

## Nothing works without them! What contribution do migrants and refugees make to securing the demand for labour in skilled occupations in Germany?

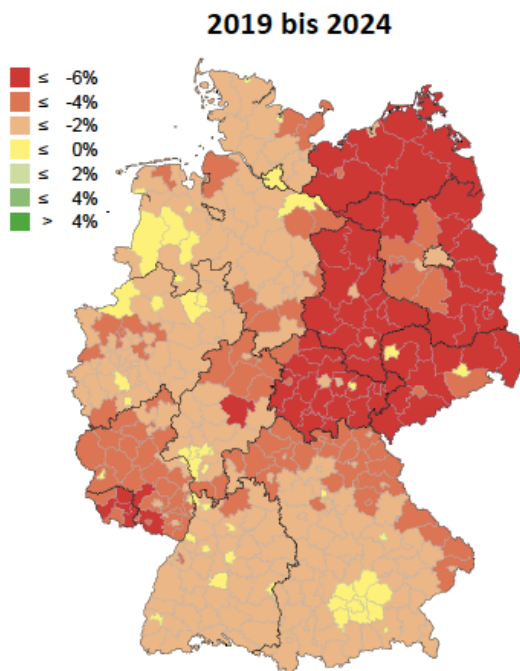
In recent months, some remarkable statistic research on the shortage of skilled workers in the German economy has been published. We quote from one of these studies below:<sup>1</sup>

*The number of migrants and refugees in skilled occupations has increased*

In 2020, a total of more than 4 million employees subject to social security in Germany do not hold German citizenship. This is an increase of over 75 per cent compared to 2013. About 1.9 million of the migrants were employed in

training or advanced school education. The number of refugees in employment subject to social security contributions at the level of skilled workers has quintupled between 2013 and 2020. In total 315,000 refugees were in employment subject to social security contributions in 2020. 120,000 of them in skilled occupations. This is largely due to the increased influx of refugees since 2015.

In 2020, almost 8,000 refugees were employed as skilled workers in the catering industry, followed by the warehousing with about 7,600 employed skilled workers. In total, the proportion of refugees in these skilled occupations accounted for 2.7 and 1.8 per cent respectively of all employees. Even in the crisis year 2020, the number of refugees employed in skilled occupations increased, although that employment in the service occupations was severely affected by the Corona pandemic



Lack of labour force without any immigration, by region  
IW-Report 25/2021

<sup>1</sup> Hickmann, Helen / Jansen, Anika/ Pierenkemper, Sarah/ Werner, Dirk 2021: Ohne sie geht nichts mehr. Welchen Beitrag leisten Migrant\_innen und Geflüchtete zur Sicherung der Arbeitskräftebedarfe in Fachkraftberufen in Deutschland?, Berlin

This can be taken as an indication that many qualification and integration measures have been successful and a growing number of refugees have found their way into the German labour market.

*Migrants and refugees are making an important contribution to filling vacancies in bottleneck occupations*

In many bottleneck occupations, migrants and refugees are making an important and growing contribution to filling of vacancies offered. For example, in care of the elderly in 2020, 8.2 per cent of all employees skilled workers were of non-German nationality. This share was only 4.2 per cent in 2013 and has risen continuously since then. In health care and nursing, every twelfth skilled worker had a foreign nationality. This proportion has doubled since 2013. In the field of electrical construction in 2020 about one in eight employees had a foreign nationality (2013: 5.3 per cent). Among the sanitary, heating and air-conditioning technicians, more than ten percent of employees had a foreign nationality (2013: 4.7 percent). The skilled occupations mentioned before are those with the largest gaps in the number of skilled workers nationwide.

