

Fast Lane to the Labour Market and VET

State of the Art Report – Belgium (Flanders)

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Sterpunt
Inclusief
Ondernemen

de werkplekarchitecten

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1 Overview of situation in Belgium

The number of asylum applications filed in Belgium in 2015 has doubled compared to 2014. In 2015 the Immigration Office registered 35 476 asylum applications . In 2014 there was a total of 17 213 asylum applications, compared to 15 843 in 2013[1]. For the period January – October 2016, a total of 15 517 asylum applicants have been registered.

The numbers concerning the asylum applications from previous years (before 2016) must be interpreted as the number of cases at the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS). For example: in 2015 there were 35 476 asylum applications, referring to 44 760 persons. One asylum case could refer to several persons. This is the case for children, for example, who often flee their country with their parents. Until recently, these children were not visible in the Belgian asylum statistics. As of January 2016, there is a reference to the number of persons, and no longer the number of cases.

Most asylum seekers come from conflict areas: in 2015 the top 3 countries of origin were Iraq (21.8 percent), Syria (21.3 percent) and Afghanistan (20 percent). For 2016, there are no general figures available for the year up till now, only monthly reports. In September 2016, Syria remained the most important country of origin of asylum applicants in Belgium, with 15.4 percent of the total number, followed by Guinea (7.6 percent), Afghanistan (6.6 percent) and Iraq (6.3 percent). Top nationalities for recognized refugees (Erkende vluchtelingen) are Syria, Iraq and Somalia. For subsidiary protection (Subsidiaire bescherming) the top three consists of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

According to the CGRS, in 2016 more persons of the male sex (including children) applied for asylum than persons of the female sex in Belgium: 60.9 percent against 39.1 percent. In 2015, the share of men was slightly higher: 70.8 percent of men against 29.2 percent women.

According to an asylum monitoring note of ‘Agentschap Inburgering en Integratie’, based on data about the people in the reception network of Fedasil on 31 March 2016¹ (16 770 people), 71.7 percent of the persons is male. Among people from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq the proportion of men is particularly high.

Furthermore, more than half of the captured persons is younger than 25 years old. Almost 3 out of 10 (29.4 percent) are under the age of eighteen. Among the minors, 20.9 percent is a (self-proclaimed) unaccompanied foreign minor of which 95.8 percent are boys and 79.0 percent have the Afghan nationality.

More than half of the collected individuals is single (51.4 percent): single men (39.0 percent), single woman (4.4 percent) or unaccompanied foreign minor (8.0 percent). The other individuals are collected

¹ Source: http://www.integratie-inburgering.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/monitoring_asielinstroom_profiel_asielzoekers_in_opvang_31.03.2016.pdf; retrieved 11 december 2016, 2 pm.

together with family members (48.6 percent): two parent families with children (22.6 percent), single parent family with children (9.5 percent), couples (3.3 percent) or other families (13.2 percent).

These are differences depending on the nationality: Syrians are more common in family members (60.1 percent), Somalis in the large proportion is single women, with Afghans large proportion of unaccompanied minors. What residency status is concerned, 84.7 percent of the persons is an asylum seeker awaiting a decision, 8.3 percent is a recognized refugee or has been granted subsidiary protection. 6.0 percent of the people is denied protection.

Initially, the VDAB did not have a good view on the level of education because she had to rely on what the refugees themselves indicated in their registration. In May 2016² VDAB stated that as soon as the refugees began registering themselves at the VDAB, it became clear that they are lower qualified than expected. Iraqis, Afghans and Syrians are the largest groups of jobseekers among the newcomers. Afghans are by far the lowest educated. Of all Afghan jobseekers 72 percent only has a primary school diploma or no diploma. For Iraqis that's the case for 50 percent and for Syrians 49 percent. Only 8 percent of Afghans is highly educated, among Iraqis that's 23 percent and among Syrians 21 percent.

VDAB stated that the low skills of the newcomers means a great challenge. The lack of training is partly due to the fact that the newcomers often are very young men who have not received training yet. But because they are so young it is also considered easier to lead them to an education.

In 2015, the CGRS concluded in 60.7 percent of its decisions that the asylum seeker needed protection. This protection rate is an increase compared to 2014 (46.8 percent) and 2013 (29.4 percent). This high number of recognition decisions can be attributed to the fact that more and more asylum seekers come from countries suffering armed conflicts.

In the case of a positive decision, there are two possible outcomes:

- Refugee status ('erkend vluchteling'): this status is granted to people who left their country because they are persecuted for reasons of race, nationality, political opinions, religion, ...
- Subsidiary protection status: people who are at risk of serious harm upon returning to the country of origin.

[1] Source: http://www.cgrs.be/sites/default/files/asylumstat_december_2015_0.pdf

² Source: <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/binnenland/1.2655252> ; retrieved 11 december 2016, 2:00 pm.

