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I. Introduction

According to IOM Glossary on Migration (2nd edition, 2011), while the term “integration” is used and understood differently in different countries and contexts, it can be defined as the process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. It generally refers to a two-way process of adaptation by migrants and host societies, while the particular requirements for acceptance by a host society vary from country to country. Integration does not necessarily imply permanent settlement. It does, however, imply consideration of the rights and obligations of migrants and host societies, of access to different kinds of services and the labour market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose. Local integration is one of the three durable solutions to address the plight of refugees. It may also be applied to victims of trafficking and unaccompanied children.¹

Integration is defined generally as a two-way process, however, it also could be considered as a three-way process. The role of the countries of origin should not be underestimated. Although their participation in integration measures is not always possible, for instance in case of refugees and asylum seekers, the countries of origin still could play an important role for the integration of economic migrants, in particular at the pre-departure stage.

Integration is a complex and challenging issue requiring adequate response of all stakeholders. The growing immigrant population in the European Union (EU) as well as in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) states determines the need to develop more comprehensive and effective policy measures by the governments of the hosting states. Close cooperation at all levels is crucial for achieving the goals of successful integration of migrants.

One of the most challenging aspects of the integration process is the economic one. Access to national labour markets of the hosting states, from one side, plays the vital role for ensuring the well-being of migrants and, from another side, could be beneficial for the national economies and hosting societies in general. At the same time, efficient participation in economic life is impossible without social and cultural inclusion of migrants. Therefore, the policies and tools developed by the governments should take into account the complexity of integration process as well as specific needs and situation of the various categories of migrants in order to suggest well-designed and targeted measures.

Recognizing the challenging nature of integration, various EU institutions as well as global and regional international organizations provide their support (both technical and financial) to the national governments in developing and implementing appropriate policies and practical measures. At the EU level, the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament and other specialized institutions are at the forefront of finding solutions for integration-related challenges. Furthermore, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Organization (ILO), Council of Europe (CoE), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and others constantly upholding the national integration efforts by the means of their technical expertise and available funds.

It is worth to note that the issue of migrants’ integration has also appeared in the agenda of the Global Compact on Migration being currently developed by the United Nations (UN) Member States. The Article 39 of the New-York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants² adopted in 2016 reinforced the

¹ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml25_1.pdf

² http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1



commitment of the United Nations Member States to combat xenophobia, racism and discrimination against refugees and migrants.

According to the Declaration, the Member States committed to take measures to improve their integration and inclusion, with particular reference to access to education, health care, justice and language trainings. The Declaration requires that national policies relating to integration and inclusion shall be developed in conjunction with relevant civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations, the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders.

Being UN Member States, both EU MS and EaP countries have commitments as defined by the New York Declaration. Although historically the EU MS were taking the role of hosting states, the recent changes in migration trends impacted also the migration profiles of the EaP states gradually transforming them from only countries of origin and/or transit to hosting ones as well.

These changes require EaP countries to improve their integration policy. The international dialogue and exchange of practices with EU partners more experienced in integration could be beneficial. To this end the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum, being a Regional Consultative Process, will provide the platform for the representatives of governments of EU MS and EaP countries, EU institutions, international organizations, representatives of civil society and academia to assess the effectiveness of the existing policy frameworks and tools in the sphere of economic integration at both the EU and national levels. In addition, the experts will be able to discuss such issues as facilitation and measuring economic integration of migrants, protection of migrant workers from abuse and exploitation, the importance of education and recognition of qualifications and skills for successful integration, the role of well economically integrated diaspora in building and harnessing the potential of the migration-development nexus, and others.

To facilitate the discussion, the present paper was developed as a background and preparatory information basis for the meeting participants. This document covers the following issues: (i) an overview of the main EU policy and tools in the field of economic integration of migrants; (ii) an overview of national practices related to economic integration (framework policy and legal documents; admission of migrants to national labour market; equal treatment and prevention of exploitation; (iii) cross-cutting measures facilitating the economic integration (recognition of qualifications, access to vocational training, language learning and cultural orientation).

The discussion paper is prepared based on the answers received from five EU Member States (MS)³ and six EaP countries⁴ to the questionnaire ([Annex I](#)) specifically designed for this purpose. The questionnaire sent to the participating states comprised eight questions aimed at finding out more on the policies and practices concerning economic integration of migrants in the EU MS and EaP countries. Other sources of information on the EU policy and individual countries' programmes were also used, where applicable, including regarding those countries who did not submit their inputs.

For the purpose of this document the integration measures related both to economic migrants as well as the persons under international protection will be considered, although the main focus will be given to the first category.

³ The following EU MS provided input: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia.

⁴ The following EaP countries provided input: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.



II. Economic integration of migrants: EU policy and tools

The integration of migrants itself has never been a subject of comprehensive legislative regulation within the European Union (EU) and still mostly remains the national competence of its Member States (MS). However, the increased migration flows observed over the two past decades and challenges experienced by the EU and its MS in connection to inclusion of newly arrived migrants into the host societies showed the need for more effective and common policy tools. The evolution of the EU approach to migrant integration could be tracked through the main policy documents adopted at the EU level starting from early 2000 until today.

Among the most ancient documents should be mentioned the **Common Basic Principles (CBPs) for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU** adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 and which formed the foundations of EU initiatives in the field of integration⁵. The first of 11 CBPs contained in the document defines integration as a *dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States*. In the context of economic dimension of the integration process the CBP2 should be underlined. This CBP recognizes that employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible. Another important CBP5 emphasizes that efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society. In relation to the integration policy development the CBP11 states that clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.

The ideas laid down in the mentioned document have been developed further with adoption in 2005 of the **Common Agenda on Integration (Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union)** (hereinafter “the Common Agenda 2005”). The Commission’s Communication on the Common Agenda 2005 (COM (2005) 389) became the first response to the invitation of the European Council to establish a coherent European framework for integration. The cornerstones of such a framework were proposals for concrete measures to put the CBPs into practice, together with a series of supportive EU mechanisms.⁶

The Common Agenda 2005 suggested a number of concrete actions to be taken by the EU and EU MS for implementation of the CBPs adopted earlier.

In particular, the MS were suggested to implement the following measures regarding the CBP 2 at the national level: developing innovative approaches to prevent labour market discrimination; involving social partners in the elaboration and implementation of integration measures; informing employers and educational institutions about certificates for introduction courses to promote access to the labour market or training opportunities; exploring additional ways of recognizing newcomers’ qualifications, training and/or professional experience, building upon existing laws; supporting training capacities of small companies, business organizations and trade unions in sectors of the economy employing many migrants; promoting employment for immigrant women, i.e. by ensuring that restrictions in labour market access are minimized and do not hamper integration, when transposing the Directive on the right to family reunification; encouraging the recruitment of migrants through awareness-raising, economic incentives and other measures targeted at employers; supporting migrant entrepreneurship, e.g. through facilitated access to banking and credit services.

⁵ http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52005DC0389&from=sk>



The Common Agenda also underlined that it is essential to foster a more coherent EU approach to integration, which should consist of consolidating the legal framework on the conditions for the admission and stay of third-country nationals, including their rights and responsibilities; developing specific cooperation activities and exchange of information on integration; mainstreaming and evaluation.

In addition, it was defined that the Ministers in charge of integration, in close co-operation with the Commission, should hold once a year a political debate on the integration of third-country nationals in the EU and assess the need for further action.

It is worth to mention that the Common Agenda 2005 contained reference to the **European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (the European Integration Fund)** which was established later in 2007 by the Decision 2007/435/ EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2007⁷. The general objective of the Fund defined in the Decision (Article 2) was to support the efforts made by the MS in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies.

