REPORT

on refugees: social inclusion and integration into the labour market (2015/2321(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure
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(*) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on refugees: social inclusion and integration into the labour market
(2015/2321(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
– having regard to Article 78 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
– having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
– having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
– having regard to the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the additional protocol thereto,
– having regard to its resolution of 29 April 2015 on the latest tragedies in the Mediterranean and EU migration and asylum policies¹,
– having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2015 on migration and refugees in Europe²,
– having regard to the Commission Ten Point Action Plan on Migration, presented at the Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council held in Luxembourg on 20 April 2015,
– having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘A European Agenda on Migration’ (COM(2015)0240),
– having regard to Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection,
– having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘EU Action Plan on Return’ (COM(2015)0453),
– having regard to the Commission recommendation establishing a common ‘Return Handbook’ to be used by Member States’ competent authorities when carrying out return-related tasks (C(2015)6250),

– having regard to the Commission communication on public procurement rules in connection with the current asylum crisis (COM(2015)0454),

– having regard to the Commission communication on addressing the refugee crisis in Europe: the role of EU external action (JOIN(2015)0040),


– having regard to the Commission communication on managing the refugee crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures under the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2015)0490),


– having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of Regions on the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals,

– having regard to the Commission communication on managing the refugee crisis: state of play of the implementation of the priority actions under the European Agenda on Migration (COM(2015)0510),

– having regard to the conclusions adopted by the European Council at its meeting in June 2014, at its special meeting of 23 April 2015, at its meeting of 25 and 26 June 2015, at the informal meeting of EU heads of state or government on migration of 23 September 2015, at its meeting of 15 October 2015, and at its meetings of 17 and 18 December 2015, and of 18 and 19 February 2016,

– having regard to the conclusions adopted by the Council on safe countries of origin at its meeting of 20 July 2015, on migration at its meeting of 20 July 2015, on the future of the return policy at its meeting of 8 October 2015, on migration at its meeting of 12 October 2015, on measures to handle the refugee and migration crisis at its meeting on 9 November 2015, and on statelessness at its meeting of 4 December 2015,

– having regard to the conclusions adopted by the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on resettling through multilateral and national schemes 20,000 persons in clear need of international protection at their meeting on 20 July 2015,

– having regard to the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan of 15 October 2015,

– having regard to the Declaration of the High-level Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean - Western Balkans Route adopted on 8 October 2015, and to the leaders’ statement adopted at the meeting on refugee flows along the Western Balkan route on 25 October 2015,

– having regard to the action plan and political declaration adopted at the EU-Africa
summit on migration, held in Valletta on 11 and 12 November 2015,


– having regard to the Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council accompanying the communication on the Annual Growth Survey 2016,

– having regard to resolution 1994 (2014) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,

– having regard to the work and reports of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), and in particular to their Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2014,

– having regard to Articles 33.1 and 33.2 of the 1984 UN Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

– having regard to the work, annual reports and studies of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and in particular to their studies on severe forms of labour exploitation,

– having regard to the Policy Department A study on the Integration of Migrants and its Effects on the Labour Market, to the Policy Department C studies on the implementation of Article 80 TFEU, on new approaches, alternative avenues and means of access to asylum procedures for persons seeking international protection, on exploring new avenues for legislation for labour migration to the EU, on enhancing the common European asylum system and alternatives to Dublin, and on EU cooperation with third countries in the field of migration, to the Policy Departments A and D notes and papers on EU funds for migration policies and refugee integration: analysis of efficiency and best practice for the future, and to the Policy Department EXPO study on migrants in the Mediterranean: protecting human rights,

– having regard to the studies by the European Migration Network (EMN), and in particular to their study on policies, practices and data on unaccompanied minors,

– having regard to the work and reports of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees,

– having regard to the work and reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants,

– having regard to the work and reports of the International Organisation for Migration,

– having regard to the work and reports of the European Council of Refugees and Exiles,

– having regard to the Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – European Agenda on Migration, adopted at its 115th plenary session of 3-4 December 2015,

– having regard to the Opinions of 10 December 2015 of the European Economic and Social Committee on the European Agenda on Migration and on the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling,
having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2014 on the situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration¹,

having regard to the experience gained via the EQUAL programme and the lessons learned,

having regard to the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004, particularly principles 3, 5 and 7,

having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on the integration of migrants, its effects on the labour market and the external dimension of social security coordination²,

having regard to the relevant Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) publications, in particular ‘Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In’, ‘Making Integration Work: Refugees and others in need of protection’, and ‘A New Profile of Migrants in the Aftermath of the Recent Economic Crisis’,

having regard to the relevant Eurofound publications, in particular ‘Challenges of policy coordination for third-country nationals’ and ‘Approaches towards the labour market integration of refugees in the EU’,

having regard to the International Monetary Fund staff discussion note ‘The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges’,


having regard to the UNHCR’s International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic, update II of 22 October 2013,

having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2016 on skills policies for fighting youth unemployment³,

having regard to its resolution of 10 September 2015 on social entrepreneurship and social innovation in combating unemployment⁴,

having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2016 on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU⁵,

having regard to the study drawn up by Parliament’s Policy Department C in February 2016 on ‘Female refugees and asylum seekers: the issue of integration’,

having regard to the European Tripartite Social Summit conclusions of 16 March 2016,
in particular the Statement of the European Economic and Social Partners on the refugee crisis,

– having regard to the international obligations found in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, bearing in mind the fundamental right of all children to have access to free primary education, irrespective of their gender, race, or ethnic or social origin,

– having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2015 on education for children in emergency situations and protracted crises¹,

– having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0204/2016),

A. whereas the refugee crisis is first and foremost a humanitarian crisis, brought about, inter alia, by the destabilisation of states in the neighbourhood of the EU, having, as well, long-term impacts on its labour markets and civil society, requiring long-term and considered responses that serve to guarantee social cohesion at local level and the successful integration of newcomers in our societies;

B. whereas the Geneva Convention came into being to protect European refugees after the Second World War, and whereas it defines who is a refugee and lays down a series of refugee rights, along with the obligations of states;

C. whereas there are three types of legal status benefiting or potentially benefiting from international protection, i.e. people with refugee status, people seeking asylum and people benefiting from subsidiary protection; whereas social inclusion and labour market integration policies should be tailored to their specific needs;

D. whereas there is a need to analyse the causes of the refugee crisis in order that effective and immediate action may be taken; whereas, furthermore, the main causes of the refugee crisis are conflicts, and whereas resolving them could drastically reduce the number of refugees, and make it possible for the remaining to return to their own countries;

E. whereas the number of asylum seekers and refugees recorded in Europe in 2014 and 2015 is unprecedented, and is the result of the difficult humanitarian situation in certain countries neighbouring the EU; whereas better access to information through new technologies could help prevent traffickers and smugglers from flourishing;

F. whereas the action plan and political declaration adopted at the EU-Africa summit on migration, held in Valletta on 11 and 12 November 2015, did not result in practical, decisive action;

G. whereas refugees’ integration into both society and the labour market can only be achieved if there is solidarity among, and united commitment of, all Member States and

their societies;

H. whereas the working-age population in the EU is projected to decline by 7.5 million by 2020; whereas projections on the development of labour market needs in the EU point to emerging and future shortages in specific fields;