2 Policy trends regarding integration of refugees and access to labour market and VET

2.1 Description of the policy trends

On the policy level, the Flemish minister of Work and the Federal State Secretary of Asylum and Migration signed an intention declaration announcing structural cooperation between VDAB and Fedasil. This was also the start of a promotional campaign of VDAB promoting its services directly to newcomers and refugees.

The central theme through many if not all policy measures and announcements seems to be 'integration through work'. VDAB sees work as an element of integration. In 2015 VDAB launched their action plan 'integration through work' (Actieplan Integratie door werk) by which they step away from a linear approach to work for refugees and newcomers.

New is that VDAB focuses on breaking the "linear integration program". This trend had already begun, but the message is now being systematically used in consultation forums with relevant authorities. VDAB adjusts the cooperation with the Agencies Integration and Civic Integration in accordance with the principle of 'integration through work'. Refugees whose estimate is that they can be turned quickly into the labor market, do not have to wait for other integration initiatives, eg. Dutch. Obviously, the intention remains to learn Dutch as a language. Dutch is taught much faster in a workplace environment than in a school environment. The refugee is already put on the NT2 waiting list for enrollment when you visits VDAB. If he/she can't start to work fast enough, NT2 training can already start. Employers who are willing to immediately employ newcomers with little knowledge of Dutch, can receive support in the form of Dutch in the workplace, other forms of workplace learning (eg. profession exploratory stage, individual training in the company with language support (IBO-T)) and job coaching / aftercare. All this preferably in the form of a fixed counselor (trajectbegeleider) who does both the mediation and the education/workplace learning. A part of VDAB's own NT2-capacity will be used for this purpose as well as partners.

A linear trajectory for refugees usually requires some form of career orientation. For refugees who have no or unrealistic job target in Flanders, an individual or a large group session can be offered. VDAB strives to start the career orientation as early as possible, preferably combined where practicable with, or if it can't otherwise at the end of the integration process. At the latest by 2017, VDAB wants to set up integrated pathways in partnership with the Agencies Integration and Civic Integration. With these integrated pathways the basic training NT2 runs together with respectively the package social orientation of the reception desks (Onthaalbureau) and the package career orientation from VDAB.

Beside that also the theme 'entrepreneurship' lives with newcomers. VDAB will further support these dynamics by facilitating agencies and by matching the language offers with specific needs and circumstances, including distance learning and classroom activities. In Flanders there's also a project call from ESF Agentschap Vlaanderen (European Social Fund Flanders) about refugees and entrepreneurship. Besides that, there's also a project call 'Refugees and Work' for the cities of Antwerp and Ghent, as well

as several regional project calls by VDAB supporting pilot projects in working with refugees towards labour market integration.

To help newcomers to find a job, VDAB primarily wants to invest in vocational training and language support. They want to stimulate employers to train the newcomers in their company. That presupposes a commitment by the employers. Sector organizations such as Agoria and construction have already expressed intentions and indicate which profiles they are looking for, but initiatives such as workplace learning are only possible if companies present themselves as a host.

To allow an accelerated activation VDAB has taken some specific measures to make sure its services could continue to be insured (including additional recruitment and training of mediators, increased use of language training and expansion of existing instruments or mechanisms relating to workplace learning).

As part of the accelerated activation, the guidance of refugees and newcomers to VDAB is largely done by its partners: OCMW (Public Social Welfare Centres), Agencies Integration & Civic Integration, reception centers and local relief initiatives. The communication campaign that VDAB launched aims to directly talk to the refugees and newcomers on its services.

Cooperation agreements are concluded with the various partners: Fedasil, the Integration and Civic Integration Agency, the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) and Education. The aim of these collaborations is always to accelerate the guidance and make sure all partners share the story of "Integration through work".

Legal framework

In January 2016, the Flemish Government has adopted the implementing by the Decree of June 7 2013 concerning the Flemish integration and citizenship policy. By this decision the Integration Act (het Inburgeringsdecreet) and the Decree on the Dutch Houses and the related decisions (Decreet op de Huizen van het Nederlands en bijhorende besluiten) are raised. The integration decree and related decisions still exist but most of the provisions have been raised.

The decision also gives effect to the new policy option in terms of integration: introducing the result commitment (resultaatsverbintenis) instead of an effort engagement (inspanningsverbintenis). The Civic Integration Proof is now based on results rather than on the basis of efforts.

Two other related and recent legal changes are worth mentioning here. On April 22 2014 the House approved a bill that allows volunteering for all newcomers who are legally resident in Belgium. This brought an end to the absurd situation that some asylum seekers were allowed to work with a work permit (Arbeidskaart) but could do no voluntary work.

