

# EUROCITIES

## LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

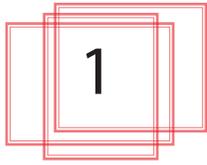
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# Introduction



In the context of the refugee crisis, European city leaders and decision makers need pragmatic, relevant and practical advice to address migrant integration challenges and develop effective strategies to benefit from migration.

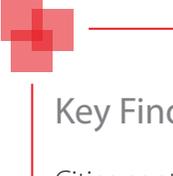
Europe's major cities are increasingly diverse and will continue to be; as they attract and welcome newcomers. They are the place where integration, growth, and job creation happen and where most third-country nationals and beneficiaries of international protection choose to live, study, work and set up businesses.

In the context of the wider local labour market, cities are not only responsible for integrating refugees and asylum seekers. They also face challenges of low levels of growth and job creation, a mismatch of skills to labour market needs, high youth unemployment and a growing number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), increasing long-term unemployment and early school leavers, and persistent barriers to labour market access for many groups, including those with a migrant background. However, cities have at their disposal many ways to foster a more diverse and inclusive local economy.

This report forms part of our efforts to showcase the work cities do to integrate refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market. The report is based on the findings of a survey of EURO CITIES members carried out in 2017. We collected information from 19 cities from 12 EU member states: Barcelona, Berlin, Bialystok, Dortmund, Enschede, Ghent, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Malmo, Milan, Munich, Nantes, Nuremberg, Ostend, Riga, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Tampere and Vienna. In this report, we present data on:

- governance and strategy,
- cooperation with social partners and other stakeholders, and
- local level labour migration policies.

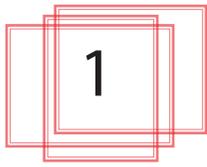
In the last two chapters of this report, we present the main challenges cities face in integrating refugees and asylum seekers on the local labour market and illustrate some good practices from cities.



## Key Findings

Cities contribute to the effective integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market by:

- having direct or shared responsibility or by providing complementary services.
- taking a cross-sectoral approach to refugee and asylum seekers' integration and participation in the labour market.
- developing social inclusion and labour market integration policies, which offer both general assistance and tailored services to cater for the specific needs of refugees.
- addressing the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market through both horizontal and vertical forms of coordination. This ensures greater coordination and dialogue among public authorities, social partners and civil society organisations.
- developing specific local strategies on migrant integration in the labour market and adapting them to respond to current needs. In some cases, cities have redesigned the types of services they provide, upskilled personnel through additional training, hired more staff, adjusted and adapted the local legal framework and strengthened cooperation with key stakeholders at local, regional and national level.
- identifying the main barriers to implementing their integration policy measures. For example, language skills, a lack of education or professional experience, legal status, a lack of documentation and a poor knowledge of local or national labour systems.
- facing the challenges brought about by long and complex administrative procedures. These procedures affect the granting of legal status or a work permit, as well as the recognition of credits, certificates and degrees.
- providing programmes such as language and ICT training, vocational education and training, counselling and job coaching services. They also design specific policy measures such as protected labour market opportunities through integrating social clauses in public procurement.
- changing the policy approach at local level from 'integrate first, work later' to 'integration through work' and making efforts to create a positive environment for refugees and asylum seekers to integrate in the local labour market.
- tailoring their measures to increase outreach and impact. For example, by providing free access to services, making service venues easily accessible and addressing linguistic diversity with the help of interpreters.



# Governance and strategy

## 1.1. Direct and indirect responsibility

Many cities across Europe are involved in integrating refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market, which shows local level plays a crucial role in the integration process. Responsibilities vary significantly between European cities from formal to informal competencies.

### • **direct or shared responsibility**

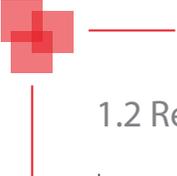
Enschede, Lisbon, Milan, Ostend, Riga, and Tampere have direct responsibility for the integration of refugees in the labour market, while Berlin, Dortmund, Munich, Nantes, Nuremberg, Stuttgart share responsibility with regional, federal or national governments. The main institutions responsible in this case are employment agencies, job centres and the ministries for labour and social affairs. For example, Munich has established a consultancy service for migrants to better match their skills with the needs of local businesses. Munich has also developed 'the municipal employment and qualification programme' (MBQ) in cooperation with local businesses to promote migrants' integration in the labour market through providing tailored qualification programmes.

