



# INTEGRATING HUMANITARIAN MIGRANTS IN OECD COUNTRIES: LESSONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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The current humanitarian crisis is unprecedented with an appalling and unacceptable human cost. The number of refugees is unparalleled in recent times. The diversity of nationalities, motives for migration and individual profiles also create a huge challenge for asylum systems and welcoming communities in many European destination countries. Moreover, given the complexity of its main driving forces, there is unfortunately little hope that the situation will improve significantly in the near future.

This issue of Migration Policy Debates looks at the most recent developments in the humanitarian migration crisis and what makes this crisis different from previous ones.

### Is this humanitarian migration crisis different?

- Refugee inflows peaked in 2013 at an unprecedented number of million asylum seekers and refugees with up to one million asylum applications, an estimated 250 000 to 400 000 people could be granted refugee or similar status, more than in any previous European refugee crisis since World War I.
- In recent months the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes have gained importance with continuing large numbers of people starting to leave or transit to Turkey. The Central Mediterranean route, which leads to Italy, also continued to be heavily used. According to the latest available estimates, more than 100 000 persons have arrived by sea in Europe since January this year, including about 200 000 landings in Greece and 120 000 in Italy.
- As during previous refugee crises in the 1990s the impact is concentrated in a few countries. In the OECD, Turkey is the most affected, currently hosting at least 1.5 million Syrians as well as a large number of people from Iraq, Ukraine, the US, Iraq, Greece and Hungary on its own front line but the most destination countries are Germany, in absolute terms, and Sweden and Austria, relative to their population.
- More than in previous crises, asylum seekers are very diverse in terms of country of origin, profile and motivation. This increases the pressure on asylum systems in destination countries.
- Recent refugees from Syria are more skilled than other groups and those who came, for example, during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. There are more concentrated efforts (job/training) without a responsibility shift to care for them, driving more their processes.
- Refugee flows tend to concentrate in countries with the most favourable economic conditions. A strong skills market seems to be the most important determinant of flows for many refugee groups.
- Europe has better legal and institutional systems in place for asylum seekers and migrants than it did in the 1990s. However, there has not been a fair burden-sharing between countries, and have not prevented people from choosing smuggling routes.
- In the current emergency situation, several countries are struggling to welcome, assist and process a large number of incoming people. Some regions and localities are under intense pressure. Coordinated between different levels of governance will be key to prevent local communities from being overwhelmed since the 1990s, when EU countries have developed better settlement services for refugees which help to ease in the medium term.
- For several EU countries, large scale asylum inflows are a new experience. This is the case, for example, Hungary and to a lesser extent for Finland and Bulgaria. Financial and technical support from countries and from EU institutions is critical to enable them to respond to the emergency.
- In the short run, processing and supporting such large numbers of asylum seekers will be an emergency, much will depend on how well successful asylum seekers are integrated. This will require intensive efforts to provide language training, assess individual skills, provide school and health and social problems, and work with employers to help boost refugees' chances of employment.
- Past experience of refugee crises suggests that migrants can, eventually, become valued contributors to the economic and social health of countries.

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### Can we put an end to human smuggling?