And more recently, there was a change (effective October 1 2016) concerning the conditions under which prior labor performances, on which the right to unemployment benefits are based in Belgium, are recognized. This includes stricter conditions for foreign labor performance for unemployment benefit. The right to unemployment benefit in Belgium starts from a number of working days during a certain period, depending on age. The conditions to count foreign labor performance is strengthened: the



minimum employment in Belgium was increased from 1 day to 3 months. And now only labor in European and some neighboring countries counts, while previously all earlier work performances counted for recognized refugees earlier work no matter where they were performed.

3 Access to the labour market

3.1 Description of the system

The needs of the recognized refugees would not be fundamentally different from the other newcomers, except perhaps in terms of trauma. There was a particular need for capacity expansion on behalf of VDAB to meet demand. There are 35 additional FTE mediators recruited on temporary contracts for 2 years, together with the existing action NT2 (Dutch Second Language) consultants and instructors, to handle the additional inflows administratively. As far as the inflow and budgets foreseen is concerned, VDAB takes into account a three times as high participation in career guidance, training NT2, technical training (preferably integrated), and intensive accompaniment. The cost is about the whole estimated at € 32.2 million.

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VDAB can't distinguish between newcomers and recognized refugees. A recognized refugee only needs to submit the electronic identity card B to qualify for active VDAB services. The criterion that VDAB has available to monitor newcomers with regard to intake, inflow and outflow through actions within the VDAB services is the target label Integration (Inburgering). The immigrant who mentions a professional perspective at the Agencies Integration and Civic Integration and registers effectively at VDAB is automatically labeled 'Integration'. Oldcomers which themselves go to VDAB but are still in need of social orientation are also referred by VDAB, in accordance with the regulations, to the Integration and Civic Integration Agency (Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering). They are therefore also given the label 'Target group Integration'. As the increased new influx comes from outside the EU these people civic integration will be required. In order to be able the effects of inflow and outflow with previous years, VDAB will establish a baseline measurement on the basis of the volume of people with the target group label 'Integration' that used the services in the previous years.

4 Integration system

4.1 Description of the system

Asylum procedure

The current procedure came into force on 1st June 2007.

Submission of an asylum application

This application is generally submitted at the Immigration Office in Brussels. However, an asylum application may also be made at the border (for example at the airport), within a closed centre or a penal institution.

The Immigration Office registers the asylum application and investigates whether Belgium is responsible for processing the asylum application (Dublin examination). If another Member State is responsible, Belgium can transfer the asylum seeker to this Member State. If this is not the first asylum application, the Office looks at whether the foreigner is providing any new and relevant elements to support the new application (examination of multiple applications). At this stage, the asylum seeker only makes a short statement and completes a standard questionnaire.

Allocation of a reception place

After submitting an application to the Immigration Office, asylum seekers go to Fedasil's Dispatching service, based in the same building. This service allocates them a reception place.

Belgium has over 27 000 reception places in total. The network comprises collective and individual reception structures. The collective structures are reception centres managed by Fedasil, the Red Cross of Belgium or other partners. The individual structures are housing managed by the Public Social Welfare Centre ('local reception initiatives') or by NGOs.

The reception centres are 'open' centres, meaning the residents are free to come and go. They receive accommodation and meals, clothing and also social, medical and psychological support, a daily allowance (pocket money) as well as access to legal assistance and services such as interpreting and training.

Review and decision

The asylum application itself is reviewed by the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS). During an interview with a CGRS employee, the asylum seeker is given the opportunity to tell his story and specify the reasons for his application. Then, the CGRS examines the credibility and truthfulness of the asylum seeker's statements and allow the asylum seeker to be granted the refugee status or subsidiary protection.

Since 2006, in addition to the status of refugee, there is has also been the status of 'subsidiary protection'. This status may be granted to asylum seekers who do not meet the criteria for recognition of

their status as refugee, but who, nevertheless, are in a situation which means that a return to their home country represents a real danger for them.

The CGRS can then grant or refuse refugee status or subsidiary protection. While this investigation is ongoing, the asylum seeker receives a temporary resident's permit.

Training courses

For the first four months after submitting their application, asylum seekers cannot work in Belgium but they may take classes (language courses, cooking classes, IT lessons, and so on). These are organized within as well as outside the reception structure. The teachers may be staff members, but may also be people from outside the reception centre and even other asylum seekers. Some common courses are language classes, sewing lessons, cooking classes and IT classes. The courses are focused on staying in Belgium as well as a possible return.

Work

Only those asylum seekers who have still not received a decision 4 months after submitting their request are allowed to work. In this case, the right to reception and material aid is still valid, but the asylum seeker will have to make a financial contribution if he continues to live in the reception centre.

Appeal

If asylum seekers do not agree with the CGRS' decision, they can lodge an appeal with the Council for Alien Disputes (CAD). This institution may confirm the CGRS' decision (the decision remains unchanged), amend it (the decision is changed) or cancel it (the CGRS must conduct a new investigation).

