

06/2016

ISSN 2363-2348



n°44

SOCIAL AGENDA



Integrating
refugees

I focus on

6

SOCIAL RIGHTS

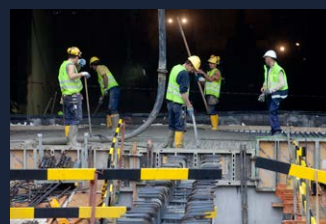
Public consultation



8

POSTED WORKERS

*Transparency
and fairness*



Social Europe

EDITORIAL



There is the tragedy of people who take enormous risks, crossing deserts and seas to escape war and make it to the European Union.

Media attention very often leaves them where their new life begins: the less spectacular but more drawn out and ultimately just as challenging process of integration in the host country.

It is then no longer a security issue but one of healing traumas, learning the language and habits, reconnecting with the education, skills or professional experience acquired in the country of origin and moving on from there.

In policy terms, it becomes very much an inclusion, employment and social affairs issue.

From the host country point of view, the arrival in much greater numbers than before of third-country nationals seeking international protection is a wake-up call.

For several if not for many years, EU countries have been struggling to a varying extent with issues such as mass, youth and long-term unemployment, skills mismatch, increasing poverty, gender inequality and all sorts of discriminations...

“A boost to social investment”

The arrival of asylum-seekers and refugees is an opportunity to see old problems in a new light: better connecting education and vocational training to the labour market, doing away with gender inequality and with discriminations against older workers, disabled people and ethnic minorities, just to name a few.

Addressing these challenges, which EU countries need to do in any case, is precisely what will help integrate asylum-seekers and refugees. Experience gained by those countries with a long experience in welcoming them tells us that early intervention is key for a successful integration.

A new sense of urgency is therefore required, that will benefit not just the refugees but all the vulnerable groups, the EU countries as such and the EU as a whole.

Michel Servoz

Director General of the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion department

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NEWS IN BRIEF

12 April: Activity rate improvement

The slow but consistent recovery of the EU's economy continues, accompanied by a gradual increase in the employment rate and a gradual decline in the unemployment rate, according to the new edition of the EU Employment and Social Situation- Spring 2016 Quarterly Review. In particular, it looks at the evolution of activity rates (or labour market participation) of different age groups. The activity rate of those aged 55-59 has now approached the overall 15-64 (working age) activity rate. The activity rate of those aged 60-64 has also increased and is now very close to the activity rate of young people aged 15-24 years for the first time in decades.



For the first time in decades: The activity rate of those aged 60-64 is now very close to that of young people aged 15-24 years.

29 March: 20 million poor EU children

Children are more likely to live in poverty than adults. Almost twenty million children in Europe, more than 1 child in 5, live below the poverty threshold (a poverty rate of 21.1% compared to 16.3% among people over 18 years old). Since the economic crisis, child poverty has increased in most EU countries. Specific attention should be given to children living

in low-income families, to guarantee equal opportunities for all children and to break the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. Living in poverty often means limited access to health care, higher risk of school drop-out and later unemployment and poverty, and not reaching one's full potential in general.

21 March: First inclusive growth convention

Taking over from the annual European Platform Against Poverty annual conventions, the first convention for inclusive growth brought together in Brussels policy makers and civil society to discuss what the EU can do to ensure that all citizens reap the benefits of truly inclusive growth. The EU needs to step up its efforts to develop, along with Member States, long-term solutions to improve its social dimension by fighting against poverty, reducing unemployment and making sure no one is left behind. The one-day event kicked off with a discussion on the European Pillar of Social Rights initiative and moved on to debates in participatory workshops about specific issues that need work if the EU is to deliver sustainable, long-term inclusive growth (see page 10).



Participatory convention: Brussels policy makers and civil society discussed how to ensure that all citizens reap the benefits of truly inclusive growth.

NEWS IN BRIEF

17 March: First social finance deal

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Société financière de la NEF have signed the first Social Entrepreneurship guarantee agreement aimed at supporting more than 300 social enterprises in France under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). This new guarantee agreement allows La NEF to provide a total of €33 million to over

300 micro and social entrepreneurs, many of whom face difficulties in accessing credit from traditional banking sources. Social entrepreneurs including fair trade producers, organic farmers and micro-borrowers in the renewable energy sector will be able to benefit from loans at a reduced interest rate, without providing collateral under the EU supported programme.

8 March: Social rights consultation is on

The European Commission presented a first outline of the European Pillar of Social Rights and launched a broad public consultation to gather views and feedback from other European institutions, national authorities and parliaments, social partners, stakeholders, civil society, experts from academia and citizens. This online consultation will run until the end of 2016. The European Pillar of Social Rights will set out a number of essential principles to support well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems within the euro area (see page 6).



Stakeholders: The European Commission is gathering views on a future European Social Pillar.

8 March: Posting of workers reform

The European Commission presented a targeted revision of the rules on posting of workers in order to facilitate the provision of services across borders while ensuring fair competition and respect for the rights of posted workers, who are employed in one Member State and sent to work temporarily in another by their

employer. The initiative aims at ensuring fair wage conditions and a level playing field between posting and local companies in the host country. The targeted revision will introduce changes in three areas: remuneration of posted workers; rules on temporary work agencies; and long-term posting (see page 8).

21 January: Investing in people is key



Investing in people: Disparities between EU countries are linked to an underutilisation of human capital.

The Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015 review reveals further positive employment and social developments in the EU. However, despite recent improvements huge disparities still exist between Member States, in terms of economic growth, employment and other key social and labour market indicators. Many of these disparities are linked to an underutilisation of human capital on several fronts. The 2015 ESDE report looks at ways of tackling these disparities, focusing in particular on job creation, labour market efficiency, social protection modernisation and investment in people (see page 12).

SOCIAL RIGHTS

Design a European social pillar

You have until 31 December 2016 to take part in a public consultation



Social Triple A: European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker wants the EU to perform economically and therefore also socially.

At the beginning of 2017, the European Commission will put forward a final proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights: a number of key social principles common to the euro area which will build upon and complement the present EU social policy initiatives (the legislative *acquis* but also existing benchmarks, employment guidelines, funding programmes etc.).

Its aim is to foster upward social convergence within the EU and increase the resilience of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) to economic shocks.

Three headings

On 8 March 2016, the Commission launched a consultation process on a first, preliminary outline of the future Pillar, which will be structured around three main headings: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market (including skills development and life-long learning); fair working conditions (setting an adequate and reliable balance of rights and obligations between workers and employers, as well as between flexibility and security elements to encourage job-creation,

take-up and transitions over time); and adequate and sustainable social protection and access to high quality essential services (including healthcare and long-term care, to ensure dignified living and protection against risks and to enable individuals to participate fully in employment and more generally in society).