### • **indirect responsibility**

Although they do not have direct responsibility, Barcelona and Ghent are involved in an informal or voluntary way. They support additional structures, services or programmes, which complement existing national initiatives. For cities like Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm, the national government, through the Swedish public employment service (Arbetsförmedlingen), has direct responsibility for refugee integration in the labour market during the asylum period and for an 'introductory' period of 24 months. The municipalities cooperate with the state by providing support services such as language courses, civic orientation, housing and social care.

Other cities such as Białystok and Vienna have no direct competences. Despite this, the cities reported implementing several actions at local level to help integrate refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market.

Based on the responses provided by cities, it is clear local level plays a crucial role in the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market either by having direct responsibility or by doing so in a voluntary way.



## 1.2 Responsible structures and main duties

In most cities, the responsibility for policymaking and implementation of migrant and refugee integration measures cuts across social affairs, education and employment administrations.

- **structures and programmes**

Berlin, Dortmund, Enschede, Nuremberg, Riga and Tampere share the responsibility for policymaking and implementation with job centres and the city's economic affairs, education, culture and sports departments. Barcelona, Gothenburg, Malmo, Munich, Ostend, Stockholm and Stuttgart focus on addressing labour market integration through cooperation with social care services providers.

There are several situations in which city administration have dedicated structures or programmes to work on migration and refugee policies such as the 'Service Centre for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees' (SAIER) in Barcelona, 'Refugee Aid Vienna' in Vienna, the immigration and refugees unit' in Milan or the 'Refugee Reception Programme' in Lisbon. In most cases, these structures or programmes provide support at different stages from reception, to follow-up and finally integration.

- **responsibilities**

The majority of responses show competences are split between these structures, from providing general assistance, like assessment of labour market needs, career counselling, physical and psychiatric care, language courses, training service, and assistance with work permits to specific targeted services like specific measures for women, education for young people and adults or participation of newcomers.



### 1.3 Cooperation and consultation

In general, cities approach migrant labour market integration through internal cooperation and cooperation with stakeholders.

- **internal cooperation**

Barcelona, Berlin, Dortmund, Enschede, Lisbon, Nuremberg and Tampere work with inter-connected departments usually led by the social affairs and integration department, job centres, education units or federal offices for migrants and refugees. In general, the participating bodies are the departments for healthcare and equality, the internal affairs offices, the youth and families' departments, the entrepreneurs' departments and educational institutions. A way cities do this is through agreements of cooperation. These agreements usually involve the setting up of a central steering committee, which can gather managing directors from the city hall (Stockholm) or members of the department for adult education and the labour market (Gothenburg). Agreements of cooperation can also support agreements between social services or between employment services and local authorities' (Malmo).

- **cooperation with stakeholders**

In general, cities cooperate with employment agencies, federal offices, training institutes, trade unions, private companies, chambers of commerce, social services, private companies, counselling services, foundations. The integration of refugees and asylum seekers does not depend only on access to the labour market; there are various problems like housing, health insurance, childcare, language, psychological or physical trauma and outstanding debts that can affect a person's ability to access the labour market. To have a holistic approach to these issues, cities work closely with social departments and services. Some cities identified the creation of multi-stakeholder consultations such as a 'taskforce for refugees' as models of cooperation. These taskforces can coordinate collaboration between different stakeholders at local level (Ghent). In Munich, these multi-stakeholder consultations were established during the planning process for the 'municipal master integration plan' and the 'intercultural integration concept' for the city. Some cities like Ostend, use public consultations to include various stakeholders such as social partners in the integration process.

- **NGOs and networks**

Cities also deliver refugee integration programmes in partnership with the NGOs. Usually, non-profit organisations role is reception activities, profiling and helping beneficiaries look for job opportunities. Barcelona, Berlin, Dortmund, Ghent, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Milan, Munich, Ostend, Nuremberg, Riga, Stockholm and Vienna also mentioned cooperation with non-profit organisations (e.g. Caritas, the Red Cross, In-Gent NGO etc.) and with national networks (e.g. the 'Integration through Qualification Network' – a German platform of 16 regional networks, which offers advice on recognising education and skills development). Enschede, also works with sports clubs and Dortmund organises roundtables including faith-based stakeholders

- **consultative bodies**

Evidence from cities shows that they also use mechanisms to consult directly with refugees and asylum seekers on the topic of labour market inclusion. For example, Berlin has planned a set of dialogues with residents in different districts. These dialogues will be open to refugees, residents, volunteers and people active in politics, the economy and culture. Ghent coordinates an open partnership, which gathers public and private actors working a broad range of topics including education, training, mediation, welfare and work. The city supports the partnership's activities by providing operating funds and human resources from the work department. In general, Barcelona, Enschede, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Milan, Ostend, Stockholm and Vienna work with one advisory board. Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart reported working with local, regional, federal and national consultative bodies and with employment authorities.



