The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France
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Abstract
This study presents a comparative overview of recent policy developments in Denmark, Finland and France. The focus of the analysis is on progress achieved in the last three years in the adaptation of the reception and integration system for the high numbers of new arrivals and on the main challenges encountered. Special attention is given to changes in perceptions, public opinion and political discourse with respect to the asylum and integration of refugees and how this influenced policy strategy.

This document was provided by Policy Department A at the request of the European Parliament’s Employment and Social Affairs Committee.
The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France

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1. DENMARK

2. FINLAND

3. FRANCE
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMIF</td>
<td>Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>CADA</td>
<td>Centre for asylum seekers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Centre d'accueil de demandeurs d'asile – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>CASP</td>
<td>Centre for Protestant social action</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Centre d'action sociale protestant – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>CEAS</td>
<td>Common European Asylum System</td>
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<td>CEPII</td>
<td>Centre for Prospective Studies and International Information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>CESEDA</td>
<td>Code of the entry and residence regulation, and asylum right</td>
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<td>(Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>CIR</td>
<td>Integration Contract</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Contrat d'intégration republicaine – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>CNDA</td>
<td>French national court of asylum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Cour nationale du droit d'asile – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>DIHAL</td>
<td>Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing</td>
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<td>(Direction interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement – in its French acronym)</td>
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<td>DK</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development</td>
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<td>EASO</td>
<td>European Asylum Support Office</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>ECRE</td>
<td>European Council on Refugees and Exiles</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<td>EEPO</td>
<td>European Employment Policy Observatory</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
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<td>EMFF</td>
<td>European Maritime and Fisheries Fund</td>
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<td>EMN</td>
<td>European Migration Network</td>
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<td>EP</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
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<td>EPRS</td>
<td>European Parliamentary Research Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>Early Warning and Preparedness System</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>European Regional Development Fund</td>
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<td>ERF</td>
<td>European Refugee Fund</td>
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<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
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<td>ESIF</td>
<td>European Structural and Investment Funds</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EUR</td>
<td>Euros</td>
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<td>FEAD</td>
<td>Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived</td>
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<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<td>FR</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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| IGU     | The Integrative Training Programme  
(Integrationsgrunduddannelsen – in its Danish acronym) |
| IOM     | International Organization for Migration |
| LFS     | Labour Force Survey |
| MMF     | Multiannual Financial Framework |
| MSs     | Member States |
| NF      | National Front  
(Front national – in its French acronym) |
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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</table>
| OFII    | French Office for Immigration and Integration  
*Office Français de l’Immigration et de l’Intégration – in its French acronym* |
| OFPRA   | French asylum office  
*Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides – in its French acronym* |
| PES     | Public Employment Service |
| TCN     | Third Country Nationals |
| UIM     | Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration  
*Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet – in its Danish acronym* |
| UN      | United Nations |
| UNHCR   | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| WIC     | Welcoming and integration contract |
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report describes recent trends in the flow of asylum seekers and refugees and presents a comparative overview of recent policy developments in Denmark, Finland and France. The report is based on in-depth country case studies carried out by national experts and interviews to national stakeholders, as well as, a desk review of relevant documents and literature.

France, Finland and Denmark are destination countries, while France is also a transit country. In recent years, the three considered countries have been characterised by different numbers and dynamics of asylum applicants. Denmark, and especially Finland, faced a sharp increase in 2015 followed by a sharp reduction in both 2016 and 2017, while France shows a gradual increase in the number of applications since 2008. The two Nordic countries also show a much lower proportion of asylum applicants of the population in 2017 (0.6 per 1,000 inhabitants in DK and 0.9 in FI) compared to France (1.5 per 1,000 inhabitants).

Since 2016, the rejection rates increased in Denmark and France, while they declined in Finland. France shows the highest rejection rate of the three. The three countries also show an uneven relocation effort: while Denmark did not relocate any asylum seeker, Finland nearly reached 100 % of the pre-determined relocation quota, while France has relocated only around 25 % of the persons it is legally committed to receive.

The composition of inflows reflects the prevalent migration route. In 2018 (I-III quarters), in France the largest group of asylum seekers were Afghans (10.2 %), followed by Albanians and Georgians; in Denmark, Syrians continued to be the main group (18.8 %), followed by Moroccans, Eritreans and Georgians; in Finland, Iraqis were still the largest group (21.5 %), followed by Russians and Turks. Generally, the recognition rates of asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq and Sudan, in the three considered countries tend to be higher than the EU average.

Asylum seekers and refugees, as with immigrants in general, are predominantly young males, who are those most likely to bear the extreme risks involved in migrating, as well as those with a higher chance of finding employment.

Employment is an important driver for integration. On average, in the EU and the considered countries, the employment rate of refugees lags behind that of economic migrants and natives. The difficulties in finding employment trigger a vicious cycle of exclusion. First, asylum applicants tend to have worse labour market conditions compared to both recognised refugees and other immigrants, as in all the considered countries they face legal barriers to employment while their asylum application is being processed. On the other hand, recognised refugees are more likely to be involved in public programmes supporting their labour market and social integration. However, despite the fact that refugees, and in particular women refugees, have a higher chance of becoming citizens of the host country compared to other migrants, they remain one of the most vulnerable groups on the labour market. Their labour market integration tends to be much slower compared to the other migrants and in the short-run, they are likely to have worse employment conditions.

Evolution of the political and public climate

The crisis and the recent terrorist attacks have changed the political climate and discourse towards a stricter immigration policy in all the three considered countries.

In Denmark, political and public opinion has been characterised by a focus on both securing a stricter immigration policy, while still recognising the importance of integration for recognised refugees. Despite some concerns raised at the local level on the difficulties and costs of housing and integration
programmes, there is broad support to integration and many initiatives were taken both by public institutions and the civil society (e.g. NGOs, private persons, business owners).

In France, a more securitised discourse dominates the public and media debate, also as an effect of the terrorist attacks that hit the country. Independently of the political orientation of the administration in charge, the approach adopted tends to increase restrictions to arrivals.

In Finland, migration is an important topic in the political debate, in particular humanitarian migration and irregular migration. The popularity of parties that have a strong anti-immigration agenda has been on the rise. Overall, the public discourse is more focused on the threats of migration while in recent years, the tone of the public discourse has become harsher.

**Recent changes in the legal framework and integration policies**

Following the refugees’ crisis in 2015, the three considered countries tightened the legal framework on migration and asylum, strongly.

In all three countries, restrictions were introduced both on arrivals and access to integration and welfare policies in order to make applications for asylum less attractive. As for integration policies, in all the three considered countries, labour market integration has become the focus of integration policies.

In France, independently of the political orientation of the administration in charge, in recent years, the approach has tended to increase restrictions on arrivals. In April 2018, a controversial bill on migration and asylum (Le projet de loi asile et immigration) was approved by Parliament, while measures concerning the reintroduction of internal border controls were strengthened during 2016 as part of the state emergency order issued following the attacks in November 2015. As for integration policies, there has been a growing awareness for the need of specific integration policies. As a consequence, the government is taking measures to promote more targeted policies for the integration of refugees into French society. However, asylum seekers still face heavy requirements to obtain a work permit, while refugees – although formally have immediate access to the labour market upon receiving their protection status – still have to wait weeks or months in order to receive their residency permit. In July 2015, a reform of the asylum law was approved bringing down the period before which asylum seekers can apply for a work permit from twelve to nine months.

In Denmark, in 2015 restrictions were introduced on integration and welfare measures with the aim of making it less attractive to apply for asylum. The rules on asylum and immigration have been substantially tightened, including the rules on access to public allowances, on naturalisation, asylum, deportation, family reunification, permanent residence and expulsion. However, Denmark – similar to Finland – continues to be characterised by comprehensive integration measures at regional and municipal level. This often takes place in collaboration with civil society organisations, although there is still scope for employers to become more engaged.

In Finland too, since 2014 the legislation on access to protection, asylum procedures, access to services and legal aid has been substantially tightened, including the rules on access to public allowances, naturalisation, asylum, deportation, family reunification, permanent residence and expulsion. Integration is strongly focused on employment; however, no significant changes have been implemented in recent years regarding access to the labour market of asylum seekers and refugees. A discussion on shortening the quarantine time for asylum seekers in order to allow them to enter the workforce faster than under current legislation, did not yet lead to concrete amendments. Furthermore, integration policies are tied to the reform proposals currently under discussion on the
provision of health and social services which have been entirely halted due to the resignation of the Finnish Government.

Remaining challenges

Initially in Denmark, the main challenges related to practical issues and concerns arising from the large inflow of asylum seekers between 2014 – 2015. However, a more general and long term perspective suggests that other challenges are emerging. First, there is low level of education and relevant professional experience among the refugees which is hampering their integration and at the same time is costly for society. Secondly, a significant number of the refugees suffer from various forms and degrees of traumatisation, making integration into the labour market and more generally into society, more difficult. Finally, refugees often lack the networks that might otherwise help them find a job and become part of everyday life in Denmark.

Similarly, in Finland, the main challenge in 2015 was the peak of arrivals of asylum seekers and the administrative and practical issues relating to the increase of applicants, including providing enough places in the municipalities. In addition, effective integration is in itself a challenge in particular with the increased number of individuals who have received international protection.

In the French case, the change in the composition of asylum seekers and refugees presents a challenge. In the past, refugee inflows were largely French speaking, with low levels of schooling, and non-French speaking immigrants with higher educational levels. Over the last five years, inflows are characterised by a growing number of non-French speaking refugees with little schooling, including a significant share of illiterates. This creates new needs and challenges for the French integration policy.

Policy suggestions

Well managed integration measures are increasingly considered as an investment that will pay off in the long run. Even if most of the policy debate addresses the management of migratory pressures at the borders, labour market integration and social inclusion issues have recently been receiving increasing attention.

Migrants and refugees often belong to economically active age groups and can provide diversified skills that in the long run could support the economy and reduce labour shortages, particularly in many of Europe’s ageing societies.

The considered countries’ experience with the integration of asylum seekers and refugees and stakeholders’ interviews illustrate some learning points that can serve as recommendations.

Promote a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach to early integration (employment, housing, language, social rights, etc.)

Asylum applicants tend to experience worse labour market conditions than recognised refugees and other immigrants, as in most countries they face greater legal barriers to employment while their asylum application is being processed. The right to access the labour market already during the processing of an asylum claim might be crucial for speeding up the integration process, as inactivity usually deteriorates the integration prospects. For this reason, a comprehensive approach addressing all dimensions of integration should start immediately when an asylum seeker enters the country to promote the asylum seekers’ active engagement already when they are in reception centres. The administrative burden to access the labour market, housing and social and health services should be reduced.
Focus on employment

A clear focus on employment is necessary to:

- Involve employers in integration policies and support guidance and training;
- Remove current legal obstacles to the employment of asylum seekers. The quarantine time for the right of asylum seekers to work should be reconsidered and should not be lengthened;
- Identify and recognise the skills and educational level of asylum seekers, and address employment discrimination;
- Invest in language courses and vocational training programmes. More efforts should be put into the language courses at the reception level to better support the integration of asylum seekers, but also at later stages in order to support the integration of refugees into the labour market;
- There is also a need to include more female refugees in the labour market and to find a way around the cultural barriers which may impede progress in this area.

Special attention should be paid to labour market integration of women. Migrant women with family responsibilities should be better supported and offered training opportunities, language courses and opportunities to gain work experience in order to better integrate into the job market and society.

Asylum procedures have to be as short as possible and asylum seekers should receive general legal aid during the asylum procedure.

The CEAS reform should guarantee that each asylum applicant has effective access to protection and to a fair procedure, in addition to a fair balance between responsibility and solidarity amongst all Member States while respecting the principles of family unification of asylum applicants.

Clearly define competences and responsibilities between national and local level and involve civil society.

Leaving the responsibility to the local level for integration measures requires a close dialogue between central and local authorities, and a responsibility for the State to monitor results and help steer the municipalities.

The involvement of NGO’s, social partners and other civil society actors proves effective at the local level. It is thus, advisable to set up strategies for their involvement, as well as formal agreements between authorities and civil organisations to match expectations and avoid uncertainty with regard to roles and responsibilities.

In France, for example, an inter-ministerial delegate for refugee integration was created in early 2018, with the aim of improving harmonisation between different sectors and levels of governance involved in integration. In Denmark in 2016, an agreement on integration between the Government and the social partners was signed – a so-called Tripartite agreement on integration in the labour market and one – between the Government and the municipalities to improve the Framework for integration in the municipalities.

Improve EU support

Working across different sectors and administrative levels is often a prerequisite for success in integration projects. This approach could be promoted by setting up selection criteria to that effect when EU-funds are advertised and when projects are selected.
More funding should be available for reception and integration policies, especially at the local level, making access to EU funding easier for local authorities and NGOs and reducing the administrative complexity.

In order to achieve the long term sustainability and effectiveness of integration measures, integration policies should be adequately resourced and mainstreamed, to avoid relying solely on single project funding.

**Learn from successful/unsuccessful experiences**

There is a need to draw from positive experiences, especially with regard to labour market integration, both for newly arrived refugees and the refugees and immigrants already residing in MSs for a number of years with modest progress in terms of integration.

There is also need to follow-up on the refugees who are employed to help them keep their job and obtain further qualifications.

**Improve data collection on beneficiaries of international protection and research**

There is a need for more evidence-based knowledge and to move beyond small scale evaluations of projects but rather to find funding for large scale, research-based knowledge. Little data is collected by administrations to study the impact of different public policies on the various aspects of the integration of refugees and migrants in general (professional integration, access to rights, etc.).

In particular, disaggregated data should be collected to increase knowledge about the differences in integration depending on gender, age, education and skill level, as well as country of origin.
1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to provide a comparative overview of recent legal and policy developments in the integration of refugees in France, Denmark and Finland: three EU destination countries presenting a very different evolution of asylum seekers’ inflows in recent years. These three countries also represent interesting examples of a strong institutional capacity for integration policies, but also an evolution towards tightening their asylum and migration policies.

The analysis assesses the policy reactions, progress achieved and main challenges with a view to integration of refugees including changes in perceptions of key stakeholders, political actors, the media and society. In addition, it assesses the role of EU instruments in supporting the development of refugees’ integration policies in these countries.

The information sources are the country reports produced by country experts and annexed to this report, as well as the available comparative studies and data produced by international and European institutions and research centres.

The analysis offers a systematic, balanced picture of the variety of views among the main stakeholders in this field, as well as the country experts’ independent assessment in a readily accessible and concise manner. The analysis has been integrated by concrete illustrative examples of measures implemented in the three countries under analysis.

The report is structured into six chapters:

- Following this introduction, Chapters 2 to 5 present a comparative review of the three considered countries in the wider EU context. This starts with a comparative assessment of the dimension and main features of recent inflows in the three countries (Chapter 2);
- Chapter 3 considers the evolution of public attitudes and the political climate in the three countries, followed by the evolution of the legal and policy approach adopted in the three countries for the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees (Chapter 4), and the use of EU funding (Chapter 5);
- The final Chapter 6 presents the main conclusion and policy implications;
- Three annexes complement the report: Annex I provides additional tables, and figures to chapters are provided; Annex II presents results from the 2018 Special Eurobarometer Survey on Migration; and Annex III presents the stakeholders interviewed by the national experts; while the case studies are included in Annex IV.

Before presenting the results of the study, it is necessary to clarify the various terms that are often used as synonyms in the media and in policy debate, although they have very different implications in the regulation of reception and integration measures. As briefly described in Box 1 below, it is important to distinguish between asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants because the legislative and policy frameworks targeting these groups are very different, as asylum seekers are usually restricted in access to integration measures until the asylum procedure is completed.

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## Box 1: Definitions

| **Asylum seeker** | A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In the EU context, a person who has made an application for protection under the Geneva Convention in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken. |
| **Migrant** | A non-resident (both national or alien) arriving in a State with the intention to remain for a period exceeding a year, irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate\(^\text{11}\). In the EU context, a person who establishes the usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country.  
**Economic migrant**: A person who leaves the country of origin purely for economic reasons that are not in any way related to the refugee definition.  
**Irregular migrant**: In the global context, a person who, owing to irregular entry, breach of a condition of entry or the expiry of their legal basis for entering and residing, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. In the EU context, a third-country national present on the territory of a Schengen State who does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils, the conditions of entry as set out in the Schengen Borders Code, or other conditions for entry, stay or residence in that Member State. |
| **Refugee** | In the EU context, either a third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom Art. 12 (Exclusion) of Directive 2011/95/EU does not apply. |
| **International Protection** | The actions by the international community on the basis of international law, aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of a specific category of persons outside their countries of origin, who lack the national protection of their own countries. |
| **Refugee status** | The recognition by a Member State of a third-country national or stateless person as a refugee. |
| **Subsidiary Protection Status** | The protection given to a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person to their country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm (...) and is unable or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country. |

Source: EMN glossary.

Note: (1) persons residing in any particular place for less than a year are commonly referred to as short-term or temporary migrants. In line with common rules for visa issuance or visa-free travel, stays below 90 days (3 months) are usually not considered a migration (see also notes under the respective entries in the EMN glossary).
2. EVOLUTION AND MAIN FEATURES OF THE INFLOW OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN FRANCE, DENMARK AND FINLAND

2.1. The decline in asylum requests continues

According to EUROSTAT data presented in Figure 1, in 2017 nearly 710,000 asylum seekers applied for international protection in the European Union, a 47% decline from the record numbers registered in 2015 and 2016, when more than 1.3 million applicants were registered. The sharp decline in asylum seekers is related to the increasing restrictions imposed by many MSs, the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, and the so-called "closure" of the Balkan route that followed.

Figure 1: Evolution of yearly inflows of asylum-seekers in EU, 1985 – 2017

This sharp decline continued in 2018 when the number of asylum applicants decreased by a further 12% in the third quarter of 2018 compared with the same quarter of 2017 (Figure 1 in Annex I).

The number of persons seeking asylum from non-EU countries in the first three quarters of 2018 was almost 475,000 (including first time applicants and repeat applicants, see Table 3 in Annex I), a number in line with levels recorded before the peaks of 2015 and 2016. By estimating the fourth quarter with the average of the first three, we can project 633,000 asylum seekers for 2018.

These inflows are very different across countries and regions, creating major pressures especially in entry points and in border regions. For example, in the context of the so-called migration crisis, massive and unlawful push backs of migrants and refugees have taken place at the French-Italian border throughout 2016 and 2017 in the area of Menton.

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data.
Note: (*) Yearly inflow for 2018 is estimated by summing up the monthly data and using the average of the first 3 quarters as an estimate for the fourth one.

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Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data.
Note: (*) Yearly inflow for 2018 is estimated by summing up the monthly data and using the average of the first 3 quarters as an estimate for the fourth one.
France, Finland and Denmark are destination countries, although France is also a transit country, with the camps in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region hosting migrants and refugees who strive to reach the United Kingdom.

The three considered countries are characterised by different numbers and dynamics of asylum applicants in recent years (Figure 2). Denmark, and especially Finland, presented a sharp increase in 2015, followed by a sharp reduction in both 2016 and 2017, while France shows a gradual increase in the number of applications since 2008. The French data are likely to be under-estimated, as people in need of protection in transit are usually invisible to statistics, as well as failed asylum seekers who remain on the French territory. Several thousand migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are estimated to be staying in the makeshift camps in Paris and elsewhere.