With a budget of EUR 825 million for the period 2007-13 (EUR 57 million for Community actions), the European Integration Fund (EIF) supported national and EU initiatives facilitating the integration of non-EU immigrants into European societies. All EU countries except for Denmark participated in the EIF. The EIF was primarily targeted at newly arrived immigrants. It supported EU countries and civil society in enhancing their capacity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate integration strategies, policies and measures, as well as their exchanges of information and best practices and cooperation on integration issues. Concretely, such initiatives included programmes for improving diversity management in neighbourhoods, intercultural training and dialogue, the promotion of courses for better understanding the integration processes, platforms and tools for comparative learning, measures for sharing information and best practices among European integration practitioners (e.g. online discussion forums, conferences, etc.) and activities in the hosting EU State and in the immigrant's country of origin on introduction to the host society. The EIF was complementary to the European Social Fund (ESF) for actions related to the participation of migrants in employment.⁸

Adoption of the Treaty on Functioning of European Union (TFEU) in 2007 gave the new impulse to development of the migrant integration policy at the EU level. The introduction of a new legal provision in the Treaty concerning EU support to the promotion of integration of third-country nationals residing legally in Member States (Article 79.4 TFEU) allowed further concerted action while excluding harmonization.⁹

The legislative changes mentioned above were followed by the adoption in July 2011 of the revised EU policy document – the **European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals** (hereinafter “the Agenda 2011”). The Agenda 2011 recognized the challenges experienced by the EU and its MS in the field of integration as well as that successful integration of migrants in the EU will represent a significant contribution to the achievement by the EU of the targets it has set in the Europe 2020 Strategy, namely to raise the employment rate to 75% by 2020, to reduce school dropout rates to less than 10%, to increase the share of the population having completed tertiary education and to lift 20 million people out of poverty or social exclusion.¹⁰

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32007D0435>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/integration-fund_en

⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0455&from=EN>

¹⁰ Ibid



The Agenda 2011 suggested to focus on three following areas:

- integration through participation;
- more action at local level;
- involvement of countries of origin.

In the context of socio-economic aspect of integration efforts the following actions were recommended:

To be ensured by EU MS:

- the provision of language courses, reflecting migrants varying needs at different stages of their integration process;
- the organization of introductory programmes for newly arrived migrants, including language and civic orientation courses. These programmes should address the specific needs of migrant women in order to promote their participation in the labour market and strengthen their economic independence;
- measures to map and assess the individual's needs and to validate qualifications and professional experiences;
- increasing labour market participation of migrants through active labour market policies;
- efforts in education systems equipping teachers and school leaders with the skills for managing diversity; recruiting teachers from migrant backgrounds; and participation of migrant children in early childhood education;
- special attention to specific needs of vulnerable groups of migrants.

To be supported by the Commission:

- the exchange of practice and policy coordination in the areas of employment, education and social policies;
- a better use of existing EU financial instruments to support migrants' participation.

In the area of involvement of countries of origin into the integration process the Agenda 2011 emphasized the importance of pre-departure support measures, enhancing the contacts with diaspora and promotion of circular migration and development in countries of origin.

Another important issue tackled by the Agenda 2011 was monitoring and data collection. As it was mentioned in the document, the Common European 'indicators' have been identified in four areas of relevance for integration: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship (the so-called "Zaragoza indicators"). The Agenda suggested that Common indicators will help to assess the efforts in support of integration in relation to European targets in the areas of employment, education and social inclusion as well as to improve coordination of relevant national and EU policies

As a follow-up, in 2015 the comprehensive *Report on Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration* was prepared under the project carried out between January 2012 and April 2013 by the European Services Network (ESN) and the Migration Policy Group (MPG) on behalf of the European Commission. Among other, the Report presented different options reflecting the different ways in which indicators could be used to understand national contexts, evaluate the outcomes of policies, and use targets to improve integration.¹¹

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=media.download&uuid=FC375682-95DF-1B86-CF670D84CA41C2D6>

Following the adoption of the European Agenda on Migration¹² in 2015, which emphasized the need for effective integration policies for third country nationals, the **Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals** (hereinafter “the Action Plan on Integration”) was adopted in June 2016. This document provided a common policy framework to help Member States in further developing and strengthening their national integration policies for migrants from third countries. It also defined the modalities of policy, operational and financial support which could be provided by the Commission in this field.

The Action Plan on Integration has emphasized the challenges and opportunities of the integration process. It stated in particular that, although the integration could be a challenge for many Member States, with the right conditions for swift and successful integration, it is also an opportunity, especially for Member States undergoing demographic changes.¹³

The integration is considered as a dynamic two-way process. This means that while expecting from migrants to embrace the EU fundamental values and learning the host language the hosting Member States should offer them meaningful opportunities to participate in the economy and society.

The following **priority policy areas and tools** were suggested by the Action Plan on Integration:

1. Policy priorities:

1.1 *Pre-departure/post-arrival support measures*

To be done by the Commission:

- Launch projects supporting pre-departure and pre-arrival measures for local communities, including in the context of resettlement programmes with a focus on priority third countries.
- Engage with Member States to strengthen cooperation with selected third-countries on pre-departure measures, including under La Valletta Action Plan.

MS are encouraged to:

- Promote private sponsorship programmes for the resettlement of refugees, in order to actively involve local communities in the integration process of third country nationals.
- Consider taking part in multi-stakeholder projects for the resettlement of refugees such as the EU project for Facilitating resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge exchange.
- Provide pre-departure information to prepare individuals for arrival in the EU, including by appointing Integration Liaison Officers in Embassies in key third countries.

1.2 *Education*

To be done by the Commission:

- Provide online language assessment and learning for newly arrived third country nationals, especially refugees, through the Erasmus+ online linguistic support (100.000 licenses for online language courses available to refugees for a period of three years).
- Support peer learning events on key policy measures such as welcome classes, skills and language assessment, support for unaccompanied children, intercultural awareness, recognition of academic qualifications and integration into higher education.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf

¹³ Ibid



- Support the school community in promoting inclusive education and addressing specific needs of migrant learners through the COM online platform School Education Gateway.
- Remove barriers to the participation of third country national girls and boys to early childhood education through the development of the European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), including assistance to ECEC staff to respond to the specific situation of families.
- Support the upskilling of low-skilled and low-qualified persons in the context of the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

MS are encouraged to:

- Equip teachers and school staff with the skills needed to manage diversity and promote the recruitment of teachers with a migrant background.
- Promote and support the participation of migrants' children in early childhood education and care.

1.3 Labour Market Integration and access to Vocational Training

To be done by the Commission:

- Develop an online repository of promising practices on integration into the labour market for refugees and, where there are good prospects of granting them protection, asylum seekers, as a source for policy makers in Member States.
- Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe: a) develop a "Skills and Qualifications Toolkit" to support timely identification of skills and qualifications for newly arrived third country nationals; b) ensure that better information about qualification recognition practices and decisions in different countries is collected through the Europass portal; c) and improve the transparency and understanding of qualifications acquired in third countries, through the revision of the European Qualifications Framework.
- Provide specific support for early recognition of academic qualifications of third country nationals including refugees, including through enhancing cooperation between National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) centres and training staff in reception facilities.
- Launch projects (under the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund and under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation) promoting labour market integration of refugees, 'fast track' insertion into labour market and vocational training and labour market integration of women.
- Identify best practices to promote and support migrant entrepreneurship and fund pilot projects for their dissemination.

MS are encouraged to:

- Support fast track insertion into the labour market of newly arrived third-country nationals, through for example early assessment of skills and qualifications, combined language and on-the-job training, specific guidance and mentoring.
- Remove obstacles to ensure effective access to vocational training and to the labour market for refugees and, where there are good prospects of granting them protection, for asylum seekers.
- Assess, validate and recognise as soon as possible skills and qualifications of third country nationals, making full use of tools available at EU level.
- Encourage entrepreneurship through tailored business training and mentoring and by opening up to third country nationals mainstream entrepreneurship support structures.