## 1.4 Cooperation with regional and national level

Most cities (83%) took a multi-level approach by working with regional and national authorities on the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market. To maintain close cooperation with these authorities, cities said they meet on regular basis to discuss needs and resources. In general, there are written agreements between the parties on the division of responsibilities.

- **regional level**

Barcelona, Enschede, Ghent, Malmo, Milan, Ostend and Tampere have a strong cooperation with regional level. They mainly cooperate on job-seeking initiatives, coordination of employment initiatives, employment and labour market strategies, vocational training and employment projects and receive financial support. These cities main regional partners are job agencies, economic centres and local municipality associations.

- **national level**

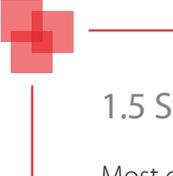
Berlin, Dortmund, Gothenburg, Lisbon, Munich, Nuremberg, Stockholm, Stuttgart and Vienna partner with national agencies and institutions to ensure the inclusion of refugees in the labour market. Based on the answers provided, cities cooperate with national level on topics such as common labour market strategies, labour market and social services, language education activities, vocational training and refugee inclusion programmes. For example, Munich cooperates with the federal employment agency to ensure the integration of refugees in social enterprises and non-profit associations.

- **formal agreements**

Data provided by all cities shows the majority cooperate with national or regional authorities based on written agreements. These written agreements can take different forms such as quota agreements, management agreements, training agreements, cooperation agreements or protocols. For example, Ghent has signed a formal strategic agreement with the public service of social welfare and the public employment service to tackle its main employment and labour market issues. One of the strategic goals of the agreement focuses on employment of new migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees.

Other types of formal recognition from the regional or national level mentioned by the cities included joint structures and projects. For example, Berlin cooperates with the federal level through the joint body 'Jobcenter' (Job Centre) which is jointly financed by Berlin and the federal government.

In their responses, cities also highlighted the recognition of cooperation with social and welfare organisations based on written agreements.

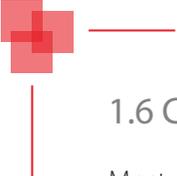


## 1.5 Strategic frameworks at local level

Most cities have strategies on migrant labour market integration. In the past two years these have had to be adapted to deal with the challenges arising from the most recent influx of refugees and asylum seekers. The main reason for modifying these strategies and actions plans was the need for cities to take a more proactive approach and intervene earlier in the inclusion process, i.e. from the moment of reception. Many cities also identified the need to involve employers, the private sector and non-profit organisations.

Berlin, Dortmund, Enschede, Ghent, Lisbon, Malmo, Munich, Nuremberg, Riga and Stuttgart developed new measures or action plans with the help of interdisciplinary working groups and stakeholders. They focused their interventions on the development of skills and competences, validating existing competences, coordinating language training programmes and providing counselling services and vocational training. For example, Lisbon has developed a comprehensive 18 month programme with three phases – reception, follow-up and inclusion. It fosters inclusion through giving access to food and clothing, housing, healthcare, education, language and skills training, validating competencies and finally access to community services and the labour market.

For the cities that do not have local level strategies they cited a lack of competencies, the existing national strategy and the guidelines and goals for labour integration in general as the main reasons. Despite not having local strategies, cities like Gothenburg have explicit political goals to work with foreigners, including refugees.



## 1.6 Changes brought on by the influx of refugees and asylum seekers

Most cities have moved from an 'integrate first, work later' to an 'integration through work' approach. They have adapted policies to be more proactive and open towards refugees and asylum seekers; placing a greater importance on early intervention. Most cities have designed tailored employment programmes to address the specific needs of refugees and have benefited from national agreements supporting cooperation at local and regional level.