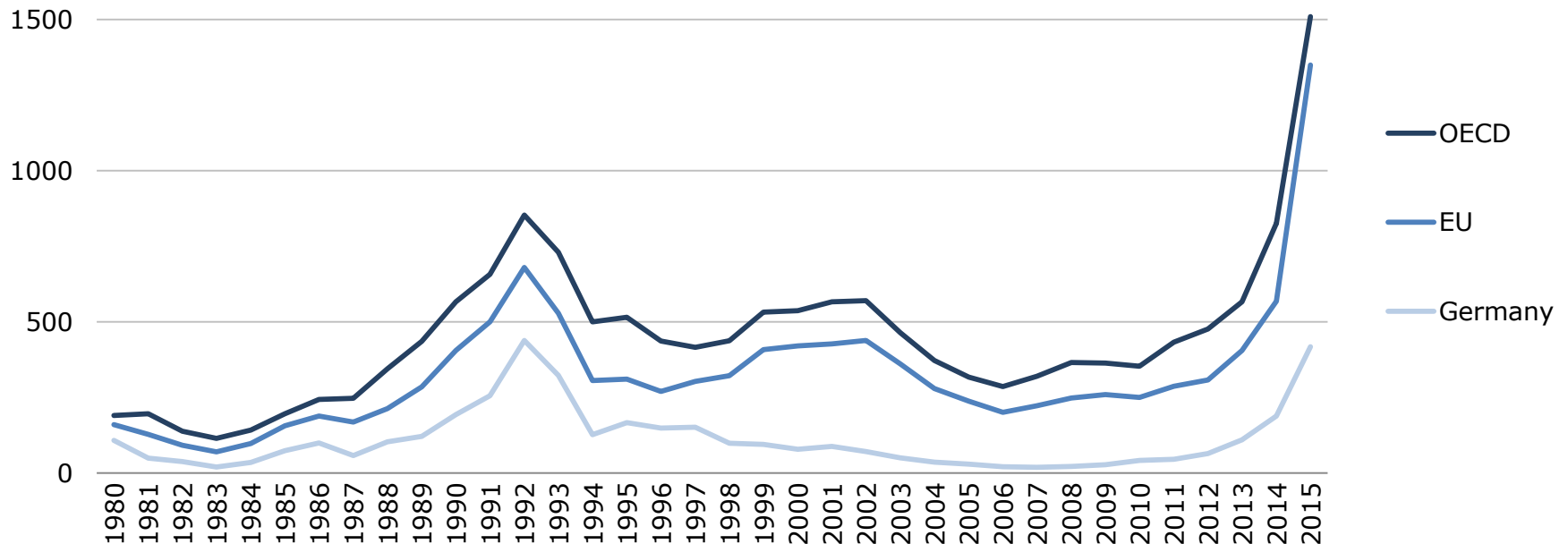
- Smuggling is a crime. Smuggling of migrants takes place when a person facilitates the transportation of another person across a border in violation of national laws. It is a crime because it involves the transportation of a person across a border in violation of national laws. It is a crime because it involves the transportation of a person across a border in violation of national laws. It is a crime because it involves the transportation of a person across a border in violation of national laws.
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# Recent asylum application trends in Europe



# 1. Unprecedented but still uncertain numbers

Evolution of number of new asylum seekers, 1980-2015



Source: UNHCR, Eurostat, OECD calculations

- Asylum applications are recorded with a lag compared to entries and may include some double counts.
- In 2015, the early registration system in Germany (EASY) recorded over 1 million entrances, including 200k in November and 130k in December (respectively 58k and 47k in the Eurostat data).
- 4.7 million refugees in neighbouring countries of Syria including 2.6 million in Turkey, 1.07 in Lebanon and 640k in Jordan.



## 2. *Multiple unsettled crises*

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- Several conflicts/crises in parallel with little prospect for improvement in the near future  
=> **Persisting and looming geopolitical crises**
- Strong concentration of asylum seekers in just a handful of entry points and destination countries which fuels anxiety and raises the issue of burden sharing; Large unmet needs for supporting refugees globally  
=> **A solidarity and coordination crisis**
- Key building blocks of the European migration & asylum framework are challenged (e.g. Schengen, Dublin) and mutual trust within the EU is undermined;  
=> **Risks of an institutional crisis**
- Welcoming and integration systems are under strong pressure and concerns regarding the integration of refugees and their children are at the highest=> **A forthcoming integration crisis?**