The latest available data (Figure 2 and 3 in Annex I) show an increase in the third quarter of 2018 with respect to the same period in 2017 (III/2017) for all the three considered countries, especially in Denmark (+28%).

Figure 2: Evolution of yearly inflows of asylum-seekers in DK, FR and FI, 1985 – 2017

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data.

The two Nordic countries also show a much lower proportion of asylum applicants of the population in 2017 (0.6 in **DK** and 0.9 in **FI** respectively) compared to **France** (1.5).

Indeed, **France** is currently the third country in the EU28 with the highest number of asylum applications, after Germany and Italy, although it is only the tenth when considering the proportion of applicants compared to the population.

**Figure 3:** Yearly inflow of asylum-seekers (total) per 1 000 inhabitants, 2017

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data (migr_asyappctza) (demo_gind).
Note: Total asylum applicants include first time and repeat applicants.
(*) Relative to population as of 1 January.

### 2.2. Increasing rejection rates

The number of first instance decisions in the EU declined slightly in 2017 compared to 2016, while the total recognition rate declined sharply (Table 1). The recognition of the refugee or subsidiary protection status, or an authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons (total positive decisions) was accorded only in 45.5 % of the cases, with a sharp decline compared to 2016 when positive decisions reached 60.8 % of the cases. Conversely, rejection rates sharply increased.

Among the three considered countries, recognition rates declined in Denmark and France, while they increased in Finland.
Table 1: Recognition rates and type of protection status granted to asylum seekers, 2016-III/2018 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>FR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiary protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian protection*</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FR</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data (migr_asydcfstTa) (migr_asydcfstq).

Note: Rejection rates are computed as the % of positive decision over total decision.

(*) Humanitarian protection means a person covered by a decision granting authorisation to stay for humanitarian reasons under national law. It includes persons who are not eligible for international protection as currently defined in the Qualifications Directive (Directive 2011/95/EU) but are nonetheless protected against removal under the obligations that are imposed on all Member States by international refugee or human rights. Examples of such categories include persons who are not removable on ill health grounds and unaccompanied minors.

(**) We consider the first three quarters of 2018.

The rejection rate differs considerably across the three considered countries, with France showing the highest rejection rate compared to Denmark and Finland.

In 2017, France – together with Poland and the Czech Republic – was among the EU countries with the highest percentage of rejections (70.6 %). Denmark also showed a high share of rejections (65.6 %), while in Finland the rate of rejections (52.2 %) was similar to the EU28 average (54.5 %).

France and Denmark also show an increase in rejection rates compared to 2016 (from 67 % to 71 % in France, and from 32 % to 66 % in Denmark), in line with the decrease of asylum applicants coming from war-torn countries. However, in the first three quarters of 2018, the two countries show opposite dynamics in rejections rates, with Denmark registering a reduction (to 48 %), and France a further increase (to 72 %), scoring above the EU28 average (63 %).

Differently, Finland shows a decrease in rejection rates since 2016 (from 66 % to 52 % in 2017 to 45 % in the first three quarters of 2018), while the increase occurred in 2015 and 2016 can be explained in part by the removal of one protection status: humanitarian protection, which in previous years had accounted for around 20 % of all recognised applicants. Differently from the other two countries, Finland also shows a lower rejection rate (43.5 %) in final decisions compared to the first-instance ones (Table 5 Annex I).
The type of protection status granted also differs. The majority of asylum seekers in the three countries still receive a protection status under the Geneva Convention (see Table 4 in Annex I). However, in France and Denmark a trend towards granting only subsidiary protection can be seen, while this share is decreasing in Finland.

Figure 4: Evolution of rejection rates in first-instance decisions in the EU28, DK, FR and FI 2008-III/2018 (%)

It is difficult to accurately estimate the total number of refugees staying or remaining in the considered countries and thus to calculate the need for integration measures.

First, there are still many asylum applications pending (Figure 5). These figures include both pending decisions on first-time asylum cases and decisions on court cases based on appeal or review. An indication of the cases pending at second and higher instances (i.e. in appeal or review) may be drawn by comparing the number of cases awaiting a decision at first instance (EPS data), with those pending at all instances of the administrative and/or judicial procedure (Eurostat data)⁷.

Figure 5: Persons subject of asylum applications pending in EU28, DK, FR and FI, 2016 – 2018

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT (migr_asypenctzm).

Second, besides positive decisions on asylum applications, there are no official statistics on rejected applicants with any kind of "toleration status". For example, in Finland, it is also possible for persons who have been refused asylum to receive a residence permit based on work if the criteria for the residence permit are met\(^8\).

Finally, there are rather vague estimates on how many family members of refugees still living abroad will get a residence permit. For **Finland**, since 2015 the number of asylum applicants has decreased, while there is an increase in the number of migrants applying for a residence permit on the grounds of employment or family relations\(^9\).

### 2.3. The uneven effort in "burden sharing measures" and EU initiatives for resettlement, relocation and legal pathways

#### 2.3.1. Resettlement

A **European Resettlement Scheme**\(^10\) was adopted by the European Council in July 2015\(^11\) for the resettlement of over 22,000 individuals in need of international protection over the period 2015 – 2017, through multilateral and national schemes. By March 2018, more than 19,432 people (mainly from Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon) were resettled under the July 2015 scheme\(^12\).

In July 2016, following the **Common European Asylum System** (CEAS) reform process\(^13\) (see Box 2) and the announcement of a new Partnership Framework\(^14\) with key third countries of origin and transit, the European Commission presented its proposal for a Regulation setting up a Union Resettlement Framework.

While CEAS provides common minimum standards throughout the EU for the treatment of all asylum seekers, currently there seems to be a tacit "race to the bottom" among the EU Member States to minimise the amount of asylum seekers and refugees arriving on their territories.

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\(^11\) 11130/15 ASIM 62 RELEX 633.

\(^12\) [https://www.resettlement.eu/page/resettlement-in-europe](https://www.resettlement.eu/page/resettlement-in-europe).


Box 2: Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

Since 1999, the EU has been working to create a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), providing common minimum standards for the treatment of all asylum seekers. CEAS consists of a legal framework covering all aspects of the asylum process and a support agency – the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

However, in practice, the current system leaves a lot to the discretion of MSs and as a result, it is still characterised by differing treatment of asylum seekers and varying recognition rates amongst EU MSs, reflecting Europe’s often criticised “asylum lottery”.

The European Agenda on Migration also sets out further steps towards a reform of the CEAS, which were presented in two packages of legislative proposals in May and July 2016, which are still under discussion. The reform also includes new EU rules, setting out common standards and stronger co-operation to ensure that asylum seekers are treated equally in an open and fair system under:

- **The revised Asylum Procedures Directive**, which aims at fairer, quicker and better quality asylum decisions. Asylum seekers with special needs will receive the necessary support to explain their claim and in particular there will be greater protection of unaccompanied minors and victims of torture;

- **The revised Reception Conditions Directive** ensures humane material reception conditions (such as housing) for asylum seekers across the EU and that the fundamental rights of the concerned persons are fully respected. It also ensures that detention is only applied as a measure of last resort;

- **The revised Qualification Directive** clarifies the grounds for granting international protection and therefore will make asylum decisions more robust. It will also improve the access to rights and integration measures for beneficiaries of international protection;

- **The revised Dublin Regulation** enhances the protection of asylum seekers during the process of establishing the State responsible for examining the application, and clarifies the rules governing the relations between States. It creates a system to detect early problems in national asylum or reception systems, and address their root causes before they develop into fully fledged crises;

- **The revised EURODAC Regulation** will allow law enforcement access to the EU database of the fingerprints of asylum seekers under strictly limited circumstances in order to prevent, detect or investigate the most serious crimes, such as murder, and terrorism.

During the 2019 March Home Affairs Council meeting, the presidency presented a progress report on the reform of the Common European Asylum System (6600/19). This was followed by a discussion as to whether work towards an agreement and a possible adoption should take place separately for those files where most progress has been achieved with the aim of finalising them before the European elections or whether all files should be agreed and adopted together (package approach). The presidency indicated its continued commitment to strive for the best possible solution.


During mid-late 2017, the European Commission launched a new resettlement pledging exercise and called on EU MSs to resettle at least 50,000 persons in need of international protection by October 2019. This was intended to address the gap between the end of the resettlement scheme under the 2015 Council Conclusions in mid-2017, and the expected adoption of the Union Resettlement Framework. Twenty EU MSs pledged for 50,030 places for resettlement for this period15. Despite the increasing numbers, resettlement falls far behind the number of yearly asylum claims submitted in the EU: in 2017, out of the more than 700,000 asylum seeker applicants within the EU28, only around 24,000 arrived via resettlement programmes (Table 6 in Annex I). Of these, only 15% were resettled in the three considered countries, with Finland showing the highest number

compared to the other two countries until 2016 (310 in DK, 620 in FR and 1,005 in FI), while in 2017 it was France that sharply increased its share (reaching 2,620 persons). In Denmark, instead the number dropped in 2017 to only five resettled persons, following the unilateral suspension of the refugee resettlement programme announced by the Danish Minister of Integration in September 2016. In December 2017, Denmark passed a new law providing that the Immigration Minister will decide how many refugees will be admitted under the UN resettlement programme, with 500 being the maximum except in an “exceptional situation” (Table 2).

Table 2: Resettlement in the selected countries, State of Play as of 7 March 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pledges under the 50,000 scheme</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>1,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7 March 2018)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons resettled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>60 as of 7 March 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under the 50,000 scheme (7 March 2018)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledges and resettlements</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2,375</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under the 20 July 2015 resettlement scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons resettled</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1,394 between March 2016 and 7 March 2018.</td>
<td>1,002 between March 2016 and 7 March 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under the EU-Turkey Statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledges under the national resettlement programme (2016)</td>
<td>500 As of July 2005, Denmark started operating a flexible quota programme lasting three years and consisting of 1,500 places. The latest period started on 1 January 2014 and ran until 31 December 2016. In September 2016, Denmark’s Minister of Integration announced the refugee resettlement programme was suspended until further notice. In December 2017, Denmark passed a new law providing that the Immigration Minister will decide how many refugees will be admitted under the UN resettlement programme, with</td>
<td>In 2008, France signed a Framework Agreement with UNHCR establishing an annual resettlement programme. Under the Agreement, France committed to examining approximately 100 resettlement applications every year. In both 2014 and 2015, France agreed to receive 500 Syrians and Palestinians from Syria residing in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt (Humanitarian Admission Programme). Figures on 2016 pledges were not available.</td>
<td>Since 2001, the number of quota refugees accepted by Finland has been 750 per year. In 2014 and 2015, due to the Syrian crisis, it was increased to 1,050. In 2016 all quota refugees were Syrian.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of persons resettled in 2016 (rounded)</th>
<th>310</th>
<th>1,420</th>
<th>945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By nationality</td>
<td>Syria (235), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (25), the Central African Republic (10), Somalia (10), Myanmar (5), Sudan (5), and stateless (5).</td>
<td>Syria (1,190), Iraq (65), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (25), Eritrea (20), Somalia (20), Sri Lanka (20), Ethiopia (10), Rwanda (10), Iran (10), Palestine (10), the Central African Republic (5), Sudan (5), Côte d’Ivoire (5), and Afghanistan (5).</td>
<td>Syria (545), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (205), Afghanistan (130), Sudan (30), Somalia (15), Eritrea (5), and stateless (10).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Persons need to be recognised as refugees in order to be eligible for the programme, and some EU MSs have additional criteria. Among the selected countries, **Denmark** and **Finland** (Table 8 in Annex I) introduced additional criteria for integration into the resettlement selection process, whereas **France** has none.

### 2.3.2. Relocation

Relocation is the distribution among Member States of persons in clear need of international protection, based on the capacity of the Member States to absorb and integrate refugees\(^\text{16}\). Thus, relocation is a "burden sharing" measure based on intra-EU solidarity. The EU relocation programme\(^\text{17}\) was initially targeted to assist Italy and Greece over a two-year period from September 2015, with the distribution of 160,000 asylum seekers towards other EU MSs. Part of the applicants were distributed according to a fixed determined quota system based on the population of a country (40 % weighting), the GDP (40 %), the unemployment rate (10 %) and earlier intake of asylum seekers (10 %).

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\(^{16}\) European Agenda on Migration, COM(2015) 240 final.

\(^{17}\) Based on Council Decision (EU) 2016/1754 of 29 September 2016 amending Decision (EU) 2015/1601 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece and on Council Decision (EU) 2016/1754 of 29 September 2016 amending Decision (EU) 2015/1601 establishing provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece.
On 31 May 2018, around 34,700 asylum seekers (35 % of the commitment) were relocated from Italy and Greece to other States participating in the relocation process\textsuperscript{18}.

Setting up the relocation mechanism was decided by Member States in legally binding Council decisions. Almost all Member States have respected their legal obligations with regular pledges and relocations. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are the only exceptions and the Commission has therefore launched infringement procedures against them (EC, 2017).

The three considered countries show an \textbf{uneven relocation effort} (Figure 6 and Table 9 in Annex I). While \textbf{Denmark} did not relocate any asylum seeker, \textbf{France} and \textbf{Finland} received respectively 5,030 and 1,981 asylum seekers by the end of October 2018.

Figure 6: Relocation of asylum seekers from Italy and Greece, 30 October 2018 (n.)

France conducted interviews with asylum seekers in Greece and Italy before approving their relocation. A faster registration procedure was followed for relocation cases compared to the rest of its asylum-seeking population. Relocated persons were directly registered by the Prefectures in specific "single desks" (guichets uniques) for relocation and they were not required to go through the pre-reception phase. Relocated persons were accommodated in dedicated centres: according to a Circular of 9 November 2015, the maximum duration of the procedure in France was theoretically four months. During these four months, relocated people were channelled to reception centres for asylum seekers (CADA) or emergency centres in which special places had been created (AIDA, 2018).

Although the pace of relocation transfers has been increasing since its start in 2015, actual relocations are still lagging behind the established objectives. By October 2018, Finland nearly reached 100% of the pre-determined relocation quota, while France has relocated only around 25% of the persons it is legally committed to receive through the EU Relocation Scheme.

Figure 7: Relocation of asylum seekers from Italy and Greece, 30 October 2018 (% of commitment)


2.3.3. EU initiatives to enhance legal pathways

In addition to the resources set aside to support the resettlement effort, the Commission encourages Member States to set up private sponsorship schemes allowing private groups or civil society organisations to organise and finance resettlements in accordance with national legislation. To this effect, the Commission has invited EASO to coordinate a pilot project on private sponsorship schemes with interested Member States. This and other developments during 2017 and 2018 seek to establish a greater role for EASO in supporting the expansion of programmes in the EU for the admission of refugees from third countries.

To overcome the shortages in certain high-skill sectors of the labour force that are expected in the near future, a strategic and pro-active EU policy on legal migration is needed to contribute to a more competitive EU economy. This is why the Commission, in June 2016, proposed a revised EU Blue Card scheme to make it easier and more attractive for highly skilled workers and their families to come to the EU and ensure that MSs can get the workforce they need, when they need it. The Commission calls on the Council to swiftly agree on a position that adds value compared with the current Blue Card scheme in view of relaunching negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council to

ensure that an ambitious agreement can be reached and that the new EU Blue Card is adopted before the European Parliament elections in May 2019\(^2\).

The **EU’s common visa policy** is also an essential instrument for mobility, notably facilitating tourism and business, but also a key tool to prevent security risks or risks of irregular migration. The Commission will assess whether the current visa policy still matches present and future challenges, and will reflect on the need to modernise it.

In February 2019, Member States endorsed the agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on the Commission’s proposal to modernise the EU’s common visa policy. The agreed changes will make it easier for legitimate travellers to obtain a visa to come to Europe, facilitating tourism, trade and business, whilst strengthening security and reducing irregular migration risks\(^22\).

Legal migration is an important element for the EU to strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with third countries, and should be fully integrated into the EU’s foreign policy. Enhanced and tailored cooperation on legal migration with countries of origin and transit will help reduce irregular migration, contribute to filling gaps in certain sectors of Member States’ labour markets and be an incentive to improve cooperation on migration management overall, including on readmission and returns. As part of its strategy to actively promote the external dimension of legal migration, the Commission has taken the initiative to develop, together with Member States, a number of pilot projects with African countries to promote legal migration schemes for labour or traineeship purposes. Several pilot projects are in preparation and should start shortly: two evaluations have recently been finalised, with other projects being developed by Member States. A project under the Trust Fund on labour mobility with Northern African countries is near to finalisation, and the Commission has launched a further call for projects under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund\(^23\).

### 2.4. Differences in the composition of asylum seekers

Eurostat data show that in 2017, the largest six groups of first-time asylum applicants in the EU28 came from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Eritrea. In the third quarter of 2018, the largest six groups of first-time applicants were from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan.

**Syria has been the main country of citizenship of asylum seekers in the EU since 2013.** However, in 2017 the number of Syrian applicants fell back to 102,000 from 335,000 in 2016, reducing the share of Syrians from 27.3 % to 15.5 % (Table 10 in Annex I). Large relative falls among the most common countries of citizenship for asylum seekers in 2017 were also recorded for war-torn countries (Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians), while the largest increases were recorded for Nigerians (whose share increased by 2.2 percentage points) and Bangladeshis and Guineans (up 1.6 percentage points each). The share of Syrians also decreased in 2018 (I-III quarters). There was also considerable growth in relative terms in the number of applicants from Turkey, Venezuela, Côte d’Ivoire, as well as from Eritrea and Albania with respect to 2016\(^24\).

---


The composition, however, varies by country reflecting the prevalent migration route. The three countries of interest show a different composition of asylum seekers by country of origin. According to 2017 Eurostat data (Figure 8 and Table 10 in Annex I), in France the largest group was made up of Albanians (11,000 in 2017, 12.4% of first time applicants), followed by Afghans and Haitians; in Denmark by Syrians (765 in 2017, 34.3%), followed by Moroccans and Eritreans; in Finland Iraqis were the largest group (1,000, 22.5%), followed by Syrians and Eritreans. In 2018 (I-III quarters), in France the largest group was made up of Afghans (10.2%), followed by Albanians and Georgians; in Denmark Syrians remained the main group (18.8%), followed by Moroccans, Eritreans and Georgians; similarly, in Finland Iraqis were still the largest group (21.5%), followed by Russians and Turkish.

Figure 8: Main (six) countries of origin of first time asylum applicants in DK, FR and FI, 2018* (%)

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data (migr_asyappctzm).
Note: (*) we consider the first three quarters of 2018.

Differences in recognition rates across EU countries are likely to be related to both the composition of asylum seekers by country of origin and procedures adopted in each country. As shown in the following table, generally the recognition rates of asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq and Sudan, in the three considered countries tend to be higher than the EU average.

Table 3: Recognition rate of first instance decision, average (extra-EU28) and by country of origin (main six), EU28, DK, FR and FI, 2018
Asylum seekers and refugees, as with immigrants in general, are predominantly young males, who are most likely to bear the extreme risks involved in migrating when compared to women and old people. Furthermore, from a comparison of the employment rates, young males also have a higher chance to find employment, vis-a-vis their female counterparts.

On average and in all three countries considered, the share of men is above 60%. The share of men is particularly high in Denmark where in 2017, men made up almost 80% of new arrivals (Table 4), although not in the first three quarters of 2018.

