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Refugee Integration  
Policies, Gender issues and Trauma

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*A case study in Germany*

By

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Master Dissertation  
Master of Intercultural Studies for business\*

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*Porto, 2018*

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## Abstract

The recent influx of refugees has brought new adversities for countries which seek to grant asylum for displaced families. Policy makers and societies suddenly realize the challenges that urban systems face in integrating the sudden influx of newcomers. This dissertation provides an understanding of the role that states and societies play in the process of social integration of newcomers, using the context of Germany's recent host of a large influx of refugee newcomers and subsequent integration policies mostly in the educational systems. This dissertation's focal areas of study will be integration and refugee migrations as well as matters of gender and sexual orientation within the barriers of integration and the influence of trauma in performance and general well-being.

I will provide context on the relevance in today's political and social environment that understanding migration processes and what they bring to a society represents, I will contextualize as well the coming of mass migrations to Europe and the middle eastern conflicts that lead up to it.

This research will include interviews with integration agents such as an education ministry member and professors and refugee students as well as community members which will allow me to reach meaningful conclusions towards policies and its real-life impacts.

This dissertation brings together different data sources to describe the current characteristics of refugee integration; mostly in the educational system in Germany in the hope of informing future decision-making and policy formulation and provide awareness towards the importance and long-term range that integration measures carry.

**Key Words:** integration, immigration, refugees, Europe, Germany, gender, trauma, education

## Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Doutora Manuela Veloso, the door to Prof. Veloso's office and mailbox were always open whenever I ran into a doubt or had question about my research's path or writing. She consistently allowed this paper to be my own work but steered me in the right the direction with her kindness and serenity.

I would also like to and acknowledge the importance and beauty of Teacher Carla Moita's work, she has shown nothing but compassion and empathy for her students. I thank her for giving me access to her world and sharing her concerns and views with so much honesty and transparency and for allowing me to work on this project that I am so passionate about. Without her involvement, participation and input this dissertation would not have happened.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my support system:

To my mother whom I acknowledge as the most valuable example of a strong independent creative woman who has inspired me so much, I am gratefully indebted to her for getting me here and allowing me to spread my wings and follow my dreams even when she quite doesn't understand them.

Guilherme I thank for the strength, helpful input and constant unconditional support and encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching for this dissertation, you gave me confidence and stood there as my number one fan all along. Your presence was indispensable not only for the execution of this dissertation but for the success of my path.

Thank you.

Mariana Camelo

Junho, 2019

## Abbreviation List

- BAMF - *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*
- BüMA - Asylum-seeker Registration Certificate
- CEAS - Common European Asylum System
- EASY quota - *System zur Erstverteilung der Asylbegehrenden*
- EU - European Union
- EURODAC – European Asylum Dactyloscopy Database
- FGM - Female genital mutilation´
- GDP - Gross domestic product
- LGBTQ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, queer (community)
- PEGICIDA – Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the west
- PIK - Personalisation Infrastructure Component
- UN - United Nations
- UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency
- UNICEF – United Nations Children´s fund

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of people fleeing their homes as a consequence of persecution, war or other conflict has always existed. The international community was firstly confronted with this phenomenon due to the first and second World Wars. During this era, the international refugee regime was created based on a treaty - the 1951 Geneva Convention<sup>1</sup> and an international organizational Protocol that created the international organization - the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to aid and protect these vulnerable people and find adequate solutions for them. The treaty was rather meaningful, as it built a body of law concerning international migration and it expressed a legal definition to the term refugee.

The General Assembly of the United Nations included, in 1948, the institution of asylum into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, affirming that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution.

As it was mentioned above, the Convention provides protection, determines human rights, requirements and responsibilities relating to refugees, it also includes the right to obtain identification and travel documents, right to work, freedom from discrimination, access to education and to courts of law, the right to own property and freely choose a place of residence.

In 2015 the biggest inflow of refugees since World War II (OECD, 2015) has challenged the European Union once again, the influx is frequently known as "The refugee crisis". By mid-2015, Eurostat (2015) had verified more than 400,000 people registered as asylum seekers. Compared to the year of 2014, this amount represented twice as much. The EU was therefore confronted with the question of how to manage this massive influx.

The uneven distribution of refugees among Member States proves to be a pressing problem, the EU lacks in establishing compromises regarding costs distribution.<sup>2</sup> This was a main focal point for political discourse, and it revived the discussion on the importance of sharing the

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR (1950) "General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950 statute of the office of the united nations high commissioner for refugees"

<sup>2</sup> Bordignon, M., & Moriconi, S. (2017). *The case for a common European refugee policy. (Policy Contribution No. 8)*. Bruegel: Catholic University of Milan. <http://bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PC-08-2017.pdf>

burdens related to asylum policies, which triggered intense discussions clearly revealing the discrepancies among member states.

As the burdens of member states occupy most of the political discussion, one crucial element falls behind – education - it is the first and longest lasting step to achieving successful integration in societies. According to UNICEF, most of the children and refugees are deprived of education, whether in warzones or in refugee camps in Europe.

The current legislation is still volatile and shows very little signs of inclusion, however, there are some countries such as Germany, that can be taken as “model systems” for others to come in the future.

Burden sharing has regularly been the focus of attention in academic works. However, in regard to European asylum policies and educational systems in place there has been relatively little research, thus, further research is critical.

European member States are the driving force behind European politics, these are the ones that influence the most various aspects in society as we know it, it is crucial to develop the tools to be more active as citizens and understand policies and how they translate into society.

Understanding the reasons and steps taken by government's towards educational measures and refugee distribution provides a wider picture, which may lead to new findings, which have never been taken into consideration. Therefore, this thesis will focus mostly on asylum policies and educational conventions specifically in Germany, by doing so, this dissertation does not only contribute to already existing literature with data, in spite of the rather small sample it provides significant experiences and information, it can also be considered as a good starting point in finding a compromise on how to deal with refugees' educational systems and the specific implications that come with the refugee title (such as gender, sexual orientation and trauma) on a European level, it should also act as a reflexion upon governments responsibilities as European states given that this is or should be a shared crisis.

### Practical and theoretical Research Approach

Europe is currently the most common pathway for refugees, however, this movement towards the west continues to take a devastating toll on human life. Since the beginning of 2017, around 2,700 people are believed to have died or gone missing while crossing the

Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe<sup>3</sup> and these dangers do not end in Europe. Those moving onwards irregularly have reported abundant kinds of abuse, including being pushed back across borders, sexual abuse and gender-based violence or prejudice.

As the European Union struggled to cope with such a vast and irregular influx of migrants and refugees a political and social turmoil in Europe was installed, nevertheless, there seemed to be a drastic switch as Chancellor Angela Merkel decided to adopt an “open door policy” and open its borders to those seeking asylum; Germany's statistics office has since then recorded the highest number of immigrants in post war history.

As one could argue the humanitarian side of the action other factors should be taken into consideration for the discussion on the reasons for adopting this measure such as the ageing society that Germany represents with a constant shrinking population that might benefit in first hand from an influx of young, highly motivated workers.

Following this influx, a mass integration system was put in place to accommodate these needs; mostly in the educational system.

Given the European “Refugee Crisis” context Germany proved to be the only country in the EU providing fast answer to the “crisis” with an organized and solid integration system at a very vast scale (education, housing, asylum-process, quotas etc) that made it possible to proceed to investigation and deeper analysis.

In order to fully understand this complex system and measures field investigation was required. A trip to Germany in February of 2019, guided by a Portuguese teacher, allowed me to pursue answers throughout interviews with refugee students, members of the community, teachers and a member of the education ministry in regard of the systems’ functioning with the purpose of understanding if it adequately serves those undertaking it as well as comprehending if there are already palpable differences in society.

The approach in the initial chapters lies in theoretical background regarding integration, policies, mass migration conflict context and inclusive systems that is followed by the practical approach to the system and its participants; their input and points of view as well as detailed analysis to all the interviews and a parallelism between divergencies and convergencies, the last two chapters provide an insight to the influence of trauma not only in cognitive development but in integration and an overall conclusions on all of the approached themes.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/europe-emergency.html>

# Chapter 1

## The importance of integration processes

As a result of the war in Syria, as well as other humanitarian crises, poverty, and social deprivation in Africa and elsewhere, European Union countries have experienced high inflows of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants.

Years spent in a conflict zone or in transit may leave these populations with gaps in education, nutrition, and health concerns. In order to provide adequate protection and plan for integration, host governments and societies need information on the characteristics and conditions of the population entering the country. According to the signatories of the 1951 Geneva Convention, which include all EU member states, (according to Art. 1A (1) of the Geneva Convention) a refugee is an individual who:

- Has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion;
- Is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or (due to such fear) is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;
- Or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or unwilling to return to it due to such fear

As for the term *immigrant* is used by the European Commission to describe a person from a non-EU country establishing his or her usual residence in the territory of an EU country for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months.

Besides the tensions of the pre-migration context, several authors note that post-migration factors also affect refugee integration (Phillimore, J. 2011). The reception in the host country is a vital part of the post-migration experience. Therefore, the asylum procedure and accommodation as well as the residence status are considered key issues in refugee integration. Since integration is understood as a multidimensional two-way process, the achieved socio-economic position of refugees should not be the only factor being analysed to explain their integration process. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2018/05/Robila\\_EGM\\_2018.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2018/05/Robila_EGM_2018.pdf)

Integration consists in a two-way process based on mutual accommodation by all immigrants and host societies of member states. This implies the need for active participation and open-minded attitudes by both sides of a society.

Jimenez T. H. (2011) defines immigrant integration as “a process wherein immigrants and the communities in which they settle – both the individuals and institutions – mutually adapt to one another.”

The reference to the bipartisan nature of integration is important to keep in mind when thinking about receptivity. In terms of immigrant integration success, Jimenez notes that while some state and local governments choose a path toward enforcement-only and restrictive immigration policies, other places choose to develop immigrant integration policies directed towards welcoming newcomers. In many cases, such efforts are often partnerships with local NGOs and other organizations that help implement integration policies. In the end, restrictive policies lead to high social and economic costs for an entire community, whereas encouraging and facilitating immigrant integration can benefit newcomers and the receiving community overall.

On the one hand, it is the responsibility of the host society to guarantee the right of immigrants and newcomers to full participation in the cultural, economic, social, and political life of the country, ensuring the protection of these rights within the framework of European common values and the international human rights principles in vigour. On the other hand, it is of the responsibility of migrant communities to respect common values and European standards and to actively contribute to the wellbeing and development of the societies in which they are inserted in.

Plural societies need to develop a consistent knowledge base on integration, not only the elaboration of policies but measures of awareness. Integration is an important tool to achieve social cohesion in plural societies, where the respect and promotion of diversity act as a parallel and contribute to a democratic and human rights-based perspective of the world.<sup>5</sup>

Theorists like Esser H. (2004) have already characterize different dimensions of integration. He defined four specific stages; The first, *Kulturation*, is based on the assimilation of knowledge and skills (e.g. the language of the host country) in order to create involvement

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<sup>5</sup> Council of Europe (2016) “Human rights in culturally diverse societies - guidelines adopted by the committee of ministers and compilation of council of Europe standards”

in the host society. Involvement in society is therefore a key aspect. The second dimension, *Interaktion* refers to the extent of intercultural social contacts established with, for instance, friends, neighbours and even a spouse. This dimension's most predominant aspects are definitely the emotional ones. Finally, *Identifikation* gives a sign of the emotional bonding with the host country. Esser states that this can only be established if the other three dimensions are met, at least to a certain extent.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Culturation</b>  | <b>Interaction</b>   |
| The transmission to and acquisition of knowledge, cultural standards and competencies by an individual necessary for successfully interacting in society. | In a case of social action characterized by mutual orientations of actors and the formation of relations and networks.     |
| <b>Placement</b>  | <b>Identification</b>  |
| An individual acquisition and occupation of relevant positions in society.  | Indicates the identification of an actor with a social system by which he sees himself as an element of a collective body. |

Immigrant integration involves what may often be uncomfortable adjustments for immigrants and their families as well as the receiving community. Jimenez, H. (2004) describes five main indicators: language proficiency, socioeconomic attainment, political participation, residential area, and social interaction with host communities. Jimenez notes that the challenges to successful integration remain significant however he proceeds to compare the integration of immigrants today from past waves of immigrant settlement and he concludes that the end result remain "strikingly similar to the successful integration observed among past immigrant inflows."

Defining clear integration strategies not only contributes to one's motivation to fit in and assimilate culture but it shows productivity, the Centre for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII) at the University of Southern California found that "in regions where immigrant integration is fostered, immigrants perform better, and the entire region also thrives." Furthermore, the Centre states "the results are better economic outcomes for immigrants and the region."

Other international organizations such as Cities of Migration, the Building Resilient Regions Network at the University of California, Migration Policy Institute, among others, have studied and written about the importance of immigrant integration for the country and for metropolitan regions, cities, and local communities. If leaders were to put more effort into immigrant integration and inclusion, rather than actively attempting to exclude migrants from actively participating in society and economy, they would see direct economic gains to their state and cities. <sup>6</sup>

Cardinal Marx, the Archbishop of Munich and chair of the German bishops' conference noted that:

Migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees should not be regarded as passive suppliants begging for favors," but rather as "persons who dare a new beginning, who are eager to advance the well-being of themselves, of their families and of the communities in which they live. <sup>7</sup>

### 1.1 European migration policies. birth and development

Integration appears as one of the first goals identified in the European Union, the EU asylum policy is embedded in a long-standing international regime of refugee protection (Loescher, G. 2008 p.7; Marrus, M. 1988 p.20-22), which aims to keep the balance between security and liberty firmly towards liberty and the rights of victims of persecution. The international system was established on 14 December 1949, when a Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly created the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>8</sup>

Asylum itself in the EU has its roots in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in an agreement founded on Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted for Western Europe. Ever since, it has been the cornerstone of contemporary international refugee law, only supplemented by the 1967 New York Protocol, which extended the Geneva provisions to the rest of the world.

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<sup>6</sup> University of Southern California Commissioned by the California Community Foundation (2009) "Immigrant integration - Strategic Directions for Funders"

<sup>7</sup> ICMC (2017) "Integrating migrants and refugees, a two-way road that benefits everyone"

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR (1950) "General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950 statute of the office of the united nations high commissioner for refugees"

Succeeding the adoption of the Schengen Agreement on the elimination of internal border controls of signatory states and its subsequent incorporation into the EU legislative framework by the Amsterdam Treaty, the EU created a Common European Asylum System to combine minimum standards related to asylum, leaving up to EU Member States the option to establish procedures for acquiring or renouncing international protection.

The EU Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is a set of EU laws, started in 1999 and completed in 2005, it is intended to ensure that all EU member states protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. The CEAS sets out minimum standards and procedures for processing and deciding asylum applications, and for the treatment of both asylum seekers and those who are recognized as refugees<sup>9</sup>. Implementation of CEAS varies throughout the European Union (Figure 1).

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<sup>9</sup> *European Commission - Migration and Home affairs (Lastly updated in 2019) "Common European Asylum System" available at [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en)*



# The Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

Asylum is granted to people who are fleeing persecution or serious harm in their own country and therefore in need of international protection. Asylum is a fundamental right and granting it is an international obligation, stemming from the 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugees. Those who seek, or have been granted, protection do not have the right to choose in which Member State they want to settle. To this end, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) provides common minimum standards for the treatment of all asylum seekers and applications. The CEAS consists of a legal framework covering all aspects of the asylum process and a support agency - the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). However, in practice, the current system is still characterised by differing treatment of asylum seekers and varying recognition rates amongst EU Member States. This divergence is what encourages secondary movements and is partly due to the fact that the current rules grant Member States a lot of discretion in how they apply the common EU rules.

The large-scale, uncontrolled arrival of migrants and asylum seekers since early 2015 has put a strain on many Member States' asylum systems and on the CEAS as a whole. The EU now needs to put in place the tools to better manage migration flows in the medium and long term. The overall objective is to move from a system which, by design or poor implementation, encourages uncontrolled or irregular migratory flows to one which provides orderly and safe pathways to the EU for third country nationals.

The European Commission has presented proposals in May and July 2016 to establish a sustainable system for the future, based on common rules, a fairer sharing of responsibility, and safe legal channels for those who need protection to get it in the EU.

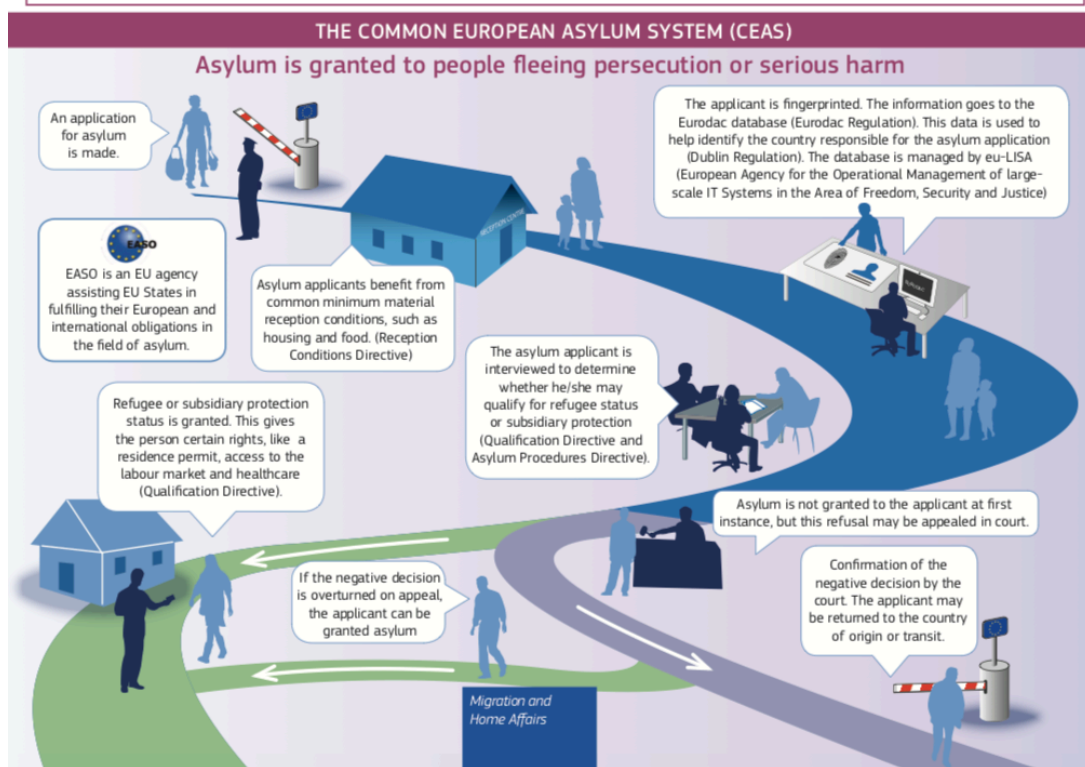


Figure 1 – CEAS Informative sheet <sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/commission-presents-options-reforming-common-european-asylum-system-and-developing-safe-and\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/commission-presents-options-reforming-common-european-asylum-system-and-developing-safe-and_en)

## 1.2 Asylum and crisis situations

Asylum seekers have no legal duty to claim asylum in the first EU state they reach, and many move on, seeking to join relatives or friends for support, or to reach a country with a functioning asylum system. However, the “Dublin Area” which Germany is a part of stipulates that EU member states can choose to return asylum seekers to their country of first entry to process their asylum claim, so long as that country has an effective asylum system.

The Dublin area comprises the EU Member States as well as Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein and its regulations determine which European State is responsible for an asylum claim and seek to ensure that each application entered in the Dublin area is processed by one state only. In 2015, the German Office for Migration and Refugees, along with other offices or ministries from other European States, suspended the Dublin regulations for asylum-seekers from Syria, mainly to quicken the asylum process based on humanitarian grounds.

The purpose of the Dublin procedure is for each asylum application which is lodged in the territory of the Member States to be examined under the substantive law of one state only. EU countries in the north, the desired destination of many refugees, have sought to use this Dublin system to their advantage,<sup>11</sup> what may come at the expense of the south, where most refugees arrive initially, yet these efforts have been obstructed by failures of asylum systems in the south.

Domestic and European courts have ruled against asylum seekers being returned to Greece, particularly in a breakthrough case in 2011 that found Belgium in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights for exposing an Afghan national to detention, harsh living conditions, and risks arising from shortcomings in Greece’s asylum system after a return.

To address the uneven application of CEAS and the problems of the Dublin system, a reform of the CEAS was proposed in 2016.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> European Commission - Migration and Home affairs (2019) “Countries responsible for asylum applications (Dublin)” [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/examination-of-applicants_en)

<sup>12</sup> European Asylum Support Office (2016) “An Introduction to the Common European Asylum System for Courts and Tribunals A Judicial Analysis August”

The *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, (German Office for Migration and Refugees), along with other offices or ministries from other European States, have suspended the Dublin regulations for asylum-seekers from Syria, primarily to accelerate the asylum process based on humanitarian grounds. Among the proposed reforms is one that risks endangering the right to asylum in the EU, with an obligation to verify first if asylum seekers could find protection outside the EU. Some European countries have already voiced opposition to some of the reforms, notably the obligation to take refugees from other EU countries. Since the migration crisis in 2015, the EU has applied measures to better control external borders and migration flows. Consequentially, irregular arrivals to the EU have been reduced by more than 90%.

According to the council of the European Union's introductory webpage overview:

The EU and its member states are intensifying efforts to establish an effective, humanitarian and safe European migration policy. The European Council plays an important role in this effort by setting the strategic priorities. Based on these priorities, the Council of the EU establishes lines of action and provides the mandates for negotiations with third countries. It also adopts legislation and defines specific programmes. Over the past years the Council and European Council have build up a strong response to migratory pressure.<sup>13</sup>

The webpage addresses several action plans towards crisis situations (IPCR - integrated political crisis response) as seen on figure 2 bellow, as well as describes the most used migration routes.<sup>14</sup> The Central Mediterranean route has become the most-used route to the EU in recent years. As a result of this most migrants from sub-Saharan and North Africa travel through Libya on their journey towards Europe, the EU notes that this has encouraged the development of smuggling and trafficking networks in Libya.

The Eastern Mediterranean route is defined by the sea crossing from Turkey to Greece, refugees seeking shelter from Syria's war arrived in high numbers to the EU via this route during the year of 2015. Since then the number of irregular arrivals on this route has greatly reduced thanks to cooperation and agreements between the European Union and Turkey.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/>

<sup>14</sup> European Council of the European Union (2016) " The EU integrated political crisis response – IPCR – arrangements" available at [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/29699/web\\_ipcr.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/29699/web_ipcr.pdf)

This resettlement scheme for Syrian refugees in Turkey was set up following the EU Turkey agreement of March 2016, the agreement provides that one Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU for every Syrian returned to Turkey from Greece. Over 11 000 Syrians have been resettled so far through this scheme.<sup>15</sup>

As migrants and refugees trying to reach Europe embark on life-threatening journeys as smugglers use increasingly dangerous tactics to cross the Mediterranean, the EU has deployed three operations in the Mediterranean to rescue those migrants at risk and fight migrant smuggling. The EU also established the European migrants smuggling centre in 2016 to help member states crackdown on migrant smuggling. Regarding other migration flows, the EU has common rules for processing asylum requests. The Council adopted a decision to relocate thousands of asylum seekers from Greece and Italy in 2015. The EU also establishes readmission agreements for returning illegal migrants.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> European Council of the European Union (2016) "EU migration policy" <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/>

<sup>16</sup> European Commission (2015) "Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions. - A European agenda on migration" available at. <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2015/EN/1-2015-240-EN-F1-1.PDF>

## How the IPCR crisis response mechanism works

The integrated political crisis response (IPCR) arrangements is one of the EU's crisis response mechanisms.

The presidency of the Council can use it to coordinate the political response to major and complex crisis, including terrorist acts.

