Next Speaker

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LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES:
SKILLS ASSESSMENT AND PES

Workshop on labour market integration of refugees – the role of PES
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POLICY DEPARTMENTS in the European Parliament

support parliamentary bodies (President, Committees, Delegations, the Secretary General)

POLICY DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC POLICIES

- analyses, briefings for 6 committees including the Employment and Social Affairs Committee:

- Responsible for employment policies, social policy, working conditions, vocational training, free movement of workers and pensioners

... and for relations with 4 European agencies:
European Training Foundation, Cedefop, Eurofound, OSHA

Tasks include co-legislation, supervision of the European Commission, preparation of resolutions, opinions

30 May 2016 - Adoption of Report on Social inclusion and labour market integration of refugees (July -> Resolution)
Recent studies and analyses, e.g.:

- Labour Market Integration of Refugees:
  1) Strategies and good practices,
  2) European networks and platforms,
  3) European funding instruments,
  4) EU law
- Precarious employment: Patterns, trends and policy strategies in Europe (forthcoming)

**Skills development and guidance**

- Employment and skills aspects of the Digital Single Market Strategy
- The future of work: Digitalisation in the US Labour Market
- Assistance for Entrepreneurship (2015)
STRUCTURE

1. Refugees: (Potential) specific features
2. Lessons from the past: Skills recognition as obstacle
3. Solutions: International approach, legal commitments, methods
4. Implications: PES service delivery
5. Conclusions
Refugees: (Potential) specific features
SYRIA - DIFFERENT WORLDS WITHIN ONE LABOUR MARKET
(POTENTIAL) SPECIFIC FEATURES OF (CURRENT) REFUGEES

- more pronounced heterogeneity of skills profiles than in many European countries:
- lower employment rate of women
- partially working with less modern technologies
- higher share of informal employment, micro-enterprises for production, retail, repair etc. providing additional skills and combining more than one job
- potential skills losses due to war and forced inactivity (e.g. Afghanistan)
- no (adequate) documents

need for individual treatment by PES / service providers
Lessons from the past:
Skills assessment/recognition as obstacle
LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Insufficient labour market integration of refugees and third-country immigrants:

1. Long duration of labour market integration – strong country variation
2. Incomplete integration - lagging behind other migrants
3. Skills mismatch – over-qualification in employment

Report of Danish Refugee Council, 1999:
“[…] there is much evidence that systems for assessment and recognition of foreign certificates, skills and knowledge often fail to offer refugees appropriate routes into employment or further education and training.”

… recent research: recognition of qualifications - a considerable barrier (2014)
PROBLEMS DETECTED IN SKILLS ASSESSMENT / RECOGNITION

- insufficient and fragmented information for users and low take-up
- opaque and lack of procedures for users, e.g. to deal with insufficient documentation
- incomplete coverage - lack of provisions for various areas of assessment
- rigidities - all-or-nothing principle of recognition, employment
- additional procedures or requirements for non-EU nationals
- fragmented systems – across different education segments, federal states
- lack of financial support and bridging to mainstream education and training
Nevertheless: “European countries and the various systems of intra-EU cooperation have been on the forefront of developing for assessing credentials for those without verifiable documentation, notably refugees.” (Loo 2016, U.S.)

Solutions: International approach, legal commitments and methods
SOLUTIONS: INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS ON GENERAL APPROACH

Need for early and effective skills assessment, more flexible approach

- European Commission – Modules on Integration (2014) – different methods, national centre, staff competences
- UNHCR Guide (2013) – early, support for employment agencies, practical assessments
- OECD – Making integration work (2016) – early, alternative methods, practical tests
SOLUTIONS: LEGAL COMMITMENTS

- Council of Europe / UNESCO (LISBON) CONVENTION (1997)
  - Standards for recognition of higher education qualifications
  - ENIC-NARIC NETWORK – European Network of Information Centres + National Academic Recognition Information Centres – Database, Tools, Sources, Procedures ...

- QUALIFICATION DIRECTIVE (2011)
  - Equal treatment between beneficiaries of international protection (i.e. recognized refugees + subsidiary protection) and nationals
  - Appropriate schemes for those who cannot provide documentary evidence -> no provisions for applicants in Directives

- Other acts support or restrict access for refugees and third-country nationals (e.g. Council Recommendation on Validation of non-formal and informal learning - 2012, Directive on recognition of professional qualifications – 2005/2013)
Biographical interviews  
(in-depth profiling to identify personal strengths and potential)

if
- no documents
- discrepancies in formal qualification

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING  
(or Skills Audit, e.g.)

- Simulation
- Completing specific work tasks
- Sample work (academics, art)
- Work experience
- Examinations
- Aptitude tests

RECOGNITION

Alternative recognition
Conditional recognition
Partial recognition

EMPLOYMENT

Work experience / probation period
Limited scope
Conditional registration
"Career laddering“ - bridging programs
Implications:
PES service delivery
PES EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH

- Quality interviewing
  - including basic skills profiling (occupational skills and competences, prior non-formal and informal learning, social skills etc.)

- Competent Individual Action Planning
  - including referral to ALMP and monitoring (if within remits)

- Good match in placement and intensive work with employers

... presumed that staff has good knowledge of:
- resource-oriented counselling techniques
- (skills) profiling
- basics of cultural, gender diversity
- information portals, PES or other apps (if available), services to refer to

... and a welcoming, flexible attitude
PES ROLE VARIES ACROSS EUROPE

- Coordinator (conductor)
  or cooperation partner

- In-house (in-depth) profiling, testing, simulation
  or referral to partners

- Career guidance provision
  (orientation)
  or referral to partners

- Traditions and resources for comprehensive
  or modest ALMP

- Integration of refugees ranking high
  or low on the policy agenda

... AS WELL AS RECOGNITION SETTINGS THEY ARE WORKING IN
CONCLUSIONS
CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD FOR PES

*PES may have to cope with*

- legal obstacles, e.g. for early intervention (applicants)
- weak or problematic institutionalisation of assessment/recognition structures
- costs for skills assessment - refugees under financial pressure

*PES at EU or global level -> mutual support through*

- common training modules
- knowledge base on education profiles in main refugee countries
- sharing tools / concepts including ways to save costs
ENDING WITH SYNERGIES

Improving skills assessment and flexible pathways for refugees ... means to enhance PES capacities for the work with all unemployed.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION
USEFUL LINKS


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Literature:

Benton, Meghan et al. 2014: [Aiming higher. Policies to get immigrants into middle-skilled work in Europe](http://example.com)

Cedefop 2014: [The validation challenge: how close is Europe to recognising all learning?](http://example.com), Policy brief

Council of Europe 1997: [Lisbon Convention](http://example.com)

European Commission 2013: [Recognition of qualifications and competences of migrants (Schuster et al.)](http://example.com)

European Parliament 2016: [Labour Market Integration of Refugees (Konle-Seidl)](http://example.com)

Loo, Bryce 2016: [Recognizing Refugee Qualifications, WES](http://example.com)

OECD/European Commission 2015: [Indicators for immigrant Integration 2015](http://example.com)

[Qualification Directive 2011](http://example.com)