



Transnational Research Report Needs Analysis

May 2018

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Content

1	Introduction.....	5
2	Methodology.....	6
3	Profile of respondents	7
3.1	Respondents' experience with employing refugees and migrants	8
4	Research results of the needs analysis.....	10
4.1	Benefits.....	10
4.2	Barriers.....	13
4.3	Competences	16
4.3.1	Competence assessment	20
4.4	Training and support needs of employers.....	21
4.4.1	Types of training	24
5	Conclusions and recommendations	24

1 Introduction

This research was carried out within the European project **COME IN - Competences in Enterprises on Integration**. It is a two-year project co-funded by the **Erasmus+ programme** of the European Union, KA2: Co-operation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices – Strategic Partnership for vocational education and training. The COME IN partnership holds together 7 organisations from 6 EU countries with different experience in migration and refugees' integration from strongly affected countries of the first entrance – Greece and Italy, target countries – Germany, Austria and Belgium and a transit country - Bulgaria. The partnership benefits from its internal diversity covering a wide range of expertise: a regional authority (Landkreis Kassel, Germany) being responsible for more than 1.000 refugees and at the same time for the economic development and capacity building in its region; labour market agencies, vocational and adult education providers (die Berater, Austria, BUPNET GmbH, Germany); NGOs experienced in refugees' integration (CESIE, Italy; 4Elements, Greece), a HR consultant with expert knowledge of employers' needs (Catro, Bulgaria) and Trendhuis (Belgium) experienced in research and strategic consulting for companies, organisations as well as the government.

Today's European labour markets face numerous challenges such as increasing numbers of vacant positions in some sectors, skill shortage, ageing workforces, or the lack of motivated apprentices. In these circumstances, refugees represent an important resource of human capital and enterprises need to learn how to exploit the wealth of talent that refugees bring to Europe. Furthermore, refugees' involvement in the labour market has crucial importance for their better integration to the wide society and building their belonging and cohesion. However, many European employers are still hesitant to employ refugees and HR managers may lack specific competences and tools needed for successful interaction with refugees. COME IN project intends to fill this gap and make employing refugees and their work integration easier through enhancing employers' competences and willingness to employ and to successfully interact with refugees. The project outputs address especially key staff in enterprises such as HR managers, supervisors and in-house trainers.

In order to develop a training programme tailored to the real needs of European employers, a transnational research combining quantitative and qualitative methodology was conducted in all 6 partner countries. The results of the research are presented in this report.

2 Methodology

The transnational research report is the sound basis for all the COME IN project phases. The research was composed of 3 steps: **needs analysis** including **online survey** and **interviews** and **desk research of good practices**.

1. **Online survey** reaching **185 respondents** from 9 European countries exploring opinions on the barriers enterprises have encountered or assume could encounter in case of employing a refugee, benefits of refugees' employment, competences required by employees' as well as existing training and support needs.
2. Semi-structured **interviews** with **33 stakeholders** from 6 partner countries including **employers** interested in employing refugees or already experienced in the employment of refugees, **experts** in the field of integration and **VET providers** exploring their attitudes toward employment and work integration of refugees and learning more about their training needs.
3. **Desk research** identifying and analysing the best practices on integration of migrants and other disadvantaged target groups into the workplace in Europe. The focus of the research was turned towards the practices that target primarily enterprises and the disadvantaged groups are rather the end beneficiaries. The final database of good practices consists of **35 best practices from 12 countries** and is **available in separate document**.

Subsequently, COME IN Training Pack to train and support key staff in European enterprises in refugee integration processes will be developed based on the conclusions drawn from the research. The analysis of good practice examples will serve as an initial inspiration for the entire following COME IN project work. The needs analysis (online survey and qualitative interviews) will help develop a well-tailored training pack targeting European employers' needs.

3 Profile of respondents

Online survey

The quantitative element of the research was carried out by the means of an **online survey** in which **185 respondents** from **9 European states** participated.

Country	Number of respondents
Belgium	46
Austria	42
Greece	42
Italia	26
Bulgaria	12
Germany	11
Czech republic	3
United Kingdom	2
Slovakia	1
SUM	185

Tab 1: Respondents of the online questionnaire

Respondents to the online survey come mainly from the sectors of **tourism** and **hospitality** (30 and 20 respondents) including hotels, restaurants or catering; and **cultural mediation** (24 respondents). Cultural mediation stands for a group of activities including mediation between refugees and local authorities, translations and interpretation, support when overcoming cultural differences, guiding refugees through administrative procedures etc. The third highest share (19 respondents) occupies the field of private and public **healthcare** which is represented by hospitals, retirement homes or live-in caregivers.

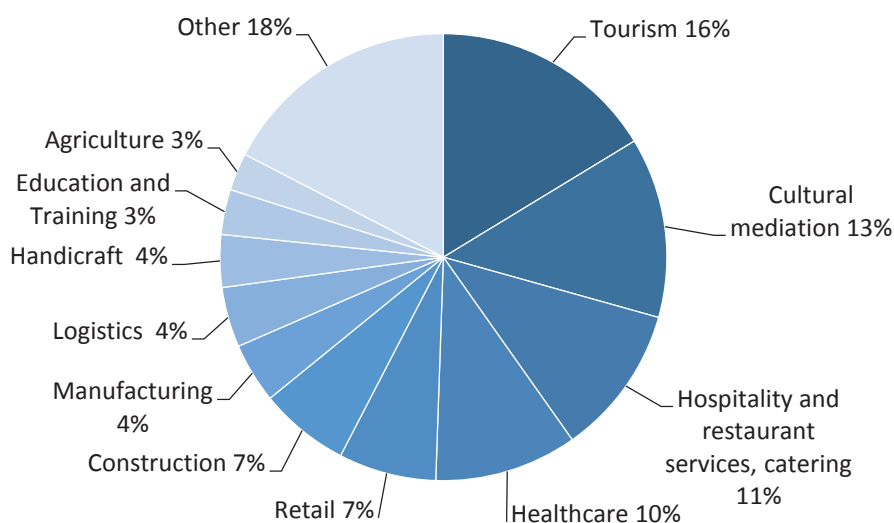


Figure 1: Structure of respondents to the online survey

In the section labelled as “other” different sectors mentioned once or twice are grouped including marketing, financial services or research.