Table 4: Non-EU first time applicants by gender, EU28, DK, FR and FI, 2016 – 2018 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compared to men, women show higher chances of having their status recognised: recognition rates are higher in all the selected countries (especially in Denmark, with a gap of 24%).

Table 5: Recognition rate of first instance decision (extra-EU28) by sex, EU28, DK, FR and FI, 2018* (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that on average, asylum seekers are mainly young, with about four fifths (82%) being under 34 years old in 2017. This share is even higher when the first three quarters of 2018 (97%) are considered. Around 30% were minors, with roughly 20% younger than 14 years old, and only a very small share was over 65 years old. This age structure suggests that the education and the training system play a key role in the integration of refugees.

The age distribution is, however, different in the three considered countries in part reflecting the different composition of asylum applicants by country of origin. While in all the three countries the age group 18-34 is the largest one, Finland shows a higher share of children in the 0-13 age bracket compared to the other two countries. In Denmark, the share of minors aged between 14-17 (especially unaccompanied minors) is higher, while France registers a relatively higher share than Denmark and Finland of older applicants (35-64) until 2018.

Table 6: Age composition of extra-EU first time applicants, 2016 – 2018 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>&lt; 14 years</th>
<th>14 - 17 years</th>
<th>18 - 34 years</th>
<th>35 - 64 years</th>
<th>65 + years</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>France</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers below 18 in the EU, although declining in the last three years from 95,000 to 30,000, minors still represent 15 % of new under-aged asylum applicants from extra-EU countries (Figure 3 in Annex I)\(^{25}\). In the three considered countries, unaccompanied minors are a large share particularly in Denmark, where they represented 40 % of the arrivals below the age of 18 in 2017, while in Finland they represented less than 15 %. In both countries, the number of unaccompanied minors has decreased strongly since 2015 both in absolute (Figure 9) and percentage terms (Table 11 in Annex I). Differently, in France this number increased from 320 in 2015 to 590 in 2017, although their share over the arrivals of young people below 18 remained around 3 %, due to the overall increase in the arrivals of this age group.

Figure 9: Extra-EU asylum applicants considered as unaccompanied minors in DK, FR and FI, 2015 – 2017 (n.)

The following subsection provides additional information on the characteristics of Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis which represent the main groups of asylum seekers in the three countries.

2.4.1. Characteristics and recognition rates of asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq

Considering the first three quarters of 2018, Syrians were the largest group in Denmark (18.8 %), while in France and Finland they represent respectively the 3 % and 4 % of first-time applications. The share of women among Syrians (48 %) is on average higher than total extra-EU asylum seekers (37 %). Furthermore, the share of women is higher in Denmark (67 % compared to 47 % in FR and 40 % in FI), as they represent more than half of the first-time requests of Syrians. At European level, Syrians have a higher share of people under 18 years old (56 % vs 31 %) than total extra-EU asylum seekers. This holds also in France (39 % vs 21 %) and Finland (35 % vs 30 %), while in Denmark the share of Syrians below 18 years old is smaller than that of extra-EU asylum seekers (30 % vs 31 %). Also, the quota of people above 65 years old is higher among Syrians, in particular in France where it reaches the 2 % of asylum seekers. Syrians also show significantly higher recognition rates for first instance decisions compared to the average for non-EU asylum seekers. Looking at the gender and age disaggregation, women and young asylum seekers show the highest recognition rates both among non-EU and Syrian asylum seekers.

In the same period, Iraqis were the largest group in Finland (21 %), while in France and Denmark they represented respectively 2.2 % and 2.7 % of first-time applications. The share of women among Iraqis (42 %) is on average higher than total extra-EU asylum seekers (37 %). Furthermore, the share of women is higher in Denmark (62 % compared to 41.5 % in FR and 23 % in FI), as they represent more than half of the first-time requests of Iraqis. At European level, Iraqis have a higher share of people under 18 years old (45 % vs 31 %) than the total extra-EU asylum seekers. This holds also in France (39 % vs 21 %) while in Finland (28 % vs 30 %) and Denmark (17 % vs 31 %) the share of Iraqis below 18 years old is smaller than that of extra-EU asylum seekers. Also the quota of people above 65 years old is higher among Iraqis, in particular in France where it reaches the 3.7 % of asylum seekers. Iraqis show also significantly higher recognitions rates in first instance decisions compared to the average of non EU asylum seekers. Looking at the gender and age disaggregation, women and young asylum seekers show the highest recognition rates both among non-EU and Iraqi asylum seekers.

Finally, in the first three quarters of 2018, Afghans were the largest group in France (10.2 %), while in Denmark and Finland they represented respectively 2.9 % and 3.9 % of first time applications. The share of women among Afghans (26.5 %) is on average lower than total extra-EU asylum seekers (37 %). Furthermore, the share of women is higher in Denmark (64 % compared to 8 % in FR and 17 % in FI), as they represent more than half of the first-time requests of Afghans. At EU level, Afghans have a higher share of people under 18 years old (38 % vs 31 %) than total extra-EU asylum seekers. This holds also in Finland (50 % vs 30 %), while in Denmark (27 % vs 31 %) and France (9 % vs 31 %) the share of Afghans below 18 years old is smaller than that of extra-EU asylum seekers. Also the quota of people above 65 years old is higher among Afghans at European level. Afghans show also significantly higher recognitions rates in first instance decisions compared to the average of non-EU asylum seekers. Looking at the gender and age disaggregation, women and young asylum seekers show the highest recognition rates both among non-EU and Afghan asylum seekers.
Table 7: Shares of first-time asylum seekers by age and gender, 2018 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Syrians</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Iraqis</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Afghans</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total extra EU</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>36.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>35.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Syrians</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
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<td>25.6</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iraqis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>58.16</td>
<td>41.82</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
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<td>61.54</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>58.50</td>
<td>41.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>FI</td>
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<td>76.53</td>
<td>23.47</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afghans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>58.16</td>
<td>41.82</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DK</td>
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<td>73.48</td>
<td>26.50</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>64.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>FI</td>
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<td>92.05</td>
<td>7.76</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROSTAT data (migr_asyappctzm).
Note: we consider the first three quarters of 2018.
Table 8: Recognition rates (first time decision) by age and gender, 2018 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total extra EU</th>
<th>Total extra EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
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<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Syrians**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>89.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Iraqis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
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<td>37.13</td>
<td>48.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>76.87</td>
<td>70.52</td>
<td>85.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>50.69</td>
<td>47.30</td>
<td>61.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Afghans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU28</strong></td>
<td>41.44</td>
<td>37.13</td>
<td>48.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>44.72</td>
<td>41.31</td>
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<td>FR</td>
<td>16.67</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>71.15</td>
<td>70.33</td>
<td>81.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IRS elaboration on EUROS TAT data (migr_asydcfstq).
Note: we consider the first three quarters of 2018.
2.5. High educational gaps between the immigrant and the native population

Available Eurostat data on the overall non-EU migrant population of working-age (25-54) show lower education rates compared to the native population (Table 14 in Annex I). Among the three considered countries, the education gap is larger in France and Finland than Denmark, in part reflecting the age composition of the foreign-born population (extra-EU).

In **France and Finland**, the share of the foreign-born population with at most a lower secondary level of educational attainment is almost 20 pp higher than the share for the native-born population in 2017, while in **Denmark** this gap is only 5 pp.

A **Finnish** study commissioned by the Audit Committee of the Parliament, compared the education level of 29 year olds and concluded that among the first generation immigrant population 60 % have only a basic level of education, while this number halves among second generation immigrants.

In **Denmark**, the educational and professional level of asylum seekers from Syria turned out to be lower than expected. According to a study of the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration (UIM), in 2016 more than one third of the Syrians granted asylum had none or only a few years of school attendance, more than half had completed only a short education cycle, whereas less than 10 % had completed a medium long or higher education cycle. A 2017 study of the Rockwool Foundation, focusing on all refugees staying in Denmark regardless of nationality and length of stay, reports that 53 % of the refugees had only a primary school education (compared to 19 % of the Danish people), 10 % had a high school diploma, and 14 % had completed a vocational education (compared to 38 % of the Danish people). The study indicates also that just 18 % of refugees had completed a higher education (compared to 37 % of the Danish population).

The impact of education is significant for the social and economic integration of refugees and migrants in the destination country. In **Finland**, for example, migrants with a higher education are more likely to find jobs and have longer careers, and this is true for both men and women. As stressed in the case study, according to 2015 data, the unemployment rate of migrants ranged from 11.5 % for those with a higher education to 18 % for those with a lesser education level. Irrespective of the educational level, unemployment rates are, however, higher among immigrants compared to natives. For example, among Finns, only 4.6 % of those with a higher education were unemployed.

2.6. A difficult labour market integration

Beside national administrative data, the source for a comparative analysis of the labour market situation of refugees in the EU is the 2014 EU-LFS survey ad hoc module. The EU-LFS survey includes information on people with a migrating background; however, it is possible to identify refugees, using the disaggregation by “reason of migration”, whenever available.

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Despite the fact that in most EU MS refugees, and in particular women refugees, have higher chances of becoming citizens of the host country compared to other migrants, they remain one of the most vulnerable groups on the labour market. According to a recent study for the European Parliament\textsuperscript{30}, the outcome of women refugees on the labour market generally lags well behind those of other migrant groups. Employed migrants and refugees, and particularly migrant women (EU/OECD, 2016), are also more likely than native-born to have low pay and irregular jobs.

The difficult integration of refugees in the labour market is confirmed in the three countries of interest, although at different levels. According to a recent assessment of the Nordic Economic Policy Review (2017), refugees in Denmark, although improving their labour market participation within the first years of their stay, do not catch up with natives (all or low-skilled). The employment rates of the non-EU born population was 16 pp lower than that of natives in 2017 (Table 9). Although the employment rate of refugees has been substantially lower than that of the Danish population and of immigrants of non-Western origin, there has been a positive development over the last few years. In the 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter of 2015, the employment rate for refugees after three years of stay was 20 % overall (29 % for men and 7 % for women). Since then, the employment rate has increased to 45 % in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter of 2018 namely, 57 % for men and 20 % for women (Danish case study, Annex IV).

### Table 9: Employment rate (15-64) by origin in EU28 and selected countries, 2015 – 2017 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EU28</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EUROSTAT (lfsa_ergacob).

In Finland, a study of the Finnish Centre for Pensions\textsuperscript{31} that followed the employment and work careers of migrants arriving in Finland at different times in the 1990’s and 2000’s until 2013 found that most migrants begin working within a year of their arrival. However, immigrants’ employment rates are 16.5 pp lower than natives. According to the Finnish Audit Committee’s study (2018), there are large differences depending on the background, age, sex and educational level and country/continent of origin. Migrants from Estonia, Western and Southern Europe find employment quickly, have longer careers and their revenues have increased over time; while migrants (mainly refugees) from the Middle-East and Somalia face the most difficulties. With regard to the Asian migrants, over 30 % are employed and around 5 % are entrepreneurs. Over 40 % of migrants from Northern and Southern


Africa are in the workforce and less than 5% are entrepreneurs\textsuperscript{32}. Somalis show the lowest integration in the labour market, with an employment rate at 31% and an unemployment rate of 55% among refugees\textsuperscript{33}. There are also differences in the work careers of migrants depending on migration cohorts, gender and regions of origin\textsuperscript{34}. Men show higher employment rates than women and a higher yearly median income: migrant women earn a median €13,000 per year while migrant men earn a median salary of more than €20,000 per year\textsuperscript{35}.

In France, in 2017 the gap in employment rates between natives and non-EU born people (20 – 64) was 12.5 pp compared to an EU average of 7.5 pp. It should be noted that France does not collect data on employment rates, unemployment rates, types of jobs and number of benefit claimants of refugees. Public services only collect data on nationality or date of entry into France when they have an impact on the public service concerned (for instance, a period of residence required for the payment of a social benefit).

According to the data of the ad hoc EU-LFS module (2014)\textsuperscript{36}, which distinguishes refugees from other non-EU immigrants, refugees tend to improve their labour market condition with time (Figure 10). However, the labour market integration of refugees is in general much slower compared to the other migrants and in the short-run they are likely to be present in worse employment conditions than economic immigrants. While the latter tend to choose their destination to maximise employment opportunities, refugees tend to secure personal safety, and thus they may arrive in countries and regions with few employment opportunities, as in the case of Greece and southern Italy\textsuperscript{37}.

**Figure 10: Employment rates by reason of migration 15 – 64, 2014**

![Employment rates by reason of migration](source: EP (2018). Based on EU-LFS ad hoc module 2014, data cover 25 EU countries.)


Asylum applicants tend to have even worse labour market conditions than recognised refugees and other immigrants, as in most countries they face greater legal barriers to employment while their asylum application is being processed, with conditions for granting access to the labour market varying across Member States. Recognised refugees are instead more likely to be involved in public programmes supporting their labour market and social integration. Hence, the right to access the labour market already during the processing of an asylum claim might be crucial for speeding up the integration process, as inactivity usually deteriorates integration prospects (see Ch. 4 for a description of waiting periods for accessing the labour market).

Table 10: Employment rates (15-64) of migrants by years of residence and reason for migration, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Reason/Duration</th>
<th>From 1 to 5 years</th>
<th>From 6 to 9 years</th>
<th>From 10 years or over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Family reasons</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education reasons</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work, job found before migrating</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work, no job found before migrating</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International protection or asylum</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Family reasons</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education reasons</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work, job found before migrating</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work, no job found before migrating</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International protection or asylum</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EUROSTAT (lfso_14l1empr).
Note: No data available for EU28 and Denmark.
(·) values missing.

A study on Swiss data from 1994 to 2004 suggests that marginally reducing the asylum waiting period can help reduce public expenditures and unlock the economic potential of refugees by increasing employment among this vulnerable population. Hainmueller J., Hangartner D. and Lawrence D. (2016), when lives are put on hold: Lengthy asylum processes decrease employment among refugees, Science Advances, 03 Aug 2016: Vol. 2, no. 8. Available at: http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/2/8/e1600432.full.
For example, in Finland, unemployment is more common among those who have migrated for reasons other than employment. Of those who had migrated to Finland originally for work, 6.3% were unemployed and 8.8% of those who had migrated to Finland originally to study were unemployed. Migration for other reasons raises unemployment levels. For example, among those who had migrated for family reasons, 18% were unemployed and among those who had a refugee background 34.5% were unemployed.

A research conducted by Eurocities in 2017 on the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market at local level, has identified several issues connected to skills as key challenges to integration: their lack of language skills, education, skills and professional experience.

Concerning working skills and work experience, according to the 2016 UIM study based on a survey distributed to 20 municipalities, in Denmark 61% of the refugees were employed in unskilled jobs, while only 16% in skilled jobs. However, this information should be considered with caution, since work experience in the survey was indicated for only approximately a third of the refugees (UIM, 2016). The level of education positively impacts the chances of being employed and refugees tend to have low levels of education and relevant professional experience compared to the qualifications needed in the Danish labour market and the high wage levels. This hampers the probability for refugees to find a job and be able to provide for themselves which can negatively affect the public perception of refugees which in turn leads to further reducing the integration of the individual and his/her family. According to the already cited 2017 study of The Rockwool Foundation, in Denmark only 28% of refugees with a primary school education are employed, whereas half of those with a vocational or a long cycle higher education are employed (The Rockwool Foundation, 2017).

Furthermore, difficulties exist not only related to the skills possessed by asylum seekers and refugees, but also to the recognition and validation of credits, certificates and degrees. To overcome the issues, several initiatives has been developed at EU (see Box 11 in Chapter 5) and local level, as described in Section 3 of this report (see Eurocities, 2017).

2.7. Main challenges and needs to be addressed in the three countries

Migrants and refugees experience high risks of social exclusion and poverty as their integration is usually a long process hampered by many barriers, including discrimination. Some groups are more at risk than others and require tailored integration measures, particularly refugee women, unaccompanied minors and irregular immigrants.

Policy changes have further penalised asylum seekers and refugees. Quotas and work permits have been reduced, restrictions have been introduced to family reunification, and “voluntary” return schemes have been incentivised.

In Denmark, initially the main challenges related to practical issues and concerns arising from the large inflow of asylum seekers in 2014 – 2015. In a more general and long-term perspective, other challenges are emerging. First, the low level of education and relevant professional experience among the refugees is hampering the integration process. Similarly, the lack of language skills makes the way

41 At the reception stage the main challenge is to provide shelter, food and first aid, while at later stages is to process the large number of applications for asylum and to provide for accommodation and integration programmes, as well as securing day-care and schooling opportunities for the children once asylum was granted.
into the labour market difficult. Secondly, a significant number of the refugees suffer from various forms of traumatisation, making integration not only into the labour market, but more generally into society, difficult. Furthermore, they often lack the networks that might help them find a job. Finally, most refugees come from societies that are very different from the one they meet in Denmark, socially, religiously, culturally.

Similarly, in Finland, the main challenge was the peak of arrivals of asylum seekers in 2015 and the administrative and practical issues relating to the increase of applicants. Providing enough places in the municipalities for asylum seekers was also a challenge, as it is effective integration, in particular with the increased amount of individuals who have received international protection.

In the French case, it is the change in the composition of asylum seekers and refugees which is considered a challenge. In the past, refugee inflows were characterised by two dominant profiles: French speaking, with low levels of schooling, and non-French speaking immigrants with higher educational levels. Over the last five years, inflows are instead characterised by a growing number of non-French speaking refugees with little schooling, with a significant share being illiterate. This creates new needs and challenges for French integration policy.
3. EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL CLIMATE/DISCOURSE

Besides traditions, experience and existing integration structures, the political discourse and the public opinion are important variables to explain policy strategies and possible country differences in asylum and integration policies.

The crisis and the recent terrorist attacks have changed the political climate and discourse, as well as increased prejudices and reinforced discriminations.

Although the magnitude of the inflow of refugees in 2014 – 2015 in Denmark was not comparable to those of neighbouring countries, this still heavily affected the political agenda, the public debate and the media. As a consequence, the political and public opinion has been characterised by a double-sided focus on both securing a stricter immigration policy, while still embracing the importance of integration. Despite some concerns raised at local level on the difficulties and costs of housing and integration programmes, a broad support has been provided on the task of integrating those arriving while many initiatives were taken by NGOs, private persons, business owners etc.

In France a more securitised discourse dominated public and media debate in the last years, also as an effect of the terrorist attacks that hit the country. Independently of the political orientation of the administration in charge, the approach adopted tends to increase restrictions to arrivals.

In Finland too, migration – in particular humanitarian migration and irregular migration – is an increasingly relevant topic in the political debate. The media have been reporting more widely on migration, refugee protection and related issues since 2015. The discussion is currently more polarised compared to the past between those who oppose migration and those who support solidarity and have a welcoming attitude towards migrants. The popularity of parties that have a strong anti-immigration agenda has been on the rise. Overall, the public discourse is more focused on the threats of migration with the tone of the public discourse becoming harsher.

3.1. The political debate between securitisation and integration

As regards the political agenda, in Denmark over the last years the debate on immigration has predominantly been shaped by the right-wing Danish ‘People’s Party', advocating for a stricter immigration policy. Differently from similar parties that reached the political stage as a result of the rapid increase in refugee inflow – as the Swedish ‘Sverigedemokraterna’ or the ‘Alternative for Germany’ – the ‘People’s Party' maintained a vital role in Parliament for a long period and contributed significantly to shaping the Danish immigration policy. More recently, a further right-wing-leaning party, the "Nye Borgerlige", has been drawing some support. At the same time, the political majority has maintained a focus on the importance of integrating refugees into Danish society, especially through the labour market. This approach has led to a number of integration policy initiatives over the last few years (see Chapter 4).

