

# Labour Market Integration of Syrian Refugees in Germany and Turkey: Challenges and Prospects

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# Labour Market Integration of Syrian Refugees in Germany and Turkey: Challenges and Prospects

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Turkey    Germany    Syrian Refugees    Labour market

## Abstract

While the timing and the magnitude of refugee inflows that Germany and Turkey have faced differ, both countries received substantial refugee populations and now host the largest number of Syrian refugees in their respective regions. Now that it is clear that prospects of return in the near future are dim for the majority of refugees, the two countries face similar challenges in fostering the inclusion of refugees into their societies, economies and politics. This paper examines the ways in which the two states have adjusted their respective legal, political, and institutional frameworks so as to facilitate refugees' access to employment and their participation in the labour market, identifies some preliminary outcomes, and draws lessons for meeting pending challenges.

## Introduction

Germany and Turkey share a position as countries that host the largest number of Syrian refugees<sup>1</sup> in their respective regions. However, the timing and the magnitude of refugee inflows that the two countries have faced, as well as their legal and political responses to the issues of reception and longer term integration, differ considerably. Other significant differences with important implications for refugee integration frameworks can also be observed in the financial capacities of the two countries, the condition of their labour markets, and state organization (i.e., federalist versus centralized systems). At the same time, it is now clear that prospects of return in the near future are dim for the majority of refugees in both contexts. Thus, both states and societies should prepare for the long-term or permanent stay of these populations. Therefore, the two countries also face similar challenges in fostering the inclusion and longer term integration of refugees into their societies, economies and politics, and hence they can potentially learn from each other's experience while planning for the future.

Refugee integration is a comprehensive and challenging task with many different and often interconnected dimensions: from providing emergency shelter and longer term housing to enabling access to health care; or from including children in public education schemes

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of simplicity, this paper refers to Syrian nationals who are entitled to international protection in Turkey and Germany as 'refugees', even though the forms of international protection they receive in the two contexts differ. The difference is explained with more detail in Section 2.

to facilitating adults' initial access to employment and participation in the labour market. This paper focuses on the latter dimension, as it is one of the most challenging and key areas and impacts on other aspects of integration, with long-term effects. It is also a timely question to be given further thought based on an assessment of the experiences in the two contexts, because both states could be considered as being at relatively early stages of developing their labour market integration frameworks.

Research based on experiences of OECD countries suggests that "humanitarian migrants" have particular difficulties in entering the labour market owing to many factors, including (often traumatic) experiences of migration and the lack of demonstrable and/or easily transferable skills and educational attainments, while they also tend to face higher barriers in accessing employment compared to other types of migrants.<sup>2</sup> While research on labour market outcomes of refugees is far from developed, existing scholarship shows that this specific group of migrants tends to fare worse in terms of unemployment rates and to suffer more from skill mismatch and over-qualification compared to not only the native populations, but also other types of migrants.<sup>3</sup> Thus, while potentially being demanding and costly in the short term, the provision of appropriate, timely and targeted labour market integration assistance is crucial for avoiding bigger long-term societal, economic and political costs. Systematically assessing previous skills and educational attainments, facilitating the acquisition of the host country language as well as the development of vocational skills are essential for refugees' participation in the labour market. However, providing the legal/political framework and practical assistance schemes that facilitate early access to employment for refugees (and in cases of lengthy refugee status determination processes, also for asylum-seekers) is considered to be key to more successful outcomes in the longer term.<sup>4</sup>

Having received substantial and relatively young refugee populations with linguistic differences in a rather short period of time, how have authorities in Turkey and Germany dealt with these multi-dimensional challenges?

<sup>2</sup> OECD, *Making Integration Work. Refugees and Others in Need of Protection*, Paris, OECD, January 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251236-en>.

<sup>3</sup> For a recent review of the literature, see Sona Kalantaryan, "The Labour-Market Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers as a Special Category of Migrants: Evidence and Literature Review", in Iván Martín et al., *From Refugees to Workers. Mapping Labour-Market Integration Support Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in EU Member States, Volume II: Literature Review and Country Case Studies*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung and Migration Policy Centre, 2016, p. 11-25, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11586/2016003>.

<sup>4</sup> Iván Martín et al., *From Refugees to Workers. Mapping Labour-Market Integration Support Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in EU Member States, Volume I: Comparative Analysis and Policy Findings*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung and Migration Policy Centre, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11586/2016002>; OECD, *Making Integration Work*, cit.

What do the initial outcomes look like? What are the lessons to be learnt? Trying to answer these questions, the following pages will: (1) provide background information on the Syrian refugee population in the two countries; (2) examine how the two states adapted their legal framework regarding refugees' entry into the labour market; (3) look at the provision of assistance facilitating refugees' entry into the labour market; (4) discuss preliminary outcomes; and (5) draw lessons from both cases with a view to providing some insights for meeting pending challenges.

## 1. Syrian refugee populations in Turkey and Germany: Admission patterns and socio-demographic structure

Turkey started to admit Syrian nationals fleeing the conflict as early as April 2011, and continued to allow their entry in a rather liberal fashion until 2016 through its "open door policy". This liberal admission policy, apart from being informed by humanitarian sensitivities, was also largely based on the authorities' expectation that the Syrian conflict would come to an end in a much shorter time span. However, the number of Syrian refugees increased from 1.5 million in 2014 to 2.5 million in 2015, and to 2.8 million in 2016; currently the total number is 3,028,226.<sup>5</sup> Together with those whose registration has not yet been completed, the total number of Syrian refugees is estimated to be around 3.2 million.<sup>6</sup> This makes Turkey the country that shelters the greatest number of (Syrian) refugees not only in its region, but also in the world. Hence, it should be acknowledged that the sheer size of the population implies a greater challenge in terms of policy development and implementation, as well as assistance provision for Turkey.