1.4 Access to basic services

To be done by the Commission:

- Promote the use of EU funds for reception, education, housing, health and social infrastructures for third country nationals.
- Strengthen cooperation with the European Investment Bank, to provide funding for temporary accommodation and health facilities for newly arrived third country nationals and social housing.
- Promote peer learning exchanges between Member States and cities in the form of study visits, peer reviews and sharing of best practices on how to address housing challenges, including geographical isolation and ghettoization.
- Support best practices in care provision for vulnerable third country nationals and refugees, including women, children and older persons under the Health Programme.
- Develop pilot training modules for health professionals on health for third country nationals and refugees, with a view to upgrade and strengthen the skills and capabilities of first line health professionals, and promote a holistic approach to health care of third country nationals and refugees.

MS are encouraged to:

- Ensure an integrated approach, coordinating policies on housing with equitable access to employment, healthcare and social services and inter-sectoral collaboration including by strengthening communication between local, regional and national levels.
- Create competence networks of health experts, for example on mental health - especially post-traumatic stress - of refugees, in close collaboration among health authorities, NGOs and health professionals' organizations for prevention and early detection of problems and provision of support and treatment.

1.5 Active participation and social inclusion

To be done by the Commission:

- Launch projects to promote intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and European common values through culture, films and arts (Creative Europe).
- Launch projects to promote social inclusion through youth and sport (Erasmus+).
- Propose to give greater priority, within the European Voluntary Service, to activities dedicated to integration of refugees and asylum seekers into their new host communities.
- Develop handbooks and toolboxes for practitioners on cultural awareness and expression; intercultural dialogue; active participation of third country nationals in political, social and cultural life and sports in the host societies; and the contribution of youth work.
- Launch projects under different EU funds promoting: participation in political, social and cultural life and sports; social inclusion through education, training and youth; preventing and combating discrimination, gender-based violence, racism and xenophobia, including hate crime and hate speech, and fostering better understanding between communities, including religious communities.
- Continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the anti-discrimination directive.

MS are encouraged to:

- Promote exchanges with the host society from the very beginning through volunteering, sport, and culture activities.
- Increase third country nationals' participation in local democratic structures.

- Invest in projects and measures aimed at combating prejudice and stereotypes (e.g. awareness-raising campaigns, education programmes).
- Fully implement legislation on combating racism and xenophobia and on victims' rights and strictly enforce equal treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.
- Organize civic orientation programmes for all third country nationals as a way to foster integration into the host society and promote the understanding and respect of EU values.

2. Tools to support integration:

2.1 *Policy coordination* (through European Integration Network and European Migration Forum).

2.2 *Funding* (through European Social Fund (ESF), Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)).

As results from the scope of the actions suggested by the Action Plan on Integration and the deadline for implementation of most activities (within 2016-2017), the EU has set the ambitious aim of enhancing the integration policy both at EU and EU MS levels. Integration is a complex issue and the economic aspect of it cannot be considered separately without taking into account its social and cultural dimension.

The documents and tools mentioned above are not exhaustive in regards to the EU integration policy. In the legislative field, several EU *acquis*, albeit do not regulate directly the integration measures to be implemented by EU MS, define the common requirements in some areas which are substantial for integration process, such as work and residence permits; admission of students, researchers and highly qualified workers, seasonal and posted workers; family reunification; recognition of professional qualifications; preventing and combating human trafficking and labour exploitation etc.

In addition, among the concrete activities envisaged by the Action Plan on Integration and already being successfully implemented, the **European website on integration www.integration.eu** should be mentioned. This website was initiated back in 2004 by the Hague Programme on strengthening freedom, security and justice in the EU, adopted by the European Council. It was developed by the Migration Policy Group (MPG) together with other organizations at request of the European Commission's Directorate General for Home Affairs (DG Home) and from 2011 is maintained by the MPG.

The website provides a "one-stop-shop" for information and good practices to support the integration of immigrants in all Member States. The website covers all dimensions of integration and gathers information from a wide variety of stakeholders. It has been designed for use by national, regional and local authorities, by civil society organizations, and by practitioners in local organizations. The aim is also to develop the website as an EU-wide platform for networking on integration, through exchange about policy and practice.¹⁴

One of the most important components of the European website on integration is the repository of good practices in EU MS, including legislation, policy measures, successful projects implemented, statistics etc. This information could be extremely useful for the governments, including of the Eastern Partnership countries, developing their own integration policies and measures.

¹⁴ <http://www.migpolgroup.com/diversity-integration/european-web-site-on-integration/>

II. National practices related to economic integration

A. Framework policy and legal documents

Depending on the number of foreigners residing on the territory of hosting state, as well as considering the existing challenges related the integration needs, the government may need to adopt certain policy and/or legislative measures defining the state approach and commitments in relation to the integration as well as conditions and practical actions to be implemented to ensure its efficiency.

When adopting a strategic framework of documents in the field of integration, hosting states recognize the role of integration for effective migration management and the benefits potentially resulting from migrants well-integrated in the hosting society.

In EU MS as well as in EaP countries, there are different examples of state approach to formulate the integration policy. In some cases, the integration could be a subject of relevant sections of migration strategies (**Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine**) or it could be a separate document dedicated specifically to integration policy (**Lithuania**). The framework policy documents are often complemented by the relevant action plans (**Georgia, Lithuania, and Ukraine**). In addition, the specific legal acts regulating the integration of migrants can be also adopted (**Moldova**).

The 2016-2020 Migration Strategy of Georgia (and the corresponding Action Plan) is the first strategic policy document that highlights the immigrant integration issues while underlining their potential for country's development.

In Lithuania, the Action Plan on the Implementation of Aliens' Integration Policy for 2015-2017 was approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour Ministry for the purpose of the integration of foreigners into the life of Lithuanian society and the promotion of tolerance of society towards foreigners. It consists of 14 measures for the integration of foreigners into the Lithuanian society, for the improvement of the education of foreigners, for cooperation and capacity building of the specialists working in the field of integration of foreigners and legal migration and etc. One of the main measures, which is foreseen to foster integration of migrants in to labour market, is the provision of complex integration services at the municipalities. To implement this measure there were established three Foreigners integration centres where persons granted asylum and legally residing third-country nationals are eligible for the introductory courses and courses of the Lithuanian language, psychological, legal and vocational counselling and other services such as interpreter. The Foreigners integrations services are managed by NGO's and funded by AMIF.

The Strategy of State Migration Policy of Ukraine up to 2025 (the Action Plan for the Strategy Implementation was developed and is to be approved in December 2017/January 2018) stipulates the following: enhancement of the level of cooperation with migrants in the course of their integration process, including by means of establishment of consultative/expert councils with their participation, involvement into development of legislative acts, state programs on integration and immigration matters, etc.; continuation of integration support of vulnerable categories of migrants (e.g. victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and the elderly); organisation of study of the state language by migrants; development of adaptation programs for migrants' children in the education system of Ukraine; education and awareness raising actions for promotion of tolerance climate in the society and the culture of inter-ethnic relations, for combating racism and xenophobia; a clear delineation of powers with simultaneous coordination of actions of SMSU, the Ministry of Social Policy, other governmental bodies in the sphere of migration; review and submission of relevant amendments, ensuring due



implementation of the Action Plan for Integration of Refugees and Persons in Need of Subsidiary Protection into the Ukrainian Society up to 2020; ensuring objective mass media coverage of issues of integration of refugees and persons in need of subsidiary protection; development of tailored programs for durable integration solutions for refugees and persons in need of subsidiary protection.

In Moldova, the Law on Integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova was adopted on 27.12. 2011 with the purpose of establishment of common legal framework for integration of foreigners in economic, social and cultural life of the Republic of Moldova, ensuring their rights and freedoms, and defining their obligations. The law, in particular, defines the categories of foreigners in need of integration, specific conditions for participation in integration programmes as well as the conditions of access to national labour market.

