



COMpetences in Enterprises on INtegration



**Transnational Research Report  
Executive summary**

**June 2018**

**welcomingenterprises.eu**



Co-funded by the  
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of the European Union

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# Transnational Research Report

## Executive summary

June 2018

Developed by



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## Introduction

The COME IN Transnational Report presents results of research carried out within the project **COME IN - COMpetences in Enterprises on INtegration** – co-funded by the **Erasmus+ programme** of the European Union. The project holds together 7 organisations from 6 EU countries with different experience in migrants' and refugees' integration: Landkreis Kassel (Germany), BUPNET (Germany), die Berater (Austria), Trendhuis CVBA (Belgium), Four Elements (Greece), Catro (Bulgaria) and CESIE (Italy).

## Methodology

The research was composed of 2 elements: **needs analysis** including **online survey** and **interviews** and **desk research of good practices**. The research served as a sound basis for all the project phases, especially for the development of COME IN Training on integration competences for employers. The **needs analysis** ensured that the Training is well-tailored to the needs and preferences of employers. The analysis of existing good practices served as a starting point and initial inspiration for the COME IN training approach.

## Good practices

Analysing good examples of work integration actions helped us understand better the **needs**, **benefits** and **obstacles** that employers face and draw a lesson from their experience. It was observed that businesses and organisations willing to integrate refugees and migrants actively look for and apply systems and tools to assess their qualification and improve their skills. They focus mainly on **intercultural relations**, **community building** and **improvement of language** and other **skills** at seminars and workshops. Nevertheless, there is still a significant **gap** between needs and support available in terms of number of programmes and tools as well as their quality and aiming. **Shared values** were identified across the practices, however, some differences were observed in socioeconomic situation of refugees and migrants in single countries. Furthermore, poor engagement of national institutions in some countries was noticed, thus, funding of integration actions is often dependant on employers, donations or programmes of the European Commission.

Taking into account all the good practices, some recommendations for COME IN project and eventual other actions were drawn:

- Support networking to share experience, raise awareness and disseminate success stories.
- Online tools help reach a large number of stakeholders with minimal organisational effort.
- Engage a facilitator of intercultural relations to support workplace integration.
- Follow a horizontal and holistic approach by promoting lifelong learning for all.

## Needs analysis

### Respondents' profile

Respondents to the survey (185 from 9 countries) were mainly employers from different sectors. **52%** of them (97) **had some experience with refugees' or migrants' employment**. These experienced employers came mostly from the sector of **tourism** (19), **hospitality** (13), **cultural mediation** (14) and fields with prevalence of **manual work** including **handicraft, manufacturing, agriculture** and **constructions** (17). 8 employers from **retail** and 7 from **healthcare** indicated their experience with refugee employees.