In comparison, the bulk of asylum-seekers, mainly but not only from Syria, were admitted to Germany over 2015 and 2016, at a period when it was rather clear that the prospects for an end to the civil war in Syria in the foreseeable future were dim. The government's unilateral suspension of the Dublin regulation for Syrian nationals at the peak of the 2015 refugee movements towards EU countries played a significant role in making Germany the member state that received the highest number of asylum-seekers. The majority of asylum-seekers (890,000) were admitted in 2015,<sup>7</sup> whereas the number dropped to 280,000 in

<sup>5</sup> Numbers as of 1 June 2017. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM): *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection*, [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection\\_915\\_1024\\_4748\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik).

<sup>6</sup> M. Murat Erdoğan, *Urban Refugees from "Detachment" to "Harmonization". Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul, Istanbul*, Marmara Belediyeler Birliği Kültür Yayınları, January 2017, p. 16, <http://marmara.gov.tr/UserFiles/Attachments/2017/05/09/5c68e8fe-6a35-4411-88f1-2f685bf4b1da.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), *Migration Report 2015: Central Conclusions*, 14 December 2016, <http://www.bamf>.

2016.<sup>8</sup> A total of 1,164,269 first-time asylum applications were filed over 2015 (441,899) and 2016 (722,370). With 424,907 applications over two years, Syrian nationals constituted the biggest group (36.5 percent) among all asylum-seekers.<sup>9</sup> Even if the magnitude of arrivals caught Germany somewhat off guard, the authorities were well aware of the long-term nature of the refugees' stay already before their admission, as demonstrated by the memo sent by the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) to the Ministry of Interior in early August 2015, stating that Syrian refugees in the immediate region "had 'completely given' up all hope of returning".<sup>10</sup>

Refugee populations in both countries can be considered as relatively young, and thus have the bulk of their working life ahead of them, a factor further enhancing the importance of labour market integration measures. In Turkey, the share of Syrian refugees under 18 is 45.8 percent, whereas 60.8 percent of the population is within the legal working age range (15–64).<sup>11</sup> In Germany, 31.1 percent of the asylum-applicants in 2015 and 36.2 percent of those in 2016 were under 18, whereas 73 percent of the applicants in 2015 and 69.1 percent of those in 2016 were within the legal working age range.<sup>12</sup> Another study taking into account only adult asylum-applicants in the year 2015 shows that the Syrian refugee population is not an exception in terms of a young age structure, with 49.4 percent of adult Syrian applicants being between 18 and 27, and 29.6 percent between 28 and 37.<sup>13</sup>

Neither Turkey nor Germany has been able to systematically gather data on previously acquired education- and skill-levels or work experiences of refugees. Nevertheless, there are partial data indicating lower levels of education and skills among refugees in Turkey, and a more equal distribution of different education and skill levels among those in Germany.

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de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Migrationsberichte/migrationsbericht-2015-zentrale-ergebnisse.html.

8 "Sharp Drop in Migrant Arrivals in Germany", in *Deutsche Welle*, 11 January 2017, <http://p.dw.com/p/2VcAB>.

9 OECD, *Finding Their Way. Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Germany*, Paris, OECD, March 2017, p. 21, <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Finding-their-Way-Germany.pdf>.

10 "Two Weeks in September: The Makings of Merkel's Decision to Accept Refugees", in *Spiegel Online*, 24 August 2016, <http://spon.de/aeOoU>.

11 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior DGMM: *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection*, cit

12 Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), *Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl, Dezember 2015*, <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-dezember-2015.html>; *Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl, Dezember 2016*, <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asyl/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-dezember-2016.html>.

13 Anna-Katharina Rich, "Social Structure, Level of Qualifications and Employment. First-time Asylum Applicants in Germany in 2015", in *BAMF Brief Analysis*, No. 3/2016 (September 2016), p. 3, [http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse3\\_sozial-komponenten.html](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse3_sozial-komponenten.html).

According to a household survey conducted with 744 Syrian refugees in six districts of Istanbul, 61 percent had "regular paid, often low-skilled jobs" back in Syria, 22 percent had non-agricultural waged labour, both skilled and non-skilled, 10 percent were engaged in formal and informal commerce, and 4 percent were agricultural waged labourers.<sup>14</sup> The survey shows that 16 percent of the heads of households were illiterate with no formal education, 18 percent were literate but had not completed primary education, 19 percent had primary education, 21 percent had graduated from general secondary schools and 17 percent from upper secondary schools, while only 8.3 percent had a university degree.<sup>15</sup> Partial data on the educational qualifications of Syrian asylum applicants in Germany come from the BAMF questionnaire that asked all adult asylum applicants in 2015 about their education levels on a voluntary basis, where the overall response rate was 78 percent. Among Syrian nationals 3 percent responded that they had no formal education, 17.4 percent had graduated from primary school, 26 percent from general secondary school, 26.6 percent from upper secondary school, and 27 percent from university. According to the same questionnaire, 73.2 percent of Syrian men and 29.5 percent of Syrian women were employed before coming to Germany. Apart from the 44 percent whose occupational characteristics were not specified, 14.5 percent of Syrian asylum-applicants were craftsmen, 9.4 percent had businesses providing services, 7.3 percent were engaged in trade and 7 percent had teaching professions.<sup>16</sup> Another survey made with over 2300 asylum-seekers from all nationalities that entered Germany between 2013 and early 2016 found out that 27 percent were self-employed in their countries of origin, 30 percent were non-salaried workers, 25 percent worked in non-managerial and 13 percent in managerial jobs with monthly salaries.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Refugees' access to formal employment: Differing pace for adapting the legal framework to the de-facto situation

Syrian nationals seeking international protection are granted different kinds of status in the two contexts, with important implications for their access to employment. In addition, the pace of adapting the legal provisions regulating refugees' and asylum-seekers' participation in

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14 Ayhan Kaya and Aysu Kırış, *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul*, Istanbul, Support to Life, April 2016, p. 30, <http://hdl.handle.net/11411/823>.

