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## **Inspiration for integration. Labour market policies for refugees in five Northern European countries**

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# Working Paper: Inspiration for integration. Labour market policies for refugees in five Northern European countries.

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## **Abstract:**

The refugee influx in 2015 marked the largest mass movement in Europe since WWII. More than half of the arrivals applied for asylum on the northernmost edge of the continent: Germany was the top destination by far but Sweden received more asylum seekers relative to its population. The Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark also took in significant numbers. The developments in 2015 caused several of these countries to reconsider their policies on migration and integration of refugees. This paper compares the policies in these five countries after 2015 focusing on what Sweden can learn from the others.

**Keywords:** Labour market, Integration, Education and Social welfare.

**JEL Codes:** I24, I38, J15 and J61.

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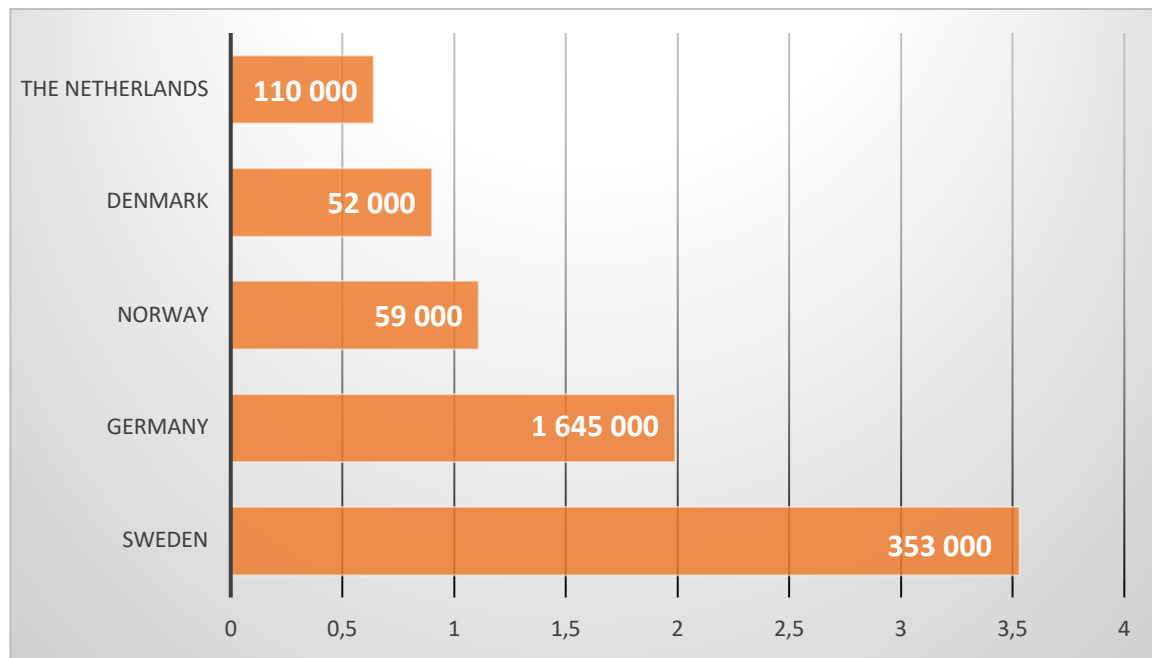
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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Major influx in 2015

In 2015 and 2016, nearly 2.7 million asylum seekers arrived in the European Union, comprising the largest mass movement in Europe since World War II. More than half applied for asylum on the northernmost edge of the continent: Germany was the top destination country but Sweden received more asylum applicants relative to its population. The Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark also took in significant numbers. All five countries are welfare states with developed economies and relatively high wages. All have also shown welcoming attitudes towards refugees in the past though both Denmark and The Netherlands became more restrictive in the early 2000s.

**Chart 1.1 Asylum seekers in Sweden, Germany, Denmark, Norway and The Netherlands 2013-2017. Numbers and share of each country's population.**



Remark: First time applications

Source: Eurostat

Before the refugee influx in 2015-2016 Sweden and Germany had the more liberal policies on refugee migration than the rest of the European Union. The developments them to tighten their policies in this area. Both countries imposed border controls in place and temporarily suspended family reunifications for most refugees. Germany reduced the economic benefits for asylum seekers and Sweden introduced temporary residence permits for all refugees. Norway also tightened its' rules on family reunification. Denmark and The Netherlands had already put harder policies on refugee migration in place at earlier stage and were less affected by the refugee influx than Germany and Sweden.

Refugees have a harder time finding work than other migrants in most developed countries.<sup>2</sup>The five countries in this paper are marked by high entry barriers to the labour market and refugees who have arrived there earlier have found it harder than expected to find work. The problems of integrating earlier arrivals and the major inflows of asylum seekers in 2015-2016 led several of the countries in this study to reconsider and revise their policies for labour market integration of refugees.

This paper describes the systems for receiving and helping refugees find work and the labour market outcomes for refugees in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, The Netherlands and Germany after 2015. The focus of the paper is to see what Sweden can learn from the other countries regarding labour market integration.

## 1.2 Definitions

*Humanitarian migrants* include:

- Refugees according to the UN convention who are those with a founded fear of persecution.
- Resettled refugees selected by the UNHCR.
- People in need of subsidiary protection who are victims of war or those who risk torture or execution.
- Families to those above.

For simplification the term refugee is used for all four groups in this paper.

*Integration* is a broad term covering many areas like migrants' economic positions in their new country or the social interaction between migrants and the native population or migrants' identification with the new country. This paper is solely focused on the integration of refugees into the labour market.

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<sup>2</sup> EU and OECD (2016).

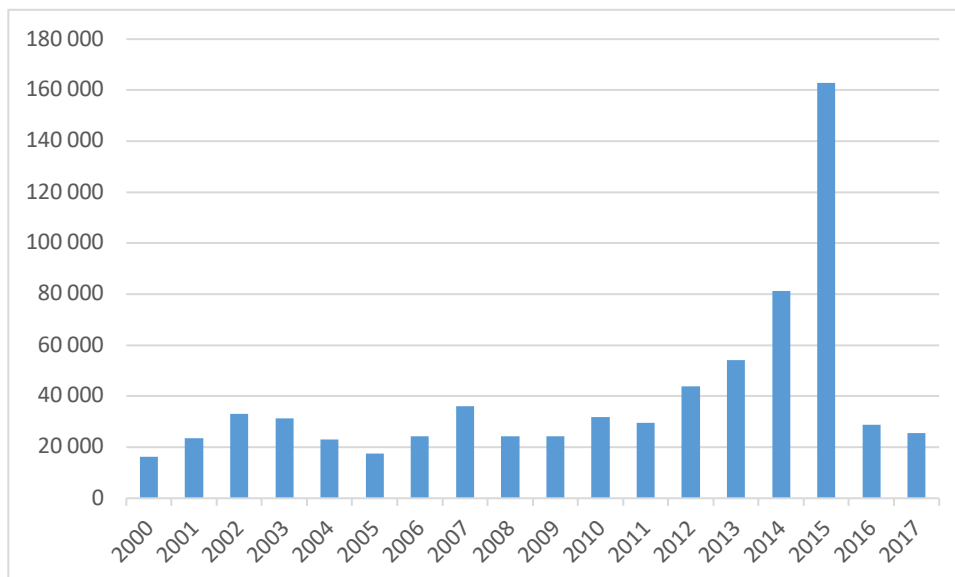
## 2 Sweden

### 2.1 Migration and the labour market

#### *Migration history*

Sweden's history as a refugee destination began in the mid-1970s with arrivals from Latin America and later from East Africa and the Middle East. Refugee migration remained at about 10 000 people a year, with a sharp temporary increase during the Balkan wars in the early 1990s. From 2012 refugee migration to Sweden increased due to the civil wars in Iraq and later Syria. Asylum migration culminated with the large influx of asylum seekers in the fall and winter of 2015-2016 which led to a sharp tightening of the Swedish migration rules. Temporary residence permits with a 13 month duration were introduced. Family reunions were temporarily suspended for most refugees and only allowed for a small group conditional on supply requirements.

**Chart 2.1 First time asylum applications in Sweden 2000-2017**



Source: Swedish Migration Agency

#### *Integration policies*

Immigrants have been entitled to tuition in Swedish since the late 1960s. Since the middle of the 1980s municipalities have been responsible for housing refugees and helping them find work. In 1997 the term integration policy replaced immigration policy in Swedish official documents. The purpose was to emphasize that the integration of immigrants was a two-way process relying both on the immigrants and the Swedish society. Swedish municipalities were obliged to offer refugees language training, civic orientation and help to find received special government grants for this. The design and the quality of the programs differed between municipalities though. In 2010 responsibility for the program was centralized and a two-year national integration program was introduced under the guidance of the Public Employment Agency with assistance from the municipalities.

### *Migrants in the labour market*

Migrants have a weaker position in the labour market than native born in Sweden. This is particularly true for migrant women. Sweden has the second largest gap in employment between natives and foreign born in the EU after the Netherlands. Two major reasons are that Sweden has high employment among native born women and that Sweden has had a sizeable refugee migration for a long time.

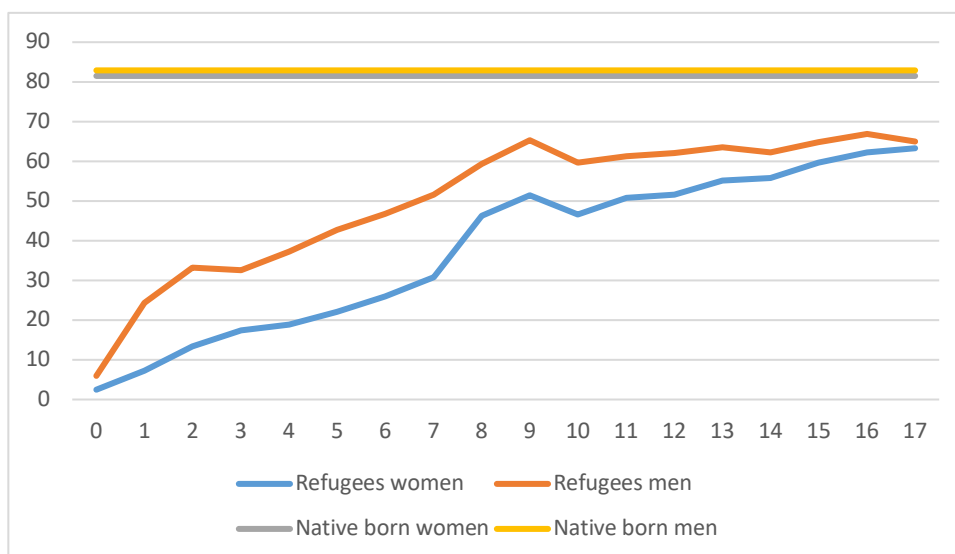
**Table 2.1 Employment and unemployment among natives and foreign born (15-64 years) in Sweden 2016. Percentages.**

	Men		Women	
	Native born	Foreign born	Native born	Foreign born
Employment	79.8	68.7	78.8	61.4
Unemployment	5.3	16.7	4.5	15.0

Source: Eurostat, Indicators of Immigrant Integration

Employment is low among refugees and their families during the first years in Sweden. After five years in Sweden 40 percent of the men and 20 percent of the women are working. The employment rate rises over time but never reaches the same level as among the native born.

**Chart 2.2 Employment rate among refugees (age 20-64) after years in Sweden 2014. Percentage.**



Source: Statistics Sweden (2016)

## 2.2 The responsible actors

Successful integration requires efforts from both the newcomers and the host society. The main responsibility rests on the public actors, state and local governments, but a commitment from the social partners (employers and trade unions) and the civil society is also required.

