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Developing and Strengthening the Operational and Personal
Capacities of Public and Non-Public Organisation in Provision of
Supporting Services for Refugees, Migrants and Immigrants through
Innovative Approaches



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CONTENT

| | |
|----------|----|
| SLOVAKIA | 3 |
| TURKEY | 22 |
| GERMANY | 36 |
| HUNGARY | 52 |

SLOVAKIA

Introduction

This material presents the statistics on migration, numbers, and ratio of national and non-national citizens in the population, and further data relating to the migration. As a complementary theoretical background, we use law and legislation, integration policies and action plans both drafted and adopted, to support our statement and to get an idea about the situation in Slovakia. Support mechanisms operating in order to provide the integration and inclusion activities along with services and concrete activities are mentioned. To complete the theory with the praxis we list three of best practices in the main fields of integration process – education, employment, and counselling.

For the purposes of integration policy:

- *foreigner* means anyone who is not a citizen of the Slovak Republic
- *third-country national* means anyone who is neither a citizen of the Slovak Republic nor of the Union, as well as a person without citizenship
- *migrant* means anyone who leaves a country or region to settle in another country or region
- *person with subsidiary protection* means anyone who has been granted subsidiary protection by the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic has been granted subsidiary protection
- *Asylum seeker* means anyone who has fulfilled the criteria under the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and Act No. 480/2002 Coll. on asylum, as amended, whereby he or she has been recognised as a refugee and granted international protection in the form of asylum¹.

1. Integration and Inclusion of Refugees, Migrants and Immigrants

¹ The Act no. 404/2011 Coll. on Residence of Foreigners or The Act no. 480/2002 Coll. on Asylum and Amendment of Some Acts, see:
https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicna_a_cudzinecka_policia/pravne_predpisy/404-ACT-Of-21-October-2011-On-Residence-of-Foreigners-and-Amendment-and-Supplementation-of-Certain-Acts.pdf

The Slovak Republic is a member of a number of international organisations and groupings that focus on migration issues. In relation to migration policy, the EU political and legal framework is therefore decisive for Slovakia.

In the EU context, the area of migration and asylum is a dynamic agenda with an increasing degree of harmonisation, as well as unclear impacts on the societies of individual EU Member States. The EU has had common policies on asylum and immigration since 1999.

Existing Integration Policies

The strategic document Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic was approved through Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 45 of 29 January 2014².

The migration policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025 is a basic document of the Slovak Republic and a starting point for building a modern, comprehensive and effective policy of the government of the Slovak Republic in all areas of migration. The Migration Policy is based on and is a continuation of the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2020 and is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The migration policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025 deals with the following topics:

1. Legal migration with an emphasis on managed economic migration
2. Emigration from the Slovak Republic with an emphasis on the return of the workforce
3. International protection
4. Integration
5. Illegal migration and borders
6. Readmission agreements and returns
7. Fight against human trafficking
8. Humanitarian and development cooperation
9. Communication of migration topics

The Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic along with the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic (in the integration activities) is responsible for the

² see: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/integracia-cudzincov/dokumenty/vlastny-material-integracna-politika-januar-2014.pdf>

³ see: <https://www.minv.sk/?zamer-migracnej-politiky-slovenskej-republiky>

migration, asylum policymaking and basic legislation regulating and amending migration policies, such as:

Law on Foreigners

Act 404/2011 on the residence of foreigners with the last amendment that came into force on 1 January 2023. The amendment reduces the administrative burden of third-country nationals applying for a residence permit in Slovakia. It also entitles displaced persons from Ukraine with temporary protection status to apply for temporary or permanent residence.

Asylum law

The Act on Asylum 480/2002 was last amended on 28 May 2023, and implemented as of 1 June 2023. It relates to people displaced from Ukraine with a temporary protection status. The amendment regulates the provision of allowance for the accommodation of people granted the status of temporary protection and extends the duration of this allowance until December 2023. The specific conditions for this allowance define government regulation no. 179/2023 Coll.

Citizenship law

Act 40/1993 Coll about the acquisition of citizenship.

Anti-discrimination law

Act 365/2004 guarantees equal treatment and protects against discrimination.

In all areas of migration, the *Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic* is the fundamental document of the Slovak Republic and the basis for building a modern, comprehensive and effective policy of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

The aim of the migration policy is to create conditions in the field of legal migration in accordance with the national interests and international obligations of the Slovak Republic, taking into account the priorities, needs and reception capacities of foreigners, including their integration into society. Migration policy shall promote a dimension of regulated labour mobility that will prevent social, economic and environmental tensions and be based on an emphasis on preserving the security of the SR and the rights of SR citizens, as well as the rights of foreigners residing in the territory of the SR. Migration flows shall be supported in

accordance with the needs and capacities of Slovak society and economy and with the foreign policy interests of the Slovak Republic.

In the area of international protection, the aim is to continue to provide effective protection to those in need, while preventing abuse of the asylum system, including through the reform of the Common European Asylum System.

Other objectives of the SR migration policy are to effectively combat irregular migration and related negative phenomena, such as human trafficking, smuggling, exploitation, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of human beings, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of human beings and exploitation of human beings. of foreigners, as well as the strengthening of the protection of the external Schengen border and the implementation of the return policy in relation to persons staying illegally on the territory of the Slovak Republic.

Reference should also be made to the Recovery and Resilience Plan, which also addresses the topic of 'attracting and retaining talent' in Component 10 as part of the integration framework. The Recovery Plan contains a number of measures that are important for the integration of foreigners - be it adaptation support programmes, language training (both for foreigners and officials), socio-cultural orientation courses, counselling, simplification of the recognition regime for educational and professional qualifications or one-stop shops. "If these measures were part of Slovakia's integration policy and were also implemented in practice, they would contribute significantly to the successful integration of foreigners living in Slovakia"³.

Facts and Figures

Slovakia has never been a popular final destination for migrants, however since the access to the EU in 2004 the number of immigrants definitely increased.

"Today, foreigners make up 5.13% of the population in Slovakia and their number is slowly but steadily growing: in December 2022, there were 111,076 more foreigners living in Slovakia than the year before, an increase of 66.3%, which was mainly due to the influx of people from Ukraine"⁴. According to Eurostat's Migration and migrant population statistics,

³ see: https://mareena.sk/assets/files/Integracia-ludi-z-Ukrajiny_Navrhy-ries%CC%8Ceni%CC%81.pdf

⁴ see: https://www.academia.edu/106235493/Slovakia_as_a_prospective_country_for_foreigners_qualitative_approach

as of 1 January 2022, there were about 22 200 third-country nationals, representing 0.4% of the population, and another 37 900 EU citizens (0.7%) living in Slovakia at the time.

In addition, on 1 January 2023, according to the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, 222 525 third-country nationals legally reside in Slovakia. They represented 4.1 % of the total population. This notable rise is due to the number of people displaced from Ukraine. Most third-country nationals came from Ukraine, Serbia, and Vietnam. Slovakia also has sizeable communities from the Russian Federation, North Macedonia, Georgia, and China. Of these third-country nationals, 98 281 had valid temporary residence permits, 28 794 were permanent residents, and 95 450 had a tolerated residence status⁵.

2. Key principles and values on integration and inclusion

Integration of foreigners who are legally residing in the territory of the Slovak Republic and are interested in settling permanently in the territory of the Slovak Republic is an essential tool for a successful migration policy, while it is a continuous, long-term and dynamic mutual process of mutual respect and reciprocal recognition of the rights and obligations of all residents.

The Slovak Republic is committed to an integration model which, in addition to compliance with Slovak legislation, is based on respect for the cultural realities, language and traditions of the Slovak Republic by foreigners. It is expected that integration measures will lead to the existence of coordinated and interrelated instruments and measures that will enable foreigners to enter the labour market, master the national language, have access to education, health care, social services, housing, enable their participation in civic and political life, and may eventually lead to the granting of citizenship of the Slovak Republic.

3. Support mechanism of the integration process

⁵ see: https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-slovakia_en

The Slovak Republic embraces an integration model that emphasizes mutual adaptation during the integration process. The goal is for foreigners to contribute to shaping the common culture while being respected and supported in their diversity by the majority society.

The focus of the Slovak Republic is to support well-managed legal immigration of highly skilled workers from third countries. This is seen as a way to enhance the overall competitiveness of the country. This includes attracting students, scientists, researchers, artists, entrepreneurs, and foreign Slovaks residing in other countries.

From the perspective of the European Union, all parties involved in the integration process share a joint responsibility. This requires active participation from immigrants, while their rights and obligations are respected. According to The Ministry of Interior of the SR⁶, which is the guarantor of the migration policy in the SR, Integration measures should provide tools and mechanisms for foreigners to:

- integrate into the labour market
- access language courses for the host country
- access education
- access healthcare
- access social services
- access housing and have their cultural specifics recognized
- establish a clear legal status
- participate in civil and political life

At present (February 2023), NGOs funded by the EU and supervised by the interior ministry are responsible for carrying out projects that provide a range of activities and services to beneficiaries of international protection. In order to receive financial support for accommodation and basic needs, beneficiaries of international protection are required to participate in activities under the Integration Project. These activities primarily consist of language courses and employment counselling. Once beneficiaries of international protection begin receiving allowances, their participation in integration activities becomes mandatory. The Integration Project also includes counselling, psychological support, language courses, civic education, vocational training, and financial contributions.

⁶ see: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/en/information-foreigners/integration-foreigners-slovakia/>

Regarding those displaced from Ukraine, Slovakia has adopted several strategic documents. In September 2022, an *Action plan for the managed integration of displaced persons from Ukraine* was approved. The interdepartmental Steering Committee for Migration and Integration, led by the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior, developed the draft action plan in collaboration with local governments and the non-profit sector⁷. The purpose of the action plan is to facilitate the rapid integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine into society. The plan, prepared in cooperation with public administration institutions and NGOs, consists of 12 recommendations for both public and private administrations, covering social security, health, housing, education, work, and culture. The recommendations include the establishment of a financing scheme for the reconstruction of designated buildings owned by local authorities and the state, as well as expanding language training for school children and employed displaced persons.

Furthermore, a contingency plan was implemented on October 26, 2022, to address the emergency context of the mass arrival of people from Ukraine between October 2022 and March 2023. The key objectives of the plan were to ensure the safe and dignified entry and stay of displaced persons from Ukraine in Slovakia, guarantee access to material, legal, psychosocial, and health support, and provide increased attention and protection for individuals with specific needs and vulnerable social groups, including victims of violence. The contingency plan was updated on June 28, 2023, and remains valid until December 2023.

The contingency plan has five strategic goals⁸:

- to ensure a safe entry and stay for nationals of third countries on the territory of the Slovak Republic
- to ensure access to material, legal, psychosocial and health support for refugees
- to ensure increased attention and protection for people with specific needs and the most endangered social groups, including victims of violence
- to ensure provision of services in reception and transit facilities and places of emergency accommodation
- to ensure capacity for the transport of a large number of refugees to relieve the burden of border crossings and transfer nodes within the Slovak Republic.

⁷ see https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-slovakia_en

⁸ see https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/library-document/contingency-plan-slovak-republic_en

Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025 is a fundamental document and a starting point for building a modern, comprehensive and effective policy Government of the Slovak Republic in all areas of migration.

The aforementioned Action Plan of the Migration Policy in the conditions of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025 is submitted based on the Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 496 of 8 September 2021 on the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to the year 2021 - 2025. It targets to „support the integration of foreigners with legal residence at the local and regional levels, primarily by cooperating with local authorities and using the financial resources from EU funds and other alternative extra-budgetary resources“⁹.

4. Types of Service Providers

Let's divide the types of Service Providers according to their role in the integration processes.

a) The State

The State is responsible for central coordination: establishment of a separate office/ a Government Plenipotentiary for Integration, creation of a comprehensive mechanism for the implementation of integration instruments and is setting up an enabling legislative environment.

At the state level, it is essential that the tools of the integration process are centrally coordinated and that the state provides sufficient support to others in the implementation of integration measures. At the same time, the state plays a role in creating the legislative environment or in providing services that are within its competence (e.g. in the fields of education, labour market, health, etc.). Without a well-set legislative environment, other actors cannot set effective integration policies at lower levels of government.

b) Regional and Local Authorities

⁹ see https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-slovakia_en

Authorities, especially local ones, play a key role in integration. They are closest to their citizens and are also responsible for providing many services that are important in the integration process.