I. whereas professional integration is a stepping stone to social inclusion;

J. whereas the social inclusion and integration of refugees in the host societies, and in particular in their labour markets, is a dynamic, two-way process, as well as a two-dimensional one (involving rights and duties), representing a challenge and an opportunity whereby the inclusion of refugees requires concerted but distinct responsibilities and efforts on the part of the refugees themselves as well as of the Member States, their local and, where applicable, regional administrations and host communities, and requiring as well as the involvement and support of social partners, civil society and volunteer organisations;

K. whereas successful integration requires not only inclusion in the labour market, but also access to language courses upon arrival, and to housing, education and training, social protection and healthcare, including mental health support;

L. whereas labour market conditions within host countries are a determining factor for the successful integration of refugees; whereas unemployment in the EU, in particular youth and long-term unemployment, is still at alarming levels, and matching supply and demand on the labour market is a persistent challenge;

M. whereas each refugee is an individual with his or her own personal background, knowledge, skills, qualifications, working and living experience, and needs that all deserve recognition; whereas refugees can undertake and generate economic activity that could bring positive return to the host communities;

N. whereas, furthermore, 24.4 % of the total population in the EU live in risk of poverty and social exclusion, and almost 10 % are facing severe material deprivation;

O. whereas third-country nationals face many difficulties in obtaining recognition of their skills and qualifications; whereas the recognition of qualifications from a third country goes hand in hand with screening of skills;

P. whereas recognition of the training and qualifications of adult refugees and specific provisions for them to obtain academic qualifications and specific skills are essential for their entry into the labour market;

Q. whereas granting refugees and asylum seekers effective access to the labour market is important to restoring their human dignity and self-worth, and is cost-efficient, and it also provides a responsible approach towards public finances, easing the cost borne by Member States and local authorities while also enabling them to become active fiscal contributors;

R. whereas women and minors, both refugees and asylum seekers, have specific protection needs; whereas all social inclusion and labour market integration policies need to
include a gender and child protection perspective;

S. whereas, according to figures supplied by Europol in 2015, at least 10 000 unaccompanied children have disappeared after arriving in Europe;

T. whereas forced displacements, conflicts, human rights violations and wars can have a severe impact on the physical and mental health of the people affected; whereas, in addition to this, female refugees and asylum seekers experience very high rates of gender-based violence;

U. whereas a large proportion of asylum seekers who have arrived in Europe are facing subhuman and precarious conditions, and are living in camps without access to resources and services of sufficient quality to meet their basic needs;

V. whereas Article 33.1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees stipulates that ‘No Contracting State shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’;

W. whereas Articles 3.1 and 3.2 of the Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (1984) stipulate that ‘No State Party shall expel, return (‘refouler’) or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture [...] the competent authorities shall take into account all relevant considerations including, where applicable, the existence in the State concerned of a consistent pattern of gross, flagrant or mass violations of human rights’;

X. whereas discrimination, along with linguistic, educational and institutional factors, is one of the most significant barriers preventing migrants in general from fully participating in the labour market and in society1;

Y. whereas, among the asylum seekers and refugees that arrived in the EU in 2015, half are between 18 and 34 years old, and one in four are children; whereas these children have come from conflict areas where their school attendance has been interrupted or restricted, sometimes for long periods, or from refugee camps where only a minority of them have been able to obtain any form of education or attend local schools;

Z. whereas Directive 2003/86/EC stipulates, with regard to family reunification for refugees, that EU countries may not impose conditions relating to a minimum period of residence in the territory before refugees can be joined by their family members;

1. Stresses the need for the EU to base its immediate response to the situation on solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, as stated in Article 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and on a holistic approach that takes into account the need to improve safe and legal migration channels, and that ensures full respect for existing laws and for fundamental European rights and values; highlights that for managing the inflow of refugees and asylum seekers it is necessary to put in

place immediately a permanent relocation mechanism for all Member States;

2. Takes note of the high degree of heterogeneity and lack of clarity in the use of the term refugee in the public and political discourse; stresses the importance of clearly identifying refugees in accordance with the legal definition enshrined in the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967, and in EU legislation, in particular the Qualifications Directive¹ as defined by Article 2 (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), and the Reception Directive as defined by Article 2 (a), (b) and (c); stresses the importance of making a clear differentiation between refugee and economic migrant for the purposes of implementing the various European and international policies;

3. Points out that a person eligible for subsidiary protection is a third country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee, but who likewise faces a real risk of suffering, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or a civilian facing a serious and individual threat to his or her life by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict (see Qualifications Directive);

4 Stresses that significant differences exist in the times and modalities of processing requests for international protection within Member States; highlights that slow and excessively bureaucratic procedures may hinder refugees and asylum seekers’ access to education and training, employment guidance and the labour market, the activation of EU and Member States' programmes, and the effective and coordinated use of funds in this field, as well as increase the refugees and asylum seekers' vulnerability to undeclared work and precarious working conditions; points to the urgent need to establish a common asylum system to improve recognition procedures while, at the same time, ensuring the highest level of safety for refugees and European citizens; recommends that the necessary measures be taken to support those Member States which, for geographical reasons, are involved more intensively in initial reception; recognises that the length of residence permit granted (especially to those with subsidiary protection) acts as a barrier to labour market integration if it is only of relatively short duration;

5. Calls as well for effective steps to be taken outside EU territory, both to ensure that those who are entitled can reach host countries safely and with a view to managing applications for international protection and containing undefined migration flows;

6. Highlights the fact that in order to facilitate the social inclusion and integration of refugees into the labour market, it is necessary to develop an approach, which prescribes appropriate adaptation and presupposes cooperation, and to address a range of serious and multi-faceted issues, such as: all forms of discrimination; linguistic barriers, being the first obstacles to integration; the validation of skills; diverse socio-economic, education and cultural backgrounds; housing; health needs, including psychosocial and post-trauma support; family reunification; and the significant share of vulnerable groups among refugees, in particular worrying numbers of children, including unaccompanied children, people with disabilities, elderly persons and women², all of whom require

responses tailored to their specific needs;

7. Rejects the idea of creating special labour markets for refugees;

8. Advocates that the respective national minimum wage should also remain valid for refugees;

9. Recalls the extremely worrying situation of women in the refugee camps in Europe, and in particular their living and hygienic conditions, which are such as to warrant emergency sanitary measures; underlines that women have different healthcare needs than men because they have more exposure to multiple risks, including gender-based violence, complications in reproductive health and cultural barriers in access to health care; considers, therefore, that policies in this area cannot be gender-neutral;

10. Points to the importance of differentiating between emergency measures and measures to be taken in the medium to long term in order to cope effectively with disparate needs;

11. Reiterates the importance of recognising the gender dimension right from the start when processing applications for refugee status, and of acknowledging the needs of women who apply for international protection, and the specific social inclusion and labour market integration challenges that women face; calls for equal opportunities for men and women in all policies and procedures relating to social inclusion and labour market integration, and asylum and migration, bearing in mind that women take more often than men the responsibility for the care of children and of elderly, ill or otherwise dependent family members; recalls that provision of quality and accessible childcare and care for other dependants, as well as flexible working arrangements, are crucial examples of how to improve access to labour markets for all parents and enable their economic and social empowerment;

12. Emphasises the benefits of education on social inclusion and integration into the labour market; stresses the importance of guaranteeing all refugees, in particular girls and women, access to formal, informal and non-formal education and long-life training, combined with work experience; calls, furthermore, for robust and transparent procedures for recognising qualifications obtained abroad, outside the European Union;