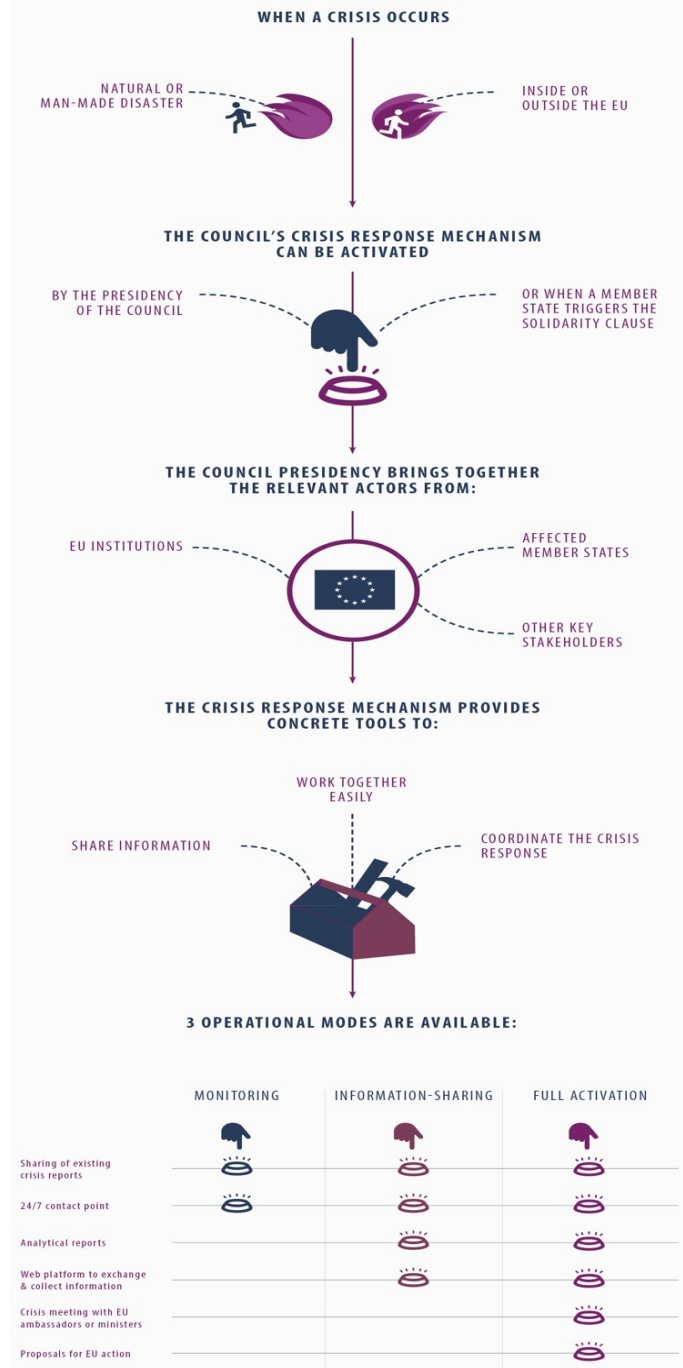


Figure 2 – IPCR Crisis <sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/ipcr-mechanism/>

### 1.3 Response to mass refugee movements

In the year of 2015, an abnormal number of migrants, mostly from Syria fled to European states, mainly to Germany, countries started to recognise that their strategy of seeking to block refugees moving across borders was unrealistic and harmful. Countries had to work together to allow migrants to move forward to the places they wished to reach. Reception countries were required to focus their resources on supporting asylum seekers and bearing in mind their individual claims. However, hostilities ascended and by early 2016 the support for this policy began to decrease, as the hostility towards migrants increased and entered the political dialogue. Some European countries alongside the migrant route started to close their borders. The situation further worsened when the EU decided to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other European member states despite of the widespread resistance.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, only a minor percentage of the transfers actually took place.

Following the difficulty related to the large number of asylum claims and its processing the European union created “hotspots” in two countries: Italy and Greece, these facilities redirects their asylum procedures, allows them to provide identification and fingerprint and overall registration. Nevertheless, there have been reports that many of these facilities are becoming overcrowded (see Figure 3 and 4) and do not have an adequate amount of staff and lack external supervision, A 2017 report from the European Court of Auditors notes that delays in increasing the number of staff members affected the service's capacity to handle asylum applications. The OXFAM confederation has even called out the EU over what they considered to be 'inhumane' refugee camps in Lesbos, Greece.

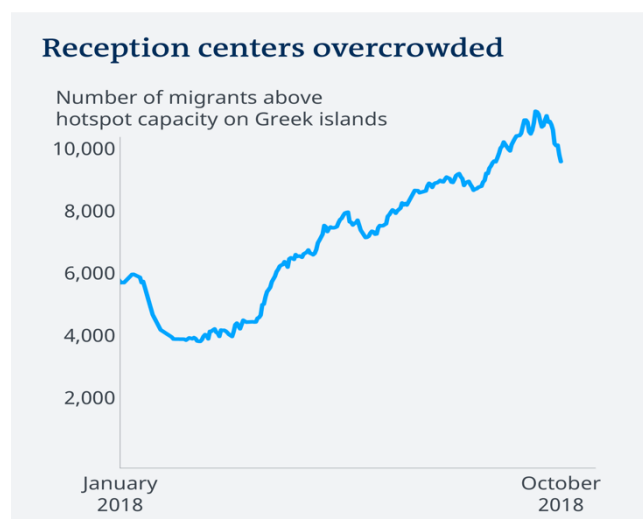


Figure 3 – Number of migrants above hotspot capacity on Greek Islands<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-17-349\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-349_en.htm)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.immigration.gov.gr/en/kykliai-metanasteusi>

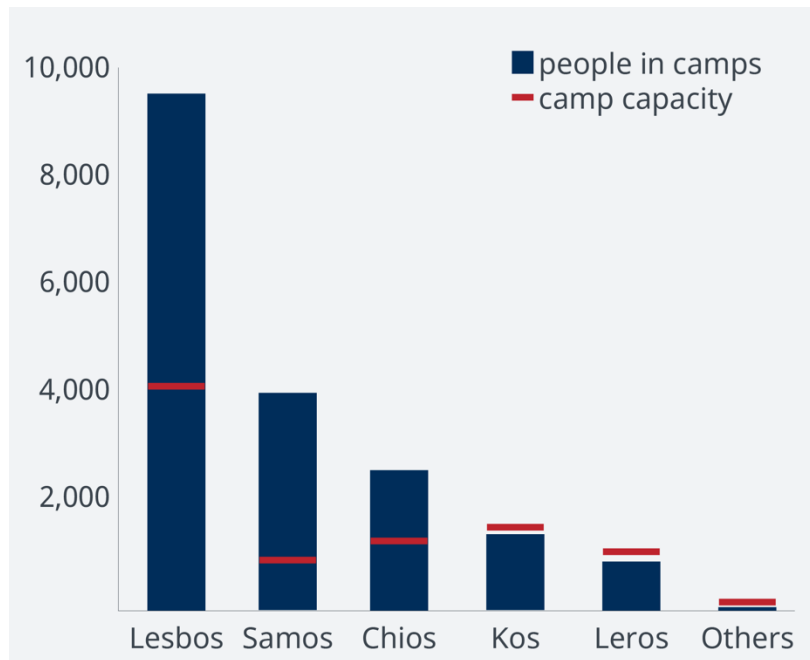


Figure 4 – Number of migrants in camps versus camp capacity<sup>20</sup>

Following this increasing overflow of migrants, in March of 2016 the EU built a deal with Turkey with the hope of providing better migrant distribution, in return, Turkey was assured financial assistance, visa-free travel to the EU for Turkish citizens, and faster negotiations for EU accession. Still, the EU-Turkey deal was unsuccessful closing the border, and thousands of migrants persisted to travel irregularly using smugglers. In reality only 750 asylum seekers have been sent back from Greece to Turkey since the deal, because Greek officials and courts consider Turkey to be an unsafe country. The deal was rather controversial, the EU linked development aid or economic incentives to commitments by states to restrict and manage the movements of people from their territory. This deal can be related to other similar deals approved by countries such as Libya, Egypt, Sudan, and Nigeria. In June 2016, the European Commission proposed a new “Partnership Framework” with third countries in the Middle East and Africa, leading to criticism by a broad range of actors for deal making with countries with poor human rights records, and for conflicting with international protection frameworks, including the right to leave one’s own country.

The EU also continues to support financially refugees in host countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, where the majority of Syrian refugees are hosted, including through funding for UN agencies working in the field such as the UNHCR or the WFP.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> UNCHR (2018) “Global resettlement needs”

## Chapter 2

### Studying the German system

#### 2.1 Germany and asylum in numbers

Germany's population has been largely shaped by immigration; more than 20 percent of the country's residents have a migration background. (Destatis, 2017)

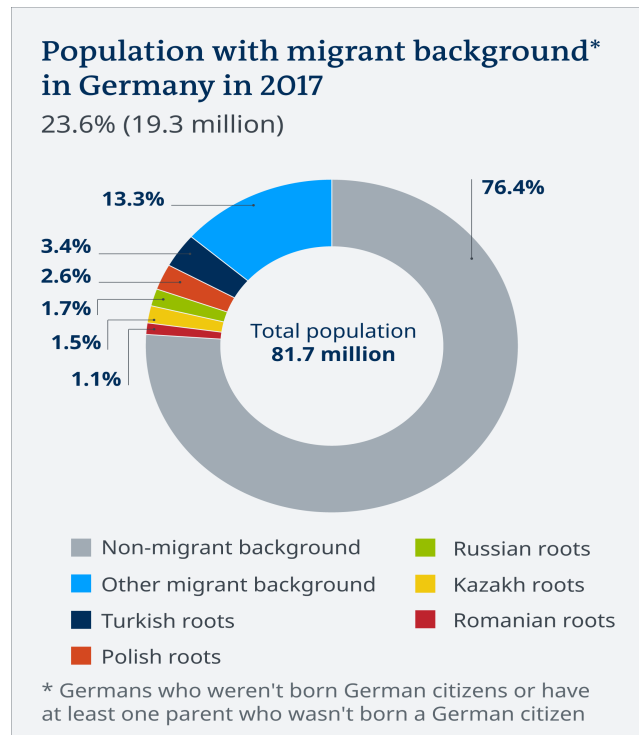


Figure 5 – Population with migrant background in 2017<sup>22</sup>

As noted in the previous chapter, during the European migrant crisis of 2015 hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees fled from the Syrian Civil War and entered Germany to seek refugee status. According to the UNHCR and Eurostat, in 2015, about 995,000 first-time asylum applications were submitted in countries of the European Union, more than twice the number for 2014.

As represented in figures 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, with 745,155 asylum seekers registered in Germany, the country represents about 61 percent of all first-time asylum applicants recorded in EU Member States in 2016. Italy ranked second with 122,960 (8 percent of the EU total), followed by France (84,270, 6 percent), Austria (42,255 5 percent), and the United Kingdom (38,800, 4 percent). Together, these five countries account for 83 percent of all applicants in the EU.

<sup>22</sup>[https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/Tables\\_PersonsMigrationBackground/TablesMigrationStatusSex.html](https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/MigrationIntegration/Tables_PersonsMigrationBackground/TablesMigrationStatusSex.html)

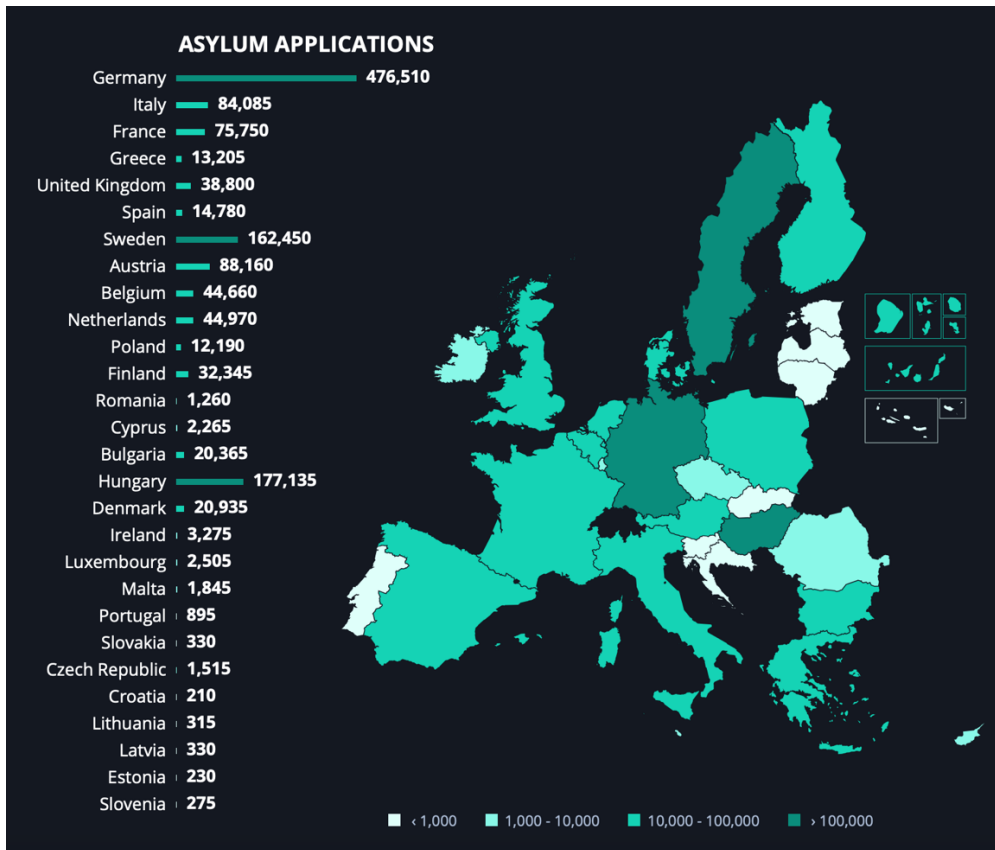


Figure 6 – Asylum applications by Country in 2015; (UNHCR, Eurostat)

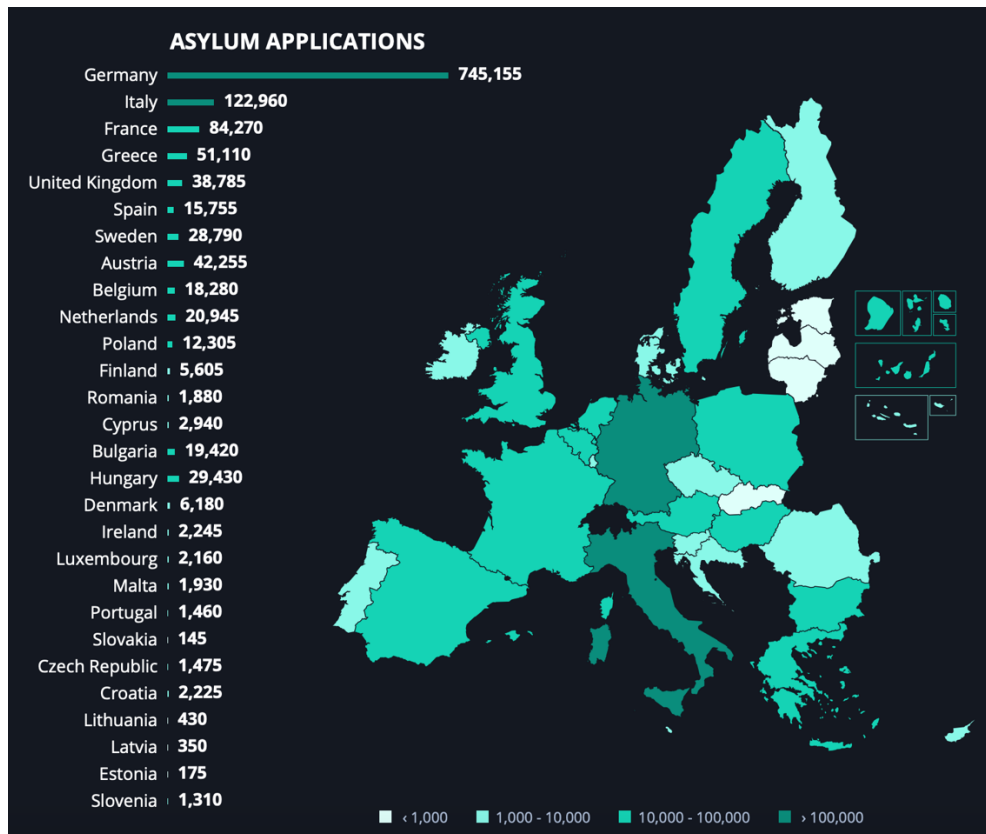


Figure 7 – Asylum applications by Country in 2016; (UNHCR, Eurostat)

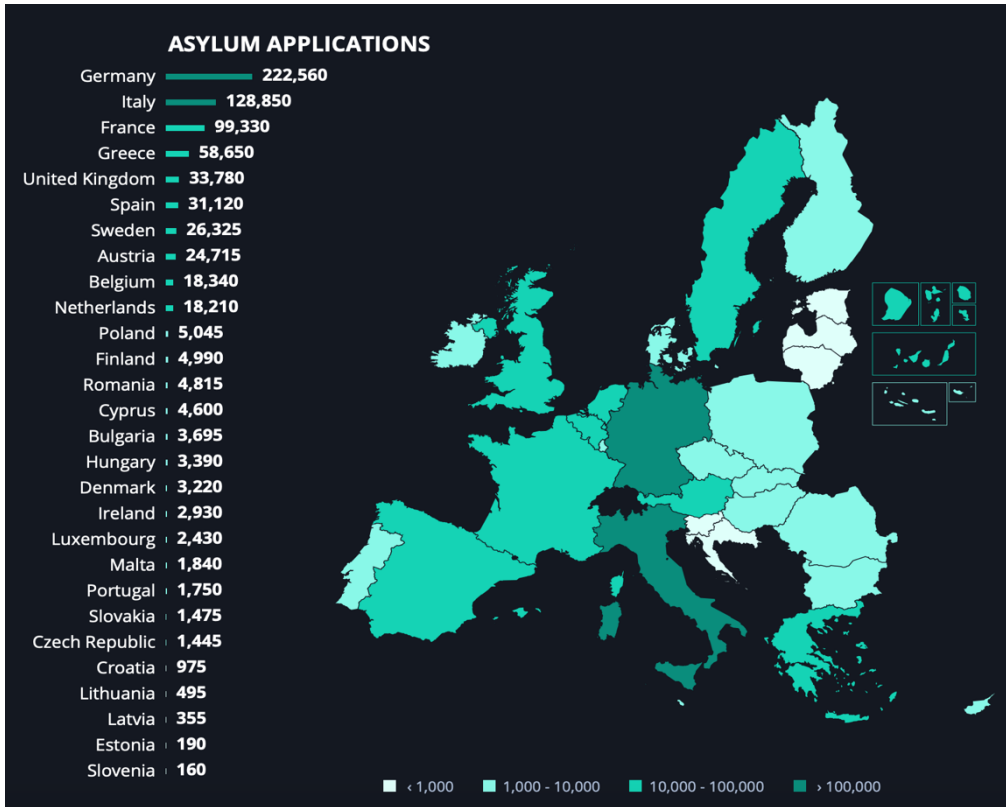


Figure 8 – Asylum applications by Country in 2017; (UNHCR, Eurostat)

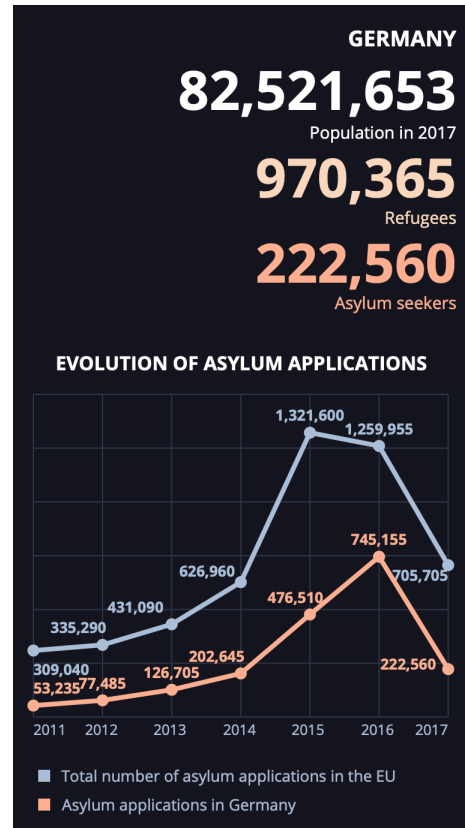
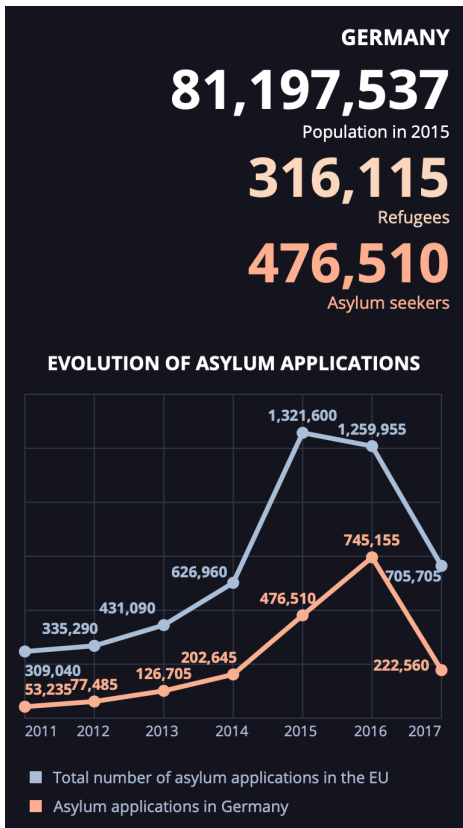


Figure 9 and 10 - Evolution of asylum applications and population in Germany in 2015 and 2017 (Left to Right); (UNHCR, Eurostat)

When concerning asylum procedures in Germany one can distinguish between two kinds of applications. An initial application is created when a foreign national applies for asylum for the first time; a subsequent application is filed if, after the withdrawal or rejection of the previously submitted asylum application, another application is recorded.

Current asylum applications in Germany represent an historic high with similar levels only in the early nineties due to the war in former Yugoslavia, but by 2008 the number had declined sharply. Since then, they have increased steadily, with over 476,000 people filing entitlement for asylum in 2015.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 the European migrant crisis was particularly accelerated when, Chancellor Werner Faymann of Austria, in unification with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, announced that migrants would be allowed to cross the border from Hungary into Austria and onward to Germany<sup>23</sup>, and early on 5 September 2015, buses with migrants began crossing the Austro-Hungarian border as of 31 December, 2016, the total number of Syrians in Germany reached 637,845.

In 2015, Syrians represented the greatest amount first-time asylum applicants in the European Union, almost 90 percent registered in Germany (88,500 of 102,400), followed by 73 percent of Iraqis and 57 percent of Afghans. During the same year, following the chancellor’s agreements the number of asylum applications submitted by Syrian nationals increased by day. As for the year of 2018 the number was quite shorter but still significant when compared to other years.

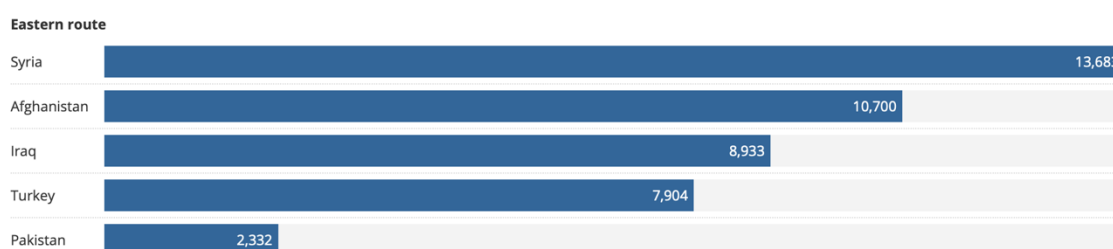


Figure 11 - Top nationalities per route between January and December 2018<sup>24</sup>

The Integration Act and the Regulation on the integration act entered German regulation on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2016, it amends several laws in order to facilitate the integration of newly come refugees into Germany.

<sup>23</sup> The Guardian (2016) "Angela Merkel defends Germany's handling of refugee influx"

<sup>24</sup> <https://frontex.europa.eu/along-eu-borders/migratory-map/>

These regulations include elements such as more integration classes and consequential settlement permits for those who are willing to cooperate and take these classes, organized and spread assignments of a place of residence to avoid massive concentration in one area, vocational training, employment and preparation opportunities.

These laws offer more integration classes, vocational training, employment and training opportunities, assignments of a place of residence to avoid concentration in select areas, and permanent settlement permits for refugees who show that they are willing to cooperate and take integration classes.

The basic idea behind the legislation is "support and challenge" (*Fördern und Fordern*). Refugees who show the potential to integrate and have a good chance of staying permanently in Germany will have easier and faster access to integration classes and employment opportunities, while refugees who refuse to cooperate will face a reduction in benefits. (Integration Act to Support and Challenge, July 8, 2016, Federal Government website.)

Everyone is implied to have the potential to integrate but those who cooperate with the system are said to have a chance of staying permanently in Germany and will have faster access to employment opportunities.

## 2.2 Describing an Asylum-Seeker's path

According to the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), the first step upon an asylum-seeker should take as arriving Germany should be to report to a state organization with urgency as soon as they reach the border.

Anyone already reporting as seeking asylum on entry reports to the border authority, this authority then sends asylum-seekers on to the closest initial reception centre, whoever hasn't done request for asylum upon arrival can report to security authorities such as the police or directly to an arrival centre.

