

European Council on Refugees and Exiles

Annual General Conference 2019

And UNHCR Europe NGO Consultation

Organised by ECRE and UNHCR

Brussels, 23 and 24 October 2019

Venue: Renaissance Brussels Hotel, Rue du Parnasse 19, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
Lisbon Room

WORKSHOP 4

INCLUSION THROUGH RIGHTS: ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Title	Inclusion through rights: access to employment for beneficiaries of international protection
Objectives	<p>The workshop aims at fostering an informal exchange of views across ECRE members on their experiences on job market integration, with the objectives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share examples of good practice in labour market inclusion• Identify the conditions for successful (support to) labour market inclusion• Identify opportunities for scaling up and replicating successful models
Speakers	<p>Facilitator Giacomo Manca, Policy Officer, ECRE - PICUM</p> <p>Speakers (in two blocks each followed by discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Julie Bodson, Duo for a Job, Belgium• Kinan Halal, Novare Potential, Sweden <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Violette Debarbouille, Action Emploi Réfugiés, France• Nuria Diez Guardia, European Commission, DG HOME• David Manicom, UNHCR Special Advisor <p>Discussion</p>

Description and structure

Background elements

Labour market integration is widely recognised as a key element of third country national's socio-economic inclusion in European societies. Employment is often a precondition for other aspects of inclusion, from housing to access to social services to active political participation.

Although the EU lacks direct competence on integration, since the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon it has supported Member States through policy coordination, knowledge exchange and financial resources. The importance and potential of this role increased after the rise in the number of persons seeking asylum in Europe in 2015.

In 2016, the European Commission published the **EU Action Plan for Integration of Third Country Nationals**, which sets labour market integration and access to vocational training as one of its five priorities, and includes measures such as support for skills validation, recognition of prior skills as well as supporting migrant entrepreneurship. In addition, it included initiatives on the use of EU funds to foster integration. The **Council Conclusions of December 2016** enhanced the coordinating role of the EU, stressing the need to allocate more financial resources to integration, and affirming the role of EU support to Member States in the assessment, validation, and recognition of the qualifications and skills of third-country nationals.

Statements in the run-up to the European Parliament elections show across the board an acknowledgement of the importance of increasing integration efforts, even from political groups traditionally more restrictive on migration.

As a result of these trends, the **proposals for the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) of the EU for the years 2021–2027**, foresee a considerable increase in the resources allocated to migrants and refugees integration, with:

- A dedicated objective of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) on socio-economic inclusion of third country nationals;
- An overall increase in the budget proposed for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), to triple compared to its allocation for 2014 to 2019;
- A mainstreamed and multi-fund approach to integration, meaning it is part of many different EU funding programmes (such as the ESF+, AMIF, the ERDF, EAFRD).
- Although employment programmes for migrants and refugees are in place in all EU Member States (thanks in part to the use of EU resources such as the ESF), employment rates are still lower for those born outside the EU compared to those born in an EU country: 64.5 % compared to 73.9%.

Delays in acquisition of the right to employment for asylum seekers is a significant obstacle to integration, and to the preservation of the long-term employability of individuals. Also, the time to acquire language skills, the lack of recognition of professional skills and qualifications, and the persistence of discrimination in recruitment are other obstacles to inclusion in the labour market.

Structure of the workshop

The discussion will kick off with presentations from speakers who will illustrate three approaches to inclusion in the labour market of beneficiaries of international protection.

After these presentations, participants and speakers will exchange ideas to identify the preconditions for successful (support to) labour market inclusion, what innovative aspects were instrumental to the project's success and whether the project could be potentially replicated in another national context and/or scaled up. In addition to the projects presented, participants will be welcomed to talk about their own experiences in designing and carrying out labour integration programmes.

The European Commission will inform the participants on the existing actions at the EU level on integration in terms of support and exchange of practices, provide updates on future opportunities within the EU funds and address the future of integration policies in the upcoming legislature.