Local authorities have the opportunity to develop local integration strategies that take into account the specific structure and needs of particular groups of foreigners living in their territory¹⁰.

The same applies to regional governments. They also have many competences in the provision of various social services, establish secondary schools, and are active in the development of the entire region. At the same time, regional governments also create partnerships between local governments in order to develop joint development integration strategies and measures.

c) Other integration actors

NGOs, churches, employers, expatriate communities, etc. have long been the most active actors in helping foreigners integrate. At the same time, these actors are very effective partners of the state or local governments in the design and implementation of integration instruments. They can help to set policies or implement a range of activities of a community, social or other nature.

As an example of the role of NGOs, we provide in the 6th part of this article examples of Best practices, where we mention projects that have brought, for example, also to the participating municipalities or employers training in setting up integration in their territory, making services accessible to foreigners and creating appropriate tools.

5. Financing and Resources

¹⁰ see: <https://www.kapacity.sk/kategoria/cudzinec-a-samosprava/>

The Slovak government allocates funds from the national budget to support integration and inclusion initiatives. This may include financing programs and projects focused on language training, education, employment support, and social integration.

Non-profit organisations and local authorities as actors can submit applications for finance resources through various funds. In addition to them, there are national and private funds available. Those are suitable for service providers and other authorities with Integration and Inclusion as the main aim of their projects.

In the case of local and regional governments, it is crucial that the state supports their activities and integration policies legislatively, methodologically and, above all, financially.

According to the European Website for Integration there are two types of EU financing funds in Slovakia:

- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) in Slovakia
- The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The AMIF allocated €29,19 million to Slovakia over the 2021-2027 period. “It will contribute to the effective management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of the Common Asylum and Immigration Policy.”¹¹.

Beneficiaries of the programmes implemented under AMIF can be “state and federal authorities, local public bodies, non-governmental organisations, humanitarian organisations, private and public law companies, education and research organisations”¹².

The ESF+ will be implemented in Slovakia in the period 2021 – 2027 and enables a budget of €2.1 billion. Investments in this fund are concentrated in three main areas: education, employment and social inclusion.

Some integration programs and initiatives in Slovakia are funded through public-private partnerships. This involves collaboration between the government, private companies, and non-profit organizations to pool resources and finances to support integration efforts. Private companies may contribute funding, expertise, or in-kind support to specific projects and activities.

¹¹ see: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en

¹² see: https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-slovakia_en#funding

Funding for integration and inclusion activities may also come from international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These organizations often work in partnership with the government to provide support and resources for migrant integration initiatives. They secure funding through grants, donations, and partnerships with other international bodies.

It's important to note that the specific funding sources and mechanisms may vary over time, depending on government policies, changes in EU funding programs, and the availability of resources. The allocation of funds and the implementation of integration programs are typically overseen by relevant government ministries and departments, in coordination with relevant stakeholders and organizations working on migration and integration issues.

In developing integration policies, but also in setting effective integration measures or tools, as well as subsequent financing, it is crucial to know the situation of the groups targeted by these measures, as well as the needs that these groups have regarding integration measures.

Given that the largest group in recent times has been the displaced persons from Ukraine, the following information refers more specifically to them.

Health Care

People arriving from Ukraine who have been granted refugee status (temporary refuge) are entitled to urgent medical care. At the same time, the General Health Insurance Fund announced in March 2022 that people from Ukraine with refugee status are to be issued medicines, medical devices and dietetic food without a supplementary payment at the maximum price of the medicine. Prescription and indication restrictions are also not to be applied, which means that medicines that usually can only be prescribed by a specialist doctor can also be prescribed by a general practitioner to people from Ukraine with refugee status.

Another important issue for war refugees (in general) is access to psychological care, which is currently only provided by NGOs (IPčko, Liga za duševné zdravie (League for Mental Health) and Modrý anjel (Blue Angel)).

Social Services

Social services and social care also play a very important role in the integration process. Regional and local authorities have an important role to play in this area, in particular by providing various social services to people in an inadequate living situation, paying one-off social benefits, carrying out counselling and a number of other competences. Some social services are also provided on behalf of the state by non-governmental organisations through field social work or community centres. Social care is also provided to various vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities or other groups. The state also plays an important role in the social sphere, particularly through the labour, social and family offices. Legally, the provision of services is regulated by Act 448/2008 Coll. on social services and local governments regulate their provision in detail in their own general binding regulations.

In the context of the current situation, many people belonging to vulnerable groups have come to Slovakia. Often these are women with minor children, people with disabilities or senior citizens. Many of those who have applied for temporary shelter are also applicants for material hardship benefits.

Since May 2022, international organisations have taken over the system of paying social benefits and providing various other allowances. This is a form of financial assistance from these organisations to the State for a period of 3 months.

Many other services, job counselling or psychological help are provided by various NGOs, private sector, churches, or other individual actors who are trying to help in this situation.

Employment Support

Employment is one of the key areas for the integration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. From an individual's point of view, the opportunity to work is important not only from a financial point of view in order to provide basic needs and a decent life for people from Ukraine, but also from a psychological point of view, whether this relates to preventing dependency on long-term aid or to the natural need for self-fulfilment and a sense of fulfilment. However, the employment or unemployment of people from Ukraine is also a matter of a long-term financial burden on Slovakia's public finances, because in the long term it is more effective to employ people from Ukraine as soon as possible.

A barrier in the labour market is the recognition of qualifications or the need for other administrative formalities (e.g. extract from the register criminal records or psychological evaluations) that are required for to pursue certain professions.

Accommodation Services

Housing for people arriving from Ukraine is currently being addressed in a number of ways. In addition to emergency accommodation for the first 10 days, which is provided in large-capacity facilities at the level of district towns (gymnasiums, dormitories, etc.), there are subsequent additional medium-term housing options in various state (hostels, recreational facilities, etc.) and private facilities (hotels, guesthouses, etc.). Given the limited capacity of state facilities, it became apparent shortly after the outbreak of the war that housing would also need to be addressed through private rentals and housing in private facilities, for which an allowance was introduced to compensate for the costs of housing people from Ukraine with refugee status. This allowance will be paid until March 2024, whether the deadline will be extended is unknown at this time.

Integration Community Programmes

Community work is a key tool for integration. Communities are made up of people who share a common interest, values or goals. Community work for people from Ukraine, in this paper, but for all foreigners in general, both promotes their involvement and develops the capacity of volunteers, providing them with services that are not provided or are poorly available (see above) and thus strengthening their voice, integration and participation in society. Community work is also about interaction and getting to know each other, while also providing a space for softening the boundaries migrants and foreigners and the host society and mutual enrichment. In this sense, community work is also a philosophy, as it provides a view of integration as a two-way process in which it is important to work not only with foreigners but also with locals.

Some municipalities (in larger cities) and a few foundations provide small grants to strengthen community life, but more substantial, systematic, and national support for these activities is absent. Existing grant schemes are far from sufficient to cover the costs that are needed for community work.

6. Best practices in key areas

Recent examples of best practice in terms of integration and inclusion in Slovakia are clearly linked to the arrival of the largest group of foreigners in Slovakia, i.e. those who left Ukraine due to the war conflict, but not only.

Therefore, we provide the following examples of organisations or activities that are significantly involved and engaged in the integration of foreigners in key areas and cooperation between foreigners and Slovak citizen.

Counselling

Integračné centrum Košického kraja (The Integration Centre of the Košice Region) – Counselling Services in the Field of Social- and Health Care and Legal Assistance

Two years ago, a strong partnership of organisations within the non-profit sector was established and a platform was created to enable the provision of assistance to refugees from Ukraine. From the outset, many members were working on the border and were aware that longer-term assistance with integration would be needed. It is supported by Donio¹³ in the framework of the initiative "Kto pomôže Ukrajine"

The Integration Centre of the Košice Region was established as an initiative of non-profit organisations focusing on social and legal issues, psychological care, accommodation, and employment. Its aim is to provide a wide range of services for refugees in one place.

This project is a unique cooperation between the Košice Self-Governing Region and nine organisations: *Nadácia Dedo (Dedo Foundation)*, which is the main operator of the centre and is responsible for housing issues, *Liga za ľudské práva (Human Rights League)*, which provides legal advice and was a co-initiator of the centre's establishment, *Človek v ohrození (People in Need)* with a primary focus on social counselling and education, *Mareena*, which provides career counselling and language courses, *Dorka, Všetko pre rodinu (All for Family)*, *Oáza-nádej pre nový život (Oasis – Hope for New Life)* and *Arcidiecézna charita* providing social counselling, *Liga za duševné zdravie (League for Mental Health)* providing psychological counselling.

Since the establishment of the centre, 1 011 clients have been registered¹⁴. However, it is important to remember that their children and other family members who are with them in Slovakia are also behind them. Therefore, the impact of the assistance ultimately affects approximately 3,000 service recipients. Beneficiaries come from a variety of age and social groups, including mothers with children, single men and women, families with children, students under the age of 18, and pensioners, among others.

¹³ a crowdfunding campaign where it is possible to set up a collection for a specific purpose, see:

<https://www.donio.sk/kto-pomoze-ukrajine?lang=en#who-will-help-ukraine>

¹⁴ data as of October 2023, see <https://www.nadaciadedo.sk/integracne-centrum/>

As part of its activities, IC KE has provided 3,500 consultations, either in person, by telephone, in writing or in the field¹⁵.

The most requested services provided at the Integration Centre of the Košice Region include among others:

1. Assistance in finding accommodation - comprehensive assistance in finding long-term and short-term accommodation, taking into account the specific needs of individual clients.
2. Legal assistance - broad legal advice, with an emphasis on comprehensive legal services for foreigners in the territory of the Slovak Republic.
3. Social counselling - health care, organization of examinations, communication with doctors for children and adults, social security and placement in social facilities, psychosocial support
4. Educational counselling - provision of Slovak language courses, support in integrating children and adults into the education system and recognition of qualifications and diplomas.

The Integration Centre of the Košice Region represents a unique synergy between the non-profit sector and local government, and its concept has attracted the attention of several experts from different fields.

The main mission of the Integration Centre is to assist refugees and migrants in their process of integration into Slovak society, to enable them to participate fully in life in Košice and to ensure that they become full-fledged citizens of Slovakia.

Employment

Mareena – Job Counselling as a Crucial Stage in the Integration Process

Mareena launched a Career Counselling Programme for foreigners living in Slovakia in 2018. The programme is a combination of group and individual meetings, during which participants will receive practical information about the labour market in Slovakia, consultations on CVs and job interviews, and strengthen their presentation skills, focus on self-discovery, personal and career development. After completion career counselling course, they can enrol in a mentoring programme.

¹⁵ see: <https://www.nadaciadedo.sk/integracne-centrum/>

The main goal of the program is to strengthen economic and social independence, support clients in finding or changing jobs, strengthen presentation skills, and help them set realistic career goals and define their competencies.

Foreigners in Slovakia often have difficulty finding employment in their previous area of employment (in their home country) or continuing in their field of study. Primary obstacles include the language barrier, the recognition of diplomas, lack of self-confidence, and high employer expectations. The counselling programme focuses on providing useful information about the labour market in Slovakia, developing soft skills, increasing self-confidence, realizing expectations and, finally, helping to apply for jobs.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Mareena was heavily involved in assisting incoming refugees in Slovakia. Assistance activities for people from Ukraine were provided in 7 locations in Slovakia - at the border crossing in Vyšné Nemecké, Gabčíkovo Humanitarian Centre, Bratislava, Košice, Nitra, Banská Bystrica and Trenčín.

The content of the counselling provided by Mareena is assistance with finding employment opportunities, orientation on the Slovak labour market and in labour relations, linking to the labour office and employers, linking to education or linking to the teaching of the Slovak language¹⁶.

The content of the counselling provided by Mareena is assistance with finding employment opportunities, orientation on the Slovak labour market and in labour relations, preparation of a CV and a cover letter or a career plan, preparation for an interview, providing information about retraining, etc.

For the year 2023, job counsellors in Mareena provided 1,082 appointments for 495 beneficiaries. The sessions were held online, by phone, by mail, but mainly in person at the assistance and integration centres¹⁷.

Education

International Organization for Migration – Training for Employers and Employees Providing Services / Employing Foreigners in Slovakia

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) implemented a training programme for public administration employees who provide services to foreigners from third countries. Participants were trained in intercultural communication and had the opportunity to improve

¹⁶ see: <https://www.ukraineslovakia.sk/en/services/p11955/>

¹⁷ internal data Mareena, unpublished internal report (as of February 2024)

their knowledge in the field of migration and integration of foreigners in Slovakia. They can use this knowledge in their work with foreigners and in cooperation between authorities.