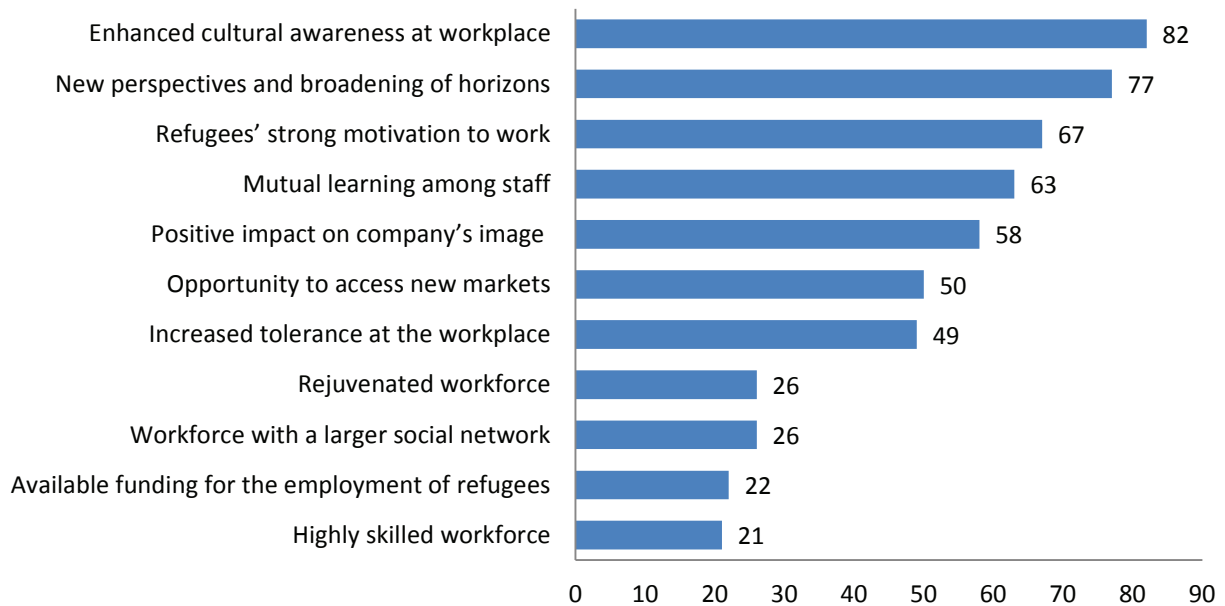
**Interviewees** (33 from 6 countries) included **employers, VET providers, experts** in the field of migrants' integration and integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market including public authorities, NGOs and recruitment agencies.

### Research results

Within the research we gained valuable insight into **employers'** and other **stakeholders' attitudes** to hiring refugees considering **benefits** and **barriers** linked to refugees' employment. We also looked at **competences** that employers require and thus achieved better understanding of their **training needs** and **preferences**.

### Benefits

Employing refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants brings various **benefits** and **advantages**. The following figure shows the ranking of benefits for employers as indicated in the online questionnaires.



**Figure 1: Benefits of employing refugees for businesses and organisations**  
 Source: COME IN Online Survey

In the interviews, two main interpretations of advantages were observed. Some benefits were related to the **refugees' contribution** to business in sense of their **knowledge, skills, attitude** or **experience**. On the other hand, some interviewees referred to the dangerous phenomenon of refugees' exploitation including **long working hours, lower salary** or **misusing subsidies**. Nevertheless, benefits can be found on the side of **employers, refugees** and the whole **team** as well as on the side of the **host country**. Firstly, having a job helps refugees become more **independent** and **autonomous**. Secondly, refugees' integration to the working world and daily contact with co-workers and clients significantly supports faster acquisition of **language skills** and their **integration to the local community**. Finally, refugees' integration to the society and **cohesion with other citizens** increases by participating in the labour market, paying taxes and social contributions. Furthermore, refugees represent a **valuable human resource** that brings skills enriching the business; especially the knowledge of foreign languages is highly useful in the sector of **tourism, hospitality** and other **services**. Migration background together with knowledge of languages and dialects creates plenty of work opportunities in the field of **cultural mediation**.

## Barriers

Employing refugees includes some **challenges** and may be affected by actual or subjectively perceived barriers.