Interviews

In the course of the research, COME IN partners **interviewed 33 stakeholders** in **6 EU countries** including **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. The structure of interviewees is broken down below.

	Employers	VET providers	Experts on migrants’ integration	Recruiting/job agency	SUM
Austria	2	2	1	-	5
Belgium	3	1	1	-	5
Bulgaria	2	1	1	1	5
Germany	5	2	1	-	8
Greece	1	2	2	-	5
Italy	3	-	1	1	5
SUM	16	8	7	2	33

Tab 2: Structure of interviewees

Employers interviewed in the course of the research come from different fields and sectors: **Constructions** (AT, DE), **Retail** (BG, DE, IT), **Logistics** (DE), **Manufacturing** (BG), **Dressmaking** (IT), **Hospitality** (AT), **Gastronomy** (DE, IT, EL), **Energy** (BE) and a public **Centre of social welfare** (BE).

3.1 Respondents’ experience with employing refugees and migrants

In total, **52%** of respondents to the online survey (97) **have some experience with refugees’ or migrants’ employment**. These experienced employers come 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.

According to the further qualitative research, refugees and migrants are hired under a variety of contracts. However, employers often have their first experience with refugee employees through **internships** and **apprenticeships**.

For example, **in Italy**, “*borse di lavoro*” and other types of **externally funded internships** are very popular among employers. Some of them use the few-months long internships to get to know better the employee and if both employer and intern are satisfied, the internship can be prolonged to a standard contract. On the other hand, some employers exploit the opportunity of such internships to cover their staff needs without increasing the expenditures.

In Germany, the **lack of apprentices** seems to be currently the most challenging issue, which can be partially resolved by admitting refugees in apprenticeships. This is an advantageous opportunity especially for young refugees who have the chance to get a German school qualification and go through the vocational training system from the beginning.

The first experience is very important since **employers** that had the chance to have a **refugee or immigrant in their team** are usually **more likely to hire** them in future and are generally more open toward multi-national and multi-cultural workplaces.

4 Research results of the needs analysis

The key findings emerged from the needs analysis are presented and commented in the following text. The results are broken down into 4 thematic clusters: **Benefits**, **Barriers**, **Competences** and **Training needs**.

Firstly, the quantitative part of the research is analysed (**online questionnaires**), which is followed by the results of the qualitative research (**interviews**). Insights to the work integration of refugees given by interviewed stakeholders will help explain the trends identified during the quantitative phase.

4.1 Benefits

Employing refugees and migrants may have some positive effects on the enterprises as well as on their work team and customers. One of the objectives of the research was to find out if and to which extent employers are aware of such benefits. Questioning about benefits that employing refugees and migrants bring to the employers and their businesses were part of the **online questionnaires** as well as the **interviews**.

The following figure shows the benefits most frequently indicated in the online questionnaires.

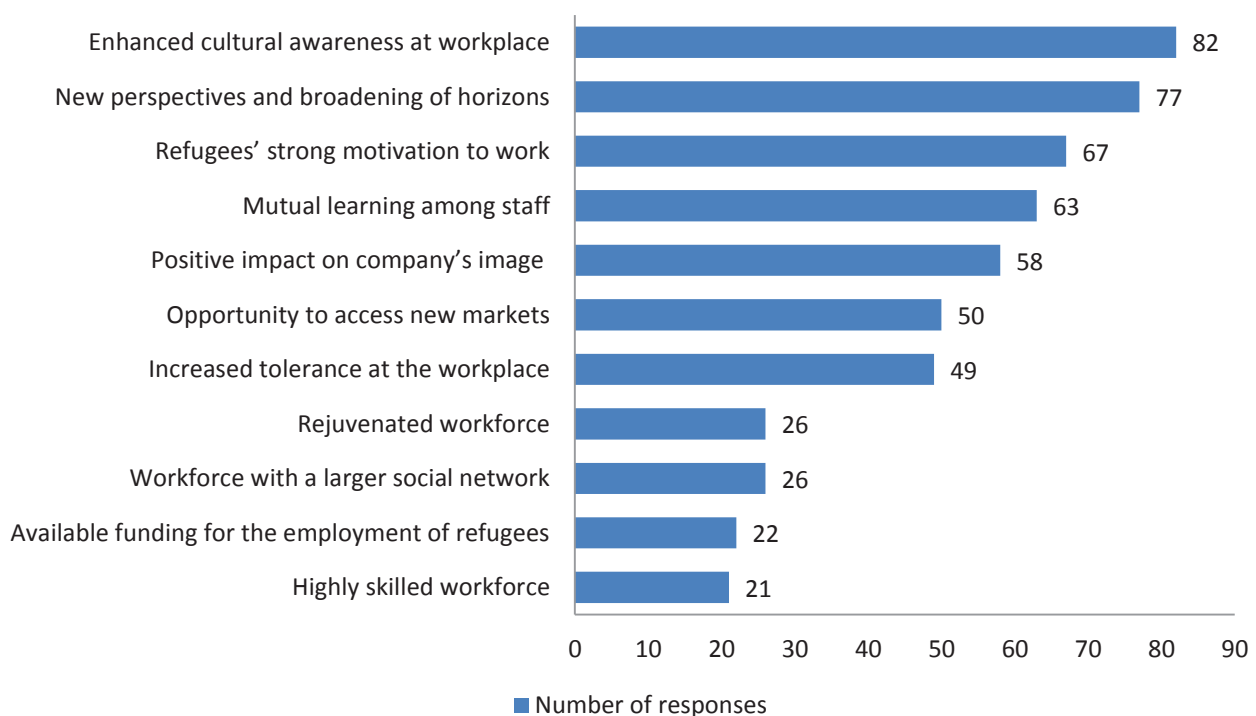


Figure 2: Benefits of employing refugees for businesses and organisations
Source: COME IN Online Survey

