center of TGU between November 2017, May 2021; and Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO) between 2009-2017. He carried out the research of his PhD dissertation from Ankara University -titled "The Relationship between Turkey and European Union after the Cold War: Geo-Strategic Perspective: 1990-2005"- as a Konrad Adenauer Foundation fellow at Bonn and Freiburg universities in Germany in 1994-1999. In 2000-2003, Erdoğan worked at the Press Section of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, and later as an advisor at the Turkish Grand National Assembly's Commission on EU Integration (2004), also as an advisor to the president of Turkish Higher Education Council, and to the Rector of Hacettepe University (2012-2016). Prof. Erdoğan carried out studies as a visiting researcher with different fellowships

at universities of Duisburg-Essen (2007), Berlin-Humboldt (2010), Oxford University (2012), Johns Hopkins University-AICGS (2014), and Humboldt University (2019). His academic research interests include voluntary and forced migration, refugees, people of Turkish origin living abroad, EU, political cartoons, political behaviour, Islamophobia, and Germany and Turkish foreign policy. He conducts comprehensive public opinion research on a regular basis and publishes particularly the "Euro-Turks-Barometre" on Turkish diaspora in Europe, and the "Syrians Barometer" on Syrians in Turkey. Prof. Erdoğan is a member of UNESCO-Turkey, board member of ISC of Metropolis International and the President of IGAM-Academy.

Prof. Erdoğan's recent books include the following:

- Syrians Barometer-2019: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Turkey (2020)
- Demographical Development of the Syrian Refugee Population and its Potential Impacts on The Education, Employment and Municipality Services in Turkey in Near Future (& M. Çorabatır) (2019) (in Turkish&English)
- Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey (2015)
- Syrians Barometer-2017: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Turkey (2018)
- Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul (2017) Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey (2015)
- "Turkey's Immigration History: From the 14th Century to the 21st Century Immigrants to Turkey" (with A. Kaya) (2015)
- "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration" (2015)
- Turks in German Cartoons, 50 Jahre 50 Karikaturen (2012)
- Turks Abroad: Fifty Years of Migration and Integration (2010)



## Greece

### Constantinos Saravakos

Constantinos Saravakos is Research Project Coordinator at the Center for Liberal Studies (KEFiM) -Markos Dragoumis and a PhD candidate of International and European Studies at the University of Macedonia. His main research interests include regulation, political economy and liberal democracy, populism, individual rights and migration. He holds a M.A. in Political Science and Sociology (Hons) and a B.Sc. in Philosophy and History of Science from University of Athens. He has also received a M.Sc. in Applied Economics and Administration from Panteion University. He is member of Greek Political Science Association and a member of the Economic Chamber of Greece. Also, he is a V-Dem Institute (University of Gothenburg) expert for Greece and Cyprus and Fellow in the European Policy Information Center (EPICENTER), an independent network of nine leading think tanks from across Europe based in Brussels.

## Germany

### Çiler Firtina

Çiler Firtina has a Master's degree in German and English Studies. She has worked as a journalist and interpreter and was a member of the Cologne City Council for 5 years. At the Multikulturelles Forum e.V. she works as an advisor for migrant organisations as well as for migrants in recognising processes for university degrees and professional qualifications acquired abroad. From November 2022 on she is leading the Multikulturelles Forum's project "MY TURN - MY CAREER: Women with migration experience - potential for the labour market". The ESF Plus funded programme aims to contribute to women with migration experience who have limited formal qualification and an increased need for support.





## Spain

### Juan Pina

Juan Pina (born in 1968) is a Spanish political scientist and writer. He holds a Masters Degree in Institutional Communication. He was Vice-President of the Liberal Youth Movement of the European Union (1990-1992), the International Federation of Liberal Youth (1991-1997) and then the Liberal International (1997-2002). He was the director of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation's "Perfiles Liberales" magazine, based in Mexico City, from 1999 to 2004. He founded Spain's Libertarian Party in 2009. Professionally, he has been Communication Director for several companies in real estate, digital and other industries. In 2014 he was the director of the world corporate communication conference (World PR Forum) held in Madrid. Since 2015 he is the Secretary-General of Spain's Fundación para el Avance de la Libertad (Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty). He personally manages the department of comparative research on freedom, which produces domestic and international freedom indices on several areas of liberty, from economic freedom at the municipal level to moral and electoral freedom by countries. A published author of two novels, his main essay books are "Una política para la Libertad" (A policy for Liberty, 2014), "Manifiesto para la autodeterminación del individuo" (Manifiesto for the Self-Determination of the Individual, 2018) and "Adiós al Estado-nación" (Good-bye, nation-state, 2019). In 2021 he has co-authored the collective book "Nacionalismo" (Nationalism) which deals with the worrisome resurfacing of national-populism in Europe and Latin America.

## About ELF

The European Liberal Forum (ELF) is the official political foundation of the European Liberal Party, the ALDE Party. Together with 51 member organisations, we work all over Europe to bring new ideas into the political debate, to provide a platform for discussion, and to empower citizens to make their voices heard.

ELF was founded in 2007 to strengthen the liberal and democrat movement in Europe. Our work is guided by liberal ideals and a belief in the principle of freedom. We stand for a future-oriented Europe that offers opportunities for every citizen. ELF is engaged on all political levels, from the local to the European.

We bring together a diverse network of national foundations, think tanks and other experts. At the same time, we are also close to, but independent from, the ALDE Party and other Liberal actors in Europe. In this role, our forum serves as a space for an open and informed exchange of views between a wide range of different actors.

## About FNF

The Foundation for Freedom in Germany and the World

Based on the principles of liberalism, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom offers political education in Germany and abroad. With our events and publications, we help people to become actively involved in political affairs. We support talented young students with scholarships. Since 2007, the addition "for freedom" has become an established part of our foundation's name. After all, freedom isn't exactly in trend these days. This makes it all the more important to campaign for freedom and to take on the responsibility that goes hand in hand with it. We have been doing this since our foundation on May 19th, 1958. Our headquarter is based in Potsdam, and we maintain offices throughout Germany and in over 60 countries around the world.

# Introduction

---

## M. Murat ERDOĞAN

Turkish - German  
University

Looking at the data of two important UN organizations, IOM<sup>1</sup> and UNHCR<sup>2</sup>, it is observed that there is an extraordinary increasing trend in both global and regional human mobility. Currently, it is seen that there are at least 300 million international (economic) immigrants and around 100 million forcibly displaced persons, some of whom (27 million) have received refugee status. As it is known, regular migration is one of the most important elements of development policies. The active working people need is increasing day by day as a result of demographic change in developed countries, because of excessive aging, decreasing child births, especially in Europe. The EU, which has received an average of 2 million immigrants from non-EU countries annually in recent years, seems to increase its need to 5 million annually in the near future.

---

1 IOM: <https://www.iom.int/migration-sustainable-development-and-2030-agenda> (Access: 28.11.2022)

2 UNHCR: Figures at a Glance: <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (Access: 28.11.2022)

On the other hand, the policy of “yes to immigrants, no to refugees” is becoming widespread in developed countries. In all this process, liberal approaches are needed to reduce the need for human resources in Europe, taking into account the needs, opportunities and crises, but at the same time, regarding the rapidly increasing number of refugees, especially in Syria and Ukraine in recent years. Despite the efforts of the “UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”<sup>3</sup> and the “UN Global Compact on Refugees”<sup>4</sup>, which are prepared to increase the contribution of global humanitarian mobility, but at the same time to realize responsibility-sharing on refugees, finding and implementing joint solutions is developing rather slowly.