The Swedish efforts to receive and integrate refugees rest primarily on government agencies even though social partners and civil society contribute.



*The State* has the primary responsibility for refugees during the first time in Sweden. The Migration Agency receives asylum seekers and provides housing to those who have not arranged their own accommodation. The government and regional administrative boards decide how many refugees each region and municipality have to receive and The Migration Agency assigns individual refugees to a specific municipality. The Public Employment Service leads a two-year integration program that all refugees are obliged to take part in. After completion of the program the Employment Service retains the responsibility for helping refugees to find work or training.

*Municipalities* are responsible for settling refugees who have been assigned there. The municipalities handle language training and civic orientation and adult education. Municipalities can if they wish offer labour market assistance to refugees.

*The social partners* provide some labour market assistance in cooperation with the state. "The fast tracks" provide quick routes into employment for refugees with certain skills in demand on the labour market.<sup>3</sup> The social partners have also agreed on creating specific introductory jobs for new refugees in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

*The civil society* offers activities to improve health and social activity among participants in the integration program and trains personal guides to help new refugees with practical issues and dealings with the authorities. Civic organisations also organize language training in asylum centres. They usually receive public funding for their efforts.

### 2.3 Early assistance and rules of asylum

Waiting times for asylum claims rose sharply after 2015 - 2016. Long waiting in suspense and insecurity creates stress and risks making integration more difficult once people have been granted residence.

In 2016 the average waiting time for a first decision on an asylum claim in Sweden was 11 months. Since 2010 asylum seekers have had the right to work during the waiting time but few manage to find work. Asylum seekers who find permanent work can apply for a work permit if their asylum claims are turned down. Asylum seekers are entitled to some language training and civic orientation from civic organisations. Those organisations received extra government grants in 2017 to increase their efforts though the tutorials were still few and far between. The Public Employment Services provide a simple mapping of asylum seekers' knowledge and skills thorough the digital tool "Job skills" where asylum seekers can register their CV. These CVs can be translated into Swedish and made searchable by employers. They can also be used for decisions on which help they should be given after they have granted residence.

Refugees and those in need subsidiary protection are granted temporary residence permits. The permits have a 3 year duration for refugees. Those with subsidiary protection are granted 11 month permits at first and then 2 year permits. Both groups can receive permanent residence permits after some time if they can provide for themselves economically. Sufficient knowledge of Swedish is not necessary for permanent residence.

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<sup>3</sup> Snabbspår.

<sup>4</sup> Etableringsjobb.

## 2.4 Settlement of refugees

Research strongly supports the fact that migrants are more likely to find work if they settle in regions where the labour market prospects are good.<sup>5</sup>

In Sweden, asylum seekers are provided accommodation in public asylum centres. Asylum seekers may also arrange their own accommodation (EBO) where they wish but must then pay their own housing costs. Those who choose own accommodation usually move in with relatives or countrymen. On Jan 1st 2018 roughly half of the asylum seekers lived outside of the asylum centres.<sup>6</sup>

Those who choose to live in any of the public asylum centres will later be offered accommodation in a municipality. Refugees are distributed among the municipalities after a quota that is based on the population size, the local labour market and how many refugees that already live there. Refugees are free to move anywhere in Sweden.

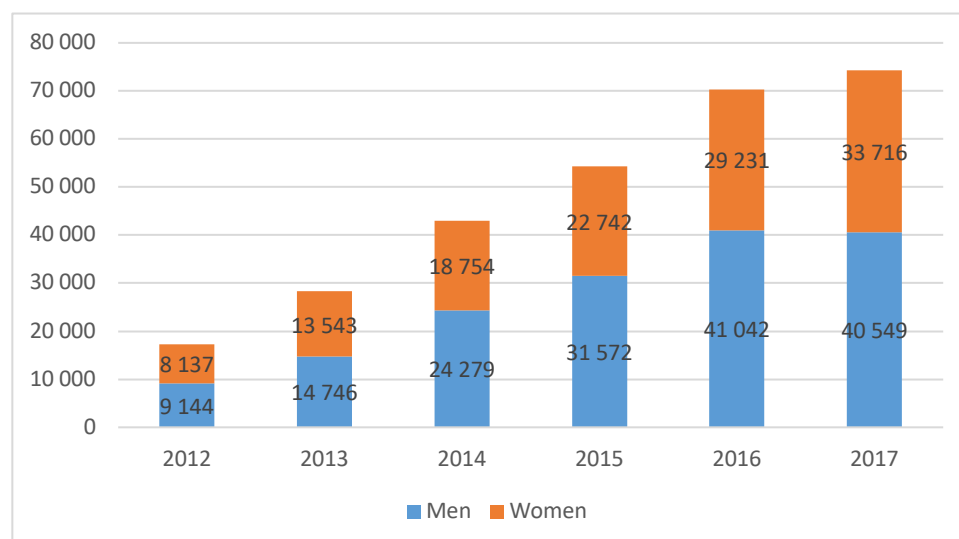
In January 2018 almost 9 000 refugees with residence permits were still living in asylum centres waiting for a home. The long waiting times for housing in the municipalities is one reason that many refugees choose to arrange their own accommodation even if it means enduring overcrowding.

## 2.5 Compulsory integration programs

### *Sweden*

All adult refugees in need of protection and their families are entitled to a two year full-time integration program. The program consists of language training, civic orientation and assistance to find work. Participation is a condition for receiving economic support but it does not affect the chance of permanent residence.

**Chart 2.3 Participants in the Swedish integration program 2012-2017**



Source: Swedish Public Employment Service

<sup>5</sup> Aslund and Rooth (2007).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Statistik.html>

The Municipalities are responsible for language training (SFI) and civic orientation. Language training is provided on three different levels, depending on the participants' previous knowledge and schooling. Some municipalities provide special vocational language training. Civic Orientation consists of 60 hours of tuition on Swedish society in the participants' native language.

The Public Employment Service provides assistance to find work through guidance, job search and validation of previous professional skills.<sup>7</sup> Participants in the integration program can also take part in the Employment Service's regular offer of vocational training, internships, subsidized employment or activities that support health and social contacts.

All participants in the integration program are entitled to a fixed allowance which was 710 Euros per month in 2017.<sup>8</sup> Those who work outside of the program are allowed to keep any money they earn. Taking part in the integration program is a condition for economic support but it does not affect the right to obtain permanent residence in Sweden.

The participants are expected to move on to a job or regular education after completion of the program. In 2017 only one in three participants did that.<sup>9</sup> The share in work or education after the program is significantly lower among women. The gap between men and women can partly be explained by the fact that more men take part in measures that lead to employment such as job training and subsidized jobs while more women take part in social activities.<sup>10</sup>

## 2.6 Assistance after the integration program

The majority of the participants do not work when the integration program is finished. Those who are still unemployed receive help from the Employment Service on the same terms as others without employment. Listed below are the labour market measures that are most common among unemployed migrants who have completed the integration program.

*Subsidized work* is a common measure for refugees and other long-term unemployed migrants. Evaluations show that labour market measures that resemble regular work have the highest probability of leading to employment.<sup>11</sup>

Step-in jobs are subsidized employment for newly arrived refugees that can last for two years.<sup>12</sup> Employers receive a wage subsidy of 80 percent but have to give the employee some time off to do language training. Step-in-jobs do not increase the chance of finding regular work but they are a bridge to other subsidized jobs which can lead to regular work.

New Start Jobs are subsidized employment for both newly arrived migrants and long-term unemployed that can last for two years.<sup>13</sup> Employers receive a wage subsidy of 50 percent. Migrants accounted for almost 70 percent of the participants. Those who had New Start Jobs

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<sup>7</sup> Only 107 people had to be their professional skills validated in the integration program in 2016.

<sup>8</sup> 6 800 SEK 2017.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/Om-oss/Om-Arbetsformedlingen/Etablering-av-nyanlanda/Etableringen-i-siffror.html>

<sup>10</sup> Arbetsförmedlingen (2017) and SOU 2012:69.

<sup>11</sup> Joyce (2015) provides a review of labour market policies for migrants and their outcomes in Sweden.

<sup>12</sup> Instegsjobb.

<sup>13</sup> Nystartsjobb.

have a significantly higher chance of finding regular work afterwards. A drawback is that New Starts Jobs in part have shown to crowd out regular employment.

There are also different types of wage subsidies for long-term unemployed.<sup>14</sup> The positions usually lasts one to two years and the subsidy varies. Migrants make up more than half of the recipients. Older evaluations have shown that these subsidies increase the chances of finding regular work job but that they also crowd out regular employment.

*Vocational training programs* strengthen the participant's job opportunities and contribute to the provision of skills in occupations where there is a shortage of labour.<sup>15</sup> The courses can last from a few weeks to 6 months. Migrants make up half of the participants. Previous evaluations have shown that these training programs increase the likelihood of getting a job. The effect is particularly large for migrants outside of the Nordic countries. The positive impact has declined over the past ten years though.

*Work Practice* is practical training at a workplace for a maximum of six months.<sup>16</sup> The training provides work experience and the opportunity to gain professional skills and have them assessed. Migrants make up almost 60 percent of the participants. Participation increases the chances of finding regular work but the impact is greatest when there is a shortage of labour.

The Employment Service has recently launched two new programs for migrants that have yet not been evaluated.

*Validation* of training and skills are useful for people who have acquired skills abroad that are not documented. The Employment Service started validating migrants' skills as a special program in 2017 which is carried out by external actors in different sectors.

*Fast track to Employment* started in early 2016.<sup>17</sup> Its' purpose is to help migrants who have training or experience in fields where there is a shortage of labour to quickly get ready to start work. The fast track has three steps; mapping the migrant's skills, assessing these skills and if necessary enhance them through education and training. The fast track is regulated by agreements between the Employment Service, employers and trade unions in thirty different professions.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.7 Economic benefits for refugees

Refugees need temporary financial support while finding a footing in the new country. Low benefits provide incentives to work but can cause social problems among those who cannot find work.

Refugees who participate in the integration program are entitled to a fixed monthly benefit for two years. In 2017 a full-time participant receive 710 Euros per month after tax which equals 49 percent of the starting wage for low skilled work.<sup>19</sup> Housing benefits are available

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<sup>14</sup> Anställningsstöd.

<sup>15</sup> Arbetsmarknadsutbildningar.

<sup>16</sup> Arbetspraktik.

<sup>17</sup> Snabbspår.

<sup>18</sup> For example cooks, truck drivers, painters, teachers and work in health care.

<sup>19</sup> 6 800 SEK.

and families with children receive extra allowances. Those who work on their spare time can keep any extra money earned.

Those who have completed the integration program without being able to provide for themselves are entitled to basic social welfare from their municipality. In 2017 the basic welfare for an adult without children was 418 Euros per month plus housing costs.<sup>20</sup> Social welfare is means tested and payments are cut down with an extra income which reduces the incentives to work. Long-term dependants on social welfare may temporarily retain a portion of an extra income.

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<sup>20</sup> 4 000 SEK.