# How will the refugee surge affect the European Economy ?



# 1. Short/medium term direct fiscal costs

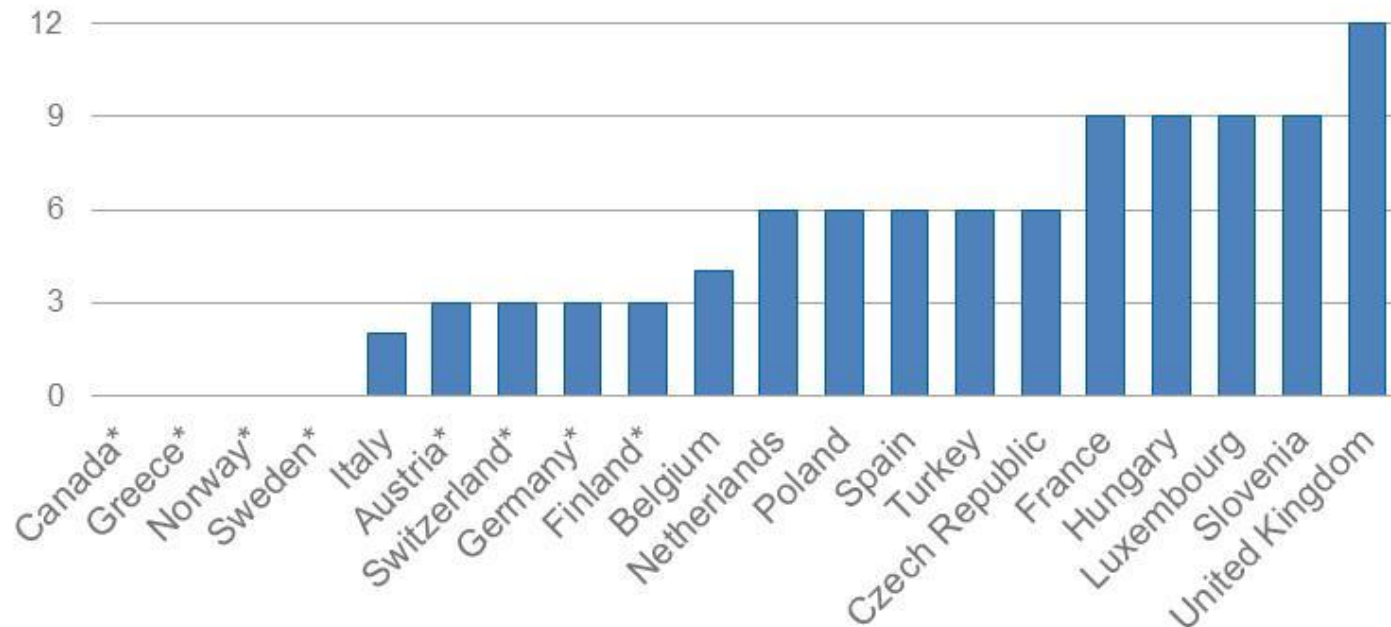
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- Germany may spend as much as 8 billion euros this year and has projected an additional 0.5% of GDP per annum of public spending in 2016 and 2017 to meet initial needs of the newly arrived immigrants and to integrate them in the labour market
- Austria has announced an additional 0.3% of GDP in 2016 and Sweden 0.9% of GDP in 2016.
- Hungary, a major transit country into the Schengen area, has announced additional spending of 0.1% of GDP in 2015, to cover costs associated with the new flows of refugees.
- Since 2011, the Turkish government has provided aid to Syrian refugees amounting to 0.8% of 2014 GDP (\$US 7 billion)
- The European Commission has announced additional funding of €9.2 billion to address the refugee crisis over 2015-16 (0.1% of EU GDP).
- *In the short run the additional public spending may act as a demand stimulus. The latest edition of the OECD Economic Outlook estimates that in 2016 and 2017, the additional spending to provide support on refugees could boost aggregate demand in the European economy by about 0.1-0.2% of GDP.*



## 2. Labour market access is also subject to a waiting period and certain conditions

Most favorable waiting periods for labour market access for asylum seekers in selected OECD countries, 2015 (in months)