The process leading to the Pillar should contribute to modernising, broadening and deepening the existing social policy, regarding the labour market and society at large. It will question the way the *acquis* is taken up in practice and take into account the multiple opportunities and challenges arising from the increasingly diverse employment and social situations.

The role, scope and content of the Pillar: this is what the consultation is all about. It is an opportunity to reflect on the particular needs of the euro area, to discuss the specificity of the principles proposed and to explore the related challenges linked to these.

The consultation process will also help EU countries outside the euro area determine whether to opt in. The feedback



On equal terms: Equal opportunities will be one of the main headings of the future European Pillar of Social Rights.

received will serve as a contribution to the work being done on the white paper on the future of Europe's EMU, expected in spring 2017.

Social Triple A

In 2014, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that his aim was to achieve a "Social Triple A" rating for the EU. He re-launched the European social dialogue, strengthening in particular the social partners' role in the yearly European Semester process of joint EU economic governance. Social partners and other civil society stakeholders at national level are encouraged to take an active part in the consultation process.

One of the aims of the consultation is to identify gaps in existing legislation, for example in the area of social protection: ensuring that everybody is covered, regardless of what kind of work contract they have, even if they are self-employed as part of the new collaborative economy.

In a fast-changing world of work affected by globalisation, the digital revolution and new business models, the Pillar is also about creating a new work-life balance so that people who have special needs at home do not have to leave the labour market.

The "new start" initiative to address the low participation of women in the labour market, following the withdrawal of the Commission's 2008 proposal to amend the 1992 Maternity Leave directive, is therefore very relevant to the Pillar. A public consultation on this specific initiative took place from November 2015 to February 2016.

Also crucial for the Pillar will be the New Skills Agenda which the Commission is due to adopt, which identifies skill gaps hindering youth and vulnerable groups' employment prospects, as well as the development of a late-career labour market.

Compass

Once adopted, the Pillar will become a reference framework to screen employment and social performance of the participating Member States and to drive reforms at national level.

In particular, it will serve as a compass for renewed convergence within the euro area. Experience accumulated over the last decade and a half shows that persisting imbalances in one of the EMU countries may put at risk the stability of the euro area as a whole. A stronger focus is therefore needed on employment and social performance, as part of a broader process of upward convergence towards more resilient economic structures within the European EMU.

Consultation on the European Social Pillar:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=699&consultId=22&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes>

From skills to essential services

Together with a first preliminary outline of the European Social Pillar, the European Commission adopted on 8 March two accompanying documents, explaining the key economic, labour market and social trends which it addresses and the relevant social acquis.

The consultation itself covers the issues of skills, education and life-long learning, flexible and secure labour contracts, secure professional transitions, active support for employment, gender equality and work-life balance, equal opportunities, conditions of employment, wages, health and safety at work, social dialogue and involvement of workers, integrated social benefits and services, health care and sickness benefits, pensions, unemployment benefits, minimum income, disability benefits, long-term care, childcare, housing and access to essential services.

LABOUR LAW

A more transparent and fair posting

The European Commission proposes to up-date the 1996 EU Posting of Workers law

Presently, when a worker who is employed in one EU Member State is sent by his/her employer on a temporary basis to carry out work in another EU Member State as a posted worker, his/her company must comply with a core set of rights including the minimum rates of pay of the host Member State.

The fact that posted workers are only granted minimum rates of pay has created unwanted tension: in some sectors and in certain EU countries, posted workers are reported to earn up to 50 % less than local workers.

This in itself is enough to alter the trust that is required for the services single market to function in a fair and efficient way: a market where companies can provide a service – including personal services, such as education, health, social work, or business services such as administrative, professional and financial services – in another EU country without needing to establish themselves in that country.

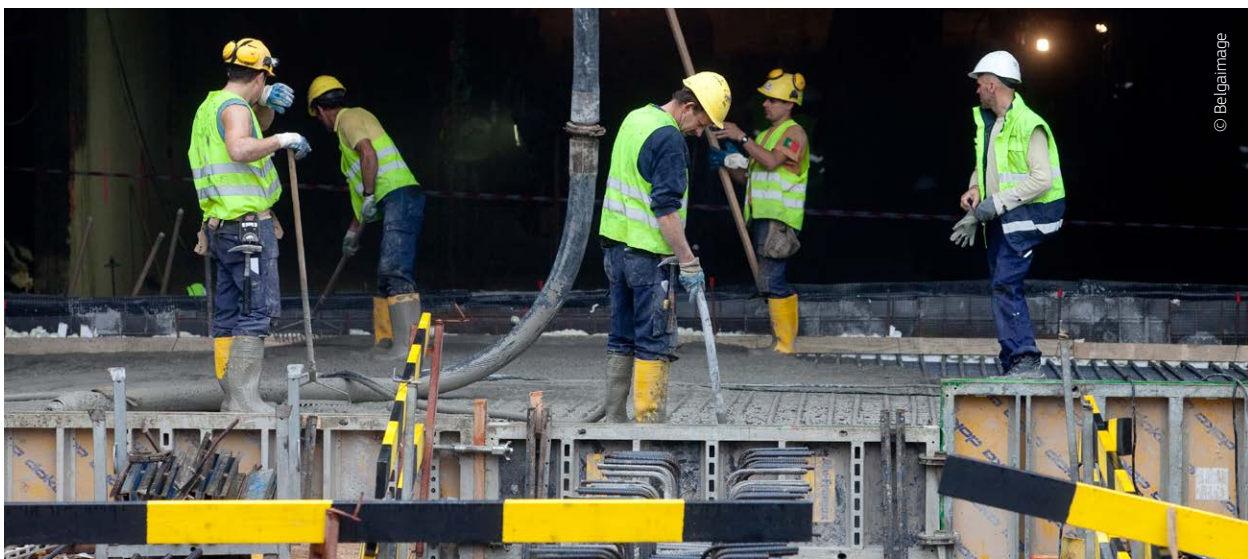
Indeed, the actual purpose of the posting of workers is to help clients benefit not just from the best cost-benefit ratio

but also from the best quality service in a given area, wherever it is available in the EU.

And for the posting companies, the purpose is to help them sell services in other EU countries, especially when the domestic market is no longer sufficient to sustain their activity: what economists call the “countercyclical” function of the posting of workers, from which for example many Italian companies benefited in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis.

Bonuses and allowances

On 8 March 2016, the European Commission put forward a proposal to introduce changes to the 1996 directive, not just regarding the remuneration of posted workers but also long-term posting and the situation of workers hired by temporary agencies or working in subcontracting companies – a proposal not to be confused with the 2014 Enforcement Directive on Posted Workers (see *Social Agenda* n°30) which is due to be transposed into EU countries' national law by June 2016.



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Beyond minimum wage: Workers posted, say, in Belgium would also be granted pay supplements and allowances, in addition to minimum wage.