Studies and regulations on immigrants in the world are handled with a developmental approach and are generally carried out successfully. However, there is a much more problematic situation regarding refugees. A paradigm shift is required in the three main permanent solutions that both the 1951 Geneva Convention and UNHCR emphasize (1. The voluntary return of refugees with the end of the problems in their countries, 2. their resettlement to third countries and 3. The implementation of local adaptation processes in their countries of residence). Experience shows that refugees cannot return to their countries, resettlement remains at a highly symbolic level. The remaining most functional option is “local adaptation processes”. However, local adaptation processes can only be realized by removing the legal and social obstacles to the participation of refugees in social and economic life. In this context, the recognition of refugees’ current abilities and competencies is of utmost importance.

There is no doubt that the European region is the most attractive destination for both migrants and refugees. In this context, the integration of refugees into economic life is of utmost importance. Matching the skills of migrants with the needs of European markets is part of the liberal economic integration process. The main objective of this project is to contribute to the synchronization of skills development among refugees/

---

3 <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>

4 <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>



migrants and the demands of European markets through research, focus groups, discussions and best-practice sharing.

The project aims at contributing to the establishment of sustainable, inclusive and target-group-oriented training policies for migrants by supporting the consistency of training opportunities for migrants according to the current/future demands of European job markets through research and discussions with focus groups such as migrants, employers, NGO representatives, decision makers, etc. The project seeks to contribute to this vision by matching migrants' skills and qualifications with labour market needs in European cities – since effective, long-term and target-group-oriented training policies are essential in order to achieve the goal of promoting economic integration. These will be shared with decision makers for them to design a holistic strategy which includes effective, long-term and target-group-oriented training policies and modules.

Also as part of the project, local community stakeholders from Turkey, Spain, Greece and Germany learn from each other's experiences and practices regarding skills-based training, vocational education and entrepreneurship training.

The project supports the economic liberalism approach by focusing on strengthening individuals at the core of the economic integration process.

# Country Reports

# Turkey, Greece, Spain, Germany



## Chapter 1

# Turkey

Prof. M. Murat  
ERDOĞAN

Turkish - German  
University

### What are the general numbers and current situation among migrants/refugees?<sup>1</sup>

After 2011, Turkey was exposed to an influx of asylum seekers and irregular migrants that it had never encountered in its history. The total number of international protection applicants exceeded millions in a short time, and Turkey became the country with the highest number of refugees in the world in 2014. It seems that Turkey will hold this global title for a long time. There are currently 3,636,000 Syrian asylum seekers and 321,000 non-Syrians applying for international protection in the country. This is to say that the number of those under international protection in Turkey, a number which was 58,018 in the year 2011, is now over 4 million, considering only those who are officially registered. The figure exceeds 5.02% of Turkey's

<sup>1</sup> In this study, some data from the Syrians Barometer, conducted annually by the author with the support of UNHCR, are included. See: M. Murat Erdoğan (2021) Syrians Barometer-2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2022/03/SB-2020-Ingilizce-son.pdf>.

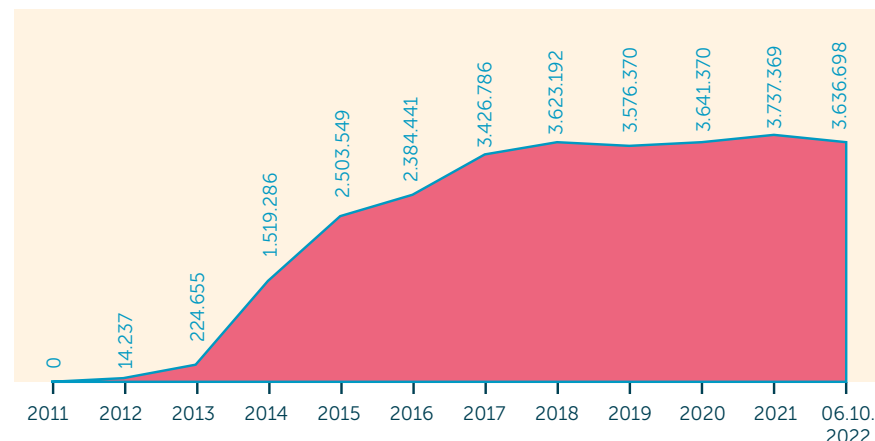
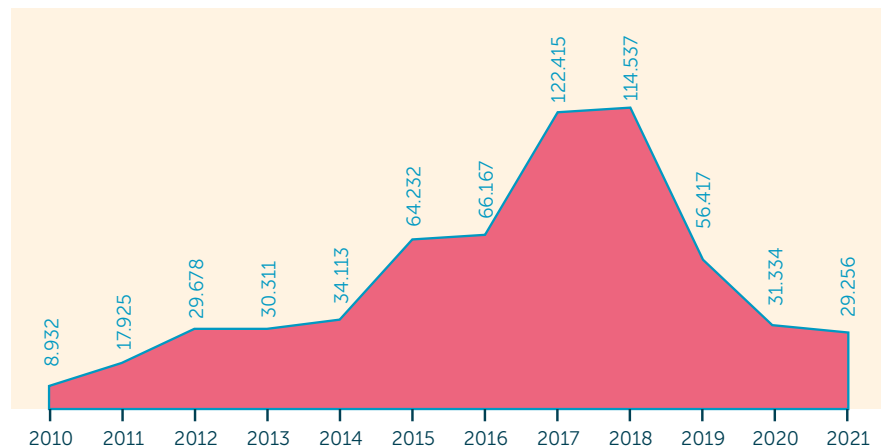


Figure 1.1:  
**Temporary Protection (Syrians):** 3.636.698

population (82 million). This situation manifests serious problems for border security, despite the walls. Although efforts are being made to prevent irregular immigrants from coming across the Iranian border, entry into the country continues. The Ministry of Interior has announced that the number of irregular migrants apprehended in Turkey between 2016 and 2022 was 1,246,000, while 334,000 of those caught were sent back to their countries.

As of October 2021, Syrians correspond to 4.22% of Turkey's 82 million inhabitants. İstanbul is the city hosting the largest number of Syrians in Turkey (551 thousand). In terms of the most migrants, the city of Gaziantep follows İstanbul, having 465 thousand; 378 thousand Syrians live in Şanlıurfa, and 363 thousand are in Hatay.

Almost all Syrian refugees in Turkey became "urban refugees" after the year 2013. As of October 2021, only 1.2% (47 thousand) of the more than 3.6 million Syrians reside in one of



**Figure 1.2: International Protection Holders/Applicants:** 321.052

the country's 7 camps.

The number of Syrians born in Turkey after 2011 is ever increasing. It can be foreseen that the average number of Turkish-born Syrians in 2022 will be 270 per day. In this regard, the number of Syrians born in Turkey is estimated to have already exceeded 820,000 over the last 11 years.

### What is the current situation regarding employment processes and work permits for migrants/refugees?<sup>2</sup>

Taking into account the increasing numbers of both immigrants and refugees, Turkey enacted the International Labour Law in 2016. With it,

<sup>2</sup> In this study, the studies of ILO Turkey have been widely used for data on employment. "ILO's support to refugees and host communities in Turkey" (2022): [https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/WCMS\\_379375/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/WCMS_379375/lang--en/index.htm).

the General Directorate of International Labour Force was established and the issuance of work permits to foreigners was centralized. It is expected that the size of the international labour force to be employed in Turkey will increase in the coming years.

Refugees in Turkey face challenges first when accessing the labour market and again once they are employed. The obstacles in accessing the labour market include low employability (due to low levels of education and technical skills), limited language skills and restrained access to information and services (mainly due to the language barrier). The majority of refugees are employed in the manufacturing sector, mainly in the textile industry, as well as in the construction, trade and hospitality sectors.

It is a well-known fact that Syrians and other refugees in Turkey have made space for themselves and work in the informal economy. However, it is very difficult to know exactly how many of them work here, except for some projections, due to the nature of the informal economy. A study published in 2020 entitled "Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market" by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Turkey office indicated that the number of Syrians working in Turkey was around 1 million as of 2021. 86.9% of Syrians in Turkey work in 4 sectors (manufacturing 48.2%, trade and accommodation 17.7%, construction 13.2% and agriculture 7.8%). Remarkably, it is observed that Syrians are less active in agriculture and animal husbandry.

