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Policy Innovation in Refugee Integration?

A comparative analysis of innovative policy strategies toward
refugee integration in Europe

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Most European countries have faced increasing levels of asylum applications over the years 2015 and 2016. Although the number of asylum applications appears to be decreasing in 2017, the prospects for return migration are still very slim (Engbersen a.o. 2015). This means that many European countries will have to prepare for a relatively long, if not permanent, presence of significant numbers of humanitarian migrants.

This presence of humanitarian migrants requires European countries to look beyond the immigration and reception policies per se. The issue of integration of refugees is clearly back on the agenda, in terms of labour market integration, education, housing, healthcare, contact with the society and cultural orientations (including attitudes towards refugees). Although the numbers of asylum migrants present in different EU countries varies significantly (see table 1), it has become clear that many countries will be faced with the challenge of incorporating relatively sizeable groups of refugee migrants.

Table 1: number of asylum applications for selected EU countries + Norway (2008-2016)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Belgium	15.165	21.615	26.080	31.910	28.075	21.030	22.710	44.660	18.280
Denmark	2.350	3.720	5.065	3.945	6.045	7.170	14.680	20.935	6.180
Germany	26.845	32.910	48.475	53.235	77.485	126.705	202.645	476.510	745.155
France	41.840	47.620	52.725	57.330	61.440	66.265	64.310	76.165	84.270
Italy	30.140	17.640	10.000	40.315	17.335	26.620	64.625	83.540	122.960
Netherlands	15.250	16.135	15.100	14.590	13.095	13.060	24.495	44.970	20.945
Austria	12.715	15.780	11.045	14.420	17.415	17.500	28.035	88.160	42.255
Sweden	24.785	24.175	31.850	29.650	43.855	54.270	81.180	162.450	28.790
United Kingdom		31.665	24.335	26.915	28.800	30.585	32.785	40.160	38.785
Norway	14.395	17.125	10.015	8.990	9.675	11.930	11.415	31.110	3.485

Source: Eurostat (*migr_asyunaa*), extracted 13 June 2017

Although there is a growing sense of awareness on the need for refugee integration, there has been only little research to and evaluation of actual strategies to address this renewed need for refugee integration. The main objective of this study is to map and analyse how selected European countries have addressed the issue of refugee integration. It seeks to find out whether and how countries have for instance adopted new specific measures or adjusted existing generic arrangements to serve the purpose of refugee integration. Also, distinguishing between different facts of (labour market, educational, socio-cultural, housing, health care) integration, it seeks to find out what approach seems most appropriate and most effective under specific circumstances.

1.2 Need for policy innovation?

A contextual development that has a tremendous effect on current developments in refugee integration, has been the **government retrenchment** away from traditional migrant integration policies in various European countries over the last decade or so (see also Geddes and Scholten 2016). Many countries have 'mainstreamed' their integration policies, which involved the abandoning of targeted group-specific measures and the embedding of integration measures into generic policies (Scholten and van Breugel

2017). Whereas this approach was designed primarily for the category of family migrants, it is uncertain to what extent this approach will also be fit for refugees.

That is why we are particularly interested in whether government have altered the course of their integration policies in response to the refugee situation. In this context, we are particularly interested in ‘policy innovation’ in refugee integration strategies. Policy innovation refers to the development of new strategies to refugee integration. These may be developed by attempts of learning, by mimicking of ‘best practices’ from other settings, by political or economic motives, or by many other factors.

Policy innovation can involve new **specific measures** for refugees as well as new measures to make sure that existing policies are accommodated to the ends of refugee integration. So, innovation does not have to mean that a new ad-hoc specific approach for refugee integration is adopted. It can also involve actively making sure that refugee integration is ‘**mainstreamed**’ across different areas of government policy. Alternatively, it may also be that countries choose a **laissez faire** approach based on the belief that other factors than government policies will help to achieve refugee integration. In such a laissez faire approach, it is often the market or the civil society that is seen as the driving force behind integration. A possibility is also that policy innovation leads to measures to provide clear conditions for integration or under some conditions even restrict opportunities for integration. As such policies mostly have a differentiating effect, this can be described as a **differentialist approach**. Finally, governments can also choose not to innovate their refugee integration policies, for instance as they see no urgency to do so or when the political circumstances are seen as inhibiting scope for innovation. This approach often involves a belief that existing integration policies suffice to produce good integration outcomes for refugees as they have done for other migrant categories. This differs from a laissez faire approach in that it does rely on existing integration policies rather than shifting policy responsibility to civil society or the market .

Table 2: Potential strategies for policy innovation in refugee integration

	Policy strategy
Adopting specific measures	Adopting measures designed for and targeted specifically at current refugee migration, mostly with a temporary character.
Mainstreaming integration measures	Integrating refugee integration as an integral priority into generic (and already established) policies, making sure that generic policies result in optimal integration outcomes for refugees and other migrants
Laissez faire approach	Not doing anything that is specifically aimed at refugee integration, but instead relying on existing societal structures and institutions will further refugee integration more than a deliberate policy strategy.
Differentialist approach	Adopting specific measures to provide clear conditions for the integration of migrants, or even restrict opportunities for integration.
No innovation: Relying on existing integration policies	Not changing the existing approach to migrant integration but instead relying on existing measures to further refugee integration as well as the integration of other types of migrants.

This project seeks sets out to find examples of policy innovation in selected European countries. Rather than aiming for ‘best practices’ to be defined in terms of effective approaches to refugee integration, we aim to find out what policy innovations have emerged and why they appear effective or not effective in specific settings. This ‘**contextualization**’ of policy innovation is very important, as what may work in one specific setting (a city, a policy area, a country) does not mean that it will work in others as well. Therefore many ‘best practices’ in specific cases do not turn out to be best practices at all in other cases. Therefore, we will identify policy innovations, but will also account for why they seem to work (or not) under specific circumstances. In other words, we will look at **effectiveness** as well as **appropriateness**.

1.3 Conceptualizing refugee integration

It is important to clearly demarcate the focus of this study, as refugee integration is a broad concept. What is more, integration is in itself an 'essentially contested concept'. It is a **multi-faceted concept** that has been particularly difficult to define. For instance, in academic literature but also in public and political debate, integration is variably defined as economic participation, social interaction, socio-cultural adaptation and many other ways. As a consequence, measuring the 'success' or 'failure' of integration is very difficult.

Therefore, in this project we will always refer to integration in a multifaceted way. This means that we will always be precise in terms of what specific aspect of integration is involved (such as participation or socio-cultural integration), without taking any position regarding the hierarchy between different facets of integration.

Besides a substantive definition of integration, another way of defining integration in the literature focuses more **process**. Especially for refugee integration, a distinction is often made between different stages of the asylum application procedure. In particular, for integration a 'cut' is assumed between the period where an asylum applicant awaits the procedure, and the period after refugee status (or an additional source of protection) has been granted. The idea is that integration would only become a concern once a status has been granted, even if mostly temporary at first. Once a permanent status has been granted, the concern about integration even becomes a clearer concern.

In this study, we acknowledge that different stages may have different implications for refugee integration, but we choose not to our analysis to the post-status stage. Also in the period when asylum migrants wait in reception centres for their application procedures, measures can be taken to further integration. We seek to find out to what extent countries are actually doing that, and if so, that what effect. Therefore, when we speak of '**refugee integration policies**', we speak of policies in a broad sense that influence the integration process of refugees. This 'policies in a broad sense' includes various states of the asylum procedure, includes integration measures targeted specifically at refugees, but can of course also include generic measures that are not targeted at refugees per se but do have important (intended or unintended) implications for refugee integration.

1.4 Aims of the project

The aim of this research project is map innovation in refugee integration strategies in various European countries and to assess evidence on the effectiveness and appropriateness of these strategies. This involves two elements (mapping policy innovations and analysing evidence on how these work out), which will also be the two central elements of the project design.

Mapping policy innovation in relation to refugee integration

Firstly, the project seeks to identify policy innovations in refugee integration strategies. This involves various elements:

- Mapping the **policy context**; this involves elements of context that can have an effect on refugee integration strategies. This include existing (integration) policies and policy legacies from the past, the relation national-local government, the impact of the welfare state, the organization of the migration-integration nexus.
- Mapping key measures that are taken to promote refugee integration in a number of selected policy areas. In terms of **measures**, we will look both at new measures developed specifically for refugees as well as for the implications of generic policies or institutions that may affect refugee integration. In terms **policy areas** we will look in particular at the key socio-economic areas of

labour, education, health care as well as at other areas including socio-cultural areas (contact, radicalisation, values and norms) and health care.

Assessing evidence regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of refugee integration strategies

After having defined policy innovations, this project will examine available evidence on how the innovations work out in practice. This includes both an assessment of effectiveness as appropriateness. The evidence collected to this aim will involve evaluation studies done in the national/local settings that are examined, as well as evidence from experts (academics as well as practitioners) on measures taken in specific settings. The key challenge for the project is to collect evidence on the often very recent policy innovations. Some innovations have hardly been put into place, let alone that there would be systematic evaluation studies about their effects. That is why we combine various sources, including the perceptions of academic and policy experts, to be able to make a first multiple stakeholder analysis of these innovations.

For the study of **effects**, we will acknowledge the multifaceted nature of the integration concept by always speaking of specific facets of integration, such as labour market integration, integration in education, housing or health care, including also socio-cultural integration. This is also reflected in the policy areas that have been selected, and does justice to both the more socio-economic and more socio-cultural definitions of integration.

For the study of **appropriateness**, we will match the findings on effectiveness with the earlier mapping of the policy context. What relation is there between specific evidence of effectiveness and specific elements of policy context, such as already existing policies, generic structures of national-local policy relations, welfare state arrangements, specific political or economic circumstances, etc. This analysis will reveal why some innovations might work under specific circumstances, and enable the project to adopt a more systematic approach in defining lessons on what may work when specific circumstances are met.

1.5 Project methodology and design

The project has been developed in various stages. Each stage involved specific methods, and a different approach to case study selection.

Mapping integration measures

For the first stage involves a broad mapping of innovative measures toward refugee integration in 10 European countries. These countries were selected based on two criteria. First of all, it should involve countries that have received a relatively significant number of asylum applications over 2015 and 2016. This is to make sure that policy innovation in refugee integration was at least a relevant topic in these countries. Secondly, there should be a fair distribution of case countries across Europe. This is also to make sure that there is sufficient variation in terms of policy contexts, which may be very different for Scandinavian countries than for Germany or Italy. The selected countries are:

Table 3: Selected country cases

	Particularities
Austria	Relatively large number of asylum applications, centrally located in refugee flow into Europe, tradition of strong integration policy
Belgium	Relatively large number of asylum applications, fragmented approach to migrant integration
Denmark	Relatively large number of asylum applications, tradition of strong integration policy

France	Relatively modest number of asylum applications, mainstreamed approach to migrant integration.
Germany	Very large number of asylum applications, emergent approach to migrant integration, decentralized approach.
Italy	Relatively large number of asylum applications, centrally located in refugee flow into Europe, weak integration policy (laissez faire approach)
Norway	Relatively modest number of asylum applications, established history with refugee migration and integration.
Sweden	Relatively large number of asylum applications, strong tradition of more specific approach to migrant integration.
The Netherlands	Relatively modest number of asylum applications, mainstreamed approach to migrant integration.
The United Kingdom	Relatively small number of asylum applications, decentralized approach to migrant integration (market approach to integration).

The mapping of policy innovation is based primarily on a survey amongst experts from these countries, and desk research into sources from or on these countries.

- The **survey** was completed by at least 2 experts from each country, so 20 surveys in total. For every country, at least one policy expert and one academic expert was selected.
- **Desk research** involves the study of primary (policy reports, evaluation studies, etc.) as well as secondary sources (academic research reports and publications, reports from advisory bodies and knowledge brokers) relevant to policy innovation. Some of these sources are also identified with the help of the surveys.

In-depth analysis of evidence on effectiveness

The second stage of the project involved a more in-depth analysis of a smaller range of only 6 countries. These countries were identified based on the countries studied in the first stage of the project, according to a **dissimilar case study design**. We selected countries that are dissimilar for instance in whether to have a mainstreamed or a targeted/specific approach, whether a country has a laissez faire or an interventionist approach, whether a country works closely with social partners or has a state-led approach, whether a country focuses on socio-economic integration or on socio-cultural integration, etc.

This led to the selection of the following 6 countries: **Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden**. In terms of methods, this in-depth part of the project involved the following methods:

- **Systematic literature review**. This involved an in-depth qualitative literature review to systematically bring together research that connects integration measures (mapped in part 1) to outcomes. This elaborated on the sources collected for the desk research in part I, including primary (policy reports, evaluation studies, etc.) as well as secondary sources (academic research reports and publications, reports from advisory bodies and knowledge brokers).
- **Qualitative expert interviews**. For all 6 case studies, at least 4 expert interviews were held. This involved at least 1 policy maker, 1 social stakeholder and 2 academics. The interviews were mostly held as skype meetings, and in some cases as actual face-to-face interviews (for instance at the IMISCOE Conference).

Expert meetings

Finally, two expert meetings were held to discuss the preliminary findings and to get feedback on the project. These were held during the IMISCOE Annual Conference in Rotterdam, 28-30 June 2017.

- **Expert meeting.** This involved a relatively small-scale meeting on June 30th, with experts from the 6 countries that were selected. These experts were asked to comment and provide further input regarding some of the key preliminary project findings. This input has been implemented in this final report.
- **Roundtable.** This involved a large-scale semi-plenary on June 29th. During this semi-plenary, the project findings were presented briefly, followed by 3-4 expert contributions on refugee integration from other countries from the project. Subsequently, a round table was held that also involves plenary questions and debate. The input from this semiplenary was also used for finalizing this final report. The following presentations were held during the semiplenary:
 - Introduction by Peter Scholten (EUR)
 - Introduction by Mark Roscam Abbing (Director of Integration Policy, Ministry of Social Affairs, the Netherlands).
 - *Key questions regarding refugee integration*, by Rainer Baubock (EUI, editor of the book *Integration of Migrants and Refugees*).
 - *The Strengths and Limits of civic engagement: Local experiences on refugee reception in Germany*, by Birgit Glorius (TU Chemnitz).
 - *The Consequences of Coherence: Innovative Approaches to Refugee Integration in Germany*, by Hannes Schammann (Univ. Hildesheim)
 - *Refugee children in education. Educational policies as powerful tools for integration*, by Maurice Crul (Free University Amsterdam)
 - *The Rotterdam Approach toward Refugees; Acceleration and Amelioration*, by Lida Veringmeijer (City of Rotterdam).
 - Roundtable led by Rainer Baubock
 - Final words by Peter Scholten

2 Experiences with refugee integration

The key issue in this study is to what extent European states have innovated their approaches to refugee integration. To study innovation, it is important to have a broader perspective on policies that are in place already and the experiences that governments have with these policies. To this aim, this chapter first provides an overview of what is already known about refugee integration strategies. This includes studies on refugee integration strategies in the past. It also includes an overview of various other studies done in recent years to refugee integration; what can be learned from and added to these studies?

2.1 Past experiences with refugee integration

This is not the first time that European countries face a challenge of refugee integration of some scale. One recent experience with asylum migration was in the early 1990s, when large numbers of migrants came from the former Yugoslav Republic. For instance, in 1991, 1992 and 1993 Germany alone received over 256000, 438000 and 322000 migrants respectively from the various formal Yugoslav states. Many other European countries, including Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden also received significant numbers in that period. Furthermore, refugee migration from destabilized areas in the Middle East has been a constant factor throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, especially from countries like Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. Iranian migration to Europe even dates back to the late 1970s and the 1980s, after the Islamic Revolution.

Factors that complicate drawing lessons from the past

However, it is important to be aware that there are **key differences** between the various refugee migration flows that Europe has experienced, in various ways. One key difference involves the **temporality** of refugee migration, which is also a key factor for the development of refugee integration strategies. Some refugee migrant groups have showed higher return rates, whereas others have shown a clear pattern of permanent settlement. For instance, whereas considerable numbers (but still not a majority) of asylum applicants from the former Yugoslav Republic eventually went back to their country of origin, it is clear that most refugees from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan reveal more long-term settlement and perhaps even permanent settlement.

Previous experiences also teach us that it although it can be easy to measure the temporality of refugee migration 'ex post', it is very difficult to estimate it 'ex ante.' Partly, this applies to all migrants, as many migrants often do not know clearly for themselves whether they are migrating temporarily or permanently. Experience with amongst others the guest labourers shows that although many migrants (and host societies) initially expect migration to be temporary, in the end it often turns out to be more permanent. However, specific for refugees, this temporality also depends on developments in the country of origin, which can be difficult to predict. As refugees will mostly have a clear reason for applying for asylum somewhere, and as their initial (temporary) status depends on the situation in their country of origin, the temporality of their stay is often marked by uncertainty. This, obviously, also has implications for their perspective on integration.

Furthermore, different refugee categories differ significantly in terms of the **qualifications and (material/immaterial) resources** that they bring. This is a very important factor in terms of accounting for the integration processes that these groups are likely to develop. For instance, Iranian refugees in particular on average had a relatively high level of education and sometimes even brought considerable resources with them. This is very different for refugees coming from countries such as Eritrea and Somalia. Also, it is very difficult to make general statements about the qualifications that different groups bring, because of the sometimes deep differences within groups, or even within specific migrant families (often gender related). This also appears to be the case with the current influx of Syrian migrants.

Besides the qualifications that refugees bring themselves, the opportunity structures in which they arrive also matter to their integration process. And in this respect it is important that the policy **context of**

refugee integration in the 1990s is very different from that of today. This involves key changes in generic policies and institutions, such as welfare state policies, as well as differences in **economic circumstances**. For instance, the economic climate in the early 1990s seems to have been much more positive in terms of economic opportunities for migrants than the situation in 2015 and 2016, when Europe was still recovering from one of its most significant financial and economic crises in recent history. Also, in various countries (including the Netherlands), **welfare state structures** were still more generous and accessible in the 1990s than they are now, due to generic welfare state reforms.

Furthermore, there have also been key changes in the **integration policy context** in many countries. Although it is still difficult to find one common European pattern in integration policies, it is clear that many European countries have been **'mainstreaming'** their integration policies over the last decade or so. This means that they have largely abandoned their specific, group-targeted approaches to integration for a generic approach where 'mainstream' policies are supposed to cater to a diverse population and produce optimal integration outcomes.

The Netherlands is one of the countries that has clearly 'mainstreamed' its integration approach since the late 2000s. Whereas in the 1990s significant means and targeted policies were available for the integration of refugees, by the end of the 2000s group targeted measures had been abandoned and integration policy as a distinct policy field had largely vanished (with an almost zero budget). This resembles the situation in France to some extent, where group-targeted measures had never been in place, and where one can hardly speak of an institutionalized national integration policy strategy. However, this mainstreaming of integration policies does not apply to all European countries. Germany, even a very important reference country when it comes to refugee integration, has taken a somewhat different turn in its integration strategies. Over the past decade or so, it has been gradually developing an integration strategy, with an important role for local governments as well (see also Geddes and Scholten 2016).

Some lessons from the past

The abovementioned factors together make it very hard to draw lessons regarding refugee integration from the past for the current situation. They should be observed anytime one tries to extrapolate past experiences to the present day. However, with this in mind, several lessons can be drawn from the past, as guidance for refugee integration strategies in the present.

First of all, studies show that refugees often face persistent difficulties in accessing the **labour market**. For instance, Engbersen a.o. (2015) show that in the Netherlands the labour market participation of refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic show a persistent gap with average participation rates in Dutch society. This is even despite the profitable economic circumstances and the relative cultural proximity that this group faced in the 1990s. Also, when compared other migrant categories, such as labour migrants, refugees 'close the gap' with the rest of society more slowly (Bevelander 2016). Factors that would contribute to this gap include the relatively long period that asylum applicants must wait in a reception center before being able to orient themselves at their new host society, but also poor (mental) health of refugees due to the situation for which they fled. Research also shows that refugees often first find employment below their original educational level (Bevelander 2016). This gap seems to decrease somewhat over time, but a persisting gap remains between original education and level of employment.

Secondly, the past teaches that **perceptions of and attitudes towards refugees** are highly versatile. Often, negative and positive sentiments toward refugees compete for attention. Focus-events, such as incidents or mediatized campaigns, can have a very significant and sudden effect on the public mood regarding asylum migration. This is also clearly manifest in the context of the current refugee situation, where for instance the German public mood has swung back and forth in response to amongst others Angela Merkel's statement 'Wir schaffen das' and the incidents on New Year's Eve in Cologne.

We know from research that **crime** rates amongst refugees are not higher when compared with native groups with similar socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics (Engbersen a.o. 2015). In fact, crime rates are even somewhat lower in comparison. However, in specific situations where refugees are housed in specific areas, this may be experienced very differently. The higher the concentration of refugees, the higher absolute crime rates, the greater the experience that refugees would on average be more criminal.

In terms of **housing**, research suggests that it is very important that refugees move into a regular housing situation as soon as possible. This allows refugees to get in contact with the host society. However, what seems to be favourable for their integration is also that they arrive in an area where there is prior experience with refugees and where other members of their community are present. Research shows (Robinson a.o. 2003) that the social capital that this generates can be very helpful for their integration and chances for making a first step on the labour market. Research in Sweden has shown that refugees that had been dispersed earned 25% less, were more often unemployed and much more often reliant on welfare benefits (Eding et al. 2004).

Finally, lessons from the past show that the level of **mobility** amongst refugees is relatively high. This includes refugees that move on to other destinations as well as refugees that return to their home country. For instance, in the Netherlands, one in three refugees that were granted a status between 1998 and 2007 had left the country by 2008 (Engbersen a.o. 2015). What is also clear from research is that the degree of socio-cultural integration indeed hinders return migration, but socio-economic integration seems to promote return migration. The better the socio-economic position of migrants, the more likely they are to eventually return. Furthermore, internal mobility in terms of refugees moving on to other places in the country is relatively high as well. This 'secondary' migration is often strongly urban-directed, targeted at those areas where refugees have the most economic opportunities. This secondary migration also often corrects the outcomes of efforts to resettle refugees throughout the country.

2.2 Emerging evidence on current refugee integration strategies

The literature on refugee integration strategies in response to the most recent refugee flows, is still relatively sparse. The situation is still emerging, and some countries have barely had the time to move from a focus on migration restriction to integration promotion. In this context, Engbersen a.o. (2015) published an influential policy brief, stating that there was 'no time to lose' in turning attention to refugee integration strategies. Their policy brief was amongst the first texts to set the agenda in terms of refugee integration.

Various studies show that over the past 2 years, most countries have been gearing up their integration efforts aimed at refugees, but in very different ways and at different paces. Konle-Seidl and Bolits (2016) argue that countries are clearly aware that if no 'short term fiscal costs' are made to promote refugee integration, then 'long-term costs of non-integration' may emerge which may be much more significant. Behind the **cross-national variation** in the efforts that are being made, there is an abundance of **ad-hoc measures and experiments** all over Europe. There does not seem to be a coherent systematic approach that converges between Europe. What does stand out from most European experiences, according to Konle-Seidl and Bolits (2016) and Eurofound, is the prioritization of labour market integration.

Furthermore, various studies suggest that the trend of mainstreaming integration policies and not adopting specific group-targeted measures appears to be cracking under the recent refugee immigration (Eurofound 2016, OECD 2016). Especially the OECD identifies a **need for a more differentiated approach**. The 'one integration policy' approach that is in place in most European countries, would insufficiently differentiate for differences between refugees and other migrants, as well as between different refugee groups and even for differences within groups. For instance, the health care situation and labour market opportunities for refugees are clearly different from that of labour migrants, and in comparison to family

migrants the refugees mostly do not have a referee in the country of destination that can help them. There are also significant differences between groups (such as in terms of education and labour market qualifications), such as between Somalian and Eritrean migrants on the one hand, and Syrian or Iraqi refugees on the other hand. EMN (2016) already observes that in many European countries '**more tailored**' measures are already being developed, although mostly in an explorative way with various pilot projects.

In this context, amongst others the **civic integration programmes** come to the foreground. Most countries have civic integration programs in place, but do not so much differentiate between refugees and other migrant categories. Several countries also have **individual integration plans** in place, which seem to work out particularly well for adapting to the situation of refugees (Konle-Seidl and Bolits 2016). This allows for flexible accommodation of integration trajectories to the specific situation and background of the refugee. However, a concern in some countries is who should be responsible for the management of such individual plans (for instance, job centers, government agencies, municipalities).

In terms of governance, studies also showed the key role that **social partners** (such as trade unions, employer's organisations, NGO's) can play in making refugee integration strategies work. There do seem to be key differences in the role that is attributed to social partners in various countries. Also, Eurofound (2016) observes that in some cases there seems to be pressure from trade union's and NGO's to develop more extensive integration services, whereas employer organizations seem to be benefited by faster and sometimes slimmer integration services.

Furthermore, one finding from early studies such as OECD (2016), Engbersen a.o. (2015) and Eurofound (2016) is that integration prospects for refugees seem to be **hindered by prolonged asylum procedures** as a consequence of the sudden increase of applications. Especially for those categories for which admission is considered very likely, the time spent in reception centers awaiting procedures counts as 'lost time' (Eurofound 2016). The OECD even recommends in this respect to provide integration services already before completion of the procedure to those groups with high prospects of being allowed to stay (ibid: 13-14). This would also respond to the often signalled concern that the **insecurity of legal status** can be an obstacle to integration.

Another finding from recent studies such as OECD (2016) is that **economic opportunity structures hardly ever seem to be taken into account in dispersal policies**. As stated in one of the 'lessons' described above, dispersal could hinder opportunities for labour market integration, when migrants are not located in areas that also offer opportunities. The OECD therefore suggests that such economic opportunity structures should be factored into dispersal policies more explicitly, to make sure that there is proximity to jobs.

Furthermore, in order to maximize such economic opportunity structures, it has become clear that all over Europe countries have developed various approaches to develop **employment support services** (EMN 2016). Some of these involve efforts to map the prior education, skills and training of refugees (Eurofound 2016). However, such efforts appear not very systematic; as mentioned above, most efforts still appear rather experimental and ad-hoc.

Finally, one of the topics that is high on the agenda in many European countries, especially Austria and The Netherlands, are potential **displacement effects**. This involves displacement effects for low-wage native workers. Studies so far show very little evidence for such displacement effects, and if there at all, they appear to be minimal and short-term at most. For instance, a study on how refugee migration in the 1990s influenced native workers in Denmark, revealed complementarities rather than displacement. Adjustment of wage levels were only minimal, and the main effect appears to be that refugee integration further spurred specialization by native workers in the context of a highly complex economy (Foged and Perri 2015, Konle-Seidl and Bolits 2016).

2.3 Conclusions

Although it is certainly not the first time that Europe has faced refugee migration and a challenge of refugee integration of some scale, it is difficult to draw lessons from the past. Not only are there important differences in the (socio-economic, cultural, political) background of refugees, also the context of refugee integration has changed rapidly (a.o. in terms of economic circumstances, welfare state facilities, migrant integration policies). This makes it very hard to compare the current refugee challenge with for instance refugee migration from the former Yugoslav republic over 20 years ago. However, some key aspects do emerge from the literature on refugee integration in the past. Labour market integration emerges as a key variable in the overall integration success of refugees, as well as access to regular housing in areas with availability of socio-economic opportunities. It is also clear that perceptions of refugees are very changeable and unpredictable, and that crime rates are usually not higher when compared to native groups with a similar socio-economic profile. Finally, mobility of refugees is relatively high, which means that some will return, some will stay but also others can move on to other destinations.

Finally, exploring recent literature on the emerging refugee situation in Europe, some patterns stand out. First of all, that there is significant cross-national variation in responses to refugee integration, revealing the absence of a more systematic and common approach in Europe. In fact, some studies reveal that many approaches have been rather ad-hoc or experimental. Furthermore, national policies would insufficiently differentiate between different refugee groups, reveal the absence of a more 'tailored' approach. This would also apply to civic integration programs in various countries. Furthermore, the role of social partners differs significantly between countries. Economic opportunities are increasingly incorporated into national policies, for instance as part of broader employment support services. However, in housing policies proximity to socio-economic opportunities still seems to be considered insufficiently.

The issues discussed in this chapter emerge from past and more recent literature on refugee integration. As mentioned, extrapolating from the findings in this literature to the current situation is complex. However, it does sketch some first themes that will be explored more in-depth and empirically in subsequent chapters.

3 Country cases

The countries selected for this study have each received increased numbers of asylum applicants over the past 2 to 3 years. There are, however, significant differences in terms of the size of the refugee flow between countries. As table 1 (on p.1) shows, especially Germany and Sweden have received relatively very high numbers of asylum applications. Relative to its population size, Austria and Belgium also received a relatively high number, against more moderate figures the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and France. Italy, with also relatively high figures of asylum applications, takes in a somewhat specific position, as it remains to be seen how many of these asylum applicants will remain in Italy. Finally, Norway is included as it has perhaps the longest history of refugee immigration and integration in Europe, which may provide valuable lessons in terms of refugee integration strategies. In this study, we will examine further to what extent these different figures mattered to policy innovation in refugee integration.

When analysing policy innovation to refugee integration, the project distinguishes various facets of refugee integration strategies. For each of the selected countries, we will examine the **context of their integration policies**, as a key background factor for being able to examine policy innovation in the first place. More specifically, we examine the following aspects of integration policies:

- Presence or absence of a specific approach; mainstreaming or group-targeted measures?
- Type of overall integration approach (what integration model: assimilation, universalism, multiculturalism, differentialism, or other...)
- Locus of the integration approach; centralized, decentralized, or 'mixed'.

Subsequently, we also looked at how the relation between immigration and integration policies was organized; the so-called **migration-integration nexus**. Especially for refugees as newcomers, how this nexus is organized could have a great effect on their integration. We distinguish between the following items:

- Access to citizenship; what are the conditions and what is the time frame for acquisition of citizenship?
- Internships during civic integration programs; is there a possibility for refugees to combine internships with their civic integration programs?
- Timing of civic integration; does civic integration start already during or only after the application process?

Subsequently, we look at a number of specific policy sectors, including housing, education, labour and healthcare. As mentioned, we focus across policy sectors, as the expectation is that many measures relevant to refugee integration come from generic policy areas rather than specific integration policies. For the domain of **housing**, we will look at the following key items:

- Accommodation of asylum seekers; are asylum seekers housed in reception centers, for how long, and how are asylum seekers distributed?
- Accommodation of status holders; once an asylum seeker has obtained a status, how is housing organized then; is there access to independent housing, is there a distribution key over geographical areas, are there any priority groups, can refugees choose locations?
- Structure of available housing stock; how is the housing stock organized for refugees, is there specialized housing or mainly use of existing housing, to what extent is social housing a priority, and who finances housing for refugees?

A key sector in integration strategies is **education**. Also for refugee integration, literature suggests that educational facilities are key to refugee integration. That is why we have looked at the following aspects of educational policies:

- Access to education; when can refugees get access to primary/secondary educational programs (at arrival, after granting of status, later..)
- Entitlement; who has access to what type of educational services.
- Funding; are there any specific allowances promoting educational access for refugees?
- Structure of the educational system; who provides educational services (national/local/private/public), how is it targeted (generic/specific), is there a sequenced or dual approach to the relation between education and participation on the labour market.
- Coaching and monitoring; are there any specific instruments in place to coach refugees (such as personal coaching) or to monitor educational participation (statistics)
- Participation; are programs mandatory or optional?

Another crucial sector for integration is the **labour market**. This is also the area at which most countries have been focusing their refugee integration strategies (as we have also seen in the preceding chapter). However, labour market participation is also a very broad area, including for instance access to labour market, promoting participation but also specifically promoting entrepreneurship. Hence, the project has focused on a number of items that have emerged in the literature as relevant for understanding labour market integration:

- Access to the labour market: who is entitled to support measures oriented at labour market access? And what benefits are provided for labour market access (for employers as well as for employees).
- Activation strategies; what sorts of strategies are deployed to promote labour market integration (such as skill trainings, facilitating contact with employers, language courses for specific professions, vocational training, etc), are these generic to everyone or specific to refugees, and who offers such activities strategies?
- Entrepreneurship; are there any (generic or specific) measures oriented at promoting entrepreneurship?