Interviewees had a chance to think about further benefits and elaborate on their importance and meaning for all stakeholders. All the benefits mentioned by **interviewees** are listed in the table below. Since the qualitative methodology was applied, the order doesn't reflect the frequency of the responses but intends to showcase **all the possible benefits** of employing refugees and migrants that interviewees considered.

- *Refugees as valuable human resource as any other employee*
- *Rejuvenated workforce*
- *Refugees as experienced workforce*

- *Refugee workers are willing to accept lower salary*
- *Economic benefits (incentives, financial support, tax advantages etc.)*

- *Highly motivated and engaged workers*
- *Workers with great work effort*
- *Refugees' attitude: Humble hard workers willing to accept some sacrifices and grateful for any job opportunity*
- *Highly focused workers*
- *Willing to learn*

- *Cultural exchange within the work team*
- *Enhanced cultural awareness*
- *Major tolerance and reduced prejudices at workplace*
- *Mutual learning at workplace*
- *New ideas and different perspective*
- *Increased creativity*
- *Enriched social network*
- *Refugee employees as a bridge to refugee communities*

- *Refugees' knowledge of several foreign languages*
- *Possibility to expand the scope of business (to enter new markets, address new clients and language groups, exploit new expertise)*
- *Positive impact on company's image through CSR and positive marketing*

Tab 3: Benefits for businesses and organisations

Source: COME IN Interviews

Two main interpretations of advantages of employing refugees may be observed. Some benefits mentioned by the interviewees are related to the **refugees' contribution** to the business in sense of their **knowledge, skills, attitude, experience** etc. On the other hand, some interviewees referred to refugees' employment as a way to gain **hardworking employees for lower salary** or as an **opportunity to reach subsidies** from the government.

This issue is very sensitive as the exploitation of refugees' work or work of other disadvantaged groups is a serious problem in European and world measures. COME IN aims to promote a positive approach focusing on refugees' employment beneficiary to all: employers, society and refugees.

Some of the interviewees (in particular, some of the **Austrian** stakeholders) mentioned not only benefits for companies but **also benefits for refugees** and the **society**. Firstly, having a job and salary 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 hosting society** and local community. Finally, according to some interviewees, refugees' integration to the hosting society and **cohesion with other citizens** increases by participating in the labour market, paying taxes and social contributions.

In some interviews, major importance was attached to **CSR** and to the **positive image** of a company as an inclusive and responsible organisation. Some employers use the fact they employ refugees as a part of their marketing (e.g. articles in local newspaper). On the other hand, this aspect was considered as fairly controversial by some stakeholders. Several interviewees claimed that refugees are valued as any other employee and they are not showcased and used for image-making purposes.

Interviewees across all the countries involved in the research often emphasised refugees' **strong work commitment** and **higher motivation** as an important advantage. Refugees' motivation, however, is often **external** and conditioned by the essential need of earning a living.

Furthermore, refugees represent a **valuable human resource** that brings skills enriching the business, especially the knowledge of several foreign languages that are highly useful in the sector of **tourism, hospitality** and in **services** in general. Other specific skills are useful in **artistic** or **creative** sectors, for example in gastronomy (new influences in cuisine) or dress-making (use of unconventional colour combinations and patterns). Migration background together with knowledge of foreign languages and dialects creates plenty of work opportunities for refugees and migrants in the field of **cultural mediation** (e.g. mediation

between refugees and local authorities, translations and interpretation, support when overcoming cultural differences, guiding refugees through administrative procedures etc.).

4.2 Barriers

Employing refugees includes some specific challenges and may be affected by actual as well as subjectively perceived barriers. The following figure presents the rating of barriers often linked to the refugees' employment.