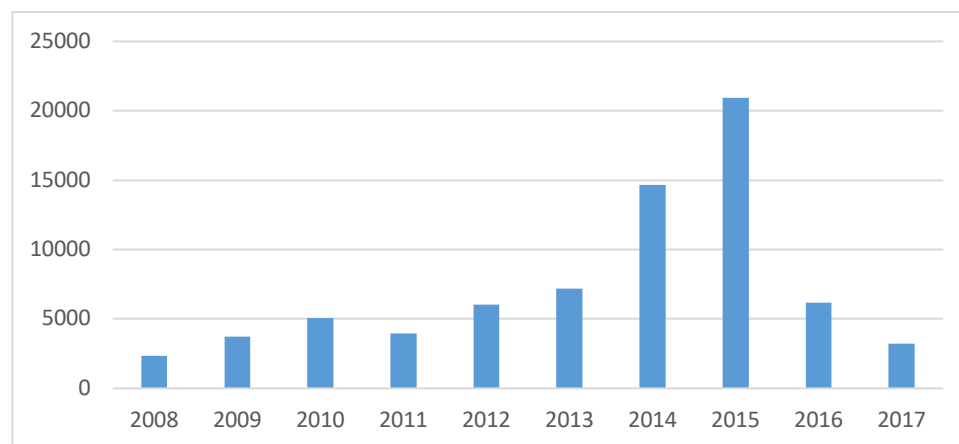
## 3 Denmark

### 3.1 Migration and the labour market

#### *Migration history*

Denmark became a refugee destination in the late 1970s. Large influxes of refugees to Europe and a humanitarian policy towards refugee migration made Denmark a major receiver during the 1980s and 1990s. After the year of 2000 Danish migration policy became more restrictive. Different rules were gradually put in place to restrict asylum migration and family reunions. Welfare benefits for refugees were also reduced. As a consequence the numbers of people seeking asylum in Denmark fell. The big refugee influx to Europe in 2015 did not affect Denmark to the same extent as Sweden and Germany.<sup>21</sup>

**Chart 2.1 First time asylum applications in Denmark 2008-2017**



Source: Eurostat

#### *Integration policies*

In 1986 refugees in Denmark were granted an 18 month integration course with language training and help to find work or education. The course was run by the Danish refugee council on behalf of the state. In 1999 the program was extended to 3 years and all migrants from outside of the EU/EEA were obliged to participate. The municipalities took over the responsibility for the program.

In 2004 the program was harder focused on promoting employment among the participants. Apprenticeships, trainee positions and other work related measures became compulsory parts of the program. The state grants for the program were adjusted to give municipalities incentives to faster help refugees to employment. In 2016 the duration of the program was made more flexible. Migrants with high skills are expected to complete the program in a single year while those with low education can stay up to 5 years in the program.

#### *Migrants in the labour market*

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<sup>21</sup> Schultz-Nielsen (2017) and OECD (2007a)

Migrants have a significant lower employment rate and higher unemployment than natives in Denmark. This is especially true for female migrants.

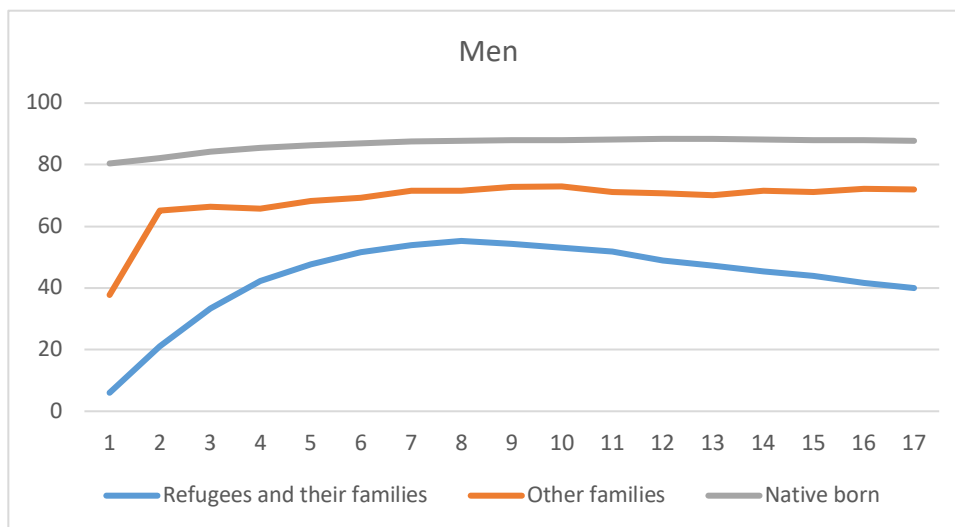
**Table 3.1 Employment and unemployment among natives and foreign born (15-64 years) in Denmark 2016. Percentages.**

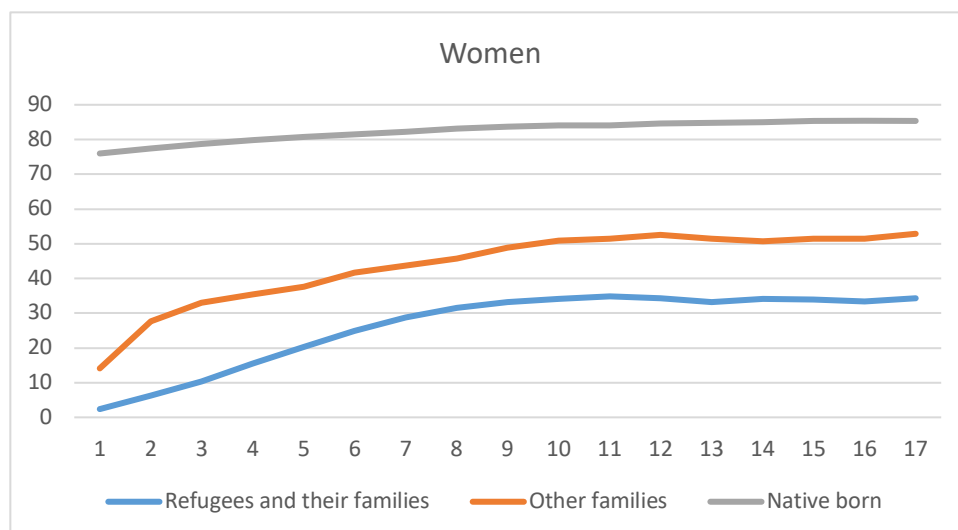
	Men		Women	
	Native born	Foreign born	Native born	Foreign born
Employment	78.5	72.5	73.9	61.4
Unemployment	5.3	10.0	5.7	13.1

Source: Eurostat, Indicators of Immigrant Integration

Employment is low among refugees and their families during the first years in Denmark and especially among women. After 10 years in Denmark only 35 percent of female refugees have work. Employment rises faster among male refugees but starts to fall after they have been 8-9 years in Denmark. So far there is no clear explanation of why this is the case.

**Chart 3.2 Employment rate among refugees and families after years in Denmark. Percentage.**





Source: Schultz Nielsen (2017)

Remark: Based on migrants aged 17-36 who moved to Denmark between 1997 and 2011 and were followed until 2014.

### 3.2 The responsible actors

The Danish efforts to receive and integrate refugees rest primarily on government agencies even though social partners and civil society contribute. The municipalities have a larger role than in Sweden.

The *state* through the Migration Agency takes care of the first reception, accommodation and upkeep for asylum seekers in special asylum centres.<sup>22</sup> The state also provides activities and language training for asylum seekers.

Refugees who have received residence permits are settled by the *municipalities* who provide housing, welfare payments and a mandatory integration program. The state gives special grants to municipalities for each refugee they receive during the first 5 years. Municipalities receive extra grants for each refugee that starts work or an education early.<sup>23</sup>

The *social partners* – employers and unions – take part in the integration process. In 2016 the Danish government and the social partners made a formalized agreement on special two-year training positions for newly arrived migrants, creation of language training in the workplaces and a state cash bonus to all private employers who hire newly arrived migrants.<sup>24</sup> A network founded by Danish employers organize voluntary mentors to help newly arrived refugees with special qualifications find work or start an education.<sup>25</sup>

The *civic organisations* take part in the reception of refugees and provide social assistance often in cooperation with municipalities. The Danish Refugee Council and the Danish Red Cross employ special guides to help refugees find their way in the Danish society and make contact with Danish families.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Utlændigestyrelsen.

<sup>23</sup> UIM (2016).

<sup>24</sup> LO (2016)

<sup>25</sup> www.foreningen-nydansker.dk

<sup>26</sup> Dansk Flyktingehjælp (2016) and KL (2016).



### 3.3 Early assistance and rules of asylum

The average waiting time for an asylum application in Denmark was 6.5 months in 2016. Asylum seekers are allowed to do voluntary work during the waiting time. After 6 months in Denmark they are also allowed to look for paid work. Asylum seekers are obliged to take part in 10 hours of language training and civic orientation each week during the waiting time.

Refugees and those in need of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence permits. Refugees receive permits with a 2 year duration and those with subsidiary protection receive 1 year permits.<sup>27</sup> Both groups can apply for permanent residence after 8 years in Denmark if they are working, have been able to provide for themselves for 4 years and pass a language test.

### 3.4 Settlement of refugees

Asylum seekers are housed in public asylum centres located across Denmark. After six months they can arrange their own housing but if they do they receive no economic support. Individual accommodation is therefore rare among asylum seekers.

Refugees are distributed among the Danish municipalities after a quota that is based on the population size and how many non-western migrants that already live there. In 2017 seven Danish municipalities had so many non-western residents that they were exempt from receiving new refugees. The matching of the refugees' education and skills with the local labour market are considered in the decision of where they should be settled.

Refugees are allowed to move from the municipality where they have been settled if they are working or if the new municipality accepts them in their integration program. Otherwise they can lose their welfare benefits.

### 3.5 Compulsory integration programs

All adult refugees have to take part in an integration program that starts within a month after settlement in a municipality. The municipalities are responsible for the program but the framework is set by the state. The program is a full time effort. The program used to be 3 years long but can now take between 1 and 5 years dependant on the skills or social situation among the participants.

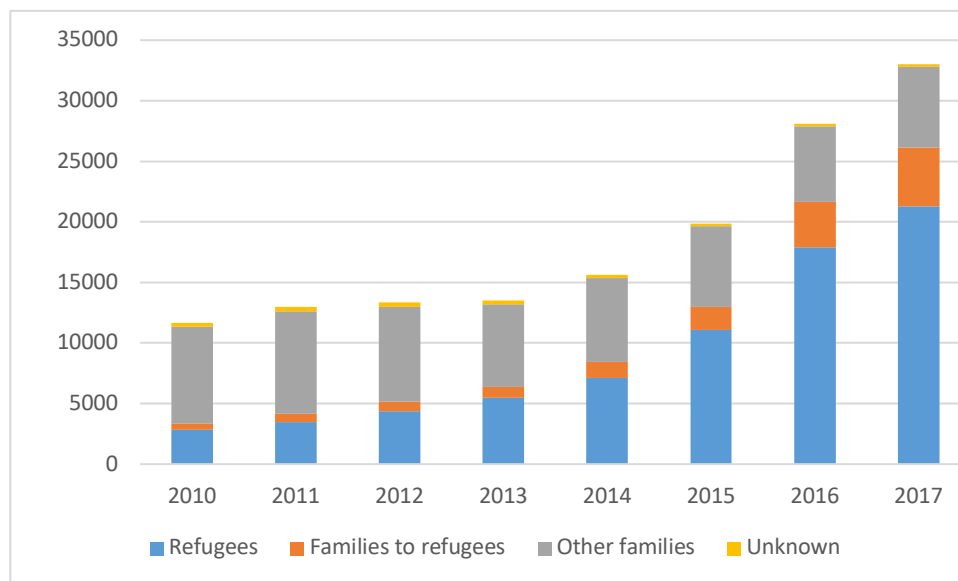
The program consists of language training on three different levels - usually 20 hours a week - and civic orientation about Danish society. Alongside the participants receive assistance to find work. That assistance can be guidance, training courses, trainee positions or subsidized employment. Since 2016 the program has focused more on workplace related training and every participant now has to spend two days a week at a workplace engaged in on the job training.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/da/Du-vil-ansøge/Asyl/>.