A final policy sector that will be examined, and which can be very relevant to refugee integration as well, is **healthcare**. A key issue here is to what extent the healthcare system results in inclusive or exclusive effects for refugees. We look at the following aspects of healthcare:

- Assessment of health issues; are health issues amongst refugees assessed and monitored?
- Addressing health issues; how are health issues addressed, is there a specific targeting, are there generic measures?
- Barriers to healthcare access; what type of barriers to refugees face for getting access to healthcare? (legal/financial/geographical/cultural barriers)

Besides these more socio-economic policy areas, it is important to recognize that refugee integration (like any form of migrant integration) is also (at least partly) a socio-cultural process. Hence, we also look at the very broad theme of **intercultural relations**. This includes, broadly, topics such as the role of values and norms in integration, promoting contact between migrants and natives, and measures regarding anti-radicalisation. More specifically, we have looked at:

- Civic integration; to what extent do socio-cultural issues play a role in civic integration programs, and are these mandatory with an exam, or different?
- Contact; are there measures to promote contact between refugees and the rest of society; is contact an issue at all in policies, for instance in the context of attitudes toward refugees; and who facilitates projects aimed at contact?

- Radicalization; are there measures oriented at anti-radicalization targeted at refugees, what type of measures are developed?

Importantly, the project does not so much aim to describe what is going on in these various areas, but specifically to find what has changed and to what extent this can be seen as innovation. So, the project actively searches for first indications (from the survey, interviews or secondary sources) on whether measures in abovementioned areas worked well (or not).

Table 3. Summary overview of policy areas and themes for the case studies

	Policy area / theme
Generic themes	Overall migrant integration strategy (policy context)
	Migration-integration nexus
Socio-economic areas	Housing
	Education
	Labour
Other areas	Health
	Intercultural relations

3.1 In depth cases

First, we provide an overview of our findings from the six ‘in-depth’ cases that were examined: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

Austria

Although much attention goes to destination countries like Sweden and Germany, Austria actually has been also a key destination country for asylum seekers, especially relative to its overall population. As a share of the Austrian total population, the number of asylum seekers mark 1,8% in 2015. With 2.026 refugees per one million of the total population, Austria has the second largest value in Europe, only passed by Sweden (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, 2015, p. 8). Due to the more restrictive policies, the number of arrivals dropped sharply in 2016. One-third of all asylum seekers in 2015 came from Afghanistan and another third from Syria; 15% were Iraqis. The fourth and fifth largest group were from Iran and Pakistan (Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2015, p. 6).

In terms of **integration policy**, Austria has a clear nationally coordinated approach. The national Austrian government passed the *50 Action Points Plan* for Integration of refugees as well as a *National Action Plan for Integration* (targeted at all immigrants, so ‘mainstreamed’). Since 2014, there is a special ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. The federal organisation of the Austrian state with its nine federal states is also reflected in integration policies. These is a “**horizontal differentiation** in the individual ministries and a **vertical differentiation** due to the hierarchy of regional authorities” (Herold 2017). Besides, civil society institutions play an important role as well. In general, the federal states are responsible for the implementation of national guidelines and legislations (Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration, 2011, p. 9f).

The pursued integration policy is officially framed as a two-way-process with the narrative *participation through effort*.¹ Wohlfarth and Kolb (2016) explain the effort made by the immigrant as a precondition for a successful integration into the Austrian society. Furthermore, a certain amount of adaption from both sides is necessary, too. According to the two authors the amount of adaption by the immigrant is much bigger than for the majority society (p.8). Thus, one could argue that the Austrian integration approach is **assimilationist**. This also becomes clear when looking at the preamble of the *Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration* which determines *the development of an Austrian sense of solidarity supported by the*

¹ [Teilhabe durch Leistung] (Wohlfarth & Kolb, 2016, p. 8).

majority society and the immigrants as the central goal for integration (Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration, 2011, p. 3). Besides, the newly established courses on norms and values give a hint to Austria's integration approach. The Burgenland, one of Austria's federal states, is regarded as the pilot project state where such courses were installed firstly. Other refugee integration measures could not be found in Burgenland.

In terms of **civic integration**, Austria follows a generic approach targeted at all migrants, including refugees. Civic integration programs are mandatory and include courses on Austrian norms and values as well as on language acquisition. However, on top of this generic approach, Austria has developed an innovative approach to combining civic integration with internships. In 2016, it implemented a new instrument for refugees being dependent on welfare benefits, called *Voluntary Integration Year* (Eurofound, 2016, p. 13). It is not an employment, rather a job training and lasts between six and twelve months with weekly working hours between 16 and 34 hours. Concerning the task areas, it is similar to a gap year that can be taken by young people to do voluntary work in the social sectors. Refugees can work in social services for children, elderly, drug addicts, homeless or disabled people (integrationsjahr.at, 2017). Other internships as part of the asylum seekers' vocational training or secondary schooling is also possible (Knapp, 2016, p. 75). Besides, the association *Wirtschaft für Integration* (economy for integration) offers its own refugee mentoring programme for 38 asylum seekers. These are supported by mentors for six months to identify and develop their skills to be prepared for the Austrian labour market. Furthermore, the participants get to know contacts that might be helpful for their future job-seeking. At the moment, the activities are focused on trade and IT. They also obtain German courses in the form of 200 hours and workshops about living, culture and work in Austria (Verein Wirtschaft für Integration, 2017).

According to representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and trade associations, there is a need of special instruments regarding **labour market** integration that tackle refugees' needs (Koppenberg, 2015, p. 26). To this aim (Eurofound 2016), guidance, counselling, vocational training, job-related training and programmes for youth are available for both, asylum seekers and refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (p. 30). Job-related trainings are - at the moment - only available as mainstream measures for all unemployed people, however targeted measures are planned (OECD, 2016, p. 40) and to some extent even implemented (expert from Austria). Since migrants with positive asylum decision are clients of the Austrian Labour Market Service (Public Employment Agency), they may get job mediation, too – other than asylum seekers (Eurofound, 2016, p. 30). Another instrument to facilitate labour market integration of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are wage subsidies for employers. There is also the possibility that the Public Employment Agency pays "50% of wage costs and non-wage labour costs" (p. 33) for a maximum period of five months. Besides, special procedures for recognising undocumented skills were established to cope with the influx of asylum seekers. A completely new measure targeting at refugees is the job fair *Chancen:reich* (chances rich) initiated by the NGO Chance Integration, Vienna and 50 Austrian companies. The Public Employment Agency as well as the Vienna Business Agency are also involved. Herewith, firms are able to introduce themselves and their work to refugees within talks and workshops (p. 33). Social partners have a fundamental role, too. Being part of the policymaking concerning education and apprenticeships, they provide information to this target group (p. 39). The pilot project "*Überregionale Lehrstellenvermittlung*" (national apprenticeship mediation) aims to bring 100 asylum seekers not older than 25 years into apprenticeships of professions with labour shortage (Koppenberg, 2015, p. 26). Another mentoring programme was established in 2008 by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Targeting at refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, it offers a network and information concerning job-related issues. Finally, there are some programmes provided by the Public Employment Agency that aim to support refugees to set up their own business. The programmes include measures such as consultation and coaching. They seem effective but are on a small-scale (Martin, Arcarons, Aumüller, Bevelander, Emilsson, Kalantaryan, MacIver, Mara, Scalettari, Venturini, Vidovic, van der Welle, Windisch, Wolffberg & Zorlu, 2016, p. 23). The Technical University Vienna established a one-week programme:

Entrepreneurship for Refugees following by another “twelve week period of individual coaching by experienced entrepreneurs and consultancies” (Technische Universität Wien, 03-04-2017).

However, Austria also develops some differentialist measures in the area of labour market access. This is driven amongst others by a public fear that easy labour market access could lead to competition with native workers in specific sectors. In this context, labour market access for asylum seekers (after 4 months) is conditional on a labour market test. For some sectors, access is highly restricted. Also, access to social insurance is restricted for asylum seekers.

In the realm of **housing**, Austria has faced several issues concerning housing of refugees and others with subsidiary protection status. Once they leave the reception centres, they are allowed to apply for social housing but do not have any priority status that can help them climbing up in the waiting list. Variations in further requirements across the federal states make house-hunting even more complicated. Access to subsidised housing requires e.g. a residence permit of minimum five years or German skills at level B1. The fact that house-hunting for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection is not facilitated by public assistance, but rather complicated, is not a positive indication for further integration of this group. To tackle this problem, so called *Startwohnungen* (starting flats) are provided for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary asylum. They are financed by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and by the Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. Due to the high influx of migrants to Vienna, the Austrian Integration Fund offers a residential neighbourhood for those with positive asylum decision, too (Koppenberg, 2015, p. 66). Also, some promising projects supporting refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection in house-hunting do exist, albeit only to a limited extent on the local level. One is *Existenz und Wohnen* by Caritas Vorarlberg which provides assistance i.a. in house-hunting and emergency overnight accommodation (Caritas Vorarlberg, 2017). *Flüchtlinge Willkommen* is another project by an NGO. It brings asylum seekers or refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection searching for a room together with shared flats searching for new flatmates. They also offer help with administrative paperwork regarding the funding of housing for asylum migrants. If social assistance is not enough to cover the costs, the project is able to start crowdfunding or micro funding to support the person in need (flüchtlinge-willkommen.at, 2017).

The generic approach that is pursued in most areas, is complemented by various seemingly more specific measures in the area of **education**. At the level of primary and secondary education, there are welcome classes for newcomers, and some schools even provide subsidiary facilities in mother tongue education as a stepping stone towards learning German. An Austrian interviewee indicated that “mobile interkulturelle Teams” (mobile intercultural teams) are an ad-hoc measure to tackle specific difficulties for asylum seekers and refugee children. In practice, there is a problem with getting access to education. As a lot of reception centres cannot provide sufficient educational services, the educational opportunities for refugees is still precarious and impeded until the people are registered under Basic Care (Mayrhofer, 2006, p. 3). A study by the European Migration Network on integration policies for unaccompanied minors even indicate a waiting time of six months before attending school (European Migration Network, 2010, p. 97). Furthermore, there have been some efforts by Austrian universities to foster university access and education for asylum seekers and refugees. The most prominent initiative is *MORE*, a project aims to establish courses targeting

Mobile Intercultural Teams

Austria is one of the countries that clearly combines a generic approach with some specific elements. An example of this are the ‘mobile intercultural teams’ that specifically target issues that may emerge with asylum seekers and refugees in educational facilities (regular facilities as well as special facilities in asylum seeker centers). In some cases this may involve mother tongue teaching as part of a strategy of moving towards regular education. As such, this is a clear example of an ad-hoc, temporary and specific measure used in specific cases where problem urgency requires something more than a generic approach.

specifically at asylum seekers and refugees with academic background. Participants may get an insight into the course offer and obtain assistance in order to choose the fitting programme. The initiative offers a non-bureaucratic recognition procedure for unverifiable qualifications, participation for free, remission of tuition fees and entitlement to exams. Besides, they organize conferences for academics and refugees and other activities regarding culture, sport, transfer of knowledge etc. The city of Vienna established an information platform and integration assistance for asylum seekers and refugees called *StartWien*. By offering 1000 places, it aims to support young people to get prepared for the Austrian labour market. It contains language courses, basic courses in maths, English, IT but also job specific modules such as handicraft workshops and peer interpreter classes. A fusion of nine actors execute the programme in two different locations in Vienna (Stadt Wien, 2017).

Austria's approach does not put much emphasis on **health** in relation to refugee integration. The main issue in relation to health care that is identified concerns language barriers (Integration Report 2016), which requires more investment in language training and in professional interpreters, and to some extent in intercultural competences. It has become clear that, in spite of refugees being included in Basic Care, they face difficulties in getting access to public health services. In this context, the City of Vienna has issued *Vienna Refugee Aid Service Cards* to facilitate access. Besides, the interviewed expert referred to the *Amber Med Clinic* in Vienna where people without insurance protection can get help; be it medical or social. This facility was also a contact point for asylum seekers. Also, there are several promising practices, also mentioned by OECD (2016). First of all, a project by *Hemayat*, which is a non-profit association in Vienna and provides medical, psychological, psychotherapeutic assistance for people that have survived war and torture. They are supported by professional interpreters. The provision is for free and does not depend on health insurance. Another project is *Zebra* located in Graz. Its main goals are the enforcement of human rights, promotion of equal treatment and long-term integration, proscription of torture and rehabilitation of those who survived it, fight against racism. It provides help on different levels, such as legally, socially, politically, medically, psychotherapeutically and psychiatrically. Furthermore, it expanded its target group by giving trainings on inter-cultural skills and diversity management. Finally, *Medical Aid for Refugees* is another initiative combating the shortage in health services for refugees. It is based in Vienna and a fusion of several non-profit organisations, private initiatives and voluntary doctors. It was meant as a fill-in during the refugee crisis in 2015 where public health services could not manage to take care of all arriving migrants.

Finally, in terms of **intercultural relations**, Austria's adherence to an assimilationist approach is clearly reflected in the importance of both language acquisition and national values and norms in civic integration. This is also targeted at refugees. In addition, various measures have been adopted to promote contact with the host society. The project *Neuland* established by *Caritas Wien* and *Mobile Flüchtlingsbetreuung*, aims to collect refugees and Austrian locals in rural areas in *Niederösterreich*. Its main objective is "a real interaction and intermixture of "new" and "old" inhabitants of the region" (Piatti and Schmidinger, 2010, p. 4). The Austrian Caritas is project coordinator for *Integrationspatenschaften* or *Lernpatenschaften* (integration or tutorial mentor programmes). They target at adult individuals, families with children and unaccompanied minors. Mentors support asylum seekers and refugees in administrative paperwork, language acquisition, free time activities, job and apartment search or just as persons of trust. The project *engagiert.integriert* (engaged.integrated) promotes intercultural volunteering in Upper Austria. It is a platform for asylum seekers, refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or other immigrants that want to engage in social organisations but also organisations that want to foster volunteering. It provides counselling, placement and support for volunteers with migration background and for organisations (ulf-ooe.at, 2017). The Austrian Integration Fund offers the web portal *Treffpunkt Deutsch* (meeting point German) to facilitate further German conversation courses for refugees and newcomers in Austria on voluntary level in addition to regular German courses. It provides information for those being interested to teach and those being interested to learn, but also for NGOs searching for courses for their clients with refugee background (integrationsfonds.at, 2017). Finally, the project *Flüchtlinge Willkommen* (refugees welcome), initially established in Germany, brings asylum

seekers or refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection searching for a room together with shared flats searching for new flatmates. They also offer help with administrative paperwork regarding the funding of housing for asylum migrants. If social assistance is not enough to cover the costs, the project is able to start crowdfunding or micro funding to support the person in need (flüchtlinge-willkommen.at, 2017).

Denmark

Compared to nearby countries such as Sweden but also Norway, Denmark only witness a modest rise in number of asylum applications. This was especially so in 2015, when the number of applications just exceeded 21.000. Nonetheless, refugee migration and integration have been major issues of public and political contestation in Denmark.

Denmark has a clear **nationally coordinated integration strategy**. On the governmental level, the resort integration falls into the responsibility of Minister of Foreigners and Integration. Integration policies in Denmark are mainly specifically targeted at selected immigrant populations only (Academic expert Denmark 1). A central actor here is the Danish Immigration Service (DIS). The DIS is a directorate of the Danish Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration and implements the Danish Alien Act, meaning that the DIS deals with asylum applications, family reunification, visas, residence and work permits (ecoi.net, 2008). However, the municipalities are responsible for the implementation of all integration programs, including language courses and labour market education as well as housing (Academic expert Denmark 1). Although national funds are available for supporting innovative pilot projects concerning refugee integration, the municipalities have a great share of autonomy in supporting civil society and NGO projects (Leinenbach and Pedersen, 2017). There has been a short period, where it was intended to mainstream the integration policies into generic policies; however, the developments are going back to more target-specific policies (Academic expert Denmark 1). In some domains the approach is mixed, for instance in education policies, or generic, such as in health policies. In the domain of education, specific measures for the integration of newly arrived students are taken in the beginning, but the goal is to place them in the generic education system as soon as possible (Academic expert Denmark 1).

The integration policy approach in Denmark can be classified as **assimilationist** (Jensen, et al., 2010). This implies that Denmark has strong notions of a national identity, which is closely connected with the culture. The Danish interpret (western) values such as freedom of speech, equality of man and woman and social equality as ingrained in their culture: “The perception of Denmark as a cultural homogeneous country, and (...) the conceptions of social egalitarianism and universalism (...) (are) constitutive elements of Danish society” (Hedetoft, 2006). Assimilation means that the existence of cultures other than or conflicting with the Danish understanding of culture is very restricted and often seen as problematic (Jensen, et al., 2010). Therefore, the amendments to the Danish Integration Act in 2006, with its “Declaration on integration and active citizenship”, emphasize clearly the recognition and duty of the newcomers to learn fundamental Danish norms and values. The beginning of the “Three-Party” negotiations in February 2016 indicated a change in this trend. The new main goal was set on a quick labour market integration of asylum seekers, with less emphasis on socio-cultural integration: “Instead of teaching refugees how to live in Denmark (e.g. through courses on history, social norms, culture...) and how to speak Danish before they can work, the new goal is to get refugees into a workplace where they can learn those things” (Kvist, 2016, p. 2).

Like most European countries, Denmark has an elaborate **civic integration** scheme in place, including a mandatory integration exam. As mentioned, this scheme includes socio-economic aspects, such as most importantly Danish language training, as an orientation on Danish values and norms. Specific to Denmark is the *individual integration trajectory*. After their arrival, asylum seekers are obliged to sign an *integration contract* with the accommodation centre, where personal goals in terms of acquiring language skills but also duties are determined (New to Denmark dk., 2016). More importantly, Denmark has an extensive, systematic mentorship system in place for refugees. If the jobcentre considers it as reasonable, a personal

mentor for the refugee will be offered, to “give personal, social and practical support in connection with virtually all forms of employment promoting activities” (Madsen, 2016, p.7). When the job centre considers the mentorship as no longer necessary, they can stop the measure. Moreover, the local job centre decides on the number of hours, the refugee is supported by a mentor, in consideration of personal assessment of abilities and needs. No such measure is available for asylum seekers. However, various NGOs offer mentorship programs for both asylum seekers and refugees.

In terms of **housing**, there is a central allocation strategy to disperse refugees across Denmark. After a refugee has been granted asylum, the DIS allocates him/her to a municipality according to several criteria. This process is called “**allocation**” (New to Denmark dk., 2016). Firstly, the 98 Danish municipalities have to take in refugees based on a quota system, which is re-evaluated every year. Local councils communicate between the regions about the allocation of refugees and agree on regional quotas. In the second step, the municipalities must come to terms on how to allocate the refugees between them (municipality quotas) based on the regional quotas. Secondly, the individual characteristics of the refugees are taken into consideration. Herewith, the possibility of employment plays the most important role. Personal skills and previous education as well as work experience should match the municipalities’ labour market situation and the educational facilities. Moreover, if a refugee already has a job offer in one of the municipalities, he/she will be allocated there. The DIS also takes family ties into consideration (New to Denmark dk., 2016). Local authorities can request to receive refugees of a particular profile. However, the final decision on which refugees are sent to which municipality, is made by DIS (Academic Expert Denmark 1). Refugees have no freedom to choose their residence location. The DIS decides for them where to live. Only after successfully completing the three years’ integration program in their assigned municipality they are free to move wherever they want (Academic expert Denmark 1). Experts evaluated this approach of integrated cooperation as successful. The country works with “a system of dispersal, whereby refugees are allocated to housing based on the available services of an individual municipality” (International Federation of Housing and Planning, 2016, p. 17). This strategy is considered as a form of “**matching**”. Refugees voice their preferences and needs in terms of housing, while at the same time municipalities state their housing stock vacancies. This process can stimulate suitable housing solutions and takes factors of integration in various domains into account. According to the experts, this strategy facilitates the chances of a successful integration.

In contrast to many other countries, refugees do have a *priority* status when it comes to access social housing. A municipality can “reserve” every fourth vacant subsidized dwelling (25%) for people in immediate need (Alves and Andersen 2015). To obtain a social house in Denmark can take up years of waiting, depending on the type of dwelling and the neighbourhood that it is located in, since vacancies are distributed by a list-system. Most municipalities allocated their 25% of the vacant social housing stock to refugees, meaning that they can skip the waiting time on the list (Annesophie Hansen, n/a). However, the available social houses have not been sufficient to accommodate all refugees in most cases.

Matching

Denmark is one of the European countries to have a targeted (in contrast to ‘blind’) scheme for the allocation of refugees to municipalities. This involves a matching of individual characteristics (including employment opportunities) of refugees with the opportunity structures offered in specific municipalities. Such targeted allocation schemes would result in better integration outcomes, as they facilitate labour market, housing and to some extent also educational integration. Similar matching strategies have been developed in countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany.

One of the mayor problems Denmark is facing in the field of **health care** provision for refugees is the lack of information. Newly arrived asylum seekers often address the wrong places when they get sick. This is both a problem for patients and professionals. The latter spend a lot of time and effort to handle treatment requests that should be addressed elsewhere. Moreover, it poses unnecessary additional costs

for the system (Hoffmann, 2017). A research conducted at the University of Copenhagen proposes an effective solution to this problem. It has been proven successful to introduce 12 hours of courses on how to navigate in the Danish health system (Hoffmann, 2017). This can be combined with language classes, which are mandatory for all asylum seekers in Denmark. The researchers tested the participant's knowledge about the Danish health system before and after the classes. It turned out, that their knowledge improved in 9 out of 11 points, which have been identified as problematic before. Signe Smith, Assistant Professor at the Department of Health Services at the University of Copenhagen states: "It's a big effect for a little effort. Language schools already teach courses in Danish society, but they focus on democracy, labour market and education. It is an obvious opportunity to make it compulsory to teach newcomers about the healthcare system..." (Hoffmann, 2017, free translation).

In terms of **education**, the approach towards refugees is a mixture of generic and specific measures. There is a special system for 'arrival education' for newcomers, involving a strong focus on Danish language (no mother tongue training). Generally, the basic set of education right after the arrival (introductory course) is provided by refugee-specific facilities in the reception centres (New to Denmark dk., 2016). Education for children is offered either in or in affiliation with the centres. Here, migrant specific facilities dominate. Language education for residence permit holders is provided by Danish language schools (sprogscole) in the municipalities, which are either public or private (Bendixen, 2016). In most cases, refugees learn Danish in classes together with other refugees. However, there has also been a questioning of the specific measures adopted in the context of education. A research conducted in 2010 shows that the special classes for immigrant minors (modtagerklasser) are not beneficial for the children's development and integration, since they are isolated from their native peers for too long. Jessen and Montgomery (2010) state that "Statistics of poor school results and low access to higher educational level for these children are associated among others, with flaws in this program" (p.23). In Denmark, we can also see more positive signals regarding educational integration measures. The in Denmark established mentorship program for refugees seems to be quite promising, considering the focus on the individual strength and needs. Mentorship has different forms and has a very de-centralized nature (Academic Expert Denmark 2). A weakness of the program is, that the de-centralized nature leads to an unequal implementation (Academic Expert Denmark 1 and 2). Some municipalities have extensive programs in place, while others have only small programs or none. According to Academic Expert 1, the *flexibility* of the educational programs poses an important indication of success. For instance, if municipalities can delegate the provision of language courses and other educational measures to private companies and establish a close cooperation with companies in integration manners, it is very beneficial for all involved parties.

Denmark offers a range of structural **labour market** activation strategies to refugees. These are normally carried out by the local job-centres. Three types of measures are in place. Firstly, guidance and training to enhance the refugees' qualifications and skills including specific employment trainings, secondly internships and traineeships and thirdly subsidised short-term salaried employment (Martín et al., 2016). Refugees participating in the latter are usually less paid than working in regular employment. The short-term salaried employment should be offered in fields where work is needed, however also in accordance with individual wishes and pre-conditions (Martín et al., 2016). Another activation strategy has been introduced in March 2016. The initiative called IGU (*integration education; Integrationsgrunduddannelsen*) is an apprenticeship scheme, that provides personalized training programs for a duration of two years (Academic Expert Denmark 1). Refugees between 18 and 40 are entitled to participate. Moreover, applicants must have been registered in Denmark for at least five years (Leinenbach and Pedersen, 2017). Refugees learn on a job in a private company or public institution, combined with an additional 20 weeks of classes in relevant topics (Academic Expert Denmark 1). Furthermore, there have been attempts in civil society to develop projects and measures to foster labour market activation. One example is concept of "*industry packages*" (branchepakker). This initiative is a cooperation between Danish NGOs and companies and is, supported by the Local Government Denmark, implemented by a growing number of Danish municipalities (Martín et al., 2016). The course

consists of five modules. Firstly, an introductory course is offered, where participants get familiar with different business areas and then choose one of their interest. Secondly, a short-term internship is part of the program in order to verify the choice and thirdly a longer “business stay” where basic skills are learned and improved. Fourthly, a second business stay with additional courses that teach knowledge in the specific area of the labour market and finally a third business stay where the refugee’s field of work is verified also according to structural needs of the country is carried out. (Martín et al., 2016).

Although the data on the effect of recently launched labour market integration strategies is still very limited there are *some indications of success*. The Migration Policy Centre conducted a research in 2016 on policies and practices of labour market integration support measures for asylum seekers and refugees in EU member states, in collaboration with the German Bertelsmann Stiftung. In their report on Denmark, it could be identified that learning the Danish language has a “significant effect on the chances of getting employed” (Martín et al., 2016, p.26). Moreover, taking a pro-active approach in facilitating contact between employers and refugees by authorities such as municipalities has been proven successful (Martín et al., 2016). Especially in the private sectors this has a strong positive correlation with future employment of the individual. The research implies that this measure

is most advantageous for the participant if subsidised short-term salaried employment is combined with other integration measures, in particular with previous regular education. In contrast, similar projects in the private sector have not been proven successful to the same extent (Martín et al., 2016). Finally, it was shown, that the more time refugees have no access to integration courses, such as Danish language and social integration courses, the harder it will be for individuals to find an occupation. The inclusion in the labour market should start as soon as possible (Martín et al., 2016). Moreover, some statements can be made about the effects of the newly introduced IGU schemes and the phase-in salary. They have the potential to facilitate and ease access to the labour market for refugees with no or little work experience, since formal training opportunities are provided (Academic Expert Denmark 1). A strength of both initiatives is, that they grant refugees experience in Danish workplaces and are tailored exactly at the refugee’s demands and personal wishes, for instance learning Danish at a practical work setting. This also poses a valuable opportunity for employers to become familiar with refugees’ skills and human capital (Academic expert Denmark 1). Academic Expert Denmark (2) confirms that, even though IGU schemes have been viewed sceptically, recently more positive signals emerged. Nonetheless, the measures have also some reported weaknesses. For instance, the measures can lead to a two-tier labour market with stratified working-rights and trigger downward pressure on wages (Academic Expert Denmark 1).

Finally, when it comes to **intercultural relations**, there is no structural approach to promoting contact. The focus is rather on the conditions for contact, such as language training and socio-cultural integration courses. As far as measures are there to promote intercultural contact, this is mostly done by civil society actors. According to Academic Expert Denmark (2) this fact poses an indication of success in itself. In Denmark, municipalities are responsible for the integration of refugees. They have to mobilize the human and financial resources in order to provide the variety of integration-related activities. Most often, municipalities have limited resources and are not able to provide the full range of services. Therefore, NGO’s and civil society’s engagement poses a large benefit for the refugees themselves but also for the municipalities. The latter “delegate” activities to NGOs, such as socio-cultural activities and support with translations of official documents. Herewith, municipalities follow several strategies to involve NGOs. Promising is here the municipality of Odense, where always representatives of NGOs are invited when

Involvement of NGO's and the private sector

The Danish ‘Industry Packages’ are a good example of how the private sector and NGO’s can be actively involved in the ‘governance’ of refugee integration. For specific labour market sectors, such packages provide internships and ‘training on the job’, providing refugees not only with potential direct job opportunities, but also opportunities to develop labour market skills more broadly. Germany is another country where similar forms of involvement of NGO’s and companies can be observed.

refugees meets representatives of the municipality. They follow the strategy of facilitating the contact between NGOs and refugees. Another way of involving NGOs is through financing. On the one hand municipalities can fund the NGOs, whose activities suit the overarching goals of integration, and on the other hand NGOs themselves can apply at various ministries for funding of their projects. Academic Expert Demark (2) concludes that social-cultural integration is not state-run but state-led. Through the authority of public institutions in financing and other ways of NGOs inclusion, the organisations are pressured to follow the general objectives of integration set by the institutions. Both experts mentioned one NGO that stand out: the organisation Venligboerne. Their overall aim is to help refugees settle in Denmark. The NGO for instance organises communal dinners where families could sign up for receiving refugees from the asylum centres who came for dinner. There is a large voluntary mentor/buddy network. All organised by volunteers (Academic Expert Denmark 1).

France

In comparison with various other European countries, France has not been a major destination country for refugees recently. Apart from early incidents with refugees trying to cross the Italian-French border, leading to the first pressure on the Schengen agreement, and from refugee concentrations in Paris and near Calais (refugees on their way to the UK), the refugee crisis seems to have affected France less than several other countries in this study. However, what does make France an interesting case, is its assimilationist and mainstreamed approach to migrant integration. With various EU countries nowadays trending towards a similar approach, it is interesting to see how an assimilationist country such as France has fared in its response to the challenge of refugee integration.

France was traditionally always the archetype of an **assimilationist** approach, which we can still observe in the current integration policies. In the efforts of integrating migrants, the values of France and rights and duties in the Republic are strongly emphasized, as is acquiring knowledge of the language. Conversely, in many domains integration policies do not even exist, because migrants are considered to be French people and are therefore not in need of specific policies. Furthermore, the majority of integration policies in France are **mainstreamed**. Especially with regards to the labour market, education and housing, once a refugee has acquired refugee status they are generally considered equal to all French citizens and thus are subject to the same, generic policies.

Similar to countries like Germany and the Netherlands, France has developed a **civic integration** scheme, also targeted at refugees. Asylum seekers can enrol in civic integration only after their status has been granted, or in case their application has not been processed within nine months. Apart from language training, civic integration in France also involves a signing of a Charter of Rights and Duties of French Citizens as a token of full integration in French society and knowledge of the language.

In terms of **housing**, France has faced many difficulties in terms of mobilising sufficient capacity in terms of proper accommodation for refugees (in spite of the relatively low number of refugees). If in the first period after receiving their status, refugees do not find accommodation in cooperation with local authorities or by themselves, there are temporary accommodation centres (*Centre provisoire d'hébergement*, CPH), to which people can be allocated for another 9 months, which can also be renewed for another 3 months. However, a 2015 OFII report has found that the average length of stay in these is 528 days, which is about 18 months. For refugees, this is 495 days and those who are refused refugee status 573 days. As part of the evaluation, we can then say that the period of three to six months is not sufficient, or not properly adhered to. The national assembly has also diagnosed a chronic shortage of housing; in 2014 it was found that as a form of emergency reception, refugees were appointed places in hotels, for instance. There is not really a distribution key, but refugees are allocated to where there is space for them, which follows the capacities of the regions. There is no dispersal regulation of refugees and other beneficiaries of protection to municipalities in France. Once former asylum seekers are granted protection or refugee status and receive a residence permit, they can have access to a temporary housing

centre in order to prepare and ease their settlement. After that, they are supposed to have access to the same benefits as any national and find an accommodation of their own.

In France, a major problem is that temporary accommodation centres are under capacity, leading to many people to have difficulty finding accommodation and subsequently, integrating well. An EMN ad-hoc mentions a number of local initiatives that have been helpful as best practices. First of all, the *Accelair* program, which was set up in Lyon area in 2002 by Forum Réfugiés. This program aims to find permanent accommodation through individual meetings on administrative tasks, information regarding the housing market and contracts as well as budget management for a period of 6 to 18 months. In addition, the project aids labour market integration through language and vocational trainings, creating career plans, preparing for job interviews etc. In 2008, upon request from the Ministry of the Interior, the project started to be implemented on the national level due to its success. Second, *RELOREF (Réseau pour l'Emploi et le Logement des Réfugiés)*, was created by Terre d'asile in 2004 in order to create housing units and offer temporary solutions for the period between the transfer from accommodation centres to independent housing. Furthermore, there are projects like *PRIM* and *INSTALE*, which respectively help refugees finding housing outside of areas where accommodation has become too expensive or is not available due to shortages which have also been successful in the past 10 years.

In terms of **health care**, France like most European countries only has a minimalist policy approach. This involves check-ups and treatment upon arrival, as part of a screening program, but no specific targeted policies to respond to specific refugee health issues. This echoes the French generalist and mainstreamed approach that treats refugees as much as possible as others. There are no specific measures to ensure that refugees really have full and equal access to health care services.

The mainstreamed and generic French approach is also clearly visible in the realm of **education**. There is compulsory education for anyone between 6 and 16 years old, regardless of the administrative situation. For higher education, the same laws and procedures apply for refugees as they would for other migrants and French people. Student refugees are entitled to scholarships via "Les Crous", which seems to be the generic scholarship institution for French students². Interestingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established a special scholarship for Syrian refugee students, for which 73 candidates were selected in 2016/2017, but other than that, there seem to be no specific allowances and financing schemes for refugees³.