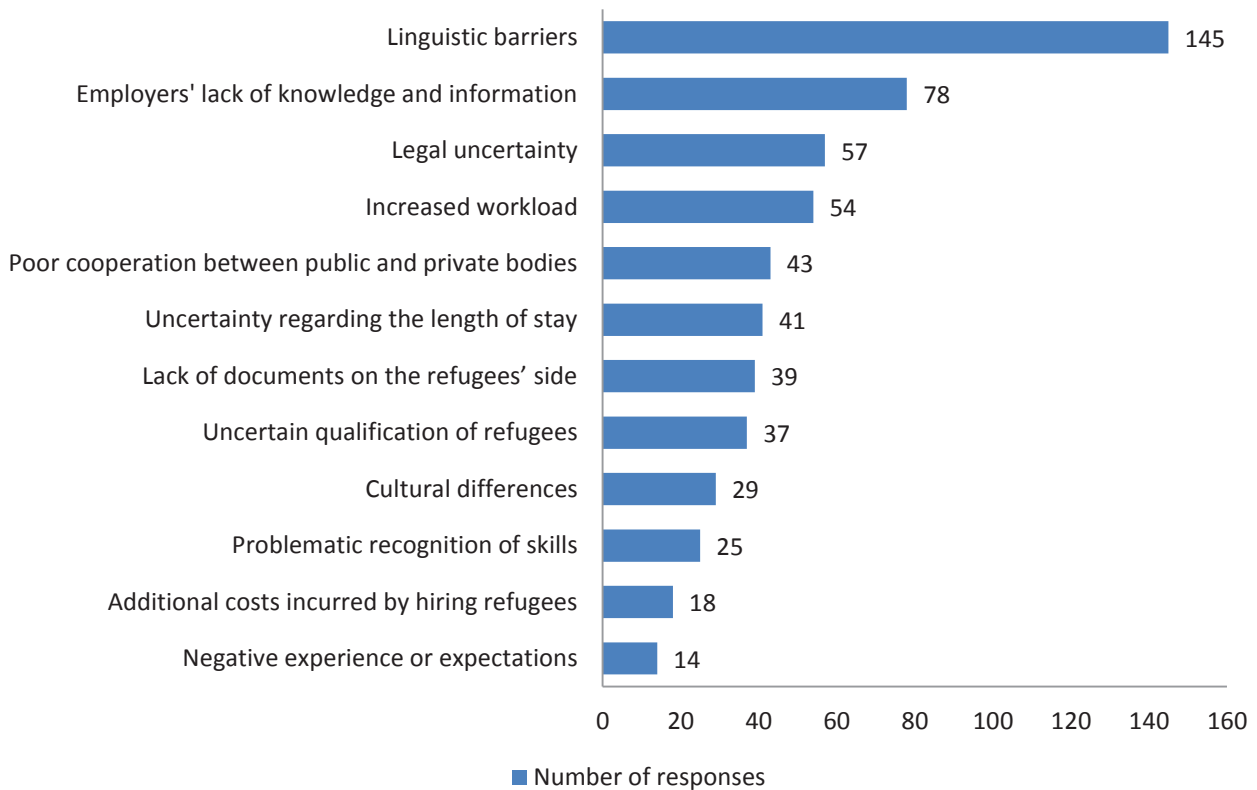


Figure 3: Barriers of employing refugees for businesses and organisations
Source: COME IN Online Survey

Almost all the respondents marked **linguistic barrier** as the main obstacle in refugees' employment, nearly a half of the participants claimed that they **lack** the necessary **knowledge and information** for a successful recruitment and work integration of refugees. At this place, it is important to highlight that only 14 respondents think that their **negative experience** or **expectations** embody an obstacle in refugees' employment.

Face-to-face interviewing shed more light on the challenges and barriers. The table below showcases all the barriers that according to the interviewees make employment of refugees

complicated or discourage employers from their hiring. Some of the general obstacles, such as **poor language skills**, were named by all stakeholders; other barriers were mentioned only once and were based on a personal attitude or experience of the interviewee. The table doesn't provide a ranking but intends to give an overview of **all the possible obstacles** and challenges of employing refugees mentioned by the interviewees.

Barriers on the side of employers

- *Legal uncertainty regarding refugees' employment*
- *Lack of information available and insufficient knowledge because of complexity of regulations*
- *Insufficient governmental support*
- *Insufficient opportunities of financial support (from public funds)*
- *Bureaucratic burdens related to employing refugees on the side of employers*
- *Strict regulations linked to execution of some professions*

- *Increased workload and costs for companies*
- *Uncertainty regarding the length of stay*
- *Lack of documents on the refugees' side*
- *Missing/unclear permission to work*
- *Difficult recognition of refugees' formal qualification (diplomas and certificates)*
- *Difficult evaluation the competences of refugees (missing formal qualification and employer's previous experience – no reference point)*
- *Insufficient experience with refugees' integration*
- *Problematic connection to the target group – it is difficult for employers to get in touch with refugee communities*

Barriers on the side of refugees

- *Language barrier*
- *Cultural differences and employer's un-readiness to deal with them*
- *Employers' low confidence in refugees*
- *Existing prejudices and stereotypes, negative experience or expectations*
- *Unwelcoming environment in society (supported by negative reporting on migration in media)*

- *Risk of conflicts at the workplace*
- *Risk of exclusion at the workplace*

- *Additional administrative burden on the side of refugees (higher absenteeism)*
- *Refugees' poor knowledge of local norms and standards*
- *Refugees' unrealistic expectations about life in Europe, salary and workload*
- *Problems with punctuality and working habits*
- *Working requirements may collide with refugees' religious needs*
- *Lack of refugees' motivation*
- *Lack of refugees' self-confidence and general assumption that refugees are qualified for low-skilled jobs only*
- *Insufficient IT skills of refugees*
- *Difficulties in refugees' private life that affect their performance at work*
- *Traumatization (psychological problems of refugees)*

Tab 4: Barriers of employing refugees for businesses and organisations
Source: COME IN Interviews

The barriers to employing and integrating refugees occur (1) **on the side of the employers** and (2) **on the side of the employees**. Apart from general **administrative and legal obstacles**, interviewees brought to light 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.

Uncertainty regarding refugees' length of stay is an issue in all the countries involved in the research. Enterprises might be reluctant to hire refugees or asylum seekers and invest money and time in their training and integration if there is no assurance that their application will be approved or if they will stay in the country. **Bulgaria** seems to be even more affected by this problem as it is a **transit country** for most of the refugees.

In the case of **Germany**, **strict state regulations regarding some professions** seem to be one of the major **structural barriers** to refugees' employment. One of the German experts on integration claimed that the biggest challenge of refugees' employment is that for many professions people need to have successfully attended the official vocational training

(apprenticeships) and passed the final exams to be allowed to work in said professions. Without an official certificate for a specific profession it is almost impossible to find a job in Germany. Moreover, recognition of refugees' prior work experience and qualifications in Germany (in other countries as well) is fairly complicated and often not possible at all. Similar doubts were expressed by interviewees in other countries: due to language barrier, absence of standardised national or bilateral procedures and other reasons, **recognition of educational and professional qualification**, certificates and other documents is very complicated if not nearly impossible.