<sup>28</sup> Short breaks of up to six weeks between job-placings are allowed.

**Chart 3.3 Participants in the Danish integration program 2010-2017**



Source: Ministry of Integration and Housing

In 2015 less than 30 percent of the participants were working after the program. Fewer women than men start work afterwards. Evaluations have shown that those who increase their language skills and take part in work related measures during the program like subsidized work and internships have higher probability of starting work afterwards.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.6 Assistance after the integration program

Refugees who have completed the integration program without finding work are entitled to the same labour market assistance as other unemployed. In a large part they continue to get the same assistance as during the integration program but with less intensity.

Municipalities have the possibility of trying their own measures to enhance integration. One interesting initiative is the *Branchepakkerprogram* which is a program that combines vocational training with trainee positions in vocations where there is a regional shortage of labour. The program is run by a group of municipalities in cooperation with a network founded by Danish employers. The program was in place in 21 municipalities in 2017 and increased the probability of regular employment among its participants significantly.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.7 Economic benefits for refugees

Refugees without other means of support receive a means-tested welfare benefit that is reduced during the first 7 years in Denmark. In 2017 it amounted to 815 Euros per month before for an adult without children. Housing benefits and extra allowances for children are available. The benefit was equal to 33 percent of the starting wage for low skilled work. Recipients can keep a part of the income if they find work.<sup>31</sup> Those who passed a language test received an extra benefit of 160 Euros per month in 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Regeringen (2016), Arendt & Pozzoli (2013) and Arendt (2016).

<sup>30</sup> LG Insight (2015)

<sup>31</sup> They are allowed to keep 3.50 Euro per hour from any extra work.

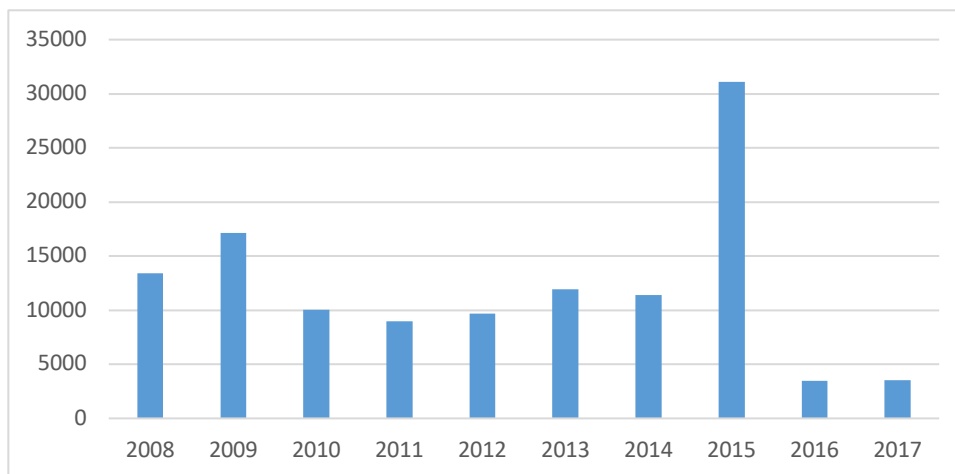
## 4 Norway

### 4.1 Migration and the labour market

#### *Migration history*

Norway has been a refugee destination since the late 1970s though Norway received fewer refugees than Denmark and Sweden during the coming decades. Norway did not tighten its migrations rules after 2000 as Denmark and continued to receive a steady number asylum seekers. The big refugee influx to Europe in 2015 affected Norway considerably but temporarily.

**Chart 4.1 First time asylum applications in Norway 2008-2017**



Source: Eurostat

#### *Integration policy*

In the 1980s and 1990s Norwegian municipalities were responsible for offering refugees language training and labour market assistance on a voluntary basis. In 2004 that responsibility was formalized into a 2 year long integration program with language training, civic integration and labour market training. Participation in the program became mandatory for receiving welfare benefits and applying for permanent residence later on.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Migrants in the labour market*

Migrants have lower employment and higher unemployment than native born in Norway but the differences between natives and migrants are smaller than in Sweden. Male migrants have almost the same employment rate as natives. One explanation is that Norway has had a strong labour market the last decade and a large proportion of migration to Norway has been labour migrants from other European countries.

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<sup>32</sup> Brochmann & Hagelund (2012)

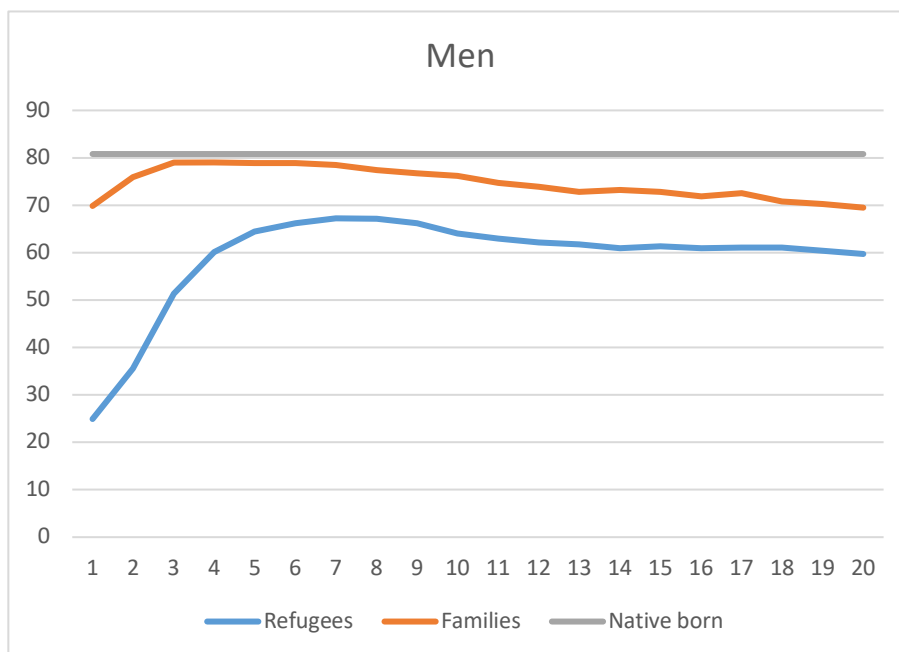
**Table 4.1 Employment and unemployment among natives and foreign born (15-64 years) in Norway 2016. Percentages.**

	Men		Women	
	Native born	Foreign born	Native born	Foreign born
Employment	76.0	74.0	74.4	64.7
Unemployment	4.7	9.8	3.0	9.4

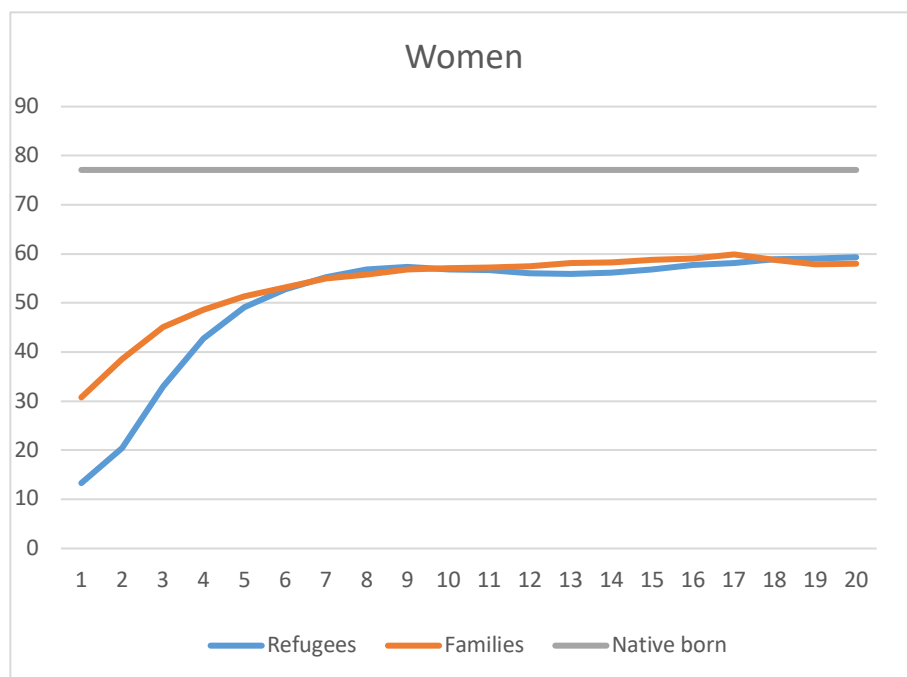
Source: Eurostat, Indicators of Immigrant Integration

The employment rate among refugees and their families is low during the first years in Norway but is increases faster than in Sweden and Denmark. Employment increases faster among male refugees were almost 70 percent are employed after 7 years. Employment among male refugees starts to fall thereafter. Possible explanations for this fact are that a large proportion of them have insecure employment conditions and low education. Health issues may also play a part.<sup>33</sup>

**Chart 4.2 Employment rate among refugees and families after years in Norway. Percentage.**



<sup>33</sup> Bratsberg et al. (2017).



Remark: Based on migrants aged 18-47 who moved to Norway between 1990 and 2013. They were followed between 1993 and 2014.  
Source: Bratsberg et al. (2017) and SSB.

#### 4.2 The responsible actors

The Norwegian system for receiving and integrating refugees rests primarily on government agencies with some contributions from the civic sector. The municipalities have a bigger hand in integration policy than in Sweden.

The *state* is responsible for the reception, accommodation and economic support for asylum seekers during the waiting time. Responsible government agencies are *Utlendingsdirektoratet* (UDI) who handle asylum claims and the accommodation of asylum seekers and *Integrerings og Mangfoldsdirektoratet* (IMDi) who handle the settlement of refugees in municipalities.

The *municipalities* are responsible for providing permanent housing, economic support and an integration program for all refugees who are settled in the municipality. The state gives municipalities economic grants to cover their costs for the first five years.

The *social partners* have no formal role in the integration system but individual employers provide internships for refugees in cooperation with the municipalities.

The *civic organisations* provide language training and social assistance to refugees and receive public grants for their efforts. The Norwegian government wants the municipalities to involve civic organisations more in their integration efforts.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Justis- och Beredskapsdepartementet (2016).

### 4.3 Early assistance and rules of asylum

The average waiting time for asylum application in Norway was 12 months in late 2016. Asylum seekers can apply for a work permit. They also have a right to receive 175 hours of language training and 50 hours of civic orientation during the waiting time but most asylum seekers do not receive the stipulated hours.<sup>35</sup>

Asylum seekers with good prospects of being allowed to stay can be selected to start their integration program early. They are then moved to special integration centres where they take part in the same integration program as those who have been granted asylum.<sup>36</sup> When they receive asylum they are settled in the municipality where the centre is located.

Refugees and those in need of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence permits with a 3 year duration. Both groups can apply for a permanent residence permit after 3 years in Norway if they can provide for themselves economically and have passed a language test and shown sufficient knowledge about the Norwegian society.

### 4.4 Settlement of refugees

Asylum seekers are housed in public asylum centres located across Norway. They can arrange their own housing but receive no economic support if they do so. Individual accommodation is therefore very rare.