### What are the existing projects/policies/programs/training for migrant/refugee employment?

The regulation allowing Syrians living under temporary protection in Turkey to work was made in 2016. However, despite this arrangement, less than 10% of the 1 million Syrians actively working in Turkey (about 60 thousand annually) are in the formal economy. The Ministry of Labour, international institutions – particularly from the EU – and NGOs in Turkey have started to develop projects for the "employment" rather than "protection" of refugees in recent years. In this framework, many important projects have been implemented by the ILO with its "Refugee

Response Programme”.<sup>3</sup> Within the scope of this strategy, the ILO has implemented seven projects since 2015, out of which four are still ongoing. Two are funded by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Conflict; the others are funded by the US Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Migration and Refugees.

### ILO's ongoing & completed projects (selected)

- Supporting Resilience and Social Cohesion with Decent Livelihood Opportunities
- Promoting Decent Work for Syrians Under Temporary Protection and Turkish Citizens
- Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey
- Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities in Turkey
- Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities

### What are the needs of labour markets in the short and long term?

Since 2016, refugees have been able to obtain a work permit through their employers; however, very few have obtained one to date, and very few Syrians are working formally. Out of the 2.16 million Syrians of working age in Turkey, 1 million are estimated to be participating in the labour market, most of them informally in low-skilled and low-paid jobs. Refugees often face poor working conditions: next to occupational safety and health risks, they work long hours and earn below the minimum wage. Limited bargaining power, the need to earn an income and a lack of language skills make it challenging for refugees to change these conditions.

<sup>3</sup> ILO-Turkey (2022) ILO’s Refugee Response Programme: <https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/refugee-response/lang--en/index.htm>.

### What are the demands and needs of migrants/refugees?

The UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) and the ILO have identified what needs to be done in this regard under three main areas, listed as follows.

#### Skills:

- Investing in people and skills
- Supporting employability through skills development
- Assessment of refugees’ skills and needs
- Providing complementary skills training on, for example, labour law, social security and occupational health and safety
- Building skills through training (vocational, language, core skills and on-the-job training)
- Enhancing workplace adaptation

#### Job Creation:

- Enhancing economic growth
- Supporting the creation and retention of formal jobs
- Formalization of informal businesses
- Supporting new and existing enterprises
- Incentivizing formal employment of refugees and host community members
- Entrepreneurship training

#### Governance:

- Strengthening fair and effective labour market governance
- Promoting decent work for all
- Fostering coordination between institutions and improving service delivery
- Supporting employers to increase formal employment and obtain work permits for their workers
- Strengthening labour law compliance and enforcement

- Increasing knowledge of labour rights among refugees and host community members

### What is missing in the market, and how can we work on it?

See above: “What are the demands and needs of migrants/refugees?”

### How to reach our stakeholders to contribute to synchronising the skills of migrants/refugees and the needs of European markets?

The EU provides financial support to Syrians and other refugees in Turkey within the framework of the agreement made in 2016. However, beyond this support, policies that will improve employment, preferential customs practices and the purchase of products made by refugees in Turkey can make a significant contribution.

### How can we guarantee qualification equivalence?

This is one of the areas where Syrians face the most problems in Turkey. The fact that the educational level of Syrians is quite low and that they do not have official documents both make progress on this issue difficult. Even though Syrians receive certificates for attending vocational training courses in Turkey, problems remain in certifying their previous and unproven competencies and abilities.

### How can we support the enrolment of migrants/refugees in vocational high schools?

It has been observed that the Turkish Education Ministry (MEB) made great achievements for Syrian students in the year 2016. Still, the most significant step was taken in August 2016 when the MEB determined the “road map” for Syrian children’s access to education, educating Syrian youth was considered a “permanent” rather than “temporary” measure, and the main objective was to integrate Syrian children into the Turkish educational system.

The Directorate General of Lifelong Learning (DGLLL) of the MEB organizes general courses, vocational courses, Turkish Teaching Courses

and Turkish literacy courses for Syrians through different channels, particularly including Public Education Centres. According to the data in the 2021 Monitoring and Evaluation Report of the DGLL, Syrians who have attended these courses so far numbered 1,487,000, of which 59% are women and 41% are men. For the first time, Turkey has had to develop Turkish training modules for “foreigners”.

### What is the role of university students in the system?

The number of students among Syrians presents in Turkey is ever increasing (around 55,000 in 2022), some having discontinued their education in Syria and seeking to restart their higher education. Others earn a place in a Turkish university after completing their primary school and high school education in Turkey and successfully passing the Foreign Student Exams and language proficiency exams. The ability to attain higher education is critically important for the continuation of Syrian students in their further education and careers, as well as their active role in cohesion processes.<sup>4</sup>

### Could you briefly talk about the best-practise projects in this field in your country?

The Turkish Government, international institutions like the ILO, the EU and some donor countries carry out projects to strengthen the vocational training of refugees and increase employment in Turkey. In these efforts, there are important contributions by the municipalities of the cities where refugees reside in high numbers.

### What should be done in this regard? What are your policy suggestions?

See: “What are the demands and needs of migrants/refugees?”

4 M. Murat Erdoğan et al. (2019). “Elite Dialogue”: Dialogue with the Syrian Asylum-Seekers Present in Turkey through Syrian Academics and Post-Graduate Students, EU HOPES MADAD, Turkish-German University, Migration and Cohesion Research Center TAGU.



## Chapter 2

# Greece

Constantinos  
SARAVAKOS

### What are the general numbers and current situation among migrants/refugees?

According to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 17,470 refugees arrived in Greece in 2021 (12,346 entering the mainland and 5,124 on the islands).<sup>1</sup>

There are an estimated 32,647 resident asylum seekers living in Greece. According to the same sources, over 350,000 asylum applications have been registered in Greece since 2013, distributed per year as below:<sup>2</sup>

The asylum applications in 2021 were mainly made by Afghans, Pakistanis and Syrians. The top 10 nationalities for asylum applications in 2021 are presented below:<sup>3</sup>

The total immigrant population, according to the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, is

<sup>1</sup> Informational Notice A December 2021 (Ενημερωτικό σημείωμα Α Δεκέμβριος 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Migration and Asylum