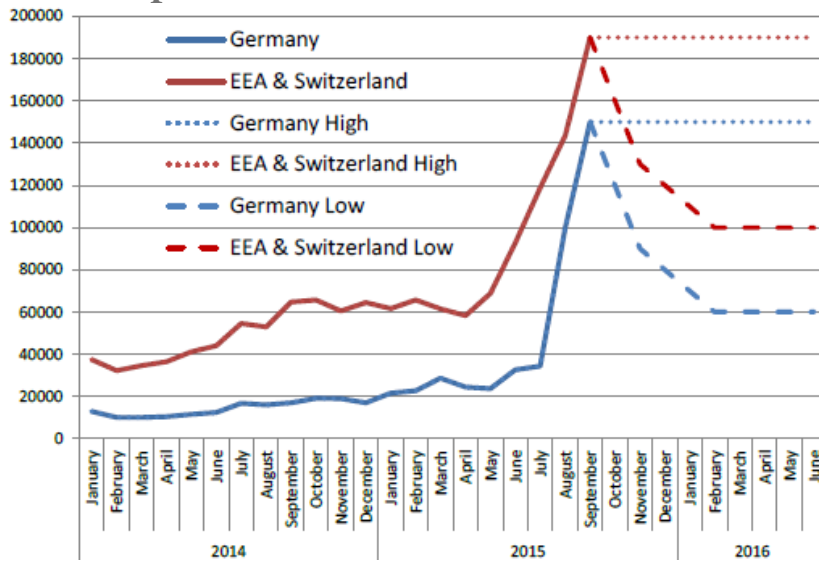


Source: OECD (2015) Migration Policy Debate n°8

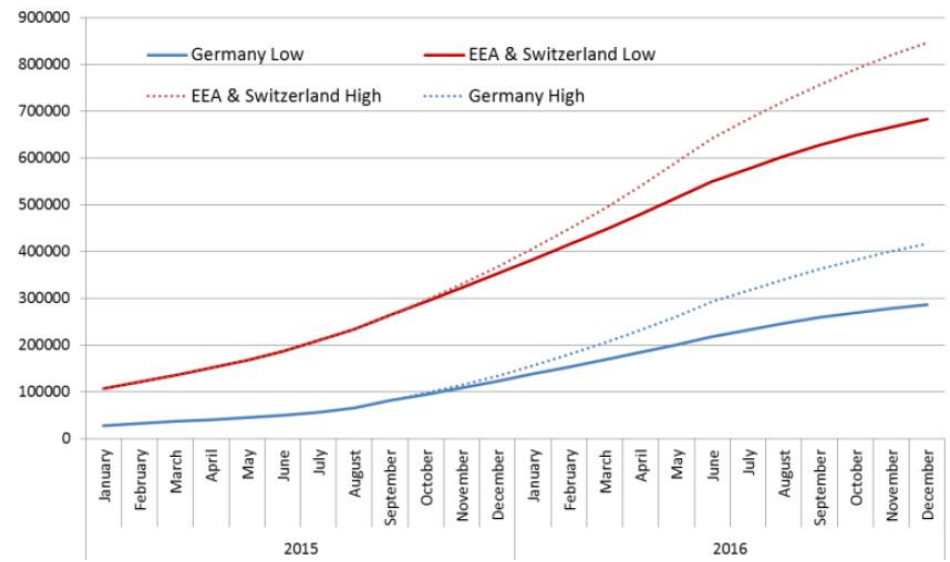


# 3. Simulated labour market impact of the refugee inflow in the EEA and Germany

Observed and anticipated asylum seeker inflows in German and the rest of the European Economic Area plus Switzerland



Estimated cumulative entries in the labour market due to refugees who have arrived since January 2014



Source: OECD (2015) Migration Policy Debate n°8

- Labour market entries will be very progressive and relatively small for most countries
- Under the high scenario, the cumulative impact of the asylum seekers inflow by the end 2016 is estimated to
  - less than one million entries in the EEA & Switzerland labour market, corresponding to 0.4% of labour force.
  - less than 400 thousand in Germany or 1% of the total labour force