Refugees' high motivation was mentioned in the previous sub-chapter as one of the benefits for companies. Apparently, **lack of motivation** may also figure as an obstacle in some cases. As emerged from one of the interviews done in **Italy**, refugees are often forced (by the need to earn for living) to do a work they don't like or are overqualified for. Consequently, their initial motivation is replaced by frustration and their work performance declines rapidly.

Stakeholders across all the countries involved in COME IN research are aware that refugees' work performance and overall integration to the workplace is strongly affected by their **personal life and the conditions they live in**. As an example may serve a testimony of an **Italian** employer who noticed that one of his employees (an asylum seeker) often came to work tired and unkempt. He got curious about his life outside of the workplace and learnt that his employee lived in an overcrowded asylum centre, attended various courses during the day and walked a long distance to work because he didn't have a car or money for public transport. The major problem is that employers are often not aware of the private life of their employees. However, in the case of refugees this aspect affects strongly their work performance as well as their integration.

4.3 Competences

COME IN research focused on competences on different levels; respondents were asked to think about **knowledge, skills and competences** they require from their employees distinguishing between those **transversal** and **job-specific**.

In the online questionnaire, participants were asked to identify the most important competences for employees in their sector. Surprisingly, major part of competences nominated can be classified as **transversal**. During the interviews this finding could be

explained. According to many interviewees, **specific job-related skills** aren't usually required from refugees, especially in case of **apprenticeships** (Germany) or **internships** (Italy). Many stakeholders consider as essential **a set of personal and transversal competences** such as critical thinking, basic literacy, responsibility or motivation, while **job-specific competences** can be acquired later by doing the job. This may be partly explained by pointing out that refugees and immigrants are still often hired for low-skilled positions with low professional profile. In case of **manual work**, **good physical condition** and **endurance** are required.

Nevertheless, in some sectors, **specific hard skills** and occupation-specific skills are required. The following table showcases those indicated during the interviews and in the online survey.

Logistics: *driving licence and driving skills*

Warehouse: *permit and ability to operate a forklift*

Gastronomy: *knowledge of food safety regulations (HACCP), cooking skills, knowledge of local and seasonal products, knowledge of recipes (national, local) – some employers require knowledge of meals that are typical in the hosting country (interviewee from Germany) others welcome new influences to enrich their menu (interviewee from Italy).*

Dress-making/tailoring: *sawing*

Healthcare: *university degree and professional certifications*

Handicraft: *manual skills, work techniques, executive skills*

Tab 5: Occupation-specific skills

Source: COME IN Interviews and COME IN Online Survey

Other **hard-skills** in demand are of more **transversal** character meaning they can be transferred from one context to another. For example, general **literacy**, **IT skills** (refugees' IT skills usually don't meet European standards), **mathematical** skills, knowledge of **foreign languages**. Besides the language of the hosting country, knowledge of other foreign languages and dialects is extremely useful in **tourism** and **cultural mediation**. In the case of **cultural mediation**, a specific set of mostly soft competences is desired such as **empathy**, **intercultural awareness**, **communication**, **ability to relate to others** (networking), **ability to develop plans** for the future and **forming strategies**. Considering **tourism** and **hospitality**, **customer orientation** and **customer care** were mentioned various times. Job-specific **qualification** and/or previous **professional experience** are essential for some job

positions. However, as respondents confirm, it is hardly possible to receive and/or recognise such documentation.

In the upshot, most of the participants to the online survey and interviews agreed that **soft skills, transversal competences** and **personal characteristics** are more important than hard skills because those can be learned on the job.

The following figure shows the ranking of **transversal and soft competences**¹ that respondents to the online survey marked in a multiple choice question.