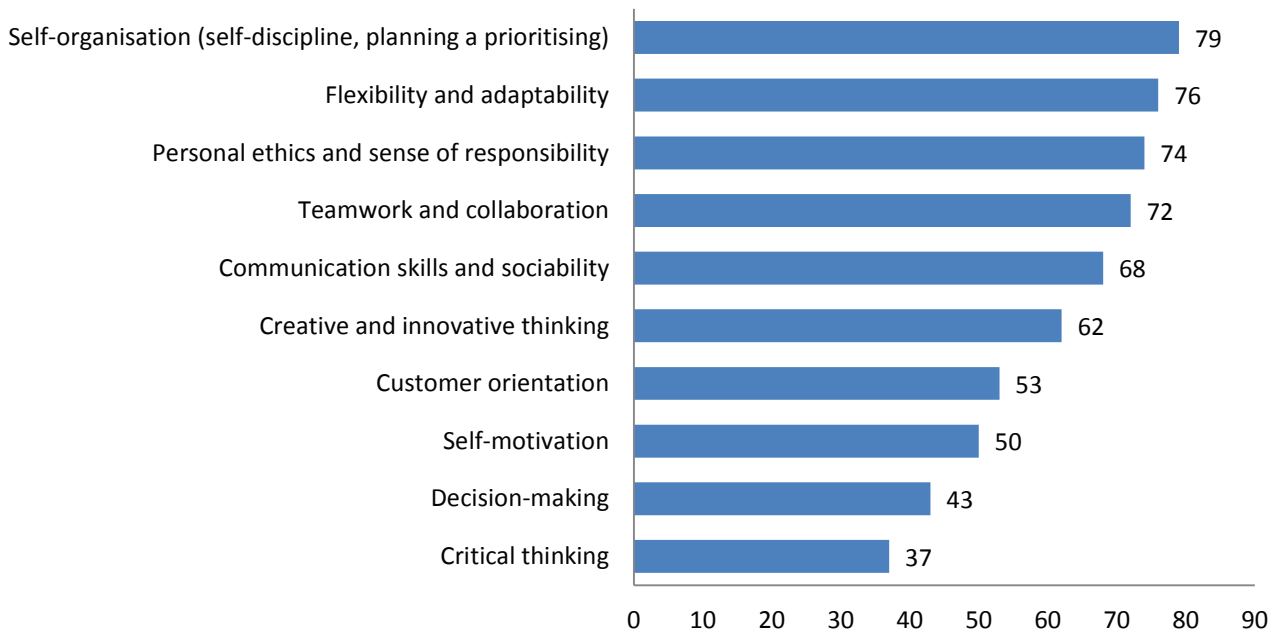
**Figure 2: Barriers of employing refugees for businesses and organisations**  
Source: COME IN Online Survey

Face-to-face interviewing shed more light on the challenges and barriers that occur (1) **on the side of the employers** and (2) **on the side of the employees**. Apart from general **administrative, legal** and **structural obstacles**, interviewees mentioned that employers have usually **limited access to the target group** and must rely on their personal contacts and effort to reach candidates from refugee community.

Even though some **challenges** accompany refugees' employment, once identified and acknowledged they can be overcome by well-tailored **support** and/or **training**.

## Competences

The research focused on **transversal** and **job-specific competences**. As presented in the figure 3, most of the competences indicated by the respondents are **transversal**.