The main changes made by cities are:

- **provision of services**

Most cities mentioned vocational training, social and job counselling, and language courses as the kinds of public services they provide for labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Barcelona, Berlin, Ghent, Gothenburg, Munich, Ostend and Stuttgart have created state-funded programmes for integration from three months to two years, and have increased their capacity to provide integration services. Ghent has increased its budgets for language education, vocational training and social and job seeking guidance.

- **public administration personnel**

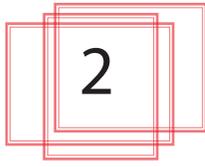
The most recent influx of refugees and asylum seekers has caused officers in public institutions to be overburdened. In their efforts to overcome this challenge, cities like Enschede and Tampere have increased their capacity by hiring extra personnel to deal specifically with refugee inclusion to the labour market. They are also focusing on developing expertise and knowledge on the subject, and recruiting social workers with the necessary experience and language skills.

- **legislative limitations**

Another challenge identified by cities is the legislative limitations, which can make refugee inclusion in the labour market very difficult. Some of the most frequently mentioned issues are the procedures to obtain a residence permit and have qualification and skills recognised. Berlin, Dortmund, Nuremberg, and Stuttgart addressed these issues by adapting the existing legislation to current needs. Cities have worked with federal authorities to promote new laws on residence permits and designed new programmes to recognised skills and qualifications (e.g Stuttgart's new 'integration and participation' law).

- **cooperation with stakeholders**

Stronger cooperation between stakeholders is one of the main changes identified by cities. In their responses, Berlin, Dortmund, Malmo, Milan and Munich showed that the influx of newcomers has fostered horizontal coordination between local authorities, the private sector and non-profit organisations. The involvement of the private and non-profit sector has allowed for the exchange of information on local measures and common plans for the future. The attitude of local employers has also changed; with businesses showing a strong interest in creating employment opportunities for refugees.



## 2

# Labour migration policies at local level

## 2.1 Policy measures

Cities as the level of government closest to citizens have identified main issues for their policy interventions in integration of refugees and asylum seekers the following: poor language skills, scarce access to local VET pathways, insufficient integration courses. For responding to these challenges cities focused their intervention on the following:

- **language competences**

While there are many examples of city-led initiatives that contribute to the integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market 87% of the cities (Berlin, Dortmund, Ghent, Gothenburg, Nuremberg, Malmo, Milan, Munich, Stockholm, Stuttgart, Tampere and Vienna) identified language courses as their main policy measure. To overcome the problem of language barriers, the courses are provided free of charge and cities ensure they are easily accessible for the target group (Malmo).

In general, the courses are designed to help refugees and asylum seekers learn the specialised vocabulary for their chosen profession. For example, Ghent integrated their languages courses into a job shadowing scheme where asylum seekers and refugees can volunteer for a period of three months in a work place linked to their professional interests. The aim is to get to know the working environment, practice language skills linked to the profession and build up a professional network. A similar six month mentoring programme was developed in Berlin to reduce barriers for refugees and asylum seekers to access the labour market. In Munich, the 'Standing Together' project promotes career orientation and labour insertion in social enterprises while providing language courses tailored to specific vocabulary of the business sectors.

- **information and counselling services**

Belin, Ghent, Malmo, Munich, and Vienna offer motivational and information group activities, information points, job fairs and counselling programmes. In general, the activities are linked to training and job-matching. Based on information from the cities the counselling services are provided at receptions centres, refugee accommodation and community, youth, leisure and women's centres. For example, the 'mobile job counselling' programme in Berlin advises refugees on vocational opportunities, helps them obtain their legal documents and prepares them for job interviews. This counselling is free of charge and is offered in several languages. The counsellors work in welcome centres and offer advice on initial orientation, the right to residency and access to the labour market.

- **skills development and vocational training**

Most cities (79%) identified development of skills and competences as a local level policy measure and carry out actions like measuring professional competences and assessing qualifications in different fields. They also offer training to refugees and migrants. For example, Nuremberg's 'Erfolg' project focuses on skills development in an integrated way combining it with profiling, guidance services and job-matching. Stockholm offers more than 100 'fast track' adult education courses for skills development to fill available job opportunities. Milan has vocational training courses taking place in reception centres. These courses require 20 hours of attendance per week for six months and include 10 hours of language courses.