Regarding registration, the government states that all individuals reporting as seeking asylum in the Federal Republic of Germany are confirmed as registered, this is carried out at "PIK" (Personalisation Infrastructure Component)<sup>25</sup> stations by the Federal or Land police,

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<sup>25</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/2018.1335\\_-\\_ad-hoc\\_query\\_on\\_equipment\\_to\\_collect\\_biometric\\_data.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/2018.1335_-_ad-hoc_query_on_equipment_to_collect_biometric_data.pdf)

by staff of the BAMF in the branch offices and arrival centres or by staff of the state at reception facilities, immigration authorities and arrival centres, here, personal data is stored, a photograph is taken as well as fingerprints. The given data is compared with the Central Register of Foreigners, as well as with the Federal Criminal Police Office, in order to determine whether the application is an initial application, a follow-up application or possibly a multiple application. Further investigations are also conducted through a Europe-wide system (EURODAC).

An interpreter is available for appointments, to help applicants understand their rights and duties within the asylum procedure. They furthermore receive all the important information in writing in their native language.

Asylum-seekers obtain a proof of arrival (*Ankunftsnachweis*) at the chosen reception facility, arrival centre or branch office of the Federal Office which is responsible for them to prove that they have registered. They can however also receive in advance a certificate directing them to the nearest reception facility (*Anlaufbescheinigung*). This contains both personal data as well as the address of the reception facility which is responsible for them and where they will receive their proof of arrival.

The introduction of the proof of arrival for asylum-seekers provides the "Asylum-seeker Registration Certificate" (BüMA). This proof of arrival is the first official document, it serves as the document of entitlement to reside in Germany, it provides the right to collect state's benefits, such as accommodation, medical treatment and food.

The personal interview is the applicant's most important appointment within the asylum procedure; therefore, advice is available when it comes to preparing for the interview from organisations providing aid, charitable associations or municipal facilities.

It is the "decision-makers" who are responsible for holding the interviews at the Federal Office. They invite applicants to attend this appointment, where an interpreter will also be present.

The conducted interviews are not public, but they may have an attorney present, a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or a guardian in the case of unaccompanied minors.

The decision-makers are familiar with the preponderant circumstances in the applicants' countries of origin, the applicants describe their biographies and situations, tell of their travel route and of the persecution which they have personally suffered. They also assess

what would await them if they returned to their country of origin. They are obliged to provide any evidence they can such as photographs, documents from the police or other authorities, and possibly medical reports.

The translations are thoroughly analysed and even translated back for the applicant after the interview, this allows them to add to what they have said, or to make corrections.

Asylum-seekers and asylum applicants also receive benefits during their stay such as a monthly amount of money to cover their everyday personal needs. The amount of the benefits that might regard food, housing, heating, clothing, healthcare and personal hygiene, as well as household durables and consumables, benefits to cover personal daily requirements, benefits in case of sickness, pregnancy and birth, as well as individual benefits which depend on the individual case is measured by the Asylum-Seekers' Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*).

Reception facilities of the Federal Land are the ones that are responsible for temporary and long-term accommodation, the process is also related to the branch office of the Federal Office or the arrival centre the respective country of origin of the asylum-seeker was processed: The competence according to country of origin principle is applied, depending on the country of origin, asylum-seekers can be accommodated in reception facilities for up to six months, or until their application is decided on. They can also be allocated to another facility during this period under certain circumstances, for example for family reunification. Regarding distribution, the government has developed a quota called "The EASY quota", this system ensures fair distribution, it is orientated in line with the "Königstein Key"; which is calculated on an annual basis by the bureau of the Federation-Länder Commission. The Königstein key for the respective budget year is based on the tax revenue and the population number of the previous year. EASY manages the distribution of asylum-seekers throughout all of the country's 16 Federal States. Before the distribution process, each asylum-seeker must record his or her intention to apply for asylum. The EASY distribution system collects information on the receiving German Federal State and the country of origin of the asylum-seeker, however, no demographic or socioeconomic information is gathered yet.

The distribution quota is calculated on an annual basis by the Federation-Länder Commission and determines what share of asylum-seekers are received by each Federal Land. This guarantees appropriate, fair distribution among the Federal Länder.

For each Federal State there are distribution quotas. Distribution to a reception facility depends on the capacity of the facilities and the regional responsibilities of the branch of the Federal Office in which the asylum claim falls. The “Königstein Key” specifies the percentage of asylum-seekers and refugees each Federal State is required to accept. These quotas are revised on an annual basis, taking into account changes in total population and tax receipts. During 2015, around 1.1 million asylum applications were recorded in the German registration system, EASY

The distribution quotas for 2018 are as follows:

| Bundesland                 | Quote     |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Baden-Wuerttemberg         | 13,01651% |
| Bavaria                    | 15,55039% |
| Berlin                     | 5,09267%  |
| Brandenburg                | 3,02571%  |
| Bremen                     | 0,95115%  |
| Hamburg                    | 2,55847%  |
| Hesse                      | 7,36424%  |
| Mecklenburg-West Pomerania | 2,00161%  |
| Lower Saxony               | 9,36559%  |
| North Rhine-Westphalia     | 21,14355% |
| Rhineland-Palatinate       | 4,83466%  |
| Saarland                   | 1,20344%  |
| Saxony                     | 5,02467%  |
| Saxony-Anhalt              | 2,77158%  |
| Schleswig-Holstein         | 3,41725%  |
| Thuringia                  | 2,67851%  |

*Table 1 – Germany distribution quotas for 2018*

*Date: 16 May 2019 (Federal office for migrations and refugees)*

Bavaria and Baden Württemberg have the largest proportion of asylum-seekers with 15.5 percent and 13.01 percent, respectively. Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia rank lowest with 3.4 percent and 2.7 percent.

When studying the proportion of asylum applications per 1,000 native German citizens, on the other hand, these ranks change significantly. Asylum applicants in Germany represent

0.5 percent of the total national population. While the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has the highest proportion of asylum applications with 11.8 asylum applications per 1,000 inhabitants, this number represents only 1.2 percent of the state's total population. Saarland rankings second, with 10.2 applications per 1,000 inhabitants (1.2 percent of the total state population), followed by Berlin with 9.6 applications per 1,000 inhabitants (0.96 percent). North Rhine-Westphalia (3.8 per 1,000) and Lower Saxony (4.4 per 1,000) have the lowest application rates, accounting for less than 0.4 percent and 0.5 percent of the total federal population.

After the final decision of the Federal Office, follows either a right of residence or a by right to remain, or by an obligation to depart, there are two types of rejection: outright rejection and rejection as manifestly unfounded. If the rejection is outright, the individual has a deadline of 30 days in which to leave the country, whereas if the asylum application is rejected as "manifestly unfounded", the deadline period for leaving is only one week.

If the individual does not leave the country voluntarily within the period limit, departure is coercively administered by the responsible immigration authority through deportation.

The Individuals who have the right of asylum receive a residence permit from their immigration authority for three years. A settlement permit can be issued after three years at the earliest under certain conditions, such as the ability to make a safe living and sufficient knowledge of German.

In case of a national ban on deportation, a person may not be returned to the country to which this ban on deportation applies. The residence permit is issued for at least one year and can be repeatedly extended. The same rules apply to issuing a settlement permit as to people who are entitled to subsidiary protection.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylv/Erstverteilung/erstverteilung-node.html>

## 2.3 Inclusive systems

Cardinal Marx of Munich noted in a conference in Genève that as decisive as a “genuine empowerment of migrants” may be, it is also essential to develop a “sense of belonging, a consciousness of being part of a community,”. “Both among the local population and among migrants, a shared responsibility for the common good needs to evolve.” Going beyond the basic requirement of law-abidance, it has to be “driven by mutual recognition and mutual esteem.”

The labor market integration of refugees as well as the process of integrating in society can be a long-term process. Despite of the growing rates of employment amongst refugees with a longer period of stay in Germany, it took about 20 years for earlier waves of refugees to achieve the employment rate of the nation’s population. According to a European Commission study <sup>27</sup> women have had considerably greater difficulty than men in the German labour market, other vulnerable groups also face different sorts of repression, mostly members of the LGBTQ community, subchapter 2.3.2 further shows the necessity for awareness and enforcement of special measures of protection.

It has shown great importance to introduce tools that can be functional and accessible to all in providing information and guidance to hopefully balance these asymmetries, these following subchapters describe what are either state or NGO initiatives for achieving larger levels of inclusive integration and creating a stronger sense of community.

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<sup>27</sup> *European Commission (2017) Peer Review on ‘Integration of Refugees into the Labour Market - Berlin, Germany, 11-12 Strategies and targeted measures to support integration of refugees into the German labour market).*

### 2.3.1 ANKOMEN APP

Following the complexity that the German integration system can represent to newcomers, mostly the ones who had few access to education, a digital application was created with the goal of facilitating integration processes and provide guidance and advice.

The app "Ankommen" <sup>28</sup>wants to make it easier for new arrivals, in particular refugees, to find their feet and settle down to a life in Germany. It was developed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the Federal Employment Agency, the broadcasting corporation *Bayerischer Rundfunk*, and the Goethe Institute, it has already been downloaded 200,000 times since it was launched in January 2016. New arrivals in Germany can, with immediate effect, get practical help and information about the asylum procedure, access to the labour market, and living in Germany. The website is very inclusive; it is available in German, English, French, Arabic, and Farsi versions. Users can get an initial introduction to the German language through free online services that are linked to the site. In April 2016, consumer watchdog "Stiftung Warentest" awarded the app the accolade "recommended", and it has also won several prizes.

The app offers the following features; Language courses;

- "Learn German" – a complete language digital training with 8 chapters.
- "Living in Germany" and "Asylum, Apprenticeship, Job" - easy to switch between languages: this makes it possible to easily switch the language of the document texts without having to change the application settings.

The visible description of the app addresses refugees directly in an informal and approachable way:

Did you come to Germany as a refugee? The Arrival app will accompany you in your first few weeks. You can even learn German here. You can learn a lot about Germany, what rules apply here and what you should pay attention to. You will get the most important information about the asylum proceedings and ways to find a vocational training position and job. In five languages, free of advertising, free of charge and which you can use offline.

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<sup>28</sup> [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.br.ankommen&hl=pt\\_PT](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.br.ankommen&hl=pt_PT)

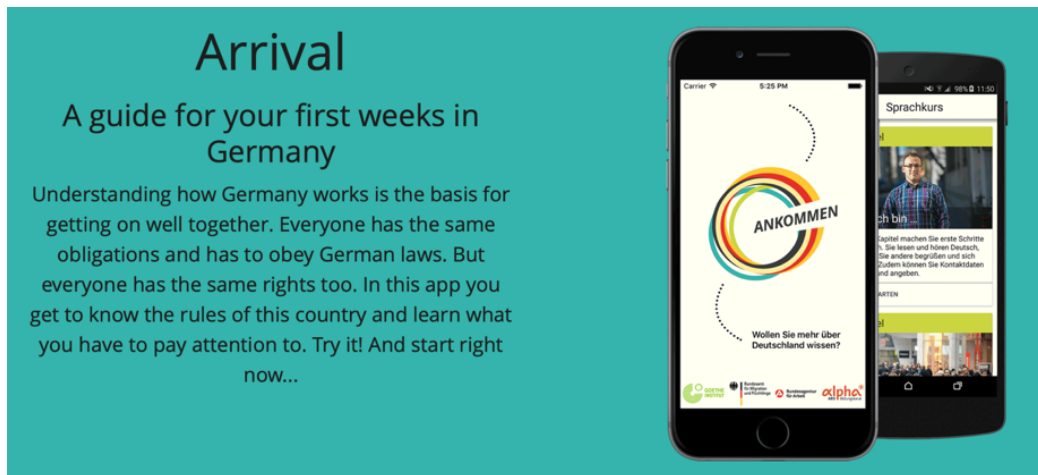


Figure 12 – Application welcome text summary

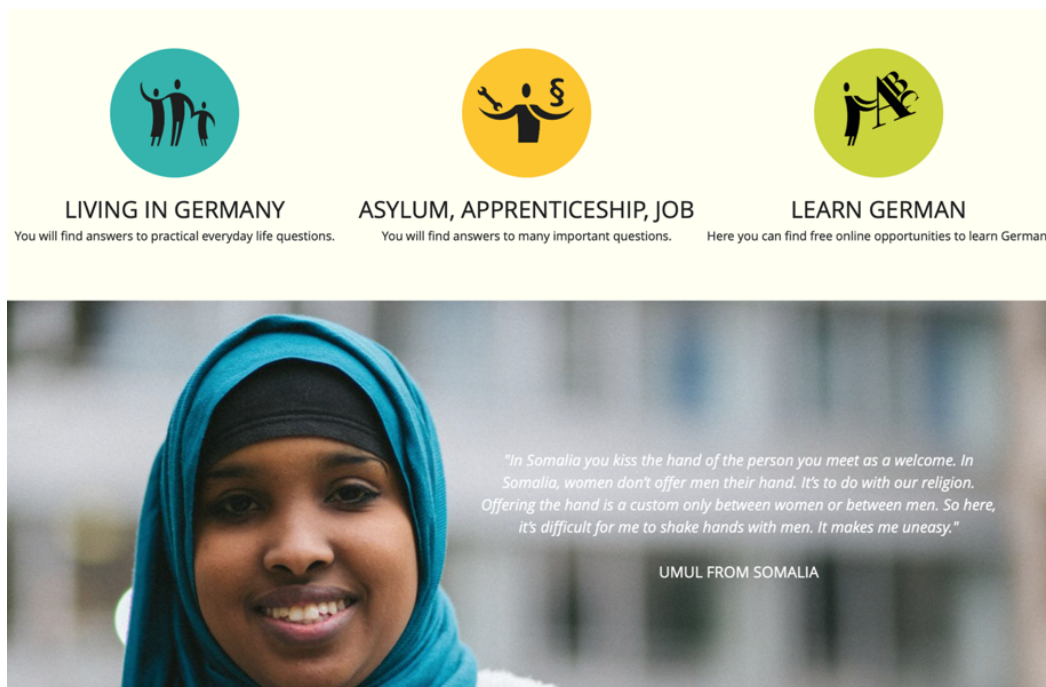


Figure 13 – Application layout and functionalities

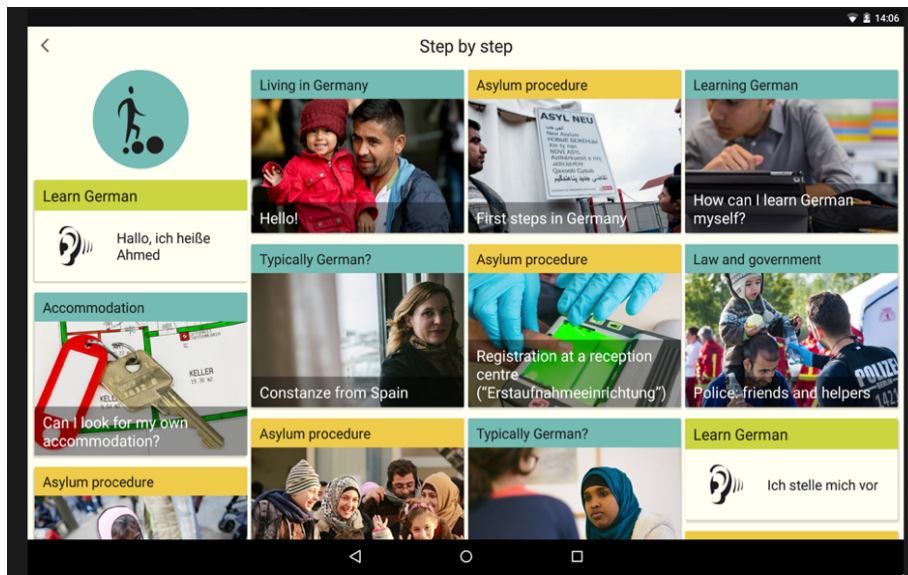


Figure 14 – Application layout and functionalities

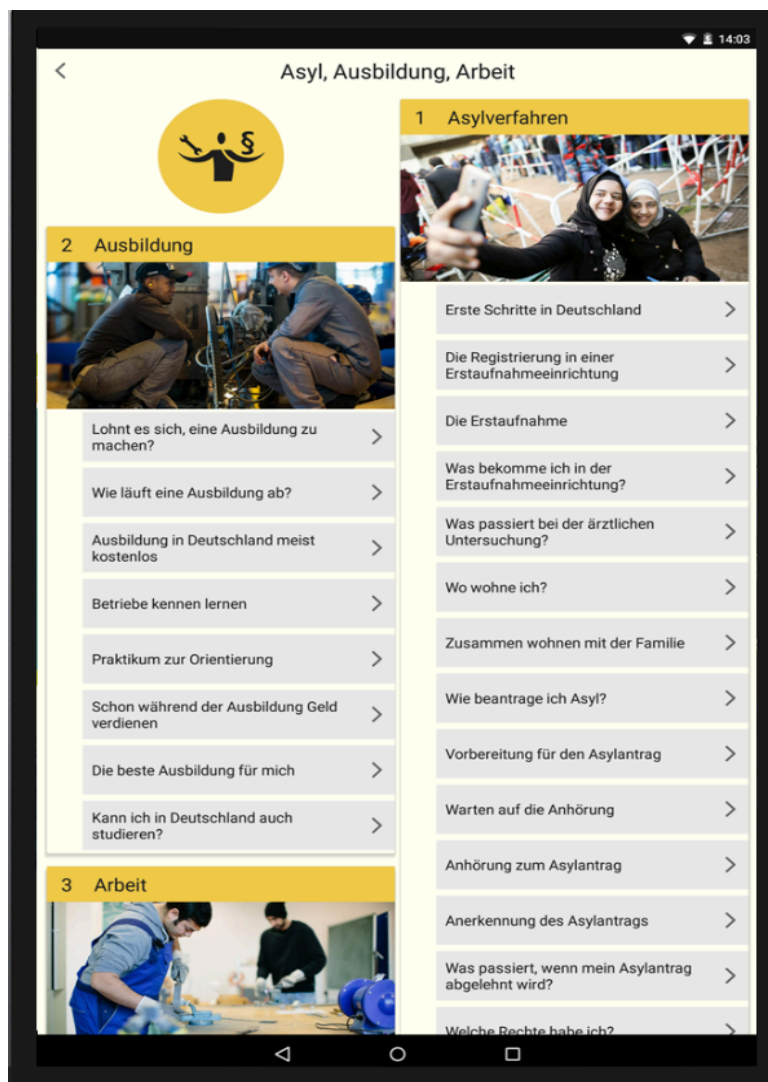


Figure 15 – Application functionalities and tips regarding integration matters

### 2.3.2 Rainbow refugees

#### Definitions and EU Regulation concerning sexual identity:

Such a circumstance in the scope of societal changes is taken into account in the EU agenda: The European Commission has developed some measures with the goal of standing against discrimination, prejudice and hate, and for diversity by raising awareness on the rights of LGBTI people through multiple campaigns.

The UNHCR agency defines lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender as follows:

A lesbian is a woman whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Gay is often used to describe a man whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other men, although the term can be used to describe both gay men and lesbians. Bisexual describes an individual who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to both men and women. Transgender describes people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term intersex refers to a condition in which an individual is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or chromosome patterns that do not seem to fit typical biological notions of being male or female. Individuals with these conditions were previously called "hermaphrodites", however this term is considered outdated.

LGBTQ people, particularly transgender people and people of colour face persistent structural barriers in society and continue to suffer from widespread discrimination (see Figure 14), hate speech and hate crimes in the European Union. Although 71% of EU citizens agree that LGBTI people should have the same rights as heterosexual people, according to a study by the European Fundamental Rights Agency (2017)<sup>29</sup>, 47% of LGBTI people report to be discriminated or harassed in the year preceding the survey. Half of all the respondents say they avoid some places like public buildings, squares or public transportation, for fear of being harassed, threatened or attacked on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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<sup>29</sup> European Commission - Annual Report on the List of actions to advance LGBTI equality  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2017-annual-report-list-actions-advance-lgbti-equality\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2017-annual-report-list-actions-advance-lgbti-equality_en)

There are still challenges to same-sex marriage and there is still a growing number of obstructive and discriminatory laws limiting access to public accommodations for transgender people which makes it is clear it is required LGBTQ inclusion. The lack of legal protections results in reduced opportunities for these people, limiting their ability to thrive as fully independent members of society and ultimately hurting the economy as a whole.

To challenge discrimination the European Commission has created the "List of actions to advance LGBTI equality". The actions summarised in the list cover all the main policy areas; effectively aiming to mainstream LGBTI equality. The respective policy areas included are non-discrimination, education, employment, health, free movement, asylum, hate speech/hate crime, enlargement and foreign policy.

The first conclusions ever on LGBTI equality by European Council<sup>30</sup> were adopted in 2016 and it is required that the European Commission annually reports on the implementation of the list of actions.

As previously described, there are still challenges to be tackled in the European union as the 2015 Eurobarometer on discrimination shows that almost 60% of EU citizens still see discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity as widespread<sup>31</sup>. LGBTI refugees are shown to be escaping persecution, violence and sexual assault. They flee to escape police forces, enforcing harsh legislation that makes it illegal to be themselves. Often, their own family and friends become violent, evict them or banish them from their communities, those who can, try to escape their homes to find protection and that can bring other dangers.

LGBTI refugees are not like other refugee as they are seen as outcasts and face discrimination and persecution from fellow refugees, as said, some are even evicted from refugee camps as a result of social and cultural discrimination.

Persecuted members of the community have a right to register as refugees and seek asylum with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. UNHCR also recognizes the unique adversities this community faces within the asylum system. In response, UNHCR is trying to train all field workers on how to avoid stereotypes, use respectful means of communication and employ sensitive interview techniques, however, the reports don't showcase much sensitivity from the integration agents on the field. A special importance is often placed on physical security

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/16/epsco-conclusions-lgbti-equality/>

<sup>31</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item\\_id=605456](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=605456)

and safety for all people who cite persecution based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, supposedly, there are measures of prevention and response in place to avoid abuse and exploitation including sexual and gender-based violence but the reports show that enforcement is rarely put in place. (sub-chapter 2.3.2.1)

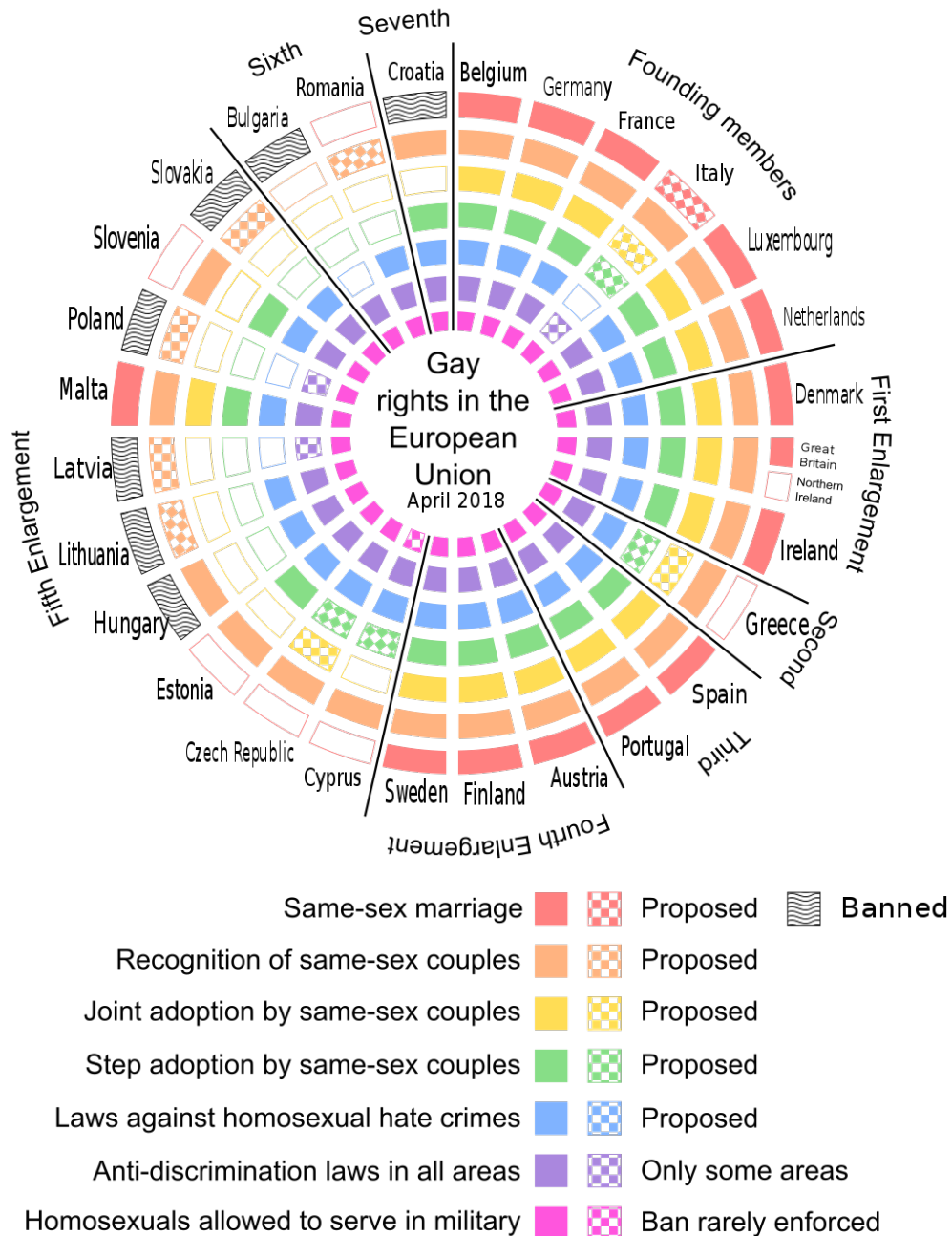


Figure 16 – LGBTQ Rights distribution amongst the European Union

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-eu-lgbt-survey-main-results\\_tk3113640enc\\_1.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-eu-lgbt-survey-main-results_tk3113640enc_1.pdf)

### 2.3.2.1 Investigations concerning LGBTQ refugee treatment

The digital news website “The new Humanitarian”, formerly known as “IRIN news” concluded through their investigation report “IRIN investigation” that greater effort is necessary for LGBTI equality at EU level, it demonstrates several reports from volunteer staff and LGBTQI refugees that display that these migrants feel the need to conceal their sexual identity in order to not suffer any hostilities from the respective hosting communities.