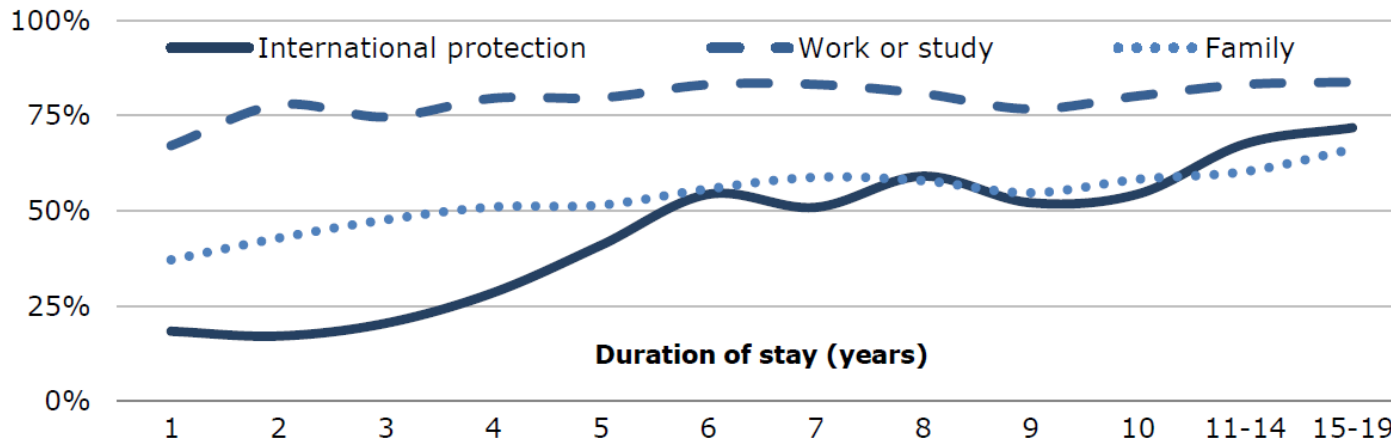


# Fostering the economic and social integration of refugees and their children



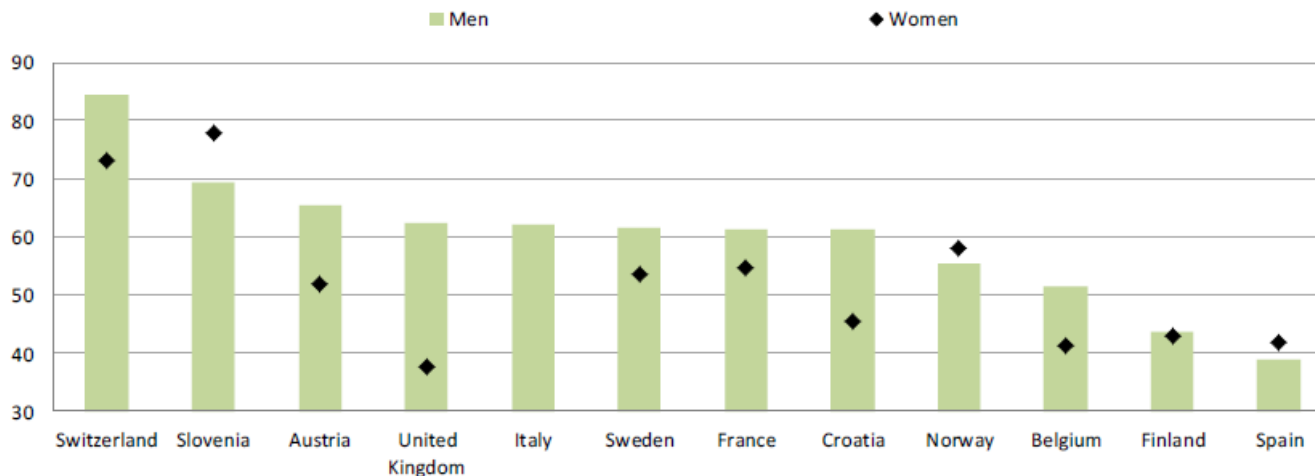
# 1. Labour market integration takes time

Employment rate by immigrant categories and duration of stay in European OECD countries, 2008



Source: Eurostat Labour force survey (2008) ad-hoc module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants.

Employment rates of immigrants aged 15-64 who migrated to seek international protection by sex and country of residence, 2014

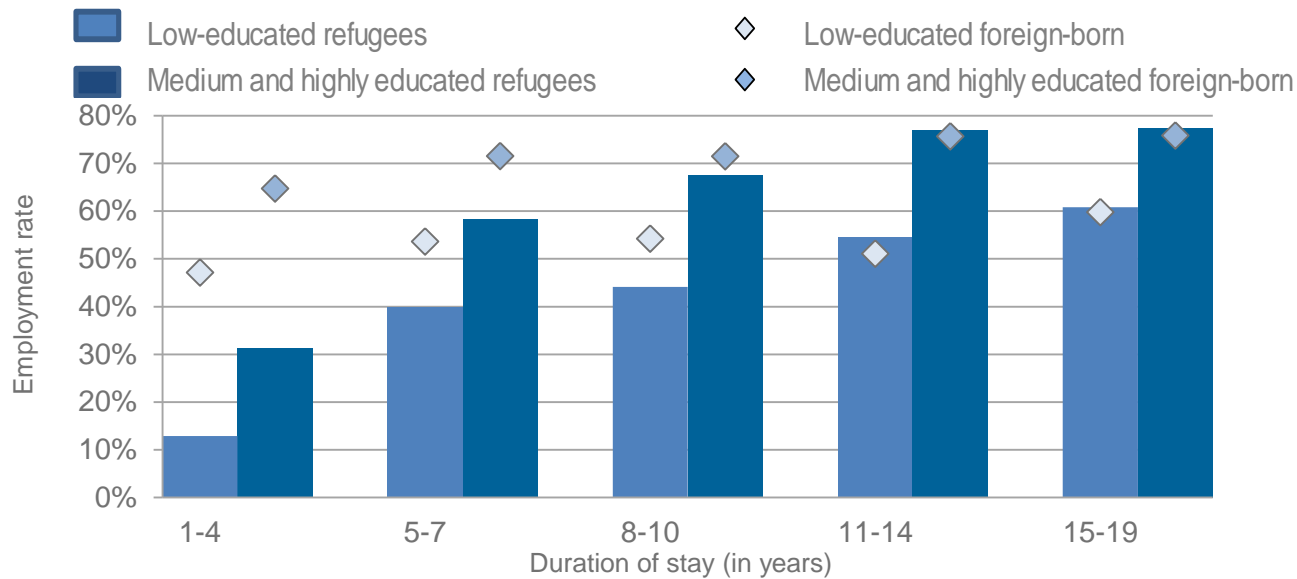


Source: Eurostat labour survey (2014) ad-hoc module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants



## 2. The integration of very low educated humanitarian migrants requires long-term training and support

Employment rate of humanitarian migrants by level of education and duration of stay in European OECD countries, 2008



Source: Eurostat Labour force survey (2008)