15 Ibid., p. 27.

16 Anna-Katharina Rich, "Social Structure, Level of Qualifications and Employment", cit., p. 5-8.

17 Herbert Brücker et al., "Forced Migration, Arrival in Germany, and First Steps toward Integration: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey", in *BAMF Brief Analysis*, No. 5/2016 (November 2016), p. 9, [http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse5\\_iab-bamf-soep-befragung-gefluechtete.html](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Kurzanalysen/kurzanalyse5_iab-bamf-soep-befragung-gefluechtete.html).

the labour market so as to enable them to access formal employment have also been quite different.

As Turkey retains the geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention, it grants refugee status only to asylum-seekers from Europe. Efforts to substantially reform Turkey's legal-institutional framework for asylum and migration, which were already ongoing before the Syrian conflict erupted, coincided with the influx of Syrian asylum-seekers. As a result, the types of international protection to be provided to non-European asylum-seekers were specified only in 2013, when Turkey adopted the Law on Foreigners and International Protection.<sup>18</sup> The status that applies to the vast majority of Syrian asylum-seekers in Turkey is that of temporary protection (TP). Around 80,000 Syrian nationals who entered Turkey regularly at the official border crossing points, with their passports, have the status of foreigners legally residing in Turkey, which gives them a different range of rights.<sup>19</sup> For the great majority under TP, the Temporary Protection Regulation of October 2014 further specified the rights and entitlements attached to this status.<sup>20</sup> This meant that until late 2014, Syrian asylum-seekers had an ambiguous "guest" status with a legally weak basis, reflecting the authorities' somewhat unrealistically maintained "emergency aid" approach based on the assumption of a "short stay".<sup>21</sup>

As regards the right to work, even though the 2014 TP Regulation had a generic clause on access to employment, the procedures through which this right could be used were not specified until the adoption of the Regulation on the Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection in January 2016.<sup>22</sup> Thus, in practice, Syrians under TP did not have the right to work in the formal labour market for nearly five years. While authorities in Turkey were aware of the necessity, the adoption of the regulation (at least its timing) was largely an outcome of EU demands for Turkey to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees as well as its conditioning of the release of the funds under the 'Facility for Refugees in Turkey' on such improvement as part of the negotiation of the EU-

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18 Law No. 6458 of 4 April 2013 (Official Gazette No. 28615 of 11 April 2013), [http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng\\_minikanun\\_5\\_son.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng_minikanun_5_son.pdf).

19 M. Murat Erdoğan and Can Ünver, *Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey*, Ankara, Turkish Confederation of Employers Associations (TİSK), December 2015, p. 40, <http://tisk.org.tr/en/?p=36520>.

20 Regulation No. 2014/6883: Temporary Protection Regulation (Official Gazette No. 29153 of 22 October 2014), [http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/\\_dokuman28.pdf](http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/_dokuman28.pdf).

21 Ahmet İcduygu and Evin Millet, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Insecure Lives in an Environment of Pseudo-Integration", in *Global Turkey in Europe Working Papers*, No. 13 (August 2016), p. 4, <http://www.iai.it/en/node/6690>.

22 Regulation No. 2016/8375: Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection (Official Gazette No. 29594 of 15 January 2016), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/582c71464.html>.

Turkey Statement, which was finalized in March 2016.

The regulation allows foreigners under TP to apply for work permits six months after having registered as such. It also allows them to register with the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) as "job-seekers". Employers are obliged to pay not less than the minimum wage and to meet the social security standards. While there is no general "priority check" mechanism allowing the employment of refugees only if there is no Turkish citizen who can fill the position, the share of foreigners under TP cannot exceed 10 percent of the Turkish citizens employed in the same workplace. Seasonal workers in agriculture and husbandry are exempt from work permits (although employers are obliged to get exemption certificates), whereas those to be employed in health provision and teaching jobs need to get a preliminary permit. In short, overall, the regulation is an improvement in terms of finally allowing refugees to take up formal employment and benefit from the working rights attached to it.<sup>23</sup> However, the considerable delay in opening legal channels for refugees to enter the formal labour market, combined with the lack of public welfare schemes covering the entire Syrian refugee population, have unsurprisingly generated a highly problematic situation of informality, to which we will turn in Section 4.

In Germany, the great majority of asylum applicants in 2015 were granted Convention refugee status and only 1 percent obtained "subsidiary protection", whereas in 2016, the share of the latter group exceeded 35 percent of all asylum decisions.<sup>24</sup> While either status entitles the holder to work and to benefit from public employment assistance measures in the same ways as citizens or legally resident foreigners, the major difference between the two statuses in terms of employment is that people under subsidiary protection can get renewable residence permits valid only for one year, which negatively affects their legal certainty and hence their employability.<sup>25</sup>

Having faced large-scale arrivals over a short period, Germany made extensive and timely legal adaptations in its provisions regarding asylum-seekers' participation in the labour market. Considering that the application, registration and refugee status determination processes are quite time-consuming in Germany, the option of banning asylum-seekers from taking up formal employment would not be realistic, as it would cause significant delays. For the same reason, the length of the curfew period for asylum-seekers to be able to obtain work permits is important in terms of their early access to employment. Already before the large-scale arrivals, in 2014 Germany had reduced the curfew period for

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23 The small group of Syrians who are registered as legally resident foreigners are under the scope of the 2003 "Law on Foreigners' Work Permits", and hence were able to get work permits before 2016.

24 OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit. p. 21.

25 Ibid., p. 12.

asylum-seekers to access the labour market from nine to three months after filing an application.<sup>26</sup> The three-month waiting period is significantly shorter than the maximum curfew period of nine months currently set out by the EU,<sup>27</sup> and that of six months proposed by the Commission,<sup>28</sup> or that of outlier countries such as the United Kingdom, which requires 12 months before asylum-seekers can get work permits.<sup>29</sup> The shortening of the curfew period indicates Germany's acknowledgement of the importance of early access to employment, and arguably also the ability of its labour market to absorb these additional workers.