Although none of the responding EU MS and EaP countries has mentioned specific policy documents in the field of economic integration, this aspect of the whole integration processes is given significant attention. At the same time the economic integration is considered in close interrelation with integration into the social and cultural life of the hosting societies.

B. Admission of migrants to national labour markets

Being probably the most important and challenging component of economic integration of migrants, the access to labour markets of hosting states require specific legislative regulation.

Admission of foreigners to national labour markets lies within the national competence of the states and the governments are generally protective while adopting rules of admission. Decision on the number of foreign workers as well as on the conditions of their access are usually taken with due consideration of current situation on labour market, rate of unemployment, availability of national work force with relevant skills and qualification etc. The globalization, current demographic trends as well as increasing labour mobility both in EU MS and EaP countries require the governments to be more and more flexible in relation to the admission criteria and policies. Furthermore, the liberalization of the labour market access policies could be beneficial for the hosting states as the migrants can contribute to the fiscal system or/and bring new skills and knowledges to the industry (in case of high qualified professionals).

In particular, regarding the EU and its MS, the evidence shows that third-country nationals have a positive fiscal net contribution if they are well integrated in a timely manner, starting with early integration into education and the labour market.¹⁵

As underlined by the EU Action Plan on Integration, the employment is a core part of the integration process. Finding a job is fundamental to becoming part of the host country's economic and social life, ensuring access to decent accommodation and living conditions as well as economic inclusion. Timely and full labour market integration can also help to meet the growing needs for specific skills in the EU as well as to enhance the sustainability of the welfare systems against the background of an ageing

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf (See for instance OECD, The Fiscal Impact of Immigration in OECD Countries, in "International Migration Outlook 2013" and EC Policy Review Research on Migration: Facing Realities and Maximising Opportunities 2016.)



population and workforce. In fact, employment is usually the single most important determinant of third country nationals' overall net fiscal contribution.¹⁶

The analysis of responses provided by the states contributed to the meeting questionnaire shows different level of “openness” of the national labour markets to the third country nationals (TCN)¹⁷.

All responding states (both EU and EaP) have introduced the legislative framework regulating the access of TCNs to the labour market and conditions of their work. The type of relevant legislative and regulatory acts vary depending on the existing legal practice in each particular state. For instance, it could be general legislation on employment (unemployment) or labour, or it could be specific legislation regulating migration-related procedures, status of foreigners, including economic migrants and refugees. In some countries both types of legal acts are applied.

It should be noted that, both in EU MS and EaP countries, the TCNs with status of permanent (long-term) residents as well as persons under international protection, as a rule enjoy the equal rights with nationals of hosting states, including in relation to the access to the national labour market. However, the legislative safeguards not necessarily could ensure a real inclusion. The research shows that the level of labour market discrimination in relation to the TCNs, especially belonging to vulnerable groups, remains high¹⁸.

In relation to other categories of migrants, the legislation of all responding states provides for procedure of obtaining a **work and residence permits** in order to legally stay at their territory and pursue the labour activity. There could be different types of the permits issued by the competent authorities of the states.

In all EU MS (**Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia**) the so-called “single permit” procedure allowing for the work and residence of TCNs is widely applicable in accordance with the EU Single Permit Directive (Council Directive 2011/98/EU)¹⁹ alongside with “usual” work permits issued in accordance with national legislation.

*In Slovakia following the transposition of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State, as of January 1, 2014, the so-called single permits are issued by the Bureau of Border and Alien Police. At present, **almost all requests are solved by the single permit**, the “original” employment permit is issued only in certain cases (e.g. seasonal employment, posting of foreigners directly from a third country). Making the process itself faster depends on the Bureau of Border and Alien Police.*

In Hungary, as the Single Permit Directive (Directive 2011/98/EU) has been adopted with the aim of issuing a single permit including both the residence and work permits, as well as ensuring equal treatment with regards to the rights and benefits defined for the single permit holders, the assessment of the applications for engaging in gainful employment and for a permanent residence permit takes place in a single authorisation procedure. In this process the labour

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ For the purpose of this paper, the term “third country nationals (TCN)” in relation to EU MS means the nationals of states outside of EU/EEA.

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/ki-04-15-841_en_n.pdf

¹⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011L0098>



authorities (based on the criteria set out by law) declare as special authorities that the third-country national shall be supported in the interest of national employment policy.

Different practices exist in EaP states in relation to authorization of employment and residence of foreigners. For instance, the legislation of **Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine** provides for that the permit should be obtained by the employer willing to engage a foreign work force. Although, in **Armenia**, the requirement on obtaining permit for employment of foreigner was suspended by 1 January 2018, thus the TCNs are currently enjoy free access to Armenian labour market.

In **Azerbaijan and Georgia** the work permits are issued to the foreigner along with the residence permit.

*In accordance with the Article 51.1 of Migration Code of **Azerbaijan**, foreigners and stateless persons intending to reside temporarily and engage in paid labor activity on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan should obtain a work permit in addition to the temporary residence permit.*

Based on answers provided to the meeting questionnaire, it could be concluded that **Georgia** is currently applying the most liberal approach in relation to the admission of TCNs to national economy (both to employment and entrepreneurship) among the EaP countries.

*The labour mobility in **Georgia** is regulated by the Law on Labour Migration and relevant subordinate bylaws. According to the law, the legally residing aliens have the same access to the labour market as Georgian nationals. Namely, foreign residents are able to accept private-sector employment under equal conditions as nationals, and can also access employment in certain fields of public sector. Likewise, local employers have no additional barriers in hiring foreign labour force in the country. The Law on Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons in Georgia defines that work residence permit shall be issued to foreigners carrying out entrepreneurial or labour activity in Georgia (including to freelance professionals).*

The specific category of foreign workforce which should to be mentioned separately in this paper is the **highly qualified professionals**.

Analysis of information provided by the responding states shows that both EU MS and some EaP countries recognize the potential and benefits of this category of migrants and, therefore, provide special conditions for their admission in respective national legislation.

At the EU level it should be highlighted the **Council Directive 2009/50/EC on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment (the so-called EU Blue Card Directive)**. While being adopted back in 2009, the Blue Card scheme, due to enough complicated procedure, has not become such successful instrument for attraction of the high-skilled workers as it was expected. Therefore, in June 2016 the proposal regarding reforming the EU Blue Card Directive was announced simultaneously with the adopting the Action Plan on Integration.

As it was stated by the Commission, the EU already faces significant structural skills shortages in certain sectors, which have the potential to limit growth, productivity and innovation in the EU (e.g. healthcare, ICT and engineering). In the future, structural changes in the EU's economies will continue to increase the demand for higher skills that are not immediately available in the labour market, creating further skills shortages that cannot be filled by the existing EU workforce. The number of highly skilled third-country national workers currently coming to the EU Member States applying the Blue Card are by far



insufficient to address these labour and skills shortages, despite the efforts to upgrade the skills of EU nationals proposed under the New Skills Agenda.²⁰

The proposal of the amendment seek both to address the shortcomings of the previous directive and to extend its scope to include beneficiaries of international protection and non-EU family members of EU citizens. The proposed scheme would also replace parallel national schemes targeting the same group as the Blue Card. The updated Blue Card also provided the following:

- more flexible admission conditions (a lower salary threshold; a lower minimum duration of 6 months for the initial contract; simpler rules for recent graduates and workers in shortage occupations; and equivalence between professional experience and formal qualifications);
- simpler procedures (faster and more flexible procedures; an optional fast-track procedure for trusted employers);
- broader rights (more flexible labour market access, including self-employed activity on the side; immediate family reunification; easier access to EU long-term residence status);
- easier travel within the EU (e.g. for short-term business trips across the EU; access to an EU Blue Card in a second EU country).²¹

According to the responses of EU MS (**Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia**) to the meeting questionnaire the simplified conditions of the renewed EU Blue Card scheme are already being implemented in relation to the highly qualified TCNs. The relevant amendments have been recently initiated in the legislation of some EU MS.

