

Press Release

## **EMN study reviews the integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market**

**This study offers a thorough and current examination of the of legislation, policies and practices related to the integration of international protection applicants into the job market in EMN Member Countries. It offers an overview into the various stakeholders responsible for implementing labour market accessibility and highlights both the challenges encountered and examples of good practices.**

**Brussels, 31 July 2023**

This EMN study offers an analysis of how EMN Member Countries are supporting the integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market. Labour market integration is a crucial aspect of migrant integration and successful engagement in society. This is not only due to its role in providing economic independence but also because it has an impact on the health and overall well-being of the migrants. The importance of migrant integration in the labour market is notably more urgent considering the current [labour and skills shortages across EMN Member States](#).

Over the period from 2017 to 2022, there were over three million applications for international protection, with the highest number recorded in 2022. The majority of these applicants were of working age, indicating a potential labour force for EMN Member Countries' job markets. According to the 2023 economic survey conducted by Eurochambres, European businesses are facing significant challenges concerning labour and skill shortages. As a result, there may be an increased reliance on individuals from third countries to address the projected shortages.

The ability of international protection applicants to enter the job market is governed by the revised [Reception Conditions Directive \(2013/33/EU\)](#), and according to Article 15(1) of this directive, EU Member States are obligated to ensure that applicants are granted access to the labour market within nine months of submitting their international protection application. Once the waiting period concludes, most of EMN Member Countries provide access to the labour market, typically through a work permit or an alternative form of authorisation. Moreover, most EMN Member States allow access to the labour market through self-employment.

However, the length of the waiting period has been the focus of debate across EMN Member Countries. Discussions have revolved around two key perspectives: one advocates shortening the waiting period to speed up access, and the other advocates extending it to prevent potential abuse of the asylum system through excessively facilitated access. According to the study, more and more EMN Member Countries are attempting to alleviate labour market concerns by shortening the waiting period, thereby improving access and integration. Notably, specific changes were made in regard to reducing waiting time to enter the labour market and revoking decrees that restricted their access to certain types of work. The study shows that, between 2017 and 2022, most EMN Member Countries allow a shorter waiting period, of six months or less. This is primarily due to allowing applicants to become self-sufficient and to integrate more quickly if and when they are granted international protection.

Additionally, debates have centred on various restrictions on labour market access, such as authorization requirements, labour market tests, and restrictions on certain sectors. Several countries have taken steps to facilitate access through language courses and integration into different sectors of the economy. Eleven EMN Member Countries have identified successful approaches to integrating applicants for international protection into the labour market. These practices typically involve vocational education, language training, and skills assessment.

However, concerns persist about potential abuse of the asylum system and the risk of applicants for international protection facing precarious work conditions and workplace discrimination.

Challenges, mostly of a practical nature, were also identified when seeking employment opportunities. The language barrier is widely reported as the primary obstacle, followed by difficulties in recognising qualifications. In certain countries, applicants for international protection encountered practical difficulties due to the complexity and uncertainty surrounding specific administrative procedures required for labour market access. Furthermore, legislative challenges are encountered by applicants in certain EMN Member Countries, such as the requirement of additional documentation beyond what is specified in national legislation and discrepancies in defining the waiting period as stated in national laws.

### **The Study:**

- Title: "Integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market"
- Period covered: This EMN study documents the labour market access of applicants for international protection between 2017 to 2022.
- Subject: This study provides an up-to-date and in-depth analysis of EMN Member Countries' legislation, policies and practices on integration of applicants for international protection into the labour market. It examines labour market access in the EMN Member Countries, including conditions, restrictions and processes, such as labour market tests and restrictions, qualification recognition procedures, and social security arrangements that may impact access.

### **The EMN**

The **European Migration Network (EMN)** is an EU network of migration and asylum experts who work together to provide objective, comparable policy-relevant information and knowledge on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration in Europe. The EMN consists of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EMN Member (EU Member States except Denmark) and Observer Countries (NO, GE, MD, UA, ME, AM, RS), the European Commission and the EMN Service Provider (ICF). The EMN was **established in 2008** (Council Decision 2008/381/EC) and amended by Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council in April 2014.

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