13. Calls on the Member States to establish a language training system, closely linking general and vocational language training;

14. Stresses the importance of a tailor-made integration approach based on equal opportunities, with the necessary attention given to the needs and specific challenges of different target groups; emphasises, in this regard, the great demand for literacy programmes;

Challenges and opportunities

15. Believes that facilitating effective access for refugees and asylum seekers to housing, health care, education, social protection and the labour market, while guaranteeing respect for their fundamental rights and making labour markets more inclusive at local and national level, could play an important role in restoring their human dignity and self-worth, and stresses that this is also cost-efficient, as it would allow them to be self-sufficient, to gain economic independence and to contribute in a positive way to society, which is an essential step for their successful inclusion into that society, and a responsible approach towards public finances, easing the cost borne by Member States and local authorities, as it involves integrating refugees while at the same time enabling them to become active fiscal contributors, which could be considered beneficial for their individual growth, development, self-esteem, recognition in society, as well as for the society and community as a whole; points out that not all refugees arriving in the EU are able to work for reasons of health, age or other issues; recalls that the Qualifications Directive and the Reception Conditions Directive provides for the right of access to the labour market and to vocational training, both for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection;

16. Asks the Member States to work on the implementation of the country-specific recommendations set out in the framework of the European Semester.

17. Points out that early and continuous intervention is crucial to efforts to guarantee the social inclusion and integration of refugees into the labour market, and into local communities, as effectively as possible, which serves to diminish the risk of them later experiencing feelings of isolation, inadequacy and of not fitting in; recalls that early intervention measures could include early participation through volunteering, internships, mentoring and community engagement;

18. Acknowledges the importance of the work of civil society and volunteer organisations providing support for the empowerment, integration and self-resilience of all asylum seekers and refugees, before and during their participation in the labour market; stresses that necessary measures should be taken to properly train those who are voluntarily engaging in the integration and education of refugees; notes the importance of establishing and building social and community networks among, and with, refugee and migrant communities in order to facilitate their access to the labour market;

19. Highlights the fact that labour market conditions within host countries is one of the determining factors when it comes to ensuring sustainable and successful integration of refugees; is aware of the fact that refugees are heterogenic in terms of age, skills and knowledge; stresses that unemployment in the EU, in particular youth and long-term unemployment, is still at alarming levels in some countries and regions, and that the Commission and the Member States should continue to prioritise policies and investments aimed at providing quality employment for the whole of society, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable people, and on economic growth; recalls that actions to create quality employment, promote active labour markets and tackle unemployment must make sense in the local context, otherwise they will not be effective;

20. Further points to the major disparities in social and economic circumstances within the EU; stresses the importance of taking these into account when refugees are relocated, in order to maximise their labour-market integration prospects, as they too often are first
relocated to places where they cannot be integrated into the labour market;

21. Calls on the Member States to ensure that welcoming refugees goes hand-in-hand with a solid integration policy, such as language and orientation courses, that provide comprehensive insights into fundamental EU rights and values and social inclusiveness; emphasises that language skill acquisition plays an essential role in the successful integration of refugees, in particular into the labour market; calls on the Member States to require and provide refugees, who are likely to be granted a permit and find a job in the host country, with both general and work-related comprehensive language courses; takes the view that language learning should already be provided in hot spots and reception centres;

22. Stresses the need for an early, fair, transparent and free-of-charge assessment of refugees’ and asylum seekers’ formal and non-formal skills, as well as recognition and validation of their qualifications, with a view to facilitating their access to active labour market policies, in particular through training and employment guidance, including measures guaranteeing their access to the labour market and to non-discriminatory working conditions, and tailored measures allowing them to make full use of their potential, and to match labour supply and demand in the host countries; stresses, in this regard, the importance of strengthening the role of the European Qualifications Framework, and of promptly introducing more effective arrangements for recognising and validating qualifications, experience and skills; points out that the EU citizenry as a whole would benefit from such effective arrangements; stresses, however, that this assessment should on no account amount to a process of discrimination in relation to asylum seekers’ qualifications, and skills and potential employability should not be a criterion for decisions on asylum applications; stresses that the limited resources available should be spent carefully on the timely handling of asylum procedures and on the speedy and effective integration of refugees;

23. Highlights the fact that public spending, covering extraordinary investments in social inclusion and labour-market integration measures and programmes, are likely to have a positive effect on national GDPs in the short term, while medium- or long-term impacts on public finances will depend on the effectiveness of these measures;

24. Welcomes, in this context, the Commission’s decision to take into account the budgetary impact of the exceptional inflow of refugees related to extraordinary expenditures for Member States under the preventive and corrective arm of the Stability and Growth Pact when assessing possible temporary deviations from the SGP requirements;

25. Highlights the fact that the main EU funds available for social inclusion and integration into the labour market, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), have different focuses, target groups and management modes at Member State level; stresses that these funds support targeted initiatives to improve language and professional skills, to promote access to services and to the labour market, and to support awareness campaigns targeting both host communities and migrants; recalls the importance of

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using integration funds for real integration measures, and reminds the Member States of the importance of the partnership principle in order to ensure effective and more coordinated use of these funds; points out, however, that the objective of labour-market integration of refugees must be reflected in greater importance being given to the European Social Fund;

26. Stresses, as these funds are insufficient, that increased public investment and additional resources are required in order to provide, as a matter of priority, local authorities, social partners, social and economic actors, civil society and volunteer organisations with direct financial support for measures aimed at facilitating swift integration of refugees and asylum seekers into society and the labour market, not least in order to forestall social tensions, in particular in those areas where unemployment is highest;

27. Acknowledges the Commission's efforts to simplify and increase synergies among the available funding instruments; stresses, however, the need to further develop accessibility, complementary and transparency of these funds with a view to strengthening Member States' reception and integration capacities of refugees and asylum seekers;

28. Emphasises, in that connection, that the AMIF has used up all its resources; urges, therefore, that the fund be retained when the MFF is revised;

29. Highlights the fact that the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, equal opportunities and gender equality should always be ensured when designing and implementing social inclusion and integration policies and measures;

30. Further highlights that integration and inclusion measures aimed at refugees and asylum seekers should not draw on financial resources destined for programmes targeting other disadvantaged groups, but necessarily require additional social investments reflecting the need for additional measures; stresses, moreover, that the EU funds available should be spent in a more efficient and effective manner; calls on the Commission to take into account labour market and social situation data when designing such integration policies in order to ensure that the integration process does not worsen the social and economic situation in host regions;

31. Calls, therefore, on the Commission to consider introducing a minimum share of 25% of the cohesion policy budget for the ESF Fund in the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), in order to ensure adequate resources for labour market integration in the long term; calls on the Council, in the context of the forthcoming revision of the MFF, to adjust the ceilings for total allocations and for the individual headings to take account of the internal and external challenges which have arisen in connection with the refugee crisis, and to bring them into line with the needs of the Member States facing greatest integration challenge;

32. Points out that in order to ensure an expedient allocation within the scope of the ESF, Member States should, where needed, adjust related national rules in order to ensure that asylum seekers are treated equally with EU and third-country nationals having

access to the labour market;

**Making integration work**

33. Stresses the need for strict correlation between all the legislative acts forming the EU Agenda on Migration\(^1\) in order to ensure good management of refugees and migrants;