In Lithuania, in order to attract more skilled workers from third countries by making this process more flexible and less lengthy some amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens came into force on 1 January, 2017. The following easier travel and employment conditions are provided to highly qualified professionals and their family members:

- a greater number of aliens qualifies for a temporary residence permit (Blue Card). Changes were made to the salary amount that an employer must undertake to pay to a highly qualified professional alien, i.e. it is reduced from double the average domestic monthly gross wages last published by Statistics Lithuania to 1.5 times the amount.

- the period of issue of a temporary residence permit (Blue Card) is reduced for highly qualified professional aliens whose occupation is put on the List of High-Skilled Occupations in Short Supply without making a labour market test. The procedure for issuing a temporary residence permit (Blue Card) takes less time – the alien's application for a temporary residence permit should be examined within one month (or 15 days as a matter of urgency);

- it is established that the examination period of the application for a temporary residence permit also applies with regard to family members of highly qualified professional aliens;

- by the Resolution No 211 of 22 March 2017, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Procedure for Treating Professional Experience as Higher Education Qualification and Issuing of a Certifying Document. It allows for treating the occupation of an alien seeking job that requires high professional qualification, which is not regulated in the Republic of Lithuania, and his professional experience as equivalent to higher education qualification and issuing a certifying document.

²⁰ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2041_en.htm

²¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A114573>



*The Ministry of Economics of **Latvia** has developed the legislative proposal “The list with specializations (professions) in which forecasts significant labour shortages and in which may be invited foreigners to work in the Republic of Latvia” which is based on the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers and which takes into account the amendments in the Immigration Law entered into force on March 2, 2017. These amendments provide certain reliefs in immigration processes for those TCN, who will work in specific professions indicated in the above mentioned list. These reliefs include shorter mandatory time for vacancy notice and reduced salary threshold for those foreigners who want to obtain EU Blue card.*

Some EaP countries have also mentioned specific frameworks applicable to the high-skilled foreign workers. The legislation of **Azerbaijan**, for instance, provides for the exemption from obligation to obtain work permits for specific category of foreign specialists in the shipbuilding area. While **Belarus** issues the special two-years (with possibility of extension for another two years) work permits to highly qualified workers.

*In **Azerbaijan**, the work permit is not required for labor activity of specialists included to the category defined by relevant executive authority, who have been invited by the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan or legal entity established in the Republic of Azerbaijan for the purpose of doing works or rendering services in the activity spheres determined by the relevant executive authority. Here, the term “activity spheres” refers to shipbuilding activity realized by the resident of Garadagh Industrial Park established in accordance with the Order No. 1255 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan of June, 2015, and its contractor which is a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan or a legal entity established in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The term “specialists” refers to the experts with higher education in shipbuilding area or relevant qualification and at least one-year-experience in this area, who is invited by the abovementioned resident or its contractor which is a citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan or a juridical person established in the Republic of Azerbaijan.*

*According to Law of the Republic of **Belarus** on Amending Law of the Republic of Belarus on External Labour Migration, since July 15, 2016, a new concept of “highly qualified worker” was introduced - i.e. a foreign national or a stateless person with a high level of professional knowledge, skills and abilities, supported by education certificates and at least five years of relevant professional experience, whose monthly wage (as specified in his/her labour contract) exceeds 15-fold minimal monthly wage of highly qualified specialists as set in the Republic of Belarus. Special permits for such specialists are issued for 2 years, and may be extended for 2 years.*

Furthermore, there are other categories of TCNs in relation to which the states may provide facilitated access conditions or even free access to the labour market since their employment is in the interest of the state.

*In **Czech Republic** the right of free access is given to holders of permanent residence permits, family members of economic migrants, students and TCNs who have already completed their education at the Czech universities and high schools etc.*

***Hungary**, from July, 2016 Act XXXIX of 2016 has facilitated the employment of third-country nationals in Hungary arriving from Hungary’s neighbouring countries. The facilitation refers to jobs published in the official communication of the Minister of National Economy. In this case, Immigration Office does not turn to the competent Government Office (i.e. Hungary does not*



make labour market test). The deadline of the single application procedure has been reduced from 21 to 8 days. Temporary employment relationships are allowed.

In Lithuania, the easier access to employment is provided to aliens who have completed studies or training under vocational training programmes in Lithuania and intend to work according to the qualification acquired. They no longer need a work permit; a work permit is neither required for foreign students studying at research and higher education institutions nor registered with educational establishments.

In relation of two EaP states (**Armenia and Belarus**) the mutual free access of the national labour markets is provided based on the provisions of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union. The same preference is granted to the nationals of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia.

As to the **statistics on TCNs admitted to the national labour markets** of the responding EU MS and EaP countries, the data provided is hardly comparable due to different indicators and methods of data collection. However, it is possible to define the leading hosting states with highest number of admitted TCNs to national economies in 2016-2017. Thus, among the responding EU MS, the **Czech Republic and Slovakia** take the lead in admission of TCNs. While among the EaP countries, **Belarus and Georgia** reported the highest number of employed and self-employed foreign workers.

At the same time, it is worth to mention that for the purpose of integration policy development the assessment of available data should be done with due consideration of various factors, such as the number of population of hosting state (in particular economically active), category of TCNs admitted to labour market (e.g. labour migrants, long-term residents, persons under international protection, students) etc.

The detailed information regarding the available statistics is provided [in Annex II](#).

C. Equal treatment and prevention of exploitation

Being in most cases the vulnerable category of work force, the migrants are often become object of discriminatory practices and could experience exploitative treatment, including the worst scenario of becoming victims of human trafficking.

According to the ILO, no society is free from discrimination. Indeed, discrimination in employment and occupation is a universal and permanently evolving phenomenon. Millions of women and men around the world are denied access to jobs and training, receive low wages, or are restricted to certain occupations simply on the basis of their sex, skin colour, ethnicity or beliefs, without regard to their capabilities and skills. In a number of developed countries, for example, women workers still earn up to 25% less than male colleagues performing equal work. Freedom from discrimination is a fundamental human right and is essential for workers to choose their employment freely, to develop their potential to the full and to reap economic rewards on the basis of merit. Bringing equality to the workplace has significant economic benefits, too. Employers who practice equality have access to a larger and more diverse workforce. Workers who enjoy equality have greater access to training, often receive higher wages, and improve the overall quality of the workforce. The profits of a globalized economy are more fairly distributed in a society with equality, leading to greater social stability and broader public support for further economic development.²²

²² <http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/equality-of-opportunity-and-treatment/lang--en/index.htm>



Various international legal standards were adopted by such international organizations as UN, ILO, and CoE defining the principle of equal treatment of workers (including migrants). At the EU level the equal treatment to TCNs is also ensured by relevant *acquis*, in particular by the Single Permit Directive 2011/98/EU. According to the Directive all TCNs who are legally residing and working in Member States should enjoy at least a common set of rights based on equal treatment with the nationals of their respective host Member State, irrespective of the initial purpose of or basis for admission. The right to equal treatment in the fields specified by this Directive should be granted not only to those third-country nationals who have been admitted to a Member State to work but also to those who have been admitted for other purposes and have been given access to the labour market of that Member State in accordance with other provisions of Union or national law, including family members of a third-country worker who are admitted to the Member State in accordance with Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification; third-country nationals who are admitted to the territory of a Member State in accordance with Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service; and researchers admitted in accordance with Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research.²³

The commitments regarding the equal treatment under the international law and EU legislation (in case of EU MS) are also duly reflected in various national legislative frameworks and institutional mechanisms.