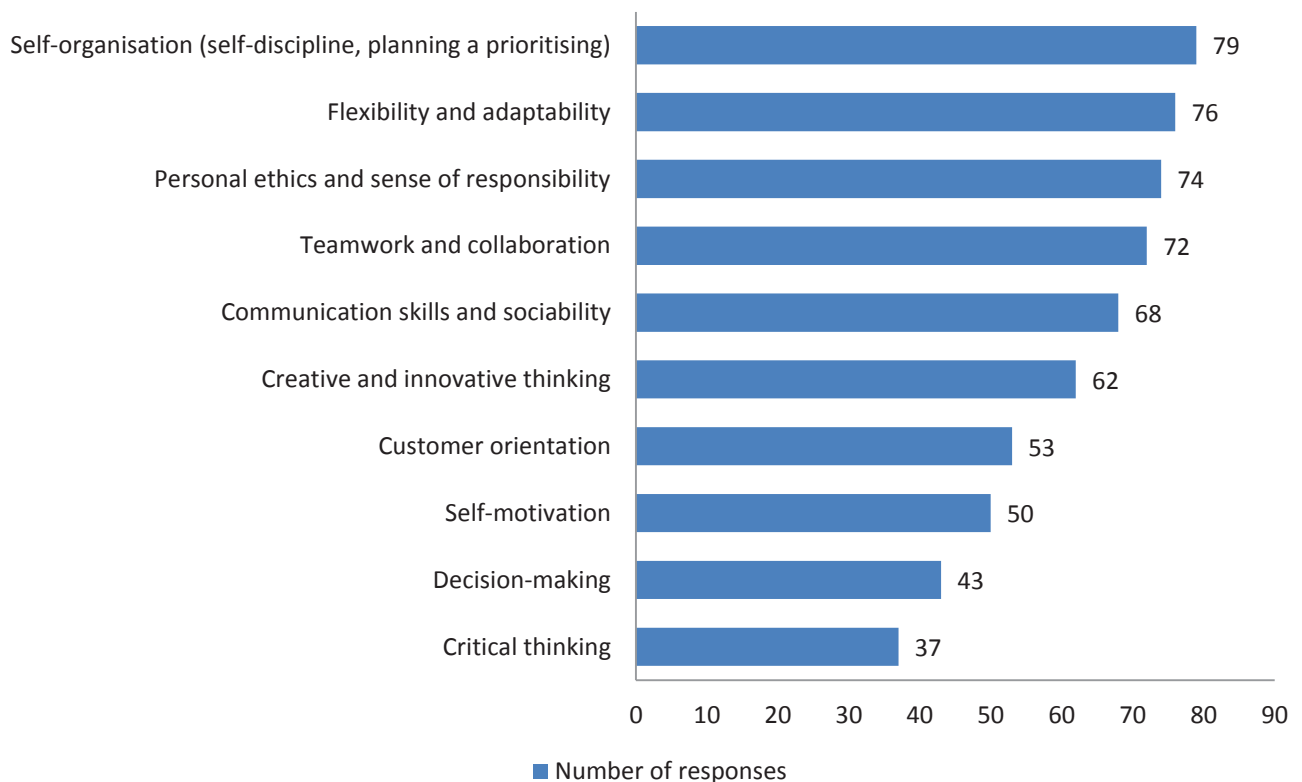


Figure 4: Transversal and soft competences required at workplace
Source: COME IN Online Survey

Stakeholders interviewed added further competences they consider important in their employees, not only refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers. The table below summarises all of them mentioned.

¹ *Transversal knowledge, skills and competences are relevant to a broad range of occupations and economic sectors. They are often referred to as core skills, basic skills or soft skills, the cornerstone for the personal development of a person. Transversal knowledge, skills and competences are the building blocks for the development of the "hard" skills and competences required to succeed on the labour market.*

European Commission, ESCO (2018). *Transversal knowledge, skills and competences*. [accessed 20-04-2018]
 Available online:

https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/escopedia/Transversal_knowledge%252C_skills_and_competences

<i>Elementary level or literacy</i>	<i>Working under pressure</i>
<i>Mathematical skills</i>	<i>Multi-tasking and versatility</i>
<i>IT skills</i>	<i>Adaptability</i>
<i>Knowledge of languages</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>
<i>Critical thinking</i>	<i>Open-mindedness</i>
<i>Creative thinking</i>	<i>Tolerance and intercultural awareness</i>
<i>Organisational skills (planning and prioritizing)</i>	<i>Teamwork</i>
<i>Ability to learn</i>	<i>Sociability and ability to relate to others</i>
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Communication skills</i>
<i>Problem solving</i>	<i>Customer orientation</i>
<i>Decision-making</i>	<i>Empathy</i>
<i>Precision and punctuality</i>	<i>Self-awareness</i>
<i>Goal-orientation</i>	<i>Self-improvement</i>
<i>Persistence</i>	<i>Self-motivation and Initiative</i>
<i>Patience</i>	

Tab 6: Transversal and soft competences required at workplace

Source: COME IN Interviews

Ability and will to work and learn together with **motivation** seem to be crucial competences in employees and job candidates. Some interviewees experienced in refugees'/asylum seekers' employment added that the ability to **maintain the initial motivation** and **good performance** is what they seek for in all employees. **Precision, punctuality** and **respect of rules** were also mentioned in connection with employing refugees. Employees with a different cultural background may find themselves in difficulty when respecting the rules of the workplace as they may not give appropriate importance to **timekeeping** or **meeting deadlines**. One of the **Italian** employers interviewed shared her experience with employees from Africa whose slower rhythm of life caused some problems when respecting due days of product delivery.

Sociability and **friendliness** manifested by participation in sport activities, joining meals or group conversation are important for employers since refugees (and new employees in

general) with such characteristics are likely to be integrated to the work team and consequently to the local community.

Flexibility and **adaptability** were frequently marked as an important asset in the online questionnaires and many interviewees confirmed it. Flexibility was explained by some interviewees as willingness to work overtime, in night hours and during weekends. In this context, flexibility should be classified likely as a requirement than a competence. This was emphasised especially in the case of **live-in caregivers** (typically in **Italy**) who may spend 24 hours a day 7 days a week with their client.

Taking into account job positions where the employee is in contact with customers, **neat** and **well-kept appearance** is required. As mentioned above, this is not a natural thing in case of refugees and asylum seekers considering their living conditions.

Even though, **intercultural awareness** and **ability to work in multicultural teams** is often required from the “national” employees, interviewees agreed that certain level of **intercultural awareness** and **tolerance** is essential also for refugees to get on well with colleagues and integrate to the workplace. Furthermore, refugees who want to apply for a job should **know** and **understand cultural customs** and **work culture** of the hosting country (emphasised particularly by **Austrian** interviewees).

4.3.1 Competence assessment

Assessment of competences during the phase of recruiting and subsequently assessment of work performance were discussed during face-to-face interviews. From the research emerged that common recruitment procedures such as **CV scanning**, **interviewing** and **reference checking** are applied when recruiting refugees. The last named is usually very complicated if not impossible and employers may be discouraged from hiring candidates without clear supporting documents (certificates, licences etc.). As already mentioned above, employers encounter some difficulties when hiring refugees since there is none or limited support system or tools for the **recognition** of their previous **education** and **professional experience** and for the **assessment** of their **competences**. Additionally, foreign diploma and certificates are usually undervalued by some employers (pointed out in particular in interviews from **Belgium**). **Competence assessment** can be done by a third body in the phase of **pre-selection** (e.g. by Integration office in **Germany** or private job agency in **Italy**).