The 'mobile education counselling' programme in Berlin has 34 trained counsellors to help refugees' have their qualifications and skills recognised and guides them towards possible educational opportunities. Vienna is providing literacy courses, German and English language courses, IT-courses, maths and civic education.

- **social clauses in the public procurement**

Some of the cities mentioned social clauses in the public procurement as one of their integration policy measures. For example, in Barcelona the new regulation for public procurement includes a social clause for public contracts awarded by the municipality encouraging businesses to hire refugees or asylum seekers. In Stockholm, social clauses are included in services and development procurement procedures, which stimulates the creation of new jobs and trainee placements. The city also negotiates with contractors and makes the connection between those furthest from the labour market and available job opportunities.

- **employment and job-matching**

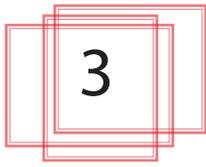
Most cities (Barcelona, Berlin, Dortmund, Ghent, Gothenburg, Malmo, Milan, Munich, Nuremberg, Stockholm, Stuttgart and Tampere) reported they also offer job-matching services; making the link between refugees and asylum seekers and available employment opportunities. Cities have designed projects to address the shortage of qualified labour in the local labour market, by building networks with local institutions using expert groups, surveys and conferences. These networks then develop strategies together to successfully integrate refugees and asylum seekers in the local labour market.



## 2.2 Characteristics of policy measures

The common characteristics of policy measures identified by the cities were free access to the services, ease of access to services, services provided in several languages and age-tailored services. For example, Berlin offers its integration services in 12 different languages - Arabic, Dari, English, Farsi, French, Hindi, Pashto, Spanish, Tigrinya, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese. Berlin, Gothenburg, Malmö, and Stockholm offer beneficiaries age-based services to cater to their specific needs (e.g. children, young people under 25's, over 25's and adults).

Most cities reported their funding can come from city, national, federal and EU level. Many cities mentioned the European Social Fund (ESF) as a source of funding to invest in the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. However, only one respondent mentioned the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), which is managed at national level, as a source of funding for local level projects. Cities mentioned alternative funding partners, for example Milan works with the US Consulate.



# 3

## Challenges



### 3.1 Main challenges in integrating refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market

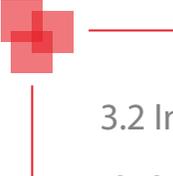
The integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market faces a lot of challenges at local level. Cities reported several barriers, which result in a precarious existence and employment situation for the target group. These barriers include individual limitations, constraints at city level and restrictions on employers.

The five key challenges identified by cities were:

- **lack of language skills (63%)**
- **lack of education, skills and professional experience (47%)**
- **legal status (41%)**
- **long and complex administrative procedures to grant legal status or a work permit (41%)**
- **recognition and validation of credits, certificates and degrees (41%)**

Many cities mentioned women refugees face the most challenges integrating in the labour market. The data provided by the cities shows women often face multidimensional problems and need tailored integration services. Many women, as the primary caregivers in their family, face challenges accessing education compared to men. Cities reported the need to make special efforts to include women on the labour market. Young refugees and asylum seekers were identified as the second most disadvantaged group when it comes to access to the labour market.

The following sections examines in detail the challenges of individual limitation, employer's perceptions and perceptions at city level.



## 3.2 Individual limitations

### • **lack of language skills**

Cities identified language as a main barrier to refugees and asylum seekers integration in the labour market. Berlin, Dortmund, Enschede, Ghent, Lisbon, Munich, Nuremberg, Ostend, Riga, Stuttgart and Tampere reported the main challenge for refugees is to meet employers' expectations. Although many cities offer intensive language courses from the moment of arrival, the A1 or A2 level is often perceived as insufficient by employers. Cities reported employers expect at least a B1 level for an apprenticeship or entry level position educational training and even more for a full employee.

### • **lack of education, skills and professional experience**

The second most reported issue from cities was the lack of education, skills and professional experience for refugees. Berlin, Dortmund, Ghent, Gothenburg, Malmo, Munich, Nuremberg and Stockholm cited refugees academic or professional backgrounds or lack of transferable skills as the reason they integrate more slowly in the labour market. Among the main needs of refugees mentioned by cities were literacy, the need for an integrated approach towards the education and the need for professional training.