The content of this type of training is an overview of current trends, policies and practices in the field of migration and integration of migrants in the world, Europe and Slovakia and related legislation. The basic part of the training activities consists of interactive trainings and the superstructural part of workshops. Topics such as prejudices and stereotypes, good practices and procedures for eliminating them, as well as strengthening inter-agency cooperation are also covered.

Personal experiences from the life of foreigners in Slovakia will be explained by cultural mediators - representatives of the different cooperating communities.

Such trained staff can offer better services to migrants and foreigners in Slovakia and facilitate their integration process in society.

Employees of 132 different employers who are interested in workers from abroad received theoretical and practically verified information on residence and employment of foreigners in Slovakia at 15 IOM trainings in the period from January 2019 to December 2021¹⁸.

Practical educational training and counselling on residence and employment of foreigners from third countries and from EU countries is intended e.g. for employers, who are interested in employing foreigners in Slovakia (primarily from third countries)

Training topics:

Employment: foreigners from EU countries, third country nationals, students from abroad, third country nationals who need to change their purpose of residence to employment, foreigners working for another employer in Slovakia.

Processing of employment permits: relevant legislation, requirements for the processing of documents, most common mistakes, demonstration of how to fill in the required forms,

Other related topics: recognition of education, risks of illegal employment, integration measures, combating trafficking in human beings.

In the context of the military conflict in Ukraine, the issue of combating trafficking in human beings, working with vulnerable groups, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, protection against gender-based violence, etc., is once again coming to the fore. Professionals involved

¹⁸ IOM statistics, see: <https://www.iom.sk/sk/aktivita/vzdelavanie-poradenske-sluzby/aktualna-ponuka-skoleni.html>

in the provision of services to refugees and non-EU citizens conducted 59 trainings, workshops and information sessions for 623 participants on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, protection from gender-based violence, how to work with clients and intercultural communication between 24 February 2022 and 16 August 2023.

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TURKEY

Introduction

Facts and figures on integration and inclusion

As of 2024, Turkey hosts approximately 4.5 million foreigners. A significant portion of these foreigners are refugees. Particularly due to the Syrian Civil War, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey is estimated to be around 3.7 million. Additionally, there are migrants from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and various African countries. For instance, the number of migrants from Afghanistan is approximately 150,000, from Iran about 100,000, and from Iraq around 200,000.

In Turkey, as of 2024, approximately 800,000 Syrian children are receiving education. In terms of healthcare, there are over 200 health centers and hospitals providing services to refugees. Various projects and training programs supporting the employment of refugees are also in place, with around 50,000 refugees participating in these programs. Turkey provides temporary protection status to Syrians, with approximately 3.7 million individuals benefiting from this status as of 2024. Additionally, the number of international protection applications exceeds 100,000.

Turkey offers social support programs to refugees, with around 200,000 beneficiaries. About 40,000 refugees are participating in language training programs. Challenges in integration processes include language barriers and cultural differences. Turkey continues to work on various improvement initiatives to address these challenges.

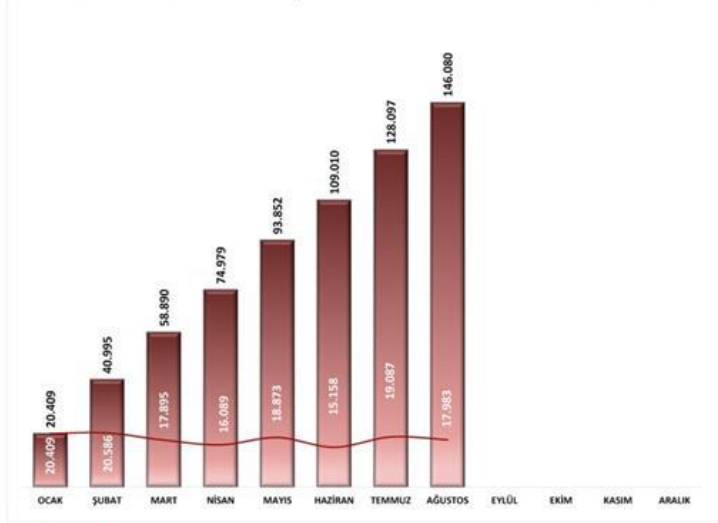


Figure 1. The number of irregular migrants apprehended by year



Figure 2. The nationality distribution of irregular migrants apprehended by year

YAKALANAN DÜZENSİZ GÖÇMEN AYLIK VE KÜMÜLATİF TOPLAMLARI

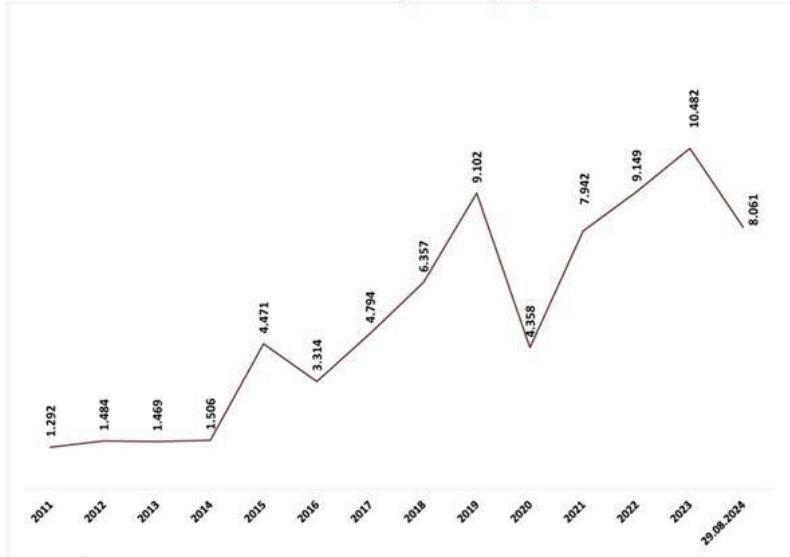


*29.08.2024 tarihi itibarıyla

Düzensiz Göç Ortak Veri Tabanından gelen kayıtlara istinaden işlem tesis edildiğinden ilgili veriler geçmişe dönük değişiklik gösterebilecektir.

Figure 3. The monthly and cumulative total of apprehended irregular migrants

YILLARA GÖRE GÖÇMEN KAÇAKÇILIĞI



*29.08.2024 tarihi itibarıyla

Figure 4. Human trafficking by year

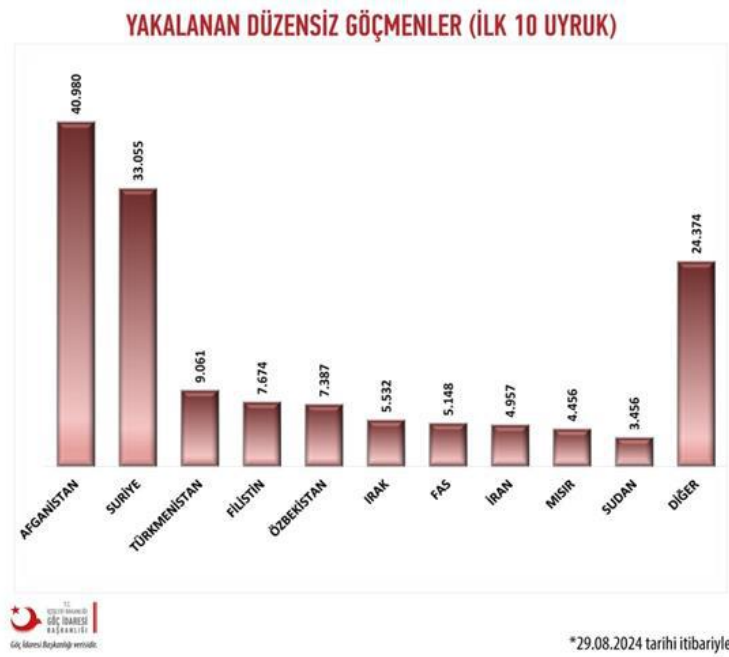


Figure 5. Irregular migrants apprehended (top 10 nationalities)

Key principles and values on integration and inclusion

Integration and inclusion are fundamental aspects of managing migration effectively and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the society they live in. In Turkey, several key principles and values guide the approach towards integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees:

Human Rights and Dignity: At the core of Turkey's integration strategy is the respect for human rights and the dignity of all individuals. The country is committed to ensuring that every migrant and refugee is treated with respect and provided with equal opportunities, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or legal status.

Equal Access to Services: Turkey strives to provide equal access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal assistance for all migrants and refugees. This principle aims to reduce disparities and promote fair treatment in the provision of public services.

Social Cohesion: Promoting social cohesion is a key value in Turkey's integration efforts. The country emphasizes the importance of fostering positive interactions between migrants and

the local population, encouraging mutual understanding, and combating xenophobia and discrimination.

Participatory Approach: Turkey advocates for a participatory approach in the integration process, involving migrants and refugees in decision-making and policy development. This ensures that their needs and perspectives are taken into account, leading to more effective and inclusive policies.

Cultural Sensitivity and Respect: Recognizing and respecting cultural diversity is a fundamental value in Turkey's integration policies. The country supports programs and initiatives that celebrate cultural differences and promote intercultural dialogue.

Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency: Empowering migrants and refugees to become self-sufficient is a priority in Turkey's integration strategy. This includes providing access to employment opportunities, vocational training, and language courses to enhance their ability to integrate into the labor market and society.

Legal and Administrative Support: Providing clear and accessible legal and administrative support is crucial for successful integration. Turkey works to streamline processes related to residency, work permits, and other legal matters to facilitate a smoother integration experience for migrants and refugees.

Community Engagement and Support: Engaging local communities in the integration process is essential for building supportive networks and fostering a welcoming environment. Turkey supports initiatives that promote community involvement and collaboration in integration efforts.

Support Mechanism of the Integration Process

Turkey provides a range of mechanisms and services to support the integration of migrants and refugees, aiming to facilitate their active participation in society and ease their integration process. The support mechanisms in Turkey can be categorized as follows:

Legal and Administrative Support: Turkey offers comprehensive legal and administrative support for migrants and refugees. This includes assistance with residence permits, work permits, and citizenship applications. The Directorate General of Migration Management and various local authorities provide guidance and assistance in these matters.

Education and Language Courses: Language acquisition is crucial for successful integration. Turkey offers various language courses and educational programs to migrants and refugees. These courses help individuals learn Turkish and facilitate their social integration.

Healthcare Services: Access to healthcare is a critical component of the integration process. In Turkey, health services are available to migrants and refugees, with specialized healthcare services provided at public hospitals and health centers.

Social Support and Assistance: Social support programs offer various forms of assistance to meet the basic needs of migrants and refugees. In Turkey, this includes food aid, accommodation support, and financial assistance. The General Directorate of Social Assistance and local social services coordinate these supports.

Employment and Vocational Training: To support the integration of migrants into the labor market, Turkey provides various employment and vocational training programs. These programs aim to enhance the job prospects of migrants through job placement services, vocational training courses, and partnerships with employers.

Psychosocial Support: Psychosocial support services are also available to help migrants and refugees cope with trauma and stress, and to support their integration into society. Psychological counseling and social services offer crucial support in this area.

Community Participation and Engagement: Turkey encourages migrants and refugees to engage with local communities through various programs and activities. These initiatives, which include cultural exchange, volunteering, and community-based projects, aim to enhance social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Inclusive Policies and Strategies: Turkey's policies and strategies for integration are designed to support migrants' effective participation in social and economic life. These policies are

implemented through various institutional and local collaborations to facilitate migrants' adjustment to local communities.

Types of Service Providers

In Turkey, a variety of service providers are engaged in delivering support and assistance to migrants and refugees. These providers offer a range of services that are crucial for the successful integration and well-being of these populations. The types of service providers in Turkey can be categorized as follows:

Governmental Agencies: Various governmental bodies are responsible for implementing policies and providing services related to migration and refugee management. Key agencies include:

- Directorate General of Migration Management: Manages legal and administrative processes related to residence permits, work permits, and asylum applications.
- Ministry of Family and Social Services: Offers social support services, including financial assistance, accommodation support, and child welfare programs.
- Ministry of Health: Provides healthcare services to migrants and refugees through public health facilities and specialized medical services.