Refugees are distributed among the Norwegian municipalities after a quota that is based on negotiations between the government and the municipalities. Municipalities can decline to receive refugees but very few do.<sup>37</sup> The matching of their education and skills with the local labour market needs and the possibility for further education are considered in the decision of where in Norway individual refugees should be settled.

Refugees are only allowed to move from the municipality where they have been settled if the new municipality accepts them in their integration program and approves of their housing arrangements. If that is not the case they can lose their welfare benefits.<sup>38</sup>

### 4.5 Compulsory integration programs

Adult refugees have to participate in a full-time integration program that consists of language training, civic orientation and labour market training. Common labour market training efforts are: shorter vocational courses, internships and subsidized employment. Regular schooling can be offered within the integration program but not college or university education.

The integration program is 2-3 years long depending on the skills and the social situation of the participants. There are plans to make it possible for some to stay in the program for 4 years. Participation in the program is a condition for receiving welfare benefits and a completed program is also stipulated for applying for permanent residence later.

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<sup>35</sup> IMDi (2017)

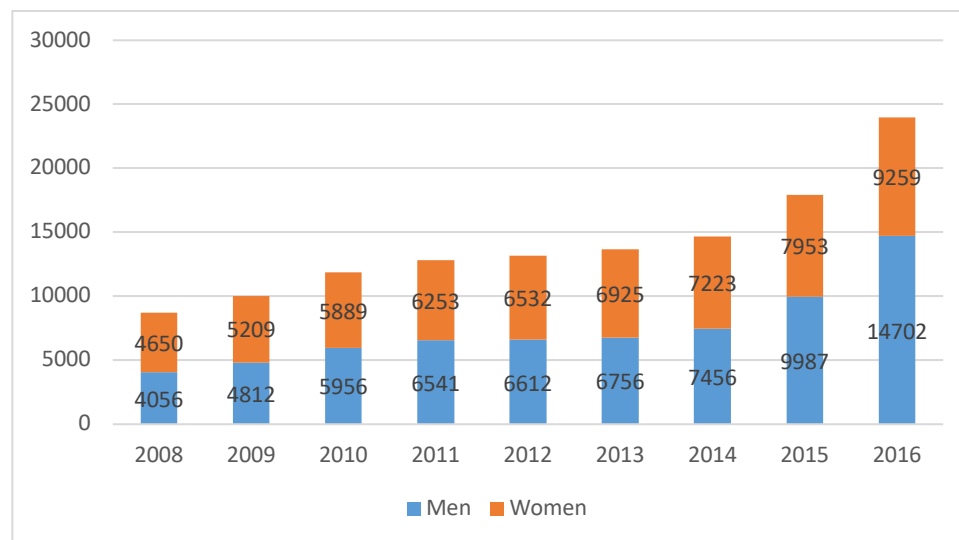
<sup>36</sup> Integreringsmottak.

<sup>37</sup> In 2016 413 out of 428 municipalities received refugees.

<sup>38</sup> IMDi (2017)

The Norwegian municipalities are responsible for carrying out the integration program in cooperation with the Public Employment Office (NAV).<sup>39</sup> The individual municipalities have greater independence in designing their programs than in Denmark. The overall results of the program are significantly better in Norway than in Denmark and Sweden. In 2015 58 percent of the participants were working or in regular education one year after finishing the program. Female participants in average need 4 months more to complete the program and fewer women than men start working after the program. Parental leave explains some of the difference. Another explanation is that women to a less extent than men are given work related training within the program.<sup>40</sup>

**Chart 4.3 Participants in the Norwegian integration program 2008-2017**



Source: Statistics Norway

The results differed significantly among different municipalities. In some municipalities less than 40 percent were working or in education after the program. In other municipalities the share was higher than 80 percent. Medium sized municipalities and those with low overall unemployment showed the best results.<sup>41</sup>

Those who managed to take part in some regular work within the integration program or upper secondary schooling increased their chances of finding work after the program. Having their foreign education officially validated by Norwegian authorities also increased the chances of finding work significantly.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.6 Assistance after the integration program

Refugees who have completed the integration program without finding work are offered labour market assistance from the Public Employment Agency (NAV) on the same terms as other unemployed. Migrants from outside the European Union are a priority group for

<sup>39</sup> NAV is the public employment agency and is also responsible for social welfare payments.

<sup>40</sup> IMDi (2017)

<sup>41</sup> Blom & Enes (2015) and Enes & Wiggen (2016).

<sup>42</sup> Blom & Enes (2015)

labour market programs and they make up one third of the participants.<sup>43</sup> Special programs that are worth mentioning are:

*Kvalifiseringsprogrammet* is open for all long term unemployed but specially targeted at those who completed the integration program without finding work. It lasts 1-2 years and is made up of short vocational courses and workplace training under close guidance by the Public Employment Agency. Participation significantly increase the chances of finding regular work.<sup>44</sup>

*Jobbsjansen* is a program targeted on migrant women who have lived in Norway for a longer time without working and often have low language skills. The program is 2-3 years and focuses language training, some schooling or vocational training and trainee positions. 70 percent of those who completed the program were working or in regular education afterwards but only 40 percent could support themselves on their income.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.7 Economic benefits for refugees

Refugees who participate in the integration program are entitled to a fixed monthly benefit for two years. In 2017 a full-time participant received 1 682 Euros per month before tax which resembled 71 percent of the starting wage for low skilled work. Housing benefits are available and families with children receive extra allowances. Those who work on their spare time can keep any extra money earned.

Those who have completed the integration program without being able to provide for themselves are entitled to basic social welfare from their municipality. In 2017 the basic welfare for an adult without children was 640 Euros per month plus housing costs. Social welfare is means tested and payments are cut down with an extra income which reduces the incentives to work.

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<sup>43</sup> NOU 2017:2.

<sup>44</sup> Markussen & Röed (2014).

<sup>45</sup> IMDi (2016)



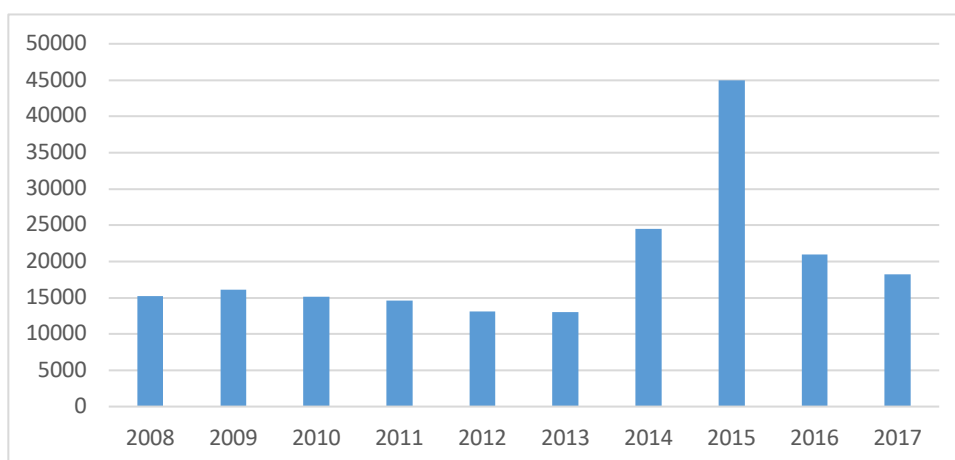
## 5 The Netherlands

### 5.1 Migration and the labour market

#### *Migration history*

The Netherlands has a long history as a refugee sanctuary and took in considerable numbers from Eastern Europe directly after WWII. Refugee migration to The Netherlands from the Middle East and East Africa was high in 1980s and followed by large influxes from Yugoslavia and Afghanistan during the 1990s. Like Denmark the Netherlands tightened their policies on refugee migration after the year 2000 and the number of asylum seekers were reduced. The refugee influx to Europe in 2015 led to high numbers of asylum seekers in the Netherlands too.

**Chart 5.1 First time asylum applications in The Netherlands 2008-2017**



Source: Eurostat

#### *Integration policies*

High unemployment among migrants led to a policy shift in the Netherlands in the late 1990s towards the ambition to faster integrate new arrivals in the Dutch society and labour market.<sup>46</sup>

Mandatory integration courses were instituted in 1998 with language training and civic integration. The courses were run by the municipalities. After the course participants had to complete a special integration exam.

In 2007 the courses were outsourced to private providers and migrants had to pay the full fee for participating but could receive special loans to cover the cost. A completed integration exam became a condition for applying for permanent residence. The municipalities could still help refugees and other migrants to choose a suitable integration course.

In 2013 the migrants became responsible on their own to select a suitable integration course and complete their integration exam within 3 years.

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<sup>46</sup> Entzinger (2006) and Entzinger (2013).

### Migrants in the labour market

Migrants have a significant lower employment rates than natives in The Netherlands. This is very clear among women. The Netherlands has the biggest difference in employment rates between natives and foreign born in the European Union.

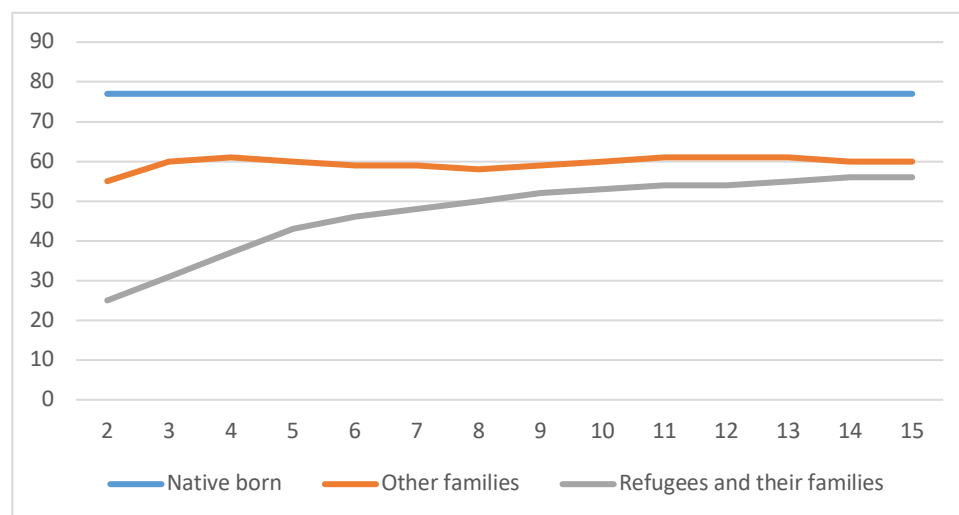
**Table 5.1 Employment and unemployment among natives and foreign born (15-64 years) in The Netherlands 2016. Percentages.**

	Men		Women	
	Native born	Foreign born	Native born	Foreign born
Employment	81.1	69.8	72.6	55.2
Unemployment	5.1	9.6	5.8	11.7

Source: Eurostat, Indicators of Immigrant Integration

Employment is low among refugees the first years in the Netherlands. After 10 years in the Netherlands 55 percent of the refugees are in employment. Employment among female refugees is 10 percentage points lower than male employment.<sup>47</sup>

**Chart 5.2 Employment rate among migrants after years in The Netherlands. Percentage.**



Source: WRR (2016) and Eurostat.

Remark: Based on individuals who moved to The Netherlands 1995-1999.

## 5.2 The responsible actors

Civic organisations and private actors have a bigger part in the Dutch integration system than in the Scandinavian countries.

The *state* takes care of asylum seekers during the waiting time. The responsible government agencies are *Immigratie- et Naturalisatiedienst* (IND) who handle asylum claims and *Centraal Organ opvang Asielzoekers* (COA) who care for accommodation, upkeep and activities for asylum seekers during the waiting time. COA distributes refugees to municipalities for permanent settlement.