### • **legal status**

Another challenge identified by cities relates to uncertainty around the legal status of refugees and asylum seekers. Barcelona, Berlin, Dortmund, Milan, Munich and Nuremberg mentioned that refugee status, residency and work permits influence refugee and asylum seeker's access on the labour market. In general, companies are hesitant to employ refugees without a residence permit.

### • **lack of documentation**

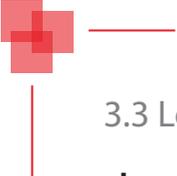
Most cities reported refugees and asylum seekers arrive without formal documents or certificates to prove their educational or professional background. There are no documents certifying their skills making it very difficult to determine a refugee or asylum seeker's qualifications. Integration can be problematic for refugees and asylum seekers without formal documentation to present to employers and educational institutions to allow them to assess their education and professional competencies. This also represents a problem for the small percentage of highly skilled refugees who end up in low skilled jobs because they cannot prove their qualifications.

### • **lack of information**

Many cities identified lack of information as a factor that contributes to the slow integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market: from basic understanding of the importance of having certified competencies to understanding employment rights.

### • **other challenges**

Cities reported problems of bad housing conditions, income insecurity and physical or mental health problems can also affect refugees and asylum seeker's integration in the labour market. Adding to this, cities stated refugees and asylum seekers generally worry about family members who fled or remained in their home country.



### 3.3 Local level challenges

- **long and complex administrative procedures**

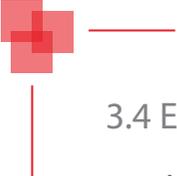
Many cities reported the long and complex procedures for obtaining legal status and work permits as one of its main challenges from a public administration perspective. Berlin, Enschede, Dortmund, Milan, Munich, Nuremberg and Tampere stated that from the moment of reception until integration in the labour market can take up to three years. This is due to the delay in registration of asylum claims caused by the complexity of the administrative procedures. On one hand, the cities depend on federal or national procedures and laws, which have long decision-making procedures and long waiting lists for available integration and language courses. On the other hand, most cities reported the regulation on access to employment for people with 'temporary suspension of deportation' status is too restrictive.

- **validating or recognising credits, certificates and degrees**

In their responses cities explained the great challenge in recognising or validating the skills and competencies of refugees and asylum seekers. A lack of formal documentation or a written track record of professional development makes the validation process longer and more difficult. Berlin, Lisbon, Milan, Nuremberg and Riga reported integration on the labour market is made more difficult because refugees must go through an assessment process, only after which they can go on to validate their professional competencies and skills.

- **high unemployment rate at local level**

Data provided by the cities cited the high unemployment rate at local level among the factors influencing the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market. For example, Malmo explained that even though there is a 14,9% unemployment rate, vacancies at local level remain unfilled. Cities have issues matching the demand for labour with the existing skills supply. Despite the percentage of unemployment in Barcelona, Dortmund, Ghent and Stuttgart the main problem is the small percentage of jobs available for low skilled people.



## 3.4 Employers' perceptions

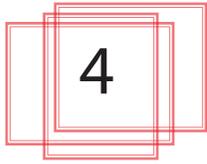
- **prejudice**

Cities reported employers' perceptions as a problem. A lack of positive images of refugees and asylum seekers in the media and existing prejudices make integration on the labour market more difficult. For example, Milan cited the negative media coverage of refugees as contributing to this problem.

- **bureaucratic burden on employers**

Cities showed that even when employers are willing to hire refugees and asylum seekers they still face many legal challenges especially when the refugee or asylum seeker in question do not yet have residency status. More specifically, Nuremberg and Tampere highlighted the bureaucratic burden employers face when they want to employ refugees who do not have a final decision on their legal status.

Another factor presented by cities was the intercultural integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the work place. The integrated approach needed on intercultural integration presents a challenge for some employers.



## 4 Examples of good practices at local level

### • **Barcelona** - social clauses in public procurement

A new regulation for public procurement in the city of Barcelona includes social clauses to encourage businesses that win public contracts to hire asylum seekers and refugees.

### • **Berlin** - ARRIVO

In 2014, Berlin and the local chamber of handicrafts launched a project to improve labour market integration prospects for refugee living in the city and to plug the severe labour shortages on the local labour market. The project offers a combination of workshops on local employment standards, short vocational and language training modules, internships and on-the-job skills assessments to refugees proficient in basic German. It consists of five projects that offer workshops in handicrafts, health, hospitality, construction and a service office, which provides businesses with information about employing refugees.