Local Authorities: Municipalities and local government bodies play a vital role in providing localized support. They offer services such as:

- Local Social Services: Facilitate access to social aid programs, community-based support, and integration activities.
- Local Health Centers: Deliver primary healthcare services and medical assistance to migrants and refugees at the community level.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): NGOs are instrumental in offering specialized support and advocacy services. They provide a range of services, including:

- Emergency Relief Organizations: Offer immediate assistance such as food, clothing, and temporary shelter.
- Human Rights Organizations: Work on protecting the rights of migrants and refugees, providing legal assistance, and advocating for policy changes.

- Integration and Social Support NGOs: Focus on facilitating social integration through language courses, vocational training, and psychosocial support.

International Organizations: International bodies operate in Turkey to support migration and refugee issues through various programs and initiatives. Notable organizations include:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Provides protection and assistance to refugees, including registration, legal aid, and resettlement support.
- International Organization for Migration: Offers services related to migration management, including return and reintegration programs, and support for vulnerable migrants.

Educational Institutions: Schools and educational institutions offer vital support to migrant and refugee children and adults. Services include:

- Language Schools: Provide Turkish language courses to help migrants and refugees integrate into the education system and local community.
- Vocational Training Centers: Offer skills development and job training programs to enhance employability and economic self-sufficiency.

Healthcare Providers: Specialized healthcare providers deliver essential medical services tailored to the needs of migrants and refugees. These include:

- Public Hospitals: Offer comprehensive medical care and emergency services.
- Specialized Clinics: Provide mental health services, reproductive health care, and other specialized medical support.

Community-Based Organizations: Local community groups and associations play a role in facilitating social inclusion and providing support through:

- Cultural and Social Activities: Organize events and activities that promote cultural exchange and community integration.
- Peer Support Network: Offer informal support and guidance based on shared experiences and community bonds.

Financing and Resources: Health Services, Educational Services, Accommodation Services, Employment Support Services, Diversity and Scope of Services Offered, such as Psychosocial Support, Integration and Compliance Programs

In Turkey, various financial resources and funding mechanisms are utilized to support a wide range of services aimed at facilitating the integration of migrants and refugees. These services include health care, education, accommodation, employment support, and psychosocial support, among others. The key aspects of financing and resources in these areas are as follows:

Health Services

- **Funding Sources:** Health services for migrants and refugees are financed through a combination of public funding, government budgets, and international aid. The Turkish Ministry of Health allocates resources for providing medical care in public hospitals and health centers.
- **Scope of Services:** Health services include primary and emergency care, preventive services, and specialized medical treatments. International organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UNHCR, also contribute resources and support for specific health programs.

Educational Services

- **Funding Sources:** Educational services for migrant and refugee children and adults are supported by government funding from the Ministry of National Education, as well as grants from international donors and NGOs.
- **Scope of Services:** Educational services include access to primary and secondary education, language courses, and vocational training programs. Various NGOs and community-based organizations also provide supplementary educational support.

Accommodation Services

- **Funding Sources:** Accommodation services are funded through a mix of government budgets, international financial assistance, and NGO contributions. The Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Services oversees accommodation support programs.
- **Scope of Services:** Services include temporary shelters, transitional housing, and long-term accommodation solutions. Support is provided for both urban and rural settings, depending on the needs of the migrants and refugees.

Employment Support Services

- **Funding Sources:** Employment support services are financed by government programs, local municipalities, and international organizations focused on labor market integration. The Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) plays a key role in providing resources and job placement services.
- **Scope of Services:** Employment support includes job placement assistance, vocational training, language courses for workplace integration, and entrepreneurship support. Various NGOs also provide career counseling and skills development workshops.

Diversity and Scope of Services Offered

- **Funding Sources:** The diversity of services offered is supported through a combination of public funding, international aid, and private contributions. This includes funding for a range of specialized services to address diverse needs.
- **Scope of Services:** Services cover a broad spectrum, including psychosocial support, cultural orientation programs, and legal assistance. Organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and various local NGOs contribute to this diversity.

Psychosocial Support

- **Funding Sources:** Psychosocial support programs are funded by government agencies, international organizations, and non-profit organizations. Financial resources are allocated for mental health services and counseling programs.
- **Scope of Services:** This includes counseling, therapy sessions, support groups, and mental health awareness programs. These services aim to address trauma and stress, helping individuals adapt and integrate into their new environment.

Integration and Compliance Programs

- **Funding Sources:** Integration and compliance programs are financed by government budgets, EU funding, and various international grants. These programs are designed to facilitate social integration and ensure adherence to local laws and regulations.
- **Scope of Services:** Programs focus on legal compliance, cultural orientation, and community engagement. They also include initiatives to foster understanding between

migrants and the local population, promoting social cohesion and adherence to local norms.

In summary, Turkey employs a diverse range of financial resources and funding mechanisms to support services for migrants and refugees. These resources ensure the provision of essential services across various domains, contributing to the successful integration and well-being of migrant and refugee populations.

Best practices in key areas – education, counselling, employment

Protection and Livelihoods Project (Implementation Period: 2023-01 / 2023-12)

The "Protection and Livelihoods Project" is a significant initiative supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), aimed at helping refugees in Turkey cope with challenges they face. The project provides various services to ensure refugee safety, protect basic human rights, and improve living conditions.

Key objectives of this project include:

- **Legal Support and Protection:** Providing legal advice and support to refugees, ensuring they understand their rights and how to access protection mechanisms. Assistance is provided in refugee status applications, residence permits, and other legal processes.
- **Livelihoods and Economic Support:** Strengthening refugees' livelihoods by providing economic support or organizing vocational training programs. This helps refugees achieve economic independence and develop skills to meet their own needs.
- **Access to Education and Health Services:** Creating or strengthening support mechanisms to facilitate refugees' access to education and health services. This includes ensuring children attend school, supporting adults' participation in the workforce, and meeting general health needs.
- **Community Empowerment and Integration Activities:** Organizing various activities to strengthen refugees' integration into society and enhance social bonds. Activities such as language courses, cultural events, sports programs, and vocational workshops enable refugees to find support within their communities and better adapt to local society.

- Crisis Management and Emergency Aid: Being prepared to respond quickly to refugees during emergencies and crises by providing necessary emergency assistance. This aims to protect refugees and meet their needs during natural disasters, health crises, or other emergency.

Implementation Of The Coordination Of Turkish Red Crescent Children's Programs In The Education Of Migrant Children

Children are undoubtedly the most affected by migration and Turkish Red Crescent Children's Programs Coordinatorship strives to reduce the difficulties faced by disadvantaged children, especially migrant children, to create conditions for access and continuation of education and to meet their needs in a holistic manner. Within the framework of collaboration, which is signed on May 2013 between Turkish Red Crescent and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Children's Programs Coordinatorship carries out psychosocial support, child protection, social adaptation, youth empowerment and educational support activities for children in the 4-18 age group in order to protect/prevent and raise their awareness. Among these studies, the activities of child protection and educational support aim to directly contribute to the education of migrant children, by focusing the problems, such as combating child labor, providing language education, providing necessary guidance for schooling and eliminating the problems that are barriers for school.

The activities of Program are applied in 16 cities, 33 fields of activities (7 temporary shelter centers/camps, 16 community centers, 3 mobile child-friendly spaces, 5 mobile psychosocial support team, 2 children and youth centers). From the start of the program, 4,301 volunteers are trained, 2,408,599 activities are realized with 644,136 children. In addition, 26,458 household visits are done and 10,077 cases, most of them are towards the children's access to education, are directed.

As previously stated, when we look at the barriers to access to education for migrant children, one of the main reasons is that children do not speak the Turkish or cannot speak it effectively and adequately. In order to resolve this problem, the Turkish language support was provided and 2,609 children have taken language lessons since 2013. Because of the majority of disadvantaged children do not have access to tutoring or classroom facilities, in order to ensure equality of opportunity, the homework support is provided to 7,135 children by The

Project of “Öğretmen-im” (My Teacher). In addition, 14.602 activities were realized within the scope of the Project of Foreign Student Exam (YOS) with 964 children, who wants to continue university education. On the other hand, in order to develop children's personal skills and overcome adaptation problems, 238.666 Psychosocial Support Activity with 95.381 children, 372.600 Child Protection Activity with 140.607 children, and 6.625 Volunteering/Leadership Activities with 4.301 children was realized.

***Health, Comprehensive Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Services for Syrian Migrants
(Implementation Period: 2023-09 / 2024-08)***

The "Health, Comprehensive Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Services for Syrian Migrants" (SAMS) is an important program aimed at improving access to health services and meeting mental health needs of Syrian migrants in Turkey. This program is implemented by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey and supported by international organizations such as UNHCR.

Services provided under SAMS include:

- Basic Health Services: Providing emergency health services, family planning, and child health services tailored to the needs of Syrian migrants.
- Management of Chronic Diseases: Regular health checks and medication provision for chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension.
- Women's Health and Maternity Services: Providing pregnancy monitoring, childbirth services, and postpartum care for women's health.
- Mental Health Services: Assessing and treating mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety among Syrian migrants.
- Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy: Offering rehabilitation services and physical therapy for injuries or disabilities.
- Psychosocial Support and Counseling: Providing psychosocial support programs and counseling services tailored to Syrian migrants.

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GERMANY

Introduction

Migration and integration are topics that have accompanied the human race for centuries, with people moving between countries and continents due to various reasons throughout history: looking for a new life, fleeing persecution and war, and moving because of work and family.

On the one hand, ongoing trends such as increased and varied mobility, means of transport, and easy access to international information on living abroad contribute to migration being an expected part of modern life.

This material contains statistics on migration, population, the number and proportion of national and non-national citizens, and other migration-related data.

Reference is made to German's migration legislation, integration policy and approved action plans. In the following, it discusses the support mechanisms that are currently in place to promote integration and inclusion, as well as the services and concrete activities provided.

In order to complete the theory with practice, here are three examples of best practice in key areas of the integration process.

Integration and Inclusion of Refugees, Migrants and Immigrants

Legal migration is part of a balanced common EU migration policy from which migrants, countries of origin, and countries of destination benefit. It gives people who plan to migrate an opportunity to improve their circumstances. At the same time, it helps host countries to address labour market needs. The EU has had common policies on asylum and immigration since 1999¹⁹.

The migration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany is intended to manage, control and limit the immigration of foreigners to Germany. It pays attention to the ability of the society to take in and integrate new arrivals and to the country's economic and labour market interests. Migration policy also serves to meet humanitarian obligations.²⁰

Integration Strategy and Policies

By establishing a commissioner for integration in 1978, the federal government acknowledged that an increasing number of temporary guest workers had permanently settled in Germany.

This laid the foundation at the start of the new millennium for the government's first large-scale reform of the immigration system in 2005 and the establishment of a systematic integration policy.

¹⁹ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/story-von-der-leyen-commission/managing-migration-responsibly_en

²⁰ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/topics/migration/migration-node.html>

To foster the inclusion of migrants, German governments have so far set up 2 integration plans.

The National Integration Plan of 2007²¹ focused on education, training, employment, and cultural integration, while the National Action Plan on Integration of 2012²² created instruments to render the results of the integration policy measurable. It included general objectives, timeframes, as well as indicators to verify the attainment of the set goals:

- Optimising individual support provided to young migrants
- Improving the recognition of foreign degrees
- Increasing the share of migrants in the civil service of federal and state governments
- Providing health care and care to migrants.

Later, the Meseberg Declaration on Integration²³ adopted by the federal cabinet in May 2016 outlined the government policy based on a 2-ways principle: offering support, training and job opportunities to foreigners but also requiring efforts in return and highlighting their duties (Fördern und Fordern).

Provided services are modular, target various immigrant groups and involve almost all the federal ministries for employment, education and social integration. In 2018, the National Action Plan on Integration was expanded as part of the 10th Integration Summit in 2018. Five phases of migration and integration were elaborated:

- Pre-immigration phase: managing expectations - providing orientation
- Initial integration phase: facilitating arrival - communicating values
- Integration phase: enabling participation - demanding and promoting performance
- Phase of growing together: shaping diversity - securing unity
- Phase of cohesion: strengthening cohesion - shaping the future

The so-called National Action Plan is designed as a process involving the whole of society, and is being developed jointly by the federal government, the states, local authorities and non-governmental actors, especially migrant organisations. More than 300 different participants are involved.