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Migration and Asylum

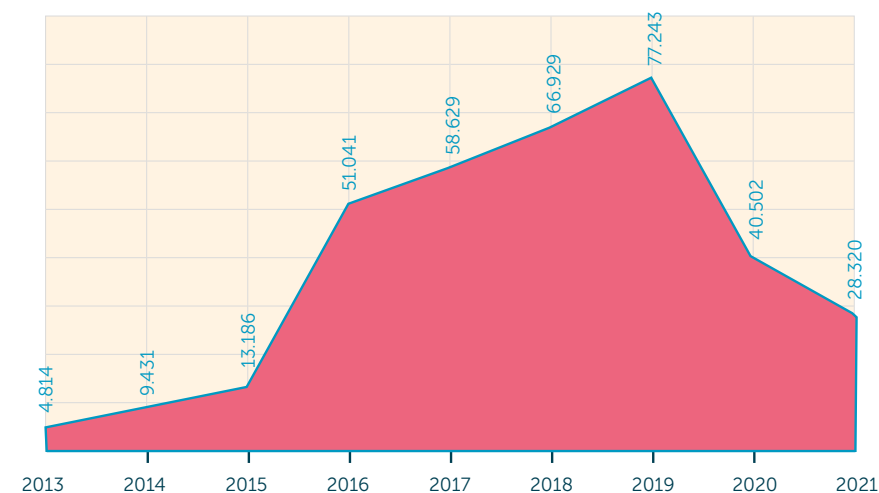


Figure 2.1: Asylum Applications in Greece, 2013-2021

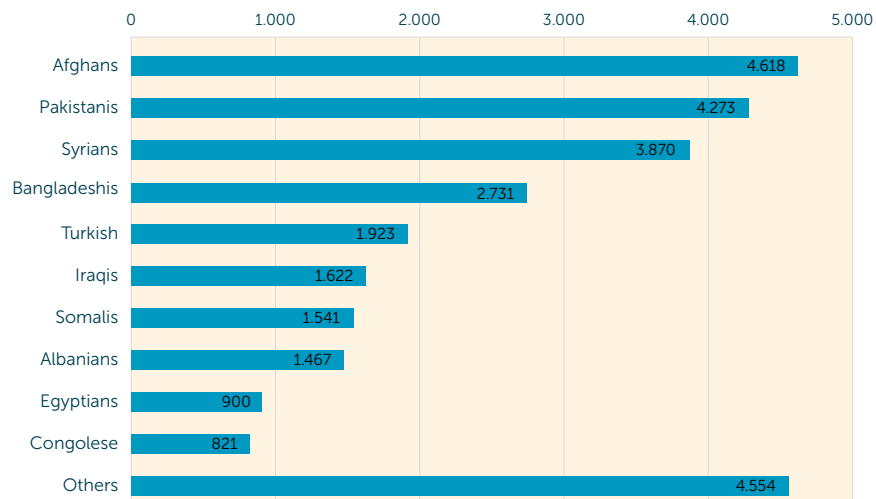
965,749.<sup>4</sup> Among them, 213,016 are EU citizens & expatriates (22%); 693,517 are citizens of other countries (72%), while 6% are identified as refugees. Citizens of third countries mainly come to Greece seeking occupation or to reconnect with their families. The vast majority of migrants in Greece come from Albania (62.82%). See the table below:<sup>5</sup>

### What is the current situation regarding employment processes and work permits for migrants/refugees?

Migrants and refugees entering Greece face several obstacles from the early stages of their reception. First, the recognition of their status in the reception and registration process is

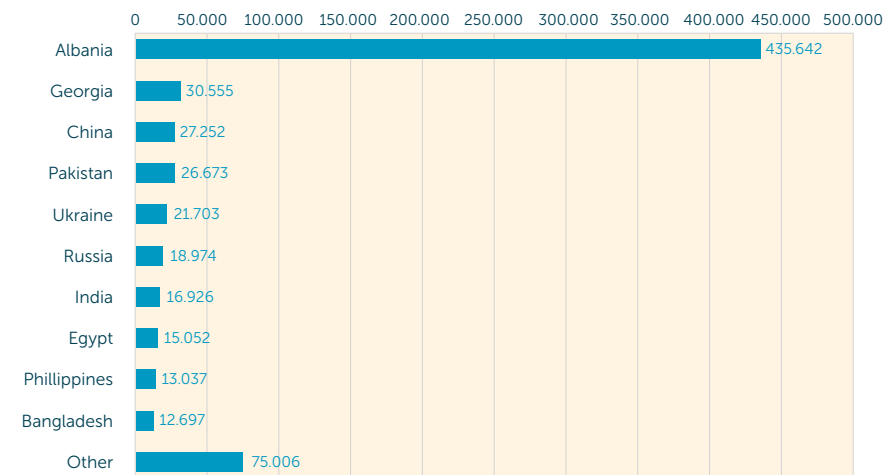
<sup>4</sup> Overall picture of Legal Migration (Συνολική εικόνα νόμιμης μετανάστευσης).

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Migration and Asylum



**Figure 2.2: Asylum Applications by Nationality: Top 10 Nationalities**

delayed in most cases; as a result, many try to reach the mainland undocumented with no acknowledged residential status. In terms of the government's employment policies, there is neither a specific action plan nor any permanent active policy dealing with migrants' and refugees' employability. The current National Strategy of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum does not provide any kind of realistic policies to integrate the migrant population, and it is too short (only 27 pages) to fulfil its purposes. The actions proposed are vague, suggesting cooperation between the government, unions and employers as well as better information access by the Labour Employment Organization (OAED) for the assessment and accreditation of people's skills. Migrants' skills and their former professional status are not registered upon their reception, thus there is no standard method for matching their skills with potential job offers in the labour market.



**Figure 2.3: Nationalities of Third-Country Nationals with Valid Residence Permit**

Although refugees who gain the status of beneficiaries of international protection have the same employment rights and obligations as Greek citizens,<sup>6</sup> they face difficulty in obtaining certain required documents, such as a tax number or social security number, not to mention their lack of the appropriate social networks in order to access the labour market, as is also the case with migrants. The usual recruitment processes (such as career websites) do not work for undocumented immigrants. According to a report on job-seeking refugees by the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), International Rescue Committee Hellas (IRC), Diotima Centre and Popaganda "the jobseeker culture and treatment applicants and beneficiaries of international protection receive in Greece, as reported by them to the

<sup>6</sup> (Art. 71 of Law 4375/2016 and Art. 15 of Law 4540/2018)



job counsellors of our organisations, is not friendly”.<sup>7</sup>

Tourism and agriculture are the main sectors in which migrants are seasonally occupied (albeit undeclared) in Greece. It should be noted that there is an exemption for the “employment of illegally residing third-country nationals in the agricultural sector”.<sup>8</sup> An undocumented immigrant can be hired in the agricultural sector only if they first receive a deportation order. Then, a suspension of deportation is issued only for the duration of their job, when the immigrant is left with a pending deportation order. Both regular and irregular migrants end up working in the informal economy and very often suffer numerous human and employment rights violations (see the “Manolada case”).<sup>9</sup>

### What are the existing projects/policies/programs/training for migrant/refugee employment?

The vast majority of current projects for the employment of migrants are offered via civil society organizations (CSOs), which are trying to substitute the absence of government policies. The main obstacles for migrants are their lack of communication skills in the Greek language and that NGOs offer such programs only for the first period of their stay in Greece. Besides language lessons, these NGOs work with their beneficiaries to focus on certain challenges they face (different for immigrants vs. refugees and according to country of origin, culture, sex, etc.), rather than following a certain policy in mutual understanding with the government according to a national action plan.

The Migrant Integration Centres (MICs) offer job counselling to help third-country nationals find jobs and communicate with potential employers on employee rights, hiring processes and available training

<sup>7</sup> For more on the legal framework on refugees accessing the labour market, see Do the human right thing: raising our voices for refugee rights, 2022, Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), International Rescue Committee Hellas (IRC), Diotima Centre and Popaganda.

<sup>8</sup> Art. 13A of Law 4251/2014

<sup>9</sup> Chowdury and Others v. Greece (Manolada case).

programs. However, not every MIC has the capacity for such counselling. In addition, the Community Centres of municipalities provide counselling support concerning job seeking in local areas, focusing on younger people. Nevertheless, the offered services do not cover the whole population.

The most prominent educational program from an NGO is called “HELIOS”,<sup>10</sup> and it is implemented by the International Organization for Migration, which, among other services, offers professional counselling to enhance job readiness.

### What are the needs of labour markets in the short and long term?

The employment prospects of migrants are limited by the recovery of the Greek economy, which has been experiencing a severe economic crisis over the last 12 years as well as the Covid-19 pandemic’s effects. The high unemployment rate affects the domestic population and migrants alike; given that Greece’s economy is based on tourism, future prospects will be a struggle for everyone looking for a job. Amidst these broader challenges, several sectors of the economy have been on the rise in the last 7 years: manufacturing, retail, scientific personnel, information and communication technologies and mining seem to occupy more personnel after the huge recession of 2015, despite the 2020 pandemic’s detrimental impact.

### What are the demands and needs of migrants/refugees?

Migrants primarily need two kinds of policies that would help them achieve a higher degree of integration and give them the opportunity to seek jobs equal to their skills. Employed migrants are often overqualified for the job they are doing since the first thing they care about is finding a job to secure a basic standard of living.