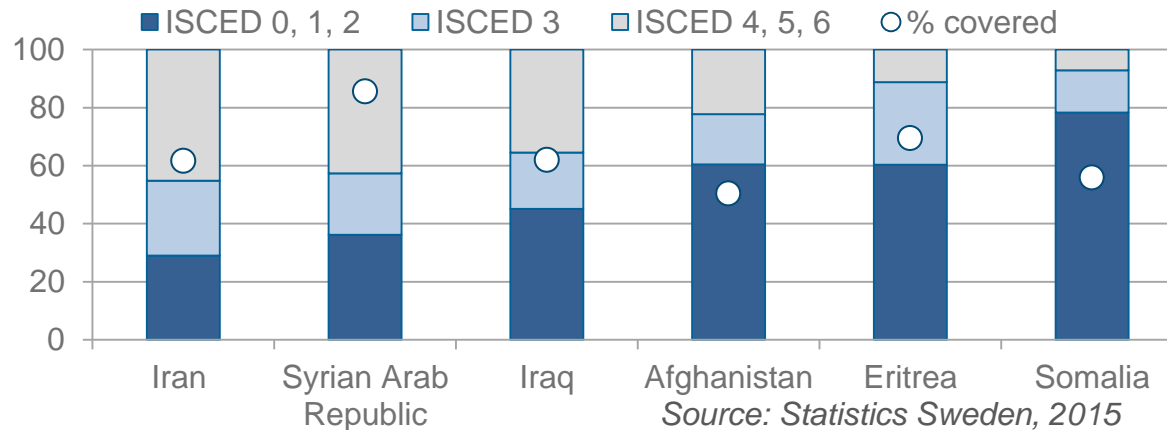
- Reaching the minimum standards of what is needed to be employable may take several years - but this investment will pay off in the long run
  - ➔ Australia, Norway and Sweden have longer introduction programmes for very low-educated refugees
- Support needs to extend beyond training to help refugees enter employment
  - ➔ Sweden and Denmark offer stepwise labour market introduction



### 3. The large skills diversity of humanitarian migrants highlights need for tailor-made approaches

- The scarce available evidence suggests a large and growing diversity of refugees' qualifications and skills

Education level of immigrants aged 16-74 in Sweden by latest country of residence, 2014



- Tailor-made integration programmes ideally include:

- *Flexible* durations of integration programmes - as in Scandinavian countries

- *Modular* language training - as pioneered by Denmark

- *Targeted* courses for specific groups like illiterate, high educated and mothers

- *On-the-job* training – as in Australia, Canada and in Scandinavian countries



## 4. Refugees face particular challenges in having their skills valued

- Refugees' qualifications and skills are often particularly undervalued due to
  - Different education and training contexts in origin countries
  - Lack of documentation
  - No access to / awareness about existing recognition mechanisms
  - Vocational skills acquired through non-formal learning
- Only few countries have a systematic assessment of refugees' skills
- Need for systematic assessment and adjusted recognition procedures

Norway



- Academic skills of refugees without verifiable documentation of their qualifications are assessed through expert committees.
- A three-level skills grid has been used by the employment service in pilots.

The Netherlands



- The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum seekers maps refugees' skills as soon as they have obtained a residence permit. Alternative assessment for persons without documentation is done jointly with competent authorities, refugee organisations and business communities.