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## ***Outside the Box***

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We would like to take this opportunity to introduce our readers to another study on migrant labour that is highly interesting because it draws attention to the persistence of significant barriers to accessing the labour market. It shows that despite the extremely favourable legal conditions for people fleeing from war and violence in Ukraine, the effectiveness of access is often dependent on other factors, like language, recognition of qualifications, counselling and other social factors. In the past, many experts have already drawn attention to these influencing factors and their weight. The persistence of these difficulties over the years gives German integration policy a poor report card. The German economy will continue to depend on immigration in the future. Therefore, the strengthening and expansion of institutions aimed to language training facilities, the recognition of qualifications (including informally acquired qualifications) and social support is more than a matter of urgency.

### **'Turning point' in labour market integration? Participation and precariousness of Ukrainians in the German labour market<sup>2</sup>**

The beginning of the war in Ukraine marks a 'turning point' in many respects- this also applies to German migration and integration policy. Before the start of the war, Ukrainian citizens came to Germany mainly in the context of family

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<sup>2</sup> Schork, Franziska/Loschert, Franziska/Kolb, Holger 2022: 'Zeitenwende' bei der Arbeitsmarktintegration? Teilhabe und Prekarität von Ukrainerinnen und Ukrainern am deutschen Arbeitsmarkt. SVR-Policy Brief 2022-3, Berlin.

reunification, but also as gainfully employed persons. For the same conditions of residence as for all third-country nationals. There were no country-specific peculiarities. Accordingly, (official) labour migration from Ukraine remained limited to the skilled labour sector.

Beyond this segment, however, access routes have increasingly established access routes that are often on the edge of legality in terms of labour and residence law: Ukrainian students work as seasonal workers in holiday jobs or internships, and (above all) Ukrainian women are in particular employed by (Polish) agencies as caregivers in German private households. Such forms of employment are associated with legal restrictions and other structural obstacles to participation. Thus the persons in question have only limited protection under labour and social law and (financially) dependent on their employers and/or placement agencies. In addition, their situation in terms of labour perspectives is uncertain. This prepares the ground for working and living conditions that are considered as highly precarious in terms of residence, as well as labour and social protection.

Since the beginning of the war at the end of February 2022 mainly women and children have been fleeing from Ukraine to Germany. The European Union had responded to the war of aggression and the ensuing refugee migration with a legal premiere: It activated the mass influx directive for the first time.

Ukrainian refugees in Germany now receive immediately a residence title according to § 24 of the Residence Act, in first instance, limited to two years. This migration policy decision was flanked by an integration policy measure: Ukrainian refugees were assigned to the legal sphere of the Social Code, which means that they are subject to the of the German labour and social administration (not more to immigration/foreigner administration). In consequence, their starting situation differs considerably from that of their compatriots who came to Germany for gainful employment before the start of the war and especially those who are employed in the grey and niche areas of the labour market. Due to the change in legal status Ukrainian refugees are not only allowed to work without any previous permission, they are also entitled to the complete portfolio of measures to promote employment and benefits of the basic social security system.

The scientific staff of the SVR has taken this 'turning point' as an opportunity to examine the role of legal restrictions on participation and other structural obstacles to participation for the emergence and consolidation of precarious working and living conditions, on the one hand for Ukrainian workers, who were employed on the margins of the official labour market, and for those who fled to Germany after the invasion of the Russian army. As a result of that research the following argument have been pointed out: Success and sustainability of the (labour market) integration of Ukrainian refugees also depends on

factors beyond the legal framework. A central role is played by the following questions: How quickly and how much effort is required to recognise the qualifications acquired abroad? To what extent and in what quality are qualification measures and language courses available? Can low-threshold counselling services on current labour and social law provided in an accessible manner? And since it is mainly women who have come, many of them with children, care alternatives will play a role: Are there enough places available in day-care centres and (all-day) schools? If these questions are answered in the negative, many of the refugees who have arrived since February could also find themselves in precarious working and living conditions - despite the legal 'turning point'.