In France, a securitised discourse under the presidencies of Sarkozy, Holland and Macron has dominated the public and media debate. These administrations – although positioned differently across the political spectrum – have all adopted an approach to migration that aims to reduce legal pathways to the recognition of the refugee status, reinforce border controls, increase expulsions and reduce access to asylum structures. For example, in 2016, the Calais migrant camp, known as the "Jungle", hosting over six thousand migrants and refugees, was shut-down by the French authorities and the migrants dispersed into temporary accommodation centres (Centre d’Accueil et d’Orientation). Recently, the 2018 Bill on immigration in asylum debated in Parliament has been widely criticised by experts and civil society, resulting in a number of strikes from practitioners at the French asylum office.
The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France

(OFPRA), as well as the appeals court (CNDA)\(^{42}\). However, the politicisation of immigration is associated primarily with the far-right National Front (FN) – recently renamed Rassemblement National – which portrays non-European immigrants as a threat to French national identity, fuelling crime and creating a climate of insecurity. The 2017 National Front manifesto renewed its commitment to a massive reduction in legal immigration, long before the Paris attacks of November 2015. Furthermore, France has seen an upsurge in prosecutions in the name of "délit de solidarité" (crimes of solidarity), aimed at preventing the expression of solidarity with migrants, particularly in two border zones, Nord-pas-de-Calais and the Valley de la Roya. This practice has received much critical attention and has recently been condemned by the constitutional council.

Also in Finland, migration – in particular humanitarian migration and irregular migration – is an important topic in the political landscape. Humanitarian migration is often used by political parties to promote their agendas. The popularity of parties that have a strong anti-immigration agenda has been on the rise. In 2015, the nationalist and populist Finns Party gained a number of seats in parliament and entered into government with the Centre Party and the National Coalition Party. The working group responsible for drafting the government programme for migration was chaired by an MP from the Finns Party\(^{43}\). The other government parties adopted, at least in part, the political agenda on immigration of the Finns Party by agreeing to some of its terms. In 2017, the Finns Party separated into two different parties: the Finns Party and the Blue Future, in part due to internal differences on migration, although both have an anti-immigration agenda. However, political parties still have quite different views of many critical aspects relating to migration and there are many politicians and political parties that speak up against racist and xenophobic language. A study conducted by the National Broadcasting Company YLE found that the majority of political parties are in favour of increasing the refugee quota Finland takes each year. Only one party, the Finns Party, wanted to decrease the refugee quota. Furthermore, four parties would like the EU to handle asylum seekers in off shore processing facilities, whereas five parties were against this suggestion\(^{44}\).

3.2. Evolution of the public opinion perceptions on immigrants and refugees

3.2.1. Immigration and integration policy is at the top of the public debate, although decreasing in importance

The Eurobarometer opinion surveys carried out in recent years (Table 11)\(^{45}\), indicate that the public opinion is becoming less sensitive to migration and integration policies, probably due to the reduction of asylum arrivals compared to 2015 – 2016. The latest survey results (autumn 2018) point out that


\(^{43}\) https://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/kielisivu/in-english/.


\(^{45}\) The standard Eurobarometer is conducted on twice per year (spring and autumn). The survey also includes migration-related questions which collect data on Europeans’ attitudes towards the immigration of people from other European Union (EU) Member States and the immigration of people outside the EU. The latest survey was conducted in 2018 (Survey 90), available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index&i=1&instruments=STANDARD. In addition to the standard survey, Eurobarometer published results in April 2018 a Special survey on Integration of Immigrants in the European Union (469), available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2169. A summary of results from this special survey is provided in Annex II.
immigration is not the most pressing policy issue in all the three considered countries and its importance has decreased considerably compared to 2016, especially in Denmark.

However, negative feelings towards immigration from outside the EU – although declining with respect to 2016 – remain above the EU average (53 %), especially in Denmark (62 %), and Finland (57 %). In Denmark an increase in negative feelings has been registered in autumn compared to spring 2018.

Table 11: Public opinion on immigration, Autumn 2018 (%) and differences with respect to Autumn 2016 and Spring 2018 (p.p.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Immigration first or second most important issue</th>
<th>Negative feeling towards immigration from outside the EU</th>
<th>Against refugees’ support</th>
<th>In favour for a common European policy on migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>54 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurobarometer survey 90 Autumn 2018; Eurobarometer survey 89 Spring 2018; Eurobarometer survey 86 Autumn 2016.

To measure the extent of people’s acceptance of migrants, the Gallup World Poll created a Migrant acceptance index on people’s perception towards immigrants living in the country, an immigrant becoming a neighbour, and an immigrant marrying a close relative. According to latest available results relative to 2016, the three countries have a higher acceptance index with respect to the EU average (5.92), Denmark in particular (7.09)46.

Misperceptions also exist on the actual proportion of immigration, especially in France, as shown in Figure 11.

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In Denmark this has been reinforced by the inflow of asylum seekers in 2014 – 2015. Looking at opinion polls conducted in the country, most consider it a duty to help the refugees who come to Denmark for protection, but at the same time find that the stay must be of a temporary nature until return is possible. According to one poll, 63 % believe that the refugees are entitled to be helped, while 61 % believe that refugees must be sent home as soon as possible (DR, 2015). These tendencies are consistent with the predominant political climate focusing on temporary stays which have been recently reflected in a political agreement (December 2018) between the government and the People’s Party which underlines that residence permits for refugees should always be temporary. The agreement was transformed into new legislation which took effect in March 2019.

The concerns voiced in the political and public debate about immigration and integration relate to a number of issues. One centres around the economic consequences of immigration from third world countries. The analysis by the Ministry of Finance (2018) shows that immigration from third world countries is, and will continue to be, very costly unless the job rate for this group improves substantially. Another major concern is the impact that immigration might have culturally. Some fear that Danish culture, norms and values are challenged by immigration, especially with immigration from Muslim countries47.

In France, the public opinion in cities tends to be more favourable towards migration. Taking the vote for the far right parties as an indicator of anti-immigrant sentiment, the party gains the most votes in rural France, particularly in the North-East and along the Mediterranean. Ironically, the far right is strongest in regions with little or no migration (Renard, 2017). Conversely, a study by Vertier and Viskanic (2018) finds evidence suggesting that municipalities hosting refugees showed a decrease in support for far-right parties. They investigated the impact of refugees relocated to temporary accommodation centres after the closure of the "Jungle" and found that the presence of these centres reduced the vote share.

In Finland, the highly polarised public discourse on migration leaves little room for a neutral and rational discussion on how to approach migration. In 2016, a study commissioned by the newspaper *Iltalehti* found that 56% of the population considered that Finland should take fewer asylum seekers and refugees, which was a 22% increase from the opinion of Spring 2015. Another study from 2016 by *Kunnallisalan kehittämissäätiö* (a foundation for developing municipalities) found that 43% of the population have a neutral position regarding the creation of reception centres in their own municipalities, whereas 28% were in favour and 26% were against.

One of the main differences between the three countries is whether or not the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers is an important topic in policy debates.

A Eurofound study (Eurofound, 2016) shows that the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers is an important issue in the current political debates in 13 countries, including Finland and Denmark. According to the study, while in Denmark the general perception is that refugees should contribute to society as soon as possible and labour market integration is seen as the best way for integration, in Finland the focus is on the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to public finances. Differently in France, the labour market integration is not a focus in the policy debate, due to the highly restrictive rules for labour market access for asylum seekers.

According to the Eurobarometer special survey on migration (see Annex II), the three countries show differences on how issues related to labour market integration are perceived by their respective population.

Table 12: Public opinion on integration measures, Autumn 2018 (n. of respondents and %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is each of the following for the successful integration of immigrants in (OUR COUNTRY)?</th>
<th>Total 'Important'</th>
<th>Total 'Not important'</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>2,477</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FR</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following measures would support integration of immigrants?</td>
<td>Total 'Agree'</td>
<td>Total 'Disagree'</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU28</td>
<td>23,501</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FR</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Concerning the social impact of migration, in France, for example, a higher share (86 %) of citizens attributed a negative impact compared to 79 % for all the other considered countries, as emerges from the CEPII study which uses data from surveys conducted by the Ipsos Institute. The series of surveys indicate that over time there is a trend towards increasingly negative views on immigration. Faced with the evolution of public opinion in relation to immigration and the perception of its impact on public finances, the political response often involves pledges to restrict access of immigrants to social welfare. "Paradoxically, although such measures have burgeoned following an increase in the proportion of people who think that immigrants represent a cost to the state budget and the finances of social protection, studies measuring such alleged costs only appeared relatively recently (in the last 20 years) and remain scarce to this day" (CEPII, 2018).

### Media coverage

According to the Eurobarometer special survey on migration (see Annex II), while in France and Denmark a significant share of respondents think that matters concerning immigrants are presented in the media too negatively (respectively 48 % and 59 %), the percentage is much lower in Finland, where the majority (54 %) considers the media objective.

In Denmark, analyses of the media coverage of the rapid increase in refugee inflow do not provide a clear picture. One comprehensive study of the media coverage from August 2015 to April 2016 concludes that the coverage was overall very balanced and neutral in its communication (Infomedia, 2016). Conversely, another study of the University of Copenhagen, concludes that the critical opinions of refugees were vastly over-represented in the media (Kristeligt Dagblad, 2018). However, it was argued that the media were merely citing the major parties more often than other sources, and as
those parties were promoting a strict immigration policy, this would naturally be reflected in the media coverage.

In **France**, the securitised discourse on refugees has also dominated the media debate. In 2016, the destruction of the "Jungle" camp attracted much international critique. More recently, migrant solidarity figures such as the French olive farmer, Cédric Herrou, have attracted a great deal of media attention within debates on the growing phenomenon concerning the criminalisation of humanitarian assistance towards migrants, particularly in relation to two key points of passage along migration routes, the Vallée de Roya and the Nord-pas-de-Calais region.

In **Finland**, at the beginning of the surge of inflows in 2015 – 2016, most of the reporting focused on coverage about the numbers of asylum seekers and about how different government and municipal agencies, cities and communities were dealing with the inflow. There was a large coverage on individuals, groups of people and civil society organisations helping the newly arrived. For example, the small Kyyjärvi municipality with 1,300 inhabitants was pointed out as a good example of reception and integration of asylum seekers. Many asylum seekers had been given jobs in a local cement factory that had been struggling to find workers.

With time, the reporting took a more nuanced approach towards the processing of the asylum seekers as well as returns and voluntary returns, in particular of Iraqi asylum seekers. Today, due to a number of unusually violent crimes committed by former asylum seekers, the media have geared towards the problems of cultural differences, criminality and failed integration.

### 3.2.3. Violence

Although **Denmark** has not experienced violence from or against asylum seekers and refugees to the same extent as in other countries, there have been violent incidents. A photograph of a man spitting from a bridge at the refugees walking on a closed down motorway stirred a substantial amount of public debate. The man was subsequently charged for racism and ultimately agreed to pay a fine (Berlingske, 2016). There are also a few reports of vandalism against asylum centres. According to the National Police, there has also been a significant increase in the number of charges raised against asylum seekers since 2014. The charges relate to crimes such as theft, violence and sexually related offences (Berlingske, 2018). There have been a number of incidents concerning unaccompanied minors, involving thievery and other forms of criminal behaviour, especially in areas close to the asylum centres. This has led to political initiatives to address this problem, including a right for staff at the centres to detain the minors if deemed necessary.

In **Finland**, a number of unusually violent crimes committed by former asylum seekers were registered recently. In 2018, there was a surge in reporting of sexual violence and rape committed by asylum seekers. This resulted in a political debate on migration in general and in the criminal justice system, in particular on whether the sentences in Finland are harsh enough for sexual violence and rape.

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Furthermore, the thoughtless, but often also racist language used by politicians publicly, as well as posts on social media have resulted in citizens practicing less self-control in their language on migration and migrants. It is now more socially acceptable to use racist language. It appears that citizens do not fully understand that hate speech is a punishable act. While some parliamentarians have been sentenced for hate speech (James Hirvisaari in 2011, Jussi Halla-aho in 2012 and Teuvo Hakkarainen in 2016), the sentences they received were not harsh enough to deter citizens from engaging in hate speech.

Refugees in northern France have been subjected to aggressive use of tear gas and repeated destruction of possessions at the hands of the regional police. A report, requested by the Interior Ministry in response to a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in July 2017, found that police used chemical sprays on refugees also when they posed no threat and that officers also regularly spray or confiscate sleeping bags, blankets, and clothing, apparently to press people to leave the area. Local authorities attempted to prevent food distribution by aid groups and refused to provide migrants with access to drinking water and showers (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Furthermore, the repeated destruction and dismantlement of the camps in Calais and Paris (Jaurès and Stalingrad metro stations) forced many of the refugees to sleep without shelter as very few were housed each time. Another report released by L’Auberge des Migrants and the Calais-based organisation Human Rights Observers showed that between November 2017 and November 2018, the French police carried out 393 separate camp evictions against refugees in the port area. Furthermore, volunteers working in Calais were monitored and filmed on a daily basis, to intimidate volunteers working in Northern France. Intimidation ranged from systematic identity checks to parking fines, threats, insults and physical violence (Human Rights Observers, 2018).

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55 Human Rights Observers (2018), Calais: the police harassment of volunteers, available in French at: 
4. EVOLUTION OF THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ON THE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

4.1. Evolution of the legal and policy approach and strategies in the selected countries

4.1.1. Overview of legal changes in procedures to gain the refuge status

At present, national differences remain considerable, reflecting both the specific characteristics and dimension of the residing refugees, the legal framework, and the specificities of national welfare regimes and integration models.

The three considered countries show different approaches in integration policies. According to the 2014 Migrant Integration Policy Index\(^\text{56}\), integration policies are more favourable (i.e. above 60/100) in Nordic countries (including Finland scoring 71), while the lowest index (below 40/100) are to be found in Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Slovakia. Denmark and France lie in the middle of the distribution, with a score of 59 and 54 respectively.

With particular regard to asylum seekers and refugees, the European Employment Policy Observatory Report (2016) notes that, while long term resident refugees are usually eligible for social benefits on the basis of their socio-economic situation, in most EU countries asylum seekers have restricted access or no access at all to education and training, employment, and social protection benefits, although in some countries there are social benefits specifically assigned to asylum seekers. In addition, most EU countries tightened the rules on asylum and immigration since the spike in arrivals registered in 2014 and 2015. This has also happened in the three considered countries, although in different ways and to a different extent.

In Denmark, the policy response to the significant inflow of asylum seekers in 2014 and 2015 went in two directions: the rules on asylum and immigration have been substantially tightened, while at the same time a number of initiatives to strengthen the integration of recognised refugees have been implemented.

The first significant concrete political initiative taken as a reaction to the rapidly increasing number of asylum seekers was to introduce a new type of temporary residence permit for refugees, granted for one year, which may be extended if there is still a need for protection (section 7(3) in the Aliens Act). However, family reunification is not allowed during the first three years of residence in Denmark. This type of residence permit has so far primarily been granted to Syrians. Temporary residence permits accounted for between one third and one fourth of all residence permits granted to refugees in the years 2016 – 2018. A number of tightenings of the rules on immigration were also introduced by the newly elected liberal government in June 2015 in order to activate a so-called "sudden brake" on the inflow of asylum seekers\(^\text{57}\). Among others, the tightening of the rules applies to access to public allowances, the rules on naturalisation, asylum, deportation of rejected asylum seekers, family reunification, permanent residence and expulsion. A temporary stop of the yearly quota of 500 refugees being resettled in Denmark upon agreement with the UN was also introduced, as well as the much debated "jewellery law" that allows authorities to seize valuables from asylum seekers exceeding the value of 10,000 dkr to help pay for expenses during their stay. Most recently the Parliament passed amendments to the Aliens Act in February 2019 meaning, inter alia, that residence


\(^{57}\) According to the homepage of the UIM ([www.uim.dk](http://www.uim.dk)) this amounts to 100 tightenings (as per January 2019).
permits granted to refugees are now always temporary. In addition, in the late summer of 2015 the Government published advertisements in a number of Lebanese newspapers and social media to inform about the changes in the conditions for residence in Denmark, including the reduction in public allowances.

In **Finland**, since 2014 the legislation on access to protection, asylum procedures, access to services, and legal aid has been amended on numerous occasions.

In 2014, the Aliens Act was amended to include voluntary return into the definition of a "return" of a migrant. The amendment followed a decision by the Supreme Administrative Court that individuals who had objected to voluntary return, and who could not be returned forcibly due to technical or diplomatic reasons, should be granted temporary residency. With the inclusion of voluntary return in the definition, individuals who refused a voluntary return were no longer eligible for a temporary residence permit\(^{58}\). At the same time, the reception legislation was amended so that asylum seekers who have been denied international protection in an asylum determination procedure and subsequently refuse to take part in a voluntary return can be denied reception services after 30 days and at the latest 90 days after the asylum application has been rejected\(^{59}\).

In 2016 a number of further restrictions were introduced. In mid-2016, humanitarian protection as a ground for a temporary residence permit was repealed with retroactive effect on applicants and persons who previously had enjoyed international protection on that ground. Those who had pending asylum applications during 2016 were not eligible to humanitarian protection\(^{60}\). In addition, residence permits on humanitarian grounds were not renewed, but applicants were forced to file a new asylum application or an application for residency on other grounds. Those who did not receive a new permit on other grounds had to be returned, with the risk of being forced into an irregular migration status (Amnesty International, 2019).

During the same year a number of changes in the asylum determination procedure also came into effect. The right to free legal aid in the first instance of the asylum determination procedure was restricted so that only minors or vulnerable individuals could claim this right at the asylum interview. Furthermore, the provision of legal aid was centralised at the Public Legal Aid Offices\(^{61}\) which, according to Amnesty International (2019), are not specialised in cases concerning international protection.

The deadline for submitting appeals before the Administrative Court was reduced from 30 days to 21, and also the deadline for submitting a leave of appeal before the Supreme Administrative Court was reduced from 30 days to 14. These reductions are only applicable to cases pertaining to migration on the grounds of international protection\(^{62}\). Furthermore, the right to appeal a case on international protection to the Supreme Administrative Court was restricted to situations where there would be particularly serious grounds for giving the leave, thus creating a further barrier for appeals concerning the Aliens Act (Amnesty International, 2017). According to a study commissioned by the government,

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these amendments to the asylum determination procedure have compromised the asylum seekers’ right to a fair process (Lepola, 2018).

The right to family reunification was also restricted in 2016. Income requirements became applicable also for refugees and persons who have received international protection\(^\text{63}\). Persons with refugee status are exempted from the income requirement provided that they file their application for family reunification within three months of receiving protection, while those under subsidiary protection must meet the income requirement, which for a family of two adults and two children amounts to a monthly income of EUR 2,600\(^\text{64}\).

Currently, Finland is in the process of overhauling its integration legislation. However, as the current government resigned on 8 March 2019, the bill proposed by the government is currently halted and the draft legislation will return at the ministerial level until the next parliamentary elections in April 2019. The new integration legislation will therefore depend on which political parties will be in the new government.