For **labour market integration**, France also follows a universalist rather than a targeted approach specific for refugees. Asylum seekers cannot register with public employment services, unless their application procedure takes more than 9 months. Refugees can register as unemployed, but this is a very mainstreamed procedure, as they will be considered the same as any other unemployed French person rather than an unemployed migrant. In addition, refugees cannot access employment that is restricted to French people, such as jobs in public services and with the government, but with a residence card they receive, which is valid for 10 years minimum, they can access all other kinds of jobs. Asylum seekers are generally not entitled to labour market integration measures. The integration contract that refugees sign provides some benefits such as skills assessments and language trainings, but this is not accessible to asylum

The boundaries of mainstreaming

France is perhaps the country with the most mainstreamed approach in Europe, taking hardly any specific measure targeted at refugees. Generic policies and institutions are supposed to deliver good integration outcomes. However, the recent refugee situation revealed clear boundaries to this approach, such as in terms of shortage of housing opportunities, relatively late access to the labour market in case asylum procedures take up to 9 months, and limited information on the part of refugees on how to get access to health services.

² <http://www.etudiant.gouv.fr/pid33626-cid106460/welcome-refugees.html>

³ http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/programme_syrie

seekers as they cannot sign the contract. However, even refugees do not receive specific labour market integration measures beyond this; such measures would be the same for them as for any unemployed French person. NGOs do have the freedom to pursue such measures though, but this is not a solid national practice, even though such NGOs are often funded by the government and CADAs (*Centre d'accueil de demandeurs d'asile*).

The main barriers found to integration and access to employment is lack of knowledge of the French language. This is a problem for all migrants, but especially so for beneficiaries of protection who may have needs that are not covered by standard French courses. An example where this was dealt with is the *Grand Sauvoy-Ateliers Mosellans association* in Metz organized a project in which migrants partnered with commercial organizations based on complementary skills, which created bridges towards gaining employment in the commercial sector. The results of this project showed successful integration and skills acquisition, leading to a renewal of the project in other sectors. In addition, the previously mentioned *Accelair* program not only helps refugees in finding housing, but also with finding and retaining jobs.

France is one of the countries to put great emphasis on the importance of **national values and norms** in relation to civic integration, as a reflection of its assimilationist approach. When a migrant signs the integration contract, they are immediately entitled to a number of courses in order to integrate better into French society. These contain linguistic assessments and further courses if necessary, civic education in which attendees are taught the fundamental values, rights and institutions of the French Republic. In addition, there is an information session in which refugees are given information about daily life in France; that is, accommodation, education, employment, health care etc. Both these information sessions (or “training modules”) last six hours. Interestingly, in the principles and values part of the course, secularism is emphasized as an important principle of the French Republic. The French government also stresses the importance of the values liberty, equality and fraternity as the keystones of the French Republic and their importance in the establishment of the modern state and life. These grant rights to the people of France, but they also state that in order to have rights, citizens also have obligations to adhere to, such as respecting these values and secularism. However, France has few initiatives oriented at promoting opportunities for intercultural contact. Promoting contact is largely left to NGO’s and to local reception centres.

Germany

Germany has been the largest receiver of refugees (in terms of absolute figures), not only during the recent refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016 but also more in general over the last decades. Also for refugees from the former Yugoslav republic, Germany was a primary destination country. But the numbers that entered during 2015 and 2016 in total sum up to over 1,2 million, which was a historically unprecedented number. Even the more reason to examine closely what approach was adopted towards refugee integration.

In the domain of refugee integration Germany follows a rather **specific policy approach**. In the areas of housing, health, labour market and education refugee-specific regulations have been developed. Especially for asylum seekers, who have not yet obtained a residence permit, the policies are very specific. In the area of labour market and socio-cultural integration special programs have been developed solely targeted at asylum seekers. Asylum seekers do not have a direct access to the German labour market like other immigrants or natives, for instance, individuals need to wait three months before they are allowed to enter the labour market. Moreover, in contrast to labour migrants, refugees underlie a “*Nachrangkeitsprüfung*” (Academic Expert Germany 1). The Federal German Labour Agency has to prove that no German job searcher would be eligible for the position the refugee is applying for, in order to allow the refugee to start this particular job. An exception is the possibility of asylum seekers and refugees to participate in the generic educational measure of apprenticeships (“*Ausbildung*”). However, individuals have to successfully finalise an integration course to be entitled to participate, in contrast to

natives. Furthermore, refugees are not able to become a regular member of public health insurance, unless they find a job, but rather underlie specific health regulations on basic health supply (Academic Expert Germany 1).

In terms of Germany's **integration policy model**, it is very important to be aware of the very specific history of German integration policies. Germany was one of the last European countries to accept that it had become a country of immigration; as late as the early 2000s. This also means that an approach to migrant integration did not (at least not formally) develop until then. Since the 2000s, a national framework for the integration of migrants is gradually being developed. In this development, the complex multi-level governance framework of the Germany **federal system** plays an important role. The registration and administration of asylum seekers for all of Germany lies at the federal level (Bund) (Academic Expert Germany 1). The main institution is here the Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Moreover, specific integration courses, including courses in German language and culture are provided by the Bund. The implementation however, takes place on the local level (Academic Expert Germany 1). In the domain of labour market integration the most important actor is the Federal Employment Agency (BA) on the national level. Both

agencies have local departments in the states in order to carry out their responsibilities. Here, local actors and national ministries work together in close cooperation, therefore the level of centralisation is mixed. However, national guidelines leave much room for local interpretation in the remaining domains. States and municipalities are responsible for distribution, education, housing and adequate supply for refugees in different communities and correspondingly have partly very different approaches.

Similar to that in several other European countries, such as in particular the Netherlands that in the past served as a model, Germany has a **civic integration** program oriented at all third-country nationals coming to the country. Although asylum seekers do not need to participate in civic integration courses abroad, participation in post entry programs is mandatory. After a waiting time of maximal six month, asylum seekers are supposed to start a course in a local agency close by their residence location (OECD, 2017). Before November 2015, only refugees were entitled to participate in integration courses. In order to keep asylum seekers occupied and facilitate integration at the earliest moment possible the German government decided in 2015 to give access to integration courses to asylum seekers with a high recognition quota (OECD, 2017). Refugees and asylum seekers (with a high recognition quota) are supposed to complete the integration course with a final exam in German language ("Deutsch-test für Zuwanderer DTZ) as well as in knowledge about German society (Leben in Deutschland LID) (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017).

The **housing** system in Germany is, just like its healthcare, educational and labour system, relatively well regulated. Asylum seekers are distributed across the country in accordance with the distribution system EASY (Academic Expert Germany 1). This distribution key is called "Königsteiner Schlüssel", is based on tax income and population of each state and gets re-evaluated every year. Moreover, the reception centres in Germany have different responsibilities regarding the country of origin of asylum seekers, meaning that Syrian refugees are first send to reception centres responsible for Syrians (Academic Expert Germany 1).

Germany's young integration policy

Whereas Germany may be the country facing the biggest challenge of refugee integration in terms of numbers, it is one of the last European countries to develop an integration policy. Only relatively recently, since the 2000s, has Germany witnessed the developed of a more national coordinated policy approach. Also due to the federal state structure, integration has long be strongly decentralized. This makes the recent refugee crisis perhaps more than in other countries a 'critical juncture' in the development of the broader integration strategy in Germany. This is also manifest in the recent 2016 National Integration Act that provides the foundation for refugee integration policies as well as for migrant integration policies more in general

Once an asylum seeker receives a status (refugee or subsidiary protection), he/she is allowed to move into de-central private housing (§ 49, Asylgesetz). Since no national policy specifies these conditions, they vary greatly between the states. Some states, such as Rhineland-Palatinate, Lower Saxony and Northrhine-Westphalia, did not implement any form of community housing (Wendel, 2014). Therefore asylum seekers and refugees are all accommodated in private housing. However, in most states, where community housing has been established, a choice about beneficiaries has to be made, according to different criteria. Depending on the local legislation of the state, certain priority groups have been determined. For instance, in Baden-Württemberg particularly vulnerable individuals have priority to move into private housing (§8 Abs. 1 FlüAG BW). In Bavaria, Hamburg and Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, individuals have a priority status resulting from humanitarian reasons, when they have at least one underage child, in the case of illness, when they are financially independent or have a partner with residence permit (Art. 4 Abs. 4 S. 1 Nr. 1 AufnG BY; FA § 3 AsylBLG HH). In Saarland, asylum seekers can only leave the community housing if they have a high likelihood of being granted a residence permit. Some cities, such as Osnabruck, favour single woman and elderly (Wendel, 2014).

From the 1th of January 2016 onwards, refugees have no freedom to choose their location of residence anymore, unless they have a job or can live together with a close relative, who earns at least 750 Euros per month (Pro Asyl, 10.08.2016). On the 25th of Mai 2016 the German government passed an “Integration law” in order to foster the integration of refugees. Part of the legislation is the so-called *Wohnsitzauflage* (**residence requirement**) (§12 AufenthG.). There are two models for the local councils to allocate refugees: Firstly, they can assign an exact neighbourhood or city for refugees (“Wohnsitzzuweisung”) or secondly they restrict certain neighbourhoods for them to live (“Zuzugssperre”), while letting the refugee choose between the remaining ones (Mediendienst Integration, n/a). The legal manifestation of the domicile requirement arose from the fear that the newly arrived immigrants would stream into the big cities due to existing networks of families and/or friends and form ethnic enclaves or ghettos (Spiegel Online, 20.01.2016). This would seriously hamper their integration according to the German government. This national policy is already implemented or in the process of implementation in some German states, namely Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Northrhine-Westphalia and Saxony-Anhalt (Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund, 09.11.2016).

Secondary migration

The issue of secondary migration means that migrants such as refugees often also tend to engage in domestic migration after they have received a residency status. Often this involves migration to areas where there are specific labour market opportunities or where they have access to social networks including migrant community networks. In reality, this often involves rural-urban migration and urban-urban migration. To prevent this secondary migration, Germany has developed a residence requirement limiting possibilities for secondary migration for refugees that are dependent on social security.

Asylum seekers and refugees gradually ‘phase into’ the Germany **health care** system. Asylum seekers, who reside in Germany less than 15 month, are only entitled to urgency treatment (§§ 4 and 6), which includes vaccinations, pre-caution and pregnant care. Normally, asylum seekers have to request a medical treatment certificate (Behandlungsschein) from the municipality in order to see a doctor (MGPEA NRW, n/a). The Act defines “urgency treatment” very flexible. This leads to great differences between the states concerning which treatments count as “urgent” and which are, correspondingly, financed (Schaich-Walch et al., 2016). For instance, the German state Bremen offers access to a wide range of physical and mental treatments for asylum seekers, comparable to the health care services provided for natives. In contrary, in the state Sachsen, the access to health care treatment is very restricted (Spiegel online, 22.03.2016). When an asylum seeker resides longer than 15 month in Germany, the access to healthcare gets expanded. In most of the German states, asylum seekers obtain an electronic health card (eGK), which makes them eligible for health services comparable with natives. At this point, a regular health insurance

company is responsible for the health care. Asylum seekers don't have to apply for a medical treatment certificate at the municipality anymore, but can go directly to a doctor (Land Brandenburg, 2016). However, the health care services, asylum seekers with a eGK are allowed to receive, are still more limited than for people who are regularly insured. Once asylum seekers obtain a residence permit and start a regular occupation, they become regular members of the public health insurance (Academic expert Germany 1). There is no strategic health program as part of the integration for refugees (Academic Expert Germany 1). However, most of the German states started individual programs to simplify the access of asylum seekers and refugees to health care services. The most prominent example is the electronic health card, a health care policy that specifically targets asylum seekers and refugees. According to Academic Expert Germany (1), the health care card for asylum seekers (Gesundheitskarte für Flüchtlinge) can be described as a promising practice. Without the card, asylum seekers have to apply for a 'medical treatment certificate' at the municipality during the first 15 months of their stay in order to access health care services (NRW.de, n/a). This poses a great expenditure for the local administrations and costs time for the asylum seeker (Focus.de, n/a). With the electronic health card, medical services can be directly accessed. Therefore, the municipality does not have to decide and test the health claims anymore (NRW.de, n/a). Municipalities, in which the card system is already implemented, report relaxations in the administrative body. The Minister of Health in the German state Northrhine-Westphalia stresses the sustainability of the measures. She states that unnecessary waiting times can make the illness worse and therefore raises the costs of the treatment (Focus.de, n/a). Also Academic Expert Germany (2) described the health care card as well functioning. However, critical voices, such as central associations, emphasize the high additional costs of the measures and the possibility of misuse and abuse (Welt, 17.05.2016).

Another example poses the state Brandenburg, where a strategy has been developed, that targets asylum seekers and refugees with mental illnesses. There, asylum seekers have already in the accommodation centre the possibility to consult certified psychologists through the psychosocial service (ZABH) (Land Brandenburg, 2016). Other states allow "particularly vulnerable" asylum seekers and refugees or individuals with health problems to move into private housing on an earlier stage, for instance in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria and Sachsen-Anhalt (Wendel, 2014).

In Germany, the domain **education** is "Ländersache", meaning that the education falls into the responsibility of the different German states. All minor refugees are entitled and required to primary and secondary education according to the regulation on compulsory school attendance ("Schulpflicht"). Access to education for minor asylum seekers varies between the German states. In the national legislation of Saarland and Berlin compulsory school attendance is implemented for asylum seekers without any additional requirements (Massumi et al., 2015). In some states, such as Brandenburg and Lower Saxony, compulsory school attendance only applies when the asylum seeker left the central reception centre and moved into de-central private or community housing in one of the municipalities. On the other hand, in states like Baden-Württemberg and Thuringia, minor asylum seekers are only required to attend education after three, or respectively, six months of stay. Concerning the apprenticeship ("Ausbildung") a temporary suspension of deportation is guaranteed for asylum seekers during this measure. If they manage to find a job in Germany after, they are entitled to stay two more years in the country, even if their application has been rejected. This is called "3 plus 2 regulation" and has been introduced in the Integration Act in August 2016 (OECD, 2017). Policy Expert Germany (1) stresses that the programs "ausbildungsbegleitende Hilfen" (apprenticeship support) and "assistierte Ausbildung" (assisted apprenticeship) organised by the Job Centres are quite important, since they have a great impact on stabilising the apprenticeships. The apprenticeship support offers young people extra language training, support of social-education-workers and subject-specific tutoring during their apprenticeship (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2017). Participants receive either private lessons or work in small groups outside of their regular working hours. Similarly, the assisted apprenticeship helps young people to successfully finalise their apprenticeship (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2017). Support in matters of administration and organisation but also language training is provided (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2017). These programs are in particular beneficial for asylum seekers and refugees. Concerning the access

to college or university education, there are no legislations that distinguish between asylum seekers and refugees. Theoretically, migrants are allowed to study at a German university or college not depending on their residence status (§16 AufenthG). However, there are some general requirements, every applicant has to meet, which poses in most cases difficulties for asylum seekers and refugees, such as a university admission certificate and basic language proficiency (Schammann et al. 2016).

Generally, next to refugees, also asylum seekers are allowed to enter the **labour market** in Germany. However, asylum seekers have to meet a number of conditions to be allowed to formally enter the labour market. Firstly, there is a waiting time of three month after applying for asylum (OECD, 2017). Secondly, asylum seekers are not allowed to apply for a job as long as they are accommodated in a reception centre (Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung). Germany has developed various specific measures to promote labour market activation of refugees. In 2015 a new program was introduced, specifically tailored at preparing refugees and asylum seekers for entering the labour market. The so-called “*berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung*” (Job specific German language classes) program is open to refugees and asylum seekers with a high likelihood of obtaining a residence permit (OECD, 2017). The “acceptance rate” (Anerkennungsquote) of an asylum seeker is high, when more than 50% of the asylum seekers originating from his/her country obtain a residence permit on average (Die Welt, 04.11.2015). Another requirement is the participation in a German language class prior to the program, finalised with a level of A1 or a German language level of B2 (without participating in a course). The “berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung” program combines vocational German lessons with practical working experience (Academic Expert Germany 1). The lessons contain training of professional vocabulary, communication skills and writing of e-mails (OECD, 2017). A qualification module forms the practical part of the program. Depending on the agency and the individual competence profile, subject-specific lessons (such as EDP training and application training), an internship and field trips to different companies is part of the program. The maximum length of the program is six month (OECD, 2017).

Italy

Italy is a special case when it comes to refugee integration. On the one hand, it has received a relatively high number of asylum applicants; 83540 in 2015 and no less than 122960 in 2016. On the other hand, Italy thinks of itself primarily in terms of being a **transit country**. Indeed, very significant numbers of asylum seekers have passed through Italy on their way to other countries such as Germany, Austria and Sweden. However, it remains very difficult to predict whether the asylum applications that have been made in Italy will not turn into refugee settlement of some size. This is, evidently, a key question in terms of Italy’s refugee integration strategy; is Italy considered a pass way station or a destination?

The Italian approach to **refugee integration** is to a large extent mainstreamed, not only as part of a national vision on integration of all migrants, but also as part of generic policies rather than specific policies. Measures aimed at facilitating the integration into the local society and labour market are a core element of services provided during the second reception phase (i.e. addressing asylum seekers waiting for accomplishment of screening and recognition procedures): language and civic education, vocational training or labour market orientation measures, legal counselling, healthcare and housing are usually provided to asylum-seekers hosted in public reception facilities. Furthermore,

The problem of unknown temporality of the stay of refugees

Many countries have struggled with the uncertainty whether refugees would settle permanently or return on a relatively short term to the country of origin. This ‘dilemma’ of ‘unknown temporality’ manifests itself in a very specific way in Italy. Perceiving itself as a transit country, the urgency for a coordinated integration strategy was to some degree pre-empted by the belief that most asylum seekers would move on to other European countries. However, as increasingly numbers in fact do apply for asylum in Italy, the question has surfaced as to whether the current integration approach suffices.

the Italian approach is strongly **decentralized**. The national government set the minimum standards and the key priorities of integration policies: the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies is the main responsible authority in setting the integration agenda. However, it is at the regional, and local level that actual policies and measures take substance. In fact, regions and municipalities are the key actors in the field of integration policies, given their core competences in the field of education, labour market, healthcare, social policies and anti-discrimination. The Ministry has concluded an agreement with 17 (out of 21) Regional governments in December 2014 concerning the definition of an Integrated Planning of Integration Policies for the period 2014-2020. The agreement envisaged the drafting of Regional Intervention Plans which, at their turn, should set the key priorities, instruments and models of governance for integration of third country nationals (including beneficiaries of international protection) in each regional area.

Unlike most other European countries, Italy does not have a fully developed **civic integration** program for asylum seekers and refugees. The European Commission concludes in this regard that “even though in theory asylum seekers and refugees can access labour market integration measures such as vocational education and training (VET), language training and civics, in practice these are often not available” (European Commission, 2016). There is in place, since March 2012, the so-called Integration Agreement, that all non-EU migrants (including refugees and other humanitarian migrants) legally residing in Italy are asked to subscribe at the moment of the issuing of the first residence permit (Respondent A, 2017). However, refugees and humanitarian migrants, as well as family migrants and other categories, are exempted from such requirement which is only mandatory for holders of permits for labour purposes. Therefore, there is no sanction or relevant consequences in case of a failure of reaching the specific integration goals. Through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Ministry of the Interior finances regional civic education courses and language training. At present language training is guaranteed in the reception system only in Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati (SPRAR) centres of second-line reception and through specific projects (outside the centres) and public services (Provincial Centre for Adult Education, CPIA), with courses funded by AMIF. SPRAR has implemented standardised integration programmes. Asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection accommodated in the SPRAR system are generally supported in their integration process, by means of individualised projects which include vocational training and internships (Ministero dell’Interno, 2015). SPRAR is the only integrated system that provides this kind of services to the beneficiaries.

In terms of **housing**, Italy has a well elaborated system for allocation of asylum seekers throughout the country. However, there are no specific policies concerning housing in the post-reception phase: once obtained the recognition or rejection of their status, refugees are expected to leave the reception centres within a short period of time. Allowed to be relocated into independent housing are therefore status-holders. There is no ad-hoc support in finding housing nor an allowance granted to the refugee (Respondent A, 2017). Thus, the refugee is free to choose a place of residence. However, it is worth mentioning the diffusion of projects and initiatives promoted by local non-profit associations and charities. For example, there is the Italian section of the international initiative ‘Refugees Welcome’: an association that works to promote and support the accommodation of refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection into private housing with Italian households (Respondent A, 2017). Another example is ‘*Programma Integra* (Migration, Asylum and Social Integration Centrum)’, a social cooperative that provides local support in amongst others the domain of housing to asylum seekers and refugees in multiple municipalities in Italy. Programma Integra cooperates with third sector organizations, public institutions, Italian and European universities and research institutions and companies (Refugee Legal Aid Information, 2016). Our research shows that the overwhelmed reception centres and the lack of public policy with regards to the housing of refugees in the post-reception phase leads to a situation of ‘social marginalization and unacceptable living conditions’ for both asylum seekers and refugees (Medecins Sans Frontiers, 2016). There is increased discrimination in the housing market with regards to migrants in Italy (O’Neill & Nallu, 2017). The result is that approximately 10,000 persons now live in informal settlements. Those are refugees who have either never entered the institutional reception centres, have left them

before they were granted status or have left the CAS or SPRAR centres after being granted their status (Medecins Sans Frontiers, 2016). The term informal settlements defines ‘those housing solutions with a prevalence of people indicated above and characterized by forms of self-management and by lack of rental payments’ (ibid.).

As a general trait of the system, **healthcare** in Italy is relatively open. Asylum-seekers and refugees are entitled to access healthcare services on the same grounds as Italian nationals and regular residents in Italy (Medecins Sans Frontiers, 2016). In relation to refugees, respondents to this project did not spot any specific concerns. However, there have been projects carried out by NGOs or on the local level as for example the training of medical staff. In the *Hotspots in Italy*, the medical staff present is trained by the CARE project, which is part of the European Union’s Health Program 2014-2020 (Care for Migrants, 2016). All professionals involved in project activities are being trained on the issues of migration, tropical medicine, transculturality and relationships with children, on the basis of a training program that was specifically developed for the purposes of the CARE project. Overall, the CARE training program aims at ensuring a common approach in migrants’ health management, taking into account context specificities. Also, there have been some developments in the field of medicine in Italy as a response to the influx of refugees. Several experiences have been developed over the years, although largely insufficient to adequately respond to existing demand (Respondent A, 2017). For example, the service of *ethno-psychiatry* of the Niguarda Hospital in Milan and in the Frantz Fanon Centre in Turin. The ethno-psychiatry service employs the specific aim of making available psychotherapy and psychological support to migrants, refugees and victims of torture. Psychotherapy and support groups are realized with the collaboration of so-called ‘cultural mediators’, whose basic skills have been implemented by a specific training in psychological and anthropological domain. In the Frantz Fanon Centre, cultural mediators coming from Morocco, Romania, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Jordan, Somali, Ethiopia, India, and Colombia work for 4 to 16 hours per week.

A similar openness of the generic system can be found in the realm of **education**. Asylum seeking children have access to the same public schools as Italian citizens and are entitled to the same assistance and arrangements in case they have special needs. They are automatically integrated in the obligatory National Educational System. No preparatory classes are foreseen at the national level, but since the Italian education system envisages some degree of autonomy in the organization of the study courses, some institutions organize additional courses in order to assist the integration. In addition, there are some examples of target-group specific programs in Italy that have proven to be fruitful. The first example is the nationwide initiative called ‘U4REFUGEES’. In 2015, the first Italian higher education institution opened its doors to refugees and asylum-seekers. It was one of the most prestigious in the country: the Oriental University in Naples. With its ‘Welcome Student-refugees Programme’, this institution granted 12 scholarships in September 2015. Following this pioneer pilot project, similar others proliferated all over the country to finally inspire nation-wide initiative called U4REFUGEES, promoted since May 2016 by the Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNHCR and the National Conference of University Deans (CRUI). On 20 July 2016, partners signed an official agreement and announced 100 scholarships to be granted to refugee students as of September 2016 per year (European Commission, 2017). Another example of a target-group specific education scheme is the innovative initiative ‘Unibo for Refugee’. This project allowed around 20 refugees living in the area of Bologna to enroll into undergraduate and master courses in order to complete their studies free of charge at the University of Bologna. The initiative, which started in January 2016, initially involved 47 beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) hosted in government reception services in Bologna (SPRAR).

A similar generic openness involves the **labour market**. An asylum applicant can start to work already within 60 days from the moment he or she lodged the asylum application. Even if they start working, however, their stay permit cannot be converted in a work stay permit. Refugees have the same rights of natives: equal access to training courses, to job placing offices, housing services, health assistance, schools for children etc. In addition they have the same access as other labour migrants to specific

language and training courses. In addition to the formal entrance of the labour market, a promising practice in Italy regarding volunteer work has been identified (Ministerio dell'Interiore, 2015). Among the critical issues connected with reception, one of the most reported ones was that the migrants had nothing to do, even for extended periods. The Prefecture of Bergamo faced the problem and involved the institutional protagonists operating in the province. This resulted in the signing on 2 October 2014 of a memorandum setting operational guidelines so that the asylum seekers can undertake volunteer activities in favour of the community, in order to favour reception education and integration processes enabling them to learn about and do something for the area hosting them. The initial evaluation of the effects of the measures planned highlighted the positive results obtained with the application of the memorandum, regards the educational aspects and the possible integration of migrants; and, with reference to the impact on the resident population, in particular regards the interaction between the resident population and foreign citizens.

Several promising practices can be identified in the Italian case when it comes to labour market activation. In November 2015 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies launched the project INSIDE. As of 31 December 2016, a number of 683 internships was activated in favour of refugees settled in the SPRAR reception system. INSIDE aims to support refugees to access to the labour market and to gain self-sufficiency. The project also aimed at strengthening the multilevel governance of labour insertion policies through the involvement of a network of subjects active in reception as well as in labour policies. It is designed for holder of international protection and the programme is supposed to provide a mix of active labour-market policy services and improving individual skills to enhance employability. The main activities underpinning the measure are the following: skills and needs profiling; offering of a personalized set of active labour market policies (tutoring, counselling, career guidance, job orientation, traineeships); offering of an economic grant to: intermediary societies providing job orientation and active labour market services, to enterprises for the tutoring of internship activities, to refugees for attending the internships; job scouting and job searching and finally, coaching.

Another promising practice in the domain of first labour market entrance is the project PERCORSI, which was also launched by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. It has been based on the definition of an individual integration plan that include a set of integration services aimed at facilitating recipients access to the labour market and the possibility of attending an internship. The project foresees the realization of a total of 960 internships. To this end, an individual grant will be offered to the 960 recipients in order to enable them to take part to the integration path. The main activities underpinning the measure are the following: skills profiling and needs assessment; offering of a personalized set of active labour market policies (tutoring, counselling, career guidance, job orientation, traineeships); job scouting, job searching and coaching; and finally the offering of a grant to: intermediary societies providing job orientation and active labour market services (2.000 euros per each individual integration plan), enterprises for tutoring activities (500 euros per each vocational training) and beneficiaries for attending vocational trainings (500 euros per month/5 months).

A final promising practice in this domain is the project RE-LAB: Start up your business, funded by the European Refugee Fund 2007 – 2013. The project was launched to favour the economic integration of refugees, in particular those who would like to set up a business initiative but who lack the necessary knowledge about the markets and who do not have access to financial services. The intervention model involves the enhancement of local awareness, business training, support to business start-up and tutoring for 14 new micro-business initiatives, links with financial and market service and the creation of a

Entrepreneurs

Labour market activation strategies are mostly targeted at finding employment. Relatively little attention is attributed to entrepreneurship. The Italian Ministry of Interior did launch a project RE-LAB which does provide various sorts of support to refugees wanting to start up their own businesses.

group of refugees as tutors to help new migrants (Ministero dell'Interiore, 2015).

Finally, in terms of **intercultural relations**, some programs have been developed in order to stimulate contact among locals and asylum seekers and refugees on both the national level and on local levels. On the national level, the Program Agreement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) for the promotion of integration policies through sports, that is based on the two-way nature of integration processes (mutual commitment of migrants and the host society). Since 2014, within this Agreement many actions have been promoted in order to raise awareness on the issue of integration, with a focus on values (e.g., diversity, respect, peaceful co-existence) naturally related to the sport practice (Respondent B, 2017).

Sweden

Sweden stands out together with Austria and Germany as one of the main destination countries of refugees in recent years; 12.4% of all asylum seekers in the European Union (EU) are hosted by Sweden (Andersson and Ehlers: 2016, 2). At the peak of the refugee 'crisis' in late 2015, an estimated 75.922 individuals applied for asylum in October and November alone ("Inkomma ansokningar om asyl, 2015," 1). Among these were 20.677 Syrians, of whom 90% were granted permanent residence permits as refugees ("Inkomma ansokningar om asyl, 2015," 4). The Nordic Welfare Center (2015: 12) finds that the group of new asylum arrivals is highly heterogeneous and, therefore, demands complex policy solutions.

As the Swedish government principally maintained an open-door policy to especially Syrian refugees, the Swedish National Audit Office (NAO), observed that the influx put significant pressure on public services, government agencies, regional County Administrative Boards, and many municipalities (NAO: 2017, 1). While the Migration Agency was perceived to largely have managed its core task to grant asylum decisions, the wider reception process was seen to have various weaknesses. Reception facilities' personnel was required to work above and beyond their duties, and municipalities were had to provide accommodation to a stream of newcomers. From a governance perspective, there was a **lack of multi-level coordination**, and various actors turned inwardly during the emergency period to manage their core tasks. Lack of communication resulted in a failure to enact emergency measures at the national level. Even when government was approached about the accommodation problem, it still took two months to produce a response (Myrberg: 2015, 11). Additional government inquiries and surveys also took too long to prepare and hence had little practical effect on the emergency situation. Furthermore, due to substantial discretion and different contexts, regional County Administrative Boards responded with diverging policies. At the local level, the NAO (2017) finds that municipalities were "forced [...] to contravene central government regulations on schools, social services and reception of unaccompanied minors" (Ibid, 10). The Office also finds that "the choice of which measures were to be taken and when was dependent on political considerations." It indicates that these decisions probably affected new arrivals' introduction conditions (NAO: 2017, 6).

Qvist (2015) notes that refugees are a priority target group for the central government, and that "local refugee reception" is a policy area "with a strong tradition of collaborative governance, decentralized decision-making and a relationship between central and local government characterized by negotiation, dialogue and reciprocity" (2). The **decentralized structure** is also rooted in the 1980s, when it was agreed by central and municipal governments that refugee distribution should be based on a system of

Disjointed 'multi-level' governance

In various countries, innovative strategies to refugee integration emerged from the local level. Although this has often been a source of inspiration for national policy developments, there are also examples of friction between government levels. According to experts, the latter was initially the case in Sweden, where cities were sometimes forced to respond to the urgency of refugee migration in ways that did not correspond with national policies, which were much later to respond.

negotiation. It was thus also accepted that municipalities could oppose refugee settlement in their area (Ibid, 8). This was changed in 2016. There are also vertical structures such as funding schemes and administrative organization (Ibid, 5). In general, however, there is a traditional "system of agreements [that] developed into an institutionalized framework for governing central-local government relations" (Ibid, 8). Finally, the policy domain consists of both generic and specific policies, which are not always effectively connected (Teljosuo: 2013, 4).

Swedish **civic integration** is largely structured around the Introduction program that is accessible to refugees between the ages 20-64 who have been placed in municipal accommodation. The process thus generally starts after refugees have found regular housing, but there are new initiatives that expand optional language and civic-orientation classes and internships to the reception centres (OECD: 2016a, 67). This is in part due to observed delays in the settlement process, which in 2013 on average took 239 days to be completed (Ibid). For refugees the Introduction program is not obligatory, but is linked to conditional incentives such as the introduction benefit (OECD: 2016, 64). In 2010 the Introduction reform dramatically changed the traditional decentralized character of integration measures. A New Public Management (NPM) approach shifted responsibility away from the municipalities and to the centralized PES. Additional tasks were also 'shifted out' to private service providers called 'Lots' (Qvist: 2015). More responsibility was shifted to the regional County Administrative Boards to foster convergence among municipalities (Lidén et al.: 2015, 471). At the national level, coordination shifted from the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality to the Ministry of Employment ("New Developments -Sweden," ERN, 2017). The underlying objective was clearly to streamline the labor market-orientation of introduction activities. The reform also significantly strengthened refugees' individual responsibility to access services, and aimed to increase participation of women (Ibid, 4). Post-reform refugees who had found housing are now expected to register at the municipal PES office. There they are assigned to a caseworker, construct a personalized introduction plan, and access special benefits (Joonas et al.: 2016, 4).