²¹ https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/library-document/national-plan-integration_en

²² https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/library-document/national-actions-plan-integration_en

²³ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/archiv/alt-inhalte/meseberger-erklaerung-zur-integration-396024>

Furthermore, between 2019 and 2021, the Expert Commission on the Framework Conditions for Integration Capability was created by the federal government to address a wide range of topics in the field of migration and integration. The result is a report which clarifies the dynamics in the integration field, advocates an understanding of integration as a benefit for the whole of society, and contains a wealth of recommendations on how policy-makers and others can work together to better shape the immigration society.

With the National Action Plan on Integration, the German government is translating into practice the pledge laid out in the coalition agreement, to focus the many and varied integration measures in the form of a nationwide strategy that both supports migrant and expects them to do their bit. The aim is to improve the life situations of people with a migrant background, enable them to participate equally and strengthen cohesion within society.

Law on Foreigners

Anyone wishing to enter and reside in Germany legally must satisfy the requirements specified in European and national law. These include having a visa (if required), a legitimate reason for staying and adequate financial resources to pay for one's stay.

A foreigner who is not a citizen of an EU or Schengen member state may not legally enter the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany without the required residence permit or passport (Section 14 of the Residence Act²⁴); foreigners subject to an entry ban may not enter without an entry permit (Sections 11 and 14 of the Residence Act²⁵).

Asylum law

In accordance with Article 16a of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz – GG) of the Federal Republic of Germany, persons persecuted on political grounds have the right of asylum. The right of asylum has constitutional status as a fundamental right in Germany.

The admission procedure for asylum seekers is governed by the Asylum Procedure Act (AsylVfG). Asylum seekers whom border authorities permit to enter the Federal Republic of Germany or who are found in the country without a residence permit are transferred to the nearest reception centre of the relevant state.

²⁴ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

²⁵ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

Using the nation-wide system for initial distribution, they are assigned to reception centres of the individual German states according to a formula defined in the Asylum Procedure Act.²⁶

Citizenship law

As one of the European countries with the most refugees and asylum seekers, Germany offers safety and stability for those who are persecuted in their own home countries. Therefore, for refugees and asylum seekers, obtaining German citizenship is not merely a legal status but a gateway to a new life filled with opportunities and security. This is why understanding the requirements of citizenship for refugees/asylum seekers is highly important.

In the area of international protection, the aim is to continue to provide effective protection to those in need, while preventing abuse of the asylum system, including through the reform of the Common European Asylum System.

Facts and Figures

Roughly 20.2 million people in Germany in 2022 either moved to the country themselves or were born to two people who moved there, according to figures published by the Federal Statistical Office, Destatis.²⁷

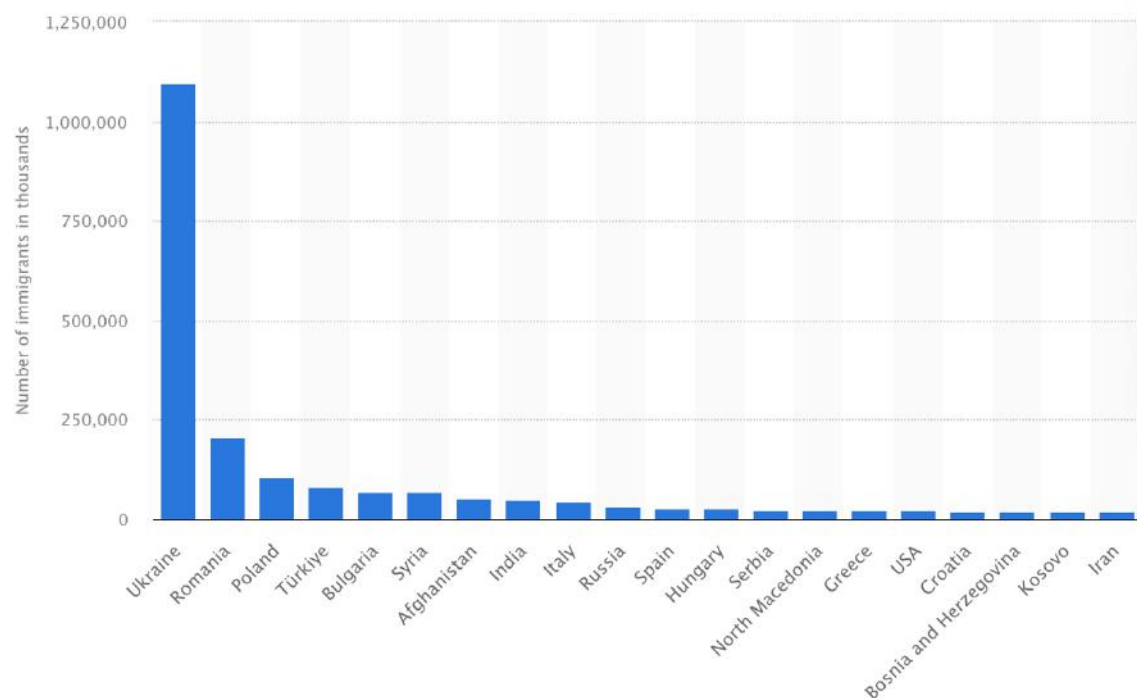
That's a 6.3% rise on the 2021 figure and represents 24.3% of the total population of around 83.2 million. Of those, 15.3 million, or 18.4% of the population, moved to Germany from abroad themselves at some point in their own lifetimes.

The high average levels of migration in recent years were also apparent in the statistics. Just over 6 million people had migrated to Germany in the last decade on record, between 2013 and 2022.

Increased migration from conflict zones like Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan in 2022 meant that the amount of people who migrated themselves was rising faster, up 7.3% on the past year, than the number of children born to migrant parents, up 4% on 2021, Destatis said.

²⁶ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/topics/migration/asylum-refugee-protection/asylum-refugee-policy-germany/asylum-refugee-policy-node.html>

²⁷ <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-immigrants-made-up-over-18-of-2022-population/a-65383249#>



Number of immigrants in Germany in 2022, by country of origin (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/894238/immigrant-numbers-by-country-of-origin-germany/>)

Destatis noted that people who had moved to Germany in the last ten years were on average younger than the average native citizen, with an average age of 29.9 versus 47.0 across the population.

Among them, 27.9% said they moved because they were fleeing or seeking asylum, 24.2% said they were looking for work, and 23.8% said they were moving to join their families. Another 8.2% said they migrated to pursue academic opportunities.

There was near gender parity among the 15.3 million in Germany who had migrated in the last decade; 47% were women and 53% men.

The most common countries of origin were civil war-stricken Syria (16%), followed by Romania (7%) and Poland (6%), with Ukraine next at 5%. Destatis noted that the unexpected increase in arrivals from Ukraine in 2022 was probably not yet adequately represented in the data.

Key principles and values on integration and inclusion

“We will make sure that people who have the right to stay are integrated and made to feel welcome. They have a future to build – and skills, energy and talent.” (President von der Leyen, State of the Union Address 2020)

The European way of life is an inclusive one. Integration and inclusion are key for people coming to Europe, for local communities, and for the long-term well-being of our societies and the stability of our economies. If we want to help our societies and economies thrive, we need to support everyone who is part of society, with integration being both a right and a duty for all.

It means giving equal opportunities to all to enjoy their rights and participate in community and social life, regardless of the background and in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights. It also means respecting common European values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including democracy, the rule of law, the freedoms of speech and religion, as well as the rights to equality and non-discrimination. These fundamental values are an essential part of living and participating in European society. They are also the reasoning behind the creation of the ‘Promoting our European way of life’ portfolio within the Commission – defending the simple but essential premise that everybody matters, that no one should be left behind, and that all should be able to effectively exercise their rights and have access to opportunities and security.²⁸

Support mechanism of the integration process

The Aliens Employment Promotion Act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsförderungsgesetz) adopted in June 2019 provides for asylum-seekers with good prospects of being granted asylum receiving assistance at an earlier stage and being more rapidly integrated into the labour market. It will be easier for migrants who are expected to be in Germany for a longer period to access integration courses and vocationally relevant German courses as well as receiving training assistance.

The amendment to the Asylum-Seeker Services Act (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz) reflects the aim of the German government to amend assistance rates and close a support gap. Migrants who are undertaking vocational training or a university degree will in future be able to receive assistance under this Act even after the 15 months of residence in Germany. This should prevent them being forced to drop out of their training or degree course as a result of financial constraints. To foster integration in the form of undertaking voluntary work, an exemption will in future apply.

²⁸ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files_en?file=2020-11/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf

The German government has established the independent specialist commission on the framework conditions that foster integration. It is drawing up standards on how integration can be improved on the labour market and within society.

The new cooperation agreement between the Federal Employment Agency and the task force of the Federal Government Commissioner for Integration is providing special support for women with a migrant background to help them become integrated on the labour market. Support for voluntary work and numerous sports projects of the Federal Government Commissioner for Integration with the Foundation of the German Football League (DFL) and the German Olympic Sports Confederation are designed to help immigrants find their feet in Germany.

Types of Service Providers

Let's divide the types of Service Providers according to their role in the integration processes. There are migration advice services in many towns and cities in Germany. The following organisations offer **free migration advice**:

- The Workers' Welfare Association (*Arbeiterwohlfahrt*),
- The German Caritas Association,
- The *Diakonisches Werk der Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland* (the social welfare organisation of Germany's Protestant churches),
- The German Equal Participation Welfare Association (*Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband*),
- The the German Red Cross (*Deutsches Rotes Kreuz*),
- The Central Welfare Agency of the Jews in Germany (*Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland*),
- The Federation of Expellees (*Bund der Vertriebenen*).

Financing and Resources

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) in Germany

- **Details:** For Germany, a total of approximately €1.5 billion is expected to be available through AMIF for relevant projects over the 2021-2027 funding period, as well as

€500 million for measures under the fund's thematic facility (resettlement and admission for humanitarian reasons, resettlement of persons in need of protection from one EU country to another). German AMIF Programme.

- **National managing authority:** The national managing authority for AMIF in Germany is the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) in Germany

- **Details:** The ESF, now ESF+, will continue to be the EU's most important financing instrument for investments in people. A total of around €2.3 billion will be made available in Germany.
- **National managing authority:** Several national and regional authorities oversee the implementation of ESF in Germany.

Other EU funds for integration available in Germany:

ERASMUS+, the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe

National managing authority: There are three national authorities responsible for Erasmus+ in Germany

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany

Federal states

Baden-Württemberg

Berlin

Bayern

Bremen

Brandenburg

Hamburg

Hessen

NRW

Niedersachsen

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Rheinland-Pfalz

Sachsen

Sachsen-Anhalt

Saarland

Schleswig-Holstein

Thüringen

Private funding in Germany

Mercator Foundation

Robert Bosch Foundation

IKEA Foundation

Help and Hope Foundation

Auerbach Foundation

Other sources of private funding can be found at Stiftungssuche

Health Care

The state covers the cost of medical services for refugees and asylum seekers through public health insurance. As a refugee or asylum seeker, you can select a health insurance fund that directly reimburses healthcare providers on your behalf.²⁹

Social Services

Both refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are entitled to social benefits, in particular unemployment benefits, on the same level as German nationals. There have been substantial reforms of the legal framework governing social benefits in Germany through the so called ‘citizens benefits law’ (*Bürgergeld Gesetz*) which entered into force on 1 January 2023.³⁰

Employment Support

It is not easy to find one’s way around in a foreign country. Refugees and asylum seekers in Germany have different ways of gaining initial practical experience in the labour market. Many initiatives, chambers and associations, as well as businesses, provide local career guidance. The website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) offers basic

²⁹ <https://handbookgermany.de/en/healthcareforrefugees>

³⁰ <http://www.fluechtlingsinfo-berlin.de/fr/pdf/ratgeber.pdf>

information on foreigners' rights and opportunities, helping them to navigate the German labour market.³¹

As soon as refugees or asylum seekers are registered in Germany, the local employment agencies are responsible for them. They offer advice and assistance in finding employment, as well as a qualification check for the German labour market. After three months, asylum seekers and tolerated people (those without a residence permit and obliged to leave the country but who cannot be deported for humanitarian or other reasons for the time being) gain access to the labour or training market

Accommodational Services

In general, 3 types of accommodation for asylum seekers can be distinguished:

- Initial reception centres, including particular types of centres such as arrival centres, special reception centres and AnkER-centres;
- Collective accommodation centres;
- Decentralised accommodation.