The new proposal foresees that the same remuneration rules of the host country, applicable to local workers, also apply to posted workers: Not just the minimum rates of pay, as is presently the case, but also bonuses or allowances or pay increases according to seniority.

A worker posted in the construction sector in, say, Belgium, would have to be granted the elements of remuneration provided for in the Belgian universally-applicable collective agreement for the construction sector, in addition to minimum wage: allowance for bad weather; pay supplement for special works; allowance for tools wear etc.

Apart from rules set by law, rules set by universally applicable collective agreements would also become mandatory for posted workers not just in the construction sector, as is already the case, but in all economic sectors.

As far as sub-contracting chains are concerned, Member States would have the option to apply to posted workers the same rules on remuneration that are binding on the main contractor, even if these rules result from collective agreements that are not universally applicable.

The principle of equal treatment with local temporary agency workers will also be applied to posted temporary agency workers.

Finally, as far as working conditions are concerned, workers posted for more than two years would at the very least be covered by the mandatory rules of protection of the labour law of the host country – and this from day one if it is known from the very beginning that they will be posted beyond two years. Presently, this is only the case for social security.

A new balance

Fundamentally, this “targeted revision” of the Posting of Workers Directive is a matter of re-establishing a balance between the economic and social objectives of achieving the free provision of services: On the economic side, the free provision of services within the EU single market; on the social side, equity and fairness for all the people concerned, starting with the workers themselves.

In the process, it is also a matter of adapting the Directive to other pieces of EU legislation adopted in co-related areas since 1996.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2488&furtherNews=yes>

Surprising fluxes

Only around 33% of the posting of workers takes place from low-wage to high-wage countries. 67% of the flux actually occurs between countries that have comparable wages or from high-wage to low-wage countries! While companies in some countries take advantage of their relatively low wages, others play on their capacity to innovate and offer top-quality services not available elsewhere.

From 2010 to 2014, the number of posted workers in the EU increased by almost 45%. There were 1.9 million of them in 2014. The average duration of posting is four months.

Overall, posted workers represent only 0.7% of total EU employment. However, the construction sector alone accounts for 43.7% of the total number of postings, although posting is also significant in the manufacturing industry (21.8%), education, health and social work services (13.5%) and in business services (10.3%).

Germany, France and Belgium are the three EU countries that attract the highest number of posted workers, making up together about 50% of total received posted workers, while Poland, Germany and France are the three largest senders of posted workers.

Since 1996, when the Posting of Workers Directive was adopted, the gap between EU Member States' minimum rates of pay has increased from a ratio of 1:3 to a ratio of 1:11!

CIVIL DIALOGUE

Embedding the fight against poverty

First European convention for inclusive growth marks a new start in EU civil dialogue



NGO expertise: The European Commission wants to make better use of the expertise of civil society organisations and help them have more impact on EU initiatives.

Policy makers met with civil society representatives on 21 March in Brussels to discuss what the EU can do to promote inclusive economic growth: A type of growth which reduces poverty and unemployment, ensures that no one is left behind and which will make the EU more resilient to financial and economic shocks.

In the opening session, Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Mobility and Inclusion, and Jetta Klijnsma, Dutch Secretary of State for Social Affairs and Employment, discussed the parameters of inclusive growth and how to foster it. Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President of the European Commission for the Euro and Social Dialogue, closed the Convention.

A pillar of rights

Social rights were a red thread in all the interventions. Indeed, the Convention kick-started the face-to-face dimension of the public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights initiative, with an intervention by Allan Larsson,

Special Adviser to the Commission for the Pillar. Launched on line by the European Commission on 8 March (see page 6), the consultation will go on until the end of this year.

Civil society welcomed the renewed focus on social rights. Organisations were very curious to learn more about what the European Pillar of Social Rights is concretely set to achieve, how it will link up with current social policies and how its implementation and progress will be assessed.

Using participatory brainstorming techniques, the 400 participants tackled the social dimension of the EU from different angles: active inclusion and inclusive labour market policies; social investment and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (launched by the European Commission in 2015); upward social convergence (between Member States) and fighting poverty; the social dimension of the European Semester (the EU annual economic policy coordination process); and the integration of asylum-seekers and refugees into the labour market and society.



The 29th EU state: "The State where people without jobs live, in which young people become unemployed, in which we see people excluded, set back and left by the wayside" (J-C Juncker, European Commission President).

New approach

Annual EU civil society conventions addressing poverty and social exclusion have been meeting since 2011 but the 2016 edition was a first in many respects. In October 2015 Marianne Thyssen launched a new approach to civil dialogue: more focused on addressing the Commission's political priorities; making better use of the expertise of civil society organisations and helping them have more impact on EU proposals and decisions.

Since then, no less than six highly focused meetings have taken place between the European Commission and civil society representatives, paving the way for the March 2016 convention for inclusive growth. A convention which was smaller in size and length compared to the previous European Platform Against Poverty annual conventions (see *Social Agenda* n°35), with 400 participants instead of 800 and a duration of one day instead of one and a half.

This more compact format is expected to produce more focused results, more embedded in the EU decision-making process and with a greater impact in particular on the European Semester process - which culminates every year in July, when the Heads of State and governments adopt country-specific recommendations directed at particular EU countries (see *Social Agenda* n°40).

Due to their on-the-ground expertise and direct contact with citizens, the social non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a crucial role to play in contributing to the quality and practicality of these recommendations – and also, therefore, in helping implement them at the national, regional and local level.

In this respect, they are complementary to the social partners, whose role in the economic governance process has also been boosted, after the European social dialogue was re-launched by the European Commission in March 2015 (see *Social Agenda* n°40).

The 29th State

The background for the reinforcement of both the EU social and the civil dialogue is the present Commission's will to rebalance

the EU's economic governance, so that social considerations are taken into account on a par with economic ones.

When he was still a candidate for the position of European Commission President, in 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker told the European Parliament that a 29th state was emerging within the borders of the EU, "the state where people without jobs live, a state in which young people become unemployed, in which we see people excluded, set back and left by the wayside".

Once elected, the new Commission President was even more explicit. Referring to the way credit rating agencies evaluate particular countries' economic perspective from an investor's point of view, Jean-Claude Juncker stated that he would like the EU to equip itself with a "social triple-A rating".

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventId=1087&furtherEvents=yes>

Over 120 organisations involved

The European Commission is engaged in a civil dialogue with over 120 non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Most of them are EU-level NGOs, with members in several EU countries. Some cover a broad area such as social justice, the social economy or human rights. Others work with specific groups such as homeless people, the elderly, Roma people, persons with disabilities, migrants and disengaged youth.

Different kinds of NGOs are involved: think-tanks, networks of cities or regions, faith-based... Some have a worldwide dimension, such as Caritas, UNICEF or the Red Cross.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Paving the way for future developments

The latest edition of the European Commission's ESDE review contains several novelties

More tightly linked than ever to the up-and-coming EU priorities, the 2015 edition of the European Commission's yearly Employment and Social Developments in Europe review (ESDE 2015) paves the way for the implementation of recent or on-going policy initiatives: the European Social Pillar, the New Skills Agenda, the Action Plan on the Integration of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees; and a European framework for the integration of the long-term unemployed.