In **France** the so-called **Aliens Code**, i.e. the code for the entry and residence of foreigners and the right to asylum (**Code de l’entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d’asile** - CESEDA), groups together the legal and regulatory provisions relating to foreigners. The CESEDA has been revised numerous times over the last decade (2003, 2006, 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2016).

A controversial bill on migration and asylum (**Le projet de loi asile et immigration**) was approved by Parliament in April 2018 and was debated in the Senate in July 2018. The bill has been heavily criticised by experts in terms of reducing access to asylum structures in France and limiting the fundamental rights of migrants. For example, the bill extends the period migrants can be detained to up to 90 days and allows the detainment of children, despite numerous condemnations of this practice by the European Court of Human Rights.

The Law of 29 July 2015 on asylum, notably codified the procedure for family reunification of beneficiaries of protection, while the Law of 7th March 2016 on the rights of foreigners in France introduced multiannual residency cards for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. A new residency permit, the “**passeport talent**” was also created to attract highly skilled migration. The 2016 law also modified the integration apparatus through the introduction of the Republican Integration Contract.

Measures concerning the reintroduction of internal border controls have also been adopted and strengthened in France during 2016 as part of the state emergency order issued following the attacks of November 2015, the organisation of major sports events like the Tour de France and Euro 2016, and the new attack in Nice on July 14, 2016. Law no \(^\text{6}^\text{16-1767 of December 19, 2016 extended the state of emergency until July 15, 2017 and the French government reinstated border controls until the same date.**

In 2013, OFPRA committed itself to speeding up the asylum procedure, so as to shorten the period of limbo that asylum seekers find themselves in throughout the asylum procedure. However, when the right of asylum seekers to work was debated at the General Assembly in 2015, all parties – except the Socialist and the Green parties – were in favour of keeping the existing limitations. In July 2015, a reform of the asylum law was approved. Concerning access to the labour market, no major changes


\(^{64}\) Toimeentuloedellytys kansainvälistä suojelua saaneen perheenjäsenelle, available at: https://migri.fi/toimeentuloedellytys-kansainvalistaa-suojelua-saaneen-perheenjasenelle.
were made, except bringing down, from twelve to nine months, the period before which asylum seekers can apply for a work permit.

Table 13: Main legal and policy provisions for recognition of asylum seekers and refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Policy Field</th>
<th>Asylum seekers (during asylum procedure)</th>
<th>Persons granted asylum (refugees)</th>
<th>Main changes since 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Residence permits</td>
<td>During the asylum procedure, the applicant is granted processual stay until a final decision has been made. The final decision contains a time limit for departure.</td>
<td>Asylum granted on the basis of the 1951 Refugee Convention is initially given for two years which can be prolonged for a maximum of two years each time. Asylum granted on the basis of a need for protection is given for one year after which prolongations are given for a maximum of two years each time. The new provision (2015) on temporary protection status is given for one year at the time for the first 3 years. After that it can be prolonged for a maximum of 2 years each time.</td>
<td>The provision on temporary protection status was inserted in the Aliens Act (section 7(3)) in 2015. In February 2019, the Act was amended again. Currently, all residence permits granted to refugees are temporary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to Family reunification.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>For those granted residence permit under section 7(3), of the Aliens Act family reunification can’t be obtained for the first three years. The conditions for obtaining family reunification have been tightened on a number of points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Settlement restrictions (for persons granted asylum)</td>
<td>Persons granted asylum are dispersed between the municipalities, who are responsible for their integration up till 5 years from reception. Moving to another municipality in this period is possible, but if the receiving municipality declines to take over responsibility for the refugee’s integration programme, the refugee might lose the right to social benefits.</td>
<td>Adjustments of the criteria for deciding to which municipality the refugee should be transferred were made. Also the duration of the integration programme has been changed from 3 years to now as a starting point 1 year but with the possibility to extend up to 5 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Residence permits</td>
<td>Right to Family reunification</td>
<td>Settlement restrictions (for persons granted asylum)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td>If the refugee status is recognised, refugees receive a resident permit &quot;Carte de résident&quot; valid for 10 years. That permit is granted <em>ipso jure</em> to their family. Article L.314-11 and L. 313-13 of the CESEDA.</td>
<td>Only spouses/partners and minor children qualify for derivative status. Article L.313-11, N°7, L.311-13 D of the CESEDA, article 8 ECHR. Law transposing 2011/95/EU Article 23.</td>
<td>The law of 7 March 2016 on the rights of foreigners introduced a renewal for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection every 2 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finland</strong></td>
<td>Asylum applicants have the right to remain in the country during the first and second instance of their procedure. In the third instance (Supreme Administrative Court) a failed applicant may be removed from the country, unless the Supreme Administrative Court grants a stay.</td>
<td>No right to family reunification during asylum procedure. Refugees with refugee status have the right to family reunification without income requirement, provided that application for family reunification is submitted within 3 months of receiving refugee status. Persons enjoying international protection based on subsidiary protection have the right to family reunification provided that they fulfil the income requirement.</td>
<td>Removal of one category of protection status (humanitarian protection) in 2016.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income requirement entered into legislation for refugees and persons enjoying subsidiary protection in 2016.
| Settlement restrictions (for persons granted asylum) | Asylum seekers are assigned to a specific municipality and a specific reception centre during their application procedure. | After receiving international protection, a person will receive a place in a municipality. | No changes since 2014. |

Source: Country case studies (Annex IV).
4.1.2. Recent changes in integration policies and examples of national/local good practices

The influx of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, is likely to remain a major challenge for the EU which requires specific attention and policy initiatives.

Well managed integration measures should be seen as an investment that will pay-off in the long run. Migrants and refugees may reduce the negative effects of declining fertility rates and population ageing which are widening territorial imbalances, generating de-population and ageing trends in rural and peripheral areas; however, they can also increase congestion and social problems in cities and metropolitan areas.

Migrants and refugees often belong to economically active age groups and can provide diversified skills that could support the economy and reduce labour shortages, particularly in many of Europe’s ageing societies. According to the socio-economic literature (OECD, 2014), migrants may have positive effects on the public budget and economic growth of receiving countries and regions. OECD data show that migrants accounted for 70% of the increase in the workforce in Europe over the past ten years, thus contrasting the negative effects of an ageing labour supply. They are complementary to the native workforce, as they work in economic niches both in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy not considered by the native born workers, and contribute to the flexibility of the labour market. In addition, young migrants and refugees tend to be better educated than older ones and bring new skills and experience that may contribute to innovation and growth in receiving countries. Regarding the public budget, employed migrants are shown to contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits (OECD, 2014).

In the selected countries the integration approaches have been changing, especially after the refugees’ crisis in 2015.

In France, individuals obtaining international protection, enter the regime of common law (droit commun). This means that they are treated equally to any other French citizen and can access all mechanisms of social protection. Thus, according to the common law approach there is little need for specific measures for refugee populations. However, in recent years, the awareness of the need of specific integration policies is growing. President Macron declared refugee integration as a priority for his migration agenda. A number of consultations and working groups with relevant stakeholders involved in refugee integration were carried out in late 2017 and early 2018, and an inter-ministerial delegate for refugee integration was created in early 2018 with the aim of improving the harmonisation between different sectors and promoting more targeted policies for the integration of refugees into French society.

In Denmark, the new Government coalition introduced restrictions also on integration measures for refugees. For example, a lower public "introduction allowance" was established for persons who had resided in Denmark for fewer than seven out of the last eight years. Passed by Parliament in August 2015, it applies to Danes and foreigners alike but the aim, which was overtly stated when the initiative was introduced, was to make it less attractive to apply for asylum in Denmark and at the same time make it clear that one was supposed to contribute to the Danish welfare system for some time before one could benefit fully from it. However, the bulk of integration policies did not change much as comprehensive measures continue to be implemented at regional and municipal level, although there is still scope for employers to become more engaged, while women refugees are often still left behind.
In **Finland** integration policies are tied to the reform proposals currently under discussion on provision of health and social services that should move from a state-based system to a system where state-based social and health care services exist together with market-based services allowing individuals to choose their service providers. According to some stakeholders, a market-based system is not likely to guarantee equal access to integration services for all refugees and migrants as this would depend on their place of residence and availability of services in that area of residence.

**Early competence mapping and language courses**

Both in **Denmark** and in **Finland**, the validation of informal and non-formal skills and competences for labour market purposes is regulated by law and there are specific validation initiatives targeted to migrants/refugees (Konle-Seidl, 2017).

In **Finland**, for example, a quick identification of professional skills of asylum seekers in reception centres while awaiting asylum decisions is taken into consideration when choosing a settlement area that offers education and business opportunities to match their skills. The Finnish National Board of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, organises language training and other integrative training for asylum seekers living in reception centres while waiting for relocation to a municipality. A modularised integration training with three different pathways, adapted to whether the individual is a fast or slow learner, also aims to inform the Finnish PES offices in validating the qualifications of asylum seekers and to make integration training more job-orientated (EEPO, 2016).

In **Denmark**, the mapping of competences focuses on language and other skills or experience relevant for labour market participation. Danish language courses have to be offered by municipalities within a month from taking over the integration responsibility for the refugee or immigrant. Courses are free of charge for refugees, who have access to up to five years of Danish courses and must follow the courses as part of the integration programme. The focus of the language teaching is integration into the labour market but issues such as democratic structures, the educational system etc. are also part of the curriculum. In 2016, a reform of Danish language courses was carried out with the aim of creating a better link between Danish language courses and the integration of newly arrived foreigners into the labour market. The initiatives include the introduction of a "language course for beginners" offered to all newly arrived foreigners with a special focus on spoken language and conversations at the work place, as well as a two-year pilot scheme whereby larger companies can offer language courses. As municipalities are responsible for the reception and integration of refugees, a number of cities in Denmark have developed local integration plans or strategies building on the common framework provided by the Integration Act and the State funding. One example of this is the City of Copenhagen’s integration initiative – the so-called ‘Copenhagen Model’ for the reception and integration of refugees.

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65 In late 2017 MP Aurélien Taché was commissioned to carry out an in-depth consultation with relevant stakeholders and his findings were published in February 2018 as a set of recommendations aimed at improving integration policies. The Ministry of Interior also organised a series of multi-stakeholder working groups on integration.

66 Yhdessä – käsi kädessä ry:n lausunto työ- ja elinkeinoministeriölle luonnoksesta hallituksen esitykseksi eduskunnalle laitakse eduskunnalle laiksi kotoutumisen edistämiseksi, 16.6.2017, available at: [https://api.hankeikkuna.fi/asiakirjat/6ff38c7-c4cc-4a36-905a-6f001b16d00a/57b0d0e9-c77a-4397-971b-2e8804b90e9b0/LAUSUNTO_20170621075000.PDF](https://api.hankeikkuna.fi/asiakirjat/6ff38c7-c4cc-4a36-905a-6f001b16d00a/57b0d0e9-c77a-4397-971b-2e8804b90e9b0/LAUSUNTO_20170621075000.PDF).

Box 3: The Copenhagen Model for the reception and integration of refugees

The City of Copenhagen was a so-called zero-quota municipality from the introduction of the Integration Act in 1999 to April 2016. However, in December 2015, the government changed the calculation model which determines how refugees are distributed across the municipalities. Therefore, from May 2016, the City of Copenhagen began receiving refugees: in total, the city received a total of 117 refugees in 2016 and 169 refugees in 2017.

In this regard, Copenhagen’s City Council adopted the so-called Copenhagen model for the reception and integration of refugees, based on:

- Early screening of refugees during the asylum phase;
- Commencement of a company internship programme within one month;
- Retention efforts with a mentor, open counselling and frequent interviews at the job centre;
- Offer of health assessments to all refugees;
- Offer of holistic mentoring to all refugees;
- Goal of maximum 6 months in temporary accommodation;
- Establishment of Welcome House – venue for refugees, volunteers and civil society organisations;
- Offer to be matched with a Copenhagener volunteer.

The model adopted has the systematic goal of the achievement of results attained for the group. This means that the municipality monitors the refugees closely to ensure successful integration i.e., through employment and education. Specifically, the systematic achievement of goals means that the City of Copenhagen continuously monitors how the municipality’s refugees relate to jobs, education and basic integration education.


Differently, France’s initial language and civic courses are set up at the national level and based on the so called Republican Integration Contract (Contrat d’Intégration Républicaine, CIR). The CIR is obligatory for all third county nationals, including beneficiaries of international protection, who wish to settle in France. Last revised in 2016, the CIR defines a personalised integration process. The main tools for integration in the framework of the CIR are a two-day civic course and up to 200 hours of language training to reach an A1 level (of the Common European of Reference Framework for Languages). These civic and language courses have been widely criticised by institutional and civil society actors alike for their dense contents, their distance from the challenges of everyday living in France, the heterogeneity of the class populations that do not take into account different levels; the lack of targeted support for illiterate populations and of interpreting facilities during the course. In addition, the A1 level is seen as too low to allow for professional integration.

However, there is growing recognition that the successful integration of migrants and refugees requires targeted approaches that go beyond a common law approach. To this end various pilot programmes have been created to improve integration prospects, often adopting a comprehensive approach, providing refugees with accommodation, language and vocational training and minimum income support. These pilot initiatives tend to involve state and non-state actors at the national, regional or local level. While they remain at the pilot level they may be extended in the coming years. The mobilisation of non-state actors regarding the provision of language training is noteworthy, as many NGOs and local authorities, like the City of Paris, have set up ad hoc training programmes for illiterate migrants and refugees, a group that was somewhat neglected by the French state’s integration policy.
Housing policies

Providing affordable housing for refugees is extremely challenging for local authorities, as competition between recognised refugees and the native vulnerable population is particularly problematic. The rising numbers of refugees and migrants and the shortage of affordable housing could trigger social conflict, segregation and hinder integration into local society. Many cities have waiting lists for social housing and vulnerable groups have difficulties in accessing the private rental market.

In France, less than 50% of asylum seekers receive dedicated accommodation and refugees often stay for extended periods in emergency accommodation, reception centres for asylum seekers or even in makeshift camps. Indeed, refugees often experience extremely precarious living situations once they receive their protection status and are supposed to leave the reception centres. There is often a waiting period of between one to two years before refugees are able to access social housing if they wish to stay close to France’s major cities. The French state has devoted more resources towards facilitating refugee access to housing. Notwithstanding, this remains a chronic problem and a Délégation interministérielle à l’hébergement et à l’accès au logement (DIHAL) was created in 2010 to improve the coordination and coherence between different organs of the state dealing with housing. Since 2015 its “migration” centre assists refugees in finding housing solutions (Taché, 2018). However, to date, hundreds of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers remain without housing solutions. Some best practices are emerging at the local level. For example, in 2016 the city of Paris created a migrant reception centre to respond to the makeshift camps where migrants and refugees have been forced to sleep. Another example is the city of Grande-Synthe, where the mayor, Damien Carème, in conjunction with Doctors Without Borders, decided to build a humanitarian camp with sanitary facilities and facilities for the associations to help migrants/refugees, despite the lack of funding from the state. This position, which contrasts with that of other mayors in the region, earned him admiration and respect from the political and associative world.

In Finland, private housing was offered in order to deal with the increased number of asylum seekers after 2015, while in Denmark the obligation for the municipality to provide housing has been made more flexible, meaning that refugees can now stay in a temporary dwelling for a longer period, and the requirements on what can serve as a temporary dwelling have been loosened.

Specific attention to the accommodation needs of unaccompanied minors has been put forward by the TRUST project of the Academy of Finland (2016 – 2018). The project developed practices to support unaccompanied children in their new home countries and published a set of policy recommendations for their housing. The children’s needs and capabilities should be taken into account in holistic housing arrangements that also provide, for example, social support for the children. Unaccompanied children in their late teens, approaching adulthood, should be supported in a manner that encourages them to become independent participants of society. Currently, many unaccompanied children stay in family group homes, which makes them subjects of prolonged institutionalised care. Housing that includes different options and different levels of support for children and youngsters encourages independence.

In the Danish case some authors underline the problematic side of dispersal policies. The Integration Law assumes that living in smaller, rural areas will boost integration of refugees, in contrast to living in urban areas where segregation due to ethnic-network is expected; however, as pointed out by Romme Larsen (2011), this assumption is not always correct. Being resettled in a rural area might in some cases result in a severe contrast with the former way of life. In many cases, although assistance is present, the families feeling of being exiled and of alienation overshadowed the integration measures into local society. The author suggests to tie-in existing networks of earlier arrived kinsmen (if possible) in dispersal decisions. They then can serve as a "mediating space" between the refugees and Danish society and also help to hinder secondary migration in the country (which is penalised if refugees move away from the municipality to which they have been allocated).

**Promoting fast-track inclusion into the education system**

Most city authorities recognise the importance of education as a medium to long-term integration. For example, in France, children seeking asylum do not seem to face particular barriers to enrol in compulsory education and they are typically registered in a school within a few days after arrival. Some difficulties might arise for registering with a "collège" in the middle of the school year, which can delay school attendance. However, after this initial period they need to rely on often inadequate and overburdened mainstream support services. Youngsters after the compulsory school age in particular face significantly more challenges as they are not entitled to education and schools are not obliged to enrol them.

In Finland, asylum seeking children have access to primary and secondary education, in principle, but in practice it varies with different municipalities. Asylum seeking children's right to primary and secondary education was long under discussion. In Finland, children have not only a right but an obligation to attend school. It was disputed by different actors whether this also concerned asylum seeking children. A decision published by the Parliamentary Ombudsman concluded that asylum seeking children have an unequivocal right to primary and secondary education69.

In 2016-2018 the "Frendi" project was administered by Föreningen Luckan r.f. and funded from AMIF with the purpose of creating organic meeting opportunities for young Finns and migrants70. The project was realised with the help of local schools. A common course was developed for Swedish-speaking students and students from schools with migrants. The courses included cooking, drama and filmmaking. A review by Luckan of the project concluded that the project was welcomed with enthusiasm but it had been a challenge to bring together the timetables and expectations of different schools and participants71.

**Labour market integration measures**

Asylum seekers are generally not allowed to work during the application process. A major obstacle to the integration of asylum seekers and migrants is thus, the length of time it can take for the asylum and work permit procedures and the associated administrative burden which deters employers from hiring them. Besides the restrictions in obtaining a work permit, in many EU countries other legal restrictions can apply to asylum seekers, including restrictions on eligible occupations and

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The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France

requirement to undergo tests as in France (no public sector and some legal professions)\textsuperscript{72}, and thresholds on wages earned as in Denmark.

Article 15 (1) of EU Directive 2013/33\textsuperscript{73} states that MSs have to ensure that asylum seekers access the labour market no later than nine months after they apply for international protection. MSs shall decide the conditions for granting access to the labour market for applicants, in accordance with their national law, while ensuring that applicants have effective access to the labour market (Art.15(2)). Across EU countries (Figure 12 and Table 19 in Annex I), the waiting period for asylum decisions and to enter employment vary, for instance, from no time restriction in Greece and Sweden, to 12 months in the UK\textsuperscript{74}.

Figure 12: Waiting periods for accessing the labour market for asylum seekers, 2017 (months)

Note: (*) In Ireland, historically there has been no access to the labour market for asylum seekers. However, the prohibition on employment for asylum seekers was declared unconstitutional, and the government subsequently responded by indicating its intention to opt into the recast Reception Conditions Directive. Until the opt-in takes place, an interim measure is in place which allows asylum-seekers access to work through the Employment Permits System. However, NGOs are concerned that this will benefit very few asylum-seekers due to onerous application requirements such as a €1,000 fee, a €30,000 minimum salary requirement, and a list of prohibited categories of employment. Furthermore, access to employment is restricted to persons who have not received a first-instance decision on their claim within nine months. Therefore, applicants who are at appeal stage within nine months of making an application are excluded.
(**) Portugal: 1 week - 1 month; Switzerland: 3-6 months.