Emergency shelters were reintroduced in 2022 especially in bigger cities following the rising numbers of protection seekers from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Initial reception centres

Following the reform of June 2019, asylum seekers are generally obliged to stay in an initial reception centre for a period of up to 18 months after their application has been lodged (*Aufnahmeeinrichtung*). An obligation to stay in these centres for a maximum of 24 months can be imposed by Federal States since July 2017³² Furthermore, asylum seekers from safe countries of origin are obliged to stay there for the whole duration of their procedures.

The Federal States are required to establish and maintain the initial reception centres. Accordingly, there is at least one such centre in each of Germany's 16 Federal States with most Federal States having several initial reception facilities.

³¹ <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Startseite/start.html>

³² <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/reception-conditions/access-and-forms-reception-conditions/freedom-movement/>

Initial reception centres are assigned to a branch office of the BAMF, or combined with a branch office to constitute an arrival centre or AnkER centre. At the beginning of 2022, out of 58 branch offices listed on the BAMF website 18 were integrated in arrival centres in 12 different Federal States, and eight were part of AnkER centres in three Federal States.

Arrival centres

Since 2016, several reception centres have either been opened as arrival centres (*Ankunftscentren*) or existing facilities have been transformed into arrival centres. The concept of ‘arrival centres’ is not established in law, therefore technically the initial reception centres are still functioning as part of the arrival centres, together with a branch office of the BAMF and other relevant authorities. As of January 2022, the BAMF lists 18 arrival centres which are located across 12 Federal States:

- Berlin
- Bremen
- Hamburg
- Baden-Württemberg: Heidelberg
- North Rhine-Westphalia: Bielefeld, Bonn, Mönchengladbach, Unna
- Saxony: Chemnitz, Leipzig
- Lower Saxony: Bad Fallingb., Bramsche
- Saxony-Anhalt: Halberstadt
- Hessen: Gießen
- Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Schwerin
- Thuringia: Suhl
- Rhineland-Palatinate: Trier

AnkER centres

As of May 2021, a total of eight AnkER were established in Germany in **Bavaria, Saxony and Saarland**.³³

Since August 2018, Bavaria has established and/or rebranded all facilities run by the seven districts of the Federal State as AnkER centres. These included seven AnkER centres and a

³³ https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/reception-conditions/housing/types-accommodation/#_ftn11

number of facilities attached thereto (*Dependancen*), the latter serving only for accommodation of asylum seekers to avoid overcrowding. All steps of the procedure are carried out in the main AnKER centres.

Best practices in key areas

Germany has a well-developed framework for migrant integration, focusing on various aspects to ease the process.

1. "Evaluation of the Integration Courses (EvIk)"³⁴

The project entitled "Evaluation of the Integration Courses (EvIk)" analyses the impact of the integration courses, especially focusing on the attendee group of refugees.

The project as a whole examines factors of success that can be controlled or influenced by the Federal Office and which lead to the successful acquisition of both language and values through the integration course. It is asked whether the integration courses are meaningfully embedded into the integration landscape and – in general terms – which measures can help to make the courses more effective and efficient.

The integration course (consisting of a language course and an orientation course) is the central contribution towards integration made by the Federation to promote language skills for migrants (final test: German language test for immigrants), and to equip them with relevant values (final test: Life in Germany). Lately, the increased migration caused by displacement from 2015 onwards has changed the composition of the integration course attendees.

Objectives

The project entitled "Evaluation of the Integration Courses (EvIk)" therefore analyses the impact of the integration courses, taking the attendee group of refugees into consideration.

In terms of content, the project addresses four main areas of research:

- Analysing pass rates and identifying the influential factors,

- Analysing how individuals progress through the course, as well as evaluating exits from the course,

In order to do justice to the multifaceted nature of these issues, the project adopts a holistic approach, incorporating information from the course attendees, integration course providers and instructors, as well as other relevant details relating to the courses.

The study focuses on two types of integration courses: the general integration course and the literacy course.

The project is scheduled to run until the end of 2025.

2. *Worker*³⁵

Worker is the first German training and job market, which is specifically aimed at refugees. The platform creates a suitable environment in which refugees meet to this group of jobseekers positive-minded employers. At the moment 114 employers and 99 jobseekers have registered.

The platform is a complementary work of BA Communication Design studies at the HTW Berlin in summer 2015. The project shall be continued and need supporters.

The platform creates a suitable environment in which this specific group of job seekers can meet employers who are interested in hiring them. With the help of employer and candidate profiles, as well as numerous job offers in various industries and locations throughout Germany, it enables the first uncomplicated contact and exchange between newcomers and employers.

Success stories:

- "When I came to Germany, it was difficult for me to find a job because I didn't know my way around and had no contacts. But then I found Worker and it really helped me to find a job. The platform is very easy to use and I was able to quickly search for open positions that matched my skills. I finally found a job as a chef in a restaurant and I am very happy about it"

IBRAHIM, 28 CAME TO GERMANY FROM TURKEY IN 2021

³⁵ <https://www.worker.de/en>

- "After I came to Germany, I wanted to find work as soon as possible, but it was not easy. I searched many job boards, but many employers were skeptical. Then I found Worker and the communication immediately felt more positive. The team personally supported me in my job search and I finally found a job as a graphic designer in a design agency in Berlin"

OLEKSANDRA, 26 CAME TO GERMANY FROM UKRAINE IN 2022

*3. Muslim Life in Germany 2020*³⁶

The project entitled "Muslim life in Germany 2020 (MLD 2020)" submits up-to-date knowledge about the Muslim population group living in Germany. More than 4,500 people with a migration background from predominantly Muslim countries of origin were interviewed for this study between July 2019 and March 2020 as part of a representative nationwide survey.

The study entitled "Muslim life in Germany 2020" was carried out on behalf of the German Islam Conference (DIK) in order to obtain authoritative data about Muslims with a migration background.

The information that was obtained will be used, firstly, to conduct a new extrapolation of the number of Muslim men and women in Germany, and to describe their social structure.

The data furthermore permit analyses to be made of everyday religious practice, on aspects of Integration, on everyday experiences and on discrimination that has been experienced, as well as on co-habitation with people of other origins and religions. In order to categorise the results, more detailed evaluations may be carried out within the Muslim population group, such as between people from different regions of origin, or between generations of immigrants.

In order to do justice to the diversity of Muslim life in Germany, a survey was carried out between July 2019 and March 2020 among both immigrants from various predominantly Muslim countries of origin, as well as among their descendants who were born in Germany. A total of more than 4,500 useable interviews were held with men and women originating from Turkey, South Eastern Europe, North Africa as well as the Middle East. 600 German nationals

³⁶ <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/ProjekteReportagen/EN/Forschung/Integration/muslimisches-leben-deutschland-2020.html>

with no migration background were also interviewed as a comparison group. The sample for the questionnaire was taken at national level in a multistage process from different residents' registration offices, using the onomastic (name-based) procedure.

On the topics of social structure, religiosity and everyday religious practice, as well as on various aspects of integration, was published in the spring of 2021. Social cohesion is examined in three further publications. They address the topics of interreligious relations, perceived discrimination, and attitudes towards social cohesion.

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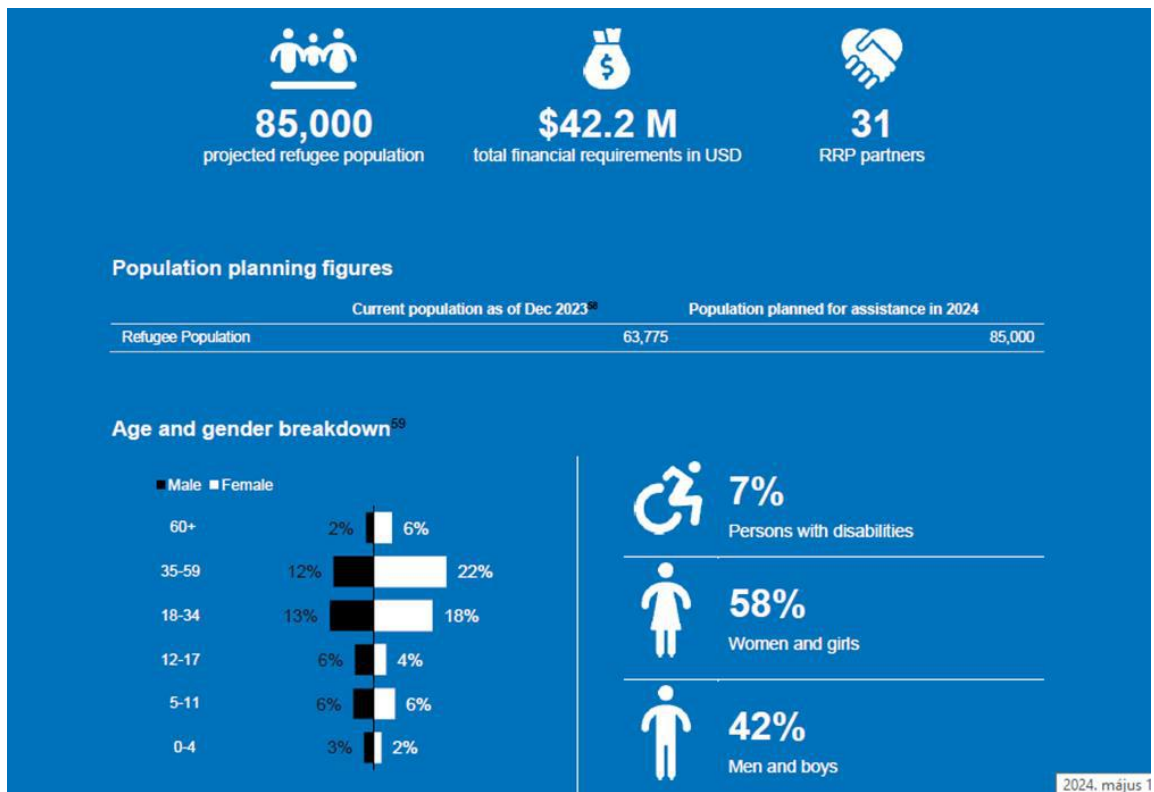
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HUNGARY

Introduction

Facts And Figures on Integration And Inclusion

Hungary Planned Response (January-December 2024)



From Ukraine, nearly the only people who come are broken families, women and children. With four out of 10 households led by a single adult, primarily women.

Men stay at home and fight in the Ukrainian army. Men aged between 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine and are not allowed to cross the Hungarian border.

One in three households has members with chronic medical conditions, and one out of 10 refugee households include a member with a disability.

As of the 2022/23 school year, Hungary hosted 4,856 Ukrainian students, with 1,164 in kindergarten and 3,692 in primary and secondary schools. Not all refugee children are enrolled in formal education institutions.

In Hungary, several factors influence access to education:

- the expectation of eventually returning to Ukraine,
- the language barriers,
- a preference for online learning for older students,
- costs and lack of awareness among refugees of eligibility for related benefits ect.

In Hungary, most refugees who are of working age are currently employed, making up 71 % of this group. They often find themselves in low-skilled jobs across various industries, where their qualifications do not align with their work and wage earnings are insufficient to cover costs.

About 20 % of working-age refugees are not part of the workforce, as they are not in a position to look for work or are currently pursuing education.

Women tend to have a lower labour force participation rate than men, often due to caregiving responsibilities. Unemployment affects 9 % of working-age refugees. The primary obstacles to employment include language barriers, limited job opportunities, issues with documentation, and a mismatch between skills and the labour market.

The demand for long-term housing and inclusion support for refugees in Hungary is growing, with refugees citing affordable housing as first among the three most reported priority needs.

Targeted transitional programmes offer rental and cash assistance to facilitate the transition from collective centres to private housing, however accessing the rental market remains challenging in Hungary due to high demand and unaffordable rental prices, especially in urban locations.

One-third of refugees expressed health needs, with 12 % facing barriers in accessing medical care; the most cited barriers are lack of Hungarian health insurance, language difficulties, inability to afford fees and lack of information or ability to register with a doctor due to overstretched services.

Additionally, one in three refugee households reported chronically ill family members. Based on consultations with Refugee-led Organizations (RLO), additional factors are hindering

access to healthcare services for TP holders, including limited awareness among both healthcare professionals and refugees regarding the rights and entitlements of TP holders, such as the availability of free translation services and the fact that TP holders are entitled to receive healthcare services without having a Hungarian social security card (TAJ card).