34. Notes that the participation of all actors involved in society is crucial, and suggests, therefore that, while respecting the competences of Member States on integration measures, the exchange of best practice in this field should be strengthened; underlines that integration measures for all legally-residing third-country nationals should promote inclusion rather than isolation; notes that local and regional authorities, including cities, have a key role to play in integration processes;

35. Is firmly convinced that integrating refugees into the labour market will be difficult without active, large-scale support from microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU; takes the view that appropriate authorities in the Member States should provide SMEs with comprehensive, tailored support and advice in the context of the integration of refugees into the labour market;

36. Supports the Commission’s efforts in updating the European Agenda on Migration, in particular by revising the Dublin III Regulation in order to improve solidarity, responsibility-sharing and the harmonisation of protection standards among Member States; underlines the positive impact that mobility of refugees would have on addressing labour needs and shortages, as well as on refugees’ inclusion into the labour market, including aspects such as encouraging Member States to allow for family reunification; stresses that further efforts are necessary to create a truly uniform Common European Asylum System, and a comprehensive and sustainable legal migration policy in the EU that meets labour market demands in terms of skills, in which social inclusion and active integration policies play a central role;

37. Deplores the fact that the Commission had to adopt 40 infringement decisions against many Member States for having failed to implement key policies of the Common European Asylum System, including letters of formal notice to 19 Member States for not having communicated measures for the transposition of the Reception Conditions Directive, which lays down essential standards on matters such as access to employment, vocational training, schooling and education of minors, food, housing, healthcare, medical and psychological care and provisions for disadvantaged persons; firmly believes that the Commission should do more to ensure that existing rules are fully and effectively implemented; urges the Member States to rectify this situation, in compliance with human rights norms and with the European principles of solidarity, fair share of responsibility and sincere cooperation, as enshrined in the Treaties;

38. Notes President Juncker’s statement\(^2\) in the State of the Union 2015 address affirming his support for granting asylum seekers access to the labour market while their applications are being processed; regrets, however, the lack of resolve shown by the Commission in implementing the decisions taken; is concerned at the decision taken by

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\(^1\)http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf

some Member States to close their internal borders or introduce temporary border controls, jeopardising freedom of movement within the Schengen area;

39. Regrets the fact that the September 2015 agreement on sharing refugees among the Member States is not being implemented satisfactorily; stresses that the quotas for receiving refugees are not being met in the majority of the Member States; urges the Commission and Member States to implement the agreements as swiftly as possible, and to speed up the processes of receiving and resettling refugees;

40. Points out that a lengthy processing of international protection applications, and a failed registration of asylum seekers at their arrival, not only impedes timely and legal access of refugees and asylum seekers to the labour market, but also generates conditions for the development of undeclared work practices and all forms of exploitation; stresses the need to support those Member States, which are in the front line in managing registrations of asylum seekers;

41. Stresses that access to justice and protection should be ensured to all victims of exploitation and discrimination; highlights the crucial work done by social partners, civil society, local authorities, economic and social actors and volunteer organisations in reaching out to these workers, and in providing them with information, in particular about their rights and duties and the protection to which they are entitled, and with the support they need, also taking into account the possible temporary nature of the refugees’ stay;

42. Highlights the importance of avoiding the formation of ghettos in order to secure the effective integration of refugees into society;

Recommendations and best practices

43. Calls on the Member States to ensure swift and full labour-market integration and social inclusion of refugees, in accordance with the principle of equal treatment, the national labour market situation and EU and national legislation, and to inform them about, and grant them access to, public services, in particular access to housing, healthcare and social protection, integration courses, language-learning modules and other educational and training measures;

44. Calls for refugees who have successfully completed vocational training to be offered long-term residence in the host country concerned;

45. Calls on the Commission to consider a targeted revision of the Reception Conditions Directive in order to ensure that applicants of international protection have access to the labour market as soon as possible, but not later than six months after their applications were lodged; urges the Commission to promote upward convergence of social protection standards and a swift delivery of work permits in the Member States;

46. Calls on the Commission to intensify its efforts to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are granted effective access to the labour market, in particular by verifying that Member States do not impose too restrictive conditions for access to employment, which would render the access to employment unduly difficult; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to cut red tape in order to make it easier for employable persons to
enter the labour market; points out that such actions would be both conducive to the integration of refugees and, more generally, to the benefit of EU citizens;

47. Encourages the Member States to shorten the processing time of applications for international protection, with due regard for the rights of the individuals concerned and without compromising the quality of the decision making, to assess levels of education and qualifications at initial reception facilities and, thus, to extend, on a more targeted basis, early intervention measures such as language training, skills assessment and civic integration courses, including courses on European fundamental rights, values and culture, in particular to those asylum seekers who have good prospects of being granted international protection, and urges that there be equal access to these measures; urges the Commission to support Member States with specific and effective measures that help streamline the processing of applications;

48. Calls on the Member States to ensure early, easy and equal access for refugees and asylum seekers to training, including internships and apprenticeships, in order to ensure rapid, effective and full integration into our societies and the labour market, including by equipping them with the necessary skills to build a new future on their return; stresses that this should be done in the form of initiatives taken jointly with the private sector, trade unions and civil society; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to recognise and validate refugees’ existing skills, and formal and non-formal competences, talents and know-how, on an individual basis; recalls that the first barrier that refugees have to overcome is language; recommends, therefore, effective measures that enable them not only to learn and understand the language of the host country, but also to promote a process of mutual familiarisation between different cultures in order to avoid the spread of xenophobic and racist sentiments;

49. Calls for a DG EMPL task force to be set up at the Commission in order to devise, as quickly as possible, pan-European standards for soft, as well as methods for cataloguing them;

50. Welcomes solutions providing multilingual information on opportunities involving formal and non-formal education, vocational training, work placement and volunteering for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; calls, therefore, for such services to be extended;

51. Highlights that innovative instruments based on new media, such as social media and apps, could play a pivotal role in facilitating access to services, as well as exchanges of information, regarding refugees’ registration, skills assessment, job-searches and language training, as well as in providing direct assistance to people in need; further encourages Member States to set up dedicated platforms and multilingual internet portals aimed at providing concise and easily accessible information about recognition possibilities, existing integration programmes and lists of the institutions responsible, recalling that every EU and EEA Member State has a designated National Academic Recognition Information Centre, which provides a way to compare academic qualifications; encourages the Member States, in this context, to promote this service;

52. Draws attention to the range of training possibilities and models available in the Member States and, in particular, to the combined vocational education and training model, which is unknown or virtually unknown in some Member States and to refugees
and asylum seekers, but which can make a major contribution to the integration of refugees into the labour market and society by smoothing the transition from education and training to employment, as a result of which workers can also be trained in skilled professions in which there is a shortage of new entrants;

53. Calls on the Commission to propose guidelines on how refugees' existing qualifications and skills can be recognised; points out, in this connection, that, in many instances, training, and the process of acquiring qualifications in refugees' countries of origin, are not up to European standards; suggests that the Commission draw up recommendations enabling Member States to identify refugees' skills, competences, talents and know-how more easily, more quickly and more effectively; points, in this connection, to the differences between labour markets in the Member States, and to their differing needs, and hopes that, by taking this into account, manpower requirements in some areas can be met more speedily, more easily and more efficiently and that, at the same time, refugees are integrated faster into the labour market;

54. Calls on the Commission to consider a revision of the Blue Card Directive in order to ensure its wider flexibility for those high-skilled beneficiaries of international protection who would potentially be entitled, as third-country nationals, to access the Blue Card system, by taking into account the extraordinary conditions with which refugees and asylum seekers are faced, as well as the needs of the EU labour market, in particular by looking at the directive’s scope and rules as regards intra-EU mobility;