<sup>47</sup> Bakker (2016).

The *municipalities* provide housing and welfare benefits for refugees who have been settled there. Municipalities must also assist refugees in finding work or a suitable education. The state gives special grants to municipalities to cover these costs.<sup>48</sup>

Refugees have to take part in special integration courses with language training and civic integration. The courses are given by *private providers* and the refugees have to select their own provider.

The *social partners* have no formal role in the integration system but individual employers make agreements with municipalities to provide work or training positions for refugees.

Civic organisations play a big part in the Dutch integration system as in the Dutch welfare system in general. Civic organisations provide language training and other activities in asylum centres. They also provide integration courses for refugees and help municipalities with social and medical assistance to refugees and legal help. Asylum seekers and refugees are also encouraged to perform voluntary work for civic organisations to speed up their integration. The civic organisations receive large public grants for their efforts.<sup>49</sup>

### 5.3 Early assistance and rules of asylum

In 2016 the average waiting time for a first decision on an asylum claim in The Netherlands was 7 months. Asylum seekers are allowed and encouraged to do voluntary work during their waiting time. Those who have been in The Netherlands for 6 months are allowed to look for paid work. Asylum seekers can receive some limited language training from civic organisations during the waiting time.

Refugees and those in need of subsidiary protection receive temporary residence permits with a 5 year duration. After 5 years in The Netherlands they can apply for a permanent residence permit if they have passed their integration exam which consists of 6 tests of language skills and knowledge on the Dutch society and labour market.

### 5.4 Settlement of refugees

Asylum seekers are provided accommodation in public asylum centres located across The Netherlands. They can arrange their own accommodation but receive no economic support if they do so. If they move in with other migrants those who receive them risk losing their welfare benefits. Individual accommodation is therefore very rare among asylum seekers.

Refugees are distributed among the Dutch municipalities after a quota that is based on the population size. The education and skills are considered in the decisions of where each individual refugee should be settled. Refugees have priority for subsidized housing in the municipality where they have been settled. They can move if they wish but then they have to arrange their own accommodation.

Shortage of affordable housing slowed down the settlement of new refugees in 2016 and forced them to stay longer in the asylum centres. Municipalities have a right to give special

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<sup>48</sup> WRR (2016).

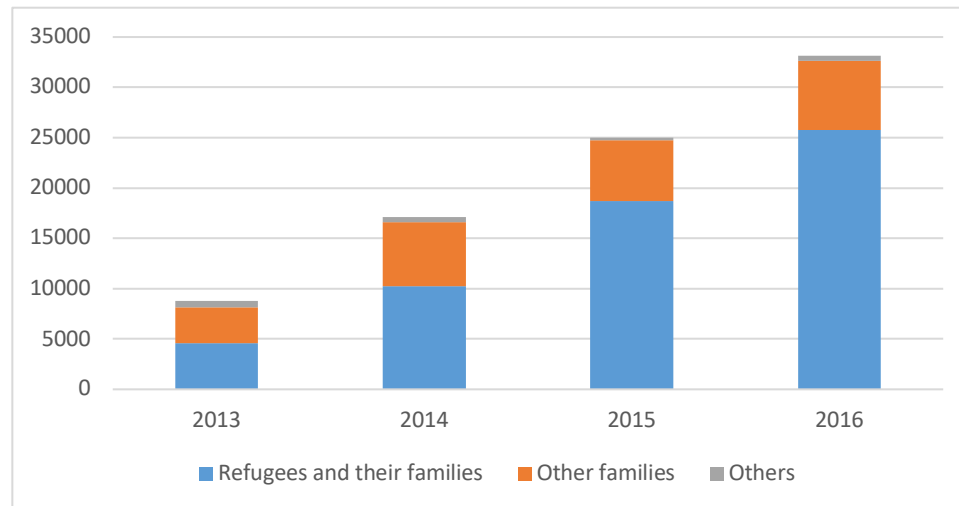
<sup>49</sup> MSW (2016) and WRR (2016).

priority to those refugees who have started work or education when they distribute subsidized housing.<sup>50</sup>

### 5.5 Compulsory integration programs

All adult migrants from outside the European Union have to complete an integration exam if they wish to apply for permanent residence. The exam is made up of four language test and two tests on the knowledge of Dutch society.

**Chart 5.3 New migrants with a duty to complete an integration exam within 3 years**



Source: DUO

Unlike in Scandinavia there is no coherent integration program in the Netherlands. Refugees and other migrants can receive help to pass the integration exam through a big range of different integrations courses from different providers. The integrations courses are provided by more than 200 private companies, language schools and civic organisations that are authorized and ranked by a public agency – Blik op Werk. The migrants have to cover the full cost for the courses and the exam but public loans of up to 10 000 Euros are available. Those who complete their exam within 3 years do not have to repay the loan.

Evaluations have shown that the integration courses improve the language skills and help the social integration among the participants but have a less impact on the chances of finding work.<sup>51</sup>

Before 2013 Dutch municipalities were able to help newly arrived migrants to choose a suitable integration course. Municipalities often bought integration courses from private or civic providers and offered them to new migrants. Since 2013 the migrants have become sole responsible for choosing and completing their own integration training without municipal help. This arrangement has received hard criticism. It is difficult for new migrants to know which provider offers the most suitable course for them. Municipalities have a

<sup>50</sup> MSW (2016).

<sup>51</sup> Dourjelin & Dagevos (2011).

harder time in coordination their social and labour market efforts with the integration courses. Fewer migrants pass their integration after the reform in 2013.<sup>52</sup>

### 5.6 Assistance beside the integration program

The Dutch municipalities are responsible for helping refugees to find work or start a regular education. Refugees receive the same welfare benefits as other unemployed and are entitled to same labour market assistance as other welfare recipients. Municipalities have an extra responsibility of providing subsidized housing and social counselling for new refugees.

Dutch municipalities have a great deal of autonomy in choosing which type of labour market assistance they wish to give. A refugee can therefore get a very different degree of help depending on where he or is she is settled in The Netherlands. An annual survey over municipal integration efforts conducted on behalf of the Dutch government shows that municipalities used to wait several years starting their work but have speeded up their efforts lately. The survey also shows that more than half of the refugees who receive public welfare only receive social activation or no active measures at all.<sup>53</sup> The ambitions differ considerably between municipalities and some of the bigger cities, among them Amsterdam, are more active in labour in labour market integration.<sup>54</sup>

### 5.7 Economic benefits for refugees

Refugees without other means of support receive a means-tested welfare benefit. In 2017 the benefit amounted to 1 086 Euros per month for a single adult without children. Extra allowances for children are available. Refugees receive no housing benefits but have preference in the allotment of subsidized housing. The benefit was equal to 70 percent of the national minimum wage after tax. Recipients can keep a part of the income if they find work but the rules differ between municipalities.

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<sup>52</sup> Algemene Rekenkamer (2017) and WRR (2016).

<sup>53</sup> Razenberg et al. (2017).

<sup>54</sup> Amsterdam (2017).

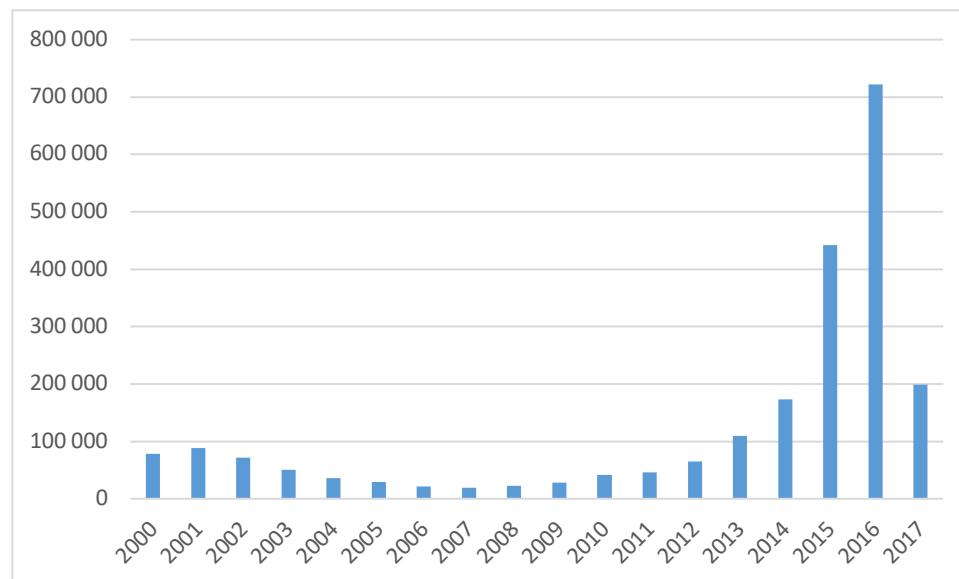
## 6 Germany

### 6.1 Migration and the labour market

#### *Migration history*

Germany has a shorter history as a refugee destination than Sweden. Refugee migration to Germany was quite small for decades except for the nearly four million people of German background from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union who migrated to Germany after WWII and the fall of Berlin Wall. The civil war in Yugoslavia led to a large influx of asylum seekers to Germany in the 1990s. Most of the Bosnians who were given temporary asylum in Germany did however return when the war ended.

**Chart 6.1 First time asylum applications in Germany 2000-2017**



Source: BAMF

Note: A large share of the registered asylum seekers in 2016 arrived in 2015.

Unrest in the EU's proximity after 2011 led to a sharp increase in asylum seekers to Germany. Between 2012 and 2016 the numbers rose tenfold from 70 000 a year to over 700 000. This led to several restrictions of German migration rules. Economic benefits for asylum seekers were reduced. The so-called safe countries - from which asylum seekers have little chance to get their applications granted – were increased and family reunions for those with subsidiary protection was temporarily removed.

#### *Integration policies*

For a long while the official policy remained that Germany was not an immigration country with the exception for people with German origins living abroad. Labour migrants were named “guest workers” and were expected to return home after some time. Refugees were mostly given temporary residence permits. Many former guest workers remained though and gradually they and other immigrants were accepted as permanent residents and were granted German language training.

A shift in policy occurred in 2000 when people without German origin could become German citizens. In 2005, the new immigration law stated that the German government had a responsibility for integrating migrants. Publicly funded integration courses with language training and civic orientation were offered to all migrants from outside the European Union. The Federal employment service (BA) was put in charge of helping migrants find work. Migrants would receive the same help as other unemployed rather than special measures. In 2012 migrants were granted a legal right to have exams and professional qualifications acquired abroad formally recognized in Germany.

Between 2014 and 2017 German integration policy was revised to accommodate the growing numbers of refugees. Asylum seekers with a high probability of having their applications granted could start the integration process during the waiting time. The rules of where in Germany refugees had to settle became more strict. Compulsory integration courses and advanced courses in vocational German were expanded to make room for more pupils. The Employment Service brought in new specific measures to help refugees find work or education.

*Migrants in the labour market*

Employment is lower and unemployment higher among migrants than among native born in Germany but the differences are smaller than in Sweden.