Several LGBTQI asylum seekers told the magazine IRIN that they or their LGBTQI friends had been beaten up or forced to leave camps or collective accommodation after being verbally abused or humiliated. Most said they would not complain to the authorities or the police as this would only make matters worse. When under threat, LGBTQI people are often separated from other asylum seeker, put in single rooms or further away from other people, a solution that just aggravates a sense of isolation.

In Greece, although several NGOs offer accommodation for LGBTQI people, the space is still very limited, most, in the community are still consigned to live in camps, which can be dangerous for them, especially if they are transgender.

The European Asylum Support Office, or EASO<sup>33</sup>, created by the European Union to strengthen the coordination of member states on asylum issues, confirmed that many people do not talk about their sexuality or gender during their first interview due to the lack of knowledge of their rights, and fear of being deported or persecuted. Aware of this, EASO has developed a series of tools for people working in asylum offices for dealing with vulnerable groups, including the LGBTQI population. But there is no way to observe if these instructions are being put into practice. On the ground, NGOs have to be practical; Margarita Kontomichali, from the Greek NGO Solidarity Now<sup>34</sup>, who is the coordinator of a housing and assistance program for LGBTQI asylum seekers in Greece called Safe Refugee notes that:

Our main concerns regard their mental health and the development of negative coping mechanisms. A major element is the double stigma that they have to bear,” she told IRIN, referencing the added risks LGBTQI people face in all stages of the displacement cycle and the need for greater protections. They are often at heightened risk for discrimination

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.easo.europa.eu>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.solidaritynow.org/en/safe-refugee/>

and exclusion from access to basic services, and they are also subjected to different forms of abuse, often also by their fellow compatriots.

Europe appears to know there is a problem: The European Parliament, in February 2016 issued a report that acknowledged that LBGTQI people suffered abuse in the EU as well as their countries of origin. It recommended fast-tracking asylum claims and called on all member states to ensure that reception centres, as well as interview procedures, were sensitive to LBGTQI people.

The Economist<sup>35</sup> also reports about a case of an 18-year-old from Afghanistan who reports he risked persecution back home for his sexual orientation. "Neither your walk, your behaviour, nor your clothing indicate even in the slightest that you could be homosexual," they told him. Confusingly, an Iraqi seeking asylum was reportedly rejected in 2018 because he was "too effeminate".

The Austrian interior ministry declared he has removed the official who turned away the Afghan man, but other stories like these are quite common. Many European countries recognise that for people from some parts of the world, simply being gay is grounds for being granted asylum. Yet Evelyne Paradis of ILGA-Europe, a gay umbrella group, says that many officials "think there is only one way to be an LGBT person".<sup>36</sup>

The Human Rights watch organization also noted that Austrian authorities have rejected the asylum application of a 27-year-old Iraqi on grounds that he was behaving "like a girl".

A report ordered by the European Parliament on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, has also demanded to strengthen action on the rights of LGBTI people. This report notes that:

Whereas women and LGBTI people are subject to specific forms of gender-based persecution, which is still too often not recognised in asylum procedures.

Moreover, it accounts that:

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<sup>35</sup> "How Europe determines whether asylum-seekers are gay" (2018)

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/09/13/how-europe-determines-whether-asylum-seekers-are-gay>

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

(...) even in countries deemed safe, women may suffer gender-based persecution, while LGBTI people may also be subjected to abuse, and thus have a legitimate request for protection; calls on all Member States to adopt asylum procedures and endeavour to develop training programmes which are sensitive to the needs of women with multiple marginalised identities, including LGBTI women; urges all Member States to combat harmful stereotypes about the behaviour and characteristics of LGBTI women and to fully apply the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in respect of their asylum claims; stresses the need for LGBTI-sensitive reception facilities across all Member States; highlights that violence against LGBTI individuals is common in reception facilities.

While EU member states have the right to investigate the legitimacy of individual claims, various unusual methods have been employed. Czech authorities tried to measure degrees of sexual arousal, asylum officers in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, and Cyprus have been proven to have asked for inappropriate, sexually explicit questions. In the United Kingdom, applicants were pressured to provide sexually explicit photographic and video evidence. Some asylum claims have been rejected on the basis that applicants can “behave discretely” and hence avoid persecution in their countries of origin – nevertheless this is expressly rejected by the UN refugee agency guidelines on refugee claims based on sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>37</sup>

These UN Refugee Agency guidelines, along with several decisions of the European Union’s Court of Justice (CJEU)<sup>38</sup>, stipulate parameters that immigration officers in EU countries need to follow; inappropriate medical tests, psychological assessments, invasive interrogations, or sexually explicit evidence are not law, asylum officers are supposed to follow the clear guidelines, and to be well-informed about issues facing sexual and gender minorities and put aside their preconceived and culturally defined notions of how LGBTQ people should behave.

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<sup>37</sup> Human Rights Watch (2018) *EU Should Follow UN Guidelines on LGBT Asylum Seekers*

<sup>38</sup> Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/court-justice\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/court-justice_en)

### 2.3.2.2 Inclusive shelter systems in Germany - LGBTQI Refugee Shelter – Cologne, Germany

Cologne was the first German city to set up shelters specifically for its LGBTQ refugees, the lesbian and gay association of North Rhine-Westphalia first drew attention to the fact some refugees were suffering from physical attacks, intimidation and threats from other refugees because of their sexuality. The board of the association Frank Bauer affirms to the [express.com.uk](http://express.com.uk) newspaper<sup>39</sup>: *"Regular asylum accommodation is often not a safe place for these people - especially if they live openly or are outed."*

The city has plans to have two residential communities established in the near future, housing between three and six people and has opened accommodation that houses several refugees. The city also provides online support for its gay and bisexual refugees with its Rainbow Refugees website which provides information on learning Germany, counselling, health care, violence and access to lawyers. Many gay and lesbian refugees have claimed asylum as in many Islamic countries' homosexuality is outlawed and even punishable with death in some, 77 countries still criminalize same-sex acts.

The Queer Refugees organization notes that while waiting for the application process to take its course, LGBTQI asylum seekers face an urgent challenge: finding a safe place to sleep. EU member states are supposed to take into consideration the vulnerability of migrants and asylum seekers applying for housing but the LGBTQI community is not explicitly mentioned in official guidelines, and rights advocates say it should be.

### 2.3.2.3 Gender issues

One of the initial guidelines of this research was to study gender and how it affected opportunities, perspective and overall living within refugee communities in Germany, nevertheless, the samples proved to be rather small, out of nine there were only three subjects that were women and the three showed quite a lot of reluctance, the approach was quite intricate as the subjects did not want to be filmed and were not willing to share with much detail. Finding female participants proved to be a difficult challenge as they were often very shy.

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<sup>39</sup> *"Germany opens special migrant centre for GAY refugees in Cologne"* (2016).  
<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/747730/Germany-Cologne-gay-refugees-migrant-centre>

Throughout the course of the interviews the respondents got more comfortable (See figure 20) and even shared their hopes for the future, all of the three had the intent of pursuing higher education and have independent careers.

It is important to understand how gender motivated issues affect refugee women and their opportunities, even though the conducted interviews don't provide much data regarding these issues in particular there is plenty of significant data reporting the need for studies and samples that approach gender issues and migrations.

As seen on the previous sub-chapters there are certain vulnerable groups within refugees that deserve attention, besides the LGBTQ community, women also face persistent gender-based violence, mainly in refugee camps, the European Council<sup>40</sup> notes:

Many migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls have been exposed to various forms of gender-based violence, either in their country of origin, during the journey to Europe, or upon arrival. Due consideration should be given to their needs and circumstances and gender-responsive measures should be adopted to prevent discrimination, violence, harassment, trafficking and other forms of exploitation and abuse

Before this latest wave, migration was understood mainly as a male phenomenon, but now the percentage of women migrants is approaching 50% of the total. According to the latest figures on refugees, whilst in June 2015 women and children accounted for 27% of all new arrivals, this number jumped to 55% in 2016.<sup>41</sup>

It is virtually impossible to precise the accurate number of refugee arrivals in Europe as well as the amount of refugee women that have faced the situations of discrimination, this lack of data on refugee women can be explained with some reasons. First, it is quite complicated to collect data from new refugee arrivals in Europe as a large amount of arrivals fail to sign up to any sort of register, mostly because of their lack of knowledge on their rights for international protection or because it is believed to be something that will slow down the arrival time to their destination.<sup>42</sup> Second, the current existent data is frequently not segmented by gender, furthermore, many refugee women do not report about the different

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/migrant-and-refugee-women-and-girls>

<sup>41</sup> European Parliament, "Report on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU".

<sup>42</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, «Initial assessment report: protection risks for women and girls in the European Refugee and Migrant Crisis. Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia».

violent situations they have suffered, such as forced marriages or interfamily gender violence, as they fear being further stigmatized or experience reprisals.

One might also explain lack of data through lack of qualified staff who can identify possible cases of sexual or family violence, as well as victims of trafficking of human beings. Some reports made by organizations in the field have discovered however that in refugee camps or during their journey, these situations of violence are abundant.<sup>43</sup>

Even if violence against refugee women is often the result of the deep-rooted discrimination that they endure in a patriarchal and heteronormative society, some of it is aggravated by the lack of specific spaces and prevention mechanisms in refugee camps.<sup>44</sup> The UNHCR in 2001 has even launched a document that lists the needs of refugee women and girls that are not being properly addressed, it demands several needed measures to develop the situation of refugee women and children in the context of the current refugee crisis.<sup>45</sup>

Another aspect that needs to be considered is that, often, women that ask for international protection are escaping their countries due to gender persecution, in many armed conflicts, women are even used as weapons to supplementary attack the population.

An example of these situations are the Yazidi people, whose women have suffered significant violations of their rights by fighters of the Islamic State.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> United Nations Refugee Agency, «Commission. Initial report: Protection risks for women and girls in the European refugee and migrant crisis».

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> European Parliament (2016) «Mujeres refugiadas y solicitantes de asilo en la Unión Europea»

<sup>46</sup> Recently, the valour of Yazidi women was recognized by the EP with the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to two of them who had been kidnapped and became sexual slaves to IS fighters. NAVARRO, «Premio Sajarov para dos esclaves sexuales del Estado Islamico, defensores de la minoria yazidi».

Besides conflict situations there are plenty of reasons to seek asylum for matters of gender such as: female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriages, honour killings<sup>47</sup>, or dowry killings<sup>48</sup>.

Gender is not yet integrated in the list of motives for persecution in the 1951 definition of refugees by the Geneva Convention. Nevertheless, the UNHCR has stated that women belong to a social group that can be victims of right violations and can therefore seek asylum for this reason.

The standards to determine the list of safe countries do not considerate gender issues and therefore do not distinguish between safe and non-safe countries for vulnerable groups such as women. This can make refugee women go to third countries where their rights can also be violated.

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<sup>47</sup> *An honor killing is the murder of a member of a family, due to the perpetrators' belief that the victim has brought shame or dishonor upon the family, or has violated the principles of a community or a religion, usually for reasons such as divorcing or separating from their spouse, refusing to enter an arranged marriage, being in a relationship that is disapproved by their family, having premarital or extramarital sex, becoming the victim of rape or sexual assault, dressing in ways which are deemed inappropriate, engaging in non-heterosexual relations or renouncing a faith. - "Honor killing: Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary". merriam-webster.com.*

<sup>48</sup> *Dowry deaths are deaths of married women who are murdered or driven to suicide by continuous harassment and torture by their husbands and in-laws over a dispute about their dowry, making women's homes the most dangerous place for them to be. Dowry deaths are found predominantly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran.*

*Belur, J. (2014) "The social construction of 'dowry deaths'*

## Chapter 3

### Contextualizing mass migration to Europe - Tensions in the middle east and consequential European migrant crisis.

The political turmoil in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia is reshaping migration trends in Europe, the quantity of illegal border-crossing detections in the EU started to increase in 2011, as thousands of Tunisians started to arrive at the Italian island of Lampedusa following the Arab Spring.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) estimates that more than 464,000 migrants have crossed into Europe by sea for the first nine months of 2015. Syrians fleeing their country's four-and-a-half-year-old civil war made up the largest group (39 percent) and afghans who escape the ongoing war with Taliban rebels make up 11 percent.<sup>49</sup>

This large and unprecedented migrations influx to Europe phenomenon is most often referred as the "European Migrant Crisis", a flow that was instantaneously joined by a far larger number of economic migrants from the Near East and Africa. It refers to the period beginning in 2015 when rising numbers of citizens arrived in the EU mostly from across the Mediterranean Sea.

When referring to migrants from Africa to Europe climate change is considered a big driving force for large-scale migrations, the long-term effects of European colonialism, including widespread poverty and corruption, are also factors. In rare cases, immigration has been a cover for Islamic State militants disguised as refugees or migrants.<sup>50</sup>

According to UNHCR's report of September 2018<sup>51</sup>, one in five migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya has either drowned or disappeared.

The largest number of newcomers were Muslim, commonly Sunni or Musli, there is also a minority of non-Muslim minorities such as Yazidis, Assyrians and Mandeans.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the top three nationalities of entrants of the over one million Mediterranean Sea arrivals between January 2015 and March 2016 were Syrian (46.7%), Afghan (20.9%) and Iraqi (9.4%)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-approach-43000-2017-deaths-962>

<sup>50</sup> IOM international organization for migration (2009) - *Migration and Climate Change*

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/desperatejourneys/>

<sup>52</sup> UNHCR; *Europe refugees & migrants emergency response*  
<https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/46811>

Of the migrants arriving in Europe by sea in 2015, 58% were males over 18 years of age (77% of adults), 17% were females over 18 (22% of adults) and the remaining 25% were under 18.<sup>53</sup> The number of deaths at sea rose to record levels in April 2015, when five boats carrying almost 2,000 migrants to Europe sank in the Mediterranean Sea, with a combined death toll estimated at more than 1,200 people. The shipwrecks took place in a context of ongoing conflicts and refugee crises in several Asian and African countries, which increased the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2014 to almost 60 million, the highest level since World War II.

According to the UNHCR, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide during the refugee crisis reached 59.5 million at the end of 2014, the highest level since World War II, with a 40% increase taking place since 2011. Of these 59.5 million, 19.5 million were refugees (14.4 million under UNHCR's mandate, plus 5.1 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate), and 1.8 million were asylum-seekers. The rest were persons displaced within their own countries (internally displaced persons).<sup>54</sup>

Developing countries still accommodated the largest share of refugees (86% by the end of 2014, the highest figure in more than two decades); while the least developed countries alone granted asylum to 25% of refugees globally.

As of 2017, 55% of refugees worldwide came from three nations: South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Syria. Of all displaced peoples, 17% of them are being hosted in Europe. As of April 2018, 15,481 refugees have successfully arrived at the shores of Europe via sea within the first few months of the year alone. There was an estimated 500 that have died in this year alone. In 2015, there was a total of 1.02 million arrivals by sea. Since then, the influx has steadily decreased but is ongoing, nevertheless.<sup>55</sup>

The following subchapters approach briefly the two conflicts that are driving the largest amounts of people to be displaced and its consequent impact on the European Union and its policies.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/12/5683d0b56/million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.html>

<sup>54</sup> UNHCR "Forced displacement in. 2015" <https://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

### 3.1 Short War Context in Dominant refugee countries & political impact of mass migrations in Germany

#### 3.1.1 Syria

As stated, numerous times, the largest majority of refugees fleeing to Europe are from Syria. Their migration originates from austere socio-political oppression under President Bashar al-Assad. The civil war erupted in 2011, in the city of Deraa as a group of Syrians demonstrated a pro-democracy protests, President Assad reacted to these demonstrations by enforcing violence, which subsequently originated more protests, backed by thousands on a nationwide level against Assad.

By the Summer of 2011, thousands of people had already fled the country and the first refugee camps were opened in Turkey. In 2012 the UNHCR decided to select a Regional Refugee Coordinator for Syrian Refugees as the concerns surrounding this crisis grew. By the year of 2013, the number of Syrian refugees had reached 1,000,000 and in late 2017 the UNHCR counted 1,000,000 asylum applications for Syrian refugees in the European Union. As of March 2018, UNHCR has calculated approximately 5.6 million registered Syrian refugees worldwide.<sup>56</sup>

#### 3.1.2 Afghanistan

Afghanistan represents the second-largest refugee population in the world. The vast majority of these refugees were forced to flee the region due to war and persecution. According to the UNHCR, there are almost 2.5 million registered refugees from Afghanistan. Afghanistan endured nearly forty years of conflict since the Soviet invasion in 1979 and the later US invasion in 2001, meanwhile, the nation still faces inconstant levels of civil war amid what seems to be a never-ending unrest. The Taliban presence within Afghanistan still seems to be a large influence on the increase in refugee numbers. Their withdrawal in 2001, originated the homecoming to nearly 6 million Afghan refugees. However, after civil unrest and fighting alongside the Taliban's return, nearly 2.5 million refugees have fled Afghanistan.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> UNHCR "Syria emergency" <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>

<sup>57</sup> UNHCR "Afghanistan" <https://www.unhcr.org/afghanistan.html>

### 3.1.3 Sub consequent political and social context and its impact

According to the retrieved samples in the interviews (Chapter 4) and other surveys, the reactions to the challenges of refugee reception fluctuate and, on the whole, can be viewed as ambivalent.<sup>58</sup> German society has on one side revealed great and ongoing solidarity with refugees and has shown spontaneous support for them. Thousands of people even welcomed them at railway stations<sup>59</sup>, made donations to several organizations, helped by giving out meals in shelters, offered language courses and even accommodation in their own homes often.<sup>60</sup> According to surveys from the Heinrich Boll Stiftung foundation, up to 10% of society was involved in welcoming processes. Many people associated the undercurrent situation quite positively in comparison to early 1990s, when hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to Germany as a result of the Balkan wars.

On the other side, civic movements which were sceptical or hostile to the creation of emergency shelters in their neighbourhoods were originated. Right-radicals such as the NPD initiated or exploited numerous protests against the reception of asylum seekers<sup>61</sup>, protests were also staged in wealthy areas, motivated by a fear of a fall in property values. In addition to protests there were also occurrences of violence against refugee shelters, including many arson attacks.<sup>62</sup> According to the Federal Criminal Office (BKA), in 2015 there were 924 such offences (in 2014 there were 199), numerous refugees were injured.<sup>63</sup> Anti-immigration nationalist *Pegida* movement has also had a substantial increase in popularity which has done regular demonstrations<sup>64</sup>, as well as the rise of the populist right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD). A national survey done in February 2016<sup>65</sup>, showed that 12% of respondents supported the AfD, which made the party came in third place in the survey, the highest it had ever polled, the party has therefore managed to have a seat the European Parliament and in 8 out of 16 state parliaments.

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<sup>58</sup> [http://eu.boell.org/en/2016/05/10/germany-refugee-crisis-background-reactions-and-challenges#\\_ftn8](http://eu.boell.org/en/2016/05/10/germany-refugee-crisis-background-reactions-and-challenges#_ftn8)

<sup>59</sup> *The Guardian* (2015) "Cheering German crowds greet refugees after long trek from Budapest to Munich"

<sup>60</sup> *Huffington Post* (2016) "As shelters fill up, Germans welcome refugees into their homes"

<sup>61</sup> *Independent* (2015) "Protesters in Germany attack refugee buses shouting 'foreigners out!'"

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/overnight-arson-attacks-hit-refugee-shelters-in-berlin-and-bavaria/a-18665079>

<sup>63</sup> *Heinrich Boll Stiftung Warsaw; Engler, M.* (2016) "Germany in the refugee crisis – background, reactions and challenges"

<sup>64</sup> *BBC* (2015) "Germany protests: Pegida movement"

<sup>65</sup> *Heinrich Boll Stiftung Brussels* (2016) "Political support in Germany"

The anti-immigration sentiment has risen across Europe, the presence in Italy's government of the far-right party of Matteo Salvini, which campaigned on a pledge to send 500,000 migrants home. The similar right-wing, populist Freedom party is also gaining power in Austria. <sup>66</sup>

As for Germany, that as seen has welcomed more than one million migrants in 2015 under Angela Merkel's open-door policy, the right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party has placed immigration determinedly at the top of the political agenda. There were several electoral obstacles, but the chancellor has said she will not stand again. Poles still show that immigration and terrorism continue being EU citizens' top concern<sup>67</sup>. The deaths of refugees in the central Mediterranean route to Italy has been reduced in the past year, but the number of drownings as a proportion of arrivals has risen abruptly to 2,054 so far this year, according to the International Organisation for Migration<sup>68</sup>, eleven of these following Salvini's announcement after taking office that he was closing Italian ports to non-Italian rescue vessels. European leaders still face divisions all along Europe but have avoided any formal agreements on refugee quotas, with some crucial states refusing any form of compulsory action.

Chancellor Merkel says that the future of the European Union mostly depends on whether it can find answers to the "vital questions" posed by migration. Italy and Greece still receive most of the migrants and Europe agrees that the distributions need to be more equal, but the existent agreements still don't ease the "burden". Efforts will have to be shared, but only voluntarily. Members will have to take in rescued migrants and create centres to deal with asylum claims on the EU will explore regional processing platforms in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia. <sup>69</sup>

However, none of these countries have yet agreed to help, meanwhile in Europe, Hungary's leader, Viktor Orban also follows the far right-wing tendencies by publicly defending "strong borders" to stop an "invasion". <sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> TIME (2015) "Countries Show How the European Far-Right Is Growing in Power"

<sup>67</sup> Reuters (2018) "Immigration, terrorism top concern list of Europeans – poll"

<sup>68</sup> International Organization of Migration (IOM) (2017) "Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals"

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45914534>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.publico.pt/2019/05/21/mundo/noticia/hungria-acusada-fomentar-retorica-antiimigracao-atitude-xenofobas-1873557>

## Chapter 4

### Introducing the process of Educational refugee integration and relating policies to real-life cases

This chapter provides deeper context on the educational processes in Germany as well as its new challenges regarding the accommodation of refugee school-goers, it will describe the content retrieved in the interviews as well as contain an analysis and comparisons regarding divergencies and convergences from the interview's subjects. Furthermore, detailed statistics from various institutions such as BAMF, UNICEF or The European Union will also be added for more adequate comparison and analysis of the educational system and its participants.

#### 4.1 School Rights in Germany

UNESCO research concluded that low levels of access to education and high levels of inequality in education in turn heighten the risk of violence and conflict,<sup>71</sup> creating a vicious cycle of lost educational opportunities, conflict and displacement. Observed over twenty-one years, regions with very low average rates of education had a 50 per cent chance of experiencing conflict.

The right and the obligation to attend school includes all children who reside in Germany, regardless of their status, however, since the education system is within the responsibility of the Federal States, there are some important distinctions in laws and practices.

For instance, mandatory education ends at the age of 16 in several Federal States, therefore children in those states do not have the right to enter schools when they are 16 or 17 years old.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, it has frequently been criticised that parts of the education system are insufficiently prepared to address the specific needs of newly arrived children. While there are "best practice" examples in some regions for the integration of refugee children into the education system, obstacles remain in other places, such as lack of access to language and literacy courses or to regular schools.