55. Stresses the need for the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and racism, including by raising awareness of anti-discrimination laws, by supporting local authorities, civil society organisations, social partners and National Equality Bodies in their work, and by stepping up their communication efforts vis-à-vis the media and citizens in the EU to combat any disinformation or xenophobia, which are contrary to fundamental European values, all of which efforts will greatly assist refugees' social acceptance and inclusion; encourages Member States to use funding from the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme to provide training on diversity, and to educate and inform refugees and migrants entering the labour market of their legal rights as workers, helping them avoid falling victim to exploitative practices or employers; stresses that multiple discrimination should be taken into account throughout all migration and integration policies;

56. Welcomes the joint statement of 16 March 2016 on the refugee crisis issued by the social partners participating in the Tripartite Social Summit, in which they underline their commitment and willingness to work with governments and other stakeholders to design and develop policies to support inclusion; is of the opinion that the social partners and civil society organisation are irreplaceable intermediaries that have a major role to play in the inclusion of refugees in the labour market and in society as a whole; encourages the Commission to enhance the dialogue with social partners, based on a balanced representation of interests, with a view to identifying labour market and employment opportunities for refugees;

57. Calls on the Member States to learn from and facilitate the sharing of the experience and practices accumulated at city level to promote inclusive labour markets for all
residents, including beneficiaries of international protection, and to involve cities and local authorities in the design and implementation of social and economic inclusion policies; takes the view that a more effective partnership is needed between the different levels of government, and that EU and national initiatives must complement and strengthen city actions, targeting the real needs of our citizens; believes that Member State good practices – in effective coordination with, and involving, cities – should be acknowledged and given visibility;

58. Considers it necessary that adequate training on employment legislation and non-discrimination is provided to refugees as well as to authorities and to law enforcement officials, including labour inspectors, judges, prosecutors and lawyers, in order to ensure that refugees are not exploited by means of undeclared work practices and other forms of severe labour exploitation, or that they suffer discrimination in the workplace;

59. Calls on the Commission to provide financial support to transnational schemes ensuring the transferability and adaptability of good practices – such as the peer-to-peer mentoring and coaching projects involving all levels of governance and multiple stakeholders, designed and implemented by different stakeholders at EU level – and to ensure their effective implementation on the ground;

60. Calls on Member States to implement the Framework Decision on Combatting Racism and Xenophobia and the new Victims of Crime Directive, as well as to ensure the timely investigation and prosecution of any incitement to violence, including gender-based violence, against migrants and asylum seekers, irrespective of their residence status;

61. Highlights increasing levels of hate speech, anti-migrant sentiments and xenophobic violence on the part of both institutions and individuals;

62. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to intensify diplomatic relations, and to take all necessary economic and social measures, to allow the stabilisation of the countries of origin of refugees so that they can remain in their own countries or return to them;

63. Calls for monies to be redeployed as quickly as possible within the ESF, the AMIF, the ERDF and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) so that those Member States bearing the brunt of the refugee crisis are given more effective support;

64. Is of the opinion that temporary place-of-residence arrangements may be necessary for refugees in order to prevent a build-up in urban centres, since that may become an obstacle to integration;

Culture, education and sport

65. Stresses the urgent need to ensure that unaccompanied minors receive particular protection from exploitation at work, violence and trafficking; underlines the need for mentors and specific measures for girls in particular, who are often more vulnerable and exposed to various forms of exploitation, trafficking and sexual abuse, and are more likely to be deprived of educational opportunities;
66. Calls on the Commission to increase the profile of culture, education and training in those operational measures undertaken as part of the European Agenda on Migration; invites the Commission to adopt a specific policy on intercultural dialogue;

67. Calls for the EU and the Member States to give priority to integration through early targeted measures on education, training, culture and sport, as well as to the challenges faced by host societies in guaranteeing, in particular, children’s right to education, regardless of their refugee status, as set out in Article 22 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, thus giving priority to the best interests of the child;

68. Insists on the need for an exhaustive analysis, through studies, research and statistics, on the basis of which the best suggestions for policy initiatives and action can be made with a view to ascertaining what the education strategy should be for refugees, specifically as regards adult learning, in light of their current qualifications;

69. Stresses the crucial role of free public education, culture, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, non-formal and informal education, lifelong learning, and youth and sports policy in fostering the integration and social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, as well as the understanding and solidarity of the host countries in combating racism, xenophobia and extremism, and in contributing to building more cohesive and inclusive societies based on cultural diversity, the promotion of common European values and the protection of fundamental rights; underlines the need to ensure cultural and linguistic mediation while refugees and asylum seekers are developing knowledge of the host country’s language and cultural and social values;

70. Underlines the important role of sport as an instrument for fostering social and intercultural dialogue by promoting the establishment of positive links between the local population and refugees and asylum seekers, and calls on the European institutions and the Member States to implement programmes aimed at the social integration of refugees through joint cultural or sporting activities; supports, therefore, the existing initiatives of sports organisations, and encourages the exchange of best practices between different entities engaged in sports activities aimed at the social integration of refugees;

71. Deeply regrets the current disappearance of cultural networks owing to the new orientation of Creative Europe;

72. Emphasises the need for effective procedures to enable a smooth transition between the educational facilities available in refugee camps and the educational systems of the Member States in which they are located;

73. Insists on the need for Member States to facilitate the enrolment of refugee students at all educational levels, and calls for greater efforts to be made to distribute pupils and place them effectively in national school systems;

74. Calls on the EU and the Member States to establish ‘education corridors’ by promoting agreements with European universities and the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED) to host refugee students coming from conflict areas, in order to facilitate their access and to promote peer support and volunteering; welcomes the initiatives adopted in this regard by a number of European universities and their partnerships;
Welcomes the European and national programmes, and the private initiatives launched by non-profit institutions, providing assistance to migrant academics in science and other professional areas, and advocates their development and support;

Calls on the Member States, in order to ensure that integration begins immediately, to guarantee solutions for practice-oriented, understandable preparatory educational information in several languages;

Calls on the Member States to provide targeted support to refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people as they enter the school system, such as through intensive language courses and general induction programmes, including pedagogical support, to allow them to participate in mainstream classes as soon as possible; stresses the need to respond to the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of specific groups, in particular unaccompanied minors and adults without basic education;

Reminds the EU and the Member States of their duty to ensure special protection for minors, including refugee children, in emergency situations, in line with international provisions, and, in particular, to guarantee their access to schools and educational facilities; welcomes the target of 4 % funding for education of the EU’s overall humanitarian aid budget for 2016, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue to advocate, at international level, an increase in funding for education in emergencies within existing aid programmes, in view of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016;

Recommends that supplementary language classes be provided to refugee children in their home-country languages;

Stresses the importance of launching educational support actions, in particular with a view to providing suitable facilities in EU hotspots and hubs, that underpin the efforts of humanitarian organisations and NGOs that have already begun to organise educational and other activities in the camps, and of providing incentives and support for the development of formal educational structures in refugee camps, including those located in third countries;

Welcomes the new calls for proposals dedicated to cultural, educational, sports and youth mobility programmes and projects aimed at intercultural dialogue, cultural and social inclusion and integration under Creative Europe and Erasmus+; stresses the need to break down obstacles and existing barriers to the application of projects aimed at the integration of refugees and to facilitate access to the programmes for all;