Additional challenges stem from difficulties in recognizing health documentation, especially for refugees with disabilities or chronic conditions, and the absence of vaccination certificates, which can hinder children's school enrolment.

Furthermore, stigma surrounding mental health issues prevails, hindering reporting and access to specialized mental healthcare. While access to mental health specialists remains essential for referrals and care, community-based interventions are crucial to address this stigma and provide support.

Key Principles and Values On Integration And Inclusion

Hungary has maintained an open-door policy for refugees from Ukraine since the beginning of the crisis in February 2022. In line with other EU Member States, the Government of Hungary prolonged the duration of the temporary protection (TP) status.

Legal status of immigrant

So far, more than 9 thousand Ukrainian refugees have applied to the Hungarian authorities for asylum seeker status.

It may already be well known that citizens who have fled from Ukraine after 24 February 2022 do not automatically qualify for refugee status, but have to apply for it. The application shall be submitted personally at any collection point close to the border, but they can also submit it at the customer service office of the National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing. The authority will make a decision within 45 days, which requires official proof that they are a Ukrainian citizen or a family member of a Ukrainian citizen. But they are entitled to protection even if they do not have any official documents, only then the authorities will question them in more detail.

Hungarian legal regulation

In its Gov. decree 86/2022. (III.7.), the Government granted protection to that Ukrainian citizen as asylum seeker, who used to stay in Ukraine before 24 February 2022, to that homeless or non-Ukrainian citizen and their family members coming from a third country, who was given international protection or equivalent national protection before 24 February 2022: to their spouse, or their long-term partner, single underaged children of their single/unmarried spouse, or long-term partner, regardless to whether they were born from marriage or outside marriage or whether they were adopted children, or other relatives, who used to live as part of the family at the time of the events leading to the mass influx of displaced people, and those, who were fully or significantly dependent on the refugee person.

Support Mechanism Of The Integration Process

In addition to the rules on obtaining facilitated status, a number of provisions were drafted in relation to the employment of asylum seekers. The regulation stated that an asylum seeker is entitled get into employment in Hungary without a permit if they are employed in one of the occupations defined in the Communication of the Minister responsible for the employment of third-country nationals in Hungary, including employment via labour recruitment.

In the positions not belonging to these professions, work permit shall be issued without examining viewpoints determined within Gov. Decree No. 445/2013. (XI. 28.) on authorising the employment of third-country nationals in Hungary on the basis of a non-single application procedure, on exemption from the authorisation requirement, on the involvement of the employment centre of the Budapest and County Government Offices in the single application procedure and on declaring the employment in Hungary of third-country nationals who may be employed without a licence in Hungary and on the reimbursement of wages.

Types of Service Providers

Temporary protection status in Hungary provides refugees with the right to reside, work, access essential services like housing, healthcare, and education, receive financial assistance, and pursue family reunification; nevertheless, life in exile remains challenging for many due to language barriers, challenges in accessing services, limited income and the absence of a long-term outlook.

Local communities and various humanitarian organizations, such as charitable organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, and refugee-led initiatives, have been actively engaged in supporting the government-led efforts in addressing the protection and assistance requirements of refugees from Ukraine in Hungary.

Financing and Resources: Health Service, Educational services, Accommodation services, Employment support services, Diversity and scope of services offered, such as psychosocial support, Integration and compliance programs

If the asylum seeker provides for the care of a minor, he or she is entitled to use the services of day-care centres, nursery care, education, care and the services of Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház ("Sure Start Children's Home") under the same conditions as Hungarian citizens.

The 2024 education strategy aims to improve access to formal education and early learning for refugee children, by:

- Providing non-formal education for language learning and remedying learning loss;
- Advocating for inclusive access to safe learning environment through mainstreaming mental health and psychosocial support in schools;
- Strengthening the technical capacity of educators on pedagogical skills; and
- Providing accessible information on school
- Registration to children and caregivers.

In collaboration with the national authorities, evidence-based programmes tailored to the needs of refugee children and schools will be further developed, monitored, and evaluated. Policy advocacy will focus on measures to facilitate the integration and retention of refugee children in school. These measures include systematic provision of Hungarian language classes, academic assessment, and accreditation processes, as well as support to schools. Partners will also ensure a concentrated effort to address the educational needs of children with multiple vulnerability markers including Romani refugee children, and children with disabilities.

Regular subsistence allowance

The applicant asking for recognition as an asylum seeker and the asylum seeker are entitled for regular subsistence allowance (even while staying at the reception centre, or at any other accommodation designated for them). The monthly amount of the subsistence allowance is equal to the amount of the employment substitute allowance for adults and that of the family allowance in case of minors.

Support of accommodation provided by the local government

The Government also decided [Gov. Decree 104/2022. (III.12.)] to grant subsidies to municipalities that provide accommodation for persons entitled to temporary protection or for asylum seekers.

Sheltering, education, nourishment and healthcare services

Accommodation, meals, medical care: if someone does not have permanent accommodation (where they can stay for a longer period) upon the submission of their application, they have to inform the authority, as well as if they can stay at a family member's or friends' home. One is entitled for Hungarian medical care after the submission of application.

- Monthly subsistence support: grants that refugees are monthly entitled for, and that begin after getting the plastic ID card are not all over the news
- Free translation of personal identification documents: OIF covers the translation of personal identification documents (birth and marriage certificate, official documents proving scholar qualification or vocational qualification).
- Employment: in certain professions, you can even work without having a special license, but also in other professions, you can get a work permit with requirements that are easier to meet.
- Education of children, their nursery and pre-school care
- Travel discount: you must apply to the OIF for the necessary certificate, but refugees can also travel free of charge on Hungarian trains and Budapest public transport without this certificate. For this, they will need a Ukrainian passport, a Ukrainian personal identification card or a Ukrainian residence permit.

It is important to know that the monthly regular subsistence allowance will be paid to the asylum seeker after he or she has fulfilled the obligation to appear as required by the

recognition decision. However, if the refugee does not accept a suitable job offered in the meantime, the asylum authority will stop paying the regular subsistence allowance

Supports and incentives to encourage immigrants

If you receive a refugee, refugees into your home, then offer your help within immigration administration anyway. Ukrainian citizens arriving with a travel document who do not have Hungarian citizenship may stay in Hungary for 90 days without special permission. If they wish to stay longer than 90 days, or if they would like to work, study or if they need free health care or other social assistance, they will have to submit their application for refugee or asylum status, or an appropriate residence application depending on their plans (employment, study).

If private individuals- based on a voluntary offer - receive refugees, in that case, the financial and other commitments for their care are borne by the private individual. The Defence Committee may stipulate a subsidy contract with accommodation providers who undertake to accommodate families with a minimum of more than twenty persons.

Hosting individuals can ask the Family and Child Welfare Institution for help in caring for refugees (they can use donations to provide basic consumer goods to support the care of refugees living with private individuals), and other NGOs can also help.

Support of employers employing refugees

The government provides subsidies to employers who meet the conditions to employ Ukrainian citizens who arrive as refugees and provide them with long-term accommodation and transport to work. Companies undertaking this will receive a monthly subsidy of HUF 60,000 for employing Ukrainian citizens who arrive as refugees, and an additional HUF 12,000 for their children – as detailed by Gov. Decree 86/2022 (III.7.) on the employment of asylum seekers

However, the most common reasons for migration – uncertain vision for the future and, in accordance with this, concern about the future of children and the intention to improve living conditions – are the same for both sexes.

Child Protection

Building upon existing partnerships with national authorities, 80 child protection actors will enhance synergies between the Hungarian child protection system and refugee response efforts. This includes advocacy to ensure that the refugee children at risk (including unaccompanied and separated children) are identified and are receiving all required protection services. In addition, partners will strengthen case management services in support of and in collaboration with national authorities for children at risk and provide complementary child protection interventions including recreational, psychosocial and parenting support. Aligning the applicability of the Child Protection Act and ensuring its inclusion of children with TP status, while expanding the offer of humanitarian child protection services, will help respond to the high demand for specialized services and ease the burden on overworked professionals. In addition, child protection actors will review the referral system among different child protection organizations updating the existing referral pathways, jointly with authorities. Efforts will also be made to strengthen the capacities of child and family/social welfare units and social workforce to enhance oversight mechanisms and normative framework for refugees.

Recognizing the importance of fostering an inclusive and positive dialogue around the Best Interest of the Child concept, particularly for refugee children, collaborative efforts will be pursued across stakeholders to ensure the well-being of refugee children aligns with the principles of the Best Interest of the Child framework. The strategy involves advocating for policy improvements in child protection, enhancing coordination with national actors, supporting local authorities, and ensuring accessibility through translation services.

Other key priorities for 2024 include strengthening community-based psychosocial capacities and ensuring equitable access for children with special needs, addressing the pressing issue of bullying in schools, and re-evaluating best practices in capacity-building and adjustments in response to changing dynamics.

Inclusion of refugees with disabilities

Forced displacement disproportionately impacts people with disabilities, leaving them susceptible to violence, and exploitation, and limiting access to information, employment, and education opportunities. In 2023, the Refugee Coordination Forum collaborated with the

Disability Inclusion Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior and Hungarian organizations of persons with disabilities to enhance the inclusion of refugees with disabilities in the response. The recommendations from the Refugee Coordination Forum serve as a foundation for priority actions, focusing on improving accessibility to information, services, and infrastructure; fostering partnerships with Hungarian disability organizations to leverage their expertise; addressing organizational culture, and enhancing data collection to better include refugees with disabilities in Hungary in the response.

Inclusion of Romani refugees

In Hungary, there is a significant presence of Romani refugees from Ukraine. Many dedicated Romani community organizations have been engaged in responding to the needs of vulnerable refugees and advocating for their rights since the onset of the crisis.

However, despite the solidarity and legal protections afforded to refugees in Hungary, the Romani refugee community is often exposed to exclusion, and marginalization and faces additional challenges accessing social protection, healthcare, education, and employment.

Building upon an RCF note developed with Romaversitas, the response acknowledges the need for a comprehensive approach addressing their unique challenges, emphasizing collaboration between service providers, Romani community leaders, Romani-led organizations, and government agencies to ensure effective and sustainable solutions.

Activities, Education Programmes And Implementations To Integrate Immigrants To Social

Besides proper housing, the Association was looking for a school for the children and work for the women. In all cases, language problems cause the biggest trouble, because it is difficult to learn the Hungarian language. But the teachers are very helpful and use English as an aid wherever they can. In the case of Ukrainian migrants, the solution was Ukrainian-Hungarian bilingual schools. But there are schools, where the enrolment documents are now available in English, German, Ukrainian, Romanian, Russian languages, as well as the house rules of the school, so that mothers can understand immediately what is happening at school and why. A school integration specialist also works with the children so that they can integrate smoothly.

Help with getting into employment

It is easy for refugees to find jobs in Hungary, especially those sectors can receive the people concerned that are glad to employ female workforce.

So far, refugees from Ukraine have had no difficulty finding a job in Hungary. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian workers were already working in Hungary before the war, and now it is typically their relatives and children, who are arriving to our country.

Hungarian businesses can also provide jobs for refugees, with state support to help them find a job, as well as accommodation.

Refugees fleeing the war are not only finding work in the north-eastern part of the country, closest to Ukraine, but can also get into employment in other parts of the country. In particular, those sectors that can employ women that are glad to employ female labour force. These include processing industry or later on tourism and catering.

Gov. Decree 86/2022. (III. 7.): Support will be given to employers who employ Ukrainian citizens or third-country nationals who have fled to Hungary to escape the war in Ukraine. The employer shall use the allowance to cover the employee's housing and travel expenses.

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In some cases, refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan have complained that the English language sometimes causes problems for Hungarian citizens and that they cannot deal with official matters. Some were concerned about the difference between Persian and Hungarian culture.

Positive stories about school, mothers speaking up:

Foreign children in the Hungarian Schools:

<https://menedek.hu/hirek/pozitiv-tortenetek-az-iskolabol-video>

The statement of the Association:

„From the very first days, it was elevating to see how many institutions, municipalities, employers and families opened their doors, offered a helping hand, work, health and social care. Within days, our association was also ready to help those fleeing from Ukraine by extending its existing services and starting new ones. Over the past year, we've provided thousands of people with counselling, helped them find housing, job, school, take health and social services, in cooperation with other institutions and voluntary groups. Based on our experience gained from this work, we have drafted four policy positions concerning housing, labour market, health and education needs of refugees from Ukraine and how to meet them effectively and professionally. We hope that by our work, we can contribute to relieve the suffering of the displaced and to help them to find a solution to their situation until they can return to their homes once the Russian aggression against Ukraine has ceased.”