Since October 2015, Germany has been privileging those asylum-seekers who are highly likely to be recognized as refugees, and hence to be allowed to stay in Germany for the long term. From October 2015 onwards, asylum-seekers from countries with recognition rates higher than 50 percent (including Syria) are given access to integration courses, labour market participation assistance, and vocational language training programmes.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the "Integration Act" that entered into force in August 2016 further eased asylum-seekers' and refugees' access to work by, for example, temporarily suspending the "priority check" in certain sectors. At the same time, a more restrictive and disincentive-based approach towards asylum-seekers with low recognition possibilities, specifically those from countries of origin Germany considers to be "safe", was adopted. None of the abovementioned privileges apply to those asylum-seekers, while the list of "safe countries of origin" has been expanded in 2015.

In general, since the large-scale arrivals of 2015, what can be called a "more for more" approach has been adopted. The state offers a broader range of rights and incentives facilitating inclusion in the German society and economy in the shorter and the longer term, but mainly to those asylum-seekers and refugees who

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<sup>26</sup> For further details on differently treated groups such as those from what Germany recognizes as "safe countries of origin", or the so-called "tolerated persons", see *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> European Parliament and Council of the European Union, *Directive 2013/33/EU of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)*, OJ L 180, 29.6.2013, p. 96-116, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32013L0033>.

<sup>28</sup> European Commission, *Proposal for a Directive laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast)* (COM/2016/465), 13 July 2016, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52016PC0465>.

<sup>29</sup> OECD, *Making Integration Work*, *cit.*, p. 19. It should be noted however that there are also those examples such as Portugal, where the waiting period is only one month.

<sup>30</sup> Jutta Aumüller, "Case Study Germany", in Iván Martín et al., *From Refugees to Workers. Mapping Labour-Market Integration Support Measures for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in EU Member States, Volume II: Literature Review and Country Case Studies*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung and Migration Policy Centre, 2016, p. 71-72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11586/2016003>.

demonstrate their commitment to participating in the societal and economic life. Reflecting this approach, the 2016 Integration Act made certain rights conditional upon "integration" outcomes, and particularly on the acquisition of the German language, by stating that integration courses may be obligatory for this group of migrants, or conditioning permanent residence permits upon participation in integration courses.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, another measure rewarding those asylum-seekers who take concrete steps towards gaining skills and experience, by giving them more secure residence permits and thus increasing their employability (while also incentivising employers to recruit them), was the introduction of the 3+2 residence permit. Under the terms of this permit asylum-seekers who enrol in a formal apprenticeship – which is a core component of the German labour market – are granted residence permits to cover the apprenticeship period of (generally) 3 years + 2 years.<sup>32</sup> Overall, Germany can be considered as having reacted fast enough and as having made significant improvements to the previously restrictive regulations regarding asylum-seekers' entry into the labour market, despite challenges delaying early access in practice, which will be discussed in Section 4.

### 3. Providing assistance for refugees' participation in the labour market

In addition to the different pace of legal adaptation, the timing and comprehensiveness of assistance measures aimed at a smoother transition of refugees into the labour market also differ between the two countries. The gap between the financial resources and the relative size of target populations, as well as the existence or absence of appropriate legal frameworks are obviously important factors in generating this difference. However, the mechanisms for geographically distributing refugees within the country and allocating resources from the central to the local level also seem to make a difference in terms of the provision of assistance. The extent to which local actors are involved in policy-making and implementation processes appears to be significant in terms of the adaptation capacity of the broader legal/institutional/political framework governing refugee integration, as this involvement informs the input transmitted from the local level (having the first-hand experience with the target populations) to the centre.

#### 3.1 Mechanisms for sharing responsibility, resources and power

In Turkey, 246,080 Syrians under TP (8 percent) live in a total of 23 camps in 10 provinces, which are managed by the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı, AFAD). The

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<sup>31</sup> OECD, *Finding Their Way*, *cit.*, p. 28-29.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

other 2,782,146 people (92 percent) are “urban refugees” spread out all over Turkey.<sup>33</sup> Refugees living outside the camps have to be registered in one of the 81 provinces in order to access public services such as healthcare and education for school-age children. Their secondary movement within the country is not restricted, even if accessing services or enjoying rights (e.g., getting a work permit) in the new province of residence are conditional upon re-registration in that province. Mainly because of the existence of employment opportunities and social networks, urban refugees tend to concentrate in specific urban centres. The increase of refugees registered in Istanbul from 203,000 in March 2015, to 317,000 in July 2015, and to 395,000 in March 2016 is illustrative of such movement and concentration.<sup>34</sup> Currently, urban refugees are mainly concentrated in Istanbul (483,810), Hatay (370,939), Şanlıurfa (321,298) and Gaziantep (294,193).<sup>35</sup> The state has been providing a larger scope of services and assistance to the smaller portion of refugees who live in the camps. As regards employment-related assistance, for example, AFAD provided certificate programmes on skill formation to a total of 225,000 Syrian refugees in the camps.<sup>36</sup> However, no comprehensive and systematic formal assistance measures were developed for urban refugees. In fact, considering that Syrian refugees were granted the right to work only in 2016, there was no legal basis for the state to develop and implement labour market assistance schemes in the five years preceding the regulation.

The lack of centrally designated and financed assistance would imply that the scope and quality of assistance measures largely depend on the capacities – and willingness – of local governments and non-state stakeholders. However, as highlighted by a recent study on how municipalities in Istanbul have been managing the arrival and settlement of refugees, municipalities have neither a clear legal mandate for catering to refugees, nor the financial resources to be able to provide a large scope of services.<sup>37</sup> While municipalities largely depend on allocations from the central budget, the allocation mechanism does not take into account immigration rates and the number of refugees.<sup>38</sup> This results in serious

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33 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior DGMM: *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection*, cit.