A job agency interviewed in **Italy** applies **non-formal assessment activities** to identify competences and motivations of refugees engaging also a **mediator** or **facilitator**.

Assessment of competences and work performance **on the job** (mostly during the trial period) isn't usually formalised or structured. Assessment is often done by the **observation** of the results of their performance. Employers take also into account the feedback of colleagues and customers.

4.4 Training and support needs of employers

In conclusion of the questioning and interviewing, employers' training needs and preferences were explored. Apparently, employers call for **general information** on hiring and integration of refugees in the workplace and help with **legal issues** related to refugees' employment. From the interviews emerged that the core of the problem is not a shortage of information but rather **confusion and inconsistency of information** and official instructions. In **Belgium**, there is a considerable difference between small and large companies in this regard. While large companies which have solid HR services can deal with complicated procedures on their own, small companies need more guidance. On that account, support programmes should focus mainly on providing employers with **well-structured** and **clearly arranged guidance**. The rating of training and support needs is illustrated by the figure below.

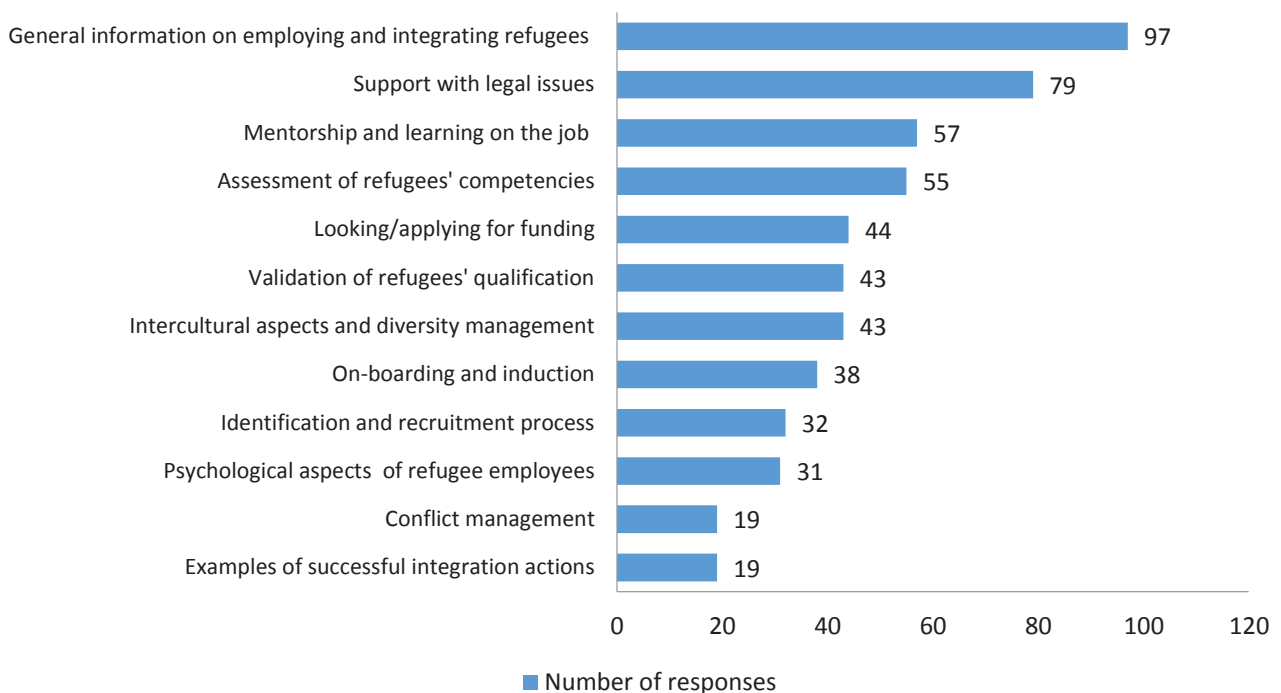


Figure 5: Training and support needs of employers

Source: COME IN Online Survey

Further training and support needs were discussed during interviews. The complete list is showcased below and followed by an interpretation.

- *Awareness raising*
- *Motivate employers to hire refugees*
- *Examples to follow or drew inspiration from – success stories, testimonies and study visits, networking with experienced local enterprises*
- *Testimonies of other employers but also from refugees (how having a job impacted their life and integration to society)*
- *Pre-selection (by external body)*
- *Recruiting strategies – external mediation/contacting the target group*
- *On-boarding and induction*
- *Legal and administrative issues – step by step guide*
- *Guide on funding opportunities*
- *Information about refugees' qualification*
- *Assessment of refugees' competences*
- *Legal and administrative issues concerning refugees to inform employers about the process refugees and asylum seeker go through (in order to sensitise them)*
- *Tackle stereotypes of employers and work team*
- *Techniques to support refugees' integration at the workplace*
- *Communication – how to talk with refugees about sensible topics such as hygiene, rules...*
- *Conflict management*
- *Mentorship and learning on the job*
- *Psychological aspect in integration*
- *Language courses for refugees*

Tab 7: Training and support needs of employers

Source: COME IN Interviews

Even though European stakeholders' awareness of refugees' integration seems to be improving, **awareness rising actions** among employers are still fundamental. They should be

sensitised not only about opportunities of refugees' employment (internships, funding programmes and types of contracts available) but also about refugees' private life context and living conditions.

To help employers overcome the initial fear and promote refugees' employment, **success stories** and **good integration actions** should be shared (also in the form of meetings, study visits, presentations, storytelling etc.). As it emerged from the research, employers that have experience with refugees' employment are usually more positive about their hiring in future.