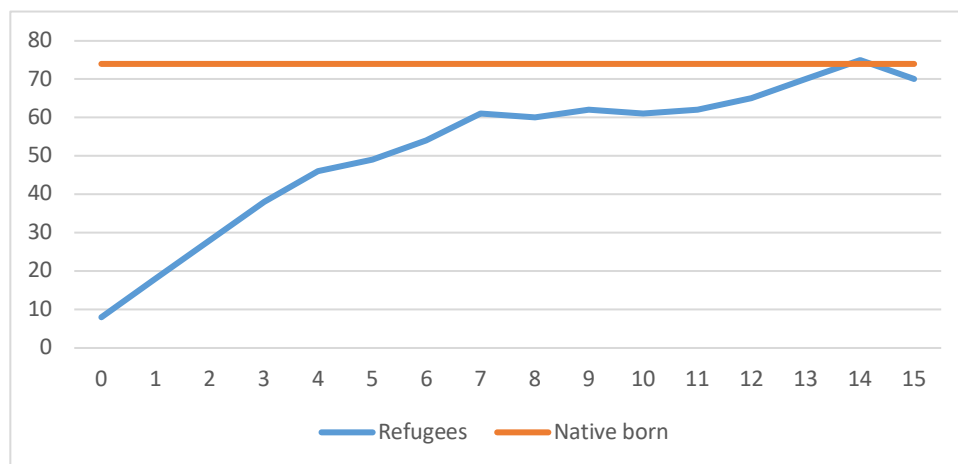
**Table 6.1 Employment and unemployment among natives and foreign born (15-64 years) in Germany 2016. Percentages.**

	Men		Women	
	Natives	Foreign born	Natives	Foreign born
Employment	79.2	75.3	73.2	60.5
Unemployment	3.9	7.3	3.3	6.2

Source: Eurostat, Indicators of Immigrant Integration

Employment is low among refugees the first years in Germany. After one year in Germany 20 percent of the refugees are working. Employment rises over time and after 15 years in Germany 70 percent of refugees are working which is close to the employment rate among native-born. Chart 6.2 is based on the smaller groups of refugees arriving in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The much larger groups of asylum seekers who arrived in recent years might find integration harder.

**Chart 6.2 Employment rate among refugees (age 15-64) after years in Germany 2015. Percentage.**



Source: IAB (2015) and Eurostat.

## 6.2 The responsible actors

### Germany

In Germany many parties share the responsibility for receiving and integrating refugees. Matters are complicated by Germany being a federal country where governance is shared between the federal government, 16 Bundesländer with large autonomy and 401 municipalities.<sup>55</sup>

The federal government handles the initial reception of asylum seekers and transfers them to the Länder. The federal level sets the laws on integration.

*Bundesagentur für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF)* handles migration issues and designs the integration courses that are offered to all new arrivals. The integration courses are mostly provided by civic organisations and private language schools.

*Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA)* has 156 employment agencies across the country. BA helps asylum seekers with labor market training. In addition there are 303 local *Jobcentres* that help refugees find work or training after they are settled in a municipality. The Jobcentres are run by the municipalities in cooperation with BA and in some cases by the municipalities alone.

*The Bundesländer* settle refugees in different municipalities and can institute their own integration measures especially within the school system where the Bundesländer have large authority.

*The Municipalities* are responsible for providing accommodation, economic support and labour market training for refugees. The municipalities must follow the federal laws and the laws of their Bundesland but can also act relatively independent.

<sup>55</sup> An overview of the organisation of integration policy in Germany is given in OECD (2017).



*Civic organizations* with connections to churches and trade unions have an important role in the German welfare system. They run facilities providing health care and social services with the help of employees and volunteers and receive public grants for their services.<sup>56</sup> They provided important social help during the big refugee and are major providers of integration courses for new arrivals.<sup>57</sup>

*The employers' organisations* have made crucial contributions to integration. The network Unternehmen Integrieren Flüchtlinge is run by the German Chamber of Commerce. It started in March 2016 and includes more than 1 700 small and medium-sized enterprises. The network provides legal assistance and information on the financial support available for companies that offer placements for refugees. A follow-up among 320 companies in the network in 2017 showed that they had arranged internships or apprenticeships for 2 200 refugees. German vocational training is mainly done in the workplace so it is crucial to involve employers in the integration process.<sup>58</sup>

### 6.3 Early assistance and rules of asylum

In Germany, the average time for processing an asylum application was 7 months in 2016.<sup>59</sup> The waiting time was in reality longer as asylum seekers have to wait in the country for several months before they can post a formal claim.<sup>60</sup>

Since 2014 asylum seekers can work in Germany after a 3 month waiting period. They may also start some apprenticeship and internship programs. If their asylum claim is rejected while they are in an apprenticeship they can complete the program and stay in Germany for two years to look for work.<sup>61</sup>

Since 2015 asylum seekers with a high probability of having their applications granted can participate in the same integration courses as those who have been granted asylum.<sup>62</sup> They can also receive labour market guidance from the Employment Office (BA) and may in rare cases participate in vocational training programs.

The Employment Service (BA) has developed a digital tool where asylum applicants can register their education and skills. The information is used to choose further measures. The Employment Service has a tool to test vocational skills in 6 languages on 30 different professions. This tool will be available for asylum seekers at employment offices throughout Germany in 2018.<sup>63</sup>

When refugees have been granted asylum the job of helping them find work is moved to the local Jobcentres. This shift in responsibility slows down the integration process. Background data must be transmitted to the municipalities and efforts initiated by the Employment Service may be stopped and restarted later.

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<sup>56</sup> Catholic Caritas, Protestant Diakonia, the Social Democratic Workers' Welfare, Jewish Welfare Council, the Red Cross and the non-denominational Welfare Council. In 2014, 1.7 million worked full-time employees and 2.5 million volunteers in the organizations 105 000 different institutions. BAGFW (2014)

<sup>57</sup> OECD (2007b) and OECD (2017).

<sup>58</sup> Max Classen, German Chamber of Commerce 2018-02-27.

<sup>59</sup> OECD (2017).

<sup>60</sup> There are no statistics on how long the first waiting time.

<sup>61</sup> The so-called 3 + 2 program.

<sup>62</sup> Applicants from countries where more than half of the asylum seekers granted residence permits.

<sup>63</sup> BA (2017b).

Temporary residence permits are the norm in Germany. Refugees receive temporary permits for 3 years at a time and those with subsidiary protection receive a 1 year permits. Both groups can apply for permanent residence after 5 years if they can provide for themselves, pass a language test and have basic knowledge of German society.

#### 6.4 Settlement of refugees

In Germany asylum seekers are allocated to the 16 Bundesländer according to the so-called Königstein key that to one-third is based on the Länder's population and to two thirds on their tax revenues.<sup>64</sup> Länder with a good economy and a strong labour market will thus receive more asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers start out in reception centres where they have their identity and health checked. They are later moved to other types of accommodation. Some Länder allow asylum seekers to arrange their own lodgings at this stage. Asylum seekers must stay in the Land while waiting for a decision. The Länder distribute refugees to their municipalities freely. Usually municipalities are assigned quotas based on their population size. Some Länder also take the local labour market and housing situation into account when the quotas are decided. The Integration law prohibits refugees being settled in municipalities where proper accommodation or integration support is not available.

Refugees must remain in the Land they have been settled in for 3 years and Länder can decide that refugees have to remain in the municipality for that duration. The purpose is to prevent refugees moving to cities with a high concentration of migrants. In 2017 five of Germany's 16 Länder had rules preventing refugees from leaving the municipality they had been settled in. Those who still move can lose their welfare payments.

#### 6.5 Compulsory integration programs

Refugees who have settled in a municipality are sent to local Jobcentres to receive help in finding work or education.<sup>65</sup> Refugees are entitled to the same help as other unemployed. In addition they receive language courses and special labour market measures for migrants. Unlike Sweden there is no coherent German integration program for refugees. Integration is supported by a variety of courses and activities. The local Jobcentres construct a personal integration plan for each new refugee to hold the activities together.

The integration plan in most cases starts with a six-month full-time integration course with basic training in German and civic orientation. It is later followed by more in-depth language training where some labour activities are included. If the need arises, more labour market support is provided. The early part of the integration process is focused on language training because German employers require good language skills of their staff. It is therefore hard to organize vocational training or internships in workplaces unless the participants have basic command of German.

The first step in the integration plan is the mandatory integration course comprised of 600-900 hours of language training at three different levels, as well as 100 hours of civic

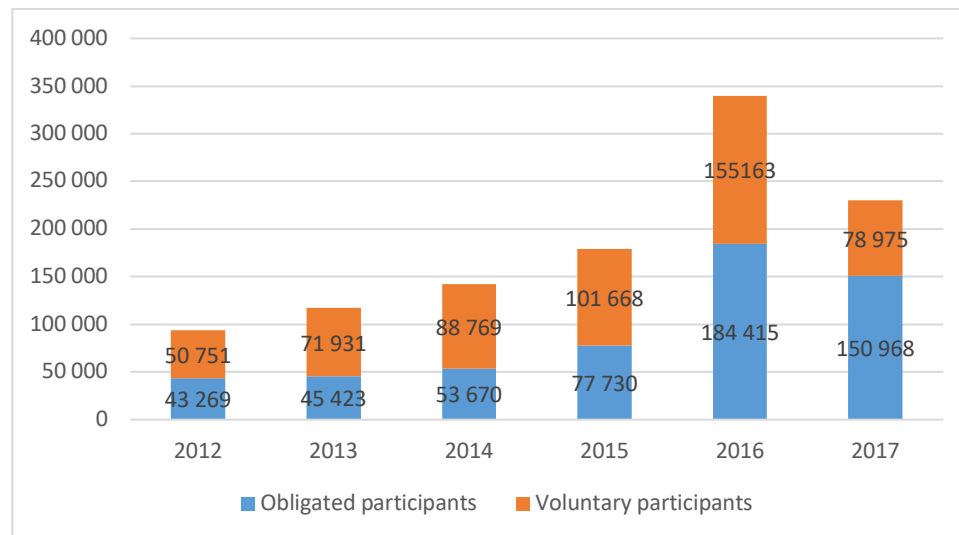
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<sup>64</sup> The Königstein key (Königsteinerschlüssel) has since 1949 been the accepted German way to distribute national commitments between the Länder since 1949.

<sup>65</sup> Job centers are run mostly by local authorities in cooperation with BA or municipalities alone.

orientation. The course takes 6-7 months of full-time studies to complete. The courses are designed by the Migration Agency (BAMF) and provided by different private providers and civic organisations. The Migration Agency (BAMF) sets quality requirements, accredits providers and authorise the teachers. The refugees have to choose a suitable provider on their own.

**Chart 6.3 New participants in German integration courses 2012 - 2017 (until Sept 30).**



Source: BAMF (2018)

The basic integration courses are mandatory for migrants from non-EU countries that receive welfare payments - mainly refugees and their families. Completion of the course and a language test is required to apply for a permanent residence permit. Since 2016, welfare payments can be reduced or withdrawn completely for non-attendance. The courses are subsidized and cost between 1 000 and 1 500 Euros in total. Those on social welfare pay no fee.<sup>66</sup>

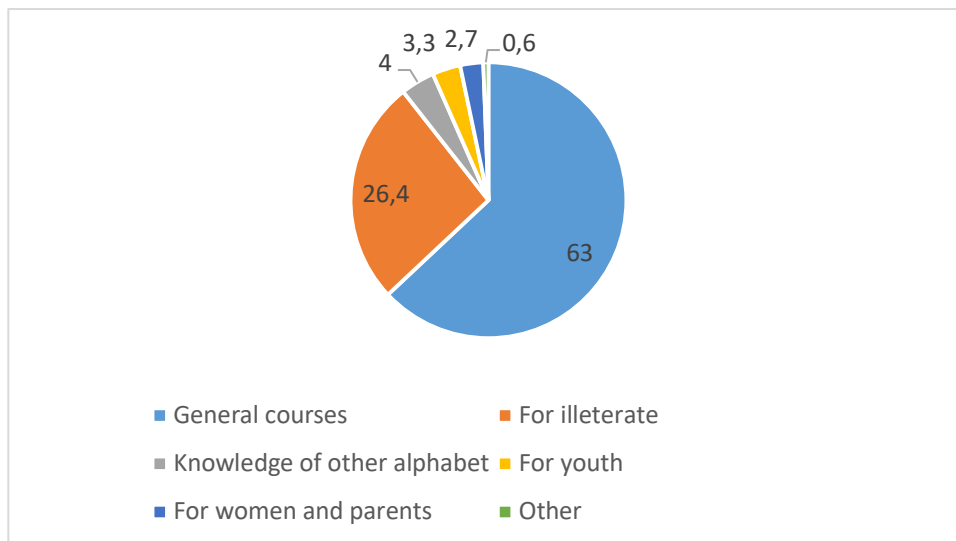
During the first nine months of 2017 230 000 refugees started integration courses. Two thirds of the participants had a mandatory obligation to enrol while the rest signed up voluntarily. Almost 60 percent of the participants were men.