Several NGOs such as regional refugee councils, Federal Association for Unaccompanied Refugee Minors, Youth without Borders came together to create a campaign, in 2016, called

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<sup>71</sup> UNESCO (2015) *"Sustainable development begins with education"*

<sup>72</sup> Deutschland.de – Government website (Last updated in 2019) *"The German school system"*

“Schule für alle” <sup>73</sup> (School for all) to bring awareness to the fact that children in many early reception centres have only had very basic schooling and no access to the regular school system for the period of their stay in these facilities.



Figure 17 – “School for future” sign by the University of Applied Sciences of Berlin



Figure 18 – “School for fall” appeal by the University of Applied Sciences of Berlin

Furthermore, the NGOs have criticised the fact that access to education services was strictly limited for asylum seekers above the age of 16, many of whom have not finished school in their countries of origin and therefore need access to the school system in order to obtain a degree.<sup>74</sup>

Problems with access to the education system have particularly been reported with regard to initial reception centres renamed as AnKER centres in Bavaria in 2018. The general policy

<sup>73</sup> <https://kampagne-schule-fuer-alle.de>

<sup>74</sup> AIDA – Asylum information database “National Country Report - Germany” p.49

predicts the provision inside the centres of both schooling for children aged 6-16 and professional school (*Berufsschule*) for persons aged 16-21. There is only one centre in Germany (*Regensburg*) that allows children up to the age of 16 to go to regular schools, this was originally only made possible because the authorities did not manage to build the necessary facilities on time but has stayed that way. Nevertheless, persons aged 16-21 are provided education in containers in the centre, not at school. If an asylum seeker requires to access regular schools, a test evaluating his or her capacity to attend classes in regular schools is conducted, namely to assess German language level 3, this is also only possible because of a successful litigation in March 2018, when the *Manching/Ingolstadt* was a "transit centre", which led authorities to provide access to regular schools for six children from Kosovo, following an Administrative Court's decision that children from these centres with satisfactory German language skills had the right to attend the regular school system.<sup>75</sup>

#### 4.2 Participation and opportunities in the system

Refugees need practical and fast paths to integrate into new societies and this starts with quality education as it is one of the most powerful assets a refugee can have. Refugee children and teenagers who are encouraged to integrate more deeply into national school systems build lasting friendships and therefore improve communication and language skills and develop vital skills for everyday living.

Among the newly arrived refugee adults in Germany, 18 percent had university-level education and 20 percent had higher secondary education. While 22 percent recorded primary education as the highest level achieved, only 7 percent stated that they had no formal education, the majority of refugees from Syria (54 percent) have at least higher secondary education.<sup>76</sup>

Newly arriving asylum-seekers and refugees are allowed to benefit from integration and language courses and those who have good prospects for permitted stay have access to such courses.

About 283,000 refugees were eligible to participate in integration courses in 2015, a 34 more than in 2014. Around 179,000 refugees attended integration courses in 2015, an increase of

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> OECD (2014) "Education at Glance – Germany"

26 percent from 2014. Refugees whose participation was required by immigration authorities represented approximately 45 percent of the total.

Basic German-language skills are expected to expand the possibility of employment with asylum-seekers and refugees.

General integration courses, including language skills, were the most commonly attended courses in 2015. Of all participants, 78 percent took part in a general integration course, followed by literacy courses (12.3 percent).<sup>77</sup> Syrian refugees account for 19.2 percent of all course participants. Men and women's participation are rather even among general courses; however, men still represent 59 percent of all students in literacy courses.<sup>78</sup>

The impact on girls is therefore alarming, younger girls are 90% more likely to be out of secondary school in conflict areas than elsewhere. Investment in education can prevent the risks of forced labour, child marriage, extremism, lost income and opportunities that are becoming all too common alternatives for young female refugees who are searching for meaning and direction or are trying to provide for their families.<sup>79</sup> Education can provide them further life purpose; it can reintroduce opportunities in later life and possibly protect them from exploitation.

Asylum seekers normally have access to vocational training and to start it they need an employment permit, however, the fact that asylum seeker's residence permits are issued for a 6-month-period often makes it impossible to start vocational training. Training contracts generally have to be completed for a period of two or three years. Thus, potential employers are often hesitant to offer vocational training to asylum seekers since there is a significant risk that the training cannot be completed if the asylum application is rejected.

The classes in which refugee children are placed before going to regular classes differ between countries and, over time, also within countries, Germany shows to be one of those examples, being a federal state. The concrete pedagogical practices also differ significantly. When the children arrive at school, they almost always do not yet have any knowledge of the national language.

In Germany, children attend preparation or introduction classes for one or two years before being transferred to regular classes, it depends on the regulations in the specific

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<sup>77</sup> *Info Migrants (2019) "Integration courses in Germany"*

<sup>78</sup> *DAAD – Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (2017) "The integration of refugees at German higher education institutions Findings from higher education programmes for refugees"*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

*Bundesland*, city, or even the school, this can be followed by more assistance with German as a second language if their German proficiency still is not good enough. There are some preparation classes in *Gymnasiums*, but usually students in secondary education take the preparation classes in *Hauptschule* or *Realschule* (lower and middle level vocational education). If the student has earlier high school experience and proven equivalent academic levels he can be accepted in an upper secondary general education at a *Gymnasium* or a comprehensive school.<sup>80</sup>

The hierarchical structure of the German school system with its early selection makes it very challenging for refugee children arriving throughout the start of secondary school (between age ten and fourteen) to follow an academic path which prepares for higher education. Most of the refugee children arriving at the end of elementary school age are placed in *Hauptschule* or *Realschule*, the two vocational paths as referred earlier. A rather small proportion of pupils of German origin go to *Hauptschule*, nevertheless in the case of refugee children it represents quite de majority, for many teachers and policymakers this seems to be the highest objective.

At age sixteen, and in some cases even a year earlier, *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* pupils should enter an apprenticeship track. However, second language difficulties often impede refugee children from finding an apprenticeship. Also, families often have difficulty to familiarize with the complexities of the vocational sector in Germany, another significant problem, as mentioned before is the possible competition of refugee students with native-born students for apprenticeship places. That those with a *Gymnasium* diploma are more preferred by employers, followed by those who have a *Realschule* diploma. Teenagers with a *Hauptschule* diploma, generally, have smaller probabilities of getting an apprenticeship position.<sup>81</sup>

Germany's diverse economy is in need of labour, mostly professions requiring hard work and working conditions combined with somewhat low wages, such as construction work, restaurant workers and hairdressers.<sup>82</sup> In Germany there are many programmes for adult education, the main problems are lack of information and the costs. Following the "refugee crisis", many adult education institutions have started to offer free courses, at least at the

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<sup>80</sup> BAMF Federal Office for Migration and Refugees "Integration courses"

<sup>81</sup> Crul M. (2019) "How different policies and school systems affect the inclusion of Syrian refugee children"

<sup>82</sup> Germany trade and investment (2018) "Economic Overview Germany - Market, Productivity, Innovation"

basic level, and sometimes the costs are covered by the government. Especially the state-owned *Volkshochschulen* have played an important role in this.<sup>83</sup>

As observed in figure 19, most of the recent asylum-seekers are largely within the ages 18–34 years. In 2015, 71 percent of applicants were below age 30, and 31 percent were below age 18. Less than one percent of asylum applicants are older than age 54. Over two thirds (69.2 percent) of asylum applicants in Germany from the principal countries of origin in 2015 are male. While the distribution of males and females is fairly even under age 11, males are the majority in all other age groups below age 65. Only in the age group 65 years and older does the proportion of applications submitted by females (53.4 percent) exceed the proportion submitted by males.

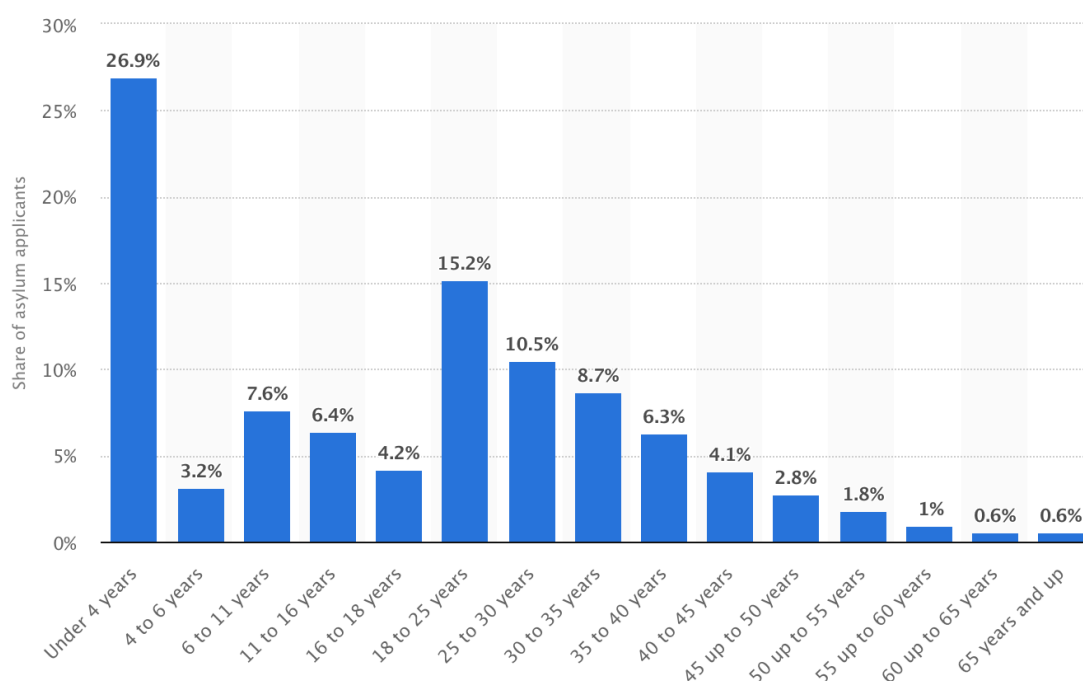


Figure 19. Age distribution of asylum seekers in Germany in 2018. That year, 8.7 percent of applicants were 30 to 35 years of age.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> BWP (2017) "Vocational education and training – new challenges"

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/912695/asylum-seekers-germany-age/>

### 4.3 Interviews

Following the studies of German language and culture throughout the three years of my bachelor's degree and the study of German culture during the master's degree I became gradually more interested in the evolution of the German society, its pre and post war context and cultural implications. The complex educational system was further studied during the master's degree as well as the integration process of refugees.

Given the current landscape it seemed adequate to understand not only how these processes were being introduced but how they were being perceived by their agents and recipients.

The attention to the issue of the integration of the children of refugees into education seems to be rather recent; however, several researchers in Europe have addressed the matter for previous waves of refugee children. The main comparative European study on the topic is *Integrace*<sup>85</sup>, it provides descriptive or evaluate examples of favourable practises in certain cities and schools in five countries who host large inflows of Syrian refugees.

The available data show that refugee children usually face more barriers than the children of immigrants.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of consideration to the development of school careers and general improvement over time. The biggest highlight is in the treatment of refugee children in the "welcome classes", which is nevertheless a crucial element for the refugee's start but it is as important to focus on what happens after these classes, if they get the extra language support or other additional support and If the current track that allows them to continue their studies beyond compulsory education.

These conducted interviews contain mostly students that want to pursue higher education and therefore attend school regularly, but it is important to understand if they will be provided with the right tools for it in the future.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://bim.lbg.ac.at/en/story/integrace-integrating-refugee-and-asylum-seeking-children-educational-systems-within-eu>

<sup>86</sup> UNICEF (2018) "Uprooted – The growing crisis for refugee and migrant children"

### 4.3.1 Context of the samples, location and methodology

The following interviews were conducted during a visit to Germany within the days between 19 of February 2019 and 23 of February 2019. During the five days visit I was assisted by an "integration class" teacher and was given several explanations regarding the organization of the integration systems as well as a tour throughout the city, the school and its functioning and the sites that house the largest amount of refugee accommodation.

The school is composed by different buildings and branches; on the one hand there is the vocational training, where the refugees are initially placed and on the other hand there is the Gymnasium, place where students who want to move further to higher education are placed. The retrieved sample comprises a total of sixteen interviews conducted in the *Gustav-Heinemann Russelsheim* School, public parks, cafes, residences and one via e-mail, they were conducted in English, German and Portuguese and depending on the degree of consent of the subjects the interviews were either audio or video-recorded for a subsequent documentary done in partnership with two film students from the University of Beira interior – Rafael Gomes and Vítor Gonçalves. The interviews were divided into four groups: "Administration & Government", "Teachers", "Refugee Students" and "Community".

In the third group - "Refugee Students" the age group consists essentially on young refugee adults within the ages of 17 and 21 from the countries of: Syria, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Iran being that Syria represents the largest number of students (4) followed by Afghanistan (2).

The fourth group is the most diverse as it contains samples from young school goers; German born and sons of immigrants and a Portuguese teacher; the age group is therefore between 14 and 42 years old.

The approach was variable as the age group and typology of the questions also differed, a more informal, flexible and informative approach was sought when in contact with the young students and community members (depending on the age group) and specific sensitive questions and a more formal and elucidative approach was used with the remaining groups.



# Räumlichkeiten



Informatikräume



Chemieräume



Mediathek

Figure 20: School Installations



# Aufnahme-Voraussetzungen

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Gymnasium</b>  | ▪ Versetzung in die Einführungsphase   |
| <b>Realschule</b> | ▪ (Qualifizierender) Realschulabschluss ( $\emptyset \leq / < 3,0$ )   |
| <b>IGS</b>        | ▪ Versetzung in die E-Phase („Ü 11“)<br>▪ (Qualifizierender) Realschulabschluss ( $\emptyset \leq / < 3,0$ ) |
| <b>KGS</b>        | ▪ Je nach Zweig (R oder G) wie oben  |

Diese Bestimmungen gelten auch für Schüler(innen) aus anderen Bundesländern.

Figure 21: School system Hierarchy<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> [https://g-h-s.de/images/orga/presentationen/GHS-Prsentation-Schule\\_1018.pdf](https://g-h-s.de/images/orga/presentationen/GHS-Prsentation-Schule_1018.pdf)



## Leitziele



Schule ist nicht nur ein Ort des Wissenserwerbs, sondern auch des sozialen Miteinanders.

Wir fordern und fördern:



- Toleranz
- Integration
- Kritikfähigkeit
- Teamfähigkeit
- Selbstständigkeit
- Verantwortungsbewusstsein



Figure 22: School Tolerance policy

Translation:

“School is not only a place of knowledge acquisition, but also of social interaction.

We demand and promote:

- Tolerance
- Integration
- Criticism
- Teamwork
- Independence
- Responsibility”<sup>88</sup>

Not only in the website but throughout the school one can notice that there is a common effort to create a healthy inclusive environment that showcases the school’s diversity through paintings, messages, works that display the student’s countries of origin and its monuments, foods and all sorts of cultural aspects;

<sup>88</sup> [https://g-h-s.de/images/orga/presentationen/GHS-Prsentation-Schule\\_1018.pdf](https://g-h-s.de/images/orga/presentationen/GHS-Prsentation-Schule_1018.pdf)



Figure 23: Classroom Posters



Figure 24: Classroom Turkey Poster



Figure 25: Heart Poem Art



Figure 26: Rainbow Poem Art



Figure 27: Picture with Students



Figure 28: Picture with student and film & sound crew

### 4.3.2 Interviews Analysis – Teachers

The approach to the teachers is essential as they are the ones who receive the guidelines and deal with them on a daily basis in first hand, this group was perhaps the most crucial to understand the initial procedures and methodology when dealing with policies and practices in such diverse classes.

Within the group all have the German language for foreigners training in common besides lecturing other courses such as Spanish language, Economics, English language and Physical Education, the teachers also teach multiple classes besides the integration ones.

The average time of experience of these teachers have with “integration classes” is of three years and there were several similarities and few diversions between the experiences of this group with the refugee students.

Subject 2 (Appendix 2) starts by briefly explaining the initial training process and goals of the integration classes.

They (migrants) have two years to learn the language and after that they can apply for a job, they can continue their studies and they can move to a regular class, so our goal is to teach them the language as fast as possible as good as we can which is not always easy.

It became clear from an interview with Subject 1 (Appendix 2 - questions number 2 and 3) that the teacher’s role furthermore went beyond education as the need for guidance was constant:

My role in these integration classes is not only being a teacher because this kind of pupils need a lot of help not only to learn German language they need a lot of help with other things so being a teacher in these classes means not only being a teacher but to be a mother a psychologist a friend, a personal assistant, you do a little bit of everything

They feel insecure they don’t even want to go to the secretary they are afraid they cannot say what they want to do so they come to me and I go with them to the secretary, most of the teachers need to so that, also talking on the phone.

Integration classes, besides the responsibility of dealing with a curriculum seem to carry extra work as the students find themselves in need of assistance in basic everyday needs and often don’t feel comfortable reaching out for help outside of their known environment. “You do

a little bit of everything, but I must say lot it is very nice, I like to teach these classes very much." (Subject 1, appendix 2)

However, it is taken lightly as the reports show that the teachers are quite happy with the environment of the classes and the gratitude shown by the students (Subject 1 and 2 from Appendix 2);

Well, in school I must say I think they do very well, because I think the majority wants or wanted before they came here to have a school and they are very happy here I have to say, and also the experience I have with a primary school I noticed that they were very happy, they were glad they could go to school.

As far as language barriers all of the subjects agree that the problem is not as accentuated as one could expected it to be, the two parties (teachers and refugee students) seem to get along and communicate relatively easily, however they have to recur to unconventional techniques to achieve understanding; the subjects (Subject 2 and 3 in order from Appendix 2) note that:

We have to talk with, our body, we have to talk with our several languages, some words we know, I don't know like, *urdo*, because we learn with them too you know, in four and half years I have learnt some words, we have to talk with your body of course and what I do , not everyone does, is to ask other pupils that know a little bit of German to translate, I often use it, or they even use their cellular phones to translate when they want to know something.

In general I don't feel a language barrier specially when I teach physical education there's a lot you can do with gestures and mimic also in the German lessons I am using my whole body to communicate with them, in case there is a problem of not understanding each other I can also use my English.

When discussing cultural contrasts all the interviewees also seem to face the same matters; lack of punctuality appears to be an accentuated problem as in most middle eastern cultures it is not a relevant cultural trade. Subject 2 and 3 from Appendix 2 note that:

The main thing is punctuality that we have to deal on a daily basis the other thing is the concept of certain rules that they have to keep and it's sometimes difficult for them

The other thing is I think the mentality, when some of my colleagues say “oh you know I can only start my class at 8h30” and the class starts at 8h because they all arrive at 8h30 because in their culture it isn’t important to be on time somewhere so that’s something that they also have to work in, to fit in in those particular things that belong to this culture they are in now

Subject 1 (Appendix 2) also reports some divergences in views of society and the world, often potentiated by their cultural context, religion and in some cases because of the recent access to education, the teacher notes that the points of view diverge from the western ways but the students are kind and willing to learn;

Sometimes there are issues, we speak a lot about society and politics and sometimes there are issues where I think they have totally different opinions sometimes there are really problematic issues, for instance once we talked about adoption in homosexual couples and all of them all were against it and another situation with a guy from Syria where he said he wishes to have a woman who stays at home and does not work but on the other hand they are really kind, most of them are very kind.

When approaching what in a first glimpse seems to be the hardest job of these teachers; the alphabetization process, one faces several variables; on the one hand there are students who have been introduced to the Arabic and Roman alphabets and have had school experience and on the other hand there are students within this age range of seventeen and twenty years old who have never been to school and both are grouped within the same classes, their evolution paces are however quite different so the role of the teacher gets more complex as the classes need to be more personalised and adapted to the students’ backgrounds..

There are pupils who are not totally alphabetized that means in this class you have different language levels so to teach in the class is not that easy but in the alphabetization you find different backgrounds, there are pupils who have already been attending schools and some others not, some of them are younger than others and of course it is much easier when they have already attended school and are younger it is much easier than when they are a bit older and have no school experience.” (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

Regarding alphabetization it is hard to apply but it is kind of, you need to adequate the teaching to each pupil (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

We have students that come from Syria or Afghanistan that didn't attend school regularly like every child does here in Europe so you notice they aren't calm enough or aren't used to be seated in a classroom and just do their work and they sometimes want to talk when others are talking so you notice that there are differences so we have to teach them all those things plus we have to teach all those things German language." (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

It's complicated (regarding the alphabetization process) they have to learn everything, they don't know our A B C, well we have for example, pupils that have never gone to school in Afghanistan for example so they come here and their first alphabetization is done here with us, it's our alphabet they learn, and when I say to them you may translate into your language they say "I can't" and I say "oh sorry of course I forgot" then there are of course others that know how to write in Arabic but they don't know our alphabet but they learn fast because they have school experience. Then there of course are others which is much more complicated they even have to learn how to write on a line because they all write in the middle of the line for example, so we use special lines that primary schools use that is easier for them to learn. (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

It is also that some of them are coming from countries where there is an educational system, they have been to school some already have certificates from there and others haven't been to school or to schools that are not comparable to our schools. (Subject 3; Appendix 2)

Subject 2 (Appendix 2) also notes that the set up deadline of two years to fully learn the language is quite unrealistic as they will never have the same opportunities in the job market as a native speaker, the teacher suggests that the ideal period for complementary language lessons should be between five and six years.

Nevertheless, according to the teachers, the divergences in school experiences within the students don't seem to affect their general motivation as it very often good and they feel quite enthusiastic about their future and the possibilities that await them, subject 1 even marks that the general motivation is significantly better in these classes than in the "normal" German classes.

In some cases, their stimulus regarding the future and ambition is just fuelled by the possibility of providing monetary help to their family and themselves, they hold great aspirations words financial freedom and success and are very often disappointed as life

doesn't go as planned which frequently can originate depressions. The following testimonies display these signs of motivation or lack of it:

Some of them will be ready to go to university, some of them are very motivated and I am sure they will reach their aims and I am sure they will reach them I would say 80 / 85 % do want to have a kind of good job and future in Germany and the rest of them are depressed and don't feel good here and want to return. I would say a small minority are very lazy, in other classes 40% are lazy. (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

Well, in school I must say I think they do very well, because I think the majority wants or wanted before they came here to have a school and they are very happy here I have to say, and also the experience I have with a primary school I noticed that they were very happy, they were glad they could go to school. (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

I see that lots of them are motivated but some don't see the necessity of going to school again, they are not used to the educational system here mainly regarding the future life, having a job or going into an internship, they are coming from a different background where they don't have the same steps like in Germany, you have to have this certificate to go to the next step, after you finish this step you have other ones and some of them don't understand that. (Subject 3; Appendix 2)

In society I believe they are going to have more difficulties, these two cultures are very different, and they have different ways of seeing life, living so I believe they have some difficulties. Like for example to find a house, lots of them have big families like 3/4/5 kids and they just find small flats and its complicated, well for one year it would be ok but for 2/3 years its complicated and they are always tell us that they are searching or their parents are searching for a house and then you have the younger boys that come here 18/19/20 they live in some kind of flats with other students, they live together, and then they have somebody from social security and they take care of them they also have, I believe 200 euros every month, more a less, but actually what they really want after two years is to start working because they want to send money to their families they get depressed you know when they notice it isn't so easy to earn lots money here in Germany, because it isn't the salaries are good but they come with a dream, because they tell me that, the dream of earning lots and lots thousands of euros and it isn't like that and then they get depressed when they notice the reality isn't like that and that they can't send their families for example 1000 euros in one or two months so for

some of them it's not going to be a dream because we notice also that there are some drug problems because of these depressions they get. (Subject 3; Appendix 2)

We have lots of students that come with the dream of going to university and lots of them say to us that if there weren't a war in my country I would be now in a university I could be studying, it is their goal, what I want, but the barrier of the language is hard, because in Germany you have to speak the language quite well, people are obliged to learn the language, you have to. But yes, they have those dreams and goals, they are motivated. (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

Despite of the motivation of the students, subject 1 (Appendix 2) points out what is believed to be a gap in the system; as the students don't attend school they receive official warnings via letter, and after three of these cautionary letters they lose their education rights, the teacher doesn't seem to agree with this system given that the motives for the absence are rather diverse and don't always originate from lack of will and motivation, but often because of the trauma that their condition comes with, the situation of subject 4 (Appendix 4) notes that he did like school but was pressured to leave to be able to provide for his family with monetary aid. Given the variety of circumstances the teacher thinks that there should be more flexibility in this instruction, the respondent approached this matter when questioned about the hardest guidelines to apply;

The most difficult to apply are two: one of them is that if they don't attend school you need to write a letter and after the third letter they are supposed to lose the rights to attend this school and some of them don't attend the school because they are depressed or because they are traumatised and so on, so it is a guideline that I cannot apply and most of the teachers cannot because it is not a rule it is not always that they are just lazy it is that they have another kind problems and you need to be flexible and another guideline that I don't like is that they need to have their studies, their school degree recognised here in Germany officially so they can attend a normal class, in this *Bundeslanden*, in this region Hessen It is necessary to do that but in other regions it is not and this is something a lot bureaucracy and it takes a long time and some of my pupils are so good I wish I could send them to a normal class and I am sure that they would do well but we don't have this flexibility no teacher is allowed to do that and I think that that is a problem because it is a pity that many of them are very motivated and they don't go forward. (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

Subject 3 (Appendix 2) refers that these depressions often can lead to drug problems, mostly in Afghan students which can have deep cultural roots related to the large connection the country still holds with opium production.<sup>89</sup>

When referring to the possibility of trauma given the students complex backgrounds associated with war and displacement and unstable current situations often (regarding housing, citizenship, social integration) all of the subjects agree that it is present and rather complicated to address given the diversity of behaviours in which it can manifest. Integration classes teachers do not have specific training regarding trauma response or intercultural mediation.