### • **Ghent** - Job-oriented volunteering

In Ghent, asylum seekers and refugees can volunteer for a period of three months in a work place linked to their professional interests. The aim is to get to know the work environment, practice language skills linked to the job and build up a professional network during while also getting guidance and language training. The volunteer programme is followed by job seeking and coaching.

### • **Malmö** - Yalla Sofielund

The ESF project 'Yalla Sofielund' is a job training programme for unemployed refugees and asylum seekers. The trainings are designed to allow participants to experience both theoretical and practical aspects of working life and the labour market. They are focused on work-oriented Swedish language, work culture, entrepreneurship, computer science, CV development, health and gender equality. Participants try out different activities for a brief period before focusing on one. The project is a cooperation between the municipality, national government, industry and NGOs and focuses its efforts in the Sofielund area of the city.

### • **Nuremberg** - AAU e.V.

The KompAS project ('Kompetenzfeststellung, frühzeitige Aktivierung und Spracherwerb') measures professional competencies and develops language skills to foster early activation in the labour market. The measures are designed to determine professional competencies and gain skills while also supporting refugees' individual needs. Refugees' competencies are determined by testing their skills in realistic workshops.

### • **Vienna** - Youth College

The 'Youth College' in Vienna is an ESF project implemented in cooperation with the Austrian public employment service and nine non-governmental organisations. The aim of the project is to prepare young migrants for high school, university, apprenticeships and ultimately the job market. It offers trainings in literacy, numeracy, language, IT, maths, English, social skills, civic education.

- **Munich** - Munich's Business Prize for Migrant Businesses

This prize honours migrant entrepreneurs for their extraordinary achievements in business, while increasing public awareness on the positive effects of these businesses on the community's integration potential.

- **Gothenburg** – 'The step-by-step job and knowledge lift'

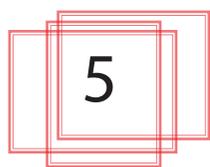
This project aims to integrate refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market by building on their education. The city also negotiates with trade unions to lower the educational thresholds for jobs in healthcare.

- **Ostend** - 'Oostende@Work'

This project is run by the city hall and the non-profit association 'Economisch Huis'. The goal of the initiative is to provide intensive language courses, driving lessons and general guidance to the unemployed.

- **Stockholm** - SFX

The SFX project is designed to shorten the time between arrival and employment for the newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers. The project provides specialised Swedish language courses based on different professions to help refugees learn the necessary vocabulary. The professions covered are teaching, engineering, economics, law, social science, human resources, entrepreneurship and healthcare.



## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

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It is in European cities that integration will fail or succeed and it is there that resources should be focused to ensure that the challenge is met. Besides housing, education and civic participation, labour market inclusion is a key factor of successful integration. As demonstrated by this report cities across Europe are using a mix of well-established practices and innovative approaches to face the challenges of screening, training and including newcomers in the local job market. Cities' ability to reform their practices, work with other levels of government, civil society and employer, and to also quickly incorporate in their strategies innovative ideas developed in other European cities is a great advantage.

To ensure the effective integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market, the 19 cities which responded to this survey have made the following recommendations:

- 1.** Cities should be included in the process of labour market inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers integration by regional, national and European institutions, as they know the reality of their own local labour markets.
- 2.** National governments should design education and labour market inclusion programmes for refugees and asylum seekers from the moment of arrival, regardless of their legal status and country of origin.
- 3.** Uncertainties around status and the right to stay should be overcome as soon as possible. These are obstacles for educational institutions or employers to train or hire applicants hampering their chances to smoothly integrate in the labour market.
- 4.** National governments should promote understandable and labour-friendly regulations for all residents, regardless of status. Even if long term residency won't be granted, people can still work, earn a living, and improve their skills rather than being forced into idleness, which can have negative consequences on motivation, social interaction and skills development.
- 5.** Cities should cooperate closely with national and regional level to create an open and inclusive local labour market for refugees and asylum seekers, including through effective anti-discrimination strategies.
- 6.** All levels of governments – including cities - should take into account cross-cutting issues such as the special needs of women or housing in all programmes, projects and policies.
- 7.** The EU should ensure that the available funding supporting labour market integration measures (AMIF, ERDF, ESF, EASI) - reaches the local level, where it is needed the most.





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