34 Ayhan Kaya and Aysu Kırac, *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul*, cit., p. 13.

35 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior DGMM: *Migration Statistics: Temporary Protection*, cit. While all Syrians in Istanbul are urban refugees, the numbers for those in Hatay, Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep are calculated by subtracting the number of refugees staying in the camps in these provinces.

36 Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), *Suriyeli sığınmacılara yapılan yardımlar* [Aid provided for Syrian refugees], 19 June 2017, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/2373>.

37 M. Murat Erdoğan, *Urban Refugees from “Detachment” to “Harmonization”*, cit., p. 65-67.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

financial limitations, particularly for local governments in provinces with high numbers of refugees (in absolute but more importantly in relative terms). As a result, assistance provided by the municipalities remains rather basic and limited, as the example of Istanbul demonstrates: most municipalities focus mainly on poverty support, while assistance measures aiming at longer term labour market integration take a backseat.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, the highly centralized political system and the centralist political culture stand as a barrier to local actors’ active and regular involvement in the designation, revision and implementation of refugee integration policies. This seems to constitute a problem in terms of the state’s ability to quickly adapt the broader legal-political framework in order to respond to emerging and expected challenges in a timely manner. For example, a 2015 survey of employers and other local stakeholders in 18 provinces showed that employer associations kept producing research-based recommendations for the need to grant refugees the right to work long before 2016, but were largely ignored by central authorities.<sup>40</sup> Ankara’s low degree of responsiveness to feedback and suggestions for reform is a complaint shared by the municipalities.<sup>41</sup>

In Germany, asylum-seekers are centrally distributed to federal states according to the annually updated Königstein formula, which takes into account the population and tax revenues. The idea is to ensure fairer responsibility sharing by allocating asylum-seekers to more prosperous states (and vice versa). In addition, as the same formula also determines the share each state gets from the central budget, the number of asylum-seekers received by a state, the financial resources available to it, and hence the degree of public spending on refugee integration measures are linked. Concerned with the overburdening of certain regions and cities, Germany’s 2016 Integration Act also requires recognized refugees to remain in their assigned state for three years after the asylum decision, unless they find employment in another state (which might not necessarily lead to positive outcomes in terms of entry into the workforce, as the distribution mechanism does not account for local labour market absorption capacities).<sup>42</sup> While some aspects of the mechanism could certainly be improved, in the face of the arrival of large numbers of asylum-seekers in the last two years, it has proved to be a reasonably fair and functioning responsibility/resource sharing system, enabling a decent degree of assistance provision.<sup>43</sup>

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39 *Ibid.*, p. 99.

40 M. Murat Erdoğan and Can Ünver, *Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey*, cit.

41 M. Murat Erdoğan, *Urban Refugees from “Detachment” to “Harmonization”*, cit.; Ayhan Kaya and Aysu Kırac, *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul*, cit.

42 OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 29.

43 Bruce Katz, Louise Noring and Nantke Garrelts, “Cities and Refugees: The German Experience”, in *Brookings Centennial Scholar*

The higher degree of power and the channels of communication available to the regional/local levels of government in Germany imply that the federal states can influence legal amendments and negotiate budget allocation. For example, as a result of their negotiations with the federal government, in July 2016, federal states managed to get additional reimbursements from the federal budget for their increased spending in the face of the de-facto situation. In addition, also partly thanks to feedback from the federal states, the budget for the period between 2016 and 2018 was increased: a total of 9.6 billion euros was allocated to housing, immediate accommodation, and integration services to be provided to asylum-seekers and refugees by the federal states.<sup>44</sup> This mutual feedback and interaction between the sub-national and national levels of government, in the case of refugee integration, seems to have enhanced the state's adaptation capacity and the efficiency of public spending, while ensuring a minimum level of integration assistance for the majority of asylum-seekers and refugees.

### 3.2 Existing and emerging assistance schemes for fostering refugee employment

In Turkey, in the period following the 2016 regulation, and the EU's establishment of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, labour market assistance projects with a more comprehensive scope started to be developed.<sup>45</sup> The large share of the 1.6 billion euro EU fund dedicated "non-humanitarian assistance" is allocated to projects focusing on children's access to formal education (42 percent) and the improvement of health services (28 percent), whereas only 9 percent covers "socio-economic support".<sup>46</sup> Similarly, in 2016, among the different sectors for which the UNCHR's Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (providing funds not only to Turkey but also to Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon) set targets for funds, the "livelihoods and social cohesion" sector was the most underfunded (only 16 percent of the appeal was received).<sup>47</sup> In the case of Turkey, only 11 million dollars out of the targeted 92 million dollars was actually pledged for this sector that focuses on job creation for refugees and enhancing their employability.<sup>48</sup>

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*Initiative Reports*, September 2016, <http://brook.gs/2cgMh1N>.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> For the ongoing projects led by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior DGMM, see the official webpage (in Turkish): [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/goc-idaresi-genel-mudurlugunun-devam-eden-projeleri\\_409\\_570\\_3609\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/goc-idaresi-genel-mudurlugunun-devam-eden-projeleri_409_570_3609_icerik).

<sup>46</sup> European Commission, *First Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey* (COM/2017/130), 2 March 2017, p. 10, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52017DC0130>.

<sup>47</sup> UNCHR and UNDP, *3RP 2016 Annual Report*, April 2017, p. 3, <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/3RP-2016-Annual-Report.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

On the brighter side, some projects with a more comprehensive scope are already emerging. For instance, the EU-funded project "Support to National Institutions for Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Crisis", launched in February 2017, has a specific skill formation component. Involving the national institutions with a stake in refugee integration and the UNCHR as the implementing partner, the project aims to provide vocational training to 6,000 Syrian refugees, give higher education grants to 2,500 Syrian students, and offer Turkish language courses to 6,000 refugees.<sup>49</sup> Initiatives such as some recent projects aiming to facilitate refugees' skill formation and access to employment, where local stakeholders such as municipalities, chambers of commerce and industry, chambers of crafts, NGOs, as well as IOs and INGOs cooperate and are supported by the central authority, might be a good starting point for empowering and involving local actors and for strengthening the local integration capacities.<sup>50</sup> Another initiative worth mentioning is the pilot project that involved as partners the UNDP, the public "Multi-Purpose Community Centres", the "Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Administration" and KOTON (a Turkish garment company), which created income-generating activities for more than 800 refugee women.<sup>51</sup> As an example of not only international-local but also as public-private cooperation, this is a promising initiative that future projects could draw upon.