In addition to the general integration course covering special integration courses targeted to specific audiences are available. Most common are literacy courses aimed at illiterate migrants. BAMF has also developed special courses for migrants who are literate in other alphabets than the Latin alphabet. Experience from Finland has shown that this group can make rapid progress if they receive extra support at the beginning.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> The fee is 1.50 Euro per hour and the prices are between 700 and 1000 hours of teaching.

<sup>67</sup> OECD (2017).

**Chart 6.4 New participants in the different German integration courses 2017 (until 30 sept). Percent.**



Source: BAMF (2018)

There are special courses for young people where they in addition to language training also receive help to find apprenticeships. Integration courses with only female participants are available for women who feel uncomfortable among male students. These courses are mostly provided on a part-time basis with child-care included. Special integration courses for parents with information about the German school system are an option. There are also intensive courses for those with university education.

Evaluations of the integration courses show that they improve the knowledge of German significantly. The courses improved the language ability best among those with low education, refugees, and those who lived in an environment where German was not spoken. During the year after the course language skills continued to improve for more than half of the previous participants but they deteriorated for nearly as many. This suggests that further language training is necessary to maintain and deepen achieved knowledge.

A completed integration course greatly increases the chance of finding work and there is a proven link between acquired language skills and employment. The more the participants improved their language skills during the course, the greater the likelihood that they had a job afterwards.<sup>68</sup>

## 6.6 Assistance after the integration program

The most common second step in the German integration process is an advanced vocational language course with elements of job training.

The ESF-BAMF-language course has been in place since 2008. It is open to all migrants who have completed the basic integration course or completed a language test. The course consists of vocational German and takes about 6 months of full time studies to complete. The course includes visits to workplaces and some vocational training and help in looking for

<sup>68</sup> Schuller et al. (2011) and Brückner et al (2016).

work. In 2016 the course had 29 000 participants. Evaluations show that completion of the course increases the probability of finding work with 30 percent.<sup>69</sup>

To meet the increasing demand a similar course (Berufsbezogener Sprachkurs) was introduced in 2016. This course had 75 000 participants in 2017 and the aim is to reach 175 000 participants in 2018. The goal is to offer everyone who completed their integration course an in-depth language training with focus on a vocation.<sup>70</sup>

The large number of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 has made it necessary for the Employment Service (BA) to introduce new specific labour measures targeted at migrants.

*Perspectives for refugees* helps them have their skills assessed. It has been offered by both the Employment Office (BA) and the Jobcentres since 2015. Refugees receive help to have foreign diplomas recognized by a relevant authority. Those who have skills but no diplomas may show their skills by practicing in a workplace under supervision. Afterwards they receive a written evaluation of their skills and, if needed, receive suggestions on additional education or training.<sup>71</sup>

*Perspectives for female refugees* started in July 2016 and is aimed at newly arrived refugee women and families with children. The program provides participants with guidance for job opportunities or training in Germany. The focus is to show which opportunities they have to receive language training or vocational training. The participants are offered child care during the training sessions if needed.

*Strong in the profession* is in-depth guiding for migrant mothers who want to take up gainful employment. The program started in 2015 and is offered by the Employment Office (BA) and the Jobcentres and is aimed primarily at female refugees. It consists of advice on combining family responsibilities with work, shorter vocational courses and internships. Childcare is offered during training.<sup>72</sup>

*Perspectives for young refugees* started in 2016 and is aimed at refugees under age 25 who have basic schooling and knowledge of German but lack vocational training. The program is 4-6 months long and includes guiding on career and educational options in Germany. It also gives the opportunity to test skills in various practical professions, for example carpentry, repairs and painting. The purpose is to help youngsters start an appropriate vocational training.<sup>73</sup>

*The EQ-program* helps young people prepare for apprenticeships. The program is open for all youngsters but it is especially helpful for refugees.<sup>74</sup> Vocational training in Germany is normally done through formal apprenticeships at an employer. The EQ-program lasts 6-12 months and mixes training with work. The state provides an economic benefit to the pupil

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<sup>69</sup> Brücker et al. (2016).

<sup>70</sup> OECD (2017).

<sup>71</sup> BA (2017a) and Brücker et al. (2016).

<sup>72</sup> BA (2017a) and [www.starkimberuf.de](http://www.starkimberuf.de)

<sup>73</sup> BA (2017a).

<sup>74</sup> Einstiegsqualifizierungen (EQ). OECD (2017) and BA (2017a)

and a subsidy to the employer. The EQ-program has been in place since 2004 and 60 percent of the participants move on to a regular apprenticeship afterwards.<sup>75</sup>

### 6.7 Economic benefits for refugees

Refugees without other means of support receive a means-tested welfare benefit. In 2017 it amounted to 404 Euros per month for an adult without children. Housing benefits and extra allowances for children are available. The benefit was equal to 31 percent of the national minimum wage after tax. Recipients can keep a part of the income if they find work.<sup>76</sup>

Low welfare benefits strengthen the incentives to look for work but they also make it harder for refugees to participate in longer training programs that may help them find skilled work.

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<sup>75</sup> BA (2017a) and OECD (2017).

<sup>76</sup> They are allowed to keep the first 100 Euros per month and 20 percent of the income above that.

## 7 Conclusions

### *Involve more actors*

Integration is a two-way process that requires considerable efforts from the migrants and from different actors in the recipient country. The Scandinavian model for integration primarily relies on efforts from the State and Municipalities even though civic organisations and the social partners help out to some degree. In the Netherlands and in Germany the civic organisations play a much greater part in process. Civic organisations provide social assistance to asylum seekers and newly arrived refugees and are also important providers of integration courses. German business organisations organize and carry out their own integration programs to help refugees gain their first employment.

- Civic organisations and social partners can be more involved in the work to promote integration in Sweden.

### *Early intervention is important*

In 2016 the waiting time for a first ruling on an asylum application increased to a year in Sweden, Norway and Germany. Long waiting in suspense creates stress and has a negative impact on refugee's chances to integrate. In Germany asylum seekers who have good prospects of having their applications granted are allowed to take part in integration courses and other training activities under the same conditions as those who have been granted residence. In Norway a selected group of asylum seekers can start integration program during the waiting time.

- If the waiting times for asylum claims increase again in Sweden asylum seekers with good chances of having their claims granted should be allowed to start the integration program.

### *Make the integration program more flexible*

The Scandinavian countries have cohesive integration programs for refugees who contain language training, civic orientation and labour market training. In Sweden the program is 2 years long. The Swedish and Danish integration programs have performed less good than expected. In Sweden one third of the participants are working or in education after finishing the program. In Denmark the share is even lower. To improve the results the length of the Danish program has been adapted so that those who need more support can participate for 5 years while those with good skills are expected to finish their program after 1 year.

- The Swedish integration program should be made more flexible in time to adapt to the different needs among the participants.

### *Require language skills for permanent residence*

Research shows that a good command of the host country's language increases the prospects in the labour market. Entry jobs are mainly in the service sector and even simple jobs require some language skills. Integration programs should focus on helping the refugees develop their language skills as fast as possible. All countries in this study, apart from

Sweden, require refugees to show sufficient knowledge of the receiving countries language to grant permanent residence.

- A requirement of sufficient skills in Swedish should be introduced for permanent residence in Sweden.





## 8 Appendix

### Rules on migration and integration for refugees, those in need of subsidiary protection and their families in 2017.

	Sweden	Denmark	Norway	The Netherlands	Germany
<i>Rules on migration</i>					
Temporary residence permits	Yes. 13 months for those with subsidiary protection. Three years for refugees.	Yes. One year for those with subsidiary protection. Two years for refugees.	Yes. Three years for both refugees and those with subsidiary protection.	Yes. Five years for both refugees and those with subsidiary protection.	Yes. One year for those with subsidiary protection. Three years for refugees.
Possibility of family reunion	Yes, for refugees. No for those with subsidiary protection.	Yes, after three years.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, for refugees. No for those with subsidiary protection during the first two years.
Income requirement for family reunion	Yes, except if an application is filed within three months.	Yes.	Yes, except if an application is filed within six months.	Yes, except if an application is filed within three months.	Yes, except if an application is filed within three months.
Can rejected asylum seekers become labour migrants?	Yes	No, except people with special qualifications	No	No	No, except young participants in apprenticeship programmes.
<i>Terms for asylum applicants</i>					
Possibility to live in individually arranged housing	Yes	No	No	No	Yes in some Länder.
Average duration of asylum procedure (2016)	11 months.	6.5 months.	12 months.	7 months.	7 months plus registration time.
Integration measures for asylum applicants	Some language training and civic integration.	Obligatory participation in language training and civic integration.	Right to some language training and civic integration. Those with high prospects of being allowed to stay can participate in the integration programme.	Some language training.	Those with high prospects of being allowed to stay can participate in integration courses, vocational training and labour market initiatives.

	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Norway</b>	<b>The Netherlands</b>	<b>Germany</b>
<i>Settlement and integration</i>					
Compulsory dispersal of refugees to all local authority areas	Yes, based on population, local labour market and previous reception of refugees.	Yes, based on population and previous reception of refugees.	No; voluntary quotas based on negotiations between state and local authority areas.	Yes, based on population.	Yes, to both regions and local authority areas. Based on population and tax revenues.
Compulsory integration programme	Yes, for refugees, those with subsidiary protection and their families.	Yes, for refugees, those with subsidiary protection and families from countries outside the EU/EEA.	Yes, for refugees, those with subsidiary protection and their families.	Yes, for all migrants from countries outside the EU/EEA.	Yes, for all migrants from countries outside the EU/EEA receiving social assistance.
Length of integration programme	Two years.	One to five years.	Two to three years.	Different lengths. An integration exam must be passed within three years.	Six months.
Content of integration programme	Language training, civic integration and labour market training.	Language training, civic integration and labour market training.	Language training, civic integration and labour market training.	Language training and civic integration.	Language training and civic integration.
Responsible for integration programme	Central government	Local authorities	Local authorities	Private actors and civil society.	Private actors and civil society.
Tuition fees for integration programme	No.	No.	No.	Yes, full fees. Public loans are available.	Yes, subsidised fees. No fee for those receiving social assistance.
Economic assistance to participants in integration programme	EUR 710 per month after tax 49 per cent of basic salary	EUR 815 per month before tax 33 per cent of basic salary	EUR 1 682 per month before tax 71 per cent of basic salary	EUR 1 086 per month before tax 70 per cent of national minimum wage	EUR 404 per month after tax 31 per cent of national minimum wage
Language skills required for permanent residence	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

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