To compensate the lack of experience, the creation of a specific **network** or **contact list** of employers, job agencies, public bodies, cultural mediators and refugee communities could be useful for the purpose of job matching, pre-selection, pre-assessment, insertion and integration.

As mentioned above, employers would also appreciate support in **competence assessment and evaluation**, especially in the phase of **pre-selection** and candidate-job **matching**. Furthermore, the interviewees often expressed that they needed help with overcoming the **language barrier** whether in the form of language course for refugees and employees or interpreting.

Since many participants in the research admitted that it is not possible to employ a refugee without extensive on-the-job training, employers need specific skills in their organisation to deliver such training. On that account, **mentoring** and **on-the-job training programmes** seem to be useful for employers.

And finally, some of the employers interviewed (e.g. in Italy and Germany) were confident about **not needing any training** as they successfully deal with problems occurring at their workplace using their common sense and experience. Some others expressed that they don't plan to undergo any training unless a concrete problem occurs.

4.4.1 Types of training

Looking at the types of training proposed in the online questionnaires, it can be assumed that the stakeholders don't have any unambiguous preferences which confirm also the results from the interviews.

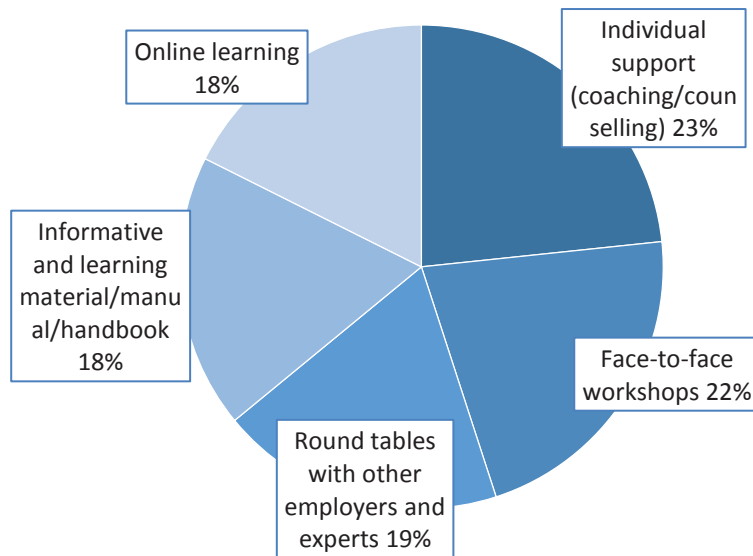


Figure 6: Preferred types of training

Source: COME IN Online Survey

Interviewees often preferred **blended training** including interactive methods such as **round tables** with other employers and experts, **meetings** and **networking events**. Some employers weren't interested in training courses but preferred **individual support** tailored to their specific needs. Finally, some employers were opposed to face-to-face workshops considering them time consuming, on the other hand, some employers didn't feel familiar with **online learning** tools.

Taking into account the results presented above, **blended** and **multi-channel training** should be offered in order to meet employers' needs and preferences.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

COME IN transnational research combined **quantitative** (185 respondents to the online survey) and **qualitative** (33 interviews) approach to find out **how integration of refugees in the workplaces can be best supported**. 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 achieved better understanding of their **training needs** and **preferences**.

According to the research results, employing refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants bring various **benefits** and **advantages** not only for **employers** and **refugee employees** but also to the whole **work team** as well as to the **society** and **economy** of the **host country** (and therefore the **European society and economy** too).

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

Key part of the research dealt with **competences** important in the labour market. We explored what **soft**, **transversal** and **job-specific competences** employers require and how they **assess** them in the phase of recruiting and employment. The results indicate that **soft skills**, **transversal competences** and **personal characteristics** are more important than hard and occupation-specific skills. In the first place, employers deem necessary refugees' **motivation** and **willingness to work and learn**, whereas job-specific knowledge and skills can be acquired later on the job. This may be partly explained by the fact that refugees and immigrants are still often hired for **low-skilled** positions with low professional profile and entry positions as **interns** or **apprentices**.

Assessment of refugees' competences is often a sticking point. Employers have limited possibilities and tools to evaluate their competences. Usually standard recruiting procedures are applied; rarely a **mediator** or **facilitator** is invited to support the assessment. Employers encounter some serious difficulties in **recognition** of refugees' **education** and **professional experience**.

In this context, support for employers should focus on **how to recognise and assess refugees' competences** at workplace. Besides, employers call for **general information** on hiring and integration of refugees in the workplace and **well-structured** and **clearly arranged guidance** on **legal issues** related to refugees' employment.

Awareness raising of refugees' situation in the host country can be successfully supported by promotion of **success stories** and **testimonies** of employers and refugee-employees accompanied by **networking** events. Training dedicated to **dealing with intercultural differences at workplace** seems to be helpful as well. Since refugee-employees need extensive **on-the-job training**, employers must have specific skills to deliver such training. On that account, employers could benefit from training on **mentoring** and **on-the-job training programmes**.

The training should be tailored to the employers' needs yet being universal enough to ensure high transferability. To meet this requirement, we identified the most relevant **sectors** for the refugees' integration: **tourism** and **hospitality** (including hotels, restaurants, catering, etc.), **healthcare** sector (hospitals, retirement homes, live-in carers, etc.), **manual work** (including handicraft, manufacturing, agriculture, constructions or job in warehouse) and **cultural mediation** (mediation between refugees and local authorities, translations and interpretation, support when overcoming cultural differences, etc.). Furthermore, we considered specific competences relevant in these sectors keeping in mind the priority employers assigned to **soft** and **transversal competences**.

Referring to the form or training for employers, **blended** and **multi-channel training** should be offered in order to meet their needs and preferences.



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