Women's willingness to migrate, however, depends largely on the roles and statuses they hold at a given age and life cycle, and that are typical of them in a given socio-cultural context. In many cases, it is the family that defines these female roles and supports or opposes migration. Women's place and social position within the family limits both their decision-making opportunities and their resources needed to implement migration (Grieco-Boyd, 1998).

Integration of immigrant women to labor market and perception of employers concerning this topic

Both women and men equally reported experiencing negative discrimination when looking for a job: 13% of them had such an experience.

Gender roles and hierarchies, and relationships between the sexes, also shape men's and women's experiences following migration. All this results - as studies on women's international migration as well as ILO reports have pointed out (see, among others, ILO (1998, 2002) - in women often being disadvantaged in multiple ways after migration: both deriving from their migrant status and their femininity, and as employees in a gender-segregated labour market.

Gender disparities in labour market integration

We can find examples of different experiences of men and women following migration, and of women's disadvantaged position in the labour market, mainly in cases where immigrants

come from a much more traditional gender role society with a different culture compared to the host society (and when there is more discrimination in the labour market), or where the migration policy of the host country differentiates according to genders. Neither of these is the case for immigration to Hungary, however, gender differences in terms of labour market integration that go beyond the different human capital and previous labour market positions of men and women can still be captured.

Best Practices in Key Areas – Education, Counselling, Employment

1.Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants



The Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants <https://menedek.hu/> has been dealing for more than two decades with promotion of social integration of Hungarian and foreign citizens migrating to and from Hungary through its social, educational and cultural programmes.

In the course of their work, they established a complex service system, with the help of which they supported thousands of refugees and other foreigners to find a new home in Hungary or return to their home country. Through individual and group counselling, language training and community programmes, they help migrants arriving here to learn about and accept Hungarian culture and customs, find a job and housing, and find their way through the maze of bureaucratic procedures.

The association organises and implements social awareness raising trainings concerning migration for professionals, who get in touch with migrants within their work:

- for pedagogues,
- for social professionals,
- for health care workers,
- for those working in the field of law enforcement.

In addition to supporting migrants and professionals, it is very important for them that the majority society becomes more open and more accepting towards foreigners arriving to Hungary, as this is one of the indispensable conditions for the successful integration of migrants. To this end, they build bridges between the host society and immigrants by implementing various educational and cultural projects and programmes.

They pursue these objectives as a public benefit activity, without the purpose of making profit or acquiring assets, in the form of a public benefit association. The Association does not engage in direct political activity, is independent of political parties, does not provide financial support to them, does not run and does not support candidates in parliamentary elections, and does not accept support from parties.

The Association helps foreigners arriving in Hungary to find a new home. In Hungary, foreign children aged 3-16 are obliged to attend school, so schools have an obligation to enrol refugee children as well. Many parents are uncertain or even distrustful about school enrolment in Hungary, which makes sense, as many of them did not come to a foreign country of their own free will, among foreign people, whose language and culture they do not know.

2. Caritas provides help to the refugees

Catholic Caritas stood with the refugees from the very first minutes. They also support the transport, accommodation and catering of refugees arriving in the Transcarpathian region or Hungary, together with their national and cross-border organisations.

Children, mothers and elderly people arriving from the border crossing point have been welcomed day and night at the Caritas base in Barabás for almost a month. The families arrive tired and hungry, they have travelled to Hungary for several days, most of them from Kiev, Donetsk and Kharkov. Over the past period, at least 10,000 people have stayed here, their accommodation and further travel has been organised by the Caritas, and they have been given travel packages and hygiene products.



In addition, from today onwards, Caritas will also provide a regular service in the transit waiting room set up in the BOK hall.

Gábor Écsy national director said: „At the border, we switched to long-term work. Tented aid points, which had been in operation since the beginning of the war, were replaced by containers placed from donation. This way, the work of organising the care, onward travel, accommodation of refugees and social tasks can be carried out in a suitable location. The temporary accommodation of our volunteers has also become more comfortable. At the same time, we will continue to support Caritas organisations across the border, which now have to care for internally displaced refugees alongside disadvantaged Hungarian families. In recent weeks, we have delivered a total of nearly 45 million HUF in financial and tangible support to Transcarpathia. Every day, we bring them two truckloads of basic cooking supplies to keep the soup kitchens running even in this very difficult period.”

3.Best Practices to Address Key Labour Market and Labour Mobility Challenges in Hungary

On 25 November 2023, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Hungary and UNHCR Representation for Central Europe, organized the first Job Fair for displaced people from Ukraine, and from other countries legally residing in Hungary, who are experiencing difficulties accessing the Hungarian job market. The event provided people with the opportunity to meet employers and recruitment agencies, get professional advice on their CVs

and job applications from trained IOM Labour Market Counsellors, participate in workshops on career development and safe employment, and learn about their labour rights in Hungary.

Hungary, like many other European countries, faces demographic challenges such as an aging population and declining birth rates. A significant portion of its skilled workforce, including professionals, scientists, and researchers, has been leaving the country in search of better economic opportunities and improved living standards abroad. Addressing these labour market challenges requires a **multifaceted approach** that combines the retention of skilled Hungarian professionals, the attraction of skilled migrants from abroad, and the ethical recruitment of migrant workers to meet the needs of foreign investments. In the context of destination countries like Hungary, labour migration can be a strategic response to skill shortages.

Labour mobility, when managed effectively, brings forth an array of advantages for countries of origin, destination countries, and migrant workers themselves. Migrant workers often bring diverse skill sets, knowledge, and perspectives that enrich the local workforce and foster innovation. The injection of skilled labour not only bridges gaps in critical sectors but also boosts overall economic productivity. Furthermore, labour mobility can contribute to cultural diversity and cross-cultural exchange, enhancing societal cohesion and understanding.

“Hiring migrants and refugees can significantly contribute to addressing skill shortages, fostering innovation, and infusing workplaces with fresh perspectives,” stated **Dániel Bagaméri, Head of Office at IOM Hungary**. “Despite their potential, many face barriers in securing employment due to systemic hurdles. IOM and its partners are dedicated to eradicating these disparities, ensuring equal opportunities for all job seekers, particularly those displaced from Ukraine. It's vital that labor migrants are well-informed about their rights and employment standards to prevent vulnerability to exploitation during their job search or employment.”

IOM advocates for ethical recruitment practices that **prioritize the well-being of migrant workers**. This includes ensuring that recruitment agencies adhere to fair labour standards, do not charge exorbitant fees, and provide transparent information about job opportunities and working conditions. By working with recruitment agencies, IOM can help establish guidelines and codes of conduct that foster ethical recruitment, protect workers' rights, and promote responsible business practices. The Job Fair is just one **instrument to highlight key labour**

market and labour mobility challenges in Hungary by offering targeted solutions to **safe labour market access** and **integration** for refugees and migrants while strengthening the dynamism and **growth of the Hungarian economy** in several important sectors. A transparent and ethical labour migration system is crucial to striking the right balance between addressing labour shortages and ensuring that the well-being and rights of all workers, both domestic and foreign. Labour mobility, when managed effectively, brings forth an array of advantages for countries of origin, destination countries, and migrant workers themselves. By promoting ethical recruitment practices, providing support to migrant workers, and collaborating with different stakeholders, Hungary can create a fair and inclusive environment that maximizes the benefits of labour mobility for all involved parties.

Displaced people from Ukraine and the Hungarian labour market

Ukrainian refugees have strong experience in high-priority sectors such as tech, health care, social services and education. Therefore, there is a certain risk that Ukrainian refugees will be considered overqualified in the labour market. According to the latest IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix data, **40% of displaced people from Ukraine in Hungary are still looking for employment**. The early employment uptake has been concentrated in low-skilled jobs, therefore, skill mismatches have been widespread. On the other hand, Ukrainian refugees are integrating into the labour market of their host countries at a much faster pace than all other refugee groups. Having the right to work upon arrival with the help of Temporary Protection Status facilitates their immediate access to the labour market. The estimated impact of Ukrainian refugees on the Hungarian labour force shows about a 1-1.5% increase.

Job seekers from other countries legally residing in Hungary

The Job Fair represented a significant step in facilitating the connection between recruitment agencies and job seekers from third countries. Recruitment agencies play a significant role in facilitating labour migration, and their practices can profoundly impact the well-being of migrant workers. The enthusiasm displayed by recruitment agencies and their active participation in this Job Fair shows their recognition of the importance of such initiatives. It indicates their willingness to engage and support efforts that contribute to the overall success and impact of events like this. Hiring third-country nationals holds substantial significance, providing economic benefits, fostering cultural diversity, and positioning the nation as an

active participant in the global economy. Embracing and leveraging the skills and talents of job seekers from non-EU countries contributes not only to the success of individual businesses but also to the overall prosperity and vibrancy of Hungarian society. Moreover, the inclusion of third-country nationals in the workforce contributes to a multicultural society, fostering cultural understanding and integration. Exposure to different traditions, languages, and perspectives in the workplace promotes a more inclusive and globally aware society.

Concrete solutions: A transparent and ethical labour migration system becomes crucial to strike the right balance between addressing labour shortages and ensuring that the well-being and rights of all workers, both domestic and foreign, are protected. Labour mobility, when managed effectively, brings forth an array of advantages for countries of origin, destination countries, and migrant workers themselves. For countries of origin, the remittances sent by migrant workers contribute significantly to economic growth and development. These remittances act as an injection of capital, which in turn can help reduce poverty levels and improve living standards within these countries. Beyond the economic impact, remittances often play a role in supporting social infrastructure, such as education and healthcare, benefiting entire communities.

As the leading UN agency on migration IOM advocates for the protection of migrant workers' human rights and the promotion of ethical labour migration worldwide. IOM emphasizes the importance of a whole-of-society approach, ensuring that the needs of migrants are considered across all policy areas. By collaborating with governments, businesses, and civil society, it seeks to reinforce policies and regulatory frameworks that protect migrant workers and facilitate their integration into host societies.

Together with its many partners, IOM Hungary is building labour migration management capacity by helping different stakeholders in diverse ways. Refugees and migrants are being assisted to gain safe employment with labour market counselling, labour market trainings, the job fair, skills trainings and thematic workshops (interview techniques, cv writing and translation, legal rights), and materials such as videos and dedicated webpages. IOM is providing information to migrant workers about their rights and entitlements under the law; and to employers, service providers, schools and health professionals about their responsibilities towards their foreign staff and to foreign diplomatic missions. Moreover, IOM offers a free interpretation service to displaced Ukrainians to review contracts and interact with employers, doctors, recruitment agencies and Government offices.

Since many of these people are vulnerable and at risk to **labour exploitation** in all its forms, IOM case workers are building capacities in the system by establishing rapport with schools, doctors, service providers and employers to ease social inclusion, better guarantee the rights of migrant workers. Labour exploitation may take many physical and/or psychological forms, for example: deception, restriction of movement, isolation, physical and sexual violence, intimidation and threats, retention of identity documents, ungrounded deductions from salaries, withholding of wages, debt bondage, abusive working conditions or excessive working hours.

At the policy level, IOM is working with accredited recruiters supporting social integration and social dialogue to ensure effective labour migration management; offering policy and technical advice to decision-makers; encouraging the development of policies, legislation and administrative structures that promote efficient, effective and transparent labour migration flows; assisting governments to promote safe labour migration practices for their nationals; and promoting the integration of labour migrants in their new workplace and society.

Future Hungarian legislative landscape

Hungary is currently facing a labour shortage. The Hungarian government is trying to fill the shortage with foreign workers through a facilitated system that speeds up the issuing of work permits to nationals of 15 countries, mainly in Asia but also in Ukraine and Serbia. This will be facilitated by the new legislation on the entry and residence of third-country nationals in Hungary, which focuses on labour inflows. The law will enter into force on 1 September 2024. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has designated 28 qualified employers to ensure a more efficient and effective supply of labour and to reduce the possibility of labour exploitation of foreign workers. In addition, these agencies often work with businesses in various industries to help them identify and recruit skilled professionals to address labour shortages. This cooperation contributes not only to the success of individual businesses, but also to Hungary's overall economic development.

The Job Fair took place at the Devai Inn, a community center for refugees from Ukraine run by the Budapest-Józsefváros Lutheran Congregation.

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