Many of them have trauma or grieve, at the beginning felt I was afraid of doing something wrong by speaking about the past or something but with time I realize that they like speaking about their countries that's why we make these posters in the class they really felt comfortable speaking and presenting their cities and talking about their lives before and when it gets a bit dramatic I try to take it with humour but I've learned that with practise at the beginning I felt insecure." (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

We don't have this kind of training and I think this is it's a pity because we have a lot of training regard how we teach grammatic and speaking properly and so on but this kind of training, about how we could help them coping with this trauma and so on is absolutely necessary" (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

Well, we don't have a special training, we attend some workshops and trainings but what I can tell you is that it isn't enough. In 2015 when all these refugees came to Germany no one was prepared, doctors weren't prepared, teachers weren't prepared, schools weren't prepared, police weren't prepared, so you have to prepare yourself every day. (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

As teachers we studied also education and science, but we are not qualified to deal with traumatized people what we can do if there's a situation is trying to calm it down, but it definitely needs someone professional to deal with this. (Subject 3; Appendix 2)

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<sup>89</sup> Schweich T. (2008) "Is Afghanistan a Narco-State?"

There were specific situations described by two of the teachers in which there are no specific guidelines in place to deal with and represent rather complex decision-making processes that can often affect the teenager's life greatly.

An emotional way (of revealing trauma) is for instance they are always showing me films from Facebook where there was a bomb explosion, a student of mine showed me a dead body, it was his cousin, he was crying and he was telling me "I'm sorry *Frau M*, today I can't attend the class" perhaps the question should be how do you reach to those things because no one is prepared, when you say you want to become a teacher you are not prepared to deal with young boys who are losing family members because a bomb fell somewhere, every day is different, it is what I can tell you, they have a lot of problems. (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

There was a situation where the whole school was watching a movie about the war in Syria and I had one student that was really touched by this movie and started to shake and crying and said "I know this place I know exactly where it is, it's close to where I used to live and now it's completely destroyed" after that we tried to talk to him and calm him down, this was the only time I was confronted with their past. (Subject 3; Appendix 2)

Concerning the future two of the interviewees note that the integration of refugees will address positively a concerning matter; the aging of Germany – by bringing young people willing to participate in the economy not only to give back to Germany but to help their families that remain in war zones and come from cultures where the constitution of family happens earlier in life it will not only generate capital for Germany but will bring more births and active population.

I think that for the economy in the future it is going to be great for Germany, I think demographically also, because as I told you they have big families, they marry very young and they want to have children and they don't just want to have one or two children so I think it's going to be great for Germany, Syrian people for instance are people who like to work, like to earn money and they know how to make money they tell me that "*Frau M* you will see in three years we are going to be rich

In Syria we love to work and to sell things, so yes, I think it's going to be good for Germany. Lots of them also want to become doctors and I believe some of them will and will be great doctors if they'll stay here or if they'll come back to Syria that's another question because some of them say they would like to go back and help their country." (Subject 2; Appendix 2)

On a last note, a teacher adds how the perspectives of these migrants might contribute positively to the mindset not only of the German society but to the rest of Europe:

Regarding the society I must say that most of the west European countries are getting very materialistic and selfish that's a fact and you realize that in society that many people are going in this direction and these immigrants that are coming in these years have a another way of seeing life and in this way, I think it is a positive influence, in my opinion they bring a lot of humanity and that's good. (Subject 1; Appendix 2)

One could associate this subject's parallelism between German's "selfish" society and "the other way of life" the subjects says refugees have to Geert Hofstede's six dimensions theory where he describes Germany as a rather individualist society and Syria as a more interdependent and collectivist country, despite the theory's archaicity this seems to go according to the reports, the students are naturally dependent and immediately establish personal relations with the integration agents, Subject 1 (appendix 3) even describes the relationship between the students and teachers as "maternal" and subject 3 (appendix 2) describes personal situations that were told in confidence. There is a sense of gratitude and concern towards the well-being of the teachers, subject 1 (Appendix 1) even proceeds to show some personal inclination towards working with the refugee classes when refers that in the "normal classes" the majority of the students uninterested.

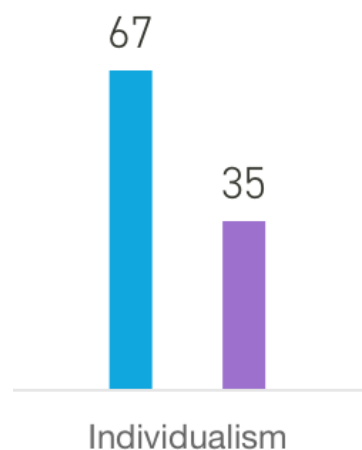


Figure 29: Hofstede's comparison between individualism levels in Germany (Blue) and Syria (Purple)

### 4.3.3 Content Analysis – Students

Given the circumstances, as earlier mentioned the initial approach to the students was informal and calm, before the interview there was an introduction to the study and why the topic was selected, there was some extra time to clarify each question and leave the subjects as comfortable as possible.

The answers to the posed questions were usually substantially shorter and more practical than the other groups as some of the respondents were quite introverted, nevertheless their attitudes shifted as the interviews evolved. Despite of the brief and direct responses the subjects still provided useful data to understand some key aspects – The satisfaction degree with the integration process, agents and school and the cultural context and difficulties in the adaptation process.

Regarding the nationalities from the respondents, there seems to be a match to the tendencies as the majority of them are of Syrian nationality followed by Afghanistan as seen in figure 30.

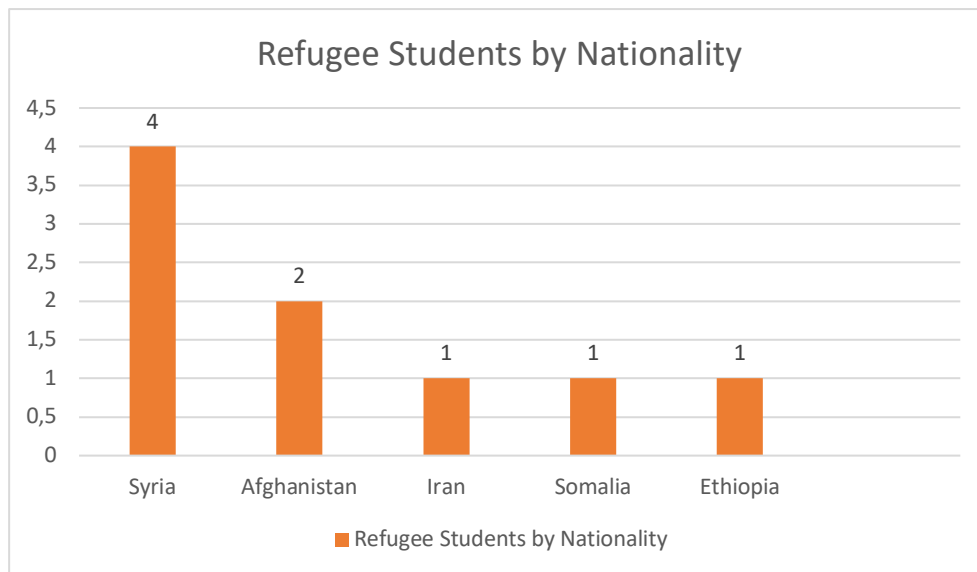


Figure 30: Refugee Students by Nationality (Interview samples) Graph

Throughout the initial conversations and interviews, one could also notice that the proficiency in German was quite good, six out of nine of the interviewees grade their proficiency in German "very good" and the average year of arrival is 2016.

As the teachers described in the prior sub-chapter the motivation to be in school is quite positive as all of the students affirm that they like coming to school, six out of nine students

show the intent of proceeding to higher education (Subject 4; Appendix 4), Figure 24, only one student quit school as there was pressure from the family to provide financial aid; - "I left because my family wanted money and they told me to work so I left my school." (Subject 4; Appendix 4), (Figure 24.

On a more positive note, however, one ambitious student (Subject 6; Appendix 3) already describes with passion what is intended for her future;

I have had many ideas for what I want to do in the future but my mine is set on being an author or a writer because like I said I love English and books have changed my life and I would like to return the favour and change other people's life's with my books.

When asked about their favourite things about Germany the answers were quite different , within the listed one can find elements such as "The people" (Subject 2; Appendix 3), "The people, the social system and the peace" (Subject 4; Appendix 3), "Democracy" (Subject 5; Appendix 4), "Organization, opportunities and cleanness" (Subject 6; Appendix 4) and "Respect" (Subject 9; Appendix 4). Subject 5 (Appendix 4) even goes to add: "Everyone can say what they think, without being afraid." Regarding the least favourite aspects, Subject 5 (Appendix 4) says that:

The thing I don't like so much is that Germans are very punctual, sometimes when I miss somewhere I have to go they get really angry and I can get problems because of that and I am an honest man and sometimes they aren't fair but there are very good nice people.

The student recognises the divergence but seems to see the excess of punctuality as the problem, as for subject 3 of the 1<sup>st</sup> appendix, a teacher, instead addresses the lack of punctuality as a pressing problem. In what is clearly a cultural difference the student defends himself as he claims that it does not affect his character; in this case he claims his "honesty" as he seems to note that Germans don't cope well with the problem; associating it with a character issue or a matter of disrespect. As the Canadian centre for intercultural learning notes: "*In daily life, a 15 to 30-minute delay for an appointment may occur. Deadlines and punctuality are flexible in Syria*"; opposing to Germany's punctuality as seen in the report.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> [https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country\\_insights-apercus\\_pays/ci-ic\\_sy.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/ci-ic_sy.aspx?lang=eng)

The most common dislike within the students is the bureaucracy and what they define as a complex system with many layers and formalities to quote subject 6 (Appendix 3) "It takes a lot of time to get things done", another popular dislike proves to be the (bad) weather.

Most of the students claim they feel welcomed and enjoy coming to school, this also goes according to the teachers' reports as they say the students show signs of motivation and gratitude (Subjects 1 and 2, Appendix 2).

As for other possible motives besides cultural ones for the lack of punctuality there were also accounts that the housing conditions could be a contributor to this; not only the lack of space given that the families are often numerous and the provided housing is usually rather small but the location that is often very far away from school in which the students were assigned. All of these factors contribute directly to the student's school performance according to subject 2 (Appendix 2);

I believe they have some difficulties. Like for example to find a house, lots of them have big families like 3/4/5 kids and they just find small flats and its complicated, well for one year it would be ok but for 2/3 years its complicated and they are always tell us that they are searching or their parents are searching for a house and then you have the younger boys that come here 18/19/20 they live in some kind of flats with other students, they live together, and then they have somebody from social security and they take care of them they also have, I believe 200 euros every month, more a less.

As for matters of comfort and happiness only one of the nine students directly claimed he was not happy as he says he does not have his family with him (Subject 1; Appendix 4).

Subject 8 (Appendix 4) also proceeds to note that her past often influences her disposition as there is a hint of a traumatic event in the following answer: "It makes me sometimes sad when I remember what happened to my family and how my land is."

As a teacher (Subject 2; Appendix 2) describes when asked about trauma, most of the students have a problematic past that continues to haunt them, the constant uncertainty regarding family member's health and well-being, poor communication between them and their countries of origin and the persistent sense of anxiety for news often complicate the lecturing process and influence their performance.

Some students demonstrate, however, energetic signs of hope and a renewed faith in happiness;

I left the bad things in Syria, I experienced wonderful things in Germany like opening myself up to the world. I am very very happy. (Subject 3; Appendix 4)

(When asked: "Are you happy?") Yes, why not? I am starting a new life I'm going to start a new job. Why not? (Subject 5; Appendix 4)

I am happy, I had a lot of fears of coming into Germany, but it has made me very happy and I have met a lot of new people and made new friends. (Subject 6; Appendix 4)

After the journey I have been through I think it has made me a better person and a stronger person and if I had a choice to go through all of this again I would because it made me who I am. (Subject 6; Appendix 4)

I feel like I am a new-born there are things that are never going to be the same again, they are past. (Subject 5; Appendix 4)

There also seems to be a relation to happiness and the parent's presence as the subjects who demonstrated their happiness more enthusiastically, the three subjects quoted above have all reported to have their parents by their side as for the subject who reports to be unhappy doesn't have close family with him, only an uncle and cousin as well as some others who justified their "happiness" with peace, democracy or justice, logical values and not with intuitive and emotional features. Subject 4 (appendix4) express his happiness in a calmer way, referring only to the social peace and absence of war; "Life is different now; I live in peace I can make friends. If there is peace I would like to come back to Afghanistan."

Subject 1 (Appendix 2), a teacher, also notes that there are some students that don't feel comfortable in Germany due to the absence of close family members: "Some of them are depressed and don't feel well in Germany here and are dreaming of going back for instance to Turkey where their mother is living for example."

When asked if they felt welcomed all of the students replied positively, having had, however different experiences Subject 6 (Appendix 4) describes what believes to be a "passive-aggressive" attitude that is often embraced by others;

No, I haven't faced any kind of prejudice or discrimination but there's fear that I would face something like that because sometimes they are not directly harsh towards you but they can

seem passive-aggressive, sometimes they know English but wouldn't want to talk in English, they want you to speak in German but it's hard for you.

There are also some split reports when it comes to hospitality as some subjects say even though the majority of people are welcoming there are some exceptions;

I like everything in Germany, I feel welcomed but sometimes not so much. (Subject 3; Appendix 4)

I feel 50/50 welcomed. (Subject 4; Appendix 4)

(When asked: "Do you feel welcomed?") Somewhat. (Subject 9; Appendix 4)

Subject 5 (Appendix 4), when questioned about hospitality describes what was for him a rather emotional situation following his tumultuous path to get to Germany;

When I arrived here, the first person I talked to was a policeman and he looked at my passport and thought it was fake, afterwards he noticed it was real and said to me "Welcome to Germany.

When questioned regarding involvement with community Subject 6 (Appendix 4) also notes that there is an effort to fit in and be welcoming.

I like everyone, I try to be as welcoming to them as they are to me, so if I have a German neighbour, I try to say hello to them in the morning.

As for possible events of discrimination the responses also diverge, however, there seems to always be some reluctance towards the question, some report situations that have happened to them while others just refer to events that have happened to friends.

What happens sometimes is that racists say, "Out, Out! (of Germany)" But apart from that all is fine! With my friends I feel good but there are some people at school that don't like me.

I have faced these situations of discrimination sometimes, in school. (Subject 3; Appendix 4)

Another student (Subject 5; Appendix 4) also describes a situation where he feels like he was being discriminated as a doctor didn't want to sign his receipts and as the student insisted,

he explains the doctor started yelling with him and he could never return to the clinic again as he did not feel welcomed.

The last question involved the possibility of wanting something to change, the students were asked what they would change in their current situation and the answers were rather similar; most didn't want to change anything while the ones who did have rather diverse answers;

I would get my family. (Subject 1; Appendix 4)

I would like to change the weather here. (Subject 2; Appendix 4)

I would like to be more confident and less shy (Subject 3; Appendix 4)

I think I would change how many papers I have to do (Subject 6; Appendix 4)

I would make it sunny in Germany. (Subject 7; Appendix 4)

The students show general signs of affection and gratitude to the community, all of the enquired describe the Germans as kind people and some even show examples:

I like everyone in general. (Subject 1; Appendix 4)

I like the people here because they are very friendly. (Subject 2; Appendix 4)

I like the people here. (Subject 4; Appendix 4)

I get along with everyone, sometimes Germans speak too fast and I don't understand, but when I say: "oh I am a foreign here could please you speak a little slower?" they do so they are very nice to me. (Subject 5; Appendix 4)

I have heard a lot of people say that sometimes Germans can be racist to us newcomers, but since if been here they all seem so welcoming, so nice and even if they don't know English that well they will try to help you as they can.(Subject 6; Appendix 4)

The following infographic (Figure 31) provides a brief summary of this interviews analysis as it provides a statistical overview.

# INFOGRAPHIC

Refugee students interview analysis

## THE STUDENTS SAY ...

**9 OUT OF 9**

Say they like or liked coming to school



**3 OUT OF 9**

Have faced situations of discrimination.

**8 OUT OF 9**

Say they are happy



**5 OUT OF 9**

Intend on going to university



1 student reports that the trip to Germany took more than 40 days

1 student notes that in order to provide for his family in his homeland Syria had to quit school and find a job



1 student says that he would like to return to his homeland

Figure 31: Student Data Infographic

#### 4.3.4 Content Analysis – Administration and government

This group is represented by one element, who not only is a teacher of German language and a department coordinator but a member of the national education authority; place where the distribution of the migrants within the state's schools is done.

The interaction started by a description of the system and procedures that an asylum applicant goes through since arrival and explaining the origin of the guidelines – the ministry of education, the respondent also noted that the school takes, besides German and refugee students, members of the European community and worldwide that are not necessarily refugees (Subject 1 appendix 3). When questioned regarding the role as of an integration agent and if the subject thought it went beyond education the respondent noted that the relationship was rather personal as they have several problems and doubts regarding the country, this first contact with the integration agents ends up being crucial for their wellbeing and development;

It definitely does. They are arriving in a completely new country with a new system a different culture some of them completely alone without their family. When most of the refugees came in 2015/2016 we had lots of young people that were underage when they came to Germany they usually came here by boat, walking and for them it's very difficult to arrive in this completely new society and those are things we have to deal with as well, sometimes for this people you are more of a mother than a teacher because they come to you with all of their problems that they have, or at the beginning they don't even want to mention these problems and then maybe you see behavioural problems and you start to find out what's going on here. It's not only teaching and that you have your curriculum and you go thought it step by step, you have to really get into a very personal relationship with them, that's what I see. (Subject 1 appendix 2)

The coordinator also added in a different question:

The teachers we have had so far are very empathetic to the students and I think they all implement much more than just the teacher character

As the interviewees from the other group referred (Appendix 2), there is a clear perception regarding the problems that surround these students and their situations as well as their emotional dependency. The subject describes what it seems to be a "maternal" sentiment

as the students feel the need to share their concerns and often even reveal them through their behaviours.

The coordinator also indicates a problem persistently mentioned the previous group; the difference in school experience as the subject refers that the distinctive backgrounds interfere directly with their posture, development and performance in class.

You can't rush through the curriculum, you go according to your class, and it's also different because of what kind of students you have, some of them have already been to schools, and they know an educational system, they know how it works to study how a class works others they have never been to school before for them it's completely new. Lots of them are coming from very restrictive systems where they are still hitting and there are fifty/sixty students in a classroom so they have to experience the school here before they can really start to study, however I have to say we have never had problems with violence in this school and we've had a lot of students so far.

As does subject 2 from appendix 3, the coordinator believes the two-year deadline to learn the language is unrealistic as it will not provide them enough skills to move on:

The possibilities for the students after these two years are very low, they hardly have any further chances to learn the language more or to do something.

When questioned about possible problems in the system the subject opted by pointing out a flaw in political-led decisions that can displace the student to the original:

The things that I am critical about are more political like some countries are being regarded as safe countries despite the fact that they are maybe not safe (Appendix 3)

Lastly, when approaching the future the respondent seems optimistic by relating shortages in the country that can be complete by the newcomers such as demographic and labour needs, however, the coordinator highlights that for the sustainability of the program and healthy integration of the migrants to thrive the integration measures need to be continued by the following government.

One key thing we have in Germany is that we don't have enough skilled workers, and this can be a gap easily filled by people who are coming from Abroad to stay in Germany, this might be a good chance.

Let's say 10% of the students coming to the school are going their own way, they start to study going to university, in my opinion it can only make a society more colourful to have people from different backgrounds from different countries.

Demographically it will change as well, the amount of children being born was raised in Germany, I see positive things, but if the government continues to care of integration, it's definitely a subject that is very important, if you don't help them to be integrate them or give them a chance that might cause problems.

#### 4.3.5 Content Analysis – Community

This sample was not prepared in advanced as the subjects were randomly chosen, the questions were not previously arranged, however, a few guidelines were set; the approach just varied as the age groups and context of the approach to the subjects did since some were approached in the street and others in their residences.

The goal and the premise in the guidelines was to understand the perception of the community towards Germany's attitude to welcome refugees and how it translated to their everyday life, what they felt like, how it affected them and eventually if they agree and feel positive impacts.

The first interview characterizes the younger subject; a 14-year-old who is rather active in this hobbies and social life as he describes; "I paint sometimes, I like to read, and I play table tennis." (Subject 1, Appendix 5). The student feels positive about Germany's decision to host refugees;

I think it's good because then we can show that we have a heart for these people, and that we can help so yes, I think it was a good idea.

When asked about the perception around him towards the newcomers there was some hesitation as it was described that in the subject's opinion, some people felt uncomfortable in the presence of refugees (*Subject 1, Appendix 5*), mostly due to the fact that there were plenty of unknown matters that could create divergences such as their personal problems, the language and the religion.

The student also notes some differences in daily practises, associated with religion;

They pray in the afternoon, in the evening, when they wake up and I think they miss those things, of course they can do this here but it's not the same, they don't have a mosque here,

but they have their book (the Quran). So, they feel uncomfortable, unsure nervous sometimes.  
(Subject 1, Appendix 5)

To conclude, the subject agrees that in the future Germany will become richer in diversity and more tolerant as people will get used to each other's presence.

The second subject is a 45-year-old musician and also a teacher of Portuguese language and culture who has been living in Germany for 10 years, when confronted with Germany's act of bringing in refugees the subject immediately describes it as a "fantastic humanitarian action" and as "an act of courage";

Eu acho que foi uma ação humanitária fantástica acho que nenhum país da europa teve tanta coragem como a Alemanha em abrir as portas e receber tanta gente a precisar de ajuda, é essa a minha opinião acho que realmente tiveram muita coragem tiveram uma ação muito humana um gesto muito humano.

The teacher thinks that Germany has provided all the necessary means for a dignifying life-style of refugees through creating mechanisms so they would get appropriate housing and social and educational integration systems, the subject also shows to be aware of the integration processes asylum takers undergo as he notes in several answers;

Eu acho que a Alemanha criou condições para que toda a gente pudesse integrar-se na vida social ou no dia a dia criando programas de inserção criando nas escolas também programas especiais em que eles aprendem a língua, em que eles são encaminhados para uma formação profissional ou até superior universitário dependendo do caso ou até das vontades e capacidades de cada individuo.

A Alemanha criou os mecanismos ideias para que essas pessoas chegassem fossem alojadas em alojamentos condignos e tivessem programas de integração a medida das necessidades deles.

Eu acho que a Alemanha criou condições para que toda a gente pudesse integrar-se na vida social ou no dia a dia criando programas de inserção criando nas escolas também programas especiais em que eles aprendem a língua, em que eles são encaminhados para uma formação profissional ou até superior universitário dependendo do caso ou até das vontades e capacidades de cada individuo.

Despite not working directly with refugee students or integration classes the respondent is aware of a problem that also persisted to be mentioned in the previous Interview groups; the alphabetization issues, the respondent acknowledges that this obstacle adds further difficulties to the pupils and the teachers in the already complicated student's social integration process.

Contrastes existem também mais a nível da educação uma dificuldade acrescida que é o facto de eles não serem alfabetizados no alfabeto romano e muitos deles nem foram a escola são alfabetizados em árabe e isso causa-lhes, no sistema em que toda a gente que vai a escola , toda a gente é alfabetizada toda a gente inicia uma formação um jovem com 15 ou 16 anos não ter alfabetização é muito mais difícil integrarem-se numa sociedade que já está muito desenvolvida relativamente aos sistemas e sociedades dos quais eles vêm.

As for matters of diversity the teacher also recognizes several advantages such as the rich intercultural exchange for both sides; the newcomers and Germany; he notes, however, that the exchange is only possible if there is a predisposition for it in both sides. There is also a recognition in the improve of lifestyle that the refugees obtain;

A diversidade é sempre boa, traz sempre riqueza

A Alemanha vai ganhar e os refugiados vão ganhar a Alemanha vai ganhar uma diversidade .... vai se tornar um país mais rico, naturalmente aquelas culturas vão deixar escoar para quem conviver características da sua cultura que só vão enriquecer a cultura alemã,

Eles por sua vez vão ganhar bastante porque se vinham de países que tinham poucas condições e uma vida pouco rica a nível de conforto na Alemanha eles vão ganhar bastante, a Alemanha realmente é um país que oferece qualidade de vida muito grande, muita segurança

Estamos numa fase de adaptação os dois lados estão a assimilar, acho que o futuro é sorridente.