Asks the Member States to promote initiatives to ensure greater cooperation, policy coherence and dialogue among public authorities, appropriate NGOs, social partners, civil society organisations and refugee communities in order to enhance mutual knowledge and understanding and to evaluate further potential initiatives to ensure equal access to high-quality education, thus integrating migrants and refugees into a positive learning environment;

Stresses the essential role of teachers in integrating refugee and migrant children and young people into the education system, and emphasises the need for specialised teaching staff and advanced training for teachers to qualify them; calls, in this context,
for the EU and the Member States to consider establishing cooperation channels for teachers so that they can share their experiences, exchange best practices and receive peer support;

84. Calls on the Member States to help migrant teachers and professors find teaching jobs, with a view both to improve their situation and to put their language and teaching skills and experience to good use in the school systems;

85. Supports the idea of setting up helpdesks for teachers that offer timely support in handling various types of diversity in the classroom, and in promoting intercultural dialogue and guidance when they are confronted with conflicts or students at risk of being radicalised; calls, moreover, on the Member States to extend opportunities of political education, and to provide appropriate further training opportunities and educational materials, as a means of clarifying why people flee and of combating extremism;

86. Stresses the importance of schools in providing counselling, and linguistic and cultural mediation, including as regards democratic values through civic education and active citizenship programmes, and playing a key role in accelerating and ensuring the social and cultural inclusion and integration not only of the students, but also of their families;

87. Welcomes the Council’s decision to dedicate specific actions in the 2015-2018 Work Plan for Culture on the role of culture, the arts and intercultural dialogue in the integration of migrants, and to take stock of existing good practices in the Member States;

88. Stresses that the use of the arts as an integration tool should be promoted in a better way, and that the participation of refugees in arts activities should be facilitated and enhanced;

89. Welcomes the new Expert Working Group on intercultural dialogue and integration of migrants and refugees through arts and dialogue1 established by the Commission, which is expected to publish a handbook of good practices by the end of 2017;

90. Emphasises the importance of promoting and further developing educational apps, videos and exercises, as well as learning platforms for refugees, in order to facilitate and complement their education and training;

91. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.


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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The management of the refugee crisis is probably one of the main challenges the European Union and its society are facing today, due to its size, its pace and the complexity of its social, political and economic implications. It is first and foremost a humanitarian crisis on a global scale, but also specifically a crisis of policy which caught the European Union unprepared and therefore demands policy makers to take urgent and decisive actions, as well as long-term measures in line with society and labour market needs.

A new European Agenda on Migration was adopted with the aim of addressing the difficulties connected to the management of an unprecedented influx of people arriving, which are requiring extra efforts in the strengthening of border management and search and rescue operations, as well as in the updating of the Common European Asylum System, in particular the Dublin rules, and the establishment of a European relocation and resettlement scheme. Nevertheless, further or possibly even greater efforts are required in order to find rapid, effective and fair ways to create the necessary conditions for integrating asylum seekers and refugees into our society. This can only be done if the external and internal policies of the Union and its Member States are synergetic, complementary and fully and timely implemented, based on solidarity, fair sharing of responsibility and the full respect of international and human rights.

A holistic approach to migration requires firstly that the external policies of the EU, such as cooperation with third countries, humanitarian and development aid, trade, investment and security and defence policies, prove themselves capable of addressing the root causes of migration: conflicts, poverty, lack of freedoms, inequalities, extreme environmental conditions; secondly, that internal policies such as employment, education, welfare, health, are open, harmonious and flexible enough to turn the challenges presented by migratory pressures into a resource for the economic and cultural development of our societies.

This is not an easy task. First of all, because all humanitarian migrants, being asylum seekers and refugees, leave their countries forcefully and therefore are the most vulnerable group among all migrants, having often serious health needs, suffering from psychosocial and posttraumatic stress disorders or forms of disability. Besides, family reunification shall also be properly addressed as it is an essential aspect of their integration into host societies. A seriously worrisome aspect of the refugee crisis, as clearly highlighted by many recent studies, in particular by UNICEF and UNHCR, is the high numbers of children or unaccompanied children, who after having undertaken long journeys and life-threatening situations, need and deserve immediate assistance and must be taken care of as a matter of priority. Also, the gender dimension of the refugee crisis should not be ignored, and the rapporteur believes that gender evaluations should be mainstreamed into all policies and procedures relating to asylum and migration.

The second set of elements of complexity for the social inclusion and integration of refugees into the labour market relates to the current macroeconomic condition of the European Union, which is in the process of getting out of the most serious economic crisis since World War II. Record levels of unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, unevenly distributed across the Continent, together with, among others, worrying data on
poverty, labour market segmentation and slow economic recovery, may become an impediment to the integration and inclusion of refugees, if not sufficiently tackled. The situation is made even harsher by the presence of too strict rules on the consolidation of the countries’ fiscal stance. Besides, the rapporteur believes that the available tools and programmes at Union level do not appear sufficient to cope with the size of the job. The European Social Fund was victim of an 8% cut of its original share during the last Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations, and the other instruments which could be used to target social inclusion and labour market integration measures, in particular the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Funds for Most Deprived (FEAD) are rather small, heterogeneous and not always of easy access, due to bureaucratic hurdles or lack of flexibility. However, the Commission’s efforts in improving the situation and putting forward possible solutions to some of these difficulties should be recognised and welcomed.

Therefore, while ensuring that sufficient support is allocated to measures aimed at the inclusion and integration of refugees into the labour market, at the same time it must be avoided that any form of competition between the most disadvantaged groups of our societies takes place in receiving such support. The reason is twofold: firstly, because data show that a healthy labour market within the country of arrival is a determining factor for a successful and durable integration of refugees, therefore policies and investments aimed at quality job-creation and economic growth must remain a priority; secondly, because the weakening of welfare instruments or other support measures targeting disadvantaged groups would have negative social and political consequences. As a general principle, it should also be recalled that the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities should always steer policy making in the field of social inclusion and integration.

The third element making the development of effective social inclusion and integration measures more problematic relates to their often unpopular nature to the eyes of the public. Partly in connection with what was said before, it is not uncommon that people feel threatened by the arrival of a conspicuous (or even a small) number of asylum seekers and refugees, as they see the possibility of an increased competition in access to services or employment, especially when and where unemployment is high and social conditions are particularly tough. Besides, the recent growing support for xenophobic and anti-immigration political parties and movements across the EU denotes a serious trend that cannot be taken lightly. Forms of discrimination, xenophobia and racism, based on false myths and prejudiced views still exist, if not are on the rise, and the European Parliament has a major role to play in fighting such phenomenon.

The report strives to accomplish the following objectives: clarify the exact subject under examination by precisely recalling what does being a refugee mean and the main elements of the current discussion; highlight the most relevant issues, the challenges and the opportunities that the social inclusion and integration into the labour market of refugees bring along; analyse the development and impact of recent measures, actions and practices undertaken at the Union and Member States’ level in order to make integration and inclusion work for our society; finally, put forward a series of proposals, recommendations and suggestions for achieving a better social inclusion and integration of refugees into the labour market. The structure sketched in the text tries to reflect this approach.
In a broader sense, the report attempts to outline on the one hand the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the subject and, on the other, the urgency and necessity for a solution to be found, keeping in mind the unavoidable application of the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility which is required to address this common European problem, and which requires a common European answer.