After the procedure

With the final decision made by the CAD, the asylum procedure ends. After the asylum procedure, asylum seekers are granted protection under the status of refugee or subsidiary protection, or turned down. When the asylum application has been definitively refused, the failed asylum seeker receives an order to leave the territory.

End of the reception

The right to reception ends once the asylum procedure has finished and all possible appeals have failed. In the event of a positive decision, refugees (or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) receive a resident's permit and may start to look for their own accommodation. They are entitled to remain at the reception structure for a further two months in order to allow them to find suitable accommodation. They may request assistance from a Public Social Welfare Centre.

Following the end of the asylum procedure, and with a status of refugee or subsidiary protection, people start with their integration programme.

Civic Integration programme

All persons integrating have a right to a civic integration programme. Moreover, certain categories are obliged to take a civic integration programme. These categories are:

- persons who recently emigrated to Belgium and have taken up residence in Flanders;
- ministers of religion in a local church or religious community, recognized by the Flemish authorities.

Asylum seekers who have submitted their application for asylum less than four months ago, are also excluded from civic integration.

For those persons integrating, the civic integration obligation continues to exist as long as they have not fulfilled it.

Anyone who has an obligation to integrate must meet the following two conditions:

1. He must report to the welcome office in time.
2. He must regularly attend the lessons within the primary civic integration programme. This means that he must attend at least 80% of each course.

Persons integrating who have a civic integration obligation and fail to fulfil it, may receive an administrative fine.

There is a primary civic integration programme and a secondary civic integration programme.

A civic integration programme consists of:

- a basic Dutch course
- an introduction to the Flemish and Belgian society
- coaching in the search of employment or studies, and towards the provision in terms of culture and leisure activities
- personal guidance.

The primary civic integration programme

The primary civic integration programme consists of:

- a social orientation course, which consists of an introduction to the Flemish and Belgian society
- a basic Dutch as second language course

- career orientation, which implies coaching in the search of employment or studies, and toward the provision in terms of culture and leisure activities.
- programme counselling, which implies an individual counselling of the person integrating.

The primary civic integration programme is organized by the welcome office. The programme followed by a person integrating is established in his civic integration contract. The latter contains the courses he will attend and where and when they will take place. The welcome office takes maximum account of the work and family situation, the learning needs and questions of the persons integrating. The welcome office also seeks the advice of the 'Huis van het Nederlands' (Dutch Language House) and, if necessary, of the VDAB (Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency).

Social orientation

Social orientation is provided for by the welcome office. A standard training course involves 60 teaching periods. Course participants can take the lessons in their own language or in a contact language. Lessons are given during the day as well as in the evening and at weekends.

Dutch as second language

During the civic integration programme, the persons integrating can acquire basic knowledge of the Dutch language. In order to determine which type of 'Dutch as second language' (NT2) course is best suited, the welcome office calls on the advice of the Huis van het Nederlands. To this end, a consultant from the Huis van het Nederlands conducts an intake interview with the person integrating.

Career orientation

The aim of career orientation is to support the person integrating in making or learning to make choices to lend further shape to his lifelong career. In doing so, the wishes of the persons integrating and the experiences and qualifications (such as diplomas) previously acquired, are used as the starting point. Three types of career orientation exist.

- Persons integrating with a 'professional perspective' can be coached toward employment and independent entrepreneurship.
- Persons integrating with an 'educational perspective' are coached toward further education.
- All persons integrating have a 'social perspective' and are coached toward participation in the socio-cultural provision, voluntary work and other types of leisure activities. This type of career orientation is also called 'social participation'.

For the purpose of career orientation for persons integrating with a professional perspective, the welcome offices in Flanders call on the services of the 'Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding' (VDAB) (Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency).

A person who signs a civic integration contract, commits to follow the training programme on a regular basis. This implies that the person integrating must attend at least 80% of all courses for each component of the training programme. Upon completion of the civic integration programme, he will receive a civic integration certificate. Persons integrating who hold a civic integration certificate can directly join the secondary civic integration programme.