Table 14: Main legal and policy provisions for labour market access for asylum seekers and refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Asylum seekers (during asylum procedure)</th>
<th>Persons granted asylum (refugees)</th>
<th>Main changes since 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>There is a basic assessment of skills. Under certain conditions asylum seekers with more than 6 months stay after the application for asylum can take up ordinary employment. There is no access to subsidised jobs.</td>
<td>Full access to the labour market. All refugees above 18 follow an integration programme, the primary components of which are activities (counseling, mentoring, preparatory courses,</td>
<td>Changes of the Integration Act in 2016 made the integration of newly arrived refugees more job-oriented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{72} Some jobs are restricted to French nationals such as civil servants, public-accountants, solicitors, lawyers, court bailiffs, veterinary surgeons and tobacco dealers. A number of occupations are regulated (reglementées), that is their practice is conditional to the authorisation by a professional association and to the possession of a diploma obtained in France. If a refugee wants to practice one of these professions, he/she has either to retake the diploma in France or to pass a test.

\textsuperscript{73} https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033.

\textsuperscript{74} No information is provided on Finland and Denmark.
subsidised jobs) to help the refugee obtain ordinary employment.

Access to the labour market is allowed only if OFPRA has not ruled on the asylum application within 9 months after the registration of the application and only if this delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.

Art. L. 744-11 CESEDA also provides that asylum seekers who have had access to the labour market can benefit from professional training. However, for the moment no vocational training schemes have been launched.


Before 2015, asylum seekers could only apply for a work permit after 12 months.

An asylum applicant has the right to work 3 or 6 months after applying for asylum in Finland. Individuals with a passport or similar documentation may start working 3 months after filing their asylum application. Individuals without a passport or valid documentation may start working 6 months after filing their asylum application. The right to work ends if the asylum application is rejected and the applicant does not appeal the rejection decision.

Individuals who have received international protection have the right to work.

No significant changes. There has been a discussion on shortening the quarantine time for asylum seekers in order to allow asylum seekers to enter the workforce more flexibly than under current legislation, but no concrete amendments have been proposed to date.

In Finland, integration is strongly focused on employment and there has not been significant changes in recent years regarding access to the labour market of asylum seekers and refugees. A discussion occurred on shortening the quarantine time for asylum seekers in order to allow them to enter the workforce faster than under current legislation, but no concrete amendments have been proposed to date.

An asylum applicant has the right to work three or six months after applying for asylum in Finland, depending on the documentation they have. Individuals with a passport or similar documentation may start working three months after filing their asylum application. Individuals without a passport or valid documentation may start working six months after filing their asylum application. The right to work ends if the asylum application is rejected and the applicant does not appeal the rejection decision. Individuals who have received international protection have the right to work.

The following box illustrates two Finnish projects supporting the labour market integration of refugees and migrants more in general.
Box 4: Finland: two examples of labour market integration initiatives

An example of labour market integration initiative was the "Work trials with a godmother/godfather" (Kummin kanssa työkokeiluun) project, ran until the end of September 2018. It was a cooperation between the ViaDia Pohjois-Savo ry NGO and the Employment and Economic Development Offices of Northern Savo. It sought to connect migrants with a personal "godmother/godfather" who would assist them with entering the job market. At the end of the project, it was found that personal assistance was helpful in the integration of migrants in the job market.


Furthermore, Työväen Sivistysliitto runs a project called Ote työhön (Catch up with Work) which tries to guide migrants who have been away from the workforce for a longer period back to work and education. The project connects career counsellors and volunteers from trade unions with migrants in order to facilitate career counselling, networking and the amelioration of language skills. It seeks to improve the participation of trade unions in the integration of refugees. The project also arranges networking groups and also runs specific groups for women only.


In France very few asylum seekers can apply for a work permit due to the heavy requirements – which include for example the need to obtain an "offer of employment" (promesse d'embauche) – while refugees have legally unrestricted access to the labour market as well as employment-related support. Nine months is the period after which asylum seekers can apply for a work permit and they are not allowed to work during the examination of their application. The access to the labour market is allowed only if the competent office (OFPRA - Office Français de Protection des Refugiés et Apatrides) has not ruled on the asylum application within nine months after the registration of the application and only if this delay cannot be attributed to the applicant. Various administrative burdens are often a source of frustration for both the employer and the asylum seeker. For example, the applicant needs to produce a job offer of employment (promesse d'embauche), although it is hard for an asylum seeker to find an employer willing to recruit him, when his/her residence permit is valid for only three months and mentions that the holder is not authorised to work. Interviews indicate that in practice, very few asylum seekers apply for a work permit. Furthermore, it should also be noted that about two thirds of asylum seekers are accommodated outside the reception system and most of them do not have access to counselling and legal/administrative support to prepare an application file. Furthermore, the inability to access employment for several months creates a gap in their employment history.

In addition, although formally refugees have immediate access to the labour market upon receiving their protection status, the prefecture often takes weeks or months to produce their residency permit. During this time the refugee is given a document (récépissé) attesting the rights to enter the labour market; however, this document is often not accepted by employers as it has a three or six month expiry period. These procedures not only hinder integration, but also increase financial dependence on the State and increase poverty amongst the asylum population. In 2016, an agreement was

75 www.asylumineurope.org/comparator/reception.
76 https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/fr/l-ofpra/actualites/les-donnees-de-l-asile-2017-a-t;
http://www.forintegration.eu/.
signed between Pôle Emploi, OFII, Ministry of Employment and the Ministry of Interior to favour the social integration of TCN newcomers. It included BIPs and aimed to promote better cooperation and exchange of information between OFII and Pôle Emploi. In practice, enhanced cooperation between these actors has not yet materialised.

Interviews indicate that despite the impediments they face in labour-market access, asylum seekers and refugees are willing to start working as soon as possible. In practice many asylum seekers work on the black market. In other cases, asylum seekers prefer not to engage in undeclared work because they may fear compromising their legal situation. As for refugees, some manage to find work through ethnic networks and often work on the informal market, in sectors like construction, the catering industry and personal care.

In Denmark, labour participation has become the focus of integration policies. Among the adopted initiatives the Integrative Training Programme (“Integrationsgrunduddannelsen – IGU”) and the Industry Packages (“Branchepakker”) presented in the box below are considered as good practice.

Box 5: Denmark - The Integrative Training Programme and Industry Packages

The Integrative Training Programme ("Integrationsgrunduddannelsen – IGU") see Table 21 in Annex I) is part of the tripartite agreement between the Government and social partners. It is based on the fact that many newly arrived refugees do not have the skills nor the productivity required to qualify for a job on regular Danish wage levels, which are relatively high. This is seen as a major obstacle to integration in the labour market. It is a two-year programme during which the refugee has a contract with an employer and is paid an apprentice pay which is based on collective agreements between the social partners. During these two years, the refugee will undergo 20 weeks of training, including language training, while working and learning at the workplace. The IGU, targeting newly arrived refugees between 18 and 40 years of age, is meant to be a stepping stone into ordinary employment or education. The programme runs for a three-year trial period until July 2019 and is expected to be prolonged. So far (February 2019) almost 2,000 IGU-contracts have been made. An evaluation of the programme shows broad support to the IGU which is considered an important new tool to pave the way for more refugees to become part of the labour market. It is mentioned, however, that the administration linked to the programme can make it difficult for – and might deter – some companies, especially smaller ones with less HR-capacity.

Another Danish initiative is the Industry Packages ("Branchepakker") developed jointly by consultancy firms and Danish municipalities, now adopted in more than 30 (of 98) municipalities. It is targeting refugees and immigrants with no connection to the labour market with the aim of finding the most direct route possible into the regular labour market. This is done by taking as its starting point the needs and requirements in the local labour market and then – in cooperation between businesses and municipalities – building a training scheme for specific sectors with good job opportunities that are relevant to refugees with little education and work experience. By following that scheme a refugee will gradually progress towards regular employment in the specific sector. Although no formal evaluation of the overall concept has yet been carried out, the concept shows good results in many municipalities and broad support from municipalities and businesses alike.

4.1.3. The role of civil society and NGOs

Adopting participatory processes and supporting community building for the integration of refugees is considered as extremely relevant both for reducing rising tensions among the local population towards refugees, and issues of public order, and attracting additional resources.

Bottom up approaches involving all stakeholders, local inhabitants, civil society organisations and employers seem to be key factors for an effective and successful integration policy. Many municipalities, especially in central and northern Europe have mobilised civil society to support local administrations’ efforts and have adopted an open and transparent communication with their populations, through information sessions, the use of the city websites and the social media. According to Eurocities (2017), cities have proved strong leadership and ability in coordinating different urban services and civil society solidarity actions, sometimes in the absence of a national response.

However, budget cuts and recruitment freezes have reduced the capacity of local governments to address massive inflows of migrants and asylum seekers. Municipalities with a tradition of strong and well-funded public services are better placed to cope with this exceptional situation. Some cities are increasing their own spending to address the refugee situation by recruiting additional staff (language teachers, social workers, school mediators, tutors for unaccompanied minors and interpreters) and enhancing the provision of services. They consider this an investment in the future with the potential boost to the local economy. However, cities sometimes struggle to find qualified staff to fill the gaps.

In Denmark, public opinion has been characterised by a double sided focus on both securing a stricter immigration policy, while still embracing the importance of integration. When the inflow of asylum seekers peaked in 2014 – 2015, concerns were voiced by mayors in many municipalities that it would become very difficult and expensive to provide housing and integration programmes for all those who were expected to be granted asylum and transferred to the municipalities. Those concerns were addressed in the Agreement made between the Government and the municipalities in March 2016, which gave the municipalities better funding and a more flexible framework to perform their tasks relating to the various aspects of integration. In addition, some municipalities were able to activate the collaboration of local NGOs and civil society in an effective way.

Notwithstanding the difficulties created by the large inflow of asylum seekers and refugees, the general impression from that period is one of broad support at the local level to the integration of those arriving and many initiatives to that effect were implemented by NGOs, private persons, business owners etc. Among those, the grass root movement "Venligboerne" arranged a broad range of activities with a view to supporting the integration of refugees, helping with practical issues and creating networks for the refugees. The Red Cross and Danish Refugee Council implemented a project known as ‘Friends leading the way’ (Venner viser vej) presented in Box 7, which offers refugees volunteering friends to guide them and help settle in the Danish society and in the given municipality. Both projects experienced positive responses and mobilised a sizeable number of volunteers. One downside to this, however, was that in many cases it proved difficult for NGOs and municipalities to convert the good will shown by many private persons into practical and useful initiatives to actually help the refugees.
While reception policies are the responsibility at national level, French local and non-state actors, including NGOs, have proved pivotal in providing humanitarian assistance and shelter for asylum seekers and refugees. For instance, the mobilisation of non-state actors regarding the provision of language training is noteworthy. Many NGOs and local authorities, like the City of Paris, have set up ad hoc training programmes for illiterate migrants and refugees, a group that was somewhat neglected by the French state’s integration policy. France terre d’asile set up a mentoring programme (Duos pour demain) where by asylum seekers and refugees are paired up with a local, who helps their refugee/asylum seeker partner learn French, master administrative processes, and more generally settle into French society. Associations such as Welcome and SINGA offer temporary accommodation for families, and some have specific housing programmes: Forum Réfugiés (the ‘Accelair’ programme) and France Terre d’Asile (‘Cap vers l’intégration’ and ‘Reloref’). As many refugees lack professional contacts, SINGA also aims to connect refugees with the relevant people to help them find a job or set up their own business. In 2017, they accompanied 300 refugees towards entrepreneurship, with 23% of them reaching financial autonomy after six months of taking part in the programme (OECD, 2018). Since 2004, France terre d’asile has also been responsible for a project to raise awareness of common law actors to promote integration, as illustrated in Box 8.

The NGO "Action Emploi Réfugiés" in France has set up an online portal where employers can post job openings, allowing refugee candidates to apply directly. Additionally, they also offer support with creating CVs.

However, few French NGOs focus their activities on the professional integration of refugees and asylum seekers as they mostly deal with reception issues and on the asylum procedure. Cimade and Gisti, which provide legal assistance, systematically encourage asylum seekers to apply for a work permit. However, they generally do not engage in litigation on work permit refusals, because given the resources available, initiatives related to the asylum procedure have priority. The Centre d’action sociale protestant (CASP) runs a counselling activity on finding a job, including vocational jobs. They advise refugees in dealing with Pôle Emploi, in following administrative files such as applications for the recognition of diplomas, they organise language training and workshops. According to the 2014 association report, this action facilitated the employment access to 97 refugees (CASP 2015).
Box 7: French project "Reloref"

Coordinated by Terre d’Asile since 2004, the project aims to support refugees to gain access to their rights according to common law (housing, employment, health) through training social workers and awareness raising among key public and private stakeholders, developing partnerships. The project targets Social workers working for France Terre d’Asile and refugees.

The project is funded by the French Ministry of Interior and the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund.

The project has national coverage, one of France’s first projects specifically targeting refugee integration, dialogue with common law authorities to raise awareness about specific predicaments of refugees.

From this experience, a lack of knowledge on the framework of refugees’ rights emerged. A lack of data on refugee integration perspectives makes it difficult to track what is working/not working.

Source: French country case study (Annex IV).

In Finland, the role of civil society and NGOs remains important in the reception and integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The Finnish Red Cross is in charge of administering several reception centres, arranges the reception of quota refugees, and has several programmes relating to their integration. The Finnish Refugee Council has a number of integration projects, for example on local integration in neighbourhoods.

Following the peak of arrivals of asylum seekers in 2015, a number of new NGOs and volunteer networks were set up. For example, there are NGOs and networks that arrange home accommodation, work opportunities, and clothing and other necessities for asylum seekers. One such example is the Startup Refugees network (Box 9), which brings together entrepreneurs, companies, NGOs and individuals to support refugees in finding a way to earn their living. It has supported hundreds of refugees in finding jobs and supported 60 businesses run by refugees\(^78\). Another example is the Global Clinic, a clinic run by volunteering medical professionals which was set up for irregular migrants in Helsinki in 2011. Today it functions in six cities across the country and also offers free legal aid to those in need\(^79\). The discussion on irregular migrants is new in Finland, as is the phenomenon. Often, irregular migrants are not recognised.

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\(^78\) Startup Refugees, About, available at: [https://startuprefugees.com/about/](https://startuprefugees.com/about/).

Box 8: The Finnish ‘Startup Refugees’ project

This national initiative, founded in 2016 and still ongoing, concerns the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants through employment and entrepreneurship. It seeks to promote the idea that immigration is a gain for society.

The project seeks to re-invent integration which it considers to be sluggish and too bureaucratic. The goal of the project is to help refugees gain independence by supporting their entrepreneurship and professionalism and thus making refugees taxpayers, entrepreneurs and active members of society.

Through the network, companies can make jobs available for refugees and refugees can seek jobs through the network.

It consists of 500 members, including companies, government officials, NGOs, universities, congregations, research institutes, communities and individuals who support newcomers with starting businesses and entering the Finnish labour market.

The project was set in motion by Riku Rantala and Tunna Milonoff who are known TV presenters and producers. Several NGOs, educational institutes and businesses are involved in the project such as AIESEC, Aalto University, Lundia, Supercell, Affecto and Slush.

The network has fundraised among private individuals and businesses. It reportedly also received EUR 150,000 in funding from a Suomi 100 foundation celebrating Finland’s 100 years of independence. In late 2018 it was reported that the network has an annual budget of EUR 600,000 out of which approximately half comes from the private sector.

As of October 2018, Startup Refugees has profiled the skills and professional goals of over 2,700 newcomers in 17 cities, offered 500 job opportunities, organised 94 business workshops for 811 participants, supported over 60 businesses of newcomers, and offered over 3,000 courses and education opportunities to develop new skills.

In the beginning the network received a lot of criticism and ridicule due to a pilot project selling design objects made by refugees, but since then the network’s activities have been geared towards employment and entrepreneurship projects.

The main strengths of the network are the innovation to work with private enterprises and to harness their support in integrating refugees into society. It is also very flexible in comparison to publicly available employment and entrepreneurship counselling.

The project is a new way of connecting the private sector with a matter (integration) that traditionally has been only the task of the public sector.

Source:
https://startuprefugees.com;

4.2. Management and governance of reception and integration measures

Local authorities are often directly responsible for the practical implementation of EU and national integration policies, even though they are not always included in EU and national policy-making and monitoring. Thus, the issue of multi-level governance on refugee and migrant reception and integration and exchange of expertise is particularly important for improving the local responses.

In France, the integration of migrants and refugees is predominantly managed at state level. As anticipated in the previous section, once an individual obtains international protection, they enter the regime of common law (droit commun). This means that they are treated equally to any other French
The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France

citizen and according to the common law approach, there is little need for specific measures for refugee populations.

While reception policies are the responsibility of the national level, local and non-state actors, including NGOs, have proved pivotal in providing humanitarian assistance and shelter for asylum seekers and refugees. Since 2016, the Ministry of Interior provides a lump sum of EUR 1,000 to municipalities to support the development of new reception facilities for asylum seekers. Some cities and regions have been particularly active in reception and integration.

Contention between different levels of governance can be observed. For instance, the city of Paris has repeatedly called on the state to provide emergency reception centres for migrants and refugees in makeshift camps in Paris and elsewhere.

Like reception, integration policies are also carried out at different levels by state and non-state actors: at the national level, for instance in the framework of the Republican Integration Contract, which provides modest civic and language training to refugees, which are often integrated at the regional and local level with vocational training programmes.

An inter-ministerial delegate for refugee integration was created in early 2018, with the aim of improving harmonisation between different sectors and levels of governance involved in integration.

In Denmark in 2016, two significant agreements on integration were implemented. One between the Government and the social partners – a so-called Tripartite agreement on integration in the labour market, the other – building on the first – an agreement between the Government and the municipalities to improve the Framework for integration in the municipalities. Together, the two agreements – which between them comprise more than 50 initiatives – laid the foundation for a more effective and job-orientated integration of refugees. The existing framework for integration in Denmark is as follows:

- The municipalities are responsible for the integration of newcomers. The State sets out the legal framework and provides the financing;
- Refugees are dispersed between the municipalities by a quota system. In connection with the decision to grant asylum, it is decided which municipality he or she will be allocated to. Once in the municipality, the refugee has access to public institutions and public services including medical care, schools and education etc. on an equal footing with other citizens in the country. The municipality shall provide accommodation for the refugee as well;
- All refugees will have an individual integration programme lasting up to five years, the core elements of which are initiatives to help qualify the refugee for the labour market, as well as Danish language courses;
- Until able to provide for oneself, a refugee is entitled to public allowances, mainly in the form of the "integration allowance".

In Finland, the government has proposed a new law on Integration promotion, which will replace current legislation on integration. The law is currently being processed by the parliament. The law proposal changes the structure of how health and social services are arranged for the whole population by moving from a state-based system to a system where state-based social and health care services exist together with market-based services allowing individuals to choose their service providers. This proposed change is tied together with a different legislation project concerning the

creation of new provinces for administrative purposes, which is highly political and contested. As the current parliamentary session is nearing its end, it remains unclear whether these law bills will pass.