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### *Business cards*

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IFPRA DE NORMANDIE has just been established in January 2021. It takes part in the definition and implementation of the education authority's policy in the field of vocational training in conjunction with the related stakeholders. Regarding its mission linked to the ongoing training of adults, IFPRA de Normandy conducts, coordinates and stimulates strategies in the different economic fields regionally and locally through the GRETA network. Therefore, IFPRA DE NORMANDIE acts as an umbrella organization for this regional group of training centres for adults and vocational schools. In 2020, they trained about 23 000 all over the region (in 28 trainings centres). They deliver courses for : - unemployed people and vulnerable groups (among which migrants) : they deliver a specific training scheme funded by the Region, which is part of a guidance process and which is to support people in career changes and the acquisition of key competences. - blue and white collar employees in numerous trades and unemployed people (among which migrants) willing to pass a certification. These trainings are funded either by businesses, Pôle Emploi, trade bodies or Normandy Regional Council and aim at training people so that they can take and pass an examination in order to get a certification. - Employees : short customized pathways designed according to the needs of businesses and participants for upskilling the workforce. It is also a training organization bringing together various services and activities: -DAVA (Academic validation system which is a recognition and validation of acquired experience for National Education diplomas) -CAFOP (Academic centre for vocational training, regional expertise dedicated to the training of trainers and training design) – Europe

Department (department for the management of projects co-financed by European Funds; administrative, financial and educational management of Erasmus +, Feder, ESF, Interreg projects) -CFA ( regional apprenticeship training centre of Normandy Region). Trainers, heads of secondary schools, heads of VET schools and vocational departments will be involved in this project as well as ongoing training advisors and trainers from the GRETA network. A group of teachers and members of education staff will be involved in the production of the digital tools and their implementation. It has to be noticed that initial and ongoing education are closely linked and work together.

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## News from partners

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### Future Focus Ltd.

A group of educators from Spain visited our Maltese partner. The objective of this professional exchange of experiences was to inform about practice of language training. They attended lessons about CLIL and heard about our project *Includmi* and the foreseen project result. The president of Future Focus explained about our focus on inclusion in the tourism sector. The preparation of a guide in CLIL was explained and they said that it would be useful for their work when this is finalised.



### Gesellschaft für Inklusion und Soziale Arbeit - ISA

#### *Includmi* presented at state-wide integration conference

On 8 November 2020, the annual integration conference took place in Potsdam, Germany, bringing together more than 150 participants from public administration, business and civil society. This year, the theme of the event was:

Immigration and overcome the lack of skilled labour force. Recent research results on that topic and several related projects, their strategies and partial results, were presented, as well as practical experiences regarding still existing obstacles were discussed.

The coordinator of *Includmi*, Dr. Wolfgang Bautz, pointed out several times that it is not only a matter of further opening access to the labour market for migrants and strengthening their position in the labour market, but that an equally great challenge is to keep immigrant workers in their respective jobs and to reduce the sometimes enormous fluctuation. In his contributions, as well as during the coffee breaks and the get-togethers, he also presented *Includmi*'s goals and planned work results and received a thoroughly positive response.



*from left to right: Dr. Tassinopoulos, Head of Regional Labaour Office, Dr. Momper, BEA-Mentoring Project, Dr. Bautz, Includmi, Mr. Rüter, Socialist member of parliament*

## Service Civil International Österreich - SCI



### Exchange Platform Meeting (EPM)

After two years of pandemic and lockdowns, and two Exchange Platform Meetings organised online, finally SCI branches, partners and contacts from several countries could meet face to face in Belgium between 10 -16 October of this year. The sessions were focusing on today's struggles for volunteering organizations and several workshops about decolonization, gender, inclusion as well as many other important topics were organised. It

was also a chance for 10 organizations from Global South to join the meeting and contribute to the running discussions about the challenges that the movement is facing nowadays and developing opportunities to enhance the international peace and voluntary scenes.

### Queer cinema in the mountains

SCI Austria hosted a workshop, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, that brought together 28 young queer people living in Germany, Greece, Poland, Austria and the Netherlands to discuss, curate and create queer cinema. It was a fully week of queer empowerment, storytelling and filmmaking. The participants watched a collection of (short) films made by young queer filmmakers and discussed about them.



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