Germany

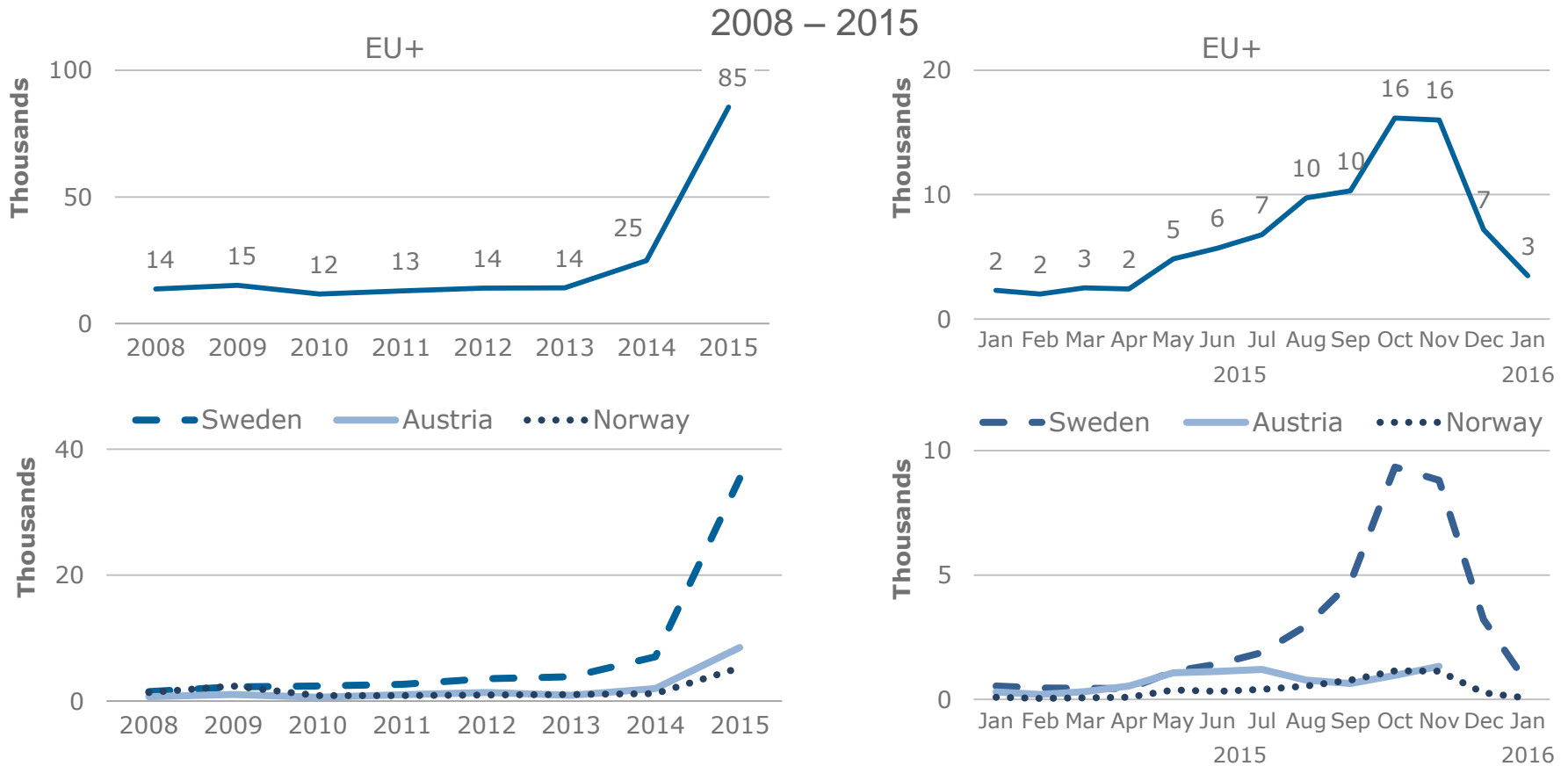


- Skills of humanitarian migrants with no or insufficient documentation of qualifications are assessed through so-called 'qualification analysis' on the basis of work samples.
- Specific online assessment tools for skilled trades are in preparation.



# 5. Increasing numbers of unaccompanied minors >>> 85000 in 2015

Evolution of the number of unaccompanied minors in EU+, Sweden, Austria, and Norway