In terms of **housing**, upon arrival asylum seekers are normally accommodated in Migration Agency reception centres. For children and vulnerable women there are special places (AIDA: 2016, 47). Since the 1994 'own accommodation' policy (EBO), asylum seekers have the freedom to find their own accommodation, and if they do have to pay their own rent (Myrberg: 2015, 5). Originally designed as an emergency response to housing shortages after the Yugoslav refugee influx, the EBO measure was restricted in 2005 because of indications of "overcrowding, segregation and compromised integration" (OECD: 2016, 55). Myrberg finds that the policy also produced an uneven distribution of asylum seekers across municipalities, as especially more expensive neighborhoods hosted fewer newcomers (Ibid). Three other challenges are linked to the 1994 EBO policy. First, internal migration has become a frequent occurrence and this risks fragmenting the introduction program. Refugees and family members often move to areas with higher income levels or with other labor market opportunities (Statistics Sweden: 2016, 162). Bevelander (2016: 1) points out that internal migration is an important factor for refugees' employment success, however. The second challenge is that municipal integration planning is hindered when additional refugees can arrive or leave at practically any moment (Ibid, 11-12). Third, municipalities with a disproportionate number of refugees are often unable to provide adequate housing for all, and indicate residential segregation and poor living conditions (Borevi and Bengtsson: 2014, 2608). Despite these shortcomings, a general housing shortage and a tradition of freedom of choice the option remains open to all new arrivals today (Ibid, 2607).

Introduced in 2010 with the Introduction reform, the new task of the PES to settle and introduce refugees involved a strongly **labor market-oriented service**. The PES matches refugees' previous work experiences and education with local labor markets (Ibid, 56). In theory, this procedure includes an estimation of the accommodation space required for a coming year, an assessment of municipal labor markets, population size and number of present asylum seekers, and, an accordingly assigned number of refugees to a particular municipality (Ibid). When accommodation is found, the PES makes one offer to the refugee applicant, which in case it is declined, results in a loss of further assistance. The refugee is then obliged to

find housing independently (Ibid, 77). The OECD evaluates this settlement system to have as benefits that it relieves some pressure from the Migration Agency, and takes into account labor market circumstances. As disadvantages, it lists signs of overcrowding, segregation and limited social integration, as well as spatial aggregations of unemployment (2016: 56). Additionally, while the PES is formally the only decision-maker in the allocation procedure, it does not own any accommodation itself, and in practice has been dependent on municipal willingness to make accommodation available. This further exacerbated an uneven distribution across municipalities (Ibid, 57-58).

In terms of **health care**, trauma among refugees in Sweden is a serious concern. Carlerby and Persson (2017: 1) note that a recent Red Cross survey estimated around 30% of asylum seekers to have had trauma-inducing experiences. Ruist (2015: 10) estimates that, on average, refugees and other foreign-born visit health care facilities 1.3 times more than natives. Asylum seekers have access to emergency medical, dental and maternity care until they receive a residency permit or their request is denied. Children are fully entitled to free health care (IMF: 2016, 44). Wangdahl et al. (2015: 5) find that a significant number of surveyed asylum seekers were not satisfied with the provision of information and communication during the health examination they received. As communication was often problematic, it is also likely that health care personnel was not able to identify all health concerns of the examined people (Ibid, 6). Information about the Swedish health care system must be communicated more clearly. Wangdahl et al. suggest that simple methods such as teach-back can help check whether patients have understood explanations (2015: 11). Lunneblad (2017: 366) finds that while education professionals often include trauma in their dealings with refugee children, this also tends to "homogenize all refugee children as weak and vulnerable." When refugees participate in the Introduction program, there are opportunities to include mental health concerns and access counselling to prepare employment plans (Eurofound: 2016, 27). Carlerby and Persson (2017: 4) find that collaboration between different health partners is unnecessarily complicated and insufficient, however. They recommend a set of comprehensive guidelines for all professionals treating newly arrived. They also find that Swedish gender rules are often different from those of newcomers', and that it usually requires some time for them to be fully understood. Finally, in Malmö, a special language program called *IntroRehab* was implemented in 2009 to serve as an introduction program for individuals undergoing psychiatric treatment by the Red Cross (Myrberg: 2015, 11). Evaluations considered it a success, but lamented its limited reach to a small target group. If expanded to other vulnerable groups, it could be a promising example of more targeted measures and dual approaches. A second notable initiative was the *Vård På medical center* in Stockholm. Here, health care professionals provided medicine and examinations, assistance and information specifically to refugees (European Youth Forum: 2016, 5). Thirdly, the southern Skåne region actively provides culturally sensitive health and civic information and organizes health-promoting activities (Carlzén and Zdravkovic: 2016, 2).

Education policy consists mostly of generic measures, with some specific programs that target vulnerable groups (Eurofound: 2016, 28). National legislation provides that all children between the ages 7 and 16 are entitled to schooling, thus both asylum seekers and refugees in this age category have full, but voluntary, access to primary and lower secondary school education ("The school system – Information om Sverige," 2017). While previously newly arrived students would spend time in preparatory classes to be introduced to basic Swedish language, society and the school system, since 2015, policy aims to accelerate children's integration (Avery: 2017, 406). Therefore, in theory, now all newly arrived students are to participate in regular classes within two months after arrival. This corroborates the finding that many asylum children attend programs in generic institutions (ADAI: 2016, 50). Avery (2017: 406) criticizes this new development, arguing that while contact with native peers can have positive outcomes, it is also important to create "safe spaces" for newly arrived refugee students.

Originating in multicultural ideas of the 1980s, foreign children "who [run] a risk of failing the minimum knowledge requirements in one or several school subjects" have a right to attend classes in their mother tongue (Avery: 2017, 407). In fact, there is a regulation that when there are more than five pupils with the

same language in an area, special teachers are employed to provide such classes (AIDA: 2016, 50). In practice, the responsibility to enact these policies lies with the municipalities and schools, and it is not clear whether they are always implemented. For example, Avery (2017) finds that because mother tongue tutoring programs were funded by the schools individually, they were often used only in extreme cases (408). Avery also identifies a recruitment problem to find tutors. Another weakness is the lack of communication between reception facilities, social services, and teachers and tutors about the children's previous education and health circumstances (Ibid, 411-412). Despite these inefficiencies native teachers still strongly expressed the need for more mother tongue tutoring (Ibid). Two promising practices are to attach tutors to schools to enhance continuity and to create more opportunities for co-teaching by teachers and tutors. For example, through joint planning sessions and more suitable teaching material (Ibid, 413).

Mother tongue language education

Although contested in some countries, in others (such as Sweden and on a more limited scale in Denmark and Austria) education in migrants' mother tongue languages is still available. However, even the Swedish case shows that it is implemented only a limited scale, in those situations where it is really required.

Most **labour market** integration policies have not yet been systematically assessed (Bevelander: 2016, 3). There is, though, a wealth of experience in this domain. First, the NAO (2015: 2) reports a significant employment gap between natives and immigrants. It finds that for asylum migrants, the average time from reception to the labour market is 7 to 10 years. By gender, the average time is 3 to 7 and 9 to 11 years for men and women, respectively. Another source points out that asylum migration does not generally match labour market demands (Teljosuo: 2013, 2). Bevelander (2016: 1) finds that upon entry, refugees start at lower employment and income levels, but that they gradually catch up to the level of family unification migrants. The two employment rates only meet after approximately 20 years, however (Ibid, 6). Furthermore, unemployment in Sweden stands at 7% in 2016, which puts the country above the OECD averages of 6.3% ("Unemployment rate - OECD Data," 2017). In Q4 2015, the unemployment rate for natives was 5.1% while for foreign-born it was 15.9% (Joona et al.: 2016, 3). In recent years, the best employment rate of newcomers is in the urban areas, in the period 2010-2013 these municipalities accounted for 85% of all employment (Ibid, 4). Simultaneously, these urban municipalities receive a decreasing rate of refugees, while rural areas receive more (Ibid).

The employment gap may partly explain why asylum seekers who have valid IDs have immediate access to the labour market (Eurofound: 2016, 18). Individuals whose asylum application is rejected but who have worked also have the option to "switch tracks" to receive a residence permit based on employment. A similar rule provides for rejected individuals with skills in shortage professions. A request to switch must be submitted within two weeks of the negative decision, and additionally requires a valid ID, continuous employment with the same employer for four months and for at least another expected 12 months, with earnings above SEK 13.000 per month (Vestin: 2017, 93; Long and Rosengaertner: 2016, 18; "Former asylum seekers who have found employment and want to apply for a work permit, - Migrationverket," 2017).

The Jämtland region on the border with Norway has developed a promising long-term approach to refugee integration. As the native population in the rural region gradually goes into retirement and shrinks, the regional administration together with municipalities aims to incentivize asylum seekers to stay when they receive their residence permits ("Making people stay - Jämtland Case Study," Nordens välfärdscenter, 2017). To do so, local authorities provided assistance in the introduction program in a project between 2013 and 2015, so after the 2010 centralization of responsibility with the PES. Results indicate significantly enhanced multi-actor coordination and information exchange processes, for both public administrative levels and the PES. Additional measures targeted the shortage of health care

personnel in the region. During health screening examinations, refugees were now also asked for skills in the sector, in order to identify possible health care professionals. The same was conducted for other occupations. In Östersund municipality, politicians agreed to make available 100 apprenticeships in the public sector. Krokoms municipality employs a specialized coordinator who links newly arrived to local employers, and assists them with finding internships and financial support (Ibid). To motivate employers, Jämtland provides mentoring courses for professionals to provide on-the-job training, and also provides compensation when staff were away for mentoring duties. Finally, senior officials such as the Mayor and Directors in Åre and Krokoms have had refugee apprentices which is assumed to have downward effects on both public and private employers. Finally, an important finding of Jämtland authorities is that in interviews with 24 new arrivals it became apparent that people prefer housing close to the location of their ABO reception centre (Ibid). Reasons include that individuals had started to build social lives, had children in school, or found some labour market entry-points already. In 2014, 71% of new refugees agreed to move to the accommodation they were offered in the region, indicating a significant policy success.

Sweden provides other support measures for labour market integration. For those who want to be self-employed, there is generic assistance that consists of "activity support and development benefits" for a period of maximum six months (Eurofound: 2016, 32). Measures to incentivize employers to hire refugees also exist in the form of both reductions in non-wage labour costs and/or wage subsidies (Ibid, 33). The Step-in and New-Start programs, for instance, entitle refugee-employers to wage subsidies (Desiderio: 2016, 32). These programs cover low-skilled jobs and evaluations point to mixed results in terms of impact and cost-effectiveness (Ibid; OECD: 2016b, 11). Lundborg and Skedinger (2016: 332-333) find that Swedish employers demonstrate a heterogeneous attitude towards refugees, albeit mostly positive. Specifically, they find that social desirability, poor language skills, screening costs, and customer and staff contact are points that disincentivize employers. Improved screening before employment can thus be a promising practice. There are also dual programs such as Swedish for Professionals (SFX) that complement language and vocational training for specific occupations and recently also help entrepreneurs ("SFX-Concept - Sfx," 2017).

Finally, the PES also introduced fast-track initiatives for shortage professions. They are strongly supported in this area by social partners, trade unions and employer's associations (Eurofound: 2016, 39; Expert 1). Initiated in December 2015, fast-tracks target both high- and middle-skilled individuals and include the validation of competencies in the mother tongue instead of Swedish, earlier access to profession-oriented Swedish language classes when still in the asylum procedure, and employment matching ("Sweden: Fast-track initiative to help asylum seekers enter labour market - Eurofound," 2016; Desiderio: 2016, 2; "Fast track - a quicker introduction of newly arrived immigrants - Government Offices of Sweden," 2016). The first three occupational sectors piloted were hospitality (chefs), health care (doctors, nurses, dentists and pharmacists) and education (teachers) (Ibid).

Finally, Sweden does not have an explicit policy to systematically create opportunities for **inter-cultural contact**. Initiatives to improve contact with native populations are solely at the discretion of municipal and civil society actors. One promising practice mentioned by Expert 1 is the Diversity and Dialogue educational method distributed by the Christian-Muslim religious organization Sensus Study Association. This method is based on conversations, group exercise, role play and drama, to exchange experiences and reflections on diversity.

3.2 Other cases

Belgium

Just like Austria, Belgium has been a relatively forgotten major receiver of refugees over 2015 and 2016. Refugee numbers in Belgium are almost similar to that of the Netherlands, which means that in proportion to its population they were much higher than in the Netherlands. However, the response to refugee integration has been rather fragmented, also because of the federal state structure with significant differences between Flanders and Wallonia.

Belgium largely follows a **generic approach** (with specific measures primarily for asylum seekers, but not refugees). The policy strategy towards refugee integration is part of a broader migrant integration strategy. However, Flanders has more policies that are specifically targeted towards migrants and their needs than Wallonia does. However, Wallonia's integration policies are much less generic than those of France and overall the emphasis on adaptation to values of Belgium is not as strong, though integration courses do exist. Therefore, a mix of multiculturalism and assimilation seems to be quite fitting for Belgium.

Like most European countries, Belgium has a **civic-integration program** in place that targets all migrants, including refugees. The programmes are, however, developed differently in Wallonia and Flanders. The contents of the courses includes language, values and norms and increasingly also attention to sexuality and women's rights. The Flemish integration track mostly focuses on these topics, as people have to follow courses in which they can learn (basic) Dutch so they can function in Flemish society. In addition, people also have to follow a course on the Flemish and Belgian society, which can be interpreted as norms and values. In addition, several sources in the news report a statement by State Secretary of Asylum and Migration Theo Francken on the including of courses on treatment of women and sexuality. This plan was motivated by the attacks in Cologne in 2015/2016 and the fact that many asylum seekers are young, single men from a different culture where especially women are treated very differently. Francken states that it is very important for them to respect the different relationships between men and women in Belgium, and that this is a non-negotiable factor. However, there has not been any proof that this plan has actually been implemented yet. In Wallonia, these courses are more geared towards language training and professional orientation, but a part of the track also focuses on daily life in Wallonia.

In the sphere of **housing**, Belgium follows a generic 'mainstreamed' approach to all refugees. There is, for instance, no specific 'distribution key' Accommodation capacity is tailored after the number of asylum requests received and Fedasil, in cooperation with NGOs tries to find any place that can be used a reception centre if the capacity needs to be increased. However, according to Art. 11 3,2 of the reception act, an equal distribution between municipalities must be kept in mind, but there are no specific restrictions. On Fedasil's website⁴ there is a map with an overview of the distribution of reception centres, where one can see that the distribution of accommodation centres is fairly spread out, but more concentrated around Brussels, Antwerp and Liège. There is no assistance to finding proper accommodation, which is seen as an individual responsibility. Also in terms of social housing, refugees

Centres for General Welfare

In Flanders, the Centres for General Welfare play a key role as central 'hubs' in the provisions of various sorts of public services to refugees. This includes information about housing (counselling), as well as services in the sphere of healthcare (including socio-psychological work). These centres are a key example of how in the often complex and fragmented institutional environment of refugee integration the combination of various activities in one place can facilitate access to public services for refugees.

⁴ <http://fedasil.be/fr/content/tous-les-centres-daccueil>

do not obtain any priority. However, Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen also acknowledges that finding housing is difficult for refugees due to discrimination, financial status and so on. Therefore, they have erected the housing platform '*jouw huis, mijn thuis*' (your house, my home) in collaboration with Fedasil, which is supposed to aid refugees into making contact with housing tenants. There are a number of social services, local initiatives and NGOs which have developed methods to aid refugees in this as well, but it remains a largely independent process. In addition, in many cities and municipalities, the extra money provided to municipalities as well as to the Centres of General Welfare, resulted in several local projects of working with volunteers as "*housing buddies*": volunteers help refugees finding a home and installing themselves into the home. This 'networking'-function of volunteers is an important leverage to tackle the difficulties on the private housing market.

In terms of **healthcare**, refugees have access (free of charge), but in practice cultural barriers are experienced for obtaining full access to health services. In this context, the *Centres for General Welfare* (centra voor algemeen welzijnswerk) provide both housing counselling as well as psycho-social counselling. The housing counselling always takes upon a "holistic view" and the bond of trust is established: this lowers the threshold to mental/psycho-social counselling. The project "*Mind-Spring*" offered a specific method for working with groups of refugees with trauma issues, tackling the cultural and language thresholds. However, it is difficult to apply this method as the project was experimental and now needs to be taken over by the Centres of General Welfare, which does not always have the staff members for it (a general problem of anchoring experimental projects). There have been several projects of 'culturally sensitive care' (cultuursensitieve zorg) amongst hospitals and health networks, which are finding ways of lowering cultural/language/mental thresholds for patients of foreign origin.

In terms of education, Belgium follows a mixed approach that combines generic and specific measures. As part of the generic approach, all migrants have access to educational facilities and also obtain state funding for this. For the first one or two years, refugees who do not speak Dutch are educated in a 'onthaalklas' or reception classes. These classes aim to teach them the Dutch language, to integrate them in society as well as the school environment in Belgium, and in vocational and secondary education specifically aims to guide them towards employment or further education. Education facilities are free in organizing these classes, as they can choose to put 'anderstalige nieuwkomers' in an existing class, make a separate class for them or combine these two options. The biggest obstacle in education is that there is little coordination between educational institutions on what language levels/qualifications are required to follow specific programmes and trainings, which is confusing for refugees. Another obstacle is that refugees are often encouraged to choose programmes that are most directly relevant to the current labour market rather than what they may want to do, which may discourage them and lead to a loss of potential. A good practice is that they can receive subsidised trainings, which makes education affordable. Regarding accreditation, good practices are that there are series of detailed information brochures on the topic and that there are extensive guides and websites on submitting recognition applications, developed by NGOs such as CIRÉ.

There have been quite some developments to upgrade the Belgian approach to **labour market** integration. Since December 2015, the period for asylum seekers who wish to acquire access to the labour market had been reduced from six to four months if they have not received their asylum decision yet in order to speed up the integration process. From September 2016 onwards, the procedure for recognition of skills and qualifications has become free as well as more flexible in general for refugees and beneficiaries of protection because they are often unable to present the required documents. Furthermore, in Flanders, the VDAB (*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding*) is an office that provides aid in the form of vocational courses, technical screenings, mediation, Dutch workplace language courses, job coaching and more. In April 2016, this office was granted more funding in order to cope with the incoming refugee crisis. More of such organization exist, which all offer trainings and courses for certain professions or language as well as individual assistance and facilitating contact with employers. However, these offices do this for all individuals who are seeking employment and are

not specifically geared towards refugees. Contrastingly, in Wallonia there are not many measures to integrate refugees. In this context, there are several promising initiatives that have been defined in this project. The European Social Fund Call "*refugees and work*" resulted into two projects in the cities of Ghent and Antwerp (the two major Flemish cities). The project consists of a minimal partnership between the city, the social welfare institute (OCMW), the local agency for civic integration, and the agency for job negotiation and vocational training (VDAB). In Antwerp the project works with a "one-stop-shop" model: all these partners are in the same building in the first phase of the integration process. In Ghent, the project aims at designing more individualised and integrated service by an "integrated team". Furthermore, the Flemish Agency for employment and vocational training (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding VDAB) launched an *App* (Hi – www.hiapp.be) for refugees and other newcomers. The app provides tools and apps, useful websites and links, as well as ways to get them in touch with partners, volunteers, organisations, companies and buddies.

Finally, in terms of **intercultural relations**, contact between refugees and natives is promoted primarily by NGO's. NGOs like Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen and Orbit vzw are organizations that are very much involved in facilitating contact and networks for refugees. In addition, there are many local initiatives, either associations or groups of citizens who support refugees in one way or another, through buddy projects and other activities. Many of these initiatives are also supported by the (local) government. A good practice named in a survey is one where organisations worked on a project "*Wereldspelers*", which aimed to bring youth activity organisations closer to reception centres for asylum seekers. The project brought together several organisations in youth leisure, as well as refugee organisations and reception centres.

Norway

Norway was also a relatively significant destination country for asylum seekers during the refugee crisis in 2015. Compared to 2014 where they received 11.415 asylum seekers, the numbers increased by 173%, meaning in total 31.110 asylum seekers. As a share of the total population in Norway, they hosted 0,6%, compared to the EU average of 0,26% more than twice as much (European Migration Network, 2015, p. 4). The top five origin countries of asylum seekers were Syria (34%), Afghanistan (22%), Iraq (10%), Eritrea (9%) and Iran (4%). More than 76% of all were male (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, 2015a). The numbers of asylum seekers fell steeply in 2016 to 3.460, constituting only a tenth of 2015's influx.

Officially, the **integration policy** in Norway follows the approach of *mainstreaming*. Nevertheless, it also has a specific integration policy with its in 2003 implemented Introduction Programme for refugees. It is financed and developed by the state (ministry of Justice and Public Security as well as the ministry of Immigration and Integration) but executed by the several municipalities in terms of the provision of housing, education and labour market integration. According expert 1 the municipalities have a large autonomy in the decision whether to accept to host approved refugees or not. However, he also emphasizes that they have to implement the introduction program in the sense that they have to provide it for those they accepted in their municipality.

The **integration model** Norway is under a permanent change. As Olwig (2011) describes acknowledged multiculturalism as the Norwegian integration model but with a certain scepticism calling it an "ambivalent multiculturalism" (Engebretsen and Grønseth in Olwig, 2011, p. 183) that is positively framed in official language, but in media connected to problems. At the same time, the Norwegian approach also carries great similarity with universalism – especially in comparison to other countries' approaches which are definitely assimilationist. Especially a guideline 'A Comprehensive Integration Policy – Diversity and Community' by the Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion (2012-2013) and the 2016 White Paper on integration policy makes clear how important it is for the Norwegian State to facilitate equal access to labour market, housing etc. for newcomers. The emphasis is clearly on participation and how to foster it and not on how adaptation in e.g. cultural terms can be advanced. This

approach did not change during or due to refugee crisis in 2015. According to a survey by the European Migration Network of August 2016, labour market participation remains the “high priority goal”.

Just like many European countries, Norway has **civic integration** programs in place for newcomers, including refugees. This includes obligatory socio-cultural trainings as well as language classes for a maximum of 3000 hours (OECD, 2016, p. 59), provided at the level of municipalities. The determination of starting the regular integration process shows some discrepancies between practice and legal/official statements. Both, one of our experts (expert 3) and Norwegian officials in a survey by the European Migration Network (August 2016) located the starting point of integration with the recognition as a refugee. This is true if one defines integration process as the participation in the Norwegian Introduction programme. Though, asylum seekers also have the opportunity to attend language classes and classes about culture. To some extent, Norway provides integration measures also to this target group (as for instance in Germany on a more systematic basis).

After being granted asylum the refugee needs to leave the reception centre and is placed in an independent **housing**. Without a refugee status, an asylum seeker is not allowed to live outside of the central accommodation. According to expert 1, most refugees are resettled in municipalities that are in the same area as the central accommodation. After the municipality accepts to host a refugee – it is financially compensated for each refugee by central authorities for five years (expert 2) – the so called introduction centre in a city or the former reception centre together with the IMDi will register the refugee in the housing office (Hagelund, 2005, p. 675; Rydin et al., 2011, p. 5). The municipality has the autonomy to decide whether the new accommodation will be in the existing social housing stock or a rent apartment from private actors. Expert 3 indicates that 30% live in “social housing through public welfare” and 70% in “private housing”. There are no priority groups for certain accommodations. The freedom of a refugee to choose the residence location is highly restricted. However, health related issues, family in a specific area or proofs that a certain municipality promises better integration are considered by the authorities. If a refugee is capable to find his independent housing by himself and to live without any financial assistance by the government, he is free to choose the residence location (Rydin et al., 2011, p. 5). According to the expert the housing of refugees is similar to the housing of other people dependent on social assistance. Since Norway has a highly developed welfare state – also in comparison to most other European countries – the support can be characterised as very generous (expert 1).

According to the literature on integration of immigrants in Norway, **health** is a not often discussed topic. For individual as well as public health reasons, all immigrants from non-western countries are screened for certain infectious diseases like tuberculosis after their arrival in the reception centre. The responsible actors are the Norwegian health care services who are also provider for the Norwegian native population. Expert 1 argues that due to the highly developed welfare state in Norway, health care is also very generous for refugees. This is also reflected in the access to health care. Compared to other European countries, Norway grants refugees and asylum seekers the right to health care as Norwegians. Due to the high influx of asylum seekers in 2015 Norway has experienced some challenges also regarding health care. Oscillating numbers of residents in reception centres make it hard to provide sufficient health care services close by. Some reception centres are located far away from hospitals or medical services. The most significant problem is the lack of interpreters in health care. All three experts addressed this issue in the survey. Thus, a lot of communicational problems arise. There is also an increased focus on competence relating to *female genital mutilation* (FGM) and how to prevent this (expert 3). The Norwegian government has developed an Action Plan combating this issue. Its measures are the following: (1) prevention of FGM and promotion of social mobilisation against it; (2) treatment and rehabilitation of victims; (3) building competence at all levels to combat FGM. In practice, the OK Project was implemented in Norway that mostly develops “information methods and materials for immigrant groups, organisations and the Norwegian health and social services” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003, p. 9). By showing movies and discussing the topic, OK tries to encourage immigrants to resist. The Action Plan explicitly talks about the approach being rights-based which again allows inference

with a universalist integration model in Norway. Expert 3 assesses this approach as a promising practice to combat health issues from non-western immigrants in Norway.

The approach for asylum seekers and refugees in **education** is sequenced, meaning that Norwegian language proficiency is a precondition to attend regular school education. The provision of such education is mixed following a subsidiary approach. If schools as generic educational facilities cannot manage to provide sufficient adapted education, the municipality stands in for them and provides e.g. mother tongue instruction which would then be a target-group specific provision. According to expert 3 these classes are taught by qualified bicultural teachers. Students of primary and secondary education with a refugee status may receive a Refugee grant which cannot be coupled with the Introduction benefit (Pietkiewicz, 2017, p. 50). Access to tertiary higher education is more restricted. Pietkiewicz gives insight into several projects in Norway fostering higher education entrance of refugees. NOKUT, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, has implemented that *Qualifications Passport for Refugees* as a standardised document containing information on skills, language skills and work history in order to support refugees without verifiable qualification. The University of Oslo has established a programme for refugees, too: *Academic Dugnad*⁵. It is an internship-like approach for refugees with at least higher educational background. Here, refugees can “apply for an internship in an academic environment similar to the one they have left” (University of Oslo, 2017).

Access to education

Like most European countries, Norway mostly follows a mainstreamed approach. However, in certain areas it is experienced that access to public services is still problematic; such as in the area of education. One of the obstacles is recognition of past qualifications. In Norway, this problem is addressed a.o. by issuing a ‘qualifications passport’ specifically for refugees, providing proof of skills and past trainings. Also, other ad-hoc and specific measures are developed to facilitate access to education, such as programmes to promote access to universities. This shows that sometimes refugees need a bit extra support in order to find their way to mainstream services.

We argued before that Norway’s approach concerning the integration of immigrants is universalist and participation is the high priority goal of all measures targeting refugees. This is very much visible in its approach to **labour market** integration. In comparison to other European countries, Norway has a rather open labour market policy concerning the access into the labour market for asylum seekers and refugees – at the first sight. After being granted refugee status, refugees have full and unrestricted access to the formal labour market. Asylum seekers are only allowed to enter the formal labour market if they can provide a proof of identity (Valenta & Thorshaug, 2012, p. 77). Furthermore, their asylum interview has already been done and there are no information saying that the applicant will/can be returned to his country soon (Trygstad, 2016, p. 3). Authorities hereby aim to facilitate and simplify the “processing of asylum applications” (Valenta & Thorshaug, 2012, p. 80) as early as possible. A study by Marko Valenta and Kristin Thorshaug (2012) shows a limited indication of success with this method. It did not make asylum procedures easier with the help of identity proofs, but it did reduce the amount of work permits issued for asylum seekers (p. 96). The authors also argue that this policy delays “work-related integration” (p. 79) and encourages asylum seekers to take up illegal work or “become passive, social clients” (p. 79). Measures that specifically target at labour market integration are part of the introduction programme that also includes language trainings and courses on social studies. Therefore, only refugees that have been granted asylum are entitled to those measures. Considering that refugee’s qualification immensely determines his need for such programmes, Norway only demands low-skilled refugees to take part in the Introduction Programme (OECD, 2016, p. 36). Therewith, Norway’s integration policy focuses on integration measures for low-skilled refugees (p. 55). Following studies that recommend the starting point

⁵ Dugnad is an old Norse word for “help”, “Good deed” meaning a group doing voluntary work for a common good. “Dugnad Spirit” is seen as an important value in Norwegian culture (University of Oslo, 2017).

for integration as soon as possible, the government initiated the programme “From Reception Centre to the Labour Market” in 4-5 integration centres for asylum seekers that are likely to be granted asylum. It includes “early language training, civic education, skills assessment and qualification schemes” (Eurofound, 2016, p. 35). According to Trygstad (2016), refugees have access to hiring subsidies, “job-finding measures, work experience, training, temporary jobs and work permanently adapted to the individual needs” (IMDi & VOX, 2010, p. 11). Furthermore, an action plan emphasising migrants’ competences in the labour market called “*We need the competence of migrants*” was initiated in 2014. By subsidising companies, mentorships and trainee programmes for migrants are fostered – especially in terms of recruitment, recognition and entrepreneurship.

Assessing Norway’s labour market integration policy for refugees is ambivalent. FAFO research institute found 2003 that programmes like the Introduction Programme in Norway have a positive impact on labour market outcomes (IMDi & VOX, 2010, p. 17). A study by the OECD however, criticises the late labour market entry since the programme firstly has to be fulfilled which takes at least two years. They see a “lock in effect”. Furthermore, incentives to start a job is low due to the high amount of introduction benefits (p. 18). The Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Social Security (2016) comes to a different outcome: 70% of men and 50% of women having participated in the programme have found a job or studies within one year (p. 10). Nevertheless, there is a plan starting *career focused measures* already in the reception centres, e.g. by mapping skills, giving advices and developing learning resources for those still being in the reception centres (p. 16). The Norwegian municipality of Levanger is pioneer in this regard. In their pilot project, local authorities, employers and the NAV developed a six-step model for low skilled refugees and migrant mothers to get employed in lower-skilled jobs in care, cleaning and kindergarten. Firstly, they attend courses, then they are entitled to work placements being supervised during the whole time. Within the time, they gain more and more autonomy from their mentor. An E-learning program is also provided for them (OECD, 2016, p. 56). Our experts indicate a need of amendments to improve the outcome of labour market integration policies. Expert 1 observes a demand in more cooperation with local companies and more emphasis regarding proactive incentives for employers. Expert 2 misses the tailor-made programme content adapted to the refugee’s individual need.

Finally, in terms of **intercultural relations**, contact is facilitated by both NGO’s and authorities. According to expert 3, especially youth integration is promoted by sponsored sports or after school activities. If adults have work, their workplace is used as a “bridging station” (expert 3). Two of the experts identify the *Refugee Guide* programme by the Norwegian Red Cross as successful. “More than 11.500” (Berglund, 11-12-2015) volunteers helped asylum seekers to make their first steps in Norway by giving Norwegian language lessons, showing them around in the city and supporting with job applications. The president of the Red Cross, Sven Mollekleiv, speaks about not donating money, but donating “time and competence to help newcomers to Norway.” (Mollekleiv in Berglund, 11-12-2015). Another project was developed by the Norwegian Center against Racism: *Tea Time*. Norwegian natives get invited by Muslims living in Norway to their homes for a cup of tea and to get to know each other. Since 2011, about 3000 meetings with “over 500 Muslim families” (Fjoerestad Amundsen, 2013, p. 15). The project aims to combat Islamophobia among the public and got media attention as well. One of the experts we interviewed assessed it as a promising strategy to facilitate contact between locals and refugees/asylum seekers. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity arranges together with the Norwegian Tourist Association an annual hike to the highest mountain in Norway with 2000 refugees and volunteers. The event is followed by a cultural feast (expert 3). Concluding, there are some small-scale projects promoting the contact between locals and refugees/asylum seekers. But there is no nationwide measure targeting this in Norway.