The answers provided by the responding EU MS and EaP countries show that more or less common approach exist among all states to ensuring equal treatment and preventing exploitation of TCNs admitted to national labour markets. In particular, the following mechanisms are similar in all responding states:

- National legislative safeguards ensuring equal treatment of migrant workers, defining rights and obligations of worker and employer, and prohibiting discrimination and exploitation;
- National legislative and policy measures directed at combating and prevention of human trafficking;
- Relevant international treaties (multilateral and bilateral) and EU legislation (in case of EU MS).

In addition, several responding states have mentioned specific mechanisms, such as: public control under the adherence to labour legislation and prevention of violations through the institute of state labour inspectorate (**Lithuania, Moldova, Slovakia**); assessment of employer's credibility during the migration procedure, awareness-raising and deterrent measures (**Czech Republic**); procedures to address violations of labour rights to Labour Disputes Committee and the court (**Lithuania**); provision of free legal assistance in compliance with EU obligations to asylum-seekers (2005/85/EC Directive) (**Hungary**).

However, despite the numerous legal and institutional safeguards, the discriminatory practices in relation to TCNs are continued to be widely observed both in EU MS and in EaP countries. Therefore, the efforts of governments of hosting states should be directed at elimination of all forms of discrimination and exploitation in accordance with relevant commitments under the international law and national legislation. Along with strong public control of the compliance with existing anti discriminatory legislation, this could be done, in particular, through the awareness campaigns explaining to the host society the potential benefits of migration, effective integration and inclusion of migrants, as well as the liability for labour rights abuse and exploitation of migrants.

²³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011L0098>

Detailed information on the existing mechanisms of ensuring equal treatment and prevention of exploitation is available in [Annex III](#) and in the [Matrix](#) of responses of states to the meeting questionnaire.

III. Cross-cutting measures facilitating economic integration

Although the access to labour market is essential part of the economic integration of migrants, the certain cross-cutting issues, which are crucial also for social and cultural integration, should be a subject of due consideration of the hosting governments in order to ensure the achievement of the comprehensive integration policy goals. Among the most important cross-cutting issues could be mentioned, in particular, the recognition of foreign education and qualifications of migrants, their access to vocational training, language learning and cultural orientation.

A. Recognition of qualifications

The effective involvement of migrants into the economy of hosting states and the full utilization of their potential is impossible without recognizing their skills and qualifications obtained in the countries of origin.

According to the recent comprehensive study on *Recognition of Qualifications and Competences of Migrants* conducted by the Independent Network of Labour Migration and Integration Experts (LINET) run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the support of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, there is broad evidence of significant underutilization of immigrants' skills across the EU. In many Member States there is a considerable gap between the employment levels of third-country nationals and EU nationals.

Underemployment and overqualification might result from several factors. Thus, while in the case of natives they mostly depend on discrepancy between the level of demand and supply of labour in specific sectors/occupations, additional factors might play a role in the case of immigrants, including discrimination, language barriers as well as the difficulties of having their qualifications, earned in countries of origin, recognized in their countries of destination. In most EU Member States, foreign qualifications, especially if earned in third countries, are largely discounted in the labour market. The same applies to work experience abroad.²⁴

Despite some efforts made by the EU towards the improvement and unification of the existing mechanisms in EU MS regarding recognition of foreign qualifications, the procedures in many cases remain complicated thus create significant barrier for economic integration of migrants. The same concerns the EaP countries as well.

The above mentioned study provided several important recommendations in order to find long-term sustainable and equitable solutions in relation to the foreign qualifications recognition (FQR). It states that FQR requires a holistic integrated approach which comprises the following components. First, it is important to ensure that accessible information and clear mapping of the FQR process are made available so that immigrants are well informed when they apply for qualification recognition. Second, a holistic integrated approach should be a process that embraces principles of transparency, fairness and justice. Third, the proposed approach combines qualification recognition with labour market integration because qualification recognition is not an end in itself. The recognition process should go

²⁴ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/recognition_qualifications_competencesofmigrants.pdf



simultaneously with career bridging programmes and other employment support programmes for those who need them to ensure smooth workplace transitions. Fourth, a holistic integrated approach should be supported by a strong political will that uses legislations to make all stakeholders accountable for how they treat immigrants. Finally, a holistic integrated approach should combine a revamped qualification recognition with public pedagogy, educating the public about the potential contributions that immigrants can bring to the host society as well as raising awareness of barriers facing immigrants' access to the labour market.²⁵

It is worth to mention that the FQR was indicated among the most challenging issues for successful economic integration of migrants by some of responding EU MS and EaP states provided their answers to the meeting questionnaire (**Latvia, Slovakia, and Ukraine**).

*There are several challenges and problems observed for TCN for successful integration into the labour market of **Latvia**: the lack of knowledge of Latvian language, difficulties finding work in the profession relevant to their qualifications, low wages.*

*It is possible to state that the main challenges related to successful economic integration of migrants in **Slovakia** are the overcoming the language barrier and acknowledgment of skills and qualifications.*

*It is necessary to improve the system of recognition of migrants' skills and qualifications for their successful economic integration in **Ukraine**.*

At the same time some good practices could be highlighted related to the introduction of the system of recognition of informal education and qualifications in such countries as **Georgia and Ukraine**.

*Immigrants in **Georgia** have access to formal education recognition services that are administered by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (under the Ministry of Education and Science in Georgia - MoES) based on the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia issued in October 2010 "On Approval of the Procedure of Validation of Georgian Educational Documents and Recognition of Foreign Education and Fees". As for recognition of informal education, the relevant mechanism is now being developed by the Ministry and this service will be available to immigrants in the nearest future.*

*In **Ukraine**, the Ministry of Social Policy is currently developing a system for recognition of qualifications/skills acquired by informal professional education in "blue collar" occupations. A person, who managed to master an occupation through informal education, self-education and practical work experience, can confirm his/her qualification and be issued a standard document on professional qualification. Procedures of certifying results of informal professional education in "blue collar" occupations were approved by Decree # 340 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 15.05.2013.*

Qualifications/skills may be recognised for citizens of Ukraine, foreigners and stateless persons who reside permanently in Ukraine, who are recognised as refugees in Ukraine, who were granted asylum in Ukraine, who were recognised as persons in need of subsidiary protection, who were granted temporary protection, as well as the ones who were granted permits for immigration to Ukraine.

²⁵ Ibid



In addition, it is worth to mention that conclusion of relevant international agreements could also serve as an effective instrument for simplifying the process of recognition of educational documents issued abroad or, in some cases, even lifting the requirement of such recognition.

*Ukraine has concluded the bilateral agreements on mutual recognition and equivalence of documents on education and academic degrees with following states: with **Azerbaijan** (24.03.1997), **Belarus** (06.02.1998), **Bulgaria** (27.06.2001), **Armenia** (01.03.2001), **Vietnam** (04.11.2004), **Guinea** (17.09.2004), **Georgia** (17.07.2002), **Estonia** (06.02.1996), **Kazakhstan** (20.08.2003), **China** (10.12.1998), **Libya** (28.07.2004), **Moldova** (19.11.2008), **Mongolia** (22.09.2004), **Peru** (16.07.2004), **Poland** (31.05.2006), **Russia** (26.05.2000), **Romania** (25.08.1995), **Slovakia** (08.09.2015), **Turkmenistan** (14.05.2001), **Hungary** (27.10.1998), **Uzbekistan** (18.04.1997), **France** (01.08.2006).*

Detailed information regarding the procedures of recognition of foreign education and qualifications in responding states could be found in the [Matrix](#) of responses to the meeting questionnaire.