First, they expect more political will and a realistic national plan of integration focused on mitigating the administrative obstacles in order to stay in Greece and pursue their goals. This means that the state should offer language lessons from day one and have trained staff within social services who have the capacity to speak foreign languages. These staff

<sup>10</sup> Project HELIOS.

would guide migrants concerning which state procedures are needed to issue legitimate documents. Therefore, simplification of the legal framework and appropriate assistance is needed.

Second, they would be helped by a system which registers their skills and former occupations; equally important is the acknowledgement of their professional certifications. This is a task which should be undertaken by the Labour Employment Organization (OAED) along with the unemployed population of the country.

### What is missing in the market, and how can we work on it?

There is a need to set up a migration registry which would include migrants' skills according to their statements, any proof of their certification, years of experience and means of communication. This shortlist could be communicated to employers and workers' unions asking for certain occupations. The state could conclude specific occupational agreements with employers and give them incentives (such as tax rebates) for the employment of migrants. More access to information on occupational status and specific needs would be mutually beneficial for both sides.

However, it should be highlighted that these policies would require a national strategy for integration in the first place. Currently, migrants do not have any reason to be registered, particularly if they are in danger of deportation.

### How to reach our stakeholders to contribute to synchronising the skills of migrants/refugees and the needs of European markets?

In Greece, the main stakeholder which needs to be more involved in the synchronization of migrants' skills and the needs of European markets is the state's public services. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum and the municipalities should work along with CSOs in order to create a national strategy for migrant integration. Given the absence of political will in the Greek case, EU institutions and international organizations should apply more pressure to the state primarily to guarantee the human rights of migrants, which are violated in certain cases.

Access to senior government officials seems to be currently limited, and CSOs should keep them accountable for the situation of migrants in Greece, working together and agreeing on a minimum set of needed policies (language lessons for all and registry of skills), so that a dialogue with the government can open up again. The adoption of integration policies by the government depends on the pressure of EU institutions and CSOs' access to people with a minimum understanding of the importance of such policies, in general.

### How can we support the enrolment of migrants/refugees in vocational high schools?

The enrolment of migrants and refugees in vocational high schools depends on two main parameters. The first is that they need to have access to housing, clothing, food and/or a basic income in order to ensure a minimum standard of life. If this concern is addressed, migrants and refugees will be able to seek opportunities for improving their living conditions, mainly by getting better vocational training.

The second parameter is that each state needs to make sure that migrants and refugees are able to be informed about the programs of vocational high schools. Migrants and refugees often live in certain neighbourhoods (ghettos) where they are kept forcibly segregated and access to information is restricted.

### What is the role of university students in the system?

University students should encourage migrants' and refugees' children to cooperate in a community, trying to exchange experiences and culture in an open and friendly environment.

### Could you briefly talk about the best-practise projects in this field in your country?

There is no important refugee/migrant network in Greece. However, Albanians have managed to integrate on their own into Greek society.

## What should be done in this regard? What are your policy suggestions?

- There should be a unique digital registry as a shortlist operated by the Labour Employment Organization (OAED) in which migrants and refugees could record their skills, education and former professions; thus, they could be invited to participate in further training to find employment in areas with higher demand.
- Simplify the processes for getting a residence permit for migrants and refugees who have managed to be hired.
- Promote training campaigns in specific neighbourhoods which host migrants and refugees, in order for them to be better informed about training and job offers.
- Better allocate the population in rural areas with increasing demand for workers, particularly during the high tourist season, which lasts from April to October in Greece.

## Chapter 3

# Germany

### Ciler FIRTINA

Multikulturelles  
Forum e.V.

### What are the general numbers and current situation among migrants/refugees?

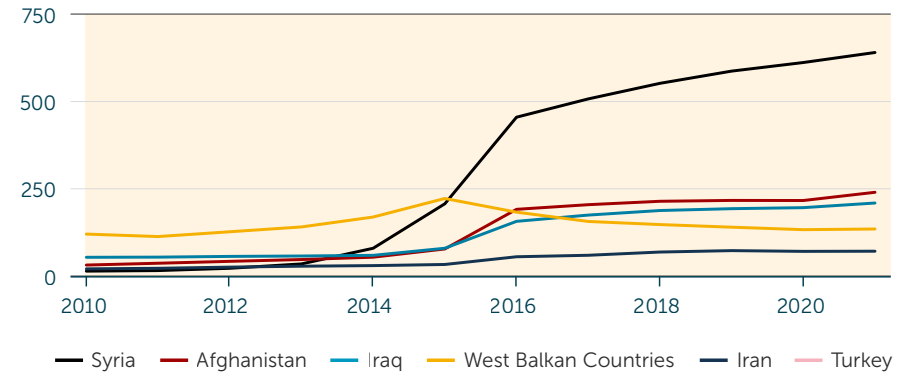
22.3 million people with a migration background lived in Germany on 31.12.2021. Among them, 11.8 million are foreigners. In 2021, 131,600 people became naturalised citizens.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the federal states, most people with a migration background live in North Rhine-Westphalia (25.2% in 2020). Of all persons with a migration background, 62% are immigrants themselves, and 38% were born in Germany. In the medium term, the proportion of those with a migration background will continue to increase: in 2020, 40% of all children under five had a migration background. 59.3% of all people with a migration background lived in urban regions in 2020; 13.2% in rural regions. Most come from Turkey (12.6% in 2020), followed by Poland (9.4%), Russia (5.6%), Romania (4.3%) and Italy (4.2%).<sup>2</sup>

The Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) registered

<sup>1</sup> Federal Statistical Office

<sup>2</sup> Federal Statistical Office: Microcensus – Population with a migration background



about one million foreign nationals who moved to Germany in 2021, including 530,000 third-country nationals (non-EU citizens).

In 2021, 190,816 people applied for asylum in Germany. In the current year 2022, there have been 113,171 asylum applications so far.

Between the end of February and 17 October 2022, 1,008,935 refugees from Ukraine were registered by the AZR, according to the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

Protection seekers by selected nationalities:<sup>3</sup>

### What is the current situation regarding employment processes and work permits for migrants/refugees?

In total, over 4 million employees subject to social insurance contributions in Germany had no German nationality in 2020. This is

**Figure 3.1: Protection seekers by selected nationalities**

Statistische Bundesamt (Destatis), 2022 (in thousands)

<sup>3</sup> Statistische Bundesamt (Destatis), 2022 (in thousands)

an increase of over 75% compared to 2013. About 1.9 million migrants were employed in skilled occupations for which vocational or school education is required.

The number of refugees in employment subject to social security contributions at the skilled worker level increased about fivefold between 2013 and 2020. In 2020, a total of 315,000 refugees were in employment subject to social security contributions, of which more than 120,000 were in skilled occupations. This is largely due to the increased proportion of refugees in the total population of Germany since 2015.

With a good 8,000 employees, most refugees were employed at the skilled worker level in the catering industry in 2020, followed by the warehouse industry with a good 7,600 employed skilled workers. Even in the crisis year 2020, the number of refugees employed in skilled occupations increased, although they were often disproportionately employed in service occupations severely affected by the pandemic where employment losses were predominantly recorded.

It is not yet clear how many people who have fled Ukraine have already found a job in Germany. However, according to the Federal Employment Agency, the number of employees with Ukrainian citizenship who are subject to social insurance contributions increased from February to June 2022 from 57,000 to around 95,000.<sup>4</sup>

Labour market researchers assume that many well-qualified Ukrainians will come to Germany. Evaluations by the Institute for Employment Research show that in the past about half of the migrants from Ukraine had a university degree, 14% had vocational training and another 26% had a secondary school education.

According to a survey by the Institute for Employment Research (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung), just under two per cent of German companies have hired Ukrainian refugees so far – mainly from the wholesale and retail trade sector, the construction industry and the

catering sector.