4.3. Main strengths and weaknesses of the approaches adopted in the three countries

The interviews with stakeholders in the three considered countries underline the main strengths and weaknesses of the policy approaches adopted.

In Denmark, among the main strengths and weaknesses pointed out by the interviewed stakeholders are:

- The relocation of recognised refugees between the municipalities so that (almost) all municipalities take part in the integration tasks. However, municipalities have different priorities and are not all equally successful in their efforts to integrate those they receive and this may end up with differences in access to integration policies by refugees;

- The greater focus of integration policies on labour market participation right from the start. To succeed with this approach, it is necessary, however, that information on the refugees’ competencies is obtained and passed on from asylum centres to municipalities more effectively than is currently the case. However, others underline that this approach tends to reduce attention to integration on other aspects than labour market participation and that having a job in itself does not necessarily lead to integration into society;

- The strong involvement of civil society in the integration process and the collaboration between local authorities and civil society organisations. However, this may blur the boundary between what is the responsibility of the municipality and what is done by volunteers, thus reducing the incentive for the volunteers to be involved and confuse the refugees;

- There is wide support for the efforts strengthening the integration of newly arrived refugees, but also a recognition that the large groups of refugees and immigrants who ‘ve been in the country for several years – and who were not met with the same approach as refugees arriving today – must not be forgotten as there is still a strong need to do more to succeed with their integration into the society.

In Finland, the impact of the legislative and policy changes in recent years was raised in the stakeholder interviews.

The main weaknesses of the integration system are:

- Integration of asylum seekers only begins when the asylum seeker has received a residence permit while it is not a part of the reception services. However, in reality the asylum seekers begin to form contacts with society while they are already at the reception stage. Furthermore, asylum seekers are moved from one reception centre to another. As a result, they face difficulties in forming connections with the hosting society or a normal everyday routine, which are essential for integration;

- Municipalities are more eager to offer placements to refugees arriving within the refugee quota than asylum seekers who have received residence permits. The placement of refugees in municipalities does not always correspond to the needs of the refugees in terms of their health and wellbeing such as their mental health as well as education and employment opportunities. It is extremely important that the emergency quota remains open to all nationalities without restrictions;
• Integration is strongly focused on employment, while in reality it relates to all aspects of the lives of refugees. With regard to employment, the skills and knowledge of individuals who have received international protection are not identified and they are mostly employed in low-skilled and low-paid lines of business;

• With regard to the integration of quota refugees, the roles of authorities and the third sector are not sufficiently defined;

• The restrictions on family reunification can have long-term impact on the abilities of refugees to integrate into society. The situation is particularly difficult for unaccompanied minors;

• The changes of the reception legislation, removing the right to reception services upon a final rejection of the asylum application have not led to an increase in voluntary returns, as envisioned by the government. On the contrary, the legislation has created a new group of irregular migrants in Finland and has also pushed individuals to file renewed applications;

• Due to the rapid increase of asylum applications in 2015, tens of thousands of asylum applications have been handled by hundreds of inexperienced caseworkers under high pressure of effectiveness and rapid decision-making. At the same time, asylum applicants have received less information about their rights and duties in the asylum procedure and have not had access to expert legal advice during the procedure. These serious issues with the asylum procedure have also led to an increase in renewed applications;

• The length of asylum proceedings, which prolong the time asylum seekers spend in reception centres and in a "societal" limbo or transit period. This uncertainty makes it difficult for asylum seekers to build a normal life and ties to the society.

On the other hand, with regard to the strengths of the Finnish system it has been pointed out:

• The quota refugee system which works in practice through a partnership with Migri, IOM and the Finnish Red Cross functions well and provides a safe route to protection for refugees. Within the quota refugee system, Finland has traditionally been able to support particularly vulnerable refugees with urgent resettlement needs by providing them with swift relocation. The integration measures of quota refugees are handled by the authorities and the third sector, thus providing an organic platform for contacts with the local communities;

• Preparation and readiness for arrivals is functioning well. Existing contracts have allowed for the Red Cross, for example, to accrue and hold on to the know-how on the reception of asylum seekers and preparedness;

• It is beneficial that the same integration law is applicable to all migrants, including refugees and recipients of international protection. Thus they all have equal access to integration services. The fact that asylum applicants are allowed to work (though after a quarantine time) is beneficial; however, the current quarantines should be reconsidered in order to allow asylum applicants to work earlier.

In France, according to the stakeholders interviewed, the main challenge relates to the fact that asylum seekers and refugees encounter excessive administrative delays and waiting periods when seeking first support measures and employment. Some refugees face difficulties in getting their residence permits issued or renewed. Their residence permits have to be issued within three months following their request for such documentation. OFPRA takes longer than expected to deliver the necessary documentation that has to be submitted for the issuance of their permits. Also interviews
indicate that in practice, very few asylum seekers apply for a work permit and even fewer are given one.

A key reception and integration challenge regards access to (adequate) housing. As anticipated, less than 50% of asylum seekers receive dedicated accommodation, and refugees often stay for extended periods in emergency accommodation, reception centres for asylum seekers or even in makeshift camps. Indeed, refugees often experience extremely precarious living situations once they receive their protection status and are supposed to leave the reception centres for asylum seekers. While the French state has devoted more resources towards facilitating refugee access to housing, this remains a chronic problem and ad hoc initiatives have been implemented at local and regional level, especially since the so-called 2015 migration crisis.

Another issue is the fact that asylum seekers do not have access to state sponsored language courses at national level as their stay in France is only treated as temporary and the level of language knowledge acquired through national training is considered to be insufficient for labour market integration. The six-month French courses included in the welcoming and integration contract (WIC) is delivered six months or one year after recognition of refugee status. However, courses are of very poor quality. For instance, people with different levels of education are in the same class (an illiterate person in the same class as someone with a university education) and courses normally run throughout the day thus, are extremely intensive. Again it is often local authorities and cities (like the City of Paris) that intervene to fill in these gaps with ad hoc measures.
5. THE ROLE OF EU SUPPORT

The EU provides Member States with financial resources to support the reception and integration of third country nationals. These include funding under shared management, including the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), and under direct management as the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation, Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme, the Health for Growth programme, etc. (EC, 2018b).

To deal with the crises the EU is currently facing, including migration, the European Parliament in its report on the MFF mid-term review/revision, calls for more flexibility and additional budgetary means during the remaining MFF 2014 – 2020 period81.

Besides the amount of financial resources available, other issues relate to the difficult access to EU funding for reception and integration projects in the case of NGOs and local administrations. Although there are many initiatives and projects at local level for the integration of migrants and refugees, local administrations and cities still encounter problems in accessing EU funds due to lack of specific calls, complex bureaucratic procedures, diverging priorities at different levels of governments, and limited recognition of the role and needs of cities in reception and integration policies. To address this issue, the Partnership on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees82 dedicates one action to providing recommendations on better access for cities to EU integration funding. The Partnership aims to reduce regulatory and practical barriers for cities and promote tools to guarantee a better access of cities to EU integration funding83. In March 2018, the Partnership published a recommendation paper for improving cities’ use of and access to integration funding, following the overview of bottlenecks on access to EU funding84.

5.1. Use of EU funds to promote integration in the selected countries

As underlined by the European Commission85 there is only a limited overlap between the AMIF and other EU funding instruments that are operated under shared management and that can be used to promote integration.

Among various EU funding streams, AMIF and ESF (European Social Fund) are the most important ones, as foreseen by the 2015 European Agenda of Migration.

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Table 15: Different migration-integration funding operated under shared management beyond AMIF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Global budget for MFF 2014-2020</th>
<th>General description</th>
<th>How it can support migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>EUR 86 billion</td>
<td>To promote high levels of employment and job quality, access to labour market, enhance social inclusion.</td>
<td>Asylum seekers can only be supported by the ESF if they are legally able to participate in the labour market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAD</td>
<td>EUR 3.8 billion</td>
<td>To alleviate poverty in the EU.</td>
<td>The beneficiaries and the type of assistance are defined at the national level. Asylum seekers are eligible if the MS sets the criteria accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>EUR 183 billion</td>
<td>Reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU.</td>
<td>The regulation highlights support to marginalised communities, such as migrants. Three of the thematic objectives (promoting employment, promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination and investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning) can be suitable for migrants. Territorial cooperation programmes can help addressing the trafficking of human beings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>EUR 95 billion</td>
<td>Rural development policy.</td>
<td>Actions related to migrants can be taken under Priority 6 (promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMFF</td>
<td>EUR 6.4 billion (of which EUR 0.65 billion under direct management)</td>
<td>Promoting competitive, environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible fisheries and aquaculture; fostering the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and Unions Integrated Maritime Policy.</td>
<td>Professional training and education, reception of asylum-seekers within and beyond the fisheries and aquaculture sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5.1.1. The use of AMIF in the first stage of the integration process

In 2014, AMIF replaced the European Refugee Fund (ERF) which was created to share the costs of reception, integration and voluntary repatriation of people in need of international protection. Between 2014 and 2020, AMIF is allocating EUR 3.1 billion (initial budget) to the reception and early integration of migrants and refugees. Compared to other EU funds – for instance, the European Social Fund (ESF) with a budget of 86.4 billion – resources targeted to AMIF are relatively small.

Around 88% of AMIF’s resources are allocated to MSs that adopt multiannual national programmes and implement the Fund under shared management. In general, the maximum EU co-financing rate for national projects is 75% (90% in specific cases). Each EU MS needs to devote at least a given share of the resources that it receives to certain objectives: MSs have an obligation to allocate at least 20% of AMIF's resources to support migrants. Attribution: European Commission.
of the total ‘basic allocation’ for their national programme to the specific objective on asylum, and at least 20% to the specific objective on legal migration/integration (EPRS, 2015).

The remainder of the AMIF is implemented, either through direct management by the European Commission or, in some cases, indirect management (e.g. by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development), to support transnational schemes or measures of particular interest to the EU (‘Union actions’), emergency assistance, technical assistance and the European Migration Network. Union actions can promote practical cooperation between relevant authorities in different MSs (Bruegel, 2018).

This Fund contributes to the achievement of four specific objectives:

- Asylum: strengthening and developing the Common European Asylum System by ensuring that EU legislation in this field is efficiently and uniformly applied;
- Legal migration and integration: supporting legal migration to EU States in line with the labour market needs and promoting the effective integration of non-EU nationals;
- Return: enhancing fair and effective return strategies, which contribute to combating irregular migration, with an emphasis on sustainability and effectiveness of the return process;
- Solidarity: making sure that EU States which are most affected by migration and asylum flows can count on solidarity from other EU States.

Actions supported by AMIF include, for instance, improvement of accommodation and reception services for asylum seekers or information campaigns in non-EU countries to education and language training or staff training on relevant topics. There are 27 AMIF national programmes, because Denmark does not participate due to the opt-out on EU Justice and Home Affairs. Non-profit organisations and local authorities receive financing through the national budget and ministries’ funds. Conversely, as shown in Figure 13, 0.8% of AMIF is allocated to Finland and 11.6% to France, based on 2011-2012 statistical information of migration situations (Table 22 in Annex I).

87 Of the AMIF funding allocated to MS, 87% is the ‘basic allocation’ for MS AMIF National Programmes. The remaining 13% is a variable amount allocated to MS resettlement and relocation activities.
89 Finland National Programme AMIF.
France National Programme AMIF.
Available at: https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/content/download/84455/619063/file/Programme-national-FAMI_version-decembre-2017.pdf.
90 Statistical data on migration flows determine the allocation of EUR 2,392 million, while an additional EUR 360 million are assigned to MSs on the basis of other mechanisms relating to specific actions, the Union Resettlement Programme and the transfer of beneficiaries of international protection from one EU country to another. Source: EPRS (2015).
Figure 13: National allocations based on statistical data 2014-2020 breakdown in million euros (with rounding) and %


Finland and France are co-financing many integration projects with AMIF (see Box 10 for details).

In Finland, for example, in 2016, when the number of asylum seekers in the country increased dramatically, AMIF co-financed a project regarding the state and development of general legal advice for asylum seekers, in which group information sessions were organised at reception centres for more than 500 new asylum seekers (UNHCR and ECRE, 2017).

In France, the French digital administration for foreign nationals programme is aimed at developing a global information system on asylum, legal migration and return. Another programme that France is financing with EUR 286.6 million from AMIF funding contributes to the implementation of the ongoing reform of the asylum system by strengthening administrative capacities to address an increased number of asylum seekers, with the objective of shortening the duration of relevant procedures and improve reception conditions91.

Box 9: Examples of AMIF projects in Finland and France

**Finland:**

*Development of general legal advice for asylum seekers (FI/2015/PR/1439)*

This programme examines how general legal advice is provided to asylum seekers, and the special needs of asylum seekers in a particularly vulnerable position in order to derive proposals to overcome the lack of comprehensive information and to uniform its provision in different locations, a need emerging from asylum seekers’ experience. The goal is that the authorities take account of the project’s development proposals when planning and drawing up instructions for the activities. Group information sessions were organised at reception centres for more than 500 new asylum seekers, with interviews with asylum seekers and reception centre directors and other professionals. As emerged, not all asylum seekers received basic information about the asylum procedure. Training and clearer instructions are needed to identify asylum seekers in a particularly vulnerable position.


"Frendi" project

In 2016-2018, the "Frendi" project was administered by Föreningen Luckan r.f. The purpose was to create meeting opportunities for young Finns and migrants. The project was realised with the help of local schools. A common course was developed for Swedish-speaking students and students from schools with migrants. The courses included cooking, drama, and filmmaking. A review of the project concluded that it was welcomed with enthusiasm but it had been a challenge to bring together the timetables and expectations of different schools and participants.

"Kulttuuriportfolio Suomeen valituille kiintiöpakolaisille 2017 – 2018" – project.

This Project was administered by the Immigration Service and funded by AMIF in 2017 – 2018. It seeks to train and educate quota refugees on Finnish cultural aspects before their arrival in the country. This project is managed by the Immigration Service and realised by the International Organization for Migration in Finland. The purpose is to give a realistic view of Finland for refugees moving to Finland as well as to support their integration. The project includes the development of webpages and other materials to support the integration of refugees. A study on the integration of Congolese quota refugees in the Utajärvi municipality in the Northern Ostrobothnia region of Finland concluded that while refugees are satisfied with the health and social services available to them, there is a weakness in integration groups that are too small during refugee integration courses.

**France:**

*French digital administration for foreign nationals (FR/2014/PR/3238)*

The ‘French digital administration for foreign nationals’ ("Administration numérique pour les étrangers en France") aims to create a digital administration for legal migrants and improve the monitoring of illegal migration and the management of returns. The information system deployed for asylum has enabled the monitoring of asylum policies at the national level and the overall management of asylum claims, including Dublin procedures. Other services are being developed: an online service to validate long-stay visas; digital management of applications to hire foreign national employees.


The Accelair Programme

The Accelair Programme run by Forum Réfugiés was launched in 2002 in the Rhone Department under the European programme "Equal". It was renewed under the European Social Fund (2005 – 2007), then under the European Refugee Fund (2008 – 2013). Since 2014, Accelair has been supported by Fonds Asile Migration Intégration, funded half by the State and half by the EU. It offers individual support for the search for accommodation, jobs and vocational training to newly recognised refugees (in the first year after recognition). In 2014, some 800 households (some 1,200 adults) of 55 nationalities received support, and two thirds of the beneficiaries of the project had access to training or to a job. The speed of access to the first training was 4.9 months and 8.7 months for a job. Since its creation, it has allowed 2,150 households to access accommodation, more than 1,600 training places and 2,700 job contracts. Today, the project supports some 90% of the newly-recognised refugees in the Rhone Department. Since 2008, there have been several attempts to export this project to other Departments, but budgetary challenges have prevented its expansion so far.

5.1.2. Medium and long-term integration is promoted by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

While AMIF is set to play a major role in the first stage of the integration process, medium and long-term integration is promoted by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). ESIF’s Common Provision Regulations cite migration as one of the major societal challenges which shall be taken into consideration in the MSs Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes. Box 11 provides two examples, in the selected countries, of OPs 2014 – 2020 which include migrants and refugee related issues.

The European Social Fund (ESF) can support actions on social integration and labour market related measures: e.g. training, language courses, counselling, coaching and vocational training. Besides providing individual support to migrants and their families, it may also support anti-discrimination initiatives and reinforce the administrative capacity of public administrations, including child protection systems, and NGOs that are dealing with the migrant’s influx.

The ESF has a budget of EUR 86.4 billion, with a minimum of 20 % allocated to social inclusion measures. Typically, specific support for refugees and asylum seekers would fall under the poverty and social inclusion objective, for which the current allocation is around EUR 21 billion. Support for asylum seekers and refugees may also be envisaged under the other objectives of the ESF Regulation (EP, 2015). However, as underlined by some of the stakeholders interviewed in Denmark, there is not enough knowledge on the possibilities for funding integration initiatives through EU-funds and, at the same time, a perception of EU funding being very cumbersome to apply for and administer.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can support: investments in social and health infrastructures; investments in education infrastructures; investments in housing and childcare infrastructure; investments in urban regeneration (physical and social regeneration of areas in which migrants/refugees are concentrated); and investments in business start-ups.

With the intensification of the refugee and migration situation in 2015, the Commission called upon MSs to systematically use the possibility of re-programming the OPs to better manage the changed circumstances. Concerning the ERDF, the Commission92 agreed upon the possibility to amend existing programmes in order to better accommodate measures that support the integration of refugees.

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92 Statement of 23 September 2015, the Commissioner Corina Cretu. Two days later, the Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs hosted a meeting with the Managing Authorities of the ESF to discuss revisions of their programmes and synergies between ESF, AMIF and FEAD.
Box 10: Examples of ESF projects and Operational Programmes 2014-2020 including migrants and refugees related issues

Denmark: project “Business Training”. Among the few ESF projects explicitly addressing refugees, the project “Business Training” targets vulnerable refugees who have arrived in Denmark over the last few years. Through a “Place and Train” programme the aim of the project is to combine on the job-training with an effort to tackle social and mental issues. It is run by municipalities in Southern Denmark and a branch of the Danish Refugee Council. A mid-term evaluation shows good results. The ESF has made it possible to extend the project to other municipalities by providing additional funding1.

Finland: Entrepreneurship and skills, Åland Structural Fund Programme 2014 – 2020. Finland’s autonomous region of Åland is investing ESF funds in education, job skills and social inclusion to boost youth employment, equality and economic diversity. The OP is funded by the ESF and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and it is worth EUR 10 million. The programme is expected to help more people find sustainable work in the region, in particular young people and jobseekers. People at risk of exclusion, such as migrants or the disabled, will also be able to participate more actively in the labour market, improving social equality.

Among the ESF priorities:

- Over half of the available funds will be used to boost education, vocational training and job-related skills. Young people are a key target for this investment, although measures will also promote lifelong learning.
- Unemployment will be reduced by helping jobseekers to find sustainable, good-quality employment and by improving labour mobility. Using 30 % of available funds, this priority will include specific measures to help inactive people, including migrants, overcome barriers to work.
- The remaining one-fifth of the budget will be invested in promoting social inclusion, reducing poverty and combating unfair discrimination. People with disabilities, or who can only work part-time, will receive support to find work that allows them to participate in the labour market.