The total amount Turkey spent on catering for Syrian refugees between 2011 and October 2015 was declared as 7.6 billion dollars, but no detailed information on specific items of spending was disclosed.<sup>52</sup> Government sources state that as of June 2017, Turkey spent over 25 billion dollars in the form of international aid for Syrian refugees, while it is not specified whether this amount was exclusively spent on Syrian refugees in Turkey or also includes humanitarian aid sent to Syria and to other countries hosting the refugees.<sup>53</sup> Regardless of the exact amounts so far spent, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey is high, the needs and challenges are manifold, and financial and human resources are limited for the country to face such a challenge by itself. This is the case

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<sup>49</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior DGMM, *Ulusal Kurumların desteklenmesi projesinin açılışı yapıldı* [The project on support to national institutions was launched], 3 August 2017, [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/ulusal-kurumlarin-desteklenmesi-projesinin-acilisi-yapildi\\_350\\_359\\_10500\\_icerik](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/ulusal-kurumlarin-desteklenmesi-projesinin-acilisi-yapildi_350_359_10500_icerik).

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, the vocational training project in Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa, funded by the EU, and implemented by the UNDP in cooperation with local stakeholders. See UNDP in Turkey, *Syrians' Integration: Vocational Training Courses Are on the Rise*, 18 January 2017, <http://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/01/suriyeliler-icin-mesleki-egitim-kurslartuem-hzyla-devam-ediyor-.html>.

<sup>51</sup> UNCHR and UNDP, *3RP 2016 Annual Report*, cit., p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> M. Murat Erdoğan and Can Ünver, *Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey*, cit., p. 37.

<sup>53</sup> Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry AFAD, *Suriyeli sığınmacılara yapılan yardımlar*, cit.



especially for local state and non-state actors, who play significant roles in day-to-day integration of refugees. Thus, it is of utmost significance that international support from actors like the EU, UNDP, ILO and UNHCR to both central and local actors is sustained, funds are used efficiently, and recently improving cooperation between Turkish authorities and international actors is continued.

In Germany, certain types of assistance such as the integration courses and general labour market integration assistance provided by federal authorities already existed before the recent arrival of large numbers of asylum-seekers, as the former have been available to non-humanitarian migrants and recognized refugees, whereas the latter has been available to all job-seekers who are nationals or foreign-born legal residents. Thus, a general and basic assistance framework already existed for migrants and refugees. As mentioned earlier, already in October 2015, when large numbers of asylum-seekers started to arrive to Germany, integration courses (100 hours of civic education and 600 hours of language training) provided by the federal government, job-search assistance and job intermediation services provided by the Federal Employment Agency (BA), and the vocational language courses provided by the BAMF were made available also to asylum-seekers from countries with high recognition rates.

In addition to these general measures, some programmes and schemes were introduced that specifically target refugees and asylum-seekers and focus on assessing skills, providing coaching and assistance for job searching, general and occupation-specific language courses, as well as vocational training. The “Early Intervention” pilot project that was run in 2014–2015 and the “Perspectives for Refugees” programme, or the recently launched “Perspectives for Female Refugees” implemented by the BA are some examples of such programmes.<sup>54</sup> The “Integration Measures for Refugees” introduced by the Integration Act aims to offer to 100,000 asylum-seekers a first contact with the German labour market through providing them with “low-threshold work opportunities”, which are short of being regular employment but equip the worker with a basic degree of employment experience.

Besides centrally managed programmes, federal states develop their own measures to facilitate asylum-seekers’ and refugees’ access to employment. One-stop ‘service points’ have been established in some federal states, providing tailor-made assistance for easier access to employment, based on the specific skills, background and needs of each asylum-seeker. This is seen as a potential “best practice” because of its tailor-made approach, and

<sup>54</sup> For more detailed analyses on the targeted labour market assistance schemes, see Jutta Aumüller, “Case Study Germany”, cit., particularly p. 71-72; and OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 50-59.

even more so because it brings various agencies dealing with different dimensions of labour market integration together at one facility, thereby not only improving inter-agency coordination, but also facilitating the handling of the process by applicants.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. What have been the outcomes so far? Effective practices, promising developments, challenges ahead

In Turkey, the absence until 2016 of the right to work and the very limited nature of formal assistance have, unsurprisingly, led to refugees’ employment in the informal sector. In 2015 the number of Syrian refugees working in the informal economy was estimated at 300,000,<sup>56</sup> which is most probably a moderate estimate. Refugees mainly work as monthly or daily paid wage labourers in textiles, industrial production, construction, paper recycling, agriculture and the service sector. Informal employment has brought with it all sorts of problems, such as the complete lack of social security benefits, job insecurity, low wages,<sup>57</sup> child labour and an overall high degree of vulnerability to exploitation.<sup>58</sup>

Even though the 2016 regulation finally allowed Syrian refugees to enter the formal job market, in practice, reversing the informal structuration of the “refugee labour market” proves to be difficult. As the main attraction of recruiting refugees is their “low cost” arising from their informal status, employers tend to be reluctant in formalizing these workers, since it implies paying at least the minimum wage and social security premiums, while refugee workers also shy away from demanding work permits, as they fear losing their job.<sup>59</sup> While the regulation definitely had a positive impact on the number of work permits obtained by Syrian nationals, the slow rate of increase (see Table 1) confirms the prevalence of the abovementioned dynamics, whereas the total number of 13 thousand work permits for 2016 remains very moderate considering that over 1.5 million Syrian refugees are of working age.