Foreigners' access to the German labour market depends on their residence status. Since the Skilled Workers Immigration Act (FEG) came into force on 01.03.2020, foreigners in possession of a residence title are allowed to engage in gainful employment, provided this is not prohibited or restricted by law.<sup>5</sup> The potential of refugees in the labour market and the shortage of skilled workers have been recognised.

In order to work in their learned profession, refugees must have their degrees recognised and learn German. The quality of their labour market integration depends strongly on the rapid recognition of acquired qualifications. For example, around 100,000 Ukrainian adults have already started an integration course in 2022 (as of 6 September 2022). Another 15,000 or so people are completing an initial orientation course.

Regarding the immigration of skilled workers, the EU Blue Card as a residence title for highly qualified workers has become increasingly important. With the Skilled Workers Immigration Act entering into force in March 2020, more skilled workers with vocational qualifications are now coming to Germany.

As part of the so-called migration package, seven individual laws were passed by the German Bundestag on 7 June 2019, including the "Skilled Workers Immigration Act", the "Foreigners Employment Promotion Act" and the "Act on Toleration in Training and Employment".<sup>6</sup>

### What are the existing projects/policies/programs/training for migrant/refugee employment?

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has been responsible in particular for nationwide integration courses since 2005. For years, more than 90% of participants in the general integration course have achieved a level of either A2 or B1 as a result of the German language

4 Institute for Employment Research

5 § 4a AufenthG

6 BAMF

test. Recently, significantly more women than men have been attending the integration course. To promote the professional opportunities of workers with a migration background, the Federal Office also offers job-related German courses. Since mid-2016, there have already been over 665,400 admissions.<sup>7</sup>

The federal government's support policy for the labour market integration of asylum seekers focuses on refugees' access to general and job-related language courses, the recognition of foreign vocational qualifications and the use of active labour market policy instruments. The extensive inclusion of refugees in the regular system of employment promotion is a specific feature of the German integration strategy.

These are the refugee-specific offers by the federal government, the federal states and the municipalities:

- Counselling and support;
- Legal and social integration: asylum procedures, housing, family reunification;
- Labour market integration: language (integration courses, job-related German courses); vocational orientation (knowledge of occupational fields and the labour market); transition to training and work (e.g., job-related internships); assessment of competence or recognition of vocational qualifications; post-qualification; training (dual/full-time school) or employment (in the primary labour market);
- Access to integration courses and job-related language courses;
- Recognition of foreign vocational qualifications.

The Federal Employment Agency includes entitlement to job and career counselling. Asylum seekers with a high likelihood of remaining in the country can also claim employment promotion measures during the waiting period before an asylum decision – for example, the assumption of travel and translation costs within the framework of recognition

<sup>7</sup> BAMF: <https://www.bamf.de/DE/Themen/MigrationAufenthalt/ZuwandererDrittstaaten/Arbeit/arbeit-node.html>

procedures – and participate in measures for labour market integration.

The Federal Agency also finances measures in individual federal states, such as the “Integration Points” in North Rhine-Westphalia. In North Rhine-Westphalia, a total of 47 “Integration Points” have existed in all agency districts since January 2016, where all contact persons and services for the labour market and social integration are bundled under one roof. At that time, a total of 44,900 asylum seekers took part in a language and entry-level course in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Through the two network programmes “Integration through Qualification” (IQ) and “Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees” (IvAF), the federal government finances complementary measures with labour market support specifically for migrants and refugees.

### What are the needs of labour markets in the short and long term?

According to a study by the German Economic Institute (IW), more than half a million skilled workers are needed. This personnel shortage is particularly acute in social work, education, nursing, the trades and information technology.

Current strategies involve refugees in employment promotion measures at an early stage of their stay, even during the asylum procedure if possible. The aim is to place them in employment positions according to their qualifications. For this purpose, offers of regular support should be adapted to the needs of refugees and expanded appropriately. However, this inclusive labour market strategy is limited to refugees with a high probability of remaining.

A large part of the current measures is aimed at enabling labour market policy actors in the Federal Employment Agency, but also in the business community, to deal competently with the target group of refugees. At the same time, networking structures are being intensively set up in order to bundle the competencies of various actors and to develop complementary target-group-specific measures for refugees. A positive



development here is that many actors at the various levels of the federal system as well as in the various social subsystems of politics, business and civil society are committed to the integration of refugees into the labour market.

### What are the demands and needs of migrants/refugees?

Migrants and refugees need guidance and support concerning work, education, language courses, housing, health services, social contacts and cultural participation. However, access to the labour market plays a central role for working-age individuals, as employment provides economic independence and a material basis for housing, health and social participation in the destination country.

They need more legal equality, simplified recognition of degrees and easier access to German courses.

Another important issue is family reunification and the integration of children in schools.

### What is missing in the market, and how can we work on it?

Networking with all stakeholders is fundamental for successful integration into the labour market. Cooperation between labour market actors needs to be further developed and continued.

It is also necessary to promote openness and diversity among companies and reduce prejudices. Multilingual skills, e.g., Ukrainian, Arabic and Turkish, should be taken as an advantage because multilingualism can be used in the company. The realities of discrimination in the selection process have to be realized more, and measures have to be taken for abolishing them.

Migrant associations should be involved in labour market policy measures to make thresholds lower. Employer representatives are necessary and useful to reach the target group and utilize their potential.

There is a lack of vocational training opportunities for adult refugees and

migrants who have worked in various professions in their countries of origin without having undergone training.

### How to reach our stakeholders to contribute to synchronising the skills of migrants/refugees and the needs of European markets?

There have to be central contact persons or an institution to provide support to local companies. Many local companies are ready to take skilled migrant workers but do not know how to go about it. For example, there could be "welcome guides" at the chambers of commerce.

There have to be central contact persons on site who bring companies and the required staff together. These can be located in the chambers, but also migrant associations or as a joint service for companies.

Employers need to be better sensitized in the area of diversity and intercultural competence. Different work mentalities need to be better understood. New formats must be created for this purpose.

### How can we guarantee qualification equivalence?

Within the framework of the Recognition Act passed in 2012, various measures have been developed whose aim is to accept qualifications acquired in the country of origin as equivalent to the corresponding reference professions in Germany.<sup>8</sup>

Like other migrants, asylum seekers and refugees have the right to a formal recognition procedure in Germany – irrespective of their residence status. The nationwide IQ networks are particularly involved in implementing the Recognition Act and are particularly concerned with the implementation of the recognition law. Since only a minority of an estimated maximum of 20% of refugees have acquired formal vocational training in their country of origin, various model procedures are currently being developed through which people without formal training or written proof of qualification are to be given the possibility to prove

<sup>8</sup> Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2015)

their knowledge and skills for the performance of essential occupational activities.<sup>9</sup>

### How can we support the enrolment of migrants/refugees in vocational high schools?

There is a lack of vocational training opportunities for adult refugees and migrants who have worked in various professions in their countries of origin without having undergone training. They can't go to vocational high schools together with 18–20-year-olds. A special programme for this group is needed.

Young migrants and refugees need more intensive language courses to be successful at school. They also need more vocational orientation because they don't know the professions and possibilities in Germany.

### What is the role of university students in the system?

It is assumed that about 20 per cent of the refugees currently immigrating have completed vocational training or studies in their country of origin, and 30 to 40 per cent have professional experience that is (possibly) usable on the local labour market. Access to university studies is made more difficult by the high language requirement (C1). It would make sense to offer degree programmes in English.

### Could you briefly talk about the best-practise projects in this field in your country?

There are very many projects aimed at migrants and refugees. Here are some examples:

- New Job Perspectives
- Information brochures in many languages
- International Women's Cafés for informal language practice and counselling

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Valikom

- A wide range of language courses, including vocational language courses with TELC language exams
- Chance 18+ project (coaching and school-leaving qualifications for refugees)
- Strong Women at Work, a programme for mothers with a migration background
- My Turn – My Career, an ESF-funded project for the professional integration of migrant women
- Counselling for refugees
- Integration Agency
- Job application coaching
- Specialist migration service

### What should be done in this regard? What are your policy suggestions?

The qualified counselling network must be further expanded.