ESDE 2015 highlights the potential of self-employment and entrepreneurship to create more jobs. Some groups, including young people, old people, women and ethnic minorities, face stronger barriers than others to start their own business. Moreover, a majority of people do not feel that they possess the necessary skills or knowledge to do so. Particularly striking is the smaller share of women than men among the self-employed, and the fact that only around 30 % of the self-employed go on to create a company and hire workers. This percentage is not growing and the share of self-employment is actually (slightly) declining.

Labour market policies, among others, can address these issues. The chapter devoted to labour legislation looks in particular at the relationship between legislation and law enforcement. The number of days it takes to sort out a court case varies enormously from one EU country to the other. In those where such court cases are dealt with quickly, employers perceive labour markets as more flexible and may therefore be more willing to hire people.

Long-term unemployment

One of the ESDE 2015 novelties is the section on long-term unemployment (LTU). It shows that in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, the link between most long-term unemployed people and the labour market has not been totally severed. As a result, policy measures such as the ones called for by the EU LTU Recommendation (see *Social Agenda* n°42) have a good chance to work.

The section on social dialogue shows that high rates of employer organisation and trade-union membership make



A good chance: Policy measures in favour of the long-term unemployed have a good chance to work as the link between many of them and the labour market has not been totally severed.



for good working relationships and better implementation of reforms. However, EU countries that are perceived as having the most cooperative labour relations are not necessarily those with the lowest rates of strikes or lock-outs.

For the second year running, the ESDE has a chapter on skills. This time, the review focuses on the fact that 4 in 10 companies find it difficult to hire people with the right skills. Although part of the responsibility lies with education and training systems, the report shows that over-qualification also exists in many companies. Employers could take more into consideration the potential of the employees they already have and adjust their job descriptions and skills through on-the-job training, for example, to mitigate labour shortages.

Social protection is also addressed, from several angles. Expenditure on unemployment benefits, social exclusion and housing and family policies, which can help stabilise incomes, increased when the crisis first hit the EU in 2009, but it no longer did so after the second dip of the crisis, in 2012.

This section also looks at older workers, whose activity and employment rate has actually increased over the last decade (see *Social Agenda* n°43). New working arrangements are needed to keep up this trend as well as to integrate more women into the labour market. Family policies can play a role in this respect. Both women and in particular mothers' labour market participation and family benefits are important to reduce child poverty.

Mobile workers

The highly topical issues of mobility and migration are also addressed. Mobile EU-born workers are younger and better educated than the population of the host EU Member State taken as a whole. They tend to move to countries where unemployment is low and therefore have a higher employment rate, and call to a lesser extent upon that country's social services than the native population.

However, both mobile (EU) and migrant (extra EU, third-country) workers may take up jobs for which they are over-qualified

and accept a wage-penalty due to discrimination, insufficient recognition of their qualifications and other legal barriers. ESDE 2016 will address in more detail the issue of integrating asylum-seekers and refugees into society and the labour market.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7859&furtherPubs=yes>

Micro-enterprises make up 30% of EU employment

About 16% of all employed people in the EU are self-employed, two-third of whom are solo self-employed. Micro-enterprises of less than 10 employees account for around 30% of all EU employment, of which nearly a third is in the wholesale/retail and motor vehicle and motorcycle repair sectors. On average, less than one third of the self-employed hire employees. Women cover only one third of total self-employment.

In the third quarter of 2015, long-term unemployment affected approximately 10.5 million people (about 4.3% of the active EU population), including 6.5 million people who have been searching for a job for more than two years.

The share of EU mobile people in the total EU population was less than 4% and the share of third-country migrants was roughly twice as high.

In spring 2013, 4 out of 10 firms had difficulties finding staff with the right skills (over 60% in Austria and the Baltic states, less than 25% in Croatia, Cyprus, Greece and Spain).

SPECIAL
FEATURE

Integrating refugees

An employment, social policy and inclusion issue



Looking for work or training: Helping asylum-seekers and refugees as early and upstream as possible is key to their integration.

This special feature is about people who have escaped war, lack of prospects, instability, poverty, climate change... People who have made it to the EU and applied for asylum in one of its countries.

In policy terms, they come under the global heading of “third-country nationals”. Within this category, the specific needs of asylum-seekers and refugees are being taken more and more into account.

Urgency

Asylum-seekers and refugees bring with them an extra sense of urgency in addressing pre-existing EU challenges such as

poverty, youth and long-term unemployment, skills mismatch, an ageing and shrinking workforce, gender inequality and all other forms of discrimination.

These challenges affect all vulnerable groups, whether EU-born citizens at risk of social exclusion or third-country nationals. Intervening as early and upstream as possible, in a preventative mode, is valid for both.

This win-win approach has a name: social investment (see *Social Agenda* n°33).

A need for more data

In terms of employment rate, asylum-seekers and refugees need on average 15 years to catch up with EU-born citizens.

The next edition of the Employment and Social Development in Europe (ESDE 2016) review, due to come out in November, will provide much needed data on the integration of third-country nationals, with a focus on the socio-economic outcome of refugees.

It will look at employment rates, skill levels, qualifications, how far they are following training programmes... And at the policies that can lead to the best outcomes (turn also to page 12 for an article on ESDE 2015, which contains a chapter on third-country extra-EU migration).



A two-way process: Integration is a long-term, multi-faceted, two-way process of mutual accommodation by third-country nationals and the societies that receive them.

A common approach to integration

Building upon over 10 years of EU initiatives and tools creation

Integration policies remain a competence of the EU Member States but already back in November 2004, the EU Justice and Home Affairs ministers adopted a set of common basic principles (CBP) on the integration of third-country nationals (coming from outside the EU).

To implement the CBP, the European Commission adopted in 2005 a common framework, laying out a series of EU mechanisms and instruments to promote integration and facilitate exchanges between relevant actors, such as the European Web Site on Integration and the European Integration Forum.

A network of 28 country coordinators and a European integration expert have been feeding the web site ever since on a daily basis, offering news, a calendar of upcoming events, an online library, a collection of good practices, country-specific information sheets etc. They complement another network, made up of the national authorities responsible for integration issues, created in 2002 to facilitate exchange of information and good practice at EU level and ensure policy coordination at national level and with EU initiatives.

As for the European Integration Forum, it was launched in 2009 by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee. It became the European *Migration* Forum in 2014.

Integration agenda

In July 2011, the European Commission put forward a new European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, stressing the need for increasing migrants' economic, social, cultural and political participation, as well as for local action. It also explored the role of countries of origin in the integration process.