B. Access to vocational training, language learning and cultural orientation

As it was recognized in the EU Action Plan on Integration, early integration into **vocational training**, with a strong work-based learning dimension, might prove to be particularly effective for some TCNs to provide them with the basis for successful integration into the labour market and progression towards a higher level of qualification. The Commission committed to mobilize existing policy initiatives and programmes (European Alliance for Apprenticeships, European Pact for Youth, Erasmus+, Education and Training 2020, etc.) to promote peer learning and sharing of promising practices on integration in the area of Vocational Education and Training. In addition, the EU MS were encouraged to remove obstacles to ensure effective access to vocational training and to the labour market for refugees and, where there are good prospects of granting them protection, for asylum seekers.²⁶

Although, the policy and legislative frameworks in many EU MS and some EaP countries declare the equal treatment in relation to access to vocational training (VT) for TCNs, in practice the real level of participation of TCNs in the relevant VT activities remains low. The equal treatment safeguards should be supported by the development and implementation of targeted programmes for migrants as well as their post-evaluation in order to assess the real impact of VT on the integration rate.

Another essential pre-condition for successful economic integration of migrants is the **knowledge of language** of hosting state. Unfortunately, migrants often underestimate the importance of language skills, which in turn leads to losing opportunities on the labour market. This particularly affects the children and youth migrants who without relevant language skills could be excluded from educational system of hosting state and therefore the process of their integration would be slowed down at the initial stage. The hosting states should adopt the relevant measures encouraging migrants to undergo the language training as well as ensure necessary conditions for that (including provision of language courses free of charge).

According to the EU Action Plan on Integration, learning the language of the destination country is crucial for TCNs to succeed their integration process. Language integration programmes should be provided at the earliest stage possible after arrival, adapted to each person's linguistic competences

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf



needs and combining language learning with learning of other skills and competences or work experiences. A special effort should be made to ensure that these courses reach women as well as men.²⁷

A **cultural orientation** could be considered as a supportive measure in the process of economic integration. While not directly affecting the economic activity of migrants it facilitates their inclusion into the host society and establishment of necessary social links and networks creating a new opportunities for demarginalization and better integration.

The analysis of answers to the meeting questionnaire shows that the responding states recognize the importance of the mentioned above issues. In particular, relevant policy and practical measures to ensure access to vocational training for migrants were introduced in such countries as **Armenia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and Slovakia**. The language training is provided for the TCNs by Armenia, **Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Ukraine**. The activities conducted in relation to the cultural orientation were reported by **Armenia, Czech Republic Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia**.

*Vocational education institutions in **Lithuania** offer the choice of nearly 400 different vocational education programmes. Pupils from the age of 14 are eligible for vocational studies. These studies usually take one to three years to complete. The form of an apprenticeship is also offered, and in this case, the profession is studied directly at the employer's enterprise. In order to enrol, pupils should address the chosen vocational education institution. Studies at public institutions are free of charge. Adult migrants can take part in continuing education and training programs to obtain an additional qualification. These programs, lasting from 2 weeks to a year (depending on the difficulty), are designed for adult persons to obtain a different qualification (to requalify) and are oriented into the demands of the labour market.*

*In **Armenia**, one of the key components of the economic integration is being implemented through vocational trainings, which are provided both for Armenian citizens and for migrants. There are also number of international and local organizations, which are providing vocational trainings, language and cultural orientation courses for migrants (including returning) and refugees.*

*According to Article 77.5 of Migration Code foreigners and stateless persons residing in the **Republic of Azerbaijan** can apply to the Training Center of the relevant executive authority for the purpose of learning Azerbaijani language, history, culture, as well as relevant legislation on the rights and obligations of foreigners and stateless persons. The Training Center of State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan has launched organization of training courses for foreigners and stateless persons since October 4, 2016. Until now hundreds of foreigners participated at the courses. In the framework of the courses the participant are taught the Azerbaijani language, history and culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as legislation on rights and duties of foreigners and stateless persons. The trainings are free of charge.*

*In **Georgia**, vocational education available for refugees and humanitarian status holders free of charge at public VET providers. Within the established Integration Center, the courses of Georgian language, civic and social-cultural awareness raising courses are offered to the persons granted international protection in Georgia. Moreover, beneficiaries are involved in cultural activities (excursions) and activities related to art, literature, music, sports, etc. Since 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) has been implementing the state programme*

²⁷ Ibid



“Teaching Georgian as Foreign language” that is the brand new product. The programme is implemented in cooperation with language policy department of the Council of Europe and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and comprises methodological and other supplementary materials for teachers. The courses of Georgian language are also offered by the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration (ZSPA) run by the MoES and fully funded by the state. Any interested individuals above 18, irrespective of nationality, can study Georgian free of charge. Since 2017 ZSPA provides language courses to persons granted international protection in cooperation with Integration Center by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees.

*In the **Czech Republic**, the Centres for Support of Integration of Foreigners provide free Czech language courses, legal counselling and sociocultural courses. Similar services are also provided by non-governmental organizations. The Czech Republic intends to launch short post-arrival integration courses which would be obligatory for new migrants.*

*The Migration Strategy of **Hungary** principally targets internationally protected and stateless persons, foreigners staying in Hungary who intend to become permanent residents here. In this regard, Hungarian language teaching appears to be of great relevance together with integration in the labour market as well as questions of accommodation while fostering social and political activity of third country-citizens and the intercultural dialogue. Promoting integration ensures learning Hungarian as a language and subject along with exploring Hungarian culture and civilisation. Furthermore, it helps learners whose citizenship and mother tongue is different from Hungarian in safeguarding and developing their own mother tongue and culture. In Hungary, state subsidies on integration are ensured provided that refugees and internationally protected persons participate in Hungarian language training available for them for free and generally financed through tenders.*

More national practices related to the measures directed to facilitation of economic integration of migrants could be found in the [Matrix](#) of responses to the meeting questionnaire.

Possible topics for discussion

What measures could be implemented in order to ensure better participation of migrants in economic activities? Should the migrant entrepreneurship be supported, including through access to existing micro-credit assistance schemes?

What can be done to improve existing mechanisms of foreign qualification recognition? Should the migrants be provided with more options in relation to education and professional training in the hosting states?

How the cooperation with countries of origin could be improved to ensure better economic integration of migrants? Should the pre-departure counseling be given more importance and attention?



Annexes

Annex I. Questionnaire distributed among the participating countries

1. Please describe the policy and legislative framework existing in your country regulating access of migrants to national labour market. Has your country adopted legal acts/provisions and programmes/action plans on measures to be taken by state and non-state actors regarding the economic integration of migrants?
2. Please describe existing legal provisions regulating conditions of establishment of small and micro business by migrants.
3. Please provide available statistics on migrants involved in national economy (if available disaggregated by: sex; age; type of economic activity (employed/self-employed); sector of economy). Has your country conducted recently any researches to assess implemented policy on economic integration of migrants and its effectiveness?
4. Does your country implement any specific programmes designed for facilitating access/attraction of migrants to national labour markets? Please provide examples.
5. Please describe legal and institutional mechanisms existing in your country to prevent labour rights abuse and exploitation of migrants. Is your country a party to international treaties protecting labour and social rights of migrants (Conventions of ILO, Council of Europe, CIS, bilateral agreements)?
6. Please provide information on conditions existing in your country for recognition of skills and qualifications of migrants. Do migrants in your country have access to vocational training, language courses and cultural orientation?
7. Does your country cooperate with countries of origin/destination of migrants as well as with civil society and diaspora in designing and implementing programmes in the field of facilitated access of migrants to national labour market and their integration? If yes, do these programmes cover also the pre-departure stage of migration? Please provide examples.
8. Please indicate the main challenges related to successful economic integration of migrants experienced by your country in the process of developing and implementing relevant policies and programmes.