The rapporteur has availed himself of the invaluable help and support of specialists and their publications, in particular from the OECD, the ILO, the UNHCR, UNICEF and the IMF, as well as the EU agencies EUROFOUND, CEDEFOP and FRA. He is thankful to all those who advised him in the preparation of this first draft, including representatives of the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies of the European Parliament, as well as the many NGOs, social partners, trade unions and employers organisations who assisted, advised or stimulated him in this first phase.
4.5.2016

**OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION(†)**

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on refugees: social inclusion and integration into the labour market
(2015/2321(INI))

Rapporteur (†): Silvia Costa

(†) Associated committee – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

**SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

– having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, to the international obligations found in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, bearing in mind the fundamental right of all children to have access to free primary education, irrespective of their gender, race, or ethnic or social origin,

– having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2015 on education for children in emergency situations and protracted crises¹,

A. whereas, among the asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the EU, one in four are children, and half are between 18 and 34 years old; whereas the number of refugee and asylum-seeking children is increasing, and whereas education and training policies are crucial for well-managed reception and integration of refugees into the labour market;

B. whereas these children have come from conflict areas where their school attendance has been interrupted or restricted, sometimes for long periods, or from refugee camps where only a minority of them have been able to obtain any form of education or attend local schools;

C. whereas, according to figures supplied by Europol in 2015, at least 10 000 unaccompanied children have disappeared after arriving in Europe;

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D. whereas recognition of the training and qualifications of adult refugees and specific provisions for them to obtain academic qualifications and specific skills are essential for their entry into the labour market;

1. Calls on the Commission to adopt an integrated approach to the EU migration policy, and to increase the profile of culture, education and training in those operational measures undertaken as part of the European Agenda on Migration; invites the Commission to adopt a specific policy on intercultural dialogue;

2. Calls for the EU and the Member States to tackle the current refugee crisis with a holistic strategy based on humanitarian principles and solidarity, and to foster durable solutions that give priority to the creation of safe and legal channels of entry and to the social and economic integration of refugees and asylum seekers, including through early targeted measures on education, training, culture and sport, as well as to the challenges faced by host societies in guaranteeing, in particular, children’s right to education, regardless of their refugee status, as set out in Article 22 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, thus giving priority to the best interests of the child;

3. Insists on the need for an exhaustive analysis through studies, research and statistics in order to assess the potential for integration of refugees currently residing in the EU into the EU labour market and in order to make the best suggestions for policy initiatives and action, with a view to ascertaining what their education strategy, specifically as regards adult learning, should be, while taking note of their current qualifications;

4. Reemphasises the importance of the swift and complete implementation of the European asylum system, which is composed of the revised Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), the revised Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), the revised Qualification Directive (2004/83/EC), the revised Dublin Regulation (No 604/2013) and the Eurodac Regulation (No 603/2013) into the national laws of the Member States; calls on the Member States for a speedy and comprehensive implementation; stresses that in order to enable the integration of refugees throughout Europe, the rapid implementation of the revised Reception Conditions Directive is crucial;

5. Stresses that, in the current humanitarian crisis, access to quality educational services and assistance for refugee children and young people is both a duty of European, national, regional and local institutions and a key precondition for their social inclusion, protection, long-term integration into the labour market and prevention of exploitation; underlines the need to ensure cultural and linguistic mediation while refugees and asylum seekers are developing knowledge of the host country’s language and cultural and social values;

6. Stresses the crucial role of free public education, culture, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, non-formal and informal education, lifelong learning, and youth and sports policy in fostering the integration and social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe as well as the understanding and solidarity of the host countries in combating racism, xenophobia and extremism and in contributing to building more cohesive and inclusive societies based on cultural diversity and the promotion of common European values and protection of fundamental rights in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the highest international standards that have been set in this respect;
7. Stresses the importance of promoting the establishment of positive links between the local population and refugees and asylum seekers, particularly through joint cultural or sporting activities;

8. Deeply regrets the current disappearance of cultural networks owing to the new orientation of Creative Europe;

9. Emphasises the need for effective procedures to enable a smooth transition between educational facilities available in refugee camps and the educational system of the Member State;

10. Insists on the need for Member States to facilitate the enrolment of refugee students at all educational levels, and calls for greater efforts to be made to distribute pupils and place them effectively into national school systems;

11. Calls for the EU and the Member States to establish ‘education corridors’ by promoting agreements with European universities and the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED) to host refugee students coming from conflict areas in order to facilitate their access and to promote peer support and volunteering; welcomes the initiatives adopted in this regard by a number of European universities and their partnerships;

12. Welcomes the European and national programmes and private initiatives launched by non-profit institutions which provide assistance to migrant academics in science and other professional areas, and advocates their development and support;

13. Calls on the Member States, in order to ensure that integration begins immediately, to guarantee solutions for practice-oriented, understandable preparatory educational information in several languages;

14. States that language courses in conjunction with an overview of the local culture, practical skills, vocational training and information on how to access services are relevant tools for promoting integration and the basis for future development and success in the host country;

15. Calls for the EU and the Member States to offer languages courses of an appropriate duration and quality, including pedagogical support, for refugee and asylum-seeking children, young people and adults, and to respond to the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of specific groups, in particular women, unaccompanied minors and adults without basic education;

16. Calls on the Member States to provide targeted support to refugee children and young people as they enter the school system, such as through intensive language courses and general induction programmes, to allow them to participate in mainstream classes as soon as possible;

17. Believes that expanding access to lifelong learning, including non-formal and informal learning and professional training, has the potential to be an effective tool for the active inclusion of refugees, thus enhancing social participation and their ultimate integration into the European labour market and society, while preventing the brain waste of highly skilled migrants, in order to safeguard their wellbeing and to reinvigorate the labour
markets of host countries; calls on the Member States, in this regard, for efforts to develop initiatives to recognise the competences and qualifications of refugees by strengthening the role of the European Qualifications Framework and promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and to ensure recognition and assessment through flexible, fast, transparent, simple and easily accessible procedures leading to the issuing of formal certificates;

18. Encourages the Member States to set up dedicated platforms and multilingual internet portals aimed at providing concise and easily accessible information about the recognition possibilities, existing integration programmes and lists of the institutions responsible, remembering that all EU and EEA states have a designated National Academic Recognition Information Centre, which provides a way to compare academic qualifications, encourages the Member States, in this context, to promote this service;

19. Welcomes solutions for multilingual information on opportunities as regards formal and non-formal education, vocational training, work placements and volunteering for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; calls therefore for such services to be extended; also insists on the need to boost comprehensive lifelong learning strategies that broaden access to early childhood education and care, vocational education and training and adult learning and to create a framework that offers legal certainty for their job to volunteers and professionals who work with refugees and schemes to provide them with skills and further training;

20. Underlines the importance of guaranteeing access to education for children in emergency situations, including refugee children; welcomes the target of 4 % funding for education of the EU’s overall humanitarian aid budget for 2016, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue to advocate at international level an increase in funding for education in emergencies within existing aid programmes in view of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016;

21. Reminds the EU and the Member States of their duty to ensure special protection for minors in line with international provisions, and in particular to guarantee their access to schools and educational facilities;

22. Recommends providing supplementary language classes in the home-country language to refugee children;

23. Stresses the urgent need to ensure that unaccompanied minors receive particular protection from exploitation at work, violence and trafficking; underlines the need for mentors and specific measures for girls in particular, who are often more vulnerable and exposed to various forms of exploitation, trafficking and sexual abuse and are more likely to be deprived of educational opportunities;