And in 2014, the Heads of State and governments reaffirmed their commitment to the CPB. They stressed that integration is a long-term, multi-faceted, two-way process of mutual accommodation by third-country nationals and the societies that receive them. This entails respect for diversity as well as for the EU's basic values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Holistic policies are needed to mainstream integration into all relevant policy areas and all levels of government.

In May 2015, the Commission proposed a new European Agenda on Migration, based on four pillars for a better migration management: reducing the incentives for irregular migration; border management (saving lives and securing external borders); Europe's duty to protect through a strong common asylum policy; and a new policy on legal migration.

SPECIAL FEATURE



Inside tents, in Germany: In the second half of 2015, the scale and pace of the flow of asylum-seekers into the EU took on a new dimension.

EU funding

Member States have EU funds at their disposal to help them finance integration measures. Between 2007 and 2013, they could call upon the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EIF), with a total budget of €825 million. In 2014, the EIF was replaced by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), which runs until 2020. At least 20% of the national programmes co-funded by AMIF should be dedicated to integration actions, which can be used for all types of third-country national legal residents, including refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. At EU level, the European Commission manages directly 12% of AMIF, to fund EU-level initiatives as well as emergency assistance.

The much older and bigger European Social Fund (€80 billion-strong for 2014-2020, 20% of which can be set aside to co-fund inclusion projects) and Regional Development Fund (with more than €20 billion allocated to inclusive measures for 2014-2020) can also be used, so can the “social inclusion” part of the new Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (see *Social Agenda* n°43).

In September 2015, Marianne Thyssen, European Commissioner in charge of Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, met the national authorities managing the European Social Fund and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. All options to optimise the use of these Funds for refugees and asylum-seekers were explored, taking into account established good practice on the ground (see page 17).

At the time of printing, the Commission was due to present an action plan on integration, including an online collection of promising practices (see next article), as well as a New Skills Agenda.

More information:

European Web Site on Integration: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/>

Legal pathways

Although Member States are responsible for deciding how many third-country nationals they admit, common admission conditions, procedures and rights for applicants are defined by EU rules.

Member States must provide asylum-seekers proper reception conditions from the outset and make sure that they have equal access to the labour market, at the latest nine months after asylum-seekers have filed their asylum application.

In the second half of 2015, the scale and pace of third-country nationals arriving in the EU to seek international protection took on a new dimension. Following up on European Commission proposals, the EU countries agreed to resettle 22 504 persons in clear need of international protection.

They also committed to relocating 160 000 people from Italy and Greece (and if relevant from other EU countries) by September 2017, through a temporary emergency relocation scheme.

On 6 April 2016, the Commission presented options for reforming the European Asylum System which it had been building up in stages since 1999, and further developing safe and legal pathways to Europe.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Accelerating concrete support

The European Commission is collecting integration practices to disseminate them EU-wide

Early intervention in support of asylum-seekers and refugees, as soon as possible after they reach the EU, is a key ingredient of their successful integration in the labour market and society of the host country. This is what experience shows, on the part of those EU countries that have a long tradition in this area.

Many Member States have very little such experience, though. It is therefore crucial to highlight right across the EU the successful or promising practices that exist here and there.

At the time of printing, the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion department (DG EMPL) was due to start showcasing such practices online. It was also due to organise face-to-face information-sharing events in Madrid

(23-24 May) and Brussels (22 June), as part of the EU Mutual Learning Programme (follow the link at the bottom of this article, on the online version of *Social Agenda*).

Language barrier

Among the practices already collected by DG EMPL was "Fast track to integration", a project launched in 2015 by the Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union (HRF) and the Swedish Employers' Association (Vista), in collaboration with the public authorities.

While this sector needs an extra 5000 chefs, 2700 hotel and restaurant professionals (whether Swedes or third-country nationals) are registered as unemployed in Sweden, including 300 who



Promising practices: A Somali refugee training to operate an excavator in Halle, in a company which first gave him some German language lessons.

SPECIAL FEATURE



Star chef: Malakeh Jazmati (wearing headscarf), a Syrian refugee who used to have a cooking show on Syrian TV, teaches how to prepare a Syrian speciality at a cooking workshop in Berlin.

have skills or experience as chefs! One of the reasons is that the industry requires them to master the Swedish language.

“Fast track to integration” is based on a validation process which HRF and Vista have been developing since 2013 in Malmö. The process has been translated and adjusted to the needs of refugees and third-country nationals in general. Once their skills have been evaluated and validated, they obtain a qualification which is recognised by the hotel and restaurant sector.

Within two weeks, the migrants’ skills are assessed and those who do not fully qualify can benefit from a customised education and training plan, funded by national authorities, which will eventually lead them to a qualification.

The project is funded 100% at national level. In due course, it will cover all the hotel and restaurant-related professions and extend to other sectors. Already in December 2015, fast tracks were in place for newly arrived chefs, meat cutters and butchers, and for regulated professions such as medical doctors and pharmacists.

Building bridges

Speeding up asylum-seekers’ integration is also the aim of the French project “Accelair”, run by Forum Réfugiés-Cosi since 2002 in South-East France. It seeks to promote a multi-disciplinary approach to facilitating refugees’ access to the labour market and integration in society, including skills recognition, language training and housing.

It does this by building bridges between public employment services, vocational training bodies, the social housing sector and local and national businesses, in a partnership approach. This ensures that refugees effectively access the social allowances to which they are entitled, and define and implement a professional project.

Not only do they receive guidance in the area of vocational education, linguistic training and employment, they also receive assistance at the workplace itself for the duration of their contract or during the trial period if the contract is open-ended.

SPECIAL FEATURE

In addition, the project raises local employment and training actors' awareness of the refugees' rights and supports them if they decide to hire some, including by providing interpreters.

Moreover, Accelair has passed an agreement with social housing institutions which now provide quotas for refugees: Accelair detects potential problems, monitors housing attributions and organises awareness-raising events for landlords. It also ensures that the refugees receive French language classes.

Half of Accelair's annual budget is provided by the EU, be it through the European Social Fund, the European Refugee Fund or, since 2014, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The rest comes from national and local funding.

Since 2008, Forum Réfugiés-Cosi shares the experience gained through Accelair with other French *départements*, the intermediary level of governance between the local and regional authorities.

Field trials

From the end of August to mid-December 2015, the Vienna branch of the Austrian public employment service carried out a pilot project called "Kompetenzcheck". Six private training institutions worked with companies to check the skills of refugees, including through workplace trial periods.

The aim of this project was to help refugees attain work positions worthy of their level of qualification. Indeed, not only can over-qualification lead to discouragement, it can also expose the refugees to harsh competition with EU-born unskilled workers.

Early intervention is crucial to avoid, or restrict to the minimum, time spent by refugees in positions for which they are over-qualified. The pilot project therefore took refugees through a five-week process, in their mother-tongue (Farsi, Arabic, Russian and French), during which they were entitled to one hour of one-to-one conversations and ten hours of workshops per week.