Vocational guidance should be flanked by migration and integration guidance.

Migrant organisations should be used as links between the guidance network and migrants and refugees.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Recommended links: <https://www.fes.de/studie-ohne-sie-geht-nichts-mehr>; <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/publikationen/publikation/did/arbeitsmarktintegration-von-fluechtligen-bestehende-praxisansatze-und-weiterfuehrende-empfehlungen-1>



## Chapter 4

# Spain

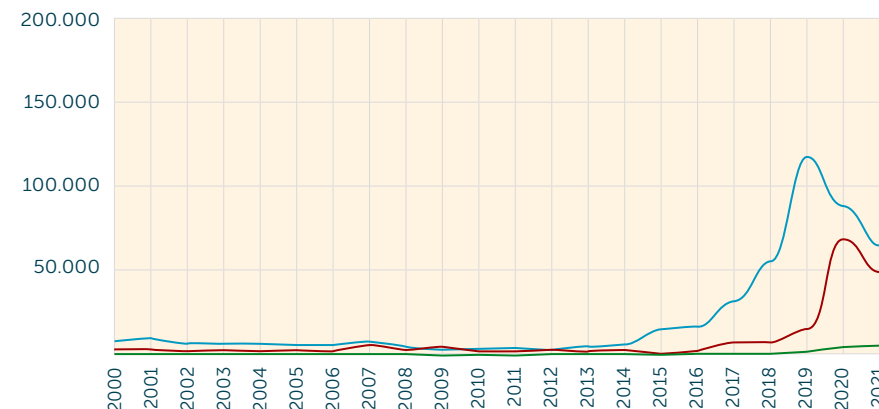
Juan PINA

### What are the general numbers and current situation among migrants/refugees?

Formerly a country of emigration, Spain is now fully a destination country for migrants from other countries. For several years, Eastern Europe was a particularly important region of origin. Romania and Bulgaria continue to be, with around nine hundred thousand migrants coming from both countries combined. Morocco and Latin America, however, make up most of the migratory flow into Spain. Among Latin Americans, Venezuelans have recently become a very large immigrant population. All in all, Spain's immigration figures are slightly larger than those of comparable European countries.<sup>1</sup> There are 15.92 asylum applications in Spain per thousand inhabitants. This figure is 13.06 in Belgium, 12.44 in the Netherlands and 10.67 in Germany. Apart from legal immigration figures, a steady increase in illegal immigration has been observed especially since 2020.

Spain received 65,301 asylum applications from

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat



refugees in 2021, according to UNHCR. Most of them came from Venezuela, Colombia and Morocco. A total of 54,393 decisions have been made on initial applications. Around 9% of them were answered positively; 91 per cent of asylum applications were rejected in the first instance. The most successful applications have been those of refugees from Afghanistan and Libya.

The table below shows the refugees who fled from Spain and changed their asylum application to other countries:

In Spain, the rise of far-right anti-immigration narratives is starting to become very worrisome. Like in other European countries, liberals need to join forces with other democratic parties and civil society stakeholders in order to change social perceptions of immigration. One helpful action point would be helping to transform socially excluded, vulnerable migrants into successful small business owners. This will create self-employment, followed by further jobs, and it will have a positive effect on

**Figure 4.1: Incoming Asylum Applications in Spain from 2000 to 2021**

The top line represents the total number of asylum applications (first applications + reviews). Below are the number of recognized refugees (green) and rejected applications (red).

Spaniards' perceptions of immigrants.

### What is the current situation regarding employment processes and work permits for migrants/refugees?

The main issue continues to be the long period of time (up to two years in many cases) in which (illegal) immigrants cannot work. This creates a situation of dependence on NGO support or small government grants and subsidies. This creates numerous social problems and unnecessarily delays labour insertion, sometimes causing a loss of professional skills. The national government has been pressured by some regional governments and civil society representatives about this. While some very minor hurdles have been removed or are in the process of being addressed, the reality continues to be that a large percentage of immigrants are left unable to work. The consensus among non-profits working on the issue is that work permits should be handed out immediately, even if the immigrant is subject to a process which might end up in expulsion. This situation would be better for immigrants themselves, for social cohesion and even from a budgetary perspective.

In the case of Spain, one particular issue that is growing more important is that of immigrant entrepreneurship. As is true in most countries, immigrants, including those who are less adequate for ordinary jobs, often make excellent SME founders and managers. Spanish liberals and others are now putting pressure on the government to remove hurdles to self-employment. However, instead of removing the specific need for non-EU foreigners' businesses to be vetted for viability before being granted the right to even start, the government is now prone to extend that same requirement to Spaniards as well.

Whether seeking self-employment or ordinary employment, the big problem immigrants face in Spain is the equivalence of their university degrees and other professional accreditations. This is particularly harmful, as it pushes professionals to take lower-qualified and lower-paid jobs in spite of having a higher cultural level, which creates social dysfunctions. Even from the perspective of Spanish society, it is now clear that the country is wasting the skills and training these people would contribute

to society if the level of bureaucracy weren't so high. Liberals and other groups blame lobbying by professional bodies, including medical ones, for the slow and complicated processes of equivalence.

### What are the existing projects/policies/programs/training for the employment of migrants/refugees?

Programs are mostly conducted at the municipal level, some at the regional level. Social and training programs are mostly conducted in large cities, normally supervised or managed by civil servants but executed by NGOs or other civil society representatives. Further to the visits held as part of the Barcelona program in July 2022, it is necessary to bear in mind that most programs only address the lowest level of qualification. Another issue with these courses is a theoretical approach with little or no practical components.

### What are the needs of labour markets in the short and long term?

It is difficult to know what the market would demand if hurdles to immigrant entrepreneurship and generally rigid labour rules were softened. However, Spain has a clear need for all types of professionals in medicine and related fields, partly as a result of the heavy brain drain from these professions back in the recession years. Other industries where qualified immigrants are needed include IT, civil engineering, heavy machinery operators, food manufacturing personnel for agricultural production, and mid-level technicians for the repair and maintenance of buildings and infrastructure.

### What are the demands and needs of migrants/refugees?

In Spain, the main demand made by migrants and refugees is being allowed to work, thus shortening their initial period of dependence on the state or NGOs. Another common need which is still insufficiently addressed is legal consultancy support to push for the equivalence of university degrees and other accreditations. Finally, easier access to self-employment, on an equal basis with locals, is demanded by an important niche of immigrants willing to pursue this.

### What is missing in the market, and how can we work on it?

There's a clear need for labour market flexibility so that migrants can easily work and acquire experience, which is made more difficult by minimum wages and other rigid regulations. Additionally, combined programs offering jobs and the further development of existing skills (senior apprenticeships with mentor supervision) would be helpful. Once again, we cannot really know what is missing because the market is not free enough for entrepreneurs (be they foreign or local) to apply the trial-and-error method and discover opportunities.

### How to reach our stakeholders to contribute to synchronising the skills of migrants/refugees and the needs of European markets?

The main issue is whether we are assessing the current labour market's needs or we understand that those needs derive from a rapidly evolving market, one that is heavily restrained by rigid labour regulations. This has a negative effect on everyone, but even more so on vulnerable newly arrived immigrants. Therefore, one reasonable way to approach our stakeholders would be suggesting labour market flexibilization for recent immigrants as a way to actually learn how the market can evolve and which needs may arise. This flexibilization should include shorter working hours for compatibility with language studies or professional recycling, as well as minimum wages. Minimum wages throw immigrants into unemployment when they can't produce enough value to meet the minimum arbitrarily set by the government, plus the employer's margin.