According to Belfield L. (2012):

Culture is the lens with which we evaluate everything around us; we evaluate what is proper or improper, normal or abnormal, through our culture. If we are immersed in a culture that is unlike our own, we may experience culture shock and become disoriented when we come

into contact with a fundamentally different culture. People naturally use their own culture as the standard to judge other cultures; however, passing judgment could reach a level where people begin to discriminate against others whose “ways of being” are different than their own—essentially, we tend to fear that which we do not understand.

Cultural diversity is important because our country, workplaces, and schools increasingly consist of various cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. We can learn from one another, but first we must have a level of understanding about each other in order to facilitate collaboration and cooperation. Learning about other cultures helps us understand different perspectives within the world in which we live and helps dispel negative stereotypes and personal biases about different groups.

In addition, cultural diversity helps us recognize and respect “ways of being” that are not necessarily our own, so that as we interact with others, we can build bridges to trust, respect, and understanding across cultures. Furthermore, this diversity makes a country a more interesting place to live, as people from diverse cultures contribute language skills, new ways of thinking, new knowledge, and different experiences.

The author (Belfield L.), just like the interview respondent describes social diversity as an asset that provides a wider perspective and therefore pushes people to face their own preconceived ideas and learn to cooperate and share.

As for possible conflicts the subject does not seem to associate it directly with the refugees but rather to the often-common necessity of attributing a sense of guilt to immigrants by claiming their blame to the country’s problems.

Embora se queira atribuir muitos casos de violência aos refugiados eu acho que são só estigmas antigos que o estrangeiro recém-chegado é que tem culpa do mal que acontece no momento, eu acho que há um processo de adaptação tanto dos alemães como da sociedade alemã, que não é só constituída por alemães. (Subject 3 Appendix 5)

The last two subjects’ interviews were retrieved through a spontaneous approach to a group of students on the street, as several of them gathered two seemed to have a more formed opinion on the integration of refugees.

The general opinion between the approached students was favorable towards refugee acceptance and integration. Subject three (Appendix 5) even proceeded to defend refugees from the regular stigma that associates them with laziness;

I think it is good that Germany took in so many people in many people from other countries came here and found good schools and Germany gave them good schools and opportunities to do something. They don't just hang around and do nothing.

Subject 4 (Appendix 5) is not sure if the integration system is working well as he notes that the distress from displacement and family loss might affect the refugees significantly;

Well, let's just say we don't know that (When asked if they think the system is working), it's a very different environment for these people, there are all kinds of people coming here, men women, children sometimes just children without their families and it leaves a very important impact on their lives.

They also note that in order for the system to be successful there needs to be determination to learn from the refugee students' part.

When questioned about possible situations of trauma and how the school is handling it the subjects do not seem to think that the school is active towards it;

I Think they could help but they don't help everybody, they don't ask everybody so much if they're traumatized. (Subject 1; Appendix 5)

## Chapter 5

### Educational and special cultural implication

#### 5.1 War, trauma and loss; Understanding how it affects performance and well-being -

##### An introduction to trauma issues

Trauma is proven to have a powerful capacity to shape a teenager's physical, emotional, and intellectual development, especially when the trauma is experienced early in life, it can profoundly alter a person's life course and diminish innate resilience.<sup>91</sup> Continual exposure to threatening situations can make a child's brain prisoner to its "fight, flight, or freeze" response. Thus, it might even become difficult for an individual to build meaningful relationships and may even make it difficult to reach out for help.<sup>92</sup> Appropriate training for assessment of the trauma impact are important because students who have experienced trauma are often misunderstood and treated as oppositional or depressed. Early assessment is also crucial to be able to intervene and change the trajectory of a student's life. This opportunity is especially significant when considering that dysfunctional behaviours resulting from trauma and even the attitude towards life are often passed down to future generations. The American Psychological Association defines trauma simply as "an emotional response to a terrible event,"

The Georgetown University National Technical assistance centre for children's mental health describes trauma as:

An event that threatens the life or integrity of the individual or a loved one, such as physical abuse, death of a parent, witnessing domestic violence, abandonment, natural disasters, war, community violence, or medical issues.

It describes the different representations of trauma such as:

Traumatic stress is the physical, mental, or emotional impact of that event, which can have serious effects on physical and mental health. Traumatic events can be acute, that is, short lived, or chronic.

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<sup>91</sup> Harvard University (2017) Center on the developing child "Resilience"

<sup>92</sup> Ubaidi, B. (2016) "Cost of Growing up in Dysfunctionally" Journal of Medicine and Disease Prevention

Chronic trauma is a recurring event over a prolonged period.

Complex trauma refers to both the chronic traumatic events and the resulting emotional and physical effects.

Complex trauma is potentially most harmful because it impairs the individual's ability to develop and maintain relationships, and because it is trauma at the hands of someone whose job is to love and protect rather than cause harm. Complex trauma also includes the combination of different types of traumatic events, for example, witnessing domestic violence, personal experience of physical and emotional abuse, or witnessing community violence.

Toxic stress is the result of repeated exposure to traumatic events, such as child abuse, that activate the body's stress response system. <sup>93</sup>

Eric Rossen and Rort Hull, in their book entitled *Supporting and Educating Traumatized Students: A Guide for School-Based Professionals*, that a "Childhood trauma is an epidemic. It is widespread, affecting 20% of the population. The influences of trauma are vast, and though some children may be able to draw on innate strengths"

The most common disorders within refugees are posttraumatic stress disorder and major depression, trauma and loss. Psychiatric surveys of refugees showed that 9% of adults were identified to have PTSD, 4% with generalized anxiety disorder and 5% with major depression, and 11% of children diagnosed with PTSD. <sup>94</sup> There is an association between difficulties in acculturation and mental distress and hence prevention of future mental health problems among migrants have to focus on easing the process of integration into the host society (Haasen, Demiralay, and Reimer, 2008).

Difficulties in resident status are also often associated with mental health problems. Consequently, asylum seekers (54%) and refugees (41.4%) fulfilled criteria of PTSD most often while anxiety and depression were reported by asylum seekers (84.6% and 63.1%, respectively) and illegal migrants (both 47.6%).<sup>95</sup> Frequent rates of depression and anxiety among migrants differ and may be related to financial tensions in the country of immigration. An evaluation of the associations between the Gross National Product (GNP) of the immigration country as a moderating factor for depression, anxiety and PTSD showed that the rates for depression were 20% among labor migrants vs. 44% among refugees and for

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<sup>93</sup> <https://gucchd.georgetown.edu>

<sup>94</sup> Schouler-Ocak, M. (2015) "Suicidal Behavior of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in Europe" p. 54

<sup>95</sup> Heerena, A. (2014) "Attention bias modification for social anxiety: A systematic review and meta-analysis."

anxiety 21% among migrants vs. 40% among refugees and higher GNP in the country of immigration was related to lower depression and/or anxiety in migrants but not in refugees.<sup>96</sup>

## 5.2 Integration agents & refugees; their roles and problems

Bearing in mind that innate strengths are universal, further on I will briefly focus on refugee's psychological stress in its multifaceted aspects.

Refugee students often suffer from psychological stress related to the war they experienced at home or their traumatic journey, loss and extreme violence and often loneliness are the most common backgrounds.

The diversity of backgrounds and contexts is argued to affect the integration process in the host country of refugees. Indeed, traumatic experiences in the country of origin and during the trip have been shown to have an impact on mental health, which subsequently may delay integration.<sup>97</sup>

This matter creates the need to identify and prepare for the education of refugee children is an international issue.

As recruiting more teachers became a priority with the mass arrival of young refugees, the specific training of these teachers has fallen behind either for lack of time or funds. Besides the special training to work with refugee children, says Marlis Tepe, president of the GEW teachers association<sup>98</sup>.

The president even notes: "They need to know about the countries of origin of the children, pedagogy and how to deal with traumatization and also to be alert to intercultural issues," she argues, adding that the school system has not proposed enough specialized training and that there is also a lack of trainers themselves.

Each student's situation is unique, and each student is different however, above all, it is crucial that students find themselves in a normal environment again.

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<sup>96</sup> Lindert, J. (2009) "Depression and anxiety in labor migrants and refugees-a systematic review and meta-analysis."

<sup>97</sup> Bustamante, L.; Cerqueira, R. (2017) "Stress, trauma, and posttraumatic stress disorder in migrants: a comprehensive review"

<sup>98</sup> The German education union (GEW) is the education sector union affiliated to the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB). They organise educators and teachers in schools, universities, early childhood education, vocational training and adult education.

As all of the interviewed teachers noted, many new students suffer from mental instability. Among them is the inability to adapt to a new society that is very much unlike their home country. Everything changes from the moment they arrive to Germany, from the housing arrangements to the schools, cultural features, gender roles, religion matters; all of these new norms, when being imposed into a teenager or young adult's head can create confusion, doubt and a sense of displacement.

As the reports show that there are some incidents related to trauma one can assume the importance of a psychologist's presence in schools to help the students cope with their new environment and associated issues.

To understand the effect of trauma on school functioning is crucial; severe stress, adversity, and trauma can obstruct concentration, cognitive functioning, memory, and social relationships. Additionally, stress can contribute to both internalized symptoms—like hypervigilance, anxiety, depression, grief, fear, anger, isolation—and externalized behaviours—such as startle responses, reactivity, aggression, and conduct problems. Given the often chronic and significant stress placed on refugee students, many are at increased risk for developing trauma and other mental health disorders, affecting their ability to function effectively in school. Further, given the environment of their previous schooling and the immigration, many have experienced significantly interrupted schooling, as seen many students arrive unprepared to participate in school with their same-age peers.

The students still face several barriers besides the traumatic one's that originate from their personal experiences; the lack of alphabetization and school experience in students mostly from rural areas seems to be a pressing problem that can cause plenty of additional distress and complicate the integration process.

Cultural and linguistic barriers may also interfere with staff's capacity to recognize trauma related symptoms and distinguish these symptoms from other challenges such as cognitive or language delays or normal adjustment to a new language and culture.

Equipping staff to provide trauma sensitive responses and supports is therefore vital for the success of integration programs. Creating trauma-sensitive schools significantly improves supports for all traumatized students, including refugees. A trauma-sensitive school perceives behaviour as a possible consequence of life circumstances rather than voluntary disobedience or intentional misbehaviour. This approach emphasizes helping school staff understanding the impact of trauma on the school's functioning, student performance and

seeing behaviour through another point of view; creating trusting relationships among teachers and students; helping students develop the ability to self-regulate behaviours, emotions, and attention; supporting student success in academic and non-academic areas; and promoting physical and emotional health.<sup>99</sup>

According to the retrieved data, which in a short proportion represents the German system, the teachers are in need of more training not only regarding cultural aspects as often cultural differences can create several conflicts but in having the proper tools to cope with trauma and understand the behaviours in which it can emerge within the students, perhaps smaller classes with students who are grouped according with their school experience would also ensure that academic expectations match academic ability and facilitate relationships and the proper evolvement of the curriculum and students.

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<sup>99</sup> <http://traumasensitiveschools.org/>

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

High quality and persistent second language instruction offered by properly trained teachers is lacking in most countries. When analyzing integration models one can notice and set apart these only one system besides the German one that is investing in proper training; Sweden.

As we have seen, in Germany there are several vocational paths open to refugee children, while access to academic education is in practice is still very restricted, with language being the main barrier.

To understand the impact of distinctive policies and institutional arrangements it is significant to see them in relation to each other, for instance: the more poorly organized second language instruction in Germany (in comparison to Sweden) in relation to the early selection and tracking results in an over-representation of refugee children in vocational tracks. These factors in combination create an accumulation of disadvantage, this also means that the Swedish good practice of limiting the time in immersion classes cannot be easily transplanted as such to Germany. In Sweden, the transfer to regular education is joint with prolonged instruction in the second language, a shorter period in immersion classes has to be combined with a continuous support in normal classes.<sup>100</sup>

The Swedish model, though not unflawed, demonstrates that support has to be given throughout the school path being the strongest example the second language instruction and multilingual classroom assistance. Sweden has expressed ambitions for second language learning in the standard curriculum starting at pre-school and continuing all the way up to the end of upper-secondary school and even into adult education. In Germany and Greece, the ambitions are quite more limited when compared, with only a small amount of additional training in elementary school and during the immersion or introduction year in secondary school. However, to learn a language to an academic level, one or two years of additional instruction are usually not enough.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Crul, M. R. J., Keskiner, E., Schneider, J., Lelie, F., & Ghaemina, S. (2017). *No lost generation? Education for refugee children: a comparison between Sweden and Germany*, (p. 62-80).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

As seen from the interviews, adult education plays a crucial role in preparing talented students. Germany is making remarkable efforts to provide vocational education through adult education which could again be a model for the other countries.

It is important to reflect upon the country's treatment of refugee newcomers, what numerous countries consider to be a "refugee problem" is rather an issue of established arrangements that are not well prepared or adjusted for immigrant children and teenagers. Many countries still seem to handle the issue wrongly, a problem that needs to be addressed by temporary measures for a limited amount of time. Migration, whether involuntary or chosen, is and will be a structural situation that needs to be addressed by policy makers and institutions in a long term and structural way. Countries who have failed to do so pay a high price in terms of school drop-out, unemployment and raise people without perspectives and those costs that are far superior than the necessary investments in education. <sup>102</sup>

The discussion around integration measures usually neglects the long-term economic potential of a successful integration of refugees, very often, young people which can transform the initial spending into a worthwhile investment. Even if numerous of the refugees' labour market prospects might be relatively poor for the first few years due to a lack of qualifications, and those who do find employment may be less productive than the average German worker, the long-term gains are likely to exceed the costs.

Despite the necessary early costs to meet the needs of the newly arrived population and to integrate them into the educational system and labour market, the OECD plans that there will still be an additional 0.5 percent growth in the GDP in 2016 and 2017 <sup>103</sup> consequence from public spending. The new-comers are projected to contribute positively to Germany's economic performance through the growth in labor supply and an increase in demand for goods and services. However, these economic benefits will depend, on the extent to which refugees are integrated into German society. The biggest step in order to achieve this goal is the compilation of consistent statistics to enable the government and local authorities to identify and meet the needs of these new members of the German society, the need for further information regarding the system's outcomes highly motivated this research and consequential interviews.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Belfield, C. (2009) "The Cost of Early School-leaving and School Failure" Economics Department Queens College, City University of New York

<sup>103</sup> OECD (2018) "Germany Economic Survey"

<sup>104</sup> OECD (2016) "Economic Survey - European Union"

The International Monetary Fund <sup>105</sup> also notes:

In the short term, the macroeconomic effect from the refugee surge is likely to be a modest increase in GDP growth, reflecting the fiscal expansion associated with support to the asylum seekers, as well as the expansion in labor supply as the newcomers begin to enter the labor force. ... The impact of the refugees on medium and long-term growth depends on how they will be integrated in the labor market.

Although education plays a vital role for refugee communities, it appears to be overlooked by aid donors and governments when looking at the available data. Only 2% of funding in crises is devoted to education, consequently, there are approximately 3.7 million refugee children out of school. The impact of this is devastating, with children easily falling victim to exploitation or forced to work to earn money for their homes.

Some families resort to child marriages in order to survive, causing as many as 90% of girls to drop out in some areas. <sup>106</sup>

Five years ago, before the conflict started, practically all of the children in Syria attended school. Nowadays, however, Syria is dealing with a 50% attendance rate in schools, which is one of the smallest in the world. According to the UN, by 2014 it is anticipated that a quarter of Syrian schools were destroyed, causing many parents to fairly be afraid of sending their children to school. Outside of Syria only 50% of Syrian Refugees have access to any formal education. Many of these kids have been out of school for the full 5 years since the conflict started and cannot go directly back into formal education.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes it clear that every child has the right to a free basic education, so that poverty and circumstance should not be a barrier to schooling. <sup>107</sup> However,, as seen above, the responses to humanitarian emergencies do not prioritize children's right to learn; as, less than 2% of humanitarian aid went towards education.

In Germany, however, in spite of the budgetary challenges of integration the effects of migrations seem to highlight positive aspects, some observers foresee a deep

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<sup>105</sup> IMF (2018) *"The Refugee Surge in Europe: Economic Challenges"*

<sup>106</sup> UNICEF (2017) *"In search of safety - children and the refugee crisis in Europe - teaching resource"*

<sup>107</sup> United Nations (1948) *"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights "*

transformation of German society that could be similar to the reunification of the country. The ethnic, religious and national diversity of German society is guaranteed to increase.<sup>108</sup> Besides the inevitable need to capitalize on the assets immigrants bring it is crucial to ensure a reception that can provide a system for better economic mobility and improved civic participation. The challenges are great, and there are tensions as well, but we must start somewhere and the development of a new setting for the debate, a focus on leadership development at all levels, and a reorganization of existing service systems to better fit refugees and the intrinsic vulnerable groups and educational systems can be a starting point. Local business, civic and community leaders can embrace this opportunity, understanding that improving economic mobility for immigrants, enhancing their local participation, and facilitating a more open and positive native-born response to immigrants and their families will actually benefit us all.

Clearly, the hardest challenge is not only to describe change or even to point to the general directions in which a region and a nation must go; there needs to be the capacity to implement a new framework with grace, sensitivity, and effectiveness.<sup>109</sup>

Immigrant integration is a common effort that can benefit us all even as it resonates with our deepest values of celebrating economic mobility, boosting democratic participation, and supporting an openness to people and ideas. Nevertheless, it will require leadership in an era when other institutions, including governments, have lost their way and are often restrained by political matters. World and European leaders play an essential part of that leadership, stirring other actors and institutions as together we find our way to a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

Those arriving in Europe need suitable treatment and assistance, mostly those with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and access to fair and efficient asylum procedures. More solidarity is indispensable within the EU to ensure protection, including through efficient and prompt family reunion and relocation.

There is a need for a comprehensive plan of action that will support long-term solutions to the complex issue of mixed migration and help address its root causes, in close cooperation with countries of origin and transit and in line with international law.

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<sup>108</sup> Lecca, P. (2018) *“Long-term social, economic and fiscal effects of immigration into the EU: The role of the integration policy”* Wiley Library

<sup>109</sup> [https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/immigrant\\_integration.pdf](https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/immigrant_integration.pdf)

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# Appendixes

## Appendix 1 - Interview questions:

### Administration

- Question 1 – What is the path that an asylum seeker takes to enter the educational system since arrival? Is there a specific sequencing process?
- Question 2 – Can you explain to me your role as a school in the integration process? What are the official guidelines you receive? How do you apply them?
- Question 3 – Do you believe that your role as an integration agent goes beyond education?
- Question 4 – Have you ever thought about suggesting or applying any changes to the educational integration model due to possible flaws?
- Question 5 – What do you believe will be the impacts in the future of these integration measures (in society, economy, demographics...)?

### Teachers

- Question 1 – Can you please define your job and your field of education?
- Question 2 - For how long have you been teaching "integration" classes?
- Question 3 – Can you explain to me your role as a professor in the integration process? What are the official guidelines you receive and how do you apply them?
- Question 4 – How does the language barrier translate itself in reality? How do you characterize the first contact with these classes?
- Question 5 - Do they already have any language skills and if not, how is the alphabetization process introduced?
- Question 6 – What guidelines do you find the most difficult to apply?
- Question 7 – Do you feel any sort of significant cultural contrasts? If so in what areas?
- Question 8 - Do you find that the majority of students are motivated to learn and pursue further educational levels?
- Question 9 - Do you feel like your students reveal signs of trauma or grieve? If yes in what ways?
- Question 10 - Do you have any specific training or guidelines to cope with students with possible trauma derivative from war, loss or other traumatic events that lead to an asylum request?

- Question 11 - What do you believe will be the impacts in the future of these integration measures (in society, economy, demographics....)?

### Student Questions

- Question 1 – Name, age and country of origin
- Question 2 – Why and when did you come here?
- Question 3 – How did you come here?
- Question 4 – Do you have any relatives with you? If yes who?
- Question 5 – What did you find the most difficult in the adaptation process?
- Question 6 – How would you characterize your proficiency in German?
- Question 7 – Do (or did) you like coming to school?
- Question 8 – What are (or were) your favourite subjects in school?
- Question 9 - Do you have any job currently? What job would you like to have in the future?
- Question 10 – What are your favourite and least favourite aspects about living in Germany?
- Question 11 – Do you feel welcomed?
- Question 12 – How do you characterize your involvement with the community?
- Question 13 – Have you ever faced situations of prejudice or discrimination?
- Question 14 – Do you feel like any possible bad events in the past have influenced the way you are and live your everyday life? Have they caused trauma that you feel is considerable?
- Question 15 – Are you happy?
- Question 16 – If you could change one thing right now what would you change?

### **Appendix 2 - Teacher Interviews:**

#### Subject 1:

My job is being a teacher at a German school, I am teaching German, Spanish and economics

My field education is also German as a foreign language in integration classes.

I have been teaching integration classes altogether for 4 years in three different schools, I've been in this school for two years.

My role in these integration classes is not only being a teacher because this kind of pupils need a lot of help not only to learn German language they need a lot of help with other things so being a teacher in these classes means not only being a teacher but to be a mother a psychologist a

friend, a personal assistant, you do a little bit of everything but I must say lot it is very nice, I like to teach these classes very much.

There are big language barriers at the beginning, at the beginning they need help with everything and I need to translate everything for them I feel like they feel insecure they don't even want to go to the secretary they are afraid they cannot say what they want to do so they come to me and I go with them to the secretary, most of the teachers need to so that, also talking on the phone.

I have been teaching alphabetization for two years and in my class right now there are pupils who are not totally alphabetized that means in this class you have different language levels so to teach in the class is not that easy but in the alphabetization you find different backgrounds, there are pupils who have already been attending schools and some others not, some of them are younger than others and of course it is much easier when they have already attended school and are younger it is much easier than when they are a bit older and have no school experience.

Regarding alphabetization - it is hard to apply but it is kind of, you need to adequate the teaching to each pupil, that's one thing, but If we talk in general I can say that the guideline I find the most difficult apply are two: one of them is that if they don't attend school you need to write a letter and after the third letter they are supposed to lose the rights to attend this school and some of them don't attend the school because they are depressed or because they are traumatised and so on, so it is a guideline that I cannot apply and most of the teachers cannot because it is not a rule it is not always that they are just lazy it is that they have another kind problems and you need to be flexible and another guideline that I don't like is that they need to have their studies, their school degree recognised here in Germany officially so they can attend a normal class, in this *bundeslanden*, in this region Hessen It is necessary to do that but in other regions it is not and this is something a lot bureaucracy and it takes a long time and some of my pupils are so good I wish I could send them to a normal class and I am sure that they would do well but we don't have this flexibility no teacher is allowed to do that and I think that that is a problem because it is a pity that many of them are very motivated and they don't go forward.

They express it and I feel it (cultural contrasts) I must say they tell me a lot of things because I think they feel confident with me because I am not German I come from Spain feel I also come from another culture, they feel comfortable and tell me lots of things but sometimes there are issues, we speak a lot about society and politics and sometimes there are issues where I think

they have totally different opinions sometimes there are really problematic issues, for instance once we talked about adoption in homosexual couples and all of them all were against it and another situation with a guy from Syria where he said he wishes to have a woman who stays at home and does not work but on the other hand they are really kind, most of them are very kind.

Some of them will be ready to go to university, some of them are very motivated and I am sure they will reach their aims, it doesn't matter which and some of them have other kinds of projects that don't include going to university and I am sure they will reach them I would say 80 to 85 % do want to have a kind of good job and future in Germany and the rest of them who are not so motivated have mainly the same problem, some of them are depressed and don't feel well in Germany here and are dreaming of going back for instance to Turkey where their mother is living for example.

I would say a small minority are very lazy, in other classes 40% are lazy

Many of them have trauma or grieve, at the beginning felt I was afraid of doing something wrong by speaking about the past or something but with time I realize that they like speaking about their countries that's why we make these posters in the class they really felt comfortable speaking and presenting their cities and talking about their lives before and when it gets a bit dramatic I try to take it with humour but I've learned that with practise at the beginning I felt insecure.

We don't have this kind of training and I think this is it's a pity because we have a lot of training regard how we teach grammatic and speaking properly and so on but this kind of training, about how we could help them coping with this trauma and so on is absolutely necessary and the only offer that we got was with a European project going 1 week to Cyprus which we are going to do, another teacher and me because we thin k this is absolutely necessary and I hope that with the knowledge that we get we can help our colleagues here.

There are different issues: society, economy and demography.

About demography I cannot say much the only thing I can say is that the population in the whole Europe in the whole capitalist world in west Europe is getting older so now we have a lot of young people and I think this is quite good and that will also have an impact the economy, if it is only a positive impact, I am not sure.