The Netherlands

Between 2014 and 2015, there was a 84% increase in asylum applications in the Netherlands (Eurofound: 2016, 9). In 2016, the country received a total of 18.171 applications, of which 2.158 were Syrian. Almost

all Syrian applicants, 98%, received positive decisions and received a temporary residence permit to stay in the country (“Bescherming in Nederland – Dutch Council for Refugees,” 2017).

In recent years, there has been an increase in political and scientific attention to the subject of refugee integration in the Netherlands. Most recently, a March 2017 letter to the formateur, signed by the directors of five important advisory committees, called for acceleration and intensification of refugee participation in Dutch society (SER: 2017). The letter points to the permanency of the refugee question, and systematic problems in social and labour market integration as well as uncertainty in public opinion. Already in 2013, the Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (ACVZ), one of the 2017 signatories, had noted that while “most of the aliens in [asylum seeker] reception facilities are between 18 and 45 years old, which can be regarded as the most productive period in a person’s life,” it found that responsibility for personal and labor market skills development lay with the aliens themselves, while it was previously encouraged by the COA (ACMA 2013, 81). This change was concluded to be an outcome of cutbacks in spending on social and cultural activities for adult asylum seekers. The conditions for labour market participation of asylum seekers was restricted, and the ACVZ considered it a loss to further integration. In 2015, a policy brief from the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) questioned “how we can accelerate the process of integration of permit holders.” This question comes in response to its finding that “one in three permit holders between the ages of 15 and 64 [...] have a paid job and many are permanently dependent on social assistance benefits” (Engbersen et al.: 2015, 3). The WRR recommends two key reforms: 1) extra efforts to identify the labor market potential of permit holders and matching relevant job opportunities; and 2) “an approach in which language acquisition, schooling, securing housing and finding work occur simultaneously rather than sequentially” (Ibid). Additionally, the authors argue that due to a predicted continuation of migration to Europe and “changes in the EU’s asylum policy and the possibility of more stringent asylum policies in the neighboring countries” that receiving countries ought to accelerate and strengthen integration measures (Ibid, 7).

The Dutch approach to migrant integration, including refugee integration, has been largely ‘**mainstreamed**’ as ethnic and cultural policy targets are replaced with generic and place-based criteria. In practice, this increased the responsibility of municipal governments, as the generic domains were largely coordinated there (Geddes and Scholten, 120). In general, there are significant targeted measures for refugees in the domains of language courses, civic integration, validation of prior skills, and housing. The education and labour market domains are supported by more generic policies that also apply to other third-country nationals (EMN: 2015, 17). De Lange (2016: 179) observes that some asylum provisions are more generous than the minimum EU standard. For instance, asylum seeker access to work is set at nine months in 2013/33/EU, but at six in the Netherlands (Ibid).

Civic integration is the core element of the Dutch integration framework. Since 1998 it has been obligatory for all new arrivals (Klaver: 2016, 17). It is not targeted specifically at refugees, and applies to all third-country nationals (EMN: 2015, 18). In 2013, the new civic integration dramatically changed the structure of provision and available programs. In line with the general shift towards individualization and citizenship, Dutch civic integration now involves a program combining language and civic courses that should be concluded within a 3 year period with a civic integration exam. This exam consists of 4 language tests, one on Dutch society, and a last one on labour market orientation (Ibid). The trajectory is only accessible to refugees with a residence permit, and have to be organized and financed by the newcomers individually (although special loans are available against favourable conditions). Failure to pass the exams can lead to fines as well as exclusion from a permanent residence status or naturalization. While for non-asylum migrants non-participation can lead to cancellation of a temporary residence permit, asylum migrants who refuse to be active only forgo the possibility of permanent residency (Klaver: 2016, 18). Klaver finds, however, that in 2016, these sanctions had not been implemented yet. Weakness of the system would be, according to Klaver (2016), that the strong emphasis on individual responsibility had produced non-participation of a substantial number of individuals, as well as a low passing-rate for the

exams (Ibid, 19). However, experts indicate that recent efforts have gradually increased the success of civic integration schemes.

The responsibility for **housing** asylum seekers and refugees is shared by the COA and municipalities. There is a policy for dispersal according to several criteria, and asylum seekers do have the option to find housing with friends or family (OECD: 2016, 25). All are temporarily accommodated in AZCs, where they receive basic facilities, consisting of shelter, a weekly allowance for food and clothing, and access to health care (Klaver: 2016, 7). There are no differences in the availability of services and activities, however the availability of activities can differ. Klaver (2016) finds that AZCs vary significantly in size, but that the average is 510 beds (Ibid). Whereas in the past there have been significant criticism that AZCs offer no substantial activities (AVCZ: 2013; WRR: 2015; Klaver: 2016: 7-8), efforts in late 2016 and in 2017 have developed pre-integration programs and case-management at AZC's to promote integration and participation as soon as possible.

When asylum seekers receive a residence permit, the COA allocates individuals and families to a municipality for permanent accommodation. This settlement process can take up three months, with 10 weeks required just to find suitable accommodation (Klaver et al.: 2015, 7). The minister of Security and Justice announces the number of permit holders to be accommodated twice a year, based on the influx of asylum seekers (SER: 2017, 50). An agreement between the central government and municipalities settled that the number of refugees designated to a municipality is based on its population size (Klaver: 2016, 12). A recent policy innovation was to take into consideration local labour market conditions and to screen and match of labour market qualifications. This has led in practice to an improvement in employment matching during the settlement procedure, see below (EMN: 2015, 33).

Case management

The Netherlands is one of the countries to develop a more individualized structure for case-management of refugee integration (a.o. after a local initiative with case managers in Amsterdam). This is somewhat similar to the Danish system of individual integration trajectories that are 'managed' by a coach. Especially in the complex governance system of refugee integration, with many different actors and often rapidly changing rules and problem settings, such case management may not only result in more coordination of integration efforts but also to better individual integration outcomes.

Asylum seekers are entitled to generic and public **health** care. The second day of arrival each asylum seeker get a medical quickscan based on a questionnaire completed if required with medical examination by a specialised nurse or a general practitioners. In 2009, the COA shifted out the responsibility for health care services as stipulated in the Regeling Zorg Asielzoekers (RZA) to Menzis, a non-profit health insurance provider (Regeling Zorg Asielzoekers: 2015, 3). This arrangement is called the *Menzis COA Administratie* (MCA). The COA itself has the duty to guide asylum seekers through the Dutch health care system. The RZA stipulates that all involved actors take into account language and cultural differences, as well as the living circumstances, asylum procedure and special care needs of the target group (Ibid). Additionally, based on the assumption that asylum seekers generally have few personal resources, they are not charged for services nor require health insurance. After registration, asylum seekers receive a care-card (*zorgpas*) that ensures RZA funding for any required services (Ibid). Upon arrival, asylum seekers are subject to a mandatory tuberculosis examination carried out by municipal health care providers (*Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst, GGD*) (Klaver: 2016, 7). If necessary, children younger than 12 also receive a BCG-vaccination against tuberculosis (Regeling Zorg Asielzoekers: 2015, 5). For newcomers from high-risk countries, voluntary screenings can be repeated every half year for the next two years (Ibid).

In the AZCs centres, asylum seekers are entitled to full health care as compared to native Dutch, and can, for instance, request a midwife, psychologist, youth care and hospital care (Ibid, 8). Additionally, at or near all reception centres there is a targeted health care centre (Gezondheidscentrum voor Asielzoekers

(GC A) (Regeling Zorg Asielzoekers: 2015, 3). In the targeted healthcentre there are walk in facilities and consultations by appointment. There are consultations possibilities with specialised nurses, general practitioners and mental health counsellors. Reception centres also provide phone lines for private and free contact with a specialized call-centre (7 days a week, 24 hours) for urgent medical questions. And during weekdays for making appointments with health care. (Ibid, 4). The care giver is obliged to inform the patient sufficiently, and thus translators have an important role with this target group. Tolencentrum Concorde is a centre for translators, and can usually provide translations by phone within minutes (Ibid, 4). In some exceptional cases, they can also be physically present. Lastly, for the deaf or people with hearing difficulties, specialized translators can be requested (Ibid).

Several studies point out that the current reception system creates significant rates of isolation and dependency among asylum seekers, with adverse health impacts (Klaver: 2016, 8). Increasing the availability of language classes and volunteering activities are new practices to counter these negative outcomes (Ibid). The psychological health of refugees also affects their labour market potential (Razenberg and de Gruijter: 2017, 4). Klaver (2016) identifies several bottlenecks in the provision of full health care to asylum seekers. First, care is oriented towards individuals who are self-reliant and independent, and thereby does not capture all asylum seekers. Second, the psychological and social care is not centralized, and there is evidence of fragmentation of care support, also partly due to relocation of individuals during the asylum procedure (Ibid, 9). Health care arrangements for refugees consist of full access to the national health system. Refugees are obliged to register for health insurance. At this stage, municipal actors are crucial to provide information about local health care services and acting as a coordinative node in this larger network (Klaver: 2016, 19).

The entire **educational system** was impacted by the influx in 2015, and government consequently allocated additional funds ("Onderwijs aan asielzoekers - Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap," 2015; Klaver: 2016, 10; Eurofound: 2016, 28). Educational institutes are responsible for the creation of accessible programs for newcomers, though COA also facilitates schools in some AZCs (Ibid). Asylum seekers in the AZCs receive information about basic rights and Dutch norms and values (SER: 2017, 48). Volunteers also provide some basic language classes, and in spring 2017, a new measure grants access to NT2 language classes to promising individuals (Ibid). When refugees with a residence permit are staying at COA they can follow a program called 'pre-civic integration' that consists of three components: language classes by certified teachers to learn the Dutch language, practical and labor market orientation courses and personal coaching. The aim of the pre-civic integration program is to prepare the refugees for their civic integration program, help them orientate on the labor and education market and prepare them for live in the municipality. After completing this program refugees have a more realistic image and expectation of the labor and educational market, made a first start with learning the Dutch language and have acquainted themselves with Dutch society.

The aim is to have children enrolled in school within 3 months after arrival (Klaver: 2016, 10). Some AZCs have special primary schools on site, and otherwise, children are designated to a regular school in the area (Ibid). The entry into education children is largely based on a sequenced approach. The first year, children attend preparatory classes that provide them with basic language skills and a special teacher. When receiving education in a reception centre, classes cover broader subjects and also focus on Dutch culture ("Onderwijs aan asielzoekers - Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap," 2015, 2). Older children who are ready for secondary education also first enter an international "*intermediate classes*" or 'internationale schakelklassen' (ISK) before joining regular classes. These ISK classes include terminology and subject-matter relevant to specific educational programs. The Ministry of Education (2015) announced that schools have signalled that many children require extra guidance during the first years. They have extra needs such as getting used to a new school system, learning a new language, and often have experienced traumatic events (Ibid, 3). Additionally, efforts are made to improve the reception of children at schools, and to reduce the chances of discrimination and social risks.

When adults receive a residence permit, in theory, they are entitled to the entire education system and its accompanying services. In practice, however, access is dependent on how quickly they can find regular housing in a municipality. For this group who temporarily remains in the AZCs, there is a preparatory civic integration program that consists of three components: language classes, practical and labor market orientation courses, and personal coaching (SER: 2017, 48). The last two components also include the creation of a personal portfolio that contains a CV, diplomas, and other documents relevant for employment. The aim of the pre-civic integration program is to prepare the refugees for their civic integration program, help them orientate on the labor and education market and prepare them for live in the municipality. After completing this program refugees have a more realistic image and expectation of the labor and educational market, made a first start with learning the Dutch language and have acquainted with the Dutch society. This initiative is rooted in the Taskforce for the Employment and Integration of Refugees (TWIV) body (EMN: 2015, 22).

The Taskforce for the Employment and Integration of Refugees supported measures to start the integration and participation more quickly and more effectively (e.g., by way of screening & matching, language training and volunteer work). The SER also released *Werkwijzervluchtelingen.nl*. It has become the premier starting point for parties searching for information on the participation, including on the labour market, of persons entitled to asylum in the Netherlands. The website provides information on applicable legislation, policy, support options and good examples of (volunteer) work, civic integration and education. The website also provides links to relevant organisations and provides specific attention to important initiatives. The primary target audience of the website consists of employers, educational institutions and social organisations.

Klaver (2016) finds no systematic assessment of this preparatory measure, but reviews indicate that pre-integration strengthens refugees' independence and readiness for the later civic trajectory. It is also generally assumed that the earlier language courses can be started, the better the outcome. There are also separate language programs for low- and high-educated refugees and modular approaches (OECD: 2016, 39). These language programs can be combined with generic education, and to enhance accessibility, childcare and evening courses are available, and under specific conditions municipalities can also provide transport reimbursements (Ibid, 57). This is especially important to female refugees for whom it was found that they often have the childcare obligation and may experience cultural barriers to attending education (EMN: 2015, 23). The Dutch Refugee Council noted that the basic A2 level obtained in the civic integration program is often not sufficient to enable refugees to access employment or integrate in society (EMN: 2015, 23).

The Ministry of Education (2015) finds several weaknesses in the current system. First, a substantial number of children has little prior education, might be analphabetic, and has experienced traumatic events. Not all teachers are sufficiently prepared to support these children. Second, the increased demand for NT-2 (Dutch as a second language) teachers cannot be met in the short-term. Third, the quality of small-scale primary schooling for newcomers in form of one or two special classes requires significant improvements ("Onderwijs aan asielzoekers - Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap," 2015, 3). The Ministry's evaluation also shows there are positive developments. In an assessment of 40 schools in the academic year of 2013/2014, 36 had sufficient quality of schooling for newcomers. Additionally,

International Intermediate Classes

The Netherlands already had in place a structure of international intermediate classes that provides specific education for newcomers to get them up to speed with the regular educational system as soon as possible. During the refugee crisis, this structure played an important role in educational integration of refugees. Moreover, this structure is an example of a more sustainable measure that is in place not only for refugees but also for other future migration flows. It is a durable structure that prevents having to 'reinvent the wheel' for every new migration flow.

specialized schooling in reception centres and elsewhere had significantly improved in recent years (Ibid). In general, the Ministry adopts a holistic approach to language courses. As of 2016, it aims to expand efforts to reach another 15.000 students, train "thousands of extra language-volunteers," and establish a local language-centre in every labor market region (Ibid, 6). The Ministry is also aware of unnecessary delays. For instance, to counter the reality that refugees often start in the first year of study programs, regardless of their prior experience, dual trajectories are being implemented. Regional educational centres (ROCs) already combine vocational education with language courses that are funded by civic integration loans (Ibid, 7). Finally, the Ministry points out that the Tel Mee Met Taal program aims to facilitate labor market integration by identifying students' skills and ambitions during their vocational education, and direct them to employment opportunities in the area (Ibid).

Labour market participation is perceived as a foundation for refugees' economic independence and cohabitation with other social groups. Permit holders are allowed to work as regular permit holders. However, Eurofound (2016, 11) observes that labour market entry is complex due to legal restrictions, and that trade unions generally do not favour refugee employment at the expense of natives and current labour standards (Ibid, 14). The involvement of social organizations is also reported to be weak, due to legal constraints and lack of local involvement by trade unions (Ibid, 42). Nevertheless, social organizations do play a significant role in various aspects of the integration process, as shown below. Municipalities are largely responsible for policy implementation, with the most critical issues being sufficient funding and personnel (Ibid, 15). Razenberg and de Gruijter (2017: 3) point out that under the Participation Law (*Participatiewet*), municipalities also have considerable discretion to design policy measures in this domain. Together with a sense of urgency, they recently discovered that more than half of Dutch municipalities developed local labor market integration measures (Ibid). Most often, municipalities take existing re-integration measures and adapt them to refugees. In addition, they create targeted measures to accelerate the integration. Tailor-made programs are vital according to the municipalities, and are based on language proficiency, knowledge of the Dutch labor market, and refugees' personal backgrounds (Ibid, 4).

Unemployment is a significant issue among refugees, and many only find temporary or part-time work (Klaver: 2016; WRR: 2015). Estimates indicate there is also a high degree of social assistance dependency (Klaver: 2016, 14). In 2013, a study of the contemporary core groups showed a difference in benefits dependency of 24%-53% versus 2% for refugees and natives, respectively (Ibid). The high influx in late 2015 exposed these shortcomings, and more specific programs have been designed to accelerate labor market participation of newly arrived. In 2015, it was estimated that 25% of permit holders find paid employment of more than 8 hours per week after two years of having status (WRR: 2015, 10-11).

Asylum seekers are restricted from the Dutch labour market. However, if the asylum procedure takes longer than six months, asylum seekers become entitled to any type of temporary work (Klaver: 2016, 11). In practice, the overall procedure may however take more time (in the period with the highest number of applications even up to 15 months: Eurofound: 2016, 18). Employers must apply for a work permit (*tewerkstellingsvergunning*) (TWV), that is valid for a maximum 24 weeks of labor, within a period of 52 weeks (De Lange: 2017, 177). This limited duration is required to avoid asylum seeker qualification for unemployment assistance (*WW-uitkering*). While Klaver (2016: 11) finds that the TWV is granted only in case of local labor shortage, De Lange (2017: 177) finds that national labor supplies are not taken into account. Additionally, De Lange finds that TWVs are not granted for low-skilled work because it is generally assumed that there will always be a labor supply. If asylum seekers find employment before the six month period, or want to work for longer than 24 weeks, their employer must demonstrate an absence of national or European labor supplies (Ibid, 178). Normally, however, it is only in exceptionally talented cases that a TWV is extended. Klaver (2016) considers this system a hindrance to asylum seeker employment. It is, for instance, easier for some employers to recruit temporary workers from Central and Eastern Europe, for whom a special TWV is not a requirement.

Previously, employment was sequenced after basic language courses and the mandatory civic integration exam. This first phase could require two or three years, causing critical delays in refugee labor market integration (Ibid, 14-15). This 'loss of time' has been criticized in several evaluations, more about this below. Refugees are also entitled to self-employment, but are not supported by targeted programs. The absence of specific provisions can make it difficult for them to find their way around the Dutch regulatory framework (De Lange: 2016, 180). This is a gap as a significant percentage of foreign-born (11%) are self-employed in the Netherlands (OECD: 2010, 5). A promising practice in this domain is the *'Incubators for Immigrants'* that guides refugees through the process of setting up a business (Ibid). Lastly, concerning intra-EU mobility, Dutch regulations allow refugee status holders to move and work in another EU country after five years of residence, but these other countries may have different rules, making for a complex situation (De Lange: 2016, 180). These and other problems such as delayed validation of skills, discrimination and language deficiencies inhibit smooth labor market integration (Ibid). One new promising practice is that the COA has started to assist asylum seekers to create and strengthen personal documents that contain their employment potentials ("Werk en opleiding - COA," 2017).

Increased awareness of 'lost time' during the asylum procedure led to some adjusted policy measures in 2016. Klaver (2016) finds that this included particularly language and labor market orientation programs in reception centres (15). Second, more coordination between public and private actors to improve employment matching. Third, more emphasis on holistic and dual approaches in the municipalities. Fourth, making it easier to follow higher education with the assistance of social benefits. Since July 1 2016, the COA started cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to identify refugees' labor market skills earlier in the integration process. Now, as soon as asylum seekers receive their residence permits, they enter a procedure in which previous work and education, as well as any networks they relate to in the Netherlands are recorded. Based on that data, the COA then places refugees in particular regions of the labor market where they are expected to have the highest chances of employment or education ("Vroege integratie – COA," 2017). The COA aims to find a place for the permit holder in an asylum seekers' centre close to this municipality wherever possible. Permit holders are very appreciative of the options available to them being taken into account. They feel heard and are happy to talk about their work and passions. They also are more appreciative of their transfer to the asylum seekers' centre.

The information collected by COA during this early screening is also relevant to the municipality that has to provide housing. Once permission has been received from the permit holder, the collected information is entered in their physical and digital file. The digital file is transferred to the linked municipal authorities by way of the Remit Tracking System (RTS). To whom municipal authorities have access.

As the COA screening results in a more targeted link, it has become easier and more productive for municipal authorities to start implementing follow-up steps while the permit holder is still staying in a reception facility. The National Government in this connection plays a facilitating role. Divosa has recruited regional coordinators at 35 central municipalities. The regional coordinators represent the labour market regions and are charged with encouraging the municipal authorities within their labour market region to start up early permit holder programmes. They in particular play a part in the process once the permit holder has been linked to a municipality but has not yet been housed there, but will remain relevant afterwards as well. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment bears the costs of the regional coordinators.

To involve residents of asylum seekers in voluntary work in the municipality, COA and Pharos work together in a project called *'Get to Work'* ("Aan het werk"). The project runs until the end of 2018 and aims to have 14,000 persons from 25 COA facilities find volunteer work. The core of the approach is that capacity is made available at the COA facilities at least one day per week for the recruitment of asylum seekers and permit holders and getting them to take on volunteer jobs. At each of the COA facilities, one of the local organizations involved will be instructed to provide this capacity. This can be a volunteer

centre, a welfare organization or a volunteer organization. Pharos concludes agreements with these organizations stating performance.

To foster the involvement of employers, promising practices at the municipal include '*meet and greet*' occasions between them and the target group. In Zaanstad, for example, short videos of refugees are sent to employers, but physical meetings are equally important (Razenberg and de Gruijter: 2017, 4). Secondly, visits of refugees to local employers and actively searching for motivated employers rather than approaching more distant companies (Ibid). Razenberg and de Gruijter advise municipalities to continue the targeted measures as generic policy, even when the 'crisis' eventually subsides (Ibid, 5). In general, employers can access wage subsidies if they employ refugees (Eurofound: 2016, 33). Finally, depending on the situation and employer, refugees can access different types of job-related trainings such that focus on a particular occupation, or are 'on-the-job' (OECD: 2016, 40). Loans for vocational training can be request at the Education Executive Agency (*Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs*, DUO) (EMN: 2015, 28).

Several other promising forms of innovation can be found in Dutch municipalities. First, **Amsterdam** has adopted a comprehensive *case-management program* that indicates enhances oversight of refugees' backgrounds and accelerated integration. This approach was adapted from a previous method that targeted youth. It includes participation, employment, education, language and health care, and is implemented by dedicated case managers with a lower caseload than usual (Razenberg and de Gruijter: 2017b: 2). This load is still 50 refugees per caseworker, but significantly less than the ordinary 250. The approach also targets refugees who await accommodation in the local AZC, but there are four access-criteria that determine the eligible group. First, literacy in one of the four languages in which the online NOA-assessment is conducted (Dutch, English, Arabic and Tigrinya), aged between 18 and 67, and digital literacy (e.g. able to work with computers) (Ibid). The NOA-assessment maps asylum seekers' prior education, work experience, language skills and labor market potential (Razenberg and de Gruijter: 2017c, 4). It is an assessment that is used throughout the Netherlands. While the entry- criteria in Amsterdam reduce the access to a select number of refugees, an alternative is an oral-assessment. The municipality finds that only a small number of individuals have difficulty in completing the assessments (Ibid). In the assessment, refugees' personal circumstances, health and trauma concerns, prior skills, ambitions, and employment potential are mapped. If the assessment indicates need for health care, for instance, the local GGD is directly contacted to facilitate access.

As such, the point of departure in Amsterdam is "earlier, dual, and faster" (Ibid). After the initial assessment, the caseworker and refugee construct a personalized integration plan that aims to guide the refugee into education or employment. Caseworkers actively try to get to know the refugees they work with, and hence provide highly personalized assistance. This includes joining participants to job interviews, or meeting them at home. After special guidance for three to six months, the refugees are incorporated into either the generic youth or activation trajectory, and receive a new caseworker (Ibid). It is vital that this transition runs smoothly. One particular measure that refugees can access is the Language Development and Orientation Program (*Taalverwerving- en Oriëntatieprogramma*, TOV). This include three mandatory components on the participation declaration trajectory (*participatieverklaringstraject*), the health care system and personal hygiene (Ibid, 3). Two additional components are optional, the first being basic language assessment and the second a city-orientation course. Parallel to the TOV program, the Dutch Council for Refugees assists refugees in civic orientation and self-reliance. Lastly, the caseworkers have a variety of measures at their disposal, such as job trainings, visits at local employers, and vocational language courses (Ibid, 4). The municipality also coordinates closely with other actors. First, they have located the caseworkers together with job hunters, and representatives of the Dutch Council of Refugees in the same building. Second, they developed cooperation from employers to provide vacancies that are tailored to refugee job candidates (Ibid, 5). Third, there are arrangement with the local civic integration service providers to be more flexible with their courses. If refugees have found employment, such courses should also be available at more suitable times (Ibid).

The city of *Eindhoven* also aims to accelerate labor market access, but follows a more sequenced approach than Amsterdam. In this southern city, the municipality has built close cooperation with the COA and local employers to assess asylum seeker and refugee labor market potential and streamline job matching. At the local AZC, the COA assesses prior skills and background, and also developed a 'job desk' (*banenbalie*) that is opened one hour per week for any employment-related questions (Razenberg and de Gruijter: 2017c, 2). At this desk, applicants' expectations are also addressed, for instance, by informing them that their prior skills may not be fully recognized by Dutch employers (Ibid, 3). Employment assistance has thus been intensified at the AZC, which the COA is content with as it complements their general goal to improve employment chances. The COA then transmits all relevant information directly to a municipal account manager. In the previous situation, labor market assessments were non-existent at the municipality (Ibid). The account manager is specifically hired to link the employment information with matching job vacancies. As the manager originates from the municipality's economic department, she is well-known to a network of local businesses and companies, and is well-placed to identify demands and open vacancies. Additionally, because the manager is positioned within the municipal framework, she is effectively able to identify all available active labor market policies (ALMPs) and call for adaptations for the new target group. This embedded nature of a specialized manager is highlighted as a promising practice. The pilot in 2015 initially focused on high-skilled individuals with technical experience, reflecting needs of the local labor market. Language requirements for target group were also made more flexible, as English proficiency is often enough in this sector. Subsequently, in 2016 and 2017, the project has been expanded to lower-skilled individuals. For this target group the municipality aims to create more opportunities for internships, vocational apprenticeships, employment activation, as well as education (Ibid).

The United Kingdom

Compared to most other European countries, the UK was not a major destination country for refugees. In fact, even over recent years, immigration to the UK involved intra-EU mobility rather than refugee migration. It was the popular dissatisfaction with intra-EU mobility that turned out as one of the main factors in the Brexit referendum. This does not mean that refugee migration played no role at all. In the debate on migration, fear for a similar increase of refugee immigration as on the European continent was phrased prominently by pro-Brexit groups.

However, in terms of integration strategies, there are key differences between the intra-EU mobile citizens and refugees coming to the UK. At least until the Brexit is effectuated, mobile EU citizens cannot be subjected to a mandatory integration approach. In contrast, over the past decade the UK has developed a clear refugee integration strategy. In fact, the term 'integration' is used in the UK mostly with reference to refugees only (other groups are approached primarily in terms of community cohesion or 'race relations', as a reflection of the superdiverse character of the UK population).

The United Kingdom employs primarily a mainstreamed policy approach based on a **universalistic** paradigm. During the desk research period for this project, policy documents of amongst other the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Education (DfE), and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have been examined. None of the policies of these departments was specifically targeted at asylum seekers or refugees. Since 2010, the UK Government has stepped back from a national integration strategy, and instead emphasized five key principles that are tackled through minimally funded projects in multilevel governance with NGO's and local governments (tackling extremism and intolerance, creating common ground and enhancing social mobility, participation, and responsibility) (Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2014). Thus, there is currently no policy at the overarching UK level to integrate refugees into the UK society, or to all four UK nations (Refugee Action, 2016). Specifically, England and Northern Ireland lack refugee integration strategies, whereas Scotland has national level integration policies.

Importantly, England has a strongly **decentralized** integration strategy. Local governments have considerable power to set their own integration strategies (Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2014). Local authorities are centralized in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The DCLG has since 2010 been given the primary responsibility for integration (ibid.). With regards to the mainstreaming of the integration policies, policies exist across various government departments that affect refugee integration. The Home Office leads on refugee resettlement programmes and the asylum system; community cohesion is led by the DCLG; English language learning and access to higher education and adult skills training sits within the Department for Education (DfE); and policies relevant to job market integration and receiving benefits are led by both the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (Refugee Action, 2016).

In the UK there are running two schemes that were developed in 2016 in cooperation with the UN as a response to the current refugee crisis, namely the *Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)* and the *Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS)* (Home Office, 2017). Through these schemes, Syrian asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors are granted Humanitarian Protection and five years' limited leave to remain. Key differences between humanitarian protection and refugee status in the UK are the more limited entitlements for those under humanitarian protection, such as the limited access to particular benefits (e.g. the Refugee Allowance), swifter access to student support for Higher Education, and different travel documents than those with refugee status. Due to these limitations that were perceived to hinder integration effectively, in March 2017 it was announced that a drastic policy change would be implemented (ibid.). As of 1 July 2017, all persons under the VPRS and VCRS schemes would be granted refugee status instead of humanitarian protection. In addition, those who in earlier times had been under the humanitarian protection can now apply to change their status into refugee status.

In terms of **civic integration**, there is currently quite some uncertainty in the UK. Due to the 2010 withdrawal of the UK government of a national integration strategy, there is currently no national level civic integration policy at place. According to the UK Government, integration can only start when one has been granted the refugee status. Some refugees are eligible for refugee status after spending five years in the UK. Since there are no programmes or policies to assist, refugees must find and pay for their own citizenship classes as well as paying for the test fee. This is found to be 'completely neglectful and highly problematic' (Respondent, 2017), because the same system that does not provide any support in obtaining citizenship courses simultaneously vilifies those who cannot speak the English language and are unable to obtain a job.

Laissez Faire

The UK is an interesting reference case as it is one of the countries to have been the least active in developing a coordinated national strategy toward refugee integration. The issue of refugee integration got caught up between the failure to develop a national migrant integration strategy more broadly and a strategy of decentralization of integration issues to the community level.

In terms of **housing**, the UK follows a dispersal policy for asylum seekers. When Home Office entitles the support under Section 95 of the Integration and Asylum Act, refugees are placed into the second form of accommodation, or 'dispersal' accommodation. In general, when allocating the dispersal accommodations, the UK employs a no choice basis and accommodation is provided outside London and South East England (Home Office, 2017). The policy of dispersal was first introduced under the Immigration and Asylum Act when the then Labour Government sought to alleviate the pressure on local authorities in London and the south-east of England where most asylum seekers were making their claims for asylum. Beyond the aim of relocating asylum seekers away from the southeast of England, the two main factors driving the distribution of asylum accommodation are availability and cost (House of Commons, 2017). The dispersal housing is provided through the Providers, although Home Office is responsible for the funding for the accommodation of the asylum seekers (Home Office, 2017:43). The dispersal housing provides no guarantee to individual housing; people often live in shared accommodations. There is no distribution key; people are located where there is a ready supply (ibid.:4).

However, asylum seekers are allowed to make requests to be placed in certain areas or cities, even in London and South East England, and caseworkers should consider all requests on the allocation of accommodation on a case to case basis.

Once asylum seekers are granted refugee status, they have 28 days to secure housing and a means to support themselves. This current process has challenged the Providers with the dilemma of either evicting the refugees after 28 days (because the Providers do not receive any funding for the support of the refugees after this period), or to continue to house the now-refugees at their own expenses (Serco Group, 2016). Families with children have entitlements to social housing, and will be housed in social housing eventually. All other refugees have to sort out their own housing in the private sector, often leading to refugees to stay with friends and family in the beginning or becoming homeless. The UK Government is allegedly currently exploring to expand the 28 days-period in order to smoothen the transition process from asylum seeker to refugee (House of Commons, 2017). Although the national level policy lacks to provide support and security to refugees in finding housing, schemes have emerged on the local levels, often initiated by charities. An example is the *Private Rented Scheme* (PRS) in London, run by Refugee Council (Refugee Council, 2017). The PRS provides practical support to refugees in obtaining a tenancy through providing advice and assistance in finding accommodation, help with accessing housing benefits (if required), help with applying for grants or loans to help with rent deposits, and advice and support to help sustain the tenancy. In addition, PRS provides on-going support throughout the life of the tenancy offering advice and guidance on issues relating to training, education and employment.

When looking at **health care**, there is a difference between Syrian refugees and other refugees. Upon resettlement in the UK through the Syrian VPRS, Syrian refugees have had two medical health assessments before arrival in the UK (Refugee Toolkit, 2017). Asylum seekers that have not entered the UK through the Syrian VPRS, have not been medically assessed before arrival (Refugee Toolkit, 2017). Medical professionals, academics and public health experts have started to advocate for the medical assessments of all asylum seekers upon arrival (Campos-Matos et al., 2016). They advocate for the revision of pre-entry health assessment of refugees by consulting with disease and migrant health experts, clinical commissioning groups, the Home Office, the IOM and the NHS. According to the advocates, pre-entry health assessments would meet the needs of refugees, reflect best practice, and provide appropriate arrival information for local governments and local health services (ibid.:1). In addition, pre-entry health assessments form a measure to protect public health, by early detection of transferable or communicable diseases.