The secondary civic integration programme

During the secondary programme, persons integrating can shape the choice they made during the primary civic integration programme, that is to start working or to take up further education. The person integrating can, for instance, follow vocational training or entrepreneurship training. Moreover, he can enroll for 'Dutch as second language' follow-up courses and continue his studies. Unlike the primary programme, the secondary programme is not organized by the welcome office. Instead it is made available by the regular facilities.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Variety in NT2 (Dutch as a second language) courses: there is a very diverse offer of Dutch courses available, level-wise, but also time-wise. Courses can take place in the morning, afternoons or evenings, ranging from 2 times a week till full time. There is also a variety in level and pace of the courses, each of them have a different target group: low-skilled people or 'slow learners' are referred to an adult basic education centre. The standard course involves 240 teaching periods. Highly educated people or 'fast learners' are referred to an adult education centre, where they can take a standard course involving 120 teaching periods. Persons integrating who wish to start higher education and who comply with the admission requirements for higher education can enroll in a course involving a maximum of 90 teaching periods. These courses are organized by university language centres. For illiterate persons or very low-skilled persons integrating, an NT2 programme comprises 600 teaching periods.
- Since 2015/2016, the policy regarding the integration programme is moving towards the combination of several aspects at once: social integration programme, Dutch language course and taking specific steps towards employment simultaneously. This is in line with the more general policy of 'first place then train', that is emphasized by the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency. Although the idea of one integrated track, covering all aspects of integration and taking steps towards employment as soon as possible is interesting, the practical arrangements of this idea and the coordination of all the different aspects with the different partners involved have yet to get started. On a more local and practical level this means that in



the day-to-day integration of each person in the region of Antwerp, different parties try to correspond with one another, but no overarching framework is installed at the moment.

Weaknesses

- The lack of a thorough integration and overarching framework as described above is the main weakness of the integration program. This means that for each individual, a puzzle has to be put together and things don't move as quickly. Sometimes it results in placing too many demands on the person integrating (for example combining an internship with an integration course, with taking Dutch classes at the same time).

5 VET-system and other related vocational training forms

5.1 Description of the system

The VET-system in Belgium covers compulsory and higher education, adult education programmes, programmes alternating work and learning, and vocational training organized by public services for job-seekers, employees and entrepreneurs.

- **Compulsory education:**

Learners aged 6 to 18. VET pathways exist for those aged 14 and over: these take the form of technical or vocational secondary education programmes. Lower technical programmes prepare students for high-level technical education which awards a higher secondary education and a VET qualification. Vocational secondary education programmes focus on preparing learners for labour market entry. These programmes lead to a qualification (after the sixth year) or a higher secondary education diploma following successful completion of a seventh year in the vocational track.
- **Part-time programmes:**

Learners aged 15 or over can also opt for part-time programmes, alternating work and learning, organized either by schools or by public training services.
- **Adults over 18:**

These learners have a wide range of programmes to choose from, offered by the education system and by public and private VET providers. Vocational training offered by public employment and training services leads to partial or full qualifications. Training is organized by their own services or in cooperation with public or private VET providers.

As long as you are registered with the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency and have the status of refugee or subsidiary protection, you can register for VET-courses. In some cases, a certificate or diploma is required to start with the course. In the case of refugees/new immigrants who don't always have the equivalence of their diploma (yet), an entrance exam can be taken to determine if they can start with the training or not.

There are some preparatory courses, specifically targeting non-Dutch speakers, with the goal of starting a higher education in Dutch.

The vocational training offered by VDAB (Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency) focuses on participants with already quite a good knowledge of the Dutch language: in most cases, a level 2.4 (B1 Threshold) has to be obtained before being able to register for a VET course. Depending on the popularity of the course and the places available, the waiting lists may be as high as 12 months. This results in a long waiting period between the end of the integration programme and the 'next step' for those who want to follow a VET course.

The possibility of EVC and obtaining accreditation of prior learning, is used in both educational contexts and the context of access to the labour market. In an educational context it is determined whether a student can skip certain classes based on knowledge and skills that are already present, prior to starting the study.

In the context of access to the labour market, a ‘Certificate of Experience’ can be obtained for certain professions. The list of possible professions for which this procedure is available, is quite limited. The ‘Certificate of Experience’ is, by many employers, still not validated in the same way as a diploma.

Important reports and sources:

- Spotlight on VET Belgium, 2015
At: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/nl/publications-and-resources/publications/8091>
- Labour market information and guidance – Executive summary and Case Study Belgium
At: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/nl/publications-and-resources/publications/5555>

5.2 Good practices

Titel	Tech Check
Assignment to occupational area	
Duration of measure in weeks	Tech Check started in spring 2016, and was a pilot to generate some experience in activating refugees with whom a professional perspective was detected.
Share of language lessons in hours per weeks	In a parallel way different trails are followed by the refugee. On the one hand a regular integration course consisting of social orientation and language lessons. On the other hand the pilot that focuses on labour market participation, and where a lot of attention is given to technical jargon in order of specific branches such as catering or welding. In the regular integration course four day parts of language course are a standard for low educated or slow learning language learners. (This has to be combined with social orientation, also three day parts a week) Beside of this, the pilot takes also at least five day parts of different