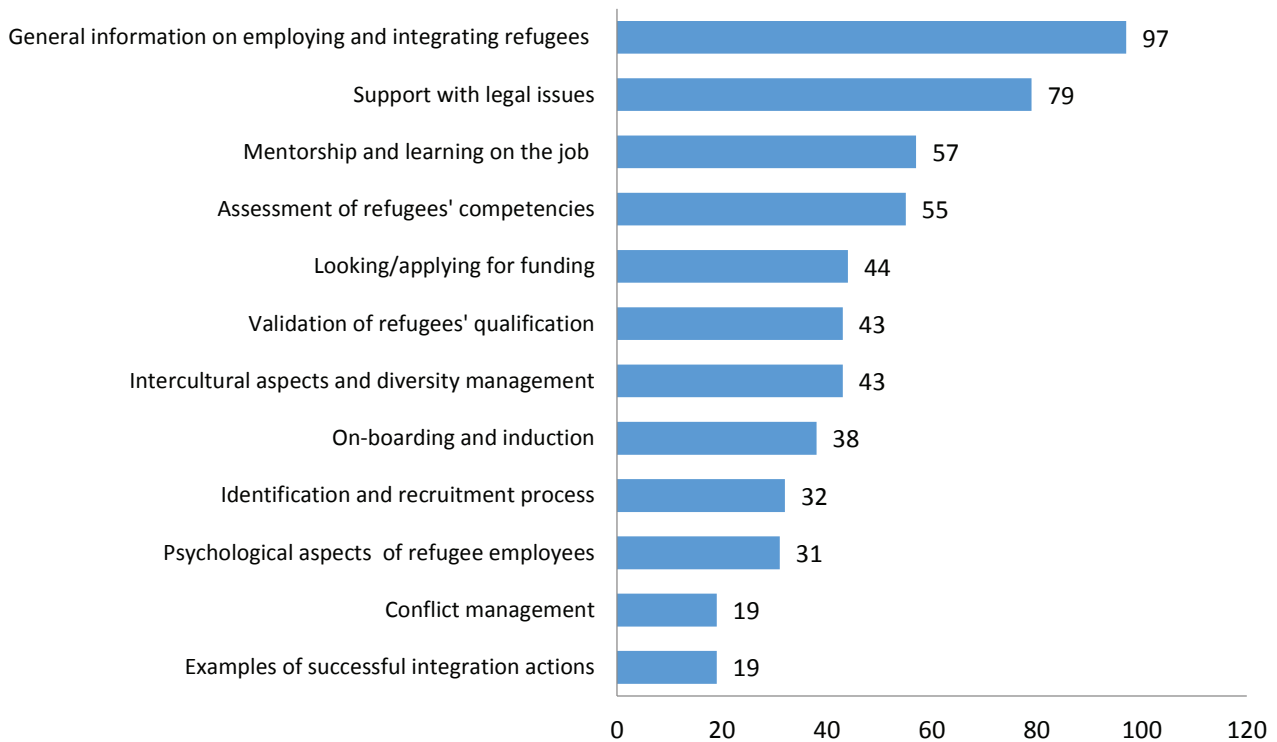


**Figure 3: Transversal and soft competences required at workplace**  
 Source: COME IN Online Survey

According to many interviewees, **specific job-related skills** aren't usually required from refugees, especially in case of **apprenticeships** or **internships**. Many stakeholders consider essential a **set of personal characteristics** and **transversal competences** such as **motivation, ability and will to work and learn** and **critical thinking**, while **job-specific competences** can be acquired later **by doing the job**. Furthermore, **sociability, friendliness, flexibility** and **adaptability** were frequently nominated as an important asset. However, **assessment of refugees' competences** is often a sticking point. Employers have limited possibilities to evaluate their competences during the phase or recruiting, selection and initial training. Moreover, employers encounter many difficulties in **recognition** of refugees' **education** and **professional experience**. **Assessment of competences** and work **performance** isn't usually formalised or structured, often simple **observation** is applied.

### Training and support needs of employers

As emerged from the research, employers need **general information** on hiring and integrating refugees and help with **legal** and **administrative issues**. Information and official instructions are often **confused** and **inconsistent**. On that account, support should focus mainly on providing employers with **well-structured** and **clearly arranged guidance**.



**Figure 4: Training and support needs of employers**  
Source: COME IN Online Survey

Even though Europeans' awareness of migration seems to be improving, **awareness raising actions** among employers are still fundamental. They should be sensitised not only about opportunities of refugees' employment (internships, funding or types of contracts available) but also about refugees' private life context and living conditions. **Success stories** of refugees' employment and **good integration actions** should be shared in order to help employers overcome the initial fear and encourage them in hiring refugees. To compensate the lack of experience, creation of **networks** or **contact lists** of employers, job agencies, public bodies, cultural mediators and refugee communities could be useful for job matching, pre-selection, pre-assessment, insertion and integration. As mentioned above, employers would also appreciate support in **competence assessment** and **evaluation**. Furthermore, employers asked for help with overcoming the **language barrier** whether in the form of language course for refugees and employees or interpreting. Since refugee-employees need extensive **on-the-job training**, employers must have specific **skills to deliver** such **training**. On that account, employers could strongly benefit from training on **mentoring** and **on-the-job training programmes**. Looking at the stakeholders' preferences, **blended** and **multi-channel training** should be offered. Training should include some interactive methods such as **round tables** with other employers and experts, **meetings** and **networking events**.



# Partners



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