The UK's public healthcare services are provided by the National Health Services (NHS). In the NHS, everyone, including refused asylum seekers who are not under section 95 Immigration and Asylum Act support, is entitled to free primary healthcare such as the general practitioner (GP). Around the IA centres, emergency healthcare centres have been established (Home Office, 2014). These centres provide access to basic facilities for physical health, mental health, and dental care health teams. The medical professionals that work in these facilities are sub-contracted doctors, financed by the Home Office and the Department of Health. A best practice in the domain of addressing individual healthcare needs of migrants and in the domain of adjusting the healthcare system by training the staff is found in the *Migrant Health Guides*. Since 2010, Public Health England (PHE), which falls under the Department of Health, publishes and updates the Migrant Health Guide: a resource for health professionals working with migrants. The Migrant Health Guide aims to support professionals involved in all aspects of migrant healthcare, and provides in addition to more common domains as infectious diseases and mental healthcare also information to professionals about human trafficking, language interpretation, religion, culture and spirituality (Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action, 2017). Each version of the Migrant Health Guide contains the latest figures, statistics and guidelines. In addition to the Migrant Health Guide, in order to address common medical needs of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, PHE started publishing Migrant Health Guide country reports: guides that contain country-specific information relevant to migrant health. PHE published 134 Migrant Health Guides on July 31, 2014, of which 38 have been updated since (Department of Health, 2017).

In the UK everyone is entitled to free primary healthcare, such as GP visits and nurse consultations. Other services everyone can access for free include Accident & Emergency (A&E) treatment, the diagnosis and treatment of infectious and sexually transmitted diseases, family planning services, and the treatment of conditions caused by torture, domestic violence, trafficking or female genital mutilation. However, asylum seekers and refugees in the UK often encounter multiple barriers in the access to primary healthcare (Asylum Information Database, 2017; Doctors of the World, 2016; Respondent, 2017). With regard to secondary healthcare, access to hospital care is not guaranteed. Hospital doctors should not refuse treatment that is urgently needed for refused asylum seekers who are not receiving support, but the hospital is required to charge for it. The hospital also has discretion to write off the charges. As a result, asylum seekers and refugees may be presented with an extortionate bill by the hospital. In 2015 a key policy change was implemented, when charges for those with no leave to remain in the UK were introduced (National Audit Office, 2016). The National Audit Office report 'Recovering the cost of NHS treatment for overseas visitors' concluded this policy change to be a bad practice. The report stated that this policy had unintended consequences and that some people were wrongly charged. The introduction of charges for migrants which are not fully understood would result in more loss of care for very vulnerable asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers.

Asylum seeker and refugee children aged 5 – 16 have the exact same entitlements to **education** as other UK pupils (Department for Education, 2017). That means that children formally have access to mainstream public schools local to where they live. Exempted are children who live in the IA centres, since they do not yet fall under the social protection of section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. There is no dual-programme in place that provides language classes and education. Although the Asylum Information Database country report of 2016 on the UK stated that children are able to access education in practice, the Refugee Council stated in a 2016 report that thousands of children are in practice unable to access education (Asylum Information Database, 2016; Refugee Council, 2016). This is due to a number of reasons. Firstly, responsibility for educating asylum-seeking children falls between different authorities in the UK (The Guardian, 2016). The Department for Education, local governments, and various NGOs are involved in providing access to education. However, local governments too often do not feel responsible for children who live in the IA centres and do not yet fall under section 95, and the Home Office does not provide education. This lack of feeling responsible derives from the dispersal distribution system: authorities often practice cost containment, and they feel they cannot 'subsidise' the education of children who may be dispersed by the Home Office to other cities. The result is that almost all children in the UK who are living in IA centres do not have access to education. Secondly, the IA centres do not provide any educational classes. Thirdly, once in dispersal accommodation, many children are put on waiting lists that can last up to a year. Children who live in the IA centres are not even allowed to sign up for a waiting list yet, delaying their waiting time to access education to a year and several months in some cases.

For refugee young people aged 16-18 the access to higher education has been reformed in 2011 (Refugee Council, 2012). Under the *Higher Education Funding Council for England* (HEFCE) the quality of opportunity has been expanded for young people of all ethnic groups, including refugee young people, through providing full access to Student Support if young people meet the eligibility criteria. The students who meet the eligibility criteria can apply for a Tuition Fees loan to cover tuition fees, and for a Maintenance loan to cover living costs. Depending on income, a non-repayable Maintenance Grant is also available for refugee young people. Although the Refugee Council has praised this policy change, they expressed concerns that Student Support is still out of reach for asylum seeker young people (Refugee Council, 2012:5). The Student Support also does not apply for further education for people aged 18 and over (Asylum Information Database, 2017). Although access to further education is open to asylum seekers and refugees, the financial barrier is perceived too high, especially for asylum seekers. In addition to the high fees and lack of access to loans, they have namely also no access to mainstream benefits or work (ibid.:70-71).

Asylum seekers do not have access to the **labour market** during the first year of their application process (Asylum Information Database, 2017). When their claim has been outstanding for a year they may apply to the Home Office to be given permission to enter employment. The same applies when further submissions have been outstanding for a year, whether or not they have been recognised as a fresh claim. However, in practice this barely happens as there is no process for application and asylum seekers are concerned that if they apply, their case for the asylum application process may be reviewed as unfavourable (Respondent, 2017; House of Commons, 2016). If permission is granted it is limited to applying for vacancies in listed shortage occupations. These are specialist trades and professions which are in short supply in the UK and are defined very specifically (e.g. consultant in neuro-physiology, electricity substation electrical engineer). The main obstacle is that since these occupations are so narrowly defined, the chances that an asylum seeker will qualify are quite low. The asylum seeker's residence status does not change as a result of obtaining permission to work. They remain on temporary admission, and subject to conditions which may include residing at an address that they give. There is no special access to re-training to enable access to the labour market (Asylum Information Database, 2016). Refugees have full access to the labour market in the UK (Asylum Information Database, 2017). However, there is no comprehensive employment support available after the funding for the national programme Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) was scrapped in 2011 (The Guardian, 2016). This leads to severe concerns among NGOs such as the Refugee Council.

There are currently no state-led developments for approaches to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Various reports have examined policy changes and promising practices throughout countries and domains, such as Eurofound's 2016 report on policy measures to benefit labour market integration in nineteen EU-countries, the Asylum Information Database' 2016 UK country-report on main changes in all relevant policy domains that target asylum seekers and refugees, and the European Parliament' 2016 report on strategies and good practices in labour market integration in the EU-28 Member States (Asylum Information Database, 2016; Eurofound, 2016; European Parliament, 2016). Unfortunately, none of these reports detected promising or good practices regarding the labour market integration strategies for asylum seekers and refugees on UK overarching or national level.

However, the UK has developed some promising practices in the private sector with regards to the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees (The Guardian, 2016; UNHCR, 2013). On the local level in the city Birmingham, a voluntary sector programme with link officers was developed by the Employability Forum, named the '*Trellis*' project (UNHCR, 2013). The aim of the project is to help refugees in Birmingham find sustainable employment to match their skill sets. It gave tailored support to refugee jobseekers, with the engagement of employers, refugee communities, and other social partners. Link officers, former refugees themselves, trained as advisors on the Birmingham labour market, were matched with jobseekers who spoke the same language. After assessing jobseekers' barriers to work, link officers developed a tailored action plan, directing clients to the most appropriate support program, training course, language class, or work placement opportunity. They also helped jobseekers update their CVs, fill in application forms, and prepare for job interviews. The Trellis project also raised awareness among employers and trade unions of the benefits of employing refugees (ibid.).

Another example of a good practice is the organization *Transitions* in London, a recruitment agency that aims to connect British employers with refugees from a professional background (Transitions, 2017). Although the goal is to employ refugees, Transitions focus is mostly on dispersal of knowledge among UK employers on the perks of employing refugees. Many businesses after all value the knowledge of international practice that refugees can bring. Transitions emphasizes that employing a refugee is not an act of charity, but it is merely 'about allowing skilled candidates to compete in the jobs market along with everyone else' (The Guardian, 2015).

Finally, in terms of **intercultural relations**, there are no mandatory courses to follow for asylum seekers or refugees with regards to the language or cultural customs in the UK. However, if one wishes to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) or the British citizenship by naturalisation, the eligibility criteria include

proving your knowledge of the English language and passing of the '*Life in the UK*' test. The Life in the UK test covers the history of the UK, cultural customs, traditions and everyday life (Great Britain Home Office, 2014). Participant study the textbook 'Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents' that is published by Home Office. The test itself takes 45 minutes and consists of 24 questions; participants must answer 18 correct (75%) in order to pass the test, and pay £50,00 to participate.

The Life in the UK test has been criticized by various authors and institutes. Author Thom Brooks (2013) for instance states that the test resembles 'a bad pub-quiz', since the test requires participants to know exactly how to claim an Insurance Number, the year that the Emperor Claudius invaded Britain or the height of the London Eye in feet and meters. The handbook currently contains over 3,000 facts that need to be memorized by heart, and only 24 will be covered in the test (Brooks, 2013).

4 Comparative analysis

In this chapter, a cross-country analysis is made of the findings from chapter 3. The aim of this analysis is threefold. First, to find patterns in the policy responses that were found in the various countries. For this study, on purpose countries were selected that differed in various respects, such as the (relative) number of refugee applications and the national integration policy history. This will contribute to the second aim of the thesis: interpreting the patterns of findings. This will be done in relation to the country selection, but also to the state of the art of the literature that was provided in chapter 2. What contribution can be made to the broader literature on refugee integration? Finally, the analysis in this chapter will contribute to defining ‘innovations’ across European countries and discussing to what extent innovations can be transferred to other settings and thus lead to policy learning by comparison.

4.1 Overall policy strategies

Generic or specific governance strategies to refugee integration

One of the first findings emerging from the case studies (chapter 3) is the variation not only in the content of measures but also the type of governance strategies that have been adopted. We found variation along all four types of governance strategies that we outlined in chapter 1; see table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Context of refugee integration strategies

	Type of policy approach	Policy model	Locus of approach
Austria	Generic as well as specific/ad-hoc measures	Assimilationism	Mixed approach, incl national and local measures
Belgium	Generic as well as specific	Mix of assimilationism and multiculturalism	Decentralized approach
Denmark	Generic as well as specific measures	Assimilationism	Mixed approach, incl national and local measures
France	Generic ('mainstreamed') approach	Assimilationism	State-centric approach, but with increasingly local variation
Germany	Mostly specific approach, but also generic adjustments	Assimilationist/Universalist	Mostly decentralized approach, with emerging national policy framework
Italy	Laissez faire	Universalism	Decentralized approach
Netherlands	Generic ('mainstreamed') approach, with some specific ad-hoc measures	Assimilationist	Increasingly decentralized approach
Norway	Generic as well as specific measures	Universalism	State-centric approach
Sweden	Generic as well as specific measures	Universalism (with some elements of assimilationism)	State-centric approach
United Kingdom	A mainstreamed approach, with some elements of 'laissez faire'	Universalism	Decentralized approach

First, various countries adopted **specific measures** targeted at refugee integration. This includes for instance specific measures to promote language instruction for refugees, ad-hoc measures to temporarily solve housing problems by improvised accommodations, meet and greet events to bring in contact refugees and employers, etc. Especially local governments appear to be active in the creation of measures specifically targeted at refugees. For instance, Germany was one of the countries to design various programs specifically for asylum seekers and refugees in response to the refugee situation, for instance in terms of job specific language classes specifically for refugees, and in alterations within the new Integration Act from 2016 that introduced a domicile requirement for refugees (limiting their freedom to choose housing in Germany). Austria also seems to be a country with relatively many specific measures for refugees, such as the MORE program targeted specifically at refugees and higher education. Also in various Scandinavian countries, to some extent in line with their broader policy histories, more specific measures could be found, including a system of mother tongue instruction in Sweden.

However, it is clear that no country really opted for a predominantly specific approach. Only in Germany and Austria did we find relatively many specific measures, which may be in line with the '**problem urgency**' of relatively high numbers of asylum applications in those countries. The higher the problem pressure, the more likely countries may be to resort to specific measures to provide immediate responses. By far most countries adopted a generic approach combined with some elements of a more specific approach. Furthermore, most specific measures that were found in countries besides Germany, Austria and Sweden often involved **ad-hoc** specific measures. This often involved temporary projects designed to address very specific needs of migrants, or sometimes also experimental projects designed to test a specific measure that, if proven successful, can be accepted more broadly. Think about the Mobile Intercultural Teams to help schools provide mother tongue instruction when necessary in Austria, or the tailor-made case management program that the city of Amsterdam designed specifically for refugees.

What we found in most cases was a generic approach, or in other words, structural adjustments of generic (non targeted) policies in order to achieve better refugee integration outcomes. This is what we define as a '**mainstreaming**' strategy, or an explicit and active effort to embed refugee integration as a general concern across existing policy areas. This involves for instance efforts to strengthen existing measures oriented at access to education (such as the Dutch intermediate classes), to open up the existing housing stock to refugees, to eradicate obstacles to labour market access - such as facilitating access for asylum seekers in Germany or Italy -, etc. Also the German Integration Act from 2016 can to some extent be seen as an effort to adjust generic facilities in areas such as housing, education and labour to effect in better integration outcomes. In this sense, the responses from various European countries to refugee integration follow the broader trend in migrant integration governance toward a more mainstreamed approach (see also Scholten and Van Breugel 2017).

A third strategy that we found in our analysis, was that of relying on generic policies without adjusting them to achieve better integration outcomes. This '**laissez faire**' approach relies on the adequate functioning of existing institutions, and puts belief both in that newcomers are able to find access to these institutions as in that these institutions are also equally open to newcomers. The Italian and UK cases provide various examples where existing approaches to migrant integration were largely let in place, out of belief that this approach would be adequate for the aim of refugee integration as well. Think about the relative openness of the NHS in the UK for refugees, or the openness of the Italian educational system for all types of migrants. However, also in both the UK and Italy it became clear that where refugee needs became most manifest, doubts were put to the viability of the broader integration strategy (for instance in terms of getting access to proper housing facilities in the UK or actually getting access to education in Italy). Furthermore, especially in Italy questions have arisen as to whether the prevailing approach would still be sufficient if it would become clear that Italy is not only a transit but also a settlement country. Also, what is clear from both the UK and Italian cases, is that in the context of a government *laissez faire*

approach, especially NGO's fill the gap with ad-hoc programs specifically for refugees (such as the activities of CARE and the U4REFUGEES project in Italy).

Finally, in some cases we also found traces of an alternative strategy, involving a selective and targeting limiting of integration opportunities under specific conditions. This strategy can be defined as '**differentialist**' as it involves efforts to differentiate refugees from getting access to generic institutions, such as the labour market, the educational system, the welfare state, the housing market and the health care system. Such differentialist measures can be driven for instance by a desire to protect institutions for potentially disrupting effects of immigration, or by a belief that integration of refugees should not be promoted with a perspective on eventual return migration. An example here are some of Austria's federal states where beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are not entitled to social assistance the way unemployed natives or refugees are. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection only obtain Basic Care which is less than the normal welfare benefit, in i.a. Burgenland. The German Integration Act from 2016 also involves some differentialist elements, such as limiting the opportunities to choose housing (the residence requirement) and providing more specific conditions under which asylum migrants can get access to the labour market.

We can conclude that although most countries act from a generic approach, there is significant variation between the examined countries in terms of governance strategies. Three factors seem relevant in accounting for differences between countries. First, the **broader integration traditions** that have been established in the different countries. For instance, countries like the Netherlands and France had already adopted a mainstreamed approach before the refugee crisis. On the other hand, Scandinavian countries have a much longer track record in developing more specific measures. This is clearly manifest in Denmark, Norway and to some extent also Sweden. Interestingly, countries with a generic approach also seem to take specific measures for refugee integration, but then mostly on an ad-hoc basis. This applies in particular to the Netherlands, but to some extent also for Belgium, the UK and France. Italy is one of the countries that most clearly follows a *laissez faire* approach. This seems to be in line with the broader lack of an explicit strategy of immigrant integration in Italy. Finally, we see some incidental evidence of more differentialist measures, such as recent efforts to restrict labour market access for asylum migrants in Austria.

Secondly, we do see a relationship between **problem urgency** and the type of approach that is adopted. The higher the sense of problem urgency, the more likely a country is to (also) adopt ad-hoc specific measures. Due to the immediacy of high numbers of refugees, such countries are more likely to see the need for specific measures to address immediate problem pressure. This is clearly the case in the three largest refugee destination countries; Austria, Germany and Sweden. Countries where problem urgency is weaker, a more generic approach is often seen as sufficient. This applies to countries such as Countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the UK. Italy seems, again, to take in a specific position here. To some extent, the Italian '*laissez faire*' approach can also be interpreted as a reflection of the view that Italy is nothing more than a transit country for refugees. This, as we have seen, would however ignore some of the signals we have identified that many refugees seem to stay in Italy.

Thirdly, we see a relation between the degree of **labour market regulation** (including enforcement of labour market regulations) and the type of governance strategy that is preferred. In more regulated economies such as the German, Austrian and the Scandinavian economies, access for newcomers may be more complicated than in economies that are less regulated, or at least where there is less enforcement, such as in Italy (for instance with its sizeable informal economy). As a consequence, highly regulated (and enforced) economies are in greater need of specific policies to overcome obstacles to access, whereas less regulated economies tend to fall back more to a *laissez faire* approach in full confidence that refugees will be able to find their way into the economy by themselves.

It is difficult to as of yet evaluate the effectiveness of the different approaches. However, we know from the migration literature that a structural adjustment of generic policies and institutions seems to produce

better integration outcomes. In this perspective, it is very important to follow to what extent current specific measures being adopted in some of the countries with the highest problem urgency (Germany, Sweden, Austria) will turn out to be temporary or permanent. They may be temporary intensifications of generic policies to alleviate immediate problem pressure, making place for generic policies once this problem pressure diminishes. They may also be more structurally embedded specific policies, which may be very much at odds with the generic or mainstreamed approaches that seem to result in the best integration outcomes.

National-local relations

Another issue that clearly emerged throughout all the case studies is the complexity in the relationship between the national and the local level. As figure 4.1 shows, there is significant variation in the extent to which refugee integration strategies were centralized or decentralized. The Scandinavian countries, in particular Sweden and Norway and to a lesser extent Denmark, seem to follow a clear state-centric approach. In others, mostly a decentralized approach is followed. Importantly, this mostly follows the structure of the broader migrant integration strategies in the respective countries. In most countries, migrant integration has become a matter of local governance primarily.

Our study reveals various examples of policy innovation coming from the local level. Faced with concrete consequences of refugee migration, cities are also often the first place to develop new programs for dealing with these consequences. Almost all successful programmes in Austria were established in Vienna which is also affected the most by the refugee influx. We can find promising measures for almost all domains in Vienna, e.g. *Startwohnungen*, *Vienna Refugee Aid Service Card*, *StartWien*, *Chancen:reich* or *Neuland*. In Sweden, too, local innovation takes place. Especially the northern regions aim to stimulate refugees to settle their municipalities where population has been in decline for decades. Local needs thus evidently produce local responses. The Dutch case also boosts various examples of innovation by entrepreneurial local governments, including larger cities such as Rotterdam (providing specific housing to refugees), Amsterdam (case management system) and Utrecht (Project Einstein).

However, in various cases we also saw that local policy innovation does not always fit within national policy frameworks. In the Netherlands, for instance, especially city governments have developed comprehensive programs that include assistance to refugees in their civic and labor market integration, while this is not in line with the official national philosophy that stresses individual responsibility. Dutch policies in these domains aim to stimulate refugees' self-reliance and participation, while officials at the local level express that this is in most cases unrealistic to demand of refugees in the first months after their arrival. In most cases, however, it appears that national level governments accept local innovation, even when it contradicts official policy imperatives. Together with the fact that local governments are more directly confronted with the refugee integration challenge, this relative freedom for innovation has led to a diverse set of local approaches that, in many cases, form a substantial part of countries' integration measures.

The migration-integration nexus

A third element of the broader policy context that we looked at in the country cases, involves the migration-integration nexus (including in particular the civic integration programs). Most European countries already had **civic integration schemes** in place before the refugee crisis. As mentioned by many of the respondents in our study, these schemes became more relevant than ever for the integration of refugees. This is clearly a policy element where countries could rely on existing civic integration policies to produce good refugee integration outcomes, depending on whether the prevailing civic integration system also 'fits' with the emerging refugee situation.

Our project did trace various efforts to innovate civic integration schemes for refugees. One key element involves the timing when refugees are allowed to **start** their civic integration process. Overall, migrants only start their civic integration once they have been granted a clear legal residency status. This excludes asylum seekers as long as their permit application procedure is still on, but includes refugees. We see in various countries efforts to start civic integration earlier already for asylum seekers. In some countries this is a fairly generic measure (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Norway), whereas in others it is conditional, for instance on the average acceptance rate for a specific refugee group (such as in Germany). These efforts respond to clear signals (also in the Netherlands) that when asylum seekers spend too long awaiting their procedures while not being able to orient themselves at the host society, this negatively affects their integration process.

Another aspect of policy innovation relates possibilities to connect to the labour market by means of **internships**. Here we see differences between countries that allow only for refugees to do internships, whereas some also allow this to asylum seekers. For instance, in the UK opportunities for asylum seekers to do internships are very restricted, and various other countries there are very specific conditions (Belgium: only with work permit, Denmark: only when accepted in youth program, Germany: after 3 months waiting time, Italy: only via SPRAR). When it comes to the debate on internships, we see here a clear manifestation of the dilemma between on the one hand concerns on labour market integration of asylum seekers and on the other hand concerns on displacement on particularly the low-skilled labour market.

Finally, a specific promising practice that was flagged in our research for refugee integration, involves the **individual or personal integration trajectories** that are developed in Denmark. This was flagged as a promising practice in particular as it does justice to the high degree of differentiation amongst refugees with different backgrounds (in terms of citizenship, socio-economic skills, cultural capital, etc). Whereas, as we saw in chapter 2, many countries somehow resort to a single integration approach, such an individual approach allows for a more tailor-made, flexible and differentiated approach. In Denmark, already on a very early point of the integration process integration measures are specifically tailored towards personal skills, needs and pre-conditions of asylum seekers. This personal integration trajectory runs like a thread through the different stages of the integration process. It starts after the arrival in one of the reception centres, when asylum seekers above the age of 18 are required to sign a contract or agreement with the asylum centre. The contract specifies the participation for each individual in educational programs as well as the duties in the centre for each individual. When the asylum seeker is granted asylum and enters the 'next level' of the integration process, individual characteristics are taken into consideration when allocating refugees into municipalities. Personal skills and previous education are matched with the municipalities' labour market situation and educational facilities. Finally, in the last stage of the integration process, refugees undergo a three year integration program specifically tailored to their skills and needs through an extension of the contract. The goal is to develop an individual integration plan for the first three years: "The Contract of Integration encompasses a range of specifically defined goals and milestones of successful integration, as well as an agreement about the tools and measures to achieve these goals." These goals usually include pertaining to education and/or employment. Importantly "the term 'contract' implied that the immigrant must in fact sign a piece of paper thereby committing him or her to its content. The municipalities are bound to make sure that the contracts are met and in principle sanctions are imposed when they are not" (p.11). Local authorities "monitor the program and (...) observe the contract" (p. 7). Although the integration program in itself is also open to other migrants, the personal integration trajectory with its contracts and allocation procedure is only available for refugees and asylum seekers.

4.2 Social economic areas

Labour market

When comparing our findings from the 10 countries, including the 6 in depth case studies, one thing stands out firmly; all refugee integration strategies put highest **priority** on socio-economic integration, and then in particular labour market integration. On the one hand, this should not be taken as a surprise, as from a sociological perspective this is seen as a key area of integration (although some sociologists argue that rather education is the key sector of integration). On the other hand, it may be taken as a surprise, as public and political discourses have focused much more on socio-cultural issues recently. Indeed, this socio-cultural framing of refugee integration discourses cannot be traced in the actual policies that we studied. This prioritization of labour market integration is also confirmed by other recent research projects on refugee integration, such as Eurofound (2016).

Table 4.2: summary of findings regarding labour market integration strategies

	Access to labour market	Activation strategies	Entrepreneurship
Austria	Asylum seekers after 3 months + labour market test, refugees	Guidance, counselling, job-related training, skills assessment	Fostered by consultation + coaching
Belgium	Asylum seekers after 4 months, refugees	Training, facilitating contacts	(Informal) counseling (as part of general integration)
Denmark	Asylum seekers after 6 months, refugees	Employment training, short-term employment	Dependent on municipality
France	Asylum seekers after 9 months, refugees	No specific	--
Germany	Asylum seekers after 3 months + sometimes labor market test, refugees	Flüchtlingsintegrationsmaßnahmen, ESF-BamF programs	Financial assistance, counseling
Italy	Asylum seekers after 2 months, refugees	Training, skills mapping, wage subsidies	--
Netherlands	Asylum seekers after 6 months, refugees	Adapted generic measures, apprenticeships, temporary/voluntary work, vocational language classes	Assistance in terms of trainings, internships, language classes
Norway	Asylum seekers with ID proof, refugees	Career counselling, job placement, hiring subsidies, on-the-job-training, vocational training	Assistance in terms of grants and preparatory courses
Sweden	Asylum seekers with ID proof, refugees	Apprenticeships, on-the-job-training, wage subsidies, vocational language trainings	Via generic assistance for self-employment
United Kingdom	Asylum seekers after 12 months + labour market test, refugees	No specific	No

However, in various respects we found quite some variation between countries, in terms of providing access to labour market for asylum seekers/refugees, in terms of labour market activation strategies and in terms of emphasis on entrepreneurship. In terms of providing **access to the labour market**, we found that in countries with specific integration programmes, first labour market related integration policies are limited to those with asylum status. This is the case in Denmark, Norway and Austria. Other countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, already offer such activation services to highly skilled asylum seekers. Fast-track initiatives detect highly- or middle-skilled asylum seekers already when still residing in central accommodations. In these programmes, their skills will be assessed, employment-related language courses are offered and potential employers will be involved, too. Since most of these

initiatives started as pilot projects, but were extended to the national level, one may consider them a **promising strategy**. Experts, however, indicate that the populace of asylum seekers may not fit into this target group scheme. And the promotion of their labour market integration is much more difficult.

We found that across all countries, recognised refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have full **access to the regular labour market**. This does not refer to asylum seekers. High variety between access regulations exists in the analysed European countries. Most countries link full access to certain conditions. Firstly, access is granted **after a certain amount of time** after the asylum application was submitted. This varies between 60 days in Italy, 3-4 months in Austria, Germany and Belgium, 6 months in Denmark and the Netherlands, 9 months in France and even one year in the United Kingdom. Norway and Sweden are the only countries that do not connect access to a certain previous period of stay in the country. However, there, access is not unconditional neither. Besides, some countries prohibit the “switch” from residence permit for humanitarian reasons and on-going asylum procedure to residence permit for economic reasons. Herewith, they intend to prevent actual “economic migrants” to bypass visa regulations etc. by immigrating as an asylum seeker.

In addition to time-wise conditions, we can observe two other patterns across countries that serve as requirements for the access. The Scandinavian countries couple the right to work with **cooperation in the asylum process**. In practice, asylum seekers are only allowed to participate in the labour market if they have provided a proof of their identity. Herewith, the countries intend to facilitate the asylum decision. However, studies (i.a. Valenta & Thorshaug, 2012) have shown that this practice does prove to be effective. Asylum seekers are pushed into illegal work or stay passive clients of social welfare if they cannot fulfil this requirement. Furthermore, the study has found that there was not increase of people proving their identity due to this policy. Continental countries, such as Germany and Austria, but also the United Kingdom require a **positive labour market test** issued by the national public employment agencies. Thereby, they aim to ‘protect’ the native population from labour shortage. The reason for these policies may be very political: most countries struggle with the assumption of the public on foreigners taking jobs from natives. Additionally, Austria has limited the access for asylum seekers to certain sectors, such as agriculture, tourism and shortage occupations. Germany recently has passed a law prohibiting access to asylum seekers from safe third countries in order to make asylum migration from these countries as unattractive as possible. To what extent these restricting policies are successful is not evaluated yet and depend highly on the national labour market and economic conditions.

In general, it can be observed that there has been an opening of labour market to asylum seekers in some countries after the recent influx of 2015. Other countries, on the other hand, still stick to their former policies limiting the access with various conditions. At the first sight, the opening may seem positive since it tackles the problem of inactive asylum seekers waiting for the asylum application to be proceeded. Furthermore, it shows how countries recognise that most asylum migrants will stay. Nevertheless, the easier access does not consider the vulnerability of refugees. Several studies, i.a. the OECD (2016) have found that “refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups of migrants in the labour market” (p. 5). According to Martín (2017), they need to be activated before they are sent out into the regular labour market. Thus, easier access seems to be working for socio-economic integration for a short-term period, but in the long-term it may not work as a sustainable measure.

Besides different strategies to labour market access, we also found significant **variation in types of labour market strategies** pursued in the different countries. Here again we can clearly recognize all four types of policy strategies that we distinguished above. Countries, such as Belgium, France, Italy or the United Kingdom rely on **generic schemes** which include employment assistance from the respective public employment agencies and the obligation to co-operate from the refugees’ side. In Germany and Austria, one can observe a **mixture of a structural adaptation of generic policies and ad-hoc temporary specific measures**. This contains e.g. employment-related language courses, specific skills assessment procedures, wage subsidies and job placements. Several Scandinavian countries have established more **tailor-made integration programmes** for labour market activation of refugees. In Denmark, Sweden and Norway a

sort of mentorship is installed to support refugees from day one after they have been granted asylum. It does not only include employment assistance, but also training. Even if this approach sounds brilliant, it also entails some constraints. The support is linked to a certain obligation to participate and refugees may risk benefit cuts if they do not do so. Especially due to their migration history and the reasons for their flight, they are very vulnerable people. Full participation may therefore not be possible for all of them. Furthermore, experts indicate that these programmes cause lock-in effects, too. As long as a refugee is participating in the programme, he does not need to search for a “real” job or proper employment is regarded as less attractive. Thus, dependency on the welfare state is to some extent fostered.

A specific measure that was implemented in Austria and seems quite **promising** is the *Competency Check*. It consists of training days, language courses, occupational tests and interviews and aims at the assessment of unverifiable skills asylum seekers and refugees may possess. Similar programmes are run in Denmark and Norway; Germany’s public employment agency is working on such a project, too. The countries take the specific characteristic of refugees on the labour market into account: the potential lack of verification of their skills and qualifications. Other than labour migrants, there might not be able to take everything with them before fleeing. Policy makers should continue to work on that since this can facilitate labour market participation immensely without the urgency to spend a lot of money on trainings. With assessed skills, trainings may be obsolete.

Finally, we found that, within marginal differences, there is very little emphasis across the examined country cases on **entrepreneurship** of refugees. Refugees may act as entrepreneurs and employers. They might not need skills training but rather financial or ideal support to start a business. At the moment, this seems to exist only on very small scale, mostly in the context of ad-hoc projects.

Housing

The refugee crisis confronted highly receiving countries with an unprecedented challenge concerning the accommodation of the newcomers. Herewith, the initial phase of reception dominated the discourse in 2015/16. In countries, that experienced a large influx of asylum seekers, emergency housing was created in abandoned buildings, schools or gymnasiums as a very ad hoc reaction to the crisis. By now, most countries are challenged with finding permanent housing for recognized refugees, especially in large cities. As housing is in many ways linked to integration, countries applied partly very distinct approaches dealing with pressing problems. Although housing has not been the major issue in refugee integration strategies on the national level, we see that the domain plays a central role in approaches on the local level. In all observed countries, housing falls to an extent or even completely in the responsibility of local authorities.