24. Stresses the need to raise the awareness among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights on the labour market;

25. Calls for the Member States to provide full and effective protection of the fundamental rights of refugees and asylum seekers, stepping up measures to combat human trafficking, enslavement and all forms of labour exploitation;
26. Stresses the importance of preventing the formation of segregated communities which limit prospects for integration into society and participation in the labour market;

27. Stresses the importance of investing in projects for the integration of refugees into the labour market through increased attention to lifelong training and apprenticeships; calls on the Member States to channel more investment towards technical, professional and business training, work experience for school pupils and dual-education schemes, making use of the Structural Funds and other resources;

28. Stresses the importance of launching educational support actions, in particular with a view to providing suitable facilities in EU hotspots and hubs, of underpinning the efforts of humanitarian organisations and NGOs that have already begun to organise educational and other activities in the camps, and of providing incentives and support for the development of formal educational structures in refugee camps, including those located in third countries;

29. Emphasises the importance of voluntary work for the integration of refugees; stresses that necessary measures should be taken to properly train those who are voluntarily engaging in the integration and education of refugees;

30. Welcomes the new calls for proposals dedicated to cultural, educational, sports and youth mobility programmes and projects aimed at intercultural dialogue, cultural and social inclusion and integration under Creative Europe and Erasmus+: stresses the need to break down obstacles and existing barriers to the application of projects aimed at the integration of refugees and to facilitate access to the programmes for all;

31. Underlines the important role of sport as an instrument for fostering social and intercultural dialogue, and calls on the European institutions and the Member States to implement programmes aimed at social integration of refugees through sport;

32. Supports the existing initiatives of sports organisations, and encourages the exchange of best practices between different entities engaged in sports activities aimed at social integration of refugees;

33. Acknowledges the scarce access to information, advice, guidance and training for refugee women; underlines the importance of proper training, by tailoring services and integration measures to specific needs, aimed at enhancing refugee women’s skills and education; calls therefore for the involvement of refugee and asylum-seeking women in training programmes in order to break isolation, enhance their empowerment and independence and foster their understanding of local customs and daily life, thus restoring a sense of equality, belonging and self-esteem;

34. Asks the Member States to promote initiatives to ensure greater cooperation, policy coherence and dialogue among public authorities, appropriate NGOs, social partners, civil society organisations and refugee communities in order to enhance mutual knowledge and understanding and to evaluate further potential initiatives to ensure equal access to high-quality education, thus integrating migrants and refugees into a positive learning environment;

35. Calls for the EU and the Member States to coordinate their activities in an effective
manner in order to provide appropriate reception structures that ensure decent living conditions and prevent the formation of segregated or ghetto communities, which limit integration into the society of the host Member State;

36. Asks the Member States to promote initiatives to foster cooperation among regional authorities, employment agencies and companies for a better integration of refugees into the labour market;

37. Stresses the essential role of teachers in integrating refugee and migrant children and young people into the education system, and emphasises the need for specialised teaching staff and advanced training for teachers to qualify them; calls, in this context, for the EU and the Member States to consider establishing cooperation channels for teachers so that they can share their experiences, exchange best practices and receive peer support;

38. Calls on the Member States to help migrant teachers and professors find teaching jobs to both improve their situation and put their language and teaching skills and experience to good use in the school systems;

39. Supports the idea of setting up helpdesks for teachers that offer timely support in handling various types of diversity in the classroom and promoting intercultural dialogue and guidance when they are confronted with conflicts or students at risk of being radicalised;

40. Calls on the Member States to extend opportunities of political education, and to provide appropriate further training opportunities and educational materials so as to clarify why people flee and to combat extremism;

41. Stresses the importance of schools in providing counselling and linguistic and cultural mediation, including as regards democratic values through civic education and active citizenship programmes and playing a key role in accelerating and ensuring the social and cultural inclusion and integration of not only the students but also their families as a whole;

42. Welcomes the Council’s decision to dedicate specific actions in the 2015-2018 Work Plan for Culture on the role of culture, the arts and intercultural dialogue for the integration of migrants and to take stock of existing good practices in the Member States;

43. Stresses that the use of the arts as an integration tool should be better promoted and refugees’ participation in arts activities should be facilitated and enhanced;

44. Welcomes the new Expert Working Group on intercultural dialogue and integration of migrants and refugees through arts and dialogue¹ established by the Commission, which is expected to publish a handbook of good practices by the end of 2017;

45. Emphasises the importance of promoting and further developing educational apps, videos and exercises, as well as learning platforms for refugees, in order to facilitate and complement their education and training;

46. Remains aware of the need to use of unused funds and to draw on other funds such as

those under the European Agenda on Migration and the Social Fund in the development of structured long-term actions and strategies; calls therefore on the Council and the Commission to take into account that reallocation of existing funds should be provided for in the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework and to enable substantial support to Member States as regards their actions for reception and integration in the interest of ensuring a constant and consistent policy for the inclusion of refugees;

47. Asks the Member States to work on the implementation of the country-specific recommendations set out in the framework of the European Semester.
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<table>
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<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>26.4.2016</th>
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| Result of final vote | +: 24  
|                  | -: 2    
|                  | 0: 1    |

**Members present for the final vote**

Isabella Adinolfi, Dominique Bilde, Andrea Bocskor, Nikolaos Chountis, Silvia Costa, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Andrew Lewer, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Stefano Mauílu, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Michaela Šojdrová, Yana Toom, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka

**Substitutes present for the final vote**

Therese Comodini Cachia, Mary Honeyball, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Martina Michels
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<table>
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<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>30.5.2016</th>
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<td>Result of final vote</td>
<td>:+: 36; --: 8; 0: 1</td>
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<td>Members present for the final vote</td>
<td>Guillaume Balas, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Arne Gericke, Czesław Hoc, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, João Pimenta Lopes, Georgi Pirinski, Terry Reintke, Sofia Ribeiro, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Ulrike Trebesius, Marita Ulvskog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substitutes present for the final vote</td>
<td>Daniela Aiuto, Rosa D’Amato, Rosa Estarás Ferragut, Tania González Peñas, Richard Howitt, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Edouard Martín, Tamás Meszerics, Evelyn Regner, Joachim Schuster, Michaela Šojdrová, Helga Stevens, Flavio Zanonato</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</td>
<td>Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Jens Geier, Sylvie Goddyn, Andrej Plenković, Jasenko Selimovic</td>
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### FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<p>| | | |</p>
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| 36 | + | ALDE Jasenko Selimovic
|   |   | EFDD Daniela Aiuto, Rosa D'Amato
|   |   | GUE/NGL Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Tania González Peñas, Rina Ronja Kari, Kostadinka Kuneva, João Pimenta Lopes
|   |   | Green/EFA Jean Lambert, Tamás Meszerics, Terry Reintke
|   |   | PPE David Casa, Rosa Estaras Ferragut, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Thomas Mann, Andrej Plenkovic, Sofia Ribeiro, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Michaela Šojdrová
| 8 | - | ECR Arne Gericke, Czesław Hoc, Anthea McIntyre, Helga Stevens, Ulrike Trebesius
|   |   | ENF Mara Bizzotto, Sylvie Goddyn, Dominique Martin
| 1 | 0 | PPE Adam Kosa

Key to symbols:
+ : in favour
- : against
0 : abstention