Among the ERDF priorities:

- Priority axis one will concentrate on improving the research and innovation activities and competitiveness of SMEs. The aim is to diversify business structure and increase the number of innovative companies. Åland will invest in research and innovation via a new financial instrument that receives about 65 % of the ERDF allocation.
- The programme will help cooperation between research institutions and SMEs. Some 70 enterprises will be supported to enhance their competitiveness and to diversify the economic structure of Åland.

France: Operational Programme ESF Guyane Etat 2014 – 2020. The overseas region of Guiana will target ESF investments at young jobseekers and school dropouts, the long-term unemployed and people facing exclusion. As a result, it is expected that some 21,000 young people will be helped to become qualified and secure work. Over 15,000 disadvantaged people, and 5,000 long-term unemployed will receive support to get back into the labour market. The OP has an EU contribution of EUR 84 million and will focus on six investment priorities:

- Over EUR 21 million will go to helping young people make the transition from education and training into their first job.
- Young people will be encouraged not to leave school early, but to stay on, complete their studies and gain valuable qualifications.
- Jobseekers and those facing difficulties getting work will be helped through counselling, guidance and training in job-relevant skills where needed. The poorly-qualified, women jobseekers and immigrants are particular targets.
- Changing technologies and markets need new skills. Workers will be helped to upgrade their skills and competences through lifelong training programmes – helping to sustain their jobs and careers.
- Those at risk of poverty or suffering social exclusion will be helped with measures to provide relevant skills and easier access to job opportunities and public services. Over EUR 34 million is available for social inclusion projects.
- A concerted, regional effort will be launched to raise the skills of public servants and their ability to implement employment, training and social inclusion programmes.

5.2. EU support in strategic development and implementation

Although Member States are primarily responsible for integration policies, the EU supports national and local authorities with policy coordination, exchange of knowledge and financial resources. To support Member States with less experience in developing effective integration strategies, the European Commission has adopted an Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals in June 2016. The Action Plan provides a comprehensive framework to support Member States’ efforts in developing and strengthening their integration policies, and describes the concrete measures the Commission will implement in this regard. While it targets all third-country nationals in the EU, it contains actions to address the specific challenges faced by refugees: it includes actions supporting pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, education, employment and vocational training, access to basic services, active participation and social inclusion.

The Action Plan and other initiatives developed at EU level to overcome the existing difficulties related to the skills possessed by asylum seekers and refugees, but also to the recognition and validation of credits, certificates and degrees, are described in the following Box.

Box 11: EU Initiatives for labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees

Ensuing from the European Agenda on Migration, the European Commission has put forward several proposals to address some of the integration challenges EU Member States are facing. A central element is the Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals, which was presented in 2016 to add value to national integration policies through the structural and financial support it provides. Actions are proposed in key-areas such as: pre-departure and pre-arrival integration measures, in particular for people in clear need of international protection who are being resettled; education, employment and vocational training; access to basic services; and active participation and social inclusion. A more strategic and coordinated approach is also proposed for the use of EU funds to support national integration measures.

Since then, the Commission took a number of initiatives to improve the integration of third-country nationals into the labour market, a recent one being the launch of the initiative "Employers together for integration" to promote employers’ efforts to support the integration of refugees and other migrants. In 2017, the European Commission released in 2017 the ‘EU Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals’, which is an off and online web editor for reception centres, integration services, public employment services and other organisations offering services to non-EU nationals to make sure their skills and education are recognised, and to further guide them to training, education or employment. In addition to giving an overview of a non-EU national’s skills profile – comparable with a CV – the tool helps migration organisations to identify individuals’ specific needs for integration into the labour market. Ultimately this will simplify the process of matching jobseekers to vacancies.

The tool is one of the ten Key Actions announced in the New Skills Agenda for Europe and it aims to address mismatches between skills and jobs of non-EU nationals. It targets both those with a high level of education and those with a low level of education and who need further education and training to obtain the skills needed in our labour market.

Furthermore, initiatives exist to promote the integration of highly skilled refugees. For example, The Science4Refugees initiative and EURAXESS portal provide refugee friendly research internships, part-time and full-time jobs, access to a European Research Community, as well as a complete range of information and support services on working and living in Europe.

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The integration of refugees in Denmark, Finland and France

In Nordic countries with a strong tradition of integration policies, the support of the EU is less relevant compared to other EU countries.

For example, in Denmark, at the state-level there is a knowledge about the EU Common Basic Principles on integration and the EU Integration Action Plan as well as participation in various EU conferences and networks. This does not seem, however, to influence national or local practices. In this respect, one of the interviewed stakeholders pointed out that the legal and societal framework for integration differs substantially between MSs making transfers of good practices difficult. The most comparable countries to Denmark in this respect are the other Nordic countries, and between these countries there is a tradition for sharing experiences, policies etc.

In Finland, instead, EU law and experiences from other EU MSs were used by the government to justify the introduction of restrictions to the legislation. Many of the amendments put through were explained in part by the fact that Finland has had a more "permissive" legislation in the past compared to other MSs and EU law, and this represented a "pull factor" for applicants to arrive in Finland. A more restrictive legislation was sought as a way to decrease the number of arrivals. This was, for example, the motivation for restricting family reunification and access to reception services for failed asylum seekers who cannot be returned to their countries of origin. In addition, while the original purpose of CEAS was to provide minimum rules for the asylum procedure across the EU MSs and not to lower the standards in MSs with functioning systems, Finland used the CEAS system to push down the standards of its own asylum system towards the minimum standards of CEAS. For example, the restrictions in legal aid were in part based on the notion that Finland provided more legal aid than the minimum standard set out in the Asylum Procedures Directive. However, currently it appears that Finland does not provide even the minimum requirement on the right to basic legal advice about the rights and duties of asylum applicants at the beginning of the asylum procedure.

As already mentioned, in order to address integration of migrants and asylum seekers at the local level, a Partnership of the Urban Agenda for the EU on the inclusion of migrants and refugees has been signed, bringing together cities, EU countries, the European Commission and civil society organisations to develop common actions to promote integration. The Partnership focuses on five themes: housing, community building & reception, education, work, and the cross-cutting theme of vulnerable groups. In addition to the partners at European level, also single MSs and cities participate as partners to the Agenda: for the purpose of this note, it is relevant to underline the participation of Denmark and of the city of Helsinki (FI) as a member.


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6. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

The three considered countries have been characterised by different numbers and dynamics of asylum applicants in recent years. Denmark, and especially Finland, showed a sharp increase in 2015, followed by a sharp reduction in both 2016 and 2017, while France registers a gradual increase in the number of applications since 2008. Furthermore, these countries show an uneven relocation effort. While Denmark did not relocate any asylum seeker, France and Finland received respectively 5,030 and 1,981 asylum seekers by the end of October 2018.

Despite these differences, however, the influx of migrants, especially considering refugees and asylum seekers, is likely to remain a major challenge which requires specific attention and policy initiatives. In particular, the high inflow of asylum seekers in 2014–2015 changed the public opinion and the political climate, as well as the policy approach adopted in the three countries on reception and integration of asylum seekers and migrants in general.

All the three countries introduced restrictions on arrivals and access to integration and welfare policies in order to make it less attractive to apply for asylum in these two countries.

The labour market integration has become the focus of integration policies. However, asylum seekers are generally not allowed to work during the asylum application process. A major obstacle to the integration of asylum seekers and migrants is the length of time it can take to go through the asylum and work permit procedures and the associated administrative burden, which deters employers from hiring them. Besides the restrictions in obtaining a work permit, other legal restrictions can apply to asylum seekers, including restrictions on eligible occupations and requirement. The right to access the labour market already during the processing of an asylum claim might be crucial for speeding up the integration process, as inactivity usually deteriorates the integration prospects.

Recognised refugees are instead more likely to be involved in public programmes supporting their labour market and social integration and, according to the data of the ad hoc EU-LFS module (2014), refugees tend to improve their labour market condition with time. However, the labour market integration of refugees is in general much slower compared to the other migrants and in the short-run they are likely to present worse employment conditions than economic immigrants.

In France, individuals obtaining international protection, enter the regime of common law. This means that they are treated equally to any other French citizen and can access social protection. According to this approach there is little need for specific measures for refugee populations. However, in recent years, there is a growing awareness for the need of specific integration policies and the government is taking measures to promote more targeted policies for the integration of refugees into French society. At the same time, a securitised discourse dominated public and media debate in recent years, also as an effect of the terrorist attacks that hit the country. Independently of the political orientation of the administration in charge, the approach adopted tends to increase restrictions for arrivals.

In Denmark, the new Government coalition introduced restrictions on integration and welfare measures for refugees, with the aim of making it less attractive to apply for asylum in Denmark. However, the bulk of integration policies did not change much and in Denmark – as in Finland – comprehensive measures continue to be implemented at regional and municipal level, although there
is still need for a greater employers’ involvement and for measures addressing the specific needs of women refugees.

In **Finland**, restrictions were also introduced to make Finland a less attractive destination country for asylum seekers. While the country still has a well-functioning reception and integration system, the impact of the recent amendments is long-term. Integration policies are tied to the reform proposals currently under discussion on provision of health and social services that should move from a state-based system to a system where public social and health care services exist together with market-based services allowing individuals to choose their service providers. According to some stakeholders, a market-based system is not likely to guarantee equal access to integration services for all refugees and migrants as this would depend on their place of residence and availability of services in that area of residence. The restrictions of the asylum determination procedure and those on the right to family reunification create actual and perceived inequality, alienation and discrimination among asylum seekers and refugees, which leads to difficulties in integrating into Finnish society.

### 6.2. Challenges and lessons learned

There are a number of policy challenges emerging from the experience of the three considered countries.

One challenge relates to **the refugee status recognition procedures**. The restrictions on arrivals, on the recognition of the refugee status and on the right to family reunification introduced by the three considered countries, are creating actual and perceived inequalities, alienation and discrimination among asylum seekers and refugees, which leads to difficulties in integrating into society. In addition, the difficulties faced by asylum seekers and refugees in negotiating with bureaucratic systems in order to access refugee rights represent obstacles for successful integration. The permanent cuts and restrictions in the asylum determination procedure, as in the **Finnish** case, lengthen the procedure and rise the number of renewed applications, thus lengthening the overall duration of the asylum procedure, during which asylum seekers are often in a **sort of legal "limbo" which makes access to employment and social support particularly difficult**. In addition, the higher the rejection rate, the greater is the risk of increasing the number of irregular immigrants surviving on often illegal expedients, especially when rejected asylum seekers cannot return to their home country and cannot have a regular job. Long asylum procedures may also lead to mental health issues among asylum seekers, although there is still little attention on recognising and supporting the mental health of asylum seekers, which may impact on the employees and volunteers at reception centres, who would need regular support for their activities and their own coping mechanisms.

**Restrictions on access to welfare systems and the lack of focus on labour market integration** are another challenge, which particularly penalise the most vulnerable among asylum seekers and refugees, e.g. women, unaccompanied young people, the less skilled and those with disabilities, who have more difficulties in accessing the labour market.

A further issue is the **lack of monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented measures**. Although several initiatives have been implemented to better integrate asylum seekers and refugees, often these are not evaluated and it is not known to what degree each of them contribute to the observed results, nor of other possible factors, e.g. positive economic conditions.

Another crucial issue is the long run sustainability of integration measures. Most of the projects on integration have received **EU funding** (especially in Finland and France) and while there have been several successful projects with innovations and an accumulation of know-how, integration activities...
should not rely on project-funding as heavily as they currently do. Integration should be a long-term
strategy, and project-based funding does not allow for sufficiently long-term planning and activities.

Furthermore, most of the activities and expertise in reception and integration measures are fragmented into short-term projects with ad hoc funding.

This impedes the development of more comprehensive practices and the scaling up of the expertise into long term strategies and policies, thus undermining the overall effectiveness of integration policies. On the whole, it is therefore necessary to have more long-term funding and large-scale projects with enough flexibility to carry them out locally. This would reduce the national and regional unequal conditions of asylum seekers and refugees when it comes to the access and quality of services.

6.3. Policy recommendations

Well managed integration measures are increasingly considered in the debate as an investment that will pay off in the long run. Even if most of the policy debate addresses the management of migratory pressures at the borders, labour market integration and social inclusion have recently been receiving increasing attention, as a considerable proportion of refugees will be granted the status of beneficiaries of international protection and stay for longer.

Migrants and refugees often belong to economically active age groups and can provide diversified skills that in the long run could support the economy and reduce labour shortages, particularly in many of Europe’s ageing societies. According to the socio-economic literature (OECD, 2014, IMF, 2016), migrants may have positive effects on the public budget and the economic growth of receiving countries and regions. OECD data show that migrants accounted for 70% of the increase in the workforce in Europe over the past ten years, thus contrasting the negative effects of ageing on the labour supply. They tend to be complementary to the native workforce, as they work in important niches both in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy not considered by the native born workers, and contribute to the flexibility of the labour market. Regarding the public budget, while in the short run additional public spending is likely for the provision of first reception and support services, in the medium and long run the contribution of refugees and immigrants to the host country depends on the speed and quality of their integration into the labour market.

However, if not well managed large inflows of migrants and asylum seekers can also increase social problems and costs, especially in cities and metropolitan areas.

The three considered countries’ experiences with the integration of asylum seekers and refugees illustrate some learning points that can serve as recommendations.

Focus on employment and skills development

Employment is an important driver for integration. On average, in the EU, the employment rate of refugees lags behind that of labour migrants and natives by about 10 percentage points but it is comparable to that of family migrants which make up the largest group of non-EU born in the EU (European Commission and OECD, 2016). The difficulties in finding employment trigger a vicious cycle of exclusion. To ensure labour market integration it is necessary to:

- Involve employers in integration policies and support guidance and training;
- Remove current legal obstacles to the employment of asylum seekers. The quarantine time for the right of asylum seekers to work should be reconsidered and should not be lengthened;
• Identify and recognise the skills and educational level of asylum seekers, and address employment discrimination. Improve diploma recognition and access to professional training;

• Invest in language courses and vocational programmes. More efforts should be put into the language courses at the reception level to better support the integration of asylum seekers but also at later stages in order to support the integration of migrants into the job market;

• There is also a need to include more female refugees in the labour market and finding a way around the cultural barriers which may impede progress in this area.

Special attention should be paid to the labour market integration of women. Migrant women with family responsibilities should be better supported and offered training opportunities, language courses and opportunities to gain work experience in order to better integrate them into the job market.

**Promote a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach to integration (employment, housing, language social rights, etc.)**

The lack of the specific human capital and skills needed in the host country (e.g. language, recognised skills and diploma) together with other factors (e.g. skills mismatch, lack of social capital, discrimination) prevent specific migrant groups, including refugees, to realise their full potential on the labour market. Language is a key determinant of labour market success in the labour market and this is even more the case for refugees. A comprehensive approach should be developed that addresses all these dimensions of integration.

• The integration process should start immediately after an asylum seeker enters the country, supporting and promoting the asylum seeker’s active engagement already when they are in the reception centres.

• Support early labour market integration, as early access to the labour market represents an essential component of the integration process, while at the same time makes clear to newcomers that they are expected to contribute and to become self-supporting as soon as possible.

• Secure access to adequate and sustainable housing, as housing for migrants is a necessary step to regularise their status.

• Adapt social services and reduce the administrative burden to address the barriers that asylum seekers and refugees experience.

• In order to achieve consistency and long-term effects, integration policies should be planned in a comprehensive strategy with adequate resources so as not to rely solely on project funding.

**Quicker asylum procedures**

Restrictions in asylum procedures may have a number of negative effects, increasing the number of irregular immigrants living of expedients and reducing the effectiveness of integration policies, as well as increasing social tensions in reception areas. In order to avoid these potential shortcomings, it is necessary to expedite the asylum procedure, and asylum seekers should receive general legal aid from someone with expertise in the field. The CEAS reform should respect the dignity and fundamental rights of all migrants and guarantee each asylum applicant has effective access to protection and a

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fair procedure. Moreover, the CEAS reform should ensure a fair balance between responsibility and solidarity amongst all MSs while respecting the principles of family unity of asylum applicants.

**Define a clear distribution of competence and responsibility and increase the involvement of local institutions and civil society organisations**

The Danish model, in which the state provides a financial and legal framework, municipalities are responsible for integration programmes, housing etc. and civil society and businesses provide networks and jobs, is a good example of the positive outcomes of a model based on a clear division of responsibilities among public institutions and of the involvement and collaboration of civil society and employers. It leaves room for local differences, but secures a certain level of security and quality standards.

Leaving the responsibility to the local level requires a close dialogue between national and local authorities, and a responsibility for the State to monitor results and help steer the municipalities. This can be done, for instance, using economic incentives. The model also calls for the sharing of good practices and cooperation between municipalities, as well as the setting up of a strong monitoring and evaluation system to assess effectiveness.

The resources and strengths of civil society play a vital role in integration policies. It is advisable to set up strategies for the involvement of and support to the NGO’s and other civil society actors, as well as to set up formal agreements between authorities and civil organisations to match expectations and avoid uncertainty with regard to roles and responsibilities. The earlier NGOs are included in the planning and implementation of integration measures, the clearer their role is in the integration process.

Successful implementation of national, regional and local integration programmes also requires sufficient resources and that the integration activities promoted by different NGOs are included in public programmes and are funded with adequate and continuative resources.

It is also important to improve the role given to the social partners. The Danish experience with the tripartite agreement between the Government, the employer’s organisations and the trade unions is indicative in this respect, as it formed the basis for the re-orientation of the approach to integration in 2016 and the implementation of its most innovative feature, the integrative training programme.

**Improve EU support**

- Working across different sectors and administrative levels is often a prerequisite for success in integration projects. This approach could be promoted by setting up criteria to that effect when EU-funds are promoted.

- EU-funded projects might have a clearer focus on effectiveness and on transferability of results taking into account the differences between MSs.

- More funding should be available for reception and integration policies, especially at the local level, making access easier for local authorities and NGOs and reducing administrative complexity in their use.

**Learn from successful/unsuccessful experience**

There is a need to evaluate and learn from the positive experiences related to newly arrived refugees to improve the approach towards large groups of refugees and immigrants who have resided in MSs for a number of years with modest progress in terms of integration.
There is also the need to follow up on the refugees who are successful in finding a job to help them keep the job and obtain further qualifications, and to secure that they learn the language at the same time.

**Improve data collection on beneficiaries of international protection and research**

There is a need for more evidence-based knowledge and to move beyond small scale evaluations of projects but rather to find funding for large scale, research-based knowledge. In Denmark, for example, there is a lack of knowledge about what really works in terms of integration of refugees and migrants, and also the French case study underlines the need for data collection regarding asylum seekers and refugees, especially in relation to their economic situation, employment, and access to various public services. Currently little data is collected by the administration to study the impact of different public policies on the various aspects of the integration of foreigners (professional integration, access to rights, etc.).

In particular, the collection of data disaggregated by personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender, educational level) would increase knowledge about differences in integration patterns and about the effects of integration policies on different groups of refugees and migrants.
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This study presents a comparative overview of recent policy developments in Denmark, Finland and France. The focus of the analysis is on progress achieved in the last three years in the adaptation of the reception and integration system for the high numbers of new arrivals and on the main challenges encountered. Special attention is given to changes in perceptions, public opinion and political discourse with respect to the asylum and integration of refugees and how this influenced policy strategy.

This document was provided by Policy Department A at the request of the European Parliament’s Employment and Social Affairs Committee.