### How can we guarantee qualification equivalence?

In Spain, it is too early for this question. Rather than guarantee it, we need to enable it – because so far equivalence is a complex, expensive, time-consuming maze for immigrants. We need more and better legal consultancy support for immigrants, flexibility around the lack of minor documents from some countries (accepting a sworn declaration instead) and a reduction in the de facto power of professional bodies which try to avoid new competitors.

### How can we support the enrolment of migrants/refugees in vocational high schools?

This can be done via joint work+study programs that jointly address migrants' needs for salary, work experience and further training. Currently, only the further training part is really addressed in Spain and other countries.

### What is the role of university students in the system?

Spain needs to make its labour market attractive for qualified foreign students to remain. It's happening already, for instance with top Chinese students, but little has been proactively done by the government in this area.

### Could you briefly talk about the best-practise projects in this field in your country?

There's no particular project directly working with immigrants which deserves specific mention. However, there are research projects worth highlighting, the main one being the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration (CER), which is a joint effort by the two largest public universities in the city: the University of Barcelona (UB) and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB).

### What should be done in this regard? What are your policy suggestions?

- Stop and redress the current minimum wage increase, which renders many less qualified workers unemployable.
- Establish a period of three years from obtaining the work permit for unqualified (foreign or national) workers, during which they will not be subject to minimum wages, so that they may easily find a job, acquire experience and integrate into the workforce.
- Exempt foreign workers from a large part of their social security costs during the first three years as employees.
- Make riders' platforms and another new economy/sharing economy options more flexible; these are normally sought out by lesser

qualified immigrants and have been rendered almost impossible by the recently introduced laws.

- Eliminate the “autonomo societario” figure in Spanish companies so that new start-ups may establish themselves without incurring this high cost.
- Make access to self-employment and starting a business equal for foreigners and nationals.

Allow illegal migrants to work while their dossier is being analysed until they are legalised or expelled.

# General Evaluation

---

## M. Murat ERDOĞAN

Turkish - German  
University

“European Cities Network on Migration: Getting the Skills Synchronized” project aims at contributing to the establishment of sustainable, inclusive and target-group-oriented training policies for migrants by supporting the consistency of training opportunities for migrants according to the current/future demands of European job markets through research and discussions with focus groups such as migrants, employers, NGO representatives, decision makers, etc. The project seeks to contribute to this vision by matching migrants’ skills and qualifications with labour market needs in European cities – since effective, long-term and target-group-oriented training policies are essential in order to achieve the goal of promoting economic integration. These will be shared with decision makers for them to design a holistic strategy which includes effective, long-term and target-group-oriented training policies and modules.

One of the most serious humanitarian crises experienced on the European continent after the Second World War started from March 2011, as anti-government protests in Syria shortly evolved into civil war. The crisis was perceived

in Europe as “regional” or “Middle-Eastern” until 2014, but it started to become “European” from that year and turned into a serious crisis due to the refugees heading to Europe. An overwhelming majority of the over 1 million Syrians who reached Europe, especially between 2014 and 2016, now live in Germany and Sweden. All developments indicate that a significant percentage of these Syrians can no longer return to their country. In this respect, the implementation of integration policies in line with liberal values in the countries hosting a significant Syrian population has become meaningful for both refugees and the countries that they live in. That almost all refugees co-exist with the local community, instead of in camps, at present gives the local cohesion processes a central role. The “European Cities Network on Migration” has a critical role in creating liberal policies for urban refugees.

Despite the need for immigrants in Europe, it is obvious that Syrian and other refugees pose a critical management issue for the EU. While all countries prefer to take regular immigrants that they may choose, it can be observed that they are rather reluctant when it comes to refugees. However, it is also known that the refugee issue unsettles communities more than refugees themselves. It is also obvious that there is a risk for this unsettling feeling to rapidly turn into hate speech and racism as well as the implementation of illiberal policies. It is critically important that Europe creates rights- and individual-based cohesion policies in accordance with liberal values. Liberal cohesion policies are also important for both the protection of refugees and for the sake of development-based cohesion policies. It is essential to ensuring the economic integration of refugees and their contribution to the community that they are a part of it as soon as possible, getting rid of their dependencies.

Rights- and individual-based cohesion policies being established towards refugees are indispensable for the development of Europe, as well as its peace and order. However, the differing developmental levels of countries, combined with their experience, capacity, and population density of refugees, directly impact process management, and there may also be differences in cohesion policies between countries and even provinces.

Representatives from politics, local governments, entrepreneurs, academics, activists, and NGOs from Turkey, Greece, Spain, and Germany convene in a network to exchange knowledge and experiences and establish a mechanism to learn how to benefit from the opportunities of migration and support the liberal narrative for integration.

For a dignified common life and economic contribution, the following suggestions came to the fore in the country-based studies, field visits in Cologne and Brussels, and panels with politicians carried out within the framework of the “Getting the Skills Synchronized” project, which is of utmost importance in terms of the integration of refugees into economic life:

- Issuing the right to refuge to those in need of International Protection is a human rights issue. Misuse of this situation may require precautions. However, every application must be considered seriously, in a rights- and individual-based manner.
- Status issued to those incoming at a later phase is critically important for individual skills development.
- Facilitating processes should be established for the “skill mapping” of incomers so that their skills can be identified ideally.
- Intensive training programs must be developed for those incoming later to improve their education levels, when they fall below the average of their originating country, providing adults primarily with language and vocational courses.
- It is a core issue that the schooling of refugee children should be ensured throughout the compulsory education years, as well as at later phases. Education is a fundamental basis for people to develop further skills. Children’s education is critical to preventing “lost generations”, ensuring their personal development, and allowing their contribution to the receiving country. Education is also significant as an indispensable part of the cohesion process.
- Access to the labour market and its training opportunities needs to be facilitated. Obstacles must be removed for the employability of refugees, and effective rights to labour should be put into place.
- Refugees must be supported with entrepreneurship, and there need to be opportunities available for them to operate economically (to open a bank account, to receive loans, or to freely travel, etc.). Self-employment and entrepreneurship should be promoted.
- Set easier and clearer criteria for legal migration and encourage valuable professionals in any industry.
- Local cohesion processes and the role of the municipalities throughout this process are critically important. Municipalities should be supported in terms of capacity development to take the required initiative. However, most urgently, municipalities should be provided with financial support through projects matched in parallel with the number of refugees.
- Initial checks and registries involving refugees should be followed by removing travel obstacles first within the country and later internationally.
- Genuine international solidarity and load sharing must be practiced. Here, the UN “Global Compact on Refugees” is a significant document. However, the opportunities for its application need to be strengthened.
- Although the cultural affinity of refugees with their receiving community is significant at first, it falls short after a while. It should be borne in mind that the critical issue here is not cultural affinity, but numbers.
- It is critically essential that the activities conducted for refugees are carried out following a developmental approach.
- Immigrants, and especially refugees, are presented by some political movements or politicians and bureaucrats as a security object. In this process that is described as “securitization”, the resilience of society is a core issue. Nevertheless, rightful societal concerns may sometimes surface which must be taken seriously.
- It is not possible to find a standard model for social cohesion. It depends on the specific condition of each country and the size of the incoming population. The attempt to identify and resolve problems at the local level is also significant for strengthening democracy.

As a general policy, it is essential to transfer further authority to the municipal level of administration (from the regional and central levels) on immigration policies.

- Liberal-based social cohesion and economic integration policies will form the most significant basis of a dignified and peaceful co-existence.

# A liberal future in a united Europe

ISBN: 978-2-39067-045-2

 /europeanliberalforum

 @eurliberalforum

#ELFevent

**liberalforum.eu**

Copyright 2022 /  
European Liberal Forum EUPF.

This publication was co-financed by the  
European Parliament. The European  
Parliament is not responsible for the  
content of this publication, or for any  
use that may be made of it.