Table 4.3; summary of findings regarding housing strategies to refugee integration

	Accommodation of asylum seekers	Accommodation of status holders	Structure of available housing stock
Austria	4 month after recognition, distribution criteria apply	No distribution key applies, no residence requirement applies, un- assisted house hunting	<u>Limited</u> special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
Belgium	No restrictions, distribution criteria apply	No distribution key applies, no residence requirement applies, un- assisted house hunting	No special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
Denmark	No restriction, distribution criteria apply	Distribution key applies, residence requirement applies, assisted house hunting	<u>Limited</u> special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
France	3-6 month,	Distribution key applies,	Use of special housing

	distribution criteria apply	no residence requirement applies, un -assisted house hunting	and existing housing stock
Germany	6 month, distribution criteria apply	Distribution key applies, residence requirement applies, <u>partly</u> assisted house hunting	<u>Limited</u> special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
Italy	6 month after recognition, distribution criteria apply <u>partly</u>	Distribution key applies, no residence requirement applies, un -assisted house hunting	No special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
Netherlands	No restrictions, distribution criteria apply	Distribution key applies, residence requirement applies, conditional house hunting assistance	Use of special housing and existing housing stock
Norway	No restrictions, distribution criteria apply	Distribution key applies, residence requirement applies, assisted house hunting	No special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
Sweden	Distribution criteria apply	Distribution key applies, no residence requirement applies, assisted house hunting <u>if requested</u>	No special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock
United Kingdom	28 days after recognition, Distribution criteria apply	Distribution key based applies, residence requirement applies, mostly un -assisted house hunting	<u>Limited</u> special housing, mainly use of existing housing stock

An emerging pattern in the domain of housing is a convergence between all observed countries on applying certain distribution criteria for the initial phase of **accommodation of asylum seekers**. A common feature that can be found concerns the required time of staying in the reception centre. Insights in these regulations can tell us a lot about a countries integration approach. Most countries have no restrictions in the length of stay concerning asylum seekers, meaning that they can end up for many years in the centres. If we refer to the Danish example, asylum seekers can stay for more than 10 years in the centres, if their status remains uncertain. In Denmark, Austria, Italy, the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden as soon as or shortly after an individual obtained a residence permit, they are required to leave the centres. In some countries, such as Denmark and Sweden, asylum seekers are allowed to live independently if they can provide for themselves. Only in Germany and Belgium, the stay in the centres is legally restricted. However, in almost all observed countries the time, asylum seekers live in the centres, is longer than intended due to informal practices and housing shortages. It is in this regard that previous studies, such as WRR (2015) and Eurofound (2016), have warned for negative long-term effects on the integration of asylum seekers that have lost much time in reception centres.

Furthermore, all countries have applied special accommodation solutions for **unaccompanied minors**. They are either housed in foster families, for example in Italy, Belgium, the UK and the Netherlands, or in special accommodation centres, for example in Germany, Norway and Denmark. Moreover, most countries offer separate housing for asylum seekers with health issues or particularly vulnerable groups. In Denmark and Belgium centres have been established for trafficking victims and people with traumata. In Denmark, also disabled people are separately accommodated and in Belgium single woman and pregnant minors can receive a special treatment. Next to this quite common distribution criteria, some countries developed outstanding approaches. In Germany, there is a system in place called "*Herkunftslanderzuständigkeit*". Reception centres have different responsibilities regarding the country of origin of the asylum seekers, meaning that Syrian refugees are first send to reception centres responsible

for Syrians. In Norway, the government has installed a new type of integration reception centres, accommodating those separately, who are “especially motivated”.

Regarding the **accommodation of status holders**, a finding that springs from our project concerns the widespread existence of **allocation schemes and distribution keys**. In all countries except of the UK, Austria and Belgium, the allocation of refugees is organised with the respect of sharing the (financial) burden between the different state-levels (states, municipalities or cities). In Italy, only asylum seekers are distributed in different reception centres due to this motivation. While in some countries, such as Germany, the key is solely orientated on local characteristics, in other countries, such as Denmark, Sweden and since recently also the Netherlands, skills of refugees try to be matched with the labour market situation of the state and in some cases also family ties are taken into account.

Significant differences between the countries can be observed in the extent to which **assistance in house hunting** is provided. Approximately half the countries grant refugees support with finding a permanent accommodation, while the other half leaves this process to the full responsibility of the recognised individuals. However, in most countries at least financial support is granted for independent housing. A specific exception here involves Italy, where individuals are not entitled to any form of support, what forces many people to live in “informal settlements”. In contrast, Denmark introduced an *innovative approach* in organising housing for soon-to-be recognized refugees when they are still in the reception centres. A contact person of the municipality is supposed to visit these refugees and help them arrange the moving and furniture for their new homes. Also, other countries have developed special schemes to prevent homelessness of refugees. In France recognized refugees have the possibility of living in *temporary accommodation centres* (CPH) for a period of up to 9 months, if they cannot find permanent housing after they have obtained asylum. In Sweden, individuals can apply for *settlement assistance*, where the PES helps them to find a municipality with available accommodation. Generally, we can observe that in all countries several NGOs and civil society groups have been created to assisted refugees with the house hunting process. For instance, in Belgium extra financial support has been provided for municipalities in order to support a project where volunteers work as “*housing buddies*”, in order to help refugees finding a home and installing themselves into the home. This 'networking'-function of volunteers is an important leverage to the tackle the difficulties on the private housing market.

Interesting findings can be revealed when looking at the regulations on freedom of movement of refugees in the different countries. In Denmark, Norway and Germany refugees are obliged to stay in their assigned area for a fixed period of time. In Denmark the residence requirement, which applies for a time of three to five years while refugees participate in an integration course, has already been established in 1999 and has therefore a long history. In Germany, the policy changed only in 2016, allowing states to apply a domicile requirement. There are two models for the local councils to allocate refugees: Firstly, they can assign an exact neighbourhood or city for refugees (“*Wohnsitzzuweisung*”) or secondly, they restrict certain neighbourhoods for them to live (“*Zuzugssperre*”), while letting the refugee choose between the remaining ones. Several studies indicate, that those practises can lead to feelings of exclusion amongst refugees. However, it remains to be seen whether the residence requirements becomes an effective tool in relaxing the tense housing situation in large cities and exonerate these cities, which has been the original motivation of this policy.

Finally, concerning the **structure of the housing** stock, the overwhelming use of existing housing stock can be classified as an emerging pattern in the domain of housing. In all countries, except of France and the Netherlands, almost no specialised housing was created for refugees. In the Netherlands, the central government subsequently enacted a special regulation that temporarily grants discretion and subsidies to municipalities to develop alternative forms of housing. In France, 500 new housing units has been created in 2015, which function as temporary refugee accommodation centres (CPH). Since the use of existing housing stock can lead to high tensions on the housing market, local governments in various countries have become creative and the creation of specialised housing is in progress. Next to generally more

funding for the creation of social housing, for instance Germany uses methods of modular constructions to provide cheap and fast new housing for refugees in metropolitan areas.

Education

In the field of education, we see across the various countries strong **investments in systematic adaptations of generic education facilities, combined with many ad-hoc measures**. The studied countries demonstrate a strong reliance on their regular education systems, and in some cases decentralized policymaking structures have led to significant regional and local divergence. In Norway, for instance, all municipalities are obliged to provide special language courses, such as mother-tongue or bilingual classes, but not all have added introduction classes. In Germany, the federal states are mandated with the provision of education. In France, municipal governments decide at which school refugee children will be registered. In Austria, the city of Vienna designed an integrative approach that includes language and basic courses alongside labor market-orientation for a thousand individuals. In the Netherlands and Sweden local governments have also designed integrated approaches to education. In general, because regular schools and higher education institutes have faced so many newcomers, systematic assistance, such as funding for tutoring programs, and comprehensive exchange of best practices are important measures that can strengthen refugees' future educational achievements. Subsidizing refugee-specific programs also relieves school and universities of the burden to fund these themselves, and hence can produce more systematic support programs.

Table 4.4: summary of findings regarding educational strategies to refugee integration

	Entry	Specific study allowance	Specific introductory classes
Austria	At arrival	Yes, depends	Yes
Belgium	Delayed (60 days)	Yes	No
Denmark	At arrival	Yes, tuition fee exemption	Yes
France	At arrival	Generic	No
Germany	At arrival	Generic	Depends
Italy	At arrival	Generic	Depends
Netherlands	At arrival	Conditional	Yes
Norway	At arrival	Generic	Yes
Sweden	At arrival	Conditional	Shift to regular classes
United Kingdom	At arrival	Generic	No

Compulsory education is applicable to all minors regardless of their asylum status. The age-group of children to which this applies differs, for example, in France it captures individuals between the ages six and 16, while in Belgium those between six to 18. Interestingly, in Sweden refugee children between the ages 7 and 16 are not obliged to attend primary or lower-secondary school. In general, it is assumed that the younger refugees are when they arrive, the more likely they will learn the language and successfully enter the labor market with native diplomas. Pre-school measures that also include classes on parenthood, and flexible school routines that can accommodate parents and pupils seem to be promising practices. Finally, the heterogeneity of refugee children in terms of their previous educational and life circumstances should be recognized and differentially addressed. Refugee children should not be uniformly treated as helpless and uneducated.

Especially **transitions** between different levels of schooling can be problematic. In Sweden, especially 'latecomers' between the ages seven to nine who arrive at the end of primary school face difficulties. Avery (2017: 406) finds that only 27% of latecomers completed their final ninth year, and that only 19% received passing grades in all subjects. Another problematic transition is that from secondary school into

higher and adult education. At this point, many refugees choose to move into lower segments of the labor market because they lack the required diplomas or need an income to support themselves and family members. A promising practice to target this group can be found in the Swedish *Komvux* school system, which provides courses based on material in compulsory, lower- and upper-secondary school for adults who have not completed these levels. Most *Komvux* schools also provide evening courses and cover students' transport costs. *Komvux* attendance is also free of charge and accessible for an unlimited time. In the Netherlands, transport costs are usually not (at least not always) reimbursed, which has shown to be a potential obstacle for refugees' access to education, as well as employment. On the other hand, the Netherlands does offer different modules for low- and high-educated refugees, and covers childcare. In general adult refugees are free to access to vocational and university-level education under the same conditions rules that apply to national citizens.

Most countries offer **specific preparatory classes** to refugee students. The Netherlands, for instance, employs a one- or two-year program with '*intermediate classes*' that prepare older refugee children before joining regular classes. Other countries emphasize accelerated participation in the generic system. There are thus both sequenced and dual approaches in this domain. Refugees in some countries first attend special classes, either voluntarily or obligatory, before they can enter the generic system, whilst in others they immediately attend regular classes. Since regular classes require that students can understand the native language, however, a sequenced pattern often still emerges because refugees will initially need to focus on the language. In the Netherlands, for example, this is further compounded by the mandatory civic integration exam that often demands a lot of time to prepare, and restricts refugees from engaging in studies elsewhere.

The findings also indicate that there is generally a **long period of time** before refugees can enter education. Especially **tertiary education** becomes difficult for refugees to access. Issues include the initially limited familiarity with the native language and education system, traumas, accreditation and validation procedures and acquiring the required admission documents that produce significant delay between the moment of residence and enrollment. In Denmark, access to tertiary education is additionally linked to successful completion of the three-year integration program and its final exam. In the Netherlands, adult refugees can practically only access education when they have found permanent housing, a process that in many cases took several months during 2016. Additionally, refugee students are often redirected to the first year of their program, regardless of their prior knowledge.

In France, children immediately enter regular classes, alongside which they can attend special language classes. In the Netherlands, the aim is to have children in school within no more than three months after arrival. Austria, on the other hand, usually categorizes refugee children as 'extraordinary pupils' because of their lack of language proficiency. This group can attend generic classes, but are not graded on their performance. They also receive extra classes that include language and subject-specific courses. Sweden has specific language classes that are available to all immigrants, the Swedish For Immigrants program. Some countries provide mother-tongue tutoring, but this appears to be arranged primarily on an ad hoc basis (SWE, AUS, GER). This is problematic because close tutoring is especially important for young children whose may be parents busy with other responsibilities during the first months after arrival and settlement. The required language proficiency levels also appear to be a problem area. Civic integration programs generally require the A1 level as a minimum (FR, NL), while higher education institutes usually require higher levels, such as B1 or C1 (AUS, GER). Only a minority of refugees will attain these levels after they pass the civic integration exam. In the Netherlands, higher level (NT2) language classes are increasingly offered to promising asylum seekers.

Denmark and Sweden are exceptions with formalized **mentorship** and **mother-tongue systems**, respectively. In Denmark, mentorship is primarily labor market-oriented, however, and does not occur strictly during education. In Sweden, on the other hand, all children have a right to mother-tongue tutoring, but in practice this measure is only implemented in extreme cases. Swedish schools are responsible to fund such additional classes, and have be found to only do so when there is a significant

number of foreign pupils who share the same language (Avery: 2017). State subsidies for such classes could be a promising practice. A more systematic approach to mother-tongue tutoring can also create a more attractive job market because the current ad hoc approach creates a lot of uncertainty for tutors' long-term employment. In Sweden, promising practices are to attach tutors to schools to create continuity, and to develop co-teaching methods for teachers and tutors to combine classes.

Denmark also stands out with its segregated approach that directs all refugee minors into **separate classes**. Children are only allowed to enter the generic system when they meet the average skill-requirements of their native peers. In 2010, this system was evaluated to contravene children's development and integration, however. One study (Avery: 2017) notes that while contact with native peers is important, the creation of 'safe spaces' for young newcomers is equally essential. In Sweden, the approach has recently (2015) shifted from specific preparatory classes to accelerate children's entry into the regular system. Lastly, preparatory classes that extend forward into the reception centers are a promising practice because they have demonstrated to accelerate refugees' familiarization with a new education system and language. This is increasingly happening in the Netherlands, for instance, where basic courses are provided in the asylum seeker centers. Denmark has also started to offer so-called preparatory education in asylum seeker reception centers. The focus is on language and health, and the country expects that young children will soon thereafter be able to join their native peers in regular primary and lower-secondary schools.

The **accreditation and validation** of refugees' previous educational backgrounds and foreign diplomas appears to be a bottleneck in most countries, while it is an essential stage to facilitate refugee labor market integration. Especially asylum migrants appear to have fewer transferable human capital skills than other immigrant groups, mainly because they did not arrive as labor migrants but to seek humanitarian protection (Luik et al: 2016). Furthermore, because of long asylum procedures, refugees risk losing additional human capital if there are no systematic activities during their stay in reception centers (ACVZ: 2013; WRR: 2015). Most countries offer an accreditation service free of charge, but the process is usually delayed until refugees have acquired the necessary documents and valid ID. Additionally, the procedures appear to be excessively bureaucratic and take a long time (BE, GER). In Belgium, NGOs have contributed to the production of information brochures and websites to enhance the accessibility. In France, refugees are designated a priority group for accreditation and are subject to a relaxed procedure. In Germany, accreditation of previous qualifications is an entitlement to anyone who intends to find employment, and while the 2015 Accreditation Act aims to make the procedures more transparent and shorter, in practice these remain distributed over multiple actors.

Some countries provide a 'statement of comparability' (NL, FR, IT) that demonstrates how the individual's previous education compares to national diplomas. Educational institutes appear to maintain a significant degree of discretion, however, as the statement is a non-binding document, thus leaving the ultimate decision to accept refugee students with the institute they apply at. As a result, refugees who have had their foreign diplomas validated may still not be accepted and have access to education. Norway is an exception with its UVD-procedure that grants a binding validation report, though it is expensive and likely to be inaccessible to most young refugees. An alternative is the NOKUT-assessment that is free of charge. While most of the studied countries rely on generic validation institutes, others leave it to individual universities or secondary schools to assess applicants' former qualifications (NOR/SWE). A decentralized system may be able to reach more applicants, but can also fragment the process and lead to misunderstanding between educational institutes. Improved communication with educational institutes to set standards on the recognition of language levels and prior qualifications for specific study programs is likely to improve the system. In Italy, a national network of experts has been set up to exchange information and best practices in this area, making the National Coordination for the Evaluation of Refugee Qualifications (CNVQR) a promising practice. In the Netherlands, some cities have developed integrated approaches that include validation of refugees' skills and guidance into the education system.

Regarding **study finances**, most countries do not provide specific loans programs. Refugees are expected to apply for generic student loans (AUS/GER/NOR). Denmark and Norway are exceptions in that the former exempts refugee students from tuition fees, and the latter provides grants to refugee children in primary and secondary school (DEN). In general, most specific arrangements are organized by individual or networks of educational institutes and usually capture only a limited number of individuals (GER/AUS/IT). In Austria, the MORE project was initiated by a group of universities to create an integrated approach that includes specific courses for refugees with prior academic experience, accreditation, and entitlement to free attendance. In Italy, public and private universities have united in the U4REFUGEES project that aims to grant 100 scholarships to refugee students per year. In Norway, the University of Oslo created an internship program for refugees with a background in higher education to participate in its programs. The university also created an online language course especially for refugees in the reception centers that is estimated to have been used by 18.000 students so far. In the Netherlands, several universities have created special introductory years and buddy systems that assign refugees to Dutch peers. High-, and since recently also some low-skilled, refugees can also request a loan at a specialized agency (UAF), and some Dutch municipalities have created local study-loan budgets. A weakness in most countries is the focus of programs on refugees with a previous educational background. Low-educated refugees are often not targeted by specific measures. An exception are the Swedish Komvux, see above, and folk schools that offer a tailor-made introduction programs to individuals who cannot access higher education. In folk schools, these programs lasts six months and combine labor market orientation courses with language and civic integration.

4.3 Other areas

Health

Whereas various studies (see chapter 2) suggest that the health situation of asylum seekers and refugees may be a key factor in their integration process, we find almost across all country cases that attention to health was rather limited. We can conclude that there is an **absence of systematic attention to health care as part of a broader refugee integration strategy**.

Table 4.5; Summary of findings regarding health care as part of refugee integration strategies

	Assessment of health situation	Healthcare system specific policy	Access to health services (incl barriers)
Austria	Yes, physical and screening	Yes, partially	No full access, legal status barrier
Belgium	Yes, physical and screening	Yes, partially	Full access, cultural barriers
Denmark	Yes, physical, mental and screening	Yes	No full access, legal status and cultural barriers
France	Yes, physical and screening	No	Full access
Germany	Yes, physical and screening	Not on the national level, depending on state	No full access, occupational barrier
Italy	Yes, physical, mental and screening	No	Full access, cultural barriers
Netherlands	Yes, physical, mental and screening	Yes, partially	Full access
Norway	Yes, physical, mental and screening	Yes	Full access, geographical barriers

Sweden	Yes, physical, mental and screening	Yes, partially	Full access, geographical and cultural barriers
United Kingdom	Yes, physical and screening	Yes	Full access, cultural, occupational and financial barriers

We did find that basic facilities regarding **assessment of asylum seeker's health situation** upon arrival and reception are in place (as they have been historically). All countries do perform **medical check-ups** for the benefit of the individual's health upon arrival for asylum seekers. However, in most countries, these check-ups are limited to physical assessments. We find that in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries Denmark, Sweden, and Norway mental health is also included in the check-ups. In addition to the check-ups all countries perform mandatory medical screenings upon arrival. The purpose of the screenings is to protect public health by screening for tuberculosis. There is no pattern among the countries in terms of regulation of these check-ups and treatment. Only several countries (Belgium, France and Germany) have a clear framework that prescribes the maximum amount of days upon arrival within asylum seekers need to be examined, when they should be referred to hospitals for more specialized treatments and who should provide for the treatment of ill asylum seekers. Because of the lack of a systematic approach in the domain of healthcare, most countries have implemented **ad-hoc measures** to perform the primary check-ups. In general, the check-ups are carried out in healthcare centres located in the reception centres. By lack of healthcare facilities in or in the proximity of the reception centres, temporary healthcare centres are established (Italy, the Netherlands, the UK). In the temporary centres check-ups are carried out and they are in addition equipped to perform (urgent) medical treatments. As such, the temporary healthcare centres exemplify a combined strategy that tackles multiple issues in the domain of healthcare (check-ups, legal and geographical barriers to access of healthcare).

In terms of the broader **healthcare system** and access to health facilities, we observe a **laissez faire approach** when countries consider their existing institutions to function sufficiently. Since healthcare is not considered to be a key domain of integration in most countries, the refugee influx has not led to drastic policy changes or structural adaptations to accommodate refugees in the domain of healthcare. This is most visible in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. The pattern we find here is that most of these countries that apply the laissez faire approach in the domain of healthcare are the countries that have an **assimilationist policy model**. In comparison, countries that employ a universalist policy model seem more invested to implement specific measures, aimed at the development of migrant-sensitive measures for the healthcare systems. Thereof the *Migrant Health Guides* issued by the Department of Health in the UK and the *Immigrant Health Strategy for 2013-2017* of the Norwegian government provide clear examples.

A pattern in the domain of healthcare is the emergence of various registration systems across the countries that do not provide full access to healthcare for asylum seekers and refugees. An example is the German *electronic health card* (eGK), or the *Vienna Refugee Aid service card* that is issued in the Austrian capital Vienna. This pattern suggests that the regulation of patient streams is difficult in the context of highly regulated healthcare systems that restrict full access for asylum seekers and refugees.

The example of the *Vienna Refugee Aid service card* also shows another pattern, concerning **national-local relations**. In most countries we find that the promising practices are developed and implemented on the local level. The case of Vienna illustrates that asylum seekers in general wish to move to larger cities, for example because of more opportunities in the labour market. Since there may not be a national sense of urgency to act upon local level issues, national governments will not act upon it. However, the development of local level promising practices do not necessarily follow the lack of existence of national level policy. Many local level healthcare measures address mental healthcare, and fall under the

supervision of NGO's or hospitals. In Italy, the Niguarda Hospital in Milan and the Frantz Fanon Centre in Turin have developed so-called ethno-psychiatry services that make psychotherapy and psychological support available for migrants, refugees and victims of torture. Similar practices can be found in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Sweden and the UK.

Intercultural Relations

As observed earlier, refugee integration strategies put much more emphasis on labour market integration than on socio-cultural issues such as values and norms, contact and also radicalization. We do find that in the context of civic integration schemes there is attention to socio-cultural issues in all country cases. This is often not specific to refugees but applies to all migrants enrolling in civic integration programs. However, what our analysis clearly shows is that measures specifically targeted to promote intercultural contact between refugees and the host society, are mostly **ad-hoc**. Importantly, the promotion of contact seems to be left mostly to **civil society actors** to arrange in ad-hoc temporary projects. This further sustains the discrepancy that we observed earlier, between the socio-cultural focus of discourses on refugee integration on the one hand and the socio-economic focus of policies combined with an ad-hoc and civil-society driven approach to socio-cultural issues on the other hand.

Table 4.6: summary of findings concerning intercultural relations

	Attention to socio-cultural integration as part of civic integration	Contact	Radicalization
Austria	Yes	Yes, NGOs	Yes
Belgium	Yes	Yes, NGOs and municipalities	No
Denmark	Yes	Yes, NGOs, civil society and municipality/city	No
France	Yes	Yes, NGOs	Yes
Germany	Yes	Yes, NGOs, civil society, municipality/city	No
Italy	Yes	Yes, government and civil society	No
Netherlands	Yes	Yes, civil society, reception centres and NGOs	Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes, NGOs and municipalities	Yes
Sweden	Yes	Depends on local initiatives	Yes
United Kingdom	Only for ILR or naturalisation	Yes, no specific measures	Only for arrival via VPRS

An emerging pattern in the domain of intercultural relations is a convergence between the majority of the countries on the topic of norms and values. Regardless of a country's traditional integration model, or their differences in the other domains, in this aspect we can find similar approaches in all countries. All countries, some of which have more established programmes than others, have a form of **civic integration courses or contracts** that are sometimes generic and targeted towards all migrants but sometimes more specifically geared to refugees. In addition, the workload and severity of these courses differ among countries. Some are more focused on language classes (France) whereas others explicitly

aim to familiarize the migrant with the host society (the Netherlands, to some extent the UK). Language seems to be a core component of these civic integration tracks, taking up the majority of the time (France, Germany, Italy), which could be connected to the thesis that language is one of the key components in integrating into a given society as well as aiding self-sufficiency.

However, in almost all countries (excluding Sweden), we find that following these civic integration courses, individuals will have to sign either a **contract** or take an **exam** to demonstrate either what they have learnt in these courses or to promise to uphold the values that they are taught. Though the severity for not complying with the terms of such a contract or passing an exam differs, ranging from imposing monetary fines (Flanders) to a failure of reissuing a residence permit after a current one has passed (Italy, France), we can see a concerted effort in trying to get migrants to adhere to what they have learnt in the integration and language courses. Many of these programmes were set up in the 2000s, and though some have changed their requirements somewhat since the refugee crisis (Wallonia, Germany), they can be seen as a symptom of the broader shift towards assimilationism rather than a direct response to the refugee crisis.

In some countries, only refugees who have received their residence permit are entitled to such courses whereas in others this dependency on status is not so strongly emphasized. Often, civic integration only starts after a residence permit/refugee status has been obtained (Austria, Sweden, Denmark), but this causes the issue of a sequenced approach towards integration; the long waiting times in the processing of asylum applications can therefore impede the integration process for many. As a result, in some countries (i.e. Belgium-Flanders), it has been established that the integration process can already start if the application process lasts longer than a number of months, thus shortening the integration process for some asylum seekers. In addition, in Germany for instance, we can find that the civic integration process starts early for groups who are more likely to obtain refugee status in the first place, which is also an approach to speeding up the integration process. So, while most programmes have remained stagnant, we can find some efforts that point at policy changes that have been made specifically for refugees.

As observed previously, a key finding is that **intercultural contact** does not seem to be a solid policy approach for many governments, at least on the national level. First of all, if there are measures that seek to improve contact between locals and refugees or asylum seekers that have been set up by the government, they are often organized on the local level by either municipalities or reception centres. Though there are many examples of initiatives that can be regarded as promising practices, which can be found in the country chapters, none of them seem to be large-scale initiatives that employ similar methods on the national level. Many of these are organized on a small scale and therefore do not indicate a unified, national approach towards facilitating relations between recently arrived refugees and natives.

Secondly, governmental bodies seem to be hardly involved in these matters at all. In many countries, the organization of such projects is left to actors in **civil society and NGOs**. Examples of these initiatives are *Neuland*, established by Caritas Wien (Austria), *Refugee Guide*, established by the Norwegian Red Cross (Norway) and different initiatives organized by Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen (Belgium), all of which seek to improve intercultural relations and have been identified as promising practices. Especially organizations that are specifically involved in aiding refugees in the first place (Caritas, Forum Réfugiés, Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland and Vlaanderen) as well as more general NGOs like the Red Cross are active actors in this sphere of integration.

Another key pattern in this sphere is that refugees are often free to pursue contact with locals without any limitations in theory. This seems to be a promising finding, however, in this case, it is not as positive in practice. This finding is also somewhat dependent on the housing policies that we can find in each country; if refugees are free to live wherever they desire, it is likely that they end up in cities where it is to establish contact with other individuals. In some countries though, when refugees are still living in reception centres (Belgium, Sweden, Denmark), it is much more difficult for them to do so as these centres are often located in remote, rural areas. So, while they are free to move and meet people in

theory, in practice this becomes much harder due to a lack of public transport in the area, or the costs that this may provide. A promising practice that may serve as solution for this problem though, can be found in Flanders, where asylum seekers are entitled to free public transport. However, this still does not remove the problem of the general remoteness of many reception centres.

Finally, with regards to the screening of possibly **radicalised individuals** among refugees, another emerging pattern is that there does not seem to be a specific process for this in many countries. This is remarkable since the possibility of radicalised individuals entering Europe has been a hot topic that has much been covered in the press (i.e. in Norway, according to survey respondent). In some countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway) there is most definitely a process of **screening** or profiling that occurs during the asylum procedure, in which a case in which an alarming finding on this topic often gets referred to the security services in a respective country, the asylum application may be placed under the accelerated procedure or even rejected. However, in other countries (Belgium, Denmark, Italy) there seems to be no specific process for this during the asylum process that goes beyond the general requirements of the procedure, or any such screening process at all. In these countries though, the focus on preventing radicalisation seems to be more on the implementation of **anti-radicalisation programmes** in general that do not necessarily pertain just to asylum seekers and refugees. A Flemish survey respondent even explained that connecting refugees with the possibility of radicalisation is specifically not done in Flanders as it may generalize and stigmatize refugees who are not at all involved in these matters.

5 Conclusions

This report set out to map **innovation** in refugee integration strategies in various European countries and to assess evidence on the effectiveness and appropriateness of these strategies. To this aim, an analysis was made of innovation in relation to refugee integration in 10 European countries in a number of selected policy areas (socio-economic as well as socio-cultural). Furthermore, based on a survey and interviews with country experts as well as a review of studies and literature on recent policy efforts, an assessment was made of evidence regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of refugee integration strategies. All selected **country-cases** (AUT, BEL, DK, FRA, GER, ITA, NOR, SWE, NL and the UK) received a relatively significant number of asylum applications over 2015 and 2016, which makes policy innovation relevant in these countries. However, they also differ in terms of the scale of refugee migration (from very high in Austria and Germany to relatively low in the UK and France), in terms of policy traditions (from assimilationist in France to more multiculturalist in Sweden) and in terms of perceptions of refugee migration (from transit countries as Italy to settlement countries as Germany and Sweden).

Our analysis shows that **innovation has been taking place in almost all examined country cases, but along very different paths**. There clearly is no single European coherent innovative strategy to refugee integration. Because of different problem situations (problem pressure, or sense of urgency), problem perceptions (whether a country is a settlement or a transit country) and also different policy traditions (such as countries with specific integration policies versus those with mainstreamed approaches), countries can innovate along very different paths. Our study showed that in different settings, different responses were 'appropriate'; what was needed in Germany was not always what was needed in France, as well as the other way around. As a consequence, it is also hard to make strong statements on what works and what does not work; what may work in France may not work in Germany and vice versa. Hence, the assessment of **effectiveness** has in this study always been combined with an assessment of **appropriateness** of measures in specific settings.

But importantly, the refugee situation that emerged in 2015-2016 was a source of policy innovation in all countries (although perhaps more limitedly so in France, Italy and to some extent the UK). As a consequence, it seems that the refugee crisis has had a structural effect on the development of integration governance in European countries; it has been a '**critical juncture**' in policy development. From our case studies (chapter 3) and our comparative analysis (chapter 4), we did find several generic trends that can be a source for the exchange of policy lessons between countries as well as for the development of migration research more generally. In the following, we will summarize these key findings:

Mainstreaming warrants a structural approach to refugee integration

There is significant variation in terms of governance strategies adopted in the ten country cases we examined. We found traces of all the policy options we outlined in table 3 (chapter 1); specific measures (Germany, Austria), mainstreamed measures (almost all countries), laissez faire (Italy and to some extent the UK), differentialism (Austria and to some extent Germany) and even no policy innovation (Italy and to some extent the UK). However, we did find a clear pattern. Almost all countries primarily choose a **mainstreamed approach**, adopting generic measures to achieve positive integration outcomes. This means that refugee integration was embedded in generic policy instruments such as language training, existing health services, access to regular education facilities and access to existing housing stock. Putting this in perspective of (past) experiences with integration of other migrant categories this marks a clear change; rather than treating refugees (or Syrians, Eritreans, Afghans and so forth) as a group or distinct and separate category, this time refugees were approached more integrally.

A clear example of how this mainstreamed approach works is how refugees in general are integrated as fast as possible within the regular education system. Although Sweden and Denmark are exceptions in

providing some form of mother tongue instruction to refugees, also there the aim is to integrate refugees as soon as possible in the generic system, on equal footing with native citizens. Similar instances can be found in the area of housing, where with only few exceptions, refugees are integrated into existing housing facilities. In fact, one of the reasons for many countries to adopt an allocation strategy in the area of housing was to make promote access to existing housing stock.

A positive aspect of mainstreamed strategies is they warrant a structural approach that is relevant for refugee integration but can be equally relevant for future migration flows. In fact, examples such as the international intermediate classes in the Netherlands show how structural measures from the past may also work for refugee integration, and prevent having to reinvent the wheel for every new migration flow. However, our research also shows several **risks** associated with the mainstreaming approach to integration governance. Generic policy measures only work when refugees can actually find their way and have effective access to available services and facilities. In our analysis, we identified various areas where this appears to be only very limitedly so; such as access to higher education, access to other forms of adult education, and more generally access to health services. Especially in the area of health where across all countries a mainstreamed approach was adopted, experts highlight a broad variety of obstacles that refugees face in the context of generic services or facilities. Sometimes this relates to lack of knowledge from refugees on how to get access, sometimes (as in health) this relates to lack of knowledge of service providers how to reach out to refugees.

But sometimes additional ad-hoc and specific measures are necessary

We also see that specific countries combine generic measures with often more **ad-hoc specific measures**. Examples are the intercultural teams in Austria that help schools to provide immigrant native language instruction in cases where this is really required, the MORE project to help refugees to get access to higher education in Austria, the *komvux* schools in Sweden that provide additional training to refugees to be able to step into regular education. Sometimes such measures are not ad-hoc, but structural, such as the intermediate classes in the Netherlands. This involves a structural effort to temporarily assist newcomers in the transition towards regular education services in the Dutch educational system.