<sup>55</sup> OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 52.

<sup>56</sup> M. Murat Erdoğan and Can Ünver, *Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey*, cit., p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> They are generally paid half of the legal salary, or even lower amounts. See Ayhan Kaya and Aysu Kırac, *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul*, cit., p. 29-30.

<sup>58</sup> For the problems arising from informal employment of Syrian refugees, see M. Murat Erdoğan and Can Ünver, *Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Turkey*, cit., p. 44-45; and Oytun Orhan and Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, “Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey”, in *ORSAM Reports*, No. 195 (January 2015), p. 17-19, <http://orsam.org.tr/index.php/Content/Report/203?s=orsam|english>.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick Kingsley, “Fewer than 0.1% of Syrians in Turkey in Line for Work Permits”, in *The Guardian*, 11 April 2016, <https://gu.com/p/4hp93/stw>.

**• Table 1 | Work permits obtained by Syrian nationals in Turkey, 2011–2016\***

Year	Number of work permits
2011	118
2012	220
2013	794
2014	2,541
2015	4,019
2016	13,298

Source: For the years 2011–2015, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labour and Social Security, *Work Permits of Foreigners*, <https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/home/contents/istatistikler/yabancicalismaiznleri>; for the year 2016, “2016’da 13 bin Suriyeli çalışma izni aldı” [13 thousand Syrians obtained work permits in 2016], in *Hürriyet*, 18 January 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/2016da-13-bin-suriyeli-calisma-izni-aldi-40338980>.

Note: \* The numbers in the period between 2011 and 2015 include only the very small minority of Syrian nationals who had the status of “foreigners legally residing in Turkey”.

Considering that it is mostly the small-scale businesses that employ refugees informally, systematized monitoring of such workplaces is crucial for continuing with the formalization process. Creating incentives for employers legally employing refugees, for example, through offering tax relief and compensation, as suggested by the OECD,<sup>60</sup> can complement such monitoring. As employers generally think that the application procedure and bureaucratic formalities are too cumbersome, information campaigns targeting employers, such as the one organized by Turkey’s Chambers of Commerce and Industry (TOBB) and the Ministry of Labour,<sup>61</sup> should be made more widespread.

On the more positive side, self-employment among Syrian refugees has shown a constantly increasing trend (see Table 2). While there are no exact numbers, it is known that entrepreneurs and tradesmen, who founded their businesses especially in border cities in Turkey, constitute a non-negligible section among Syrian refugees.<sup>62</sup> Certain districts of Istanbul also host many shops run by refugees, employing and catering to mostly Syrians, but also locals.<sup>63</sup> Self-employment has largely grown without any specific state support, showing that it is a potentially fruitful area for income and employment generation. Hence, while further research on the phenomenon is needed, measures to

<sup>60</sup> OECD, *Making Integration Work*, cit., p. 56.

<sup>61</sup> Turkey’s Chambers of Commerce and Industry (TOBB), “TOBB’dan Suriyelilerin istihdamına eğitim desteği” [TOBB training support to Syrians’ employment], in *Ekonomik Forum*, No. 363 (May 2016), p. 56–58, <http://haber.tobb.org.tr/ekonomikforum/2016/263/056-059.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> Oytun Orhan and Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, “Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey”, cit., p. 18.

<sup>63</sup> Ayhan Kaya and Aysu Kırac, *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul*, cit., p. 22.

support self-employment and establishment of small-scale businesses should be seriously considered.

**• Table 2 | Newly established companies with Syrian partners, 2011–2017**

Year	Number of companies
2011	81
2012	165
2013	489
2014	1,257
2015	1,599
2016	1,764
2017*	677

Source: For the years 2011–2015, Ömer M. Karasapan, “The Impact of Syrian Businesses in Turkey”, in *Brookings Future Development Blog*, 16 March 2016, <http://brook.gs/2bcXR0M>; for 2016–2017, Turkey’s Chambers of Commerce and Industry (TOBB) website, *Company Establishment and Liquidation Statistics*, <http://tobb.org.tr/BilgiErisimMudurlugu/Sayfalar/Eng/KurulanKapananSirketistatistikleri.php>.

Note: \* January–April 2017.

The arrivals are much more recent in Germany, and both the asylum decision procedure and the required path of training before taking up employment are rather time-consuming. Thus, it is early to talk about employment outcomes, as recently arriving asylum-seekers, including Syrian nationals, are starting to enter the labour market only now. However, the willingness to work among refugees seems to be quite high. According to the previously mentioned survey conducted with asylum-seekers who entered Germany between 2013 and 2016, 78 percent stated that they were “definitely planning to work”.<sup>64</sup> This seems to be particularly the case among Syrians. As of February 2017, a total of 455,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered as job seekers at the BA: 252,231 Syrians constitute more than half of this total.<sup>65</sup>

Demand for and participation in the integration courses has also been high. In fact, long waiting periods due to insufficient availability of integration courses has become one of the important challenges for Germany in achieving early access to employment in practice. In 2016, 560,000 people were issued approval to participate in these courses, whereas only 320,000 were able to start.<sup>66</sup> Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers ranked first also in the integration course participation rates in 2016.<sup>67</sup> However, participation rates of asylum-seekers and

<sup>64</sup> Herbert Brücker et al., “Forced Migration, Arrival in Germany, and First Steps toward Integration”, cit., p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>67</sup> Fabian von der Mark, “German Integration Report Exposes Prejudice against Immigrants”, in *Deutsche Welle*, 10 December 2016, <http://p.dw.com/p/2U4Sg>.