	<p>courses (language and technical competence scans). We can conclude that a refugee has a total of 40, sometimes 55 hours a week of different courses/internship/work. The part of language courses depends between 15 till 20 hours a week for low educated refugees. During the project fort activation another eight hours a week of technical language are added.</p>
Certification of qualification	<p>In Flanders only education (schools) can provide diplomas with a civil effect. Non-educational institutions deliver certificates that don't have the same value, but that are sufficient for a lot of employers to engage a worker or an employee.</p>
Participant Structure (age, gender, low, middle or higher education)	<p>As already mentioned, all participants are screened (first phase only by interview) to detect some professional perspective. In practice, because of the partnership in Antwerp, it is limited to those branches in which our partners have experience in vocational training or work based learning. These domains are welding, electricity, catering, building, woodwork and metallurgy. In the realization of the project we meet, until now, only male persons, an average age of 30-45 years old (this group, "young and male" cover about 70 percent of the total amount of refugees in Belgium), rather low or middle educated if not educated they have (a lot) of work experience in one of the domains mentioned above. Those who are high educated follow another trail in activation or integration. Those who got an education inn technical branches, but don't have work experience have other routes too. Until now we saw about 50 persons, all coming from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and some from Eritrea of Somalia. (these are five acknowledged countries of origin off whom inhabitants have aa above average chance to get a residence permit because of war circumstances.</p>
Integrational quota	
Procedure of determination of competence (method and extent)	<p>The model of screening competences is based on an index or a kind of a set of competences used by education and labour office and based on input given by branche-organizations. These index cards (Cobra-fiches) give an overview of each (part of a) competence that should be obtained to have a reasonable chance to find and get a job in a certain branche. We use these indexes to have an overview of these competences</p>

	<p>and to core them (all). We score most of these items on a scale of one to four to avoid that too much is chosen for three on a scale of five. This also doesn't mean that someone who fails in (parts of) this screening has no chance to go further in the process of being guided to a job.</p> <p>As a matter of fact, the technical screening lasts only for (min) one hour up till 20 hours. It gives a general idea of competences, of knowledge and expertness. Part of this screening is lingual. We try to avoid that the screening of competences evolves to a language test by making the screening surrounding "language free" or "maximal lingual".</p>
Innovative approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening of technical skills in a nonprofit (free of commercial pressure) surrounding; • An offer of technical language with focus on the domain of expertise or knowledge of the refugee; • Labour market information, mobility; • Internship; • Guidance through the whole course ; • Using social media on general and individual level.
Success Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had the opportunity to spread out some pilots where we could gain some experience. This gave us a unique position to start dialogues with local authorities and administrations to set up some realistic programs; • One of the most important conditions of succeeding in activating refugees is having a very broad network. A network consisting of companies, public services, (local) authorities, employers-organizations, and a whole range of other stakeholders who are needed to complete the pieces of the puzzle into a whole; • We are working with a partnership of independent organizations with a long history in activating jobseekers with a huge distance to labour market. We are not bound to strict programs applied by government or other authorities; • A range of branches we have expertise in offering vocational training or work based learning for migrants with a small knowledge of our language;

Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In a country like Belgium, the regions are responsible for all labour market policies. If, as happened, savings must be applied, it can happen that earlier granted budgets can be shortened. At this moment, all budgets for 2016 and 2017 were cut because of a shortcoming in the budget of the Flemish government;• At the moment (spring 2016) we were negotiating with the Flemish public service for employment-finding and vocational training for jobseekers, (VDAB, our labour office) we had a long and difficult discussion about social acceptance of the necessary budget to activate a refugee. Making exception of all kind of taxes this amount is situated at € 3300.00€/refugee;• Companies are not always willing to engage towards refugees as an employer. Even offering internships is far from easy;• There isn't a general advisability of activating refugees, or investing in refugees with the objective of finding/offering a job within a certain deadline;• Language, language, language... A lot of refugees only speak their mother language. Contact languages are not common within the group we reach in our activation programs;• The adjustment of integration courses, language training and our activation course isn't always easy, on the contrary.
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Erasmus+

Annex 1: Infographics Tech Check

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TechCheck

Objectieven



Doorgedreven technische screening in de praktijk



Attestering van technische competenties



Ervaring opdoen op de werkvloer (stage en werkplekieren)



Werken aan technisch Nederlands



Arbeidsmarkt-informatie



Werken rond mobiliteit

Traject

1. Screening

Individueel / 15 - 20 u / telkens halve dagen / onthaal en opvang door coach / screening door instructeur uit vakgebied / evaluatiegesprek na screening

2. Werkplekieren

In groep / 4 weken / volledige dagen / intern werkplekieren / werken aan technisch Nederlands / arbeidsmarkt-informatie / korte stage

3. Kennismaking arbeidsmarkt

Individueel / 2 weken / stage



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Een project van

LIFT

Werk Vormm

LEVANTO



In samenwerking met



Annex 2: Newspaper article

Article in Belgian newspaper 'De Morgen' about a Syrian refugee who participates in Tech Check and who had the opportunity to take up an internship with a well-known chef. This is one success story. In general, the willingness of employers to welcome refugees for internships or jobs is quite low.