Our findings also suggest several explanations for the variation between the countries, ore more specifically, for why a case country is more or rather less inclined to combine a mainstreamed approach with specific measures. The fact that especially countries as Sweden, Germany and Austria choose for relatively many specific measures, suggests that the higher the **problem urgency** is the more a country requires specific measures. We also found that the broader **integration tradition** of a country matters to whether or not specific measures are adopted. Finally, our analysis suggests that the degree of **labour market regulation (and enforcement)** correlates with the need for specific measures; the more highly regulated the labour market is, the more specific measures are required to make sure that refugees can actually access the labour market.

The local level is often a driver of innovation

Another clear finding from our analysis is that policy innovation is often driven by the local level of governance. Innovation can have many sources, including exchange of best practices between countries, evidence-based policymaking, research-policy dialogues, etc. However, here we found that **innovative projects or 'experiments' at the local level often make their way into national policies**, and thus promote policy innovation. This was clearly the case in Austria where many promising practices were initiated in Vienna, but also the Netherlands where many projects were initiated in larger cities such as Rotterdam, Utrecht and Amsterdam.

Country experts interviewed for this project interpret this finding as a consequence of the problem urgency in cities. It is primarily the cities that face the challenge of integrating significant numbers of refugees, therefore it is also that level where the need to develop effective projects is felt most concretely. Also, experts see the role of the local level as essential in the absence of a clearly articulated

national strategy to refugee integration. This applies to Italy but also to some extent the UK where most governance strategies to refugee integration concentrate on the local level, or even the community level.

No time to waste: from a serial to a parallel approach to migration and integration

From our analysis in various areas (labour, education, housing) we found that most of countries have been rethinking the traditionally 'hard-cut' between the period before and after admission; in other words, between 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees'. This is to prevent what the WRR (2015) has described as 'losing' time in the integration process. Various measures are taken to start the integration process sooner, such as limiting the amount of time after asylum application that an asylum migrant can access the labour market, start the civic integration procedure already during the process of asylum application for those with high acceptance rates, and expanding the opportunities for internships. These efforts mark a shift from a sequenced approach in which integration follows after admission, to a more **parallel approach** where integration already starts during admission so as to avoid losing time.

Priority on labour market integration, but not always consistently so

Our study confirms what other studies such as Eurofound (2016) and OECD (2016) also stated, which is that most countries strongly **prioritize labour market integration**. This emerged clearly from the input from country experts as well as policy documents. Furthermore, this priority is clearly manifest in concrete efforts to map labour market skills of asylum seekers (competency checks, such as in Austria, Denmark and Norway), sometimes even to allocate them across regions according to their skills, or in efforts by various countries to enlarge opportunities for internships for asylum seekers and refugees.

However, our project also found several inconsistencies in the prioritization of labour market integration. First of all, we found that **local labour market opportunities** are still taken too little into consideration in allocation schemes. Only in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands do we see that skills of refugees are matched with the labour market situation in target areas, and Germany is considering such schemes. In most other countries allocation schemes are driven by 'burden sharing' and by limits of institutional absorption capacity. A second limitation we found involved the **limited attention for entrepreneurship**. Only on a very limited scale and in mostly ad-hoc formats did we find attention to promotion of entrepreneurship amongst refugees.

Socio-cultural themes are mostly left to civil society

Whereas socio-cultural themes play a central role in the public (and political) debate on refugee integration throughout Europe, we see only **limited systematic attention for socio-cultural integration** as specific part of the refugee integration strategies. Indeed, socio-cultural integration is part of the broader civic integration schemes in almost all countries that were examined. However, besides these schemes, attention to socio-cultural issues is largely left to civil society. Only in terms of preventing radicalization do we see some national schemes. However, when it comes to (according to sociologists key) issue of contact and the issue of values and norms, attention is mostly ad-hoc and strongly embedded in local activities by NGO's.

Experts do not provide a clear explanation for this discrepancy between discursive emphasis on socio-cultural integration on the one hand and the actual policy prioritization of it on the other. It may be that socio-cultural integration is considered less a priority than socio-economic integration, or that in concrete policy settings socio-cultural integration less 'governable' than socio-economic topics.

Need for a more integral approach to health and refugee integration

The area of **health** appears to be the area that receives the least systematic attention of the areas that were examined in this study. This is surprising given knowledge on the specific health issues associated with refugees, the relatively high demand that refugees put to health services and also the importance of health issues for the future integration trajectories of refugees. In this area, a more systematic analysis is

required of the health needs of refugees, the 'fit' between these needs and available services, and the importance of health services for integration trajectories. Various experts clearly state that health should be seen as an integral part of a refugee integration strategy, also as health issues have an inescapable effect on other aspects of integration such as labour market participation and educational achievements.

Need for more coordination of services to refugees

Finally, our study clearly shows the **complexity of refugee integration as a governance system**. It is a governance system that is strongly fragmented, with many institutional players, complex regulations, highly changeable and often also catering to a strongly heterogeneous public. In practice this can lead to various issues, such as institutional friction between government levels (such as in Sweden, but also in many other countries), policy gaps (such as urgent issues that need to be solved at the local level without adequate policies in place) and coordination problems (such as between actors involved in asylum application procedures and those responsible for more integration-oriented services). Furthermore, the complexity of the system can lead to confusion on the side of refugees on how to get access to services. Especially in the area of health we have seen examples of this.

There have been various efforts to bring together services and promote coordination between services. A clear example are the General Welfare Centres in Flanders that bring together housing as well as health-related services. More on the level of coordination rather than delivery of services, the Dutch Task Force Work and Integration of Refugees (in Dutch TWIV) is also an example of a more integrated perspective on services to refugees.

Examples of innovative practices:

Based on expert opinions and recent studies, our research has also pinpointed various innovative practices. This involves policy efforts adopted in relation to refugee integration that appear, according to expert opinions or to other studies, to function effectively under specific conditions. In the following we will flag a number of these innovative practices, and highlight why they work well under specific conditions.

Individual integration trajectories (Denmark)

In Denmark there is a longer established practice with individual integration trajectories. Experts report that these trajectories work particularly well for the current refugees. A key factor of this success appears to be the differentiated approach that such individual trajectories enable. As also highlighted by OECD (2016), there is a need for such a more **differentiated approach** as refugees, especially in the current refugee situation, have very different (national, cultural, economic, social) backgrounds; more than ever before, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not seem to fit. Another success factor appears to be the **clarity** that such individual trajectories provide, not only because of the integration contract that is signed but also by the mentor or coach that oversees the trajectory. This appears particularly helpful to asylum migrants who, in comparison to for instance family migrants, often have difficulties in getting access to relevant information.

MORE (Austria)

One of the key problems that this project signalled in relation to the mainstreaming approach to refugee integration, is that such a generic approach sometimes fails to recognize the difficulties that specific groups have to get access to generic services or facilities. MORE is a joint effort by Austrian universities to facilitate access of refugees to higher education. As such it is a clear example of a project that precisely seeks to prevent one of the issues where mainstreaming may fail.

Industry packages / Branchepakker (Denmark)

Another innovative practice involves a Danish effort to establish sectoral effort to match skills from refugees with the skills required in various labour market segments. With NGOs, companies and the Danish local government association working together, it is a clear example of how governance efforts sometimes do not require a state-led approach. By first offering an introductory course followed by a number of shorter and longer internships where refugees learn relevant skills, the packages not only help match labour supply and demand but also contribute to further skills developments amongst refugees.

Domicile requirement (Germany)

An innovative practice that has, according to experts, clear advantages as well disadvantages, is the residence or domicile requirement that was introduced with the 2016 Integration Act in Germany. This codifies that a refugee (or asylum seeker) that does not have work, and is dependent on social security, is not allowed to move to another municipality for a three years period. On the one hand, this measure limits the risk that migrants that cannot find a job, will migrate to the larger cities with informal economies, and rely on social security facilities in those municipalities. On the other hand, a disadvantage is that it may enlarge distance to the labour market by impeding migrants to go where they see most opportunities on the labour market.

Skills assessment and matching (Austria, the Netherlands)

Both the Netherlands and Austria have developed strategies to assess skills of refugees already during the application stage. Both countries are also developing strategies to successively match these skills with for instance specific training programs, allocation to specific municipalities and to some extent tailor-made civic integration schemes.

Komvux school system (Sweden)

Komvux involves a system for additional training at lower- and higher-secondary school level. It is a system at no cost, often also including evening classes and extending travel reimbursements. It helps refugees (and others) to get up to speed with the regular school system, and to join as soon as possible in a regular educational facility. (It resembles to some extent the Dutch system of transition classes).

General welfare centres (Flanders)

The general welfare centres combine the delivery of various services to refugees in Flanders, especially in the area of housing and health. This involves a more integrated approach to the delivery of services to refugees, which is an adequate response to the complexity of refugee integration as a governance system. Furthermore, it creates clarity on the side of refugees on how and where to get access to services, while at the same time still making use of a 'mainstream' government facility (rather than creating something adhoc and specific).

Lessons for migration research:

Finally, this research has also provided some key insights to feed in academic debate in the field of migration studies.

Work first! The end of the assimilationist turn?

The early 2000s marked a multiculturalism backlash in many European countries, followed by what has become known in the literature as an assimilationist turn. This was framed in particular with reference to family migrants (the largest migration category in that period). The increase of refugee integration in the second half of the 2010s suggests a discontinuation of this trend. In spite of political and public discourses (which fall largely beyond the scope of this study), we found little emphasis in national and local policies on socio-cultural issues altogether. Our study

suggests a clear prioritization of labour market integration; work first! This prioritization even applies to all case studies in this research, also in those countries where there is a strong emphasis on socio-cultural integration in public and political discourse (such as the Netherlands, but also Austria and Germany). This suggests a discrepancy between public and political discourses on the one hand and actual policy realities on the other hand. More research would be required as to why this discrepancy is there. An explanation could be that countries see labour market integration as more urgent than socio-cultural integration, but it could also be that on a more pragmatic level countries see less opportunity for promoting socio-cultural integration. The latter explanation could be substantiated by our finding that socio-cultural issues often tend to be left to NGO's rather than targeted by government programs.

Mainstreaming trend is not (structurally) punctuated by more specific policies.

Although our study does show a re-emergence of specific policies under specific circumstances, it also shows that this is rarely structural and that in general countries accommodate refugee integration strategies into generic policies. Specific policies are mostly chosen in cases where problem pressure is most immediate or institutional friction the highest, which requires temporary specific measures to provide immediate solutions. Although the refugee crisis has indeed been a critical juncture in the development of migrant integration policies more in general, this seems to have reinforced the trend of mainstreaming rather than diverted from it. However, a crucial question regarding mainstreaming is whether the current measures indeed obtain a more structural character. Does the innovation that is analysed in this study apply only to refugee integration or will it lead to structural adjustments that will also apply to future migration flows? In a broader perspective, mainstreaming is a strategy of adapting generic policies for a society that is increasingly mobile and diverse. Whether the refugee crisis has been a critical juncture in adapting such generic policies to this new reality is something that is up to a broader research agenda.

Institutional friction in a complex governance system

This study clearly revealed in an inductive way how complex the governance system of refugee integration has become. The governance system is unique in the level of fragmentation, the density of many different actors, the rapid changeability of regulations and also the strongly heterogeneous character of the target populations that it involves. As we have seen, this can lead to various forms of institutional friction, such as between levels of government, between various government departments, between state bodies and NGO's, between state bodies and street-level bureaucracies, etc. Much more research is required as for how to manage such a complex governance system, and find more effective ways of coordinating policies in such a system and a more integrated perspective on service delivery within such a system.

Rethinking the migration-integration nexus

Also in migration research, the classical view is that integration follows immigration. The notion of a 'migration-integration nexus' conceptualizes a 'chain' from arrival, admission, civic integration to eventually participation and citizenship (or return). The case of refugee integration defies this image of a migration-integration nexus in various ways. Increasingly, countries have started civic integration and participation even before formal admission. The refugee integration is not the only indicator of a changing nexus, as civic integration abroad already reversed the chain between migration and integration. Increasingly, we see countries adopting a parallel rather than a serial approach, starting to facilitate integration already during the migration and admission procedure. More research would be required as to how this works out, such as what the effects on return prospects are, whether it leads to better integration outcomes, etc.

Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Achtergrond

Dit onderzoek richt zich op de integratie van vluchtelingen als beleidsuitdaging in diverse Europese landen. De vluchtelingen crisis in 2015 en 2016 heeft de vraag opgeworpen hoe de integratie van asielzoekers en vluchtelingen het best bevorderd kan worden. Is gevestigd beleid voldoende in staat om ook de integratie van deze nieuwe groep immigranten te bevorderen, of is er noodzaak tot beleidsinnovatie bijvoorbeeld omwille van de schaal of aard van deze recente immigratie?

Het doel van deze studie is dan ook om beleidsinnovatie in diverse Europese landen in kaart te brengen en vervolgens te analyseren op basis van indicaties van effectiviteit en passendheid van deze benaderingen in specifieke situaties. In volle onderkenning dat **'integratie'** een weerbarstig en meervoudig begrip is, richt het onderzoek zich op diverse facetten van (algemeen en specifiek) beleid die betrekking hebben op integratie. Daarbij gaat het onder meer om sociaal-economische domeinen als arbeid, onderwijs en huisvesting maar ook om andere domeinen zoals gezondheid en intercultureel contact. Tevens kijkt het onderzoek naar wat in verschillende landen als het institutionele 'integratiebeleid' wordt aangeduid en naar de wijze waarop migratie en integratiebeleid aan elkaar worden gerelateerd. Zo ontstaat dus een breed beeld van maatregelen die landen kunnen treffen ten aanzien van de integratie van vluchtelingen.

Beleidsinnovatie wordt in dit onderzoek gezien als het bewust, bijvoorbeeld op basis van kennis, ervaringen of lessen van elders, aanpassen van beleid. In het kader van de integratie van vluchtelingen, wordt in bijzonder gekeken of sprake is van innovatie in de 'governance strategie.' In veel Europese landen was tot recentelijk sprake van een trend naar 'mainstreaming' van integratiebeleid. Is in het kader van vluchtelingenintegratie deze trend doorgezet, of doorbroken in de richting van bijvoorbeeld meer specifiek beleid, naar een meer laissez faire benadering of zelfs naar een meer differentiaalistisch beleid?

Aanpak

Het onderzoek richt zich op een geselecteerd aantal Europese landen, die allen te maken hebben gehad met significante aantallen vluchtelingen in de periode 2015-2016, maar in verschillende mate, op een verschillende manier (bv als transit- of vestigingsland) en tegen de achtergrond van een verscheidenheid aan nationale benaderingen van integratie. Het volgt dus een **'dissimilar case study design.'** Dit leidde tot de selectie van 6 diepte cases (Oostenrijk, Zweden, Duitsland, Italië, Frankrijk en Denemarken) en 4 overige cases (België, Noorwegen, Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk).

Voor alle gekozen landen is allereerst een surveyonderzoek en een literatuuronderzoek gehouden. Voor het **surveyonderzoek** is per land tenminste een academische expert en een beleidsexpert betrokken, met als doel een beter beeld te krijgen van recente specifieke ontwikkelingen per land als ook ervaringen met deze ontwikkelingen. Het **literatuuronderzoek** richtte zich op een zo breed mogelijk beeld van onderzoeken naar integratiebeleid ten aanzien van vluchtelingen, met name betreffende evaluaties van beleid. Voor de diepte-studies is deze analyse nog uitgebreid met **interviews** met verschillende experts per land, om zo een beter zicht te krijgen met name van de ervaringen met recente beleidsmaatregelen.

Tenslotte is een aantal **expert meetings** gehouden om aan de hand van voorlopige bevindingen te discussiëren met landenexperts en de bevindingen van het onderzoek zo verder te verdiepen. Dit behelsde onder meer een plenaire bijeenkomst en een rondetafel discussie met experts gedurende de IMISCOE conferentie in Rotterdam, 28-30 Juni 2017.

State of the art

Op basis van (recente en minder recente) studies naar de integratie van vluchtelingen, kan gesteld worden dat het moeilijk is om lessen te trekken uit het verleden. Vaak wordt het trekken van lessen

bemoelijkst door grote verschillen in de (economische, sociale, culturele) achtergrond van vluchtelingen (bv de vluchtelingen uit vml. Joegoslavië in de jaren '90) of in de maatschappelijke context waarin de vluchtelingen arriveren.

Echter, er is weldegelijk een aantal constanten te ontdekken in de literatuur over vluchtelingenintegratie. Zo blijkt vaak prioriteit te worden gegeven aan economische integratie, met name arbeid, huisvesting en onderwijs. Onderzoek uit het verleden heeft laten zien dat vooral huisvesting met oog op arbeidsmarktkansen een belangrijke integratie bevorderende voorwaarde kan zijn. Ook laat onderzoek zien dat percepties van vluchtelingen erg veranderlijk kunnen zijn. Dit gaat soms gepaard met plotse en felle omslagen van zeer positief naar zeer negatief. Ook laat onderzoek zien dat mobiliteit van vluchtelingen vaak erg hoog is; sommigen blijven, sommigen keren terug, en vaak migreert een deel ook weer door naar elders.

Recente studies naar de integratie van vluchtelingen (met name veel overzichtsstudies) laten zien dat er significante verschillen zitten in hoe in diverse landen ingespeeld wordt op de integratie van vluchtelingen. Er is duidelijk geen spraken van een Europese samenhangende benadering. Bovendien laten diverse studies zien dat nog nauwelijks sprake is van een meer structurele benadering; veel maatregelen zijn vooral ad-hoc en tijdelijk. Ook zou er behoefte zijn aan een meer gedifferentieerde benadering, die recht doet aan de grote variëteit binnen de groep vluchtelingen die recentelijk naar Europa is gekomen. Dit soort bevindingen in de migratieliteratuur zijn in dit onderzoek nader empirisch onderzocht.

Bevindingen

Dit onderzoek laat zien dat weldegelijk sprake is van beleidsinnovatie in vrijwel alle geselecteerde Europese landen. Het is duidelijk dat de vluchtelingen crisis een keerpunt is geweest in de ontwikkeling van integratiebeleid in Europa. Echter, deze innovatie krijgt in verschillende landen vorm op heel verschillende manieren. Onder meer door verschillen in probleem situaties, in probleem percepties en ook in beleidstradities, reageren landen vaak heel verschillend op het vraagstuk van integratie van vluchtelingen. Dit maakt het ook moeilijker om harde uitspraken te doen over de effectiviteit van beleidsmaatregelen en om deze uitspraken vervolgens door te trekken naar andere landen. Wat in bepaalde landen wordt gezien als succesvol en passend beleid hoeft helemaal niet goed te werken in andere landen.

Echter, uit het onderzoek komt een aantal centrale bevindingen naar voren. Allereerst zien we dat beleidsinnovatie met name plaatsvindt middels een **mainstreaming strategie met ad-hoc specifieke maatregelen waar nodig**. De integratie van vluchtelingen wordt met name bevorderd middels maatregelen in algemeen beleid, en niet door de herontwikkeling van een geïnstitutionaliseerd integratiebeleid specifiek voor vluchtelingen. De Europabrede trend in de richting van mainstreaming blijkt dus niet doorbroken te zijn. In vrijwel alle landen worden pogingen gedaan zo snel mogelijk aansluiting te vinden bij regulier onderwijs, bij betaald werk en reguliere huisvesting. Wel kiest een aantal landen voor aanvullende maatregelen van meer specifieke aard. Daarbij blijkt het met name te gaan om landen waar de probleemdruk het grootst is (zoals Zweden, Oostenrijk en Duitsland). Vaak hebben dergelijke specifieke maatregelen een ad-hoc karakter, in de vorm van tijdelijke intensiveringen van beleid om problemen op relatief korte termijn te verhelpen. Soms gaat het ook om meer structurele maatregelen, zoals het Zweedse komvux systeem voor aanvullend onderwijs of de Nederlandse schakelklassen. Het onderzoek, en met name de input van de surveys en interviews, laat wel een aantal risico's zien van deze mainstreaming benadering. Algemeen beleid werkt alleen wanneer vluchtelingen ook daadwerkelijk hun weg weten te vinden naar algemene faciliteiten. En juist dit lijkt op diverse terreinen niet volledig het geval te zijn, zoals toegang tot hoger onderwijs, tot volwassenenonderwijs of tot gezondheidszorg.

Een tweede bevinding is dat het **lokale niveau** vaak een belangrijke bron is van beleidsinnovatie. Lokale projecten of 'experimenten' worden, indien succesvol, vaak verheven tot nationaal beleid. Experts melden dat juist doordat op lokaal niveau de probleemdruk relatief hoog is, ook de prikkel tot innovatie relatief hoog is. Echter, in sommige landen, zoals het VK en Italië, speelt het lokale niveau juist een sleutelrol omdat op nationaal niveau een meer laissez faire benadering is verkozen.

Een derde bevinding is dat in vrijwel alle onderzochte landen, de **absolute prioriteit uitgaat naar arbeidsmarktintegratie**. Dit komt onder meer tot uiting in concrete maatregelen als het in kaart brengen en vervolgens 'matchen' van arbeidsmarktkwaliteiten van vluchtelingen met specifieke vestigingsregio's, of in de verruiming van mogelijkheden voor vluchtelingen en zelfs asielzoekers om stages te doen en te werken. Echter, het onderzoek laat ook twee inconsistenties zien binnen deze prioritering van arbeidsmarktparticipatie. Zo bestaat er in diverse landen, aldus experts, nog steeds te weinig aandacht voor arbeidsmarktkansen bij de allocatie of spreiding van vluchtelingen over verschillende vestigingsplaatsen. Ook is er relatief weinig aandacht voor ondernemerschap onder vluchtelingen.

Een andere bevinding, die verband houdt met het voorgaande punt, betreft de **beperkte systematische aandacht voor sociaal-culturele integratie en voor gezondheidszorg**. Hoewel een aantal landen, waaronder Nederland, Denemarken, Oostenrijk en Duitsland, aandacht besteed aan sociaal-culturele integratie binnen reguliere inburgering, is de aandacht specifiek voor vluchtelingen beperkt. Hier schijnt dan ook een discrepantie tussen de sociaal-culturele focus van publiek en politiek debat en het daadwerkelijke beleid. Voor zover er wel specifiek iets gedaan wordt voor vluchtelingen ten aanzien van sociaal-culturele integratie, heeft dit vaak een sterk ad-hoc karakter en worden maatregelen vaak overgelaten aan het maatschappelijke middenveld. Ook ten aanzien van gezondheidszorg lijkt aandacht zeer beperkt, ook in termen van 'mainstreaming.' Juist in deze sector rapporteren experts dan ook problemen in termen van gebrekkige aansluiting tussen bestaande faciliteiten en de zorgbehoefte van vluchtelingen (en asielzoekers).

Ook is bij het onderzoek gebleken dat **diverse Europese landen proberen de 'harde knip' tussen migratieprocedure en integratieproces te doorbreken**. Hier lijkt wel sprake te zijn van een doorbraak met een vaak sterk geïnstitutionaliseerde scheiding tussen de periode waarin een asielzoeker de procedure doorloopt en de periode waarin een statushouder met integratie begint. Dit komt concreet tot uiting onder meer in verruiming van mogelijkheden voor asielzoekers en vluchtelingen om stage te lopen, om eerder te beginnen met inburgeringsprogramma's en om eerder werk te mogen verrichten. Het duidt dus op een verschuiving van een 'seriële' benadering (integratie volgt op status) naar een 'parallele' benadering (zo snel mogelijk integreren).

Tenslotte toont het onderzoek de **complexiteit van het beleidssysteem** rond de integratie van vluchtelingen, en de gevolgen die dit kan hebben in de praktijk. De snelle veranderlijkheid van het veld, de meerlagigheid van beleid en van de problematiek, de betrokkenheid van vele actoren (zowel overheid als niet-overheid) bemoeilijkt overzicht en coördinatie in het veld. We zien in de praktijk dat dit regelmatig leidt tot beleidsdiscrepanties en institutionele frictie (bijvoorbeeld tussen lokaal en nationaal beleid). Dit leidt ook vaak tot een gebrek aan integratie in de verlening van allerlei diensten aan vluchtelingen. In Nederland is hier op coördinatie niveau wel in het kader van de TWIV wat tegen gedaan, en op het niveau van dienstverlening zijn de Vlaamse algemene welzijnsinstellingen een voorbeeld van een meer integrale visie.

Veelbelovende praktijken

Op basis van het onderzoek, en dan met name de input vanuit het onderzoek met vragenlijsten en de interviews, is een aantal veelbelovende praktijken te onderscheiden. Hierbij gaat het om praktijken die effectief zijn gebleken onder specifieke omstandigheden. Dit betekent nog niet dat ze ook onder andere omstandigheden en bijvoorbeeld in andere landen zouden werken. Echter, op basis bovenstaande

bevindingen, zijn deze praktijken wel als ‘veelbelovend’ aan te duiden; ze zijn kansrijk in termen van mogelijke effectiviteit en passendheid in een bredere Europese setting.

Een benadering die een goed voorbeeld vormt van een ‘mainstream’ oplossing met een structureel karakter, betreft de **individuele inburgeringstrajecten** in Denemarken. Experts oordelen vooral dat de gedifferentieerde benadering goed recht lijkt te doen aan de diversiteit binnen de doelgroep. In Nederland krijgt deze benadering enige navolging met recente pogingen om tot beter case management te komen voor de integratie van vluchtelingen.

Een voorbeeld van een meer specifieke maatregelen die juist focust op een thema waarbij vluchtelingen vaak minder makkelijk toegang hebben tot algemene voorzieningen, betreft het project **MORE** in Oostenrijk. Het richt zich specifiek op het helpen van vluchtelingen bij het krijgen van toegang tot hoger onderwijs. Het Zweedse **Komvux** schoolsysteem, een andere veelbelovende praktijk, laat zien dat het verkrijgen van toegang tot regulier onderwijs ook op een meer structurele wijze vorm kan krijgen (op een manier die lijkt op de Nederlandse internationale schakelklassen).

In het kader van de absolute prioriteit op arbeidsmarktintegratie, vallen twee maatregelen op. Allereerst de zogenaamde **Branchepakker** (Industry Packages) in Denemarken, die tonen hoe een gezamenlijke aanpak van het bedrijfsleven, maatschappelijk middenveld en lokale overheden op een heel praktische wijze helpt bij arbeidsmarkttoegeleiding. Bovendien levert deze ‘promising practice’ een bijdrage aan training van vluchtelingen; een heel praktische win-win situatie dus. Daarnaast de steeds breder toegepaste strategieën voor **in kaart brengen en matchen van arbeidsmarktkwalificaties van asielzoekers** en hun allocatie naar specifieke vestigingsregio’s. Onder meer Nederland en Oostenrijk (en binnenkort ook Duitsland) passen dit systeem toe. Daarmee komen ze tegemoet aan een van de meest centrale kritieken op vestigingsbeleid van asielzoekers, namelijk dat deze de afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt kan vergroten wanneer spreiding alleen plaats vindt op basis van het idee van ‘burden sharing.’

Een heel specifieke praktijk waaraan, volgens experts, zowel voor- als nadelen hangen, betreft de zogenaamde **‘woonplaatsconditie’**. Dit betreft een maatregel in Duitsland die binnenlandse mobiliteit beperkt zolang een vluchteling afhankelijk is van sociale voorzieningen. Dit lijkt als voordeel te hebben dat het secundaire migratie en mogelijk concentratie van vluchtelingen in specifieke stedelijke gebieden kan voorkomen, maar ook als nadeel dat het mogelijk de afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt kan vergroten wanneer vluchtelingen in regio’s moeten blijven waar ze relatief weinig kansen hebben.

Tenslotte zijn de Vlaamse algemene welzijnsinstellingen al genoemd als een veelbelovende praktijk om tot een meer integrale dienstverlening aan vluchtelingen te komen. Belangrijk is dat het gaat om een mainstream (‘algemene’) instelling die gebruikt wordt om diverse diensten aan vluchtelingen samen te brengen, onder meer op het terrein van huisvesting en sociaal-psychologische dienstverlening. Voor vluchtelingen vergemakkelijkt dit het verkrijgen van toegang tot algemene diensten.

Lessen voor migratieonderzoek

Uit het onderzoek is een aantal belangrijke lessen te trekken voor het migratieonderzoek meer in het algemeen. Zo toont het onderzoek dat, ondanks de sterke nadruk op sociaal-culturele thema’s in het publieke en politieke debat, de focus van beleid in alle landen ligt op arbeidsmarktparticipatie; **‘werk eerst!’**. Dit zet vragen bij de literatuur over de trend naar assimilatie in integratiebeleid (de zogenaamde ‘assimilationist turn’). Nader onderzoek moet uitwijzen waarom (ook in Nederland) deze discrepantie tussen maatschappelijk discours en beleidspraktijk is ontstaan; een verklaring zou kunnen zijn dat op het niveau van beleidspraktijken, juist sociaal-culturele integratie moeilijk te bevorderen is, hetgeen ook terugkomt in onze bevindingen dat sociaal-culturele thema’s vaak aan het maatschappelijk middenveld worden overgelaten.

Ook laat het onderzoek zien dat de trend naar **mainstreaming** van integratiebeleid niet doorbroken maar juist bestendig lijkt te zijn in het kader van de integratie van vluchtelingen. Een belangrijke vraag is

echter nog wel in hoeverre de maatregelen die momenteel getrokken worden ook daadwerkelijk een duurzaam karakter krijgen. In de literatuur wordt juist verondersteld dat mainstreaming een strategie is om algemeen beleid en algemene faciliteiten structureel aan te passen aan de realiteit van immigratie, en daarmee niet alleen effectief te zijn voor de vluchtelingencrisis maar ook voorbereid te zijn op toekomstige migratie. Dit onderzoek suggereert in elk geval dat de vluchtelingencrisis een belangrijke bredere functie heeft in het structureel aanpassen van beleid en voorzieningen, en daarmee een 'kritische gebeurtenis' is geweest in het bestendigen van mainstreaming.

Op het terrein van **management van complexe beleidssystemen** laat dit onderzoek zien dat er nog veel onderzoek nodig is. Dit onderzoek toont hoe complex het beleidssysteem van vluchtelingenintegratie is geworden en laat zien dat dit gepaard gaat met significante voorbeeld van institutionele frictie, coördinatieproblemen, 'misfit' tussen beleid en doelgroepen, etc. Op dit terrein is veel meer onderzoek nodig, op theoretisch niveau (hoe beleidscoördinatie en dienstverlening te organiseren in dergelijke complexe systemen) maar ook op praktijk niveau (wat voor goede voorbeelden zijn er in termen van beleidscoördinatie en dienstverlening).

Tenslotte heeft dit onderzoek laten zien dat het denken over de relatie tussen migratie en integratie aan vernieuwing toe is. In onderzoek wordt vaak gesproken over een **migratie-integratie nexus**, waarbij een migrant serieel door diverse fases gaat; vertrek, aankomst, toelating, inburgering, participatie, integratie, burgerschap. In het kader van vluchtelingenintegratie blijkt een meer parallelle benadering op te komen, waarbij migratie (toelating) en integratie (inclusief inburgering) gelijktijdig worden opgepakt. Nader onderzoek is nodig naar de implicaties hiervan, bijvoorbeeld voor terugkeermigratie en voor uiteindelijke integratie uitkomsten.

List of respondents

Survey	
Country	Name (function)
Italy	Stefania Congia (policy maker)
	Ester Salis (academic expert, University of Turin)
United Kingdom	Jenny Phillimore (academic expert, University of Birmingham)
Netherlands	Jeanine Klaver (Manager Research and Consultancy, Regioplan)
	Arend Odé (Manager Research and Consultancy, Regioplan)
Sweden	Tommi Teljosuo (Audit Director, Office of the Auditor General)
	Sayaka Osanami-Törngren (PhD researcher, Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare)
Denmark	Martin Bak Jorgensen (academic expert)
Germany	Dr. Sascha Krannich (academic expert)
	Regionaldirektion Bayern Integration, joint answer (policymakers)
Norway	Marko Valenta (academic expert)
	Pia Buhl Girolami (policymaker)
	Kofi Amankwah (policymaker at Directorate of Integration and Diversity)
Belgium	Marlies Stubbe (policy maker at Flemish government)
Interviews	
Country	Name (function)
Austria	Katharina Schaur (academic expert)
Germany	Diana Schacht (academic expert)
	Heike Hanhörster (academic expert)
Denmark	Martin Bak Jorgensen (academic expert)
	Romana Careja (academic expert)
Netherlands	Ilse van Liempt (academic expert)
Italy	Michela Sempredon (academic expert)
	Magda Bolzoni (academic expert)
	Stella Gianfreda (academic expert)

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