The first step was to gather information on their skills and qualifications. Support was provided to those who had obtained formal qualifications in a third-country, in having them recognised by Austrian institutions. Their knowledge of German was also evaluated.

The next step was to check their work experience in practice. For example, a refugee who explained that he had been a painter

for three years in his country of origin was introduced to a professional painter in Vienna, who checked his skills against the competences asked for in Austria to complete a vocational training course in this area.

At the end of the process, the refugees received help to draw up a CV and the project provided customised guidance recommendations to their public employment service counsellors.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1047>

and turn to page 26 for an article on Convivial, a Belgian NGO co-managed by refugees.

Torture survivors

Refugees have often been through some very traumatic experiences in their country of origin or on their way to Europe. However, only psychotic or suicidal asylum-seekers have access to psychiatric services and many psychiatry professionals feel they lack the skills to work with families coming from a foreign cultural background. As indeed, addressing such traumas often requires family therapy.

Yet psychiatric care is a pre-condition for a successful integration into society, something which is overlooked most of the time.

Thanks to a Finnish project run by the Helsinki Deaconess Institute since 1993, every year 170 tortured adult refugees or asylum-seekers and 150 tortured or severely traumatised children and youth (0-24 years old) receive multidisciplinary psychiatric care in its Centre for Torture Survivors. Moreover, about 700 psychiatry professionals take part in training sessions in 30 localities throughout Finland.

The project receives EU support through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, in addition to some national funding.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Integrating refugees can bring new insights

Manuela Geleng is head of the Refugee Task-Force in the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion department (DG EMPL)



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Ensuring effective access to the labour market: Manuela Geleng, head of the European Commission's employment and social policy Refugee task-Force.

Why create a Refugee Task-Force in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion?

The EU is facing a historically high inflow of people fleeing war, lack of prospects, instability, poverty and climate change. In 2015, 1.3 million people sought asylum in the EU, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. This involves tremendous human suffering as well as practical challenges: reception, housing, education, health care and integration into the labour market and society. Integration is Member States' competence but the EU has an important role to play in providing support and incentives for their actions, such as promoting the exchange of good

practices and facilitating the use of EU funding. The present EU asylum rules already include the obligation for Member States to provide rights pertaining to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Integration is a multidimensional process, so we are taking on a cross-cutting approach. In particular, we look at the drivers for ensuring effective access to the labour market through skills assessment, recognition of qualifications, language training, upskilling, on-the-job training, education, healthcare and housing. And we are paying specific attention to the challenges facing women and unaccompanied minors. On this basis, the Task Force is about better knowledge, promoting exchange of information and good practices, mainstreaming

SPECIAL FEATURE

into other DG EMPL policies and initiatives and better use of EU funding (see box page 23).

So you are breaking down silos even within the employment and social affairs area?

Yes, the Task Force is precisely about integrating different facets and having a multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional approach – not just within our department but also inside the European Commission as a whole, as we take part in a Commission-wide inter-service group. And we are breaking silos not just from a policy development point of view but also from a funding one.

What was the most urgent thing to do when the Refugee Task Force was created in November 2015?

Already back in September, when European Commissioner Marianne Thyssen met the national authorities managing the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD), the Member States were asking for more support, especially in terms of exchanging best practices: few EU countries have a lot of experience in migrant integration

and some don't have any at all. The seminar was designed to better use the Funds for helping asylum seekers and refugees to integrate (see *Social Agenda* n°43). However, the issue is broader. Looking at what has already happened in the previous annual rounds of the European Semester economic policy coordination process, it appears that those countries that have a substantial number of people with a migration background are facing significant challenges: these people have twice as much risk of falling into poverty, dropping out of school early etc., and their employment rate is much worse than that of the rest of the population. So how can we better address the current challenges these people are facing and how can we learn from past experience, to ensure that the integration of the newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees will be successful? This is our objective.

Did you need extra data?

Absolutely. We are currently exploring ways for our employment and social protection networks to collect more data because we are missing statistics on the precise situation in the Member States. As of now, we only have some data on Germany.



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Special focus: "A special focus will be placed on the labour market integration of women and more generally on gender-related issues".

SPECIAL FEATURE

Integration, including skills, is a whole universe that we need to explore. Once a third-country national comes into the EU and makes a request for asylum, he/she can have access to the labour market nine months later, at the latest. But prior to the asylum request, preparatory action may already be undertaken with the help of EU Funds.

What impact is the present flow of asylum-seekers and refugees having on employment and social policy?

The volume and scope of the present flow is adding a sense of urgency to long-standing issues that we have not yet managed to address in a satisfactory way. For example, a special focus on labour market integration of women and more generally on gender-related issues, is important. In addition, policy responses have to take into consideration the age composition of the recent arrivals: 82% of the people that came to the EU in 2015 were under the age of 35 and 29% below 18, with unaccompanied minors making up a considerable share. Those who have to implement measures on the ground are confronted with an unprecedented scale and urgency – the worst crisis in

the EU since World War II – and with relatively new typologies: few EU countries have measures to care for unaccompanied minors after their 18th birthday, once they are adults, although they still need a helpful environment to carry on developing academically and socially.

So it is an opportunity to see traditional issues from a new angle?

Yes. The economic situation and the labour market are slightly improving but we still have high unemployment and youth unemployment rates, as well as a lot of poverty. So it's important to have a holistic approach to address challenges that are both internal and external to the EU. Public authorities need to find new solutions and they can also revisit old problems and find solutions to these. For instance, how can we quickly identify the skill needs of people and draw up a skills profile? This is useful for anyone, even for EU citizens. The New Skills Agenda which the Commission is due to adopt will have a number of actions specifically targeting the refugees. The refugee crisis has also been an opportunity to set up a platform for the ESF managing



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Faster support: In some EU countries, the European Social Fund can fund immediate vocational training for people as soon as they have applied for asylum.

SPECIAL FEATURE

authorities to facilitate the exchange of experience, so it is indeed an opportunity for mutual learning and exchanging. This sense of urgency can bring new insights and solutions to old problems.

So what has the Task Force done so far?

We have encouraged discussions in the Employment Committee (the main advisory committee for the Employment and Social Affairs EU Council of ministers in the employment field) and the Social Protection Committee (an advisory policy committee for the same EU Council), as well as within our networks, such as the European Network of Public Employment Services. We also resort to the Mutual Learning Programme (which supports, coordinates and encourages mutual learning between EU countries in the framework of the European Employment Strategy). The refugee crisis also illustrates what we mean by social investment. If we look at asylum seekers and refugees, statistics tell us that it takes them 15 years to reach the same employment rate as EU-born nationals and that this gap is particularly significant in their first five years in the EU. Therefore we need to accelerate the process right from the beginning and integrate them earlier. We can help refugees in a much better way. It would be good for them and good for the economy too, because we have a shrinking demography whereas, in fact, we have a young potential workforce coming to the EU that can actually contribute to our economic growth.