refugees in the “active labour market measures” offered by the BA or in vocational language courses remain low for the time being.<sup>68</sup> This might be an outcome of the prerequisite-based, linear integration framework of Germany, where one can proceed to occupation-specific trainings, apprenticeships and actual employment only after meeting certain requirements. Even though the German legal framework is conducive to early entry into the labour market, the clogging of both the asylum decision process and the integration course mechanism due to the large number of applications results in lengthy waiting periods under the linear framework, periods during which the asylum-seekers remain inactive. Long periods of inactivity might negatively impact on the levels of motivation to work and to participate in the socio-economic life in general. In addition, owing to self-sufficiency concerns, delaying actual employment for too long might also channel asylum-seekers and refugees into the informal sector.<sup>69</sup>

Another dimension of assistance provision relates to self-employment. Existing studies converge in their criticism that Germany has not paid sufficient attention to supporting the self-employment option.<sup>70</sup> Preliminary data suggest that the share of asylum-seekers who were self-employed in their home countries is certainly not insignificant. However, refugees constituted only 0.2 percent of the persons who received support from the BA for starting their businesses in August 2016.<sup>71</sup> Hence, targeted support to prospective business start-ups by refugees, and measures to channel previously self-employed refugees to the German labour market should be given further thought.

Finally, in Germany, civil society initiatives and employers’ associations seem to have played considerable roles in providing assistance in the form of language and/or vocational training, as well as in facilitating refugees’ and asylum-seekers’ access to employment. Civil society initiatives are known to be important particularly in offering mentorship programmes and skill formation and assessment opportunities. Employers, owing to their knowledge on local and sector-based labour market needs, as well as on skill levels and skill matching, could significantly contribute to the design of skill assessment schemes and vocational training.<sup>72</sup> The case of Germany shows that civil society can also play a crucial role as regards job-intermediation. A survey conducted by the OECD, the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs found that more than 40 percent of employers

who recruited refugees and asylum-seekers were put in contact with their prospective workers through civil society initiatives.<sup>73</sup> Job-intermediation via online platforms set up by civil society initiatives, job-search assistance provided by NGOs (also set up by refugees) or information portals for employers willing to recruit refugees constitute relatively inexpensive and effective initiatives by non-state actors that should complement state-led assistance.

## Conclusions

If the experiences of Turkey and Germany in dealing with the arrival of substantial refugee populations in general, and in tackling their integration into the labour market in particular, provide us with one broad conclusion, it would be this: fast reaction to developments matters, flexibility and the pace of adaptation are key, and lost time has long-term adverse consequences that do not have easy fixes. The two cases show that a realistic assessment by the authorities of the refugee population’s nature of stay is crucial for developing the appropriate legal and political framework.

The cases point out that legal provisions should prioritize several factors. First, providing a sound legal framework and clearly defining the administrative procedures for refugees’ access to formal employment without long delays are significant preconditions for successful integration in the longer term. Second, the case of Turkey clearly demonstrates that delays in providing access to regular employment can lead either to informality – exposing refugee workers to exploitation and potentially destabilizing local labour market dynamics – or to an increased strain on the welfare system, if the host-state has such schemes. It also shows that once employer–worker dynamics based on high-profit exploitation start to become structural, improving the legal framework alone does not automatically lead to formalization. Therefore, rather than solving the problem of informality after it becomes a reality, the key is to prevent it from happening. Third, providing legal certainty in terms of residence rights and linking it with employment is not only important for motivating refugees to enter the workforce, but also for incentivizing employers to hire them. For Turkey, this implies that it is time to go beyond the “temporary” protection status and open channels for Syrians to obtain residence permits. For Germany, it means that secure legal status options could be expanded so as to cover those entitled to protection but who fall short of refugee status.

The contrast between the two cases also indicates that mutual feedback as well as mechanisms enabling a balanced sharing of responsibilities, resources and power

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68 OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 14.

69 Jutta Aumüller, “Case Study Germany”, cit., p. 69.

70 OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit.; Iván Martín et al., *From Refugees to Workers, Volume I*, cit.

71 OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 58.

72 OECD, *Making Integration Work*, cit., p. 49-51.

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73 OECD, *Finding Their Way*, cit., p. 62.

between the central and local levels of government are important factors impacting on the state's capacity to provide labour market participation assistance more comprehensively, effectively and in a timely manner. Regardless of the type of mechanism used, the intra-country distribution of refugees and the allocation of resources to provinces/states hosting asylum-seekers and refugees should be made relational. If it is a free mobility regime as it is in Turkey, then the resource allocation mechanism should ideally be dynamically updated taking into account the pattern of refugees' movement and settlement. In a controlled mobility regime like the one in Germany – ideally to be used only until the asylum decision is taken – a distribution system that takes into account local unemployment levels and sectoral/occupational gaps could improve employment outcomes.

Providing assistance for language education as well as skill formation and transfer are essential for more successful outcomes in the longer term. Turkey should particularly prioritize the language-training aspect, at least for the younger sections of working-age population who have yet not entered the workforce. However, the case of Germany, where a broader scope of these measures are in place, also suggests that the time factor should be considered, so as not to delay refugees' actual contact with the labour market for too long. A linear and highly formal framework based on a series of prerequisites to be met might not be optimal, particularly when there are high numbers of asylum applicants. Online learning and evening classes could accelerate the training process. Learning the language during apprenticeships is considered a highly efficient way for gaining work-oriented language skills and work experience. In both contexts, more pilot projects in that direction can be run and funds can be re-allocated if they are found effective. In the case of Turkey (and other refugee-hosting countries in the region), considering the public spending needed for meeting a challenge of this magnitude, together with the limited nature of resources, the international community should step up its efforts for financially and technically supporting both central and local governments in fostering labour market participation, and further engage civil society and stakeholders from the private sector operating in local contexts.

Finally, while central and local governments are certainly key actors, examples from both countries point out that non-state stakeholders have much to contribute to the process. They can play specific and crucial roles, such as the one played by civil society initiatives in job-intermediation in Germany, or the emerging job-creation and skill formation assistance given by companies and employer organizations in Turkey. Engagement of, dialogue with and support to non-state stakeholders as

partners in fostering refugees' participation in the labour market offer promising prospects, with coordination between state and non-state actors being important for an efficient use of resources and energies.

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