Regarding the society I must say that most of the west European countries are getting very materialistic and selfish that's a fact and you realize that in society that many people are going in

this direction and these immigrants that are coming in these years have a another way of seeing life and in this way, I think it is a positive influence, in my opinion they bring a lot of humanity and that's good.

### Subject 2:

My name is X, I teach English, German and German for foreigners in a German school, and it's also my field of education, German and English, I've been teaching these integration classes for four and half years.

Well first I have to tell you that these young people that come to Germany they have two years to learn the language and after that they can apply for a job, they can continue their studies and they can move to a regular class, so our goal is to teach them the language as fast as possible as good as we can which isn't always easy because we have all kinds of students, we have students that come from Syria or Afghanistan that didn't attend school regularly like every child does here in Europe so you notice they aren't calm enough or aren't used to be seated in a classroom and just do their work and they sometimes want to talk when others are talking so you notice that there are differences so we have to teach them all those things plus we have to teach all those things German language

Mariana, we have to talk with, our body, we have to talk with our several languages, some words we know, I don't know like, *urdo*, because we learn with them too you know, in four and half years I have learnt some words, we have to talk with your body of course and what I do , not everyone does, is to ask other pupils that know a little bit of German to translate, I often use it, or they even use their cellular phones to translate when they want to know something.

It's complicated (regarding the alphabetization process) they have to learn everything, they don't know our *A B C*, well we have for example, pupils that have never gone to school in Afghanistan for example so they come here and their first alphabetization is done here with us, it's our alphabet they learn, and when I say to them you may translate into your language they say "I can't" and I say "oh sorry of course I forgot" then there are of course others that know how to write in Arabic but they don't know our alphabet but they learn fast because they have school experience. Then there of course are others which is much more complicated they even have to

learn how to write on a line because they all write in the middle of the line for example, so we use special lines that primary schools use that is easier for them to learn.

It's unrealistic that everyone is going to be able to learn the language in two years. And we have an experience in that, and what does that mean? It means that everyone has to learn a profession here in Germany, there is the first barrier so to say, they won't be able to get there, and we know that, because some of them would need 5 to 8 years. The other thing is I think the mentality, when some of my colleagues say "oh you know I can only start my class at 8h30" and the class starts at 8h because they all arrive at 8h30 because in their culture it isn't important to be on time somewhere so that's something that they also have to work in, to fit in in those particular things that belong to this culture they are in now, there are some things we won't be able to help, we try to help them but it's not always easy.

Well, in school I must say I think they do very well, because I think the majority wants or wanted before they came here to have a school and they are very happy here I have to say, and also the experience I have with a primary school I noticed that they were very happy, they were glad they could go to school.

In society I believe they are going to have more difficulties, these two cultures are very different, and they have different ways of seeing life, living so I believe they have some difficulties. Like for example to find a house, lots of them have big families like 3/4/5 kids and they just find small flats and its complicated, well for one year it would be ok but for 2/3 years its complicated and they are always tell us that they are searching or their parents are searching for a house and then you have the younger boys that come here 18/19/20 they live in some kind of flats with other students, they live together, and then they have somebody from social security and they take care of them they also have, I believe 200 euros every month, more a less, but actually what they really want after two years is to start working because they want to send money to their families they get depressed you know when they notice it isn't so easy to earn lots money here in Germany, because it isn't the salaries are good but they come with a dream, because they tell me that, the dream of earning lots and lots thousands of euros and it isn't like that and then they get depressed when they notice the reality isn't like that and that they can't send their families for example 1000 euros in one or two months so for some of them it's not going to be a dream because we notice also that there are some drug problems because of these depressions they get.

Yes, in general they are motivated but the problem is that not everyone is getting somewhere, but yes we have lots of students that come with the dream of going to university and lots of them say to us that if there weren't a war in my country I would be now in a university I could be studying, it is their goal, what I want, but the barrier of the language is hard, because in Germany you have to speak the language quite well, people are obliged to learn the language, you have to. But yes, they have those dreams and goals, they are motivated.

Oh yes, they do, that's why I spoke to you about drugs problems, young boys from Afghanistan, when I say young, I mean nineteen, twenty years old. In a very emotional way (When asked how they reveal trauma), drugs are an emotional way of showing that, another emotional way is for instance they are always showing me films from Facebook where there was a bomb explosion, a student of mine showed me a dead body, it was his cousin, he was crying and he was telling me "I'm sorry *Frau M* today I can't attend the class" perhaps the question should be how do you reach to those things because no one is prepared, when you say you want to become a teacher you are not prepared to deal with young boys who are losing family members because a bomb fell somewhere, every day is different, it is what I can tell you, they have a lot of problems.

Well, we don't have a special training, we attend some workshops and trainings but what I can tell you is that it isn't enough. In 2015 when all these refugees came to Germany no one was prepared, doctors weren't prepared, teachers weren't prepared, schools weren't prepared, police weren't prepared, so you have to prepare yourself every day.

I think that for the economy in the future it is going to be great for Germany, I think demographically also, because as I told you they have big families, they marry very young and they want to have children and they don't just want to have one or two children so I think it's going to be great for Germany, Syrian people for instance are people who like to work, like to earn money and they know how to make money they tell me that "*Frau M* you will see in three years we are going to be rich" In Syria we love to work and to sell things, so yes I think it's going to be good for Germany. Lots of them also want to become doctors and I believe some of them will and will be great doctors if they'll stay here or if they'll come back to Syria that's another question because some of them say they would like to go back and help their country.

Of course, some of them have. I can't say none of them have but I would have to say most of them are grateful, others are disappointed.

### Subject 3:

My name is X and I am employed here as a teacher in the subjects of physical education and German in these integration classes, for the migrants and I am also teaching in two other schools.

All and all I've been teaching integration classes for eighteen months, in this school I've been teaching for a year, there has been a small break, but I've been teaching here since the beginning of the year.

I am teaching these two subjects physical education and German and in German I am mainly responsible for the reading and there my main aim is to lead them towards an examination which is called the German language diploma and trying to give them more vocabulary, trying to understand essays and other texts, helping them to get them intergraded them in the society through the language so at the end of these two years they can manage to go into work, a job.

In general I don't feel a language barrier specially when I teach physical education there's a lot you can do with gestures and mimic also in the German lessons I am using my whole body to communicate with them, in case there is a problem of not understanding each other I can also use my English.

(Cultural contrasts) The main thing is punctuality that we have to deal on a daily basis the other thing is the concept of certain rules that they have to keep and it's sometimes difficult for them they are seeing it more like an "easy life" to be at school and cant sometimes see the seriousness of the whole subject of learning the language and being in school, getting used to school.

(Motivation) I see that lots of them are motivated but some don't see the necessity of going to school again, they are not used to the educational system here mainly regarding the future life, having a job or going into an internship, they are coming from a different background where they don't have the same steps like in Germany, you have to have this certificate to go to the next step, after you finish this step you have other ones and some of them don't understand that.

It is also that some of them are coming from countries where there is an educational system they have been to school some already have certificates from there and others haven't been to school or to schools that are not comparable to our schools, also it's a minority of them but some they reach their abilities to study and go further.

In this school I haven't seen any student that I have felt is traumatized or grieving or suffering emotionally from losses but at my old school where he used to work there was a situation where the whole school was watching a movie about the war in Syria and I had one student that was really touched by this movie and started to shake and crying and said "I know this place I know exactly where it is, it's close to where I used to live and now it's completely destroyed" after that we tried to talk to him and calm him down, this was the only time I was confronted with their past.

As teachers we studied also education and science, but we are not qualified to deal with traumatized people what we can do if there's a situation is trying to calm it down, but it definitely needs someone professional to deal with this.

It's difficult to see the future because things might pop up tomorrow or no more refugees will come it's very difficult to foresee the future. I think that some of the students will manage to find a place here, a job and in society others might not even stay in Germany because they feel like it's going to slowly so they might go either their own countries or other European countries, and some will maybe just find a job just to earn money and not get training for a job.

It's also important whether they are here alone or came here with their family.

### Appendix 3 - Administration & Government interview

#### Subject 1:

My name is X and I am doing several things here in school, I am teaching students who are coming to learn German in our school then I have the coordination of this department plus I am working in the national education authority where my job is to distribute the migrants to the schools

We don't have a common system in Germany it all depending on the federal state you are in, like here we are in Hesse and we are getting the young people that applied for asylum here in Hessen they usually arrive in Gesen, there is an initial reception institution and from there they are being distributed to several regions in Hessen, in the federal state, once they are being distributed they have to contact the national educational authority and then they will have an appointment in this case with me what's going to happen with them regarding education and the further steps towards a job in Germany.

In general we are getting our guidelines from the ministry of culture and education which also is responsible for the general state of Hessen, here in this school we only take young people between 16 to 18 years old because they don't have the legal duty to go to school but they have the right to go to school, we also have an amount of young people we can take that are above 18 but that's actually not a very high amount of people, and these ones have to be refugees otherwise we take refugees and migrants from the European community or from worldwide if they are not refugees.

It definitely does (When asked if her role as an integration agent goes beyond education).

They are arriving in a completely new country with a new system a different culture some of them completely alone without their family. When most of the refugees came in 2015/2016 we had lots of young people that were underage when they came to Germany they usually came here by boat, walking and for them it's very difficult to arrive in this completely new society and those are things we have to deal with as well, sometimes for this young people you are more of a mother than a teacher because they come to you with all of their problems that they have, or at the beginning they don't even want to mention these problems and then maybe you see behavioural problems and you start to find out what's going on here.

It's not only teaching and that you have your curriculum and you go through it step by step, you have to really get into a very personal relationship with them, that's what I see.

Yeah, the first thing is that you can't rush through the curriculum, you go according to your class, and it's also different because of what kind of students you have, some of them have already been to schools, and they know an educational system, they know how it works to study how a class works others they have never been to school before for them it's completely new and lots of them are coming from very restrictive systems where they are still hitting and there are fifty/sixty students in a classroom so they have to experience the school here before they can really start to study. I have to say we have never had problems with violence in this school and we've had a lot of students so far.

I think a system is always being done by human beings and depending on the human being the system will be applied, if you just want to go according to the book of course I say there are some changes that should be done (to adjust the system), I can only talk about this school, but all the

teachers we have had so far are very empathetic to the students and I think they all implement much more than just the teacher character, so in this way I wouldn't change anything.

The things that I am critical about are more political like some countries are being regarded as safe countries despite the fact that they are maybe not safe so the possibilities for the students after these two years are very low, they hardly have any further chances to learn the language more or to do something.

One key thing we have in Germany is that we don't have enough skilled workers, and this can be a gap easily filled by people who are coming from Abroad to stay in Germany, this might be a good chance.

Let's say 10% of the students coming to the school are going their own way, they start to study going to university, in my opinion it can only make a society more colourful to have people from different backgrounds from different countries.

Demographically it will change as well, the amount of children being born was raised in Germany, I see positive things, but if the government continues to care of integration, it's definitely a subject that is very important, if you don't help them to be integrate them or give them a chance that might cause problems

#### Appendix 4 – Student Interviews:

##### Subject 1

My name is X I come from Syria I am 20 years old.

I came here because of the war in my country in 2015.

I only have my uncle and my cousin here.

I can speak German very well.

I like coming to school, my favourite subject is maths.

I would like to be an engineer in. the future.

I like Germany but I don't like a lot of things ...

I don't always feel welcomed.

I like everyone in general.

I haven't faced situations of discrimination.

I am not happy because I am in Germany and my family isn't.

## Subject 2

My name is X I come from Afghanistan and I am 21 years old.  
I came here by foot, sometimes by car and bus I has taken 21 days.  
I have three sisters here and one brother.  
I found it hard to adapt to the culture.  
I can speak very good German.  
I like coming to school, my favourite subject is maths.  
In the future I would like to be a soccer player my favourite team is Juventus.  
I like the people here because they are very friendly.  
I like everything about Germany.  
I feel welcomed.  
I haven't faced any situations of discrimination everyone is friendly.  
My past has influenced me, I have good friends here now, they help me in school.  
I am happy.  
I would like to change the weather here.

## Subject 3

My name is X, I am from Syria and I am 20 years old.  
I came here in 2015 because of the war in my country.  
I have my mother and my brother with me.  
I found the language to be the most difficult thing adapting.  
My German is very good.  
I like coming to school, my favourite subject was German language.  
Now I am a waiter but, in the future, I would like to be an optician.  
I like everything in Germany, I feel welcomed but sometimes not so much.  
The good thing here in Germany is that at least we know that here we have a future, better opportunities to continue living (in the sense of having a better life). What happens sometimes is that racists say, "Out, Out! (of Germany)" But apart from that all is fine!  
With my friends I feel good but there are some people at school that don't like me.  
I have faced situations of discrimination sometimes, in school.  
I left the bad things in Syria, I experienced wonderful things in Germany like opening myself up to the world.

I am very very happy.

I would like to be more confident and less shy.

#### Subject 4

My name is X I am 21 years old.

I came to Germany in 2015 because of the war in Afghanistan.

I came by foot and sometimes by car, it took 45 days to get here.

I just have one brother, here in Munich.

I found it hard to adapt to the culture and also the interview process.

The German language is not easy to speak but I can understand and speak a little bit.

I went to school just for one year and then I left. Why I left is a long story.

I left because my family wanted money and they told me to work so I left my school.

I would like to be a driver like a truck driver.

I like the people here, the social system and the peace.

I feel 50/50 welcomed.

I can live a normal life here everyone in general is friendly.

Life is different now; I live in peace I can make friends.

If there is peace I would like to come back to Afghanistan.

I am happy.

I wouldn't change anything.

#### Subject 5

My name is X I am 18 years old and I come from Syria, from the Kurdish part.

I came in 2016 because there was war in my country, there still is and we are searching for a new future. I came by plain. I came with my family and I also have an uncle who lives in Munich.

First it was the language and afterword's the contact with the people, but now it is ok because I can speak the language.

To me yes, I can speak German very good, but you'll have to ask my teachers.

Yes, I like to come to school but there are some subjects that I don't like as much as others like math and English, but I know I need them. I like German language.

I would like to have my own business as a mechanic.

The thing I like the most is that there is democracy, everyone can say what they think, without being afraid. The thing I don't like so much is that Germans are very punctual, sometimes when I miss somewhere I have to go they get really angry and I can get problems because of that and I am an honest man and sometimes they aren't fair but there are very good nice people.

(Do you feel welcomed?) Yes, when I arrived here, the first person I talked to was a policeman and he looked at my passport and thought it was fake, afterwards he noticed it was real and said to me "Welcome to Germany".

(Regarding Involvement with the community) Yes, I get along with everyone, sometimes Germans speak too fast and I don't understand, but when I say "oh I am a foreign here could please you speak a little slower?" they do so they are very nice to me.

(Regarding situations of discrimination) Yes, once there was a situation when I was with my doctor and afterwards he just had to sign my recipes and he went up and down looked at the receipts and he didn't sign them so I told him "I'm sorry I don't have a lot of time could you please sign my receipts" he started yelling at me and I said I don't want the receipts anymore and went away, afterwards they called me again but I didn't return because they weren't nice to me.

(Are you changed?) Yes, I think so because I feel like I am a new-born there are things that are never going to be the same again, they are past.

(Are you happy?) Yes, why not? I am starting a new life I'm going to start a new job. Why not?

I would to everything the same I would change anything and if doesn't like me as I am I don't care.

## Subject 6

My name is X I am seventeen years old and I come from Syria.

I arrived in Germany in. the 10<sup>th</sup> of June I came here because I wasn't financially stable enough to continue school or to continue living in a house, so we had to go to a city or country that offered a nice student plan or universities.

I came here by train from the Netherlands.

My mom is with me and my little sister.

I think that the most difficult thing to adapt to is how everybody has a routine and has to wake up early and there's always posts you have to answer and you have to go to a lot of buildings to get what you want for example if you want a home you need to go to the job centre or social centre, there's a lot of paperwork that you have to get used to and it takes a lot of time to get things done.

I think I am good enough for now I can understand German very well, but I have difficulties speaking because I take a lot of time translating words in my mind

The school system is still very different and complicated but it's still fun

My favourite subjects are English and German because I like literature.

I have had many ideas for what I want to do in the future but my mine is set on being an author or a writer because like I said I love English and books have changed my life and I would like to return the favour and change other people's life's with my books. My favourite books are usually young adult so famous authors like John Green, I've read, and this book spoke to me in so many ways, it's so beautiful, it's my favourite.

The thing I like the most about Germany is how organized everybody is, how the streets are really clean the air is really fresh, there are a lot of opportunities for a lot of people and you don't need to have a lot of money to go to college, what I don't like about Germany is sometimes the weather can be harsh and also like I said the paperwork.

I do, I feel welcomed, I have heard a lot of people say that sometimes Germans can be racist to us newcomers, but since if been here they all seem so welcoming, so nice and even if they don't know English that well they will try to help you as they can.

I do, I like everyone, I try to be as welcoming to them as they are to me, so if I have a German neighbour, I try to say hello to them in the morning.

No, I haven't faced any kind of prejudice or discrimination but there's fear that I would face something like that because sometimes they are not directly harsh towards you but they can seem passive-aggressive, sometimes they know English but wouldn't want to talk in English, they want you to speak in German but it's hard for you.

I have been a pessimistic person because a lot of things in my life weren't going the way I wanted to but after the journey I have been through I think it has made me a better person and a stronger person and if I had a choice to go through all of this again I would because it made me who I am.

I am happy, had a lot of fears of coming into Germany but I has made me very happy and I have met a lot of new people and made new friends.

I think I would change how many papers I have to do and I'm seventeen I don't even have to do that much.

### Subject 7

My name is X and I am seventeen years old and my country is Ethiopia.

Because my mother was here, I came in 2018, last year.

I came by foot and bus.

Here I have my father, mother and brother.

(Hardest thing to adapt in Germany) That was the weather.

(Proficiency in German) It's good!

Yes, I like coming to school and learn new things, my favourite subject is English maths or science.

I would like to be a scientist or a doctor.

My favourite thing about living in Germany is that I am with my mother and I like it, and my least favourite is the weather ... it's so cold.

I feel welcomed.

(Has someone ever discriminated you) Yes, some of them ... but not a lot.

Yes, I'm happy.

I would make it sunny in Germany.

### Subject 8

My name is X I am nineteen years old and I am from Somalia.

I came because my land is in war. I came here by car.

I have my mother, my sister and my brother with me.

The hardest thing for me is all the appointments and paperwork (medical, job centre).

I speak German well.

I like coming to school, my favourite subject is German.

I want to be a journalist when I grow up.

I like the weather, it is cold my land is not cold, so I like it here.

Yes, I feel welcomed, I love the people around me.

It makes me sometimes sad when I remember what happened to my family and how my land is.

Yes, I am happy.

I want everyone to be together and have a conversation or just say hello.

### Subject 9

My name is X, I am seventeen years old and I am from Iran.

I came here in 2017 because we have a problem with our reign.

I came through the land border of Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Austria and eventually Germany.

I have my mother and father with me.

The most difficult things in the adaptation process were to learn German language and find friends.

With the assistance of my teachers it is good,

Of course, I like coming to school.

I am just a student now but I would to become an engineer; mechatronics engineer.

My favourite thing about Germany is that they respect me, and this is important to me.

The least favourite is the administrative bureaucracy as it takes a long time.

(When asked: "Do you feel welcomed?") Somewhat.

First, I had problems with my involvement with the community but later I could find friends and they helped me; I find more friends.

I have not had situations of discrimination, but it has happened to my friends.

I was afraid of the police in Iran and I still have this fear.

(When asked about possible existent traumas) I was afraid of the police in Iran and I still have this fear.

Yes, I am happy, why not.

If I could change one thing, I would like to be more knowledgeable.

## Appendix 5 - Community Interviews

### Subject 1

I'm X, I am 14 years old and I live in Germany, I paint sometimes, I like to read, and I play table tennis.

I think it's good because then we can show that we have a heart for these people, and that we can help so yes, I think it was a good idea.

I have to say yes but I think that some people feel uncomfortable with refugees (German people) and I think they have their problems, they don't know these people, they know that they come from another land, country and it is hard to handle the language, the religion.

(Regarding biggest contrasts) The religion, the food, the clothes.

They pray in the afternoon, in the evening, when they wake up and I think they miss those things, of course they can do this here but it's not the same, they don't have a mosque here, but they have their book (the Quran). So, they feel uncomfortable, unsure nervous sometimes

We are friendly with them, of course some people aren't, and I think they feel nervous sometimes when they are with us, when they enter a restaurant, or a café people see them and think "Oh my God I don't know these people"

Yes, because they will know us, the people will feel safe and then they will be more friendly with each other and they want to learn more about the religion and things they do daily. Yes (people will be more tolerant)

## Subject 2

Chamo-me X, sou professor na Alemanha, sou professor de português, língua e cultura portuguesa, dou aulas também de música aqui na Alemanha, tenho 45 anos, estou na Alemanha já a 10 quase 11 anos e tem sido uma experiência engraçada.

Eu acho que foi uma ação humanitária fantástica acho que nenhum país da Europa teve tanta coragem como a Alemanha em abrir as portas e receber tanta gente a precisar de ajuda, é essa a minha opinião acho que realmente tiveram muita coragem tiveram uma ação muito humana um gesto muito humano.

Não há sistemas nem medidas perfeitas, do meu ponto de vista eu acho que a Alemanha criou os mecanismos ideias para que essas pessoas chegassem fossem alojadas em alojamentos condignos e tivessem programas de integração a medida das necessidades deles há vários relatos de norte a sul da Alemanha de situações que funcionaram bem, outras menos bem, outras mal, mas acho que no geral funcionou bem.

Eu acho que a Alemanha criou condições para que toda a gente pudesse integrar-se na vida social ou no dia-a-dia criando programas de inserção criando nas escolas também programas especiais em que eles aprendem a língua, em que eles são encaminhados para uma formação profissional ou até superior universitário dependendo do caso ou até das vontades e capacidades de cada indivíduo.

Claro que existem são povos que vem de uma cultura completamente diferente da Alemanha, o primeiro contraste que vemos é a cor da pele, os tipos de roupas que eles vestem, a religião é um grande contrastes existem também mais a nível da educação uma dificuldade acrescida que é o facto de eles não serem alfabetizados no alfabeto romano e muitos deles nem foram a escola são alfabetizados em árabe e isso causa-lhes, no sistema em que toda a gente que vai a escola, toda a gente é alfabetizada toda a gente inicia uma formação um jovem com 15 ou 16 anos não ter alfabetização é muito mais difícil integrarem-se numa sociedade que já está muito desenvolvida relativamente aos sistemas e sociedades dos quais eles vêm.

A diversidade é sempre boa, traz sempre riqueza, a Alemanha é um país que tem recebido muitas influências culturais das várias culturas que as cercam neste caso dos refugiados eu acho que a Alemanha vai ganhar e os refugiados vão ganhar a Alemanha vai ganhar uma diversidade vai se tornar um país mais rico, naturalmente aquelas culturas vão deixar escoar para quem conviver características da sua cultura que só vão enriquecer a cultura alemã, eles por sua vez, os

refugiados vão também aprender a viver numa nova sociedade vão ter que fazer alterações eles (refugiados) essencialmente é que vão ganhar bastante porque se vinham de países que tinham poucas condições e uma vida pouco rica a nível de conforto na Alemanha eles vão ganhar bastante, a Alemanha realmente é um país que oferece qualidade de vida muito grande, muita segurança embora se queira atribuir muitos casos de violência aos refugiados eu acho que são só estigmas antigos que o estrangeiro recém chegado é que tem culpa do mal que acontece no momento, eu acho que há um processo de adaptação tanto dos alemães como da sociedade alemã, que não é só constituída por alemães, estamos numa fase de adaptação os dois lados estão a assimilar, acho que o futuro é sorridente.

(The following are quick spontaneous street interviews)

Subject 3: (when asked about Germany integrating refugees) I think it is good that Germany took in so many people in many people from other countries came here and found good schools and Germany gave them good schools and opportunities to do something. They don't just hang around and do nothing.

(Is the system working?) It depends on the school and if the people want to learn here, maybe some don't want to learn and it's very hard, but at the moment, I think it's good.

I really don't know how they can help (Germany) if they are traumatized (refugees) I Think they could help but they don't help everybody, they don't ask everybody so much if they're traumatized.

(When asked about cultural contrasts) Yeah there are some contrasts between these normal students and people like them because they have other views and it's a problem.

Subject 4:

It really depends on the school (Is the system working?)

Well, let's just say we don't know that, it's a very different environment for these people, there are all kinds of people coming here, men women, children sometimes just children without their families and it leaves a very important impact on their lives.

(Impacts) Financially I could argue about that.

(Is the system working) Some of the things you hear on the news ... it's not working out all that well apparently...