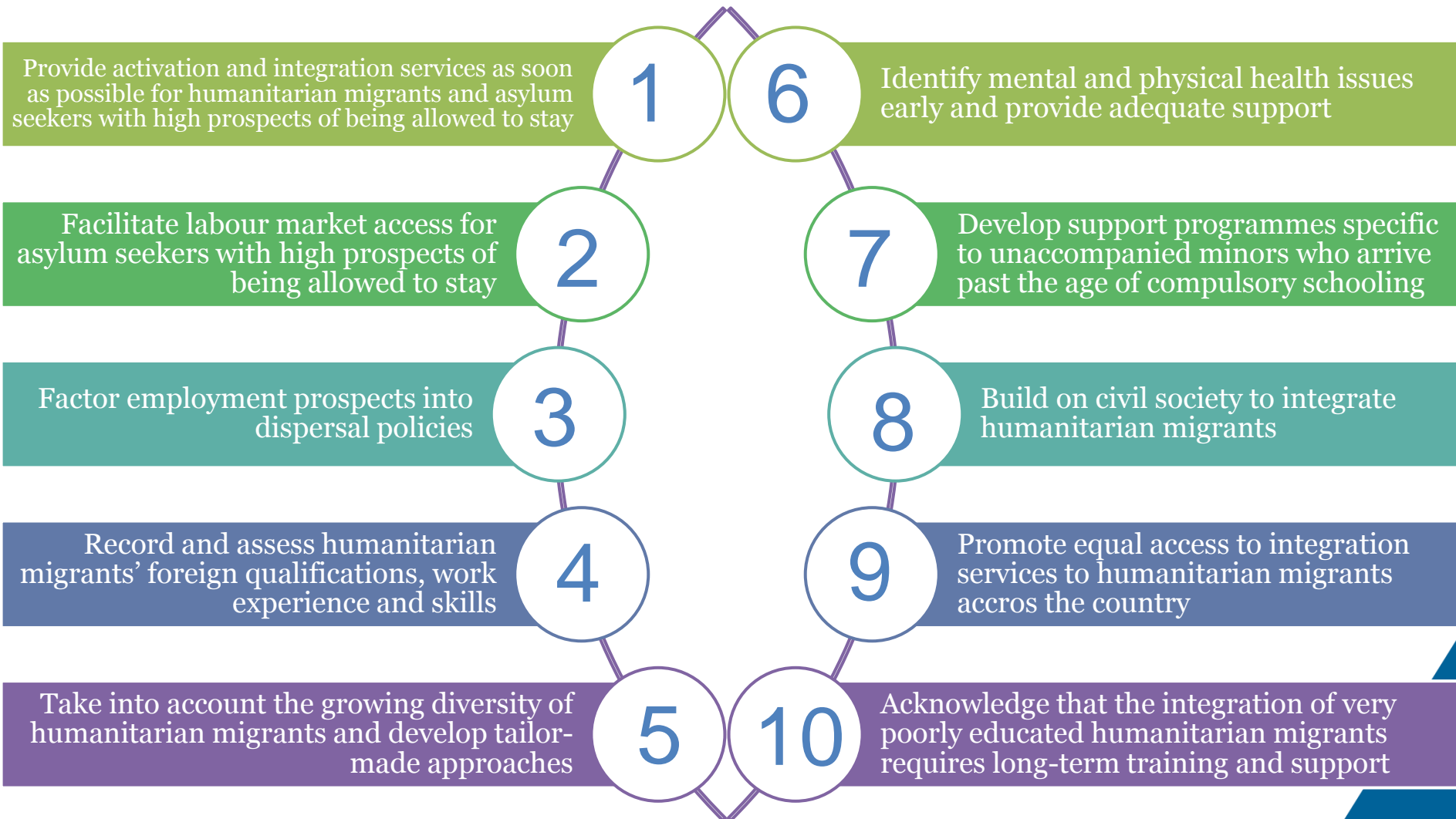


- Vulnerable group requiring specific (and often expensive) support
- Many arrive with little prior tuition at the end of obligatory schooling

Sources: EASO, Statistics Sweden, Federal Austrian Ministry of the Interior, Norwegian Directorate of Immigration



# Making integration of refugees work





# Thank you for your attention



For further information:  
[www.oecd.org/migration](http://www.oecd.org/migration)  
[jean-christophe.dumont@oecd.org](mailto:jean-christophe.dumont@oecd.org)

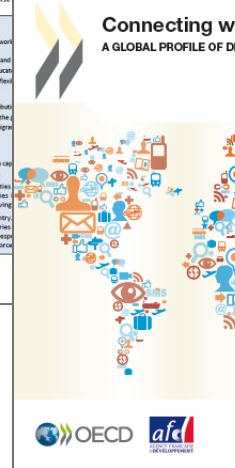


### Is migration good for the economy?

Migration is a feature of social and economic life across populations rather considerably. In part this is because of the Zealand, managed labour migration poses an important humanitarian migration. (However, in general, migration of these can be controversial. The economic impact of migrants benefit or harm – what's the reality? To answer this we impact in three areas – the labour market, the public purse

- Labour markets**
- Migrants accounted for 47% of the increase in the work force over the past ten years
  - Migrants fill important niches both in fast-growing and in the native-born, young migrants are better educated
  - Migrants contribute significantly to labour-market fluidity
- The public purse**
- Migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions
  - Labour migrants have the most positive impact on the public purse
  - Employment is the single biggest determinant of migrant public purse impact
- Economic growth**
- Migration boosts the working-age population
  - Migrants arrive with skills and contribute to human capital
  - Migrants also contribute to technological progress
- Understanding these impacts is important: if our societies face debates, in turn, are essential to designing policies to maximise the benefits of migration, especially by improving this policy mix will, of course, vary from country to country. Maximising the benefits of migration, both for host countries and for migrants, is a challenge that will become increasingly important in coming decades, especially in countries with ageing populations and high demand for immigrants to make up shortfalls in the workforce

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### Connecting with Emigrants

A GLOBAL PROFILE OF DIASPORAS 2015

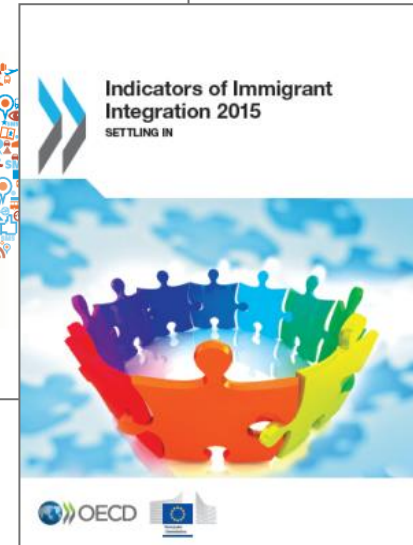


### Matching Economic Migration with Labour Market Needs



### Matching economic migration with labour market needs in Europe

September 2014



### Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015

SETTLING IN



### Talent Abroad: A Review of German Emigrants