Annex II. Number of third country nationals (TCNs) admitted to national labour markets in responding states

Country	Available statistics	Notes
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 500 employed TCNs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data as of 1 September 2017. In comparison with 2013, there is an increase of 29.3%. In average, during the last 5 years 1500 new employment contracts are being signed annually
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17844 employed TCNs 11 903 employed TCNs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for 2016 Among them: managers - 1 025; qualified workers and specialists - 4 841; service workers – 961; agriculture workers - 1 103; industrial workers - 9 914 Data for 2017 Among them: managers - 1 078; qualified workers and specialists - 3 949; service workers – 965; agriculture workers - 647; industrial workers - 5 264
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120 186 employed TCNs (84 821 TCNs with free access to the labour market; 35 365 TCNs need permits) 55 619 self-employment TCNs in the Czech Republic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data as of 30 June 2017 Data as of 30 September 2017
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8,964 TCNs started either entrepreneurial or non-entrepreneurial activities 5578 TCNs employed in Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for 2016 Data for 2015 (among them 40% were working at the positions of low qualification civil engineers, motor vehicle mechanics and repairers, and 11% - managing directors and chief executives (as to the rest of them, 7% are heavy truck drivers, 4% civil engineers, 4% professional service managers, 3% commercial service and administrative managers, 2% cooks, 2% hotel managers, and 27% occupy other positions). Sectors of economy where foreigners are employed are: 31% in construction sector, 26% in trade and repair of vehicles and home appliances, 9% in rental and lease of real estate and property / providing services to customers, 8% in transport and telecommunications, 8% in hotels and restaurants, 3% in education and 14% in other sectors)



Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6007 TCNs are granted rights to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for 2016 <p>Most of the employees work in the following areas: land transport and pipeline transport production (2765); computer programming and consultation (528); production of other vehicles (310); repair and installation of machinery and equipment (265); catering services (230) and in other areas</p>
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 749 national visas issued to TCNs who came to work in Lithuania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for January-September 2017 <p>Among them:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 000 national visas were issued to foreigners who have a qualification included in Lithuania's shortage occupations list 2 855 national visas were issued to foreigners who have work permits issued by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange. Currently, the most demanded employees are drivers of international transport vehicles, as well as welders 1 029 national visas were issued to posted foreigners (i.e. foreigners who employed by companies established in non-EU country and posted to Lithuanian companies for a period not exceeding one year under contracts concluded between these companies on provision of services or performance of particular work)
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19216 TCNs of employable age in total 1052 TCN engaged in national economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for 2015 Data for 2016 <p>Among them: leader / founder with foreign investments – 268; leader / founder without investments – 80; migrant workers - 704</p>
Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7618 TCNs with valid work permits 12491 TCNs with registered information cards 27762 EU nationals with registered information cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data as of 31 October 2017
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3159 new residence permits issued to TCNs who came to work in Ukraine 3175 residence permits were extended for TCNs who already reside in Ukraine for the purpose of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for January-November 2017





Annex III. Mechanisms in place to prevent labour rights abuse and exploitation of migrants

Country	Existing mechanism to prevent labour rights abuse and exploitation of migrants
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal safeguards are provided to the migrant workers according to the national legislation equally with Armenian nationals ▪ International treaties (ILO and UN Conventions, Revised European Social Charter, Agreement in the framework of Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), regulating the rights and obligations of the migrants from the EEU member states, bilateral agreements in the field of labour migration)
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International treaties (ILO Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labor, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Convention on legal status of migrant workers and members of their families of the State Parties of the Commonwealth of Independent States, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as well as United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementing protocols to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air) ▪ Various legislative and policy measures directed at prevention of human trafficking
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative safeguards for migrants in relation to their work conditions and prohibition of discrimination ▪ Legislative and policy measures directed at prevention of human trafficking ▪ International treaties (Conventions of Council of Europe, Conventions and agreements in the framework of CIS, Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, bilateral agreements on labour migration and social security)
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Czech institutional mechanisms include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) assessment of employer's credibility during the migration procedure, (b) awareness-raising and (c) deterrent measures
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National legislation defining the rights and obligations of labour migrants and their employers ▪ International treaties (ILO Convention 117 Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention, European Social Charter)
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative safeguards providing equal treatment to migrants with regular status and refugees regarding their labour and social rights, including access to unemployment services ▪ International treaties (ILO fundamental Conventions, as well as the instruments containing specific provisions on migrant workers such as the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) and social security instruments, Revised European Social Charter, bilateral agreements) ▪ Provision of free legal assistance in compliance with EU obligations to asylum-seekers (2005/85/EC Directive)
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative safeguards regarding rights to work, fair, safe and healthy working conditions, fair work remuneration as well as prohibition of any kind of discrimination. ▪ Implementation into the national Labour law of the EU Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers provisions of which are used to prevent labour right abuse and exploitation of migrants



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International treaties (ILO Forced Labour Convention and Protocol of 2014 to the Convention (expected to enter into force soon), the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105), The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA etc.)
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative safeguards prohibiting discrimination and providing equal rights to migrant workers as nationals. ▪ Procedures to address violations of labour rights to Labour Disputes Committee and the court ▪ Control and prevention of violations by the by the State Labour Inspectorate under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour ▪ International treaties (ILO fundamental Conventions, ILO Convention concerning Equality of Treatment for National and Foreign Workers as regards Workmen's Compensation for Accidents (No 19) and Convention concerning Employment Policy (No 122), European Social Charter)
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public supervision and control of adherence to legislation in the field of labour migration conducted by the National Employment Agency, Labour Inspection, competent authority on foreigners and licensing authority ▪ International treaties (ILO Conventions, Conventions of Council of Europe, bilateral agreements)
Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislative provisions regulating relations between the employer and foreign workers ▪ Antidiscrimination act providing equal treatment ▪ Institute of state labour inspection represented by Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, the National Labour Inspectorate and labour inspectorates ▪ International treaties (ILO Conventions, UN Conventions, legal instruments of Council of Europe, bilateral agreements)
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National legislation envisaging legal safeguards for migrant workers (national labour law provides equal rights and obligations to the migrants as the nationals) ▪ International treaties (ILO Conventions, Council of Europe Conventions, Conventions and treaties in the framework of CIS, bilateral agreements on labour migration and social security)



Annex III. Main challenges related to successful economic integration of migrants

Country	Challenges related to successful economic integration of migrants
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migration crises and strict regulation in number of EU MS impose certain challenges on countries of origin of migrants in terms of awareness raising and counseling on legal channels of labour migration, labour rights etc.
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrants are not aware of their legal rights and duties; they rarely join labour unions which may protect their rights or seek other forms of legal counselling Migrants' tolerance to their employers' violation of the Labour Code and their reluctance to address complaints to labour inspectorates is an obstacle to rectification Low wages for migrants in low skilled jobs sometimes do not allow them to reunify with their families Informal organizers of migration and unofficial employment brokers maintain strong influence on their fellow countryman Many migrants have low skilled jobs in industry and agriculture which lack any professional growth perspective Migrants underestimate importance of Czech language proficiency despite general availability of language courses
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of accurate statistical data and sufficient quality databases on immigration. The number of immigrants are estimated through different sources which sometimes might overlap and do not necessarily provide with the precise picture Lack of financial resources to maintain funding of all necessary integration services
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unprecedented migration and asylum pressure in 2015 requiring solid financial resources as well as adequate legal and policy measures
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge of Latvian language, difficulties finding work in the profession relevant to their qualifications, low wages
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of financial resources; need of comprehensive policy on integration and coordination of activities of different institutions working with migrants
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of activity of economic agents, private employment agencies for the purpose of combating irregular migration/fraudulent legalization of foreigners in Moldova Need of development of relevant systems for migration and asylum related risk analysis (equipment, software, data bases, analysis instruments etc.)
Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming the language barrier and acknowledgment of skills and qualifications of migrants
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of qualifications procedure needs to be improved