Is there a danger of Member States doing trade-offs between EU-born and non-EU born members of vulnerable groups?

The refugee crisis is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity in the sense that an ageing Europe needs to bring everybody into the labour market, extend the working



Closing the gaps: "On average, it takes asylum-seekers and refugees 15 years to reach the same employment rate as EU-born nationals and this gap is particularly significant in their first five years in the EU".

life, raise the employment rate of women, bring all those who are furthest away from the labour market into it and, clearly, we also need migration. Most of the refugees that are now entering the EU are young, so they represent an opportunity. This should also give us a new impetus to solve the problems we were already facing before the refugee crisis, rather than opposing different sets of needs. We should try using the momentum created by the refugee crisis to boost effective integration in general.

Different sources of EU co-funding

Several EU funds can be mobilised to support asylum-seekers and refugees' integration into the EU countries' labour market and society. For example the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (€3.1 billion for 2014-2020), for developing and improving reception conditions, as well as offering language, civic interaction and labour market integration courses; the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (€3.8 billion over the same period of time), for immediate food and material assistance; the European Social Fund (ESF, €80 billion for the same period) facilitates integration in the labour market, once asylum-seekers have acquired refugee status or at the latest 9 months after they have applied for it; and the European Regional Development Fund complements the ESF as it can finance social, health, education, housing and childcare infrastructure. Prior to that, asylum-seekers may receive limited ESF support for educational measures for children and vocational training for adults, in those EU countries which allow this.

EMPLOYMENT

The Youth Guarantee in practice

The story of Gerda (Latvia), Sandrina (Portugal) and Andrei (Romania)



New insight: The Youth Guarantee gave Gerda, who has a passion for the Arabic language, an insight into the work carried out by NGOs dealing with people from war-torn Iraq and other Arab countries.

Gerda, from Latvia, got the opportunity to follow a course that prepared her to work with refugees, thanks to the Youth Guarantee scheme. Dealing with people from war-torn Iraq and other Arab countries improved her language skills and gave her an insight into the social work carried out by the non-governmental organisations (NGO) sector.

She discovered the Youth Guarantee (YG) when she went to the State employment agency for career advice. There, an adviser informed her about a three-month training course provided by an NGO that was specialised in refugees and displaced people, as part of the YG scheme.

Gerda has a passion for the Arabic language and a Bachelor's degree in Asian studies. She has now started working for the Arab-Latvian Chamber of Commerce, where she can use her language skills on a daily basis and apply several things she learned during the YG training course.

The course will also help her fulfil her aims. "I obtained useful knowledge, skills and work experience and became more

self-confident. Now I feel more secure about future work possibilities", she says.

In July 2015, there was a 15.1 % unemployment rate for under-25 people in Latvia, where the YG scheme includes a whole range of support measures, tailored to each young person's particular needs: vocational training, wage subsidies, short courses and lectures, work placements, assistance with job interviews and help to become self-employed.

Sanitary engineering

Sandrina is from Portugal, where the YG scheme enabled her to connect her Sanitary Engineering studies with the world of work. She now has the job she wanted.

Soon after registering with the YG, a company specialising in her study area offered her a one-year traineeship. This hands-on experience was really valuable because it complemented her academic endeavours and theoretical knowledge. She made such an impression that the company recruited her as an employee.



Connection: The Youth Guarantee enabled Sandrina to connect her Sanitary Engineering studies with the world of work through a one-year traineeship.

"The YG scheme opened the door to the labour market for me," she explains, "which is what I appreciate most of all. My experience is proof that, as long as you are optimistic and dynamic, the scheme can give you a better chance of getting the job you want."

It was at the end of her Master's degree that Sandrina heard about the YG, when she was looking for a traineeship that would enable her to learn new skills and compete in the labour market.

In Portugal, the unemployment rate for people under 25 stood at 31.7% in June 2015. In this country, a young person can register through a dedicated YG website. In some cases, he/she can also be proactively identified by the YG team, which will record his/her details on the website. Those in need of assistance are contacted via email or by phone to start the YG guidance process.

Cooking classes

"No work experience? Sorry!". Such was the answer that Andrei, from Romania, always used to get when he was looking for a job after leaving secondary school last year. Until a friend suggested that he paid a visit to the local Active Employment agency and speak to a career adviser.

The adviser told Andrei about the YG and recommended that he take some cooking classes, a training option which was supported by the scheme. Andrei liked the idea of learning a new craft from scratch and seized this opportunity to obtain a recognised certificate. The free course had theoretical and practical modules – plus Andrei got to learn tips and tricks from some of the best chefs in the country.

The adviser also taught Andrei how to improve his CV so that he could catch the eye of potential employers. Fortunately, it only took him a few weeks to land a great, well-paid job! He is now a qualified cook based in Bucharest, not far from his home town. He is working hard and is very happy with his new career, which has allowed him to become financially independent.

"I strongly recommend the YG scheme. It really changed my life and taught me that it is never too late to learn new skills. I was just a boy with an uncertain future and over a period of just a few months, I have become a skilled professional."

Combining training and work

Andrei is the typical kind of young person that the YG scheme is trying to help. His struggle to find work is not unusual in Romania, where the unemployment rate for young people was 22.3% in March 2015.

In Romania, young people can now receive counselling and guidance through newly established YG Centres. The centres seek to place clients with employers that can offer good-quality training options. When necessary, the centres also encourage young people to finish school.

More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1079&newsId=2446&furtherNews=yes>

Since 2013

The EU countries endorsed the principle of the Youth Guarantee (YG) in April 2013. The EU financially supports the setting-up and implementation of YG Schemes through the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative. It also provides opportunities for mutual learning between EU countries, and monitors YG implementation in the context of the European Semester process of EU economic governance. The results of these efforts contribute to providing youngsters a better career future.

OTHER VOICES

A win-win approach to refugees



Bruno Gilain, Director of Convivial: "Training courses must both be activated quicker and lengthened".

When and how was Convivial created?

Bruno Gilain, director of Convivial NGO: In 1994, at the time of the genocide in Rwanda. The founder called on friends and neighbours to welcome Rwandese asylum-seekers. As they were rapidly granted refugee status, it was more a question of finding housing and furniture. In 1996, Convivial turned into a non-governmental organization (NGO). It was co-created by refugees who had become involved in the organization and by people who had been living in Belgium for a long time!

So you are really specialized in integration?