Vorig jaar op de vlucht, vandaag kok bij topchef

Syriër Badr Aldouni loopt stage bij Seppe Nobel in Graanmarkt 13

BARBARA DEBUSSCHERE

Seppe Nobels van het Antwerpse toprestaurant Graanmarkt 13 werkt sinds kort samen met Badr Aldouni (34), een Syrische scheepskok die sinds een jaar in ons land leeft en Nederlands noch Engels spreekt. De verwarring is soms groot. Maar ik weet nu al dat ik veel van hem kan leren.

Een gigantische uitgeholde witte kool, gevuld met tabouleh, tomaten en verse kruiden. Een schotel met hummus, versierd met felroze bloemen en kunstzinnige inkepingen. Nog steeds tabouleh, gedresseerd met citroen en granatapfel. Het zijn niet meteen combinaties die je verwacht bij het hippe Graanmarkt 13, dat resoluut de kaart trekt van lokale ingrediënten. Het zijn de gerechten van Badr Aldouni uit Syrië. Die laat trots de foto's die doen waterdansen zien aan Nobels, chef van Graanmarkt 13.

"Al die versieringen, daar doen wij niet aan. Maar over zijn signatuurgerechten wil ik deze maand alles te weten komen, want dat zal mijn repertoire verrijken", zegt Nobels. Via Tom De Pauw van het sociaal secretariaat voor Antwerpen horeca hoorde hij over Badr en hij stelde prompt in hem een maand stage aan te bieden via vzw Werkvorm.

Chef-kok op schip

De goedlachse Syriër met trieste ogen komt uit de kuststad Tartus en was jarenlang chef-kok op een schip. Zijn moeder is dood, zijn broer zit in de gevangenis en hij sloeg op de vlucht voor het oorlogsgeweld dat ook hem zichtbaar heeft gekraakt. Na een lange tocht is hij in november in ons land gearriveerd en begeleidde de vzw Werkvorm hem op weg naar passend werk.

Vandaag probeert de overheid vluchtelingen dan ook sneller en eerder aan het werk te krijgen, alhoewel dat zeker niet altijd. "Onthaalbeurten selecteren wie professioneel potentieel heeft", zegt Chris Bryssinckx van vzw Werkvorm, dat wordt gesteund door de stad. "Wij proberen een brug te slaan naar de arbeidsmarkt, via stages. Het is de eerste keer dat we iemand die de taak niet spreekt aan een stage helpen. Dat zegt genoeg, zeker?"

Vluchtelingen zoals Badr volgen een stevig programma van inburgerings- en taallessen en dat alles al maakt werkervaring opdoen niet evident. De twee andere grote hindernissen zijn taalbarrières en werkgevers die niets van vluchtelingen moeten weten of die het te veel gedoe vinden. Zeker wanneer iemand Nederlands noch Engels spreekt.

'Badr heeft zijn vader via Skype een rondleiding gegeven in de keuken'

SEPPE NOBELS
CHEF-KOK GRAANMARKT 13

Maar Nobels ziet het helemaal zitten. Drie keer werkte Badr de afgelopen week in zijn keuken. Badr aan de pas, waar de gerechten voor te worden geserveerd nog even door de handen van Nobels gaan. Badr die saus en salades maakt zoals hem is getoond. Badr die te zien krijgt hoe ze hier hummus van pompoen maken en die dan het gerecht namaakt op zijn manier. "Hij gooit het recept helemaal om en begon met yoghurt. Die aanpak gaan we eens proberen", zegt Nobels.

Behelpen met Google

Ook voor morgen hebben ze al plannen. Badr zal het Graanmarkt 13-team laten zien hoe hij een speciaal soort Syrisch brood maakt. Wanneer Nobels hem vraagt of dat voor hij de hummus is, ontstaat spraakverwarring. "Het is behelpen met gebarentaal en soms Google-afbeeldingen", zegt Nobels. "Toen hij het hele tijd had over 'warrehem', dacht ik dat dat misschien een Arabische groente was. Bleek dat hij het had over Waregem, waar hij enkele maanden in een asielcentrum zat."

Afgelopen zaterdag zat het restaurant opnieuw afgeladen vol en waren de huiskamers maodelines bijna op. Nobels: "Afhijven van die kockjes", zei ik tegen mijn team. Iemand legde het ook zo duidelijk mogelijk aan Badr uit.



Eén op vier na half jaar aan de slag

Tegenwoordig is een kwart van wie met een Arbeidskaart C aan de slag wil na een half jaar aan het werk, zo stelt de Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB) vast. Daarbij gaat het niet enkel over vluchtelingen, want onder meer om privacyredenen wordt dat statistiek niet opgenomen in de statistieken, maar ook over asielzoekers en studenten. Een Arbeidskaart C geldt voor buitenlanders die voor beperkte duur of op een voorlopige manier in ons land blijven. Bij de VDAB zetten ze vluchtelingen bewust almaar vroeger aan het werk. In tegenstelling tot Badr is de talentkennis van de jongste generatie vluchtelingen en asielzoekers goed. Zo spreken veel Syriërs en Irakëzen wat Engels of Frans. "Terwijl we vroeger eerst de kleintoon legden op Nederlands leren, helpen we vluchtelingen nu sneller aan het werk", zegt woordvoester Shireen Altab. "Met stages en werkplekken als opstap naar een contact merken we dat de integratie sneller verloopt." (100)

► Seppe Nobels met zijn Syrische stagiar. 'We zullen afwachten wat dit geeft. Maar ik zie veel potentieel', zegt de kok. © BOB VAN NOL

ging. Ik heb erg veel moeite moeten doen om dat recht te trekken (grinst). Daarom ga ik de communicatie nog strakker en eenvoudiger houden en alle zinnen waar we mee worstelen aan zijn leerkracht meegeven."

De band tussen de twee lijkt nu al tinnig. "Zaterdag hadden we een paar uur vrij. Badr wilde per se nog iets leren. Ik liet hem groenten zien die hij nog nooit zag. Toen heeft hij me met handen en voeten verteld over zijn familie. De pijn droop van zijn gezicht. Uit zijn gebaren kon ik afleiden dat hij zag hoe kinderen werden vermoord en dat zijn broer een erg zware tijd heeft in de cel. Meestal tegen de avond krijg hij het een halfuur moeilijk, dan speelt het trauma op. Via Skype heeft hij zijn vader ook een rondleiding in de keuken gegeven."

Niet dat Nobels zichzelf als een humanitaire weldoener ziet. Hij runt vooral een zaak die 600 mensen per week moet bedienen.

veel potentieel", zegt Nobels. En zijn team is enthousiast. Onder de zes koks zitten een Nepalees, een Chileen en een Uruguayaan. "Hun keukens geven een meerwaarde aan mijn schermen en spruitjes. Bovendien vind ik naarwieljes Vlaamse jonge krachten. Ze koken van ver op het beroep maar na een stage knappen ze af op de werkdruk en de lange uren. Mensen zoals Badr niet. Hij volgt een druk inburgeringsprogramma maar is hier zelfs al bij te vreeg. Met zijn enorme inzet en legerigheid past hier alvast perfect."

En de keuze voor een kok die op de vlucht moest past ook bij Nobels filosofie dat een restaurant meer is dan wat in de borden ligt. "Ik kweek stadsbijen op het dak. Ik hou mij aan seizoensgroenten. Ik mijd tonijn. Wat met de wereld gebeurt, trek ik mij aan, tot in de keuken. De groenten zijn lokaal en de blik is naar buiten gericht." En dan blijkt een slachtoffer van de Syrische oor-

PostNL krijgt sint-pakketje niet verstuurt

Door een computerstoring bij het Nederlandse postbedrijf PostNL werden gisteren een dag voor Sinterklaas zowat 40.000 pakketten op tijd bezorgd. Daarbij 8.000 pakketjes voor ons land. Volgens een woordvoerder wordt het grootste deel van de pakketjes vandaag bezorgd maar zal dat niet voor alle lussen. "Het verwende ik zetten alle zellen bij om zo veel mogelijk post tijd te verwerven en te bezorgen. PostNL bezorgde vorig jaar 1 december, in de aanloop Sinterklaas, bijna 1,3 miljard pakketten. In 2015 leverde het bedrijf gemiddeld 550 pakketten per dag af, maar tijdens de eindejaarsperiodes zijn dat er dus veel meer."

Akkoord over controles aan buitengrenzen

Onderhandelaars van het Europees Parlement en de ten zijn het eens geworden de invoering van systematische veiligheidscontroles voor Europese burgers en die anders die de Europese Unie binnenkomen of verlaten. Het akkoord bepaalt dat niet te gegevens van derde landen maar ook die van Europese burgers aan de buitengrenzen worden aan vastgesteld na aansluiten van Parijs in november 2013, moet helpen om terrorisme te voorkomen. Er was reeds een meegedrukt na maatregelen die wachtdieners buitengrenzen kan doen open. De autoriteiten kunnen besluiten tot steekproeven te gaan. (BELGA)

Ben Carson eerste zwarte regering-Trump

Donald Trump heeft de voormalige Republikeinse presidenten kandidaat en gepensioneerd neurochirurg Ben Carson gekozen om de nieuwe minister van Huisvesting en Stedelijke Ontwikkeling. Carson is de eerste Afro-Amerikaan in de nog samen te stellen regering-Trump. Hij staat bekend als oerconservatief en erg religieus. Hij is zeer radicaal tegen abortus en wil Obamacare zo snel mogelijk vernietigen.

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De voormalige neurochirurg wordt minister van Huisvesting