Yes. There are three phases, through which each refugee is accompanied by someone who speaks his/her native language. First, the installing phase: We play a great role in finding housing and mediating with the landlords. We have a Fund and we are trying to create a network of landlords on whom we can rely. We also help them on the administrative front: you can't register with the local

authorities and have access to social assistance if you don't have lodging and for this you have to provide some sort of guarantee to the landlord! Then we help them integrate into the labour market. We take stock of their skills and work experience and help them conceive a plan that is both ambitious and realistic. This entails customized assistance and a series of training courses, including a Citizenship module which helps them understand how Belgium works and thinks. The installation phase takes place during the first few months, the training one lasts 3- 6 months and then we follow the refugees for another year.

What is your main message to the decision-makers?

Promote a win-win, positive and holistic approach to asylum-seekers and refugees, whether it is utilitarian because it can have a positive impact on our economy or humanistic because it is our duty as human beings! It is crucial to put accompanying frameworks quickly in place, while at the same time being realistic and giving enough time for integration to take place, in a long-term investment perspective. Therefore, training courses must both be activated quicker and lengthened. For example, it is worth investing one or two years in training a doctor to become a nurse (as his/her medical diploma will not be recognized) rather than giving him/her a short training course to become a cleaner, say. This is crucial at a time when Belgium and Europe as a whole is closing up and giving in to fear.

What about host country citizens?

In Belgium at least, we are witnessing an unprecedented mobilization of people who come to us asking how they could help. So my message is also to consolidate the specialized NGOs, to channel the surge of citizens' solidarity and to allow the refugees to access the services which all citizens enjoy, such as the employment services, which are not equipped to address inter-cultural differences, e.g. helping people who have never thought in terms of a professional project. In 2014, all the migrant-related EU funds were merged. As a result, funding to NGOs like ours has been reduced and they have had to get rid of part of their staff! We have launched a new initiative to get refugees and host country citizens to meet up once a month. It's a micro-initiative but we have just received some funds from the French Community of Brussels to develop it further.

Ann Branch: "We underestimate the entrepreneurial capacity of people from 'under-represented' groups".

INTERVIEW



Ann Branch is head of the European Commission's Job Creation unit

Creating jobs

Job creation, that's quite a mandate!

Yes, it's challenging! There are so many factors that influence job creation. One aspect of our work is trying to create jobs directly, for example through our microfinance financial instruments. From 2010 to 2013, through Progress Microfinance, we were able to provide 40 000 loans to vulnerable and under-represented groups. On average, each beneficiary has created one other job. Of course we could achieve more if we had more funds, and we are hoping that some countries will use the European Social Fund to create "windows" on our financial instruments, which would boost their impact further. This support is really important, as it's striking how we tend to underestimate the entrepreneurial capacity of people in general and even more so the capacity of those from "under-represented" groups. The lack of access to finance is one of the biggest obstacles they face.

You also deal with social enterprises...

This is a sector with significant growth potential. For the first time, we will be providing guarantees, loans and equity to financial institutions lending to social enterprises. We should be able to support well over 1 000 social enterprises to start up and grow over 2014-2020. Overall, due to the private sector investment triggered by our financial instruments, we expect each euro spent to generate at least five.

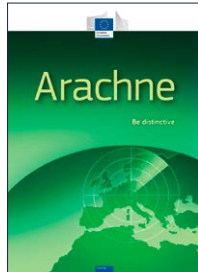
What else does the European Commission do in this area?

We are also in the process of developing a broader job creation strategy, which will require working with other services and

departments. One of the challenges is insufficient understanding about the effectiveness of Member States' job creation measures. The EU Annual Growth Survey and European Semester country reports provide a general macro-economic picture but do not describe the job creation and destruction process as such. This makes it difficult to provide guidance to Member States to optimise job creation. Another challenge in the EU is that we need to produce more entrepreneurs, but more importantly, to help more of them to grow their business, as evidence points to the fact that most jobs are created in micro-enterprises within the first five years of existence. The Commission is already addressing some of these issues, such as how to help start-ups grow, how to improve EU venture capital markets, and how to improve insolvency proceedings, but we will be looking at what more we could propose.

You have worked a lot in the field of education and culture. Can the EU help mentalities evolve?

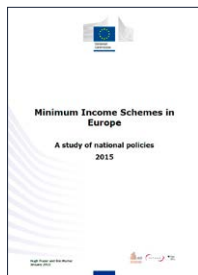
Absolutely. Europe could be more entrepreneurial, which requires modernising bankruptcy laws, and changing attitudes towards risk and entrepreneurship, among other things. But the reality is that many more of us will have to think about entrepreneurship, or spells of entrepreneurship, in the future, and have an entrepreneur mind-set, even as a civil servant. And as far as culture is concerned, it is indeed a significant sector with positive spill-overs for other sectors in the local economy.



Arachne – Be distinctive

Arachne is a risk scoring tool developed by the European Commission. It supports managing authorities responsible for the European Structural and Investment Funds by detecting effectively and efficiently the most risky projects, contracts, contractors and beneficiaries. This brochure shows the vast possibilities of the Arachne risk-scoring tool and how managing authorities can profit from its innovative and sophisticated features.

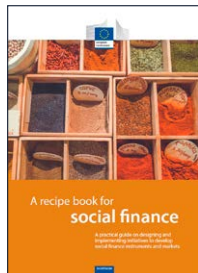
Catalogue N°: KE-04-15-934-EN-N



Minimum Income Schemes in Europe – National policies

This report of the European Social Policy Network highlights and assesses the contribution of minimum income schemes to preventing and alleviating poverty and social exclusion. It also studies to what extent minimum income schemes are effectively linked with other benefits and services so as to support recipients' inclusion into the labour market.

Catalogue N°: KE-02-15-950-EN-N



Social finance – A recipe book for social finance

Designed for practitioners such as social enterprises, investors, social finance intermediaries, market builders and social enterprise support organisations, this publication will guide you step by step through the process of designing and implementing initiatives to develop social finance instruments and markets. You will discover that there is no tried-and-tested formula or recipe and that there are challenges at whatever level you operate. This practical guide provides good examples and practices that you can learn from and adapt to help you avoid possible pitfalls. Checklists and key questions at the end of each chapter will help you summarise what you have learned and move to the next step.

Catalogue N°: KE-01-15-889-EN-N



Make a difference – Drop'pin and go far

Designed for practitioners, Drop'pin is an online portal that aims to help young people get a foot on the employment ladder. It is designed to bring those looking to better their knowledge, skills and abilities closer to organisations offering opportunities to improve them, including corporates, SMEs and NGOs. Looking for an apprenticeship, traineeship, mentoring or e-learning courses? Drop'pin has a wide range of opportunities spanning a number of sectors across Europe. Whether you are a young person looking for your first job or an organisation looking for your stars of the future, Drop'pin and go far.

Catalogue N°: KE-04-15-657-EN-N

Useful websites

The website of Commissioner Thyssen: http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/thyssen_en

The home page of the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/>

The website of the European Social Fund: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf>

To download or to order these publications, please go to <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en>

To subscribe to the 'Social Agenda' magazine or to other publications of DG Employment,

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