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# **ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS FOR YOUNG MIGRANTS, RELATED WITH INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT**

In today's globalized world, the integration of migrants and refugees into the labor market is not just a matter of social responsibility but a strategic imperative for fostering inclusive growth and economic resilience. Migrants, driven by aspirations for a better life, and refugees, seeking refuge from conflict and persecution, bring with them a wealth of untapped potential and entrepreneurial spirit, poised to enrich the fabric of their host societies.

For young migrants and refugees, entrepreneurship offers a beacon of hope and opportunity amidst the challenges of resettlement and economic insecurity. By cultivating their entrepreneurial skills, these individuals can chart their own paths to success, transcending the limitations of traditional employment and creating opportunities for themselves and others in the process.

However, the journey towards entrepreneurial success is fraught with obstacles. From navigating bureaucratic red tape and accessing financial resources to overcoming language barriers and cultural prejudices, migrant and refugee entrepreneurs face a myriad of challenges that can hinder their progress and stifle their potential.

This is where inclusive leadership and management skills emerge as critical enablers of success. Inclusive leaders possess the empathy, cultural competence, and collaborative mindset necessary to create environments where all voices are heard, valued, and empowered to contribute. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and belonging, these leaders inspire trust, creativity, and innovation, empowering migrant and refugee entrepreneurs to leverage their diverse backgrounds and perspectives as assets rather than obstacles.

Moreover, inclusive leadership equips young migrants and refugees with the resilience and adaptability needed to navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship. In an ever-changing business landscape, the ability to embrace diversity, foster collaboration, and navigate cultural

nuances can spell the difference between success and failure for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs.

In essence, inclusive leadership and management skills serve as the bedrock upon which the entrepreneurial dreams of young migrants and refugees are built. By fostering environments where diversity is celebrated, collaboration is encouraged, and innovation is nurtured, inclusive leaders empower these individuals to not only succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavors but also drive positive change within their communities and beyond.

As we embark on this research paper, our aim is to delve into the challenges and opportunities encountered by migrants and refugees, particularly youth, at both the international and European levels. Through an exploration of their entrepreneurial aspirations and the barriers they face, we seek to illuminate pathways for their integration into the labor market and entrepreneurial ecosystem. Moreover, this research endeavors to propose concrete policy recommendations aimed at enhancing support structures, fostering inclusive leadership, and promoting entrepreneurship among migrant and refugee populations. By leveraging insights gleaned from our analysis, we aspire to contribute to the creation of more inclusive, resilient, and equitable societies, where the entrepreneurial potential of all individuals, regardless of their background, is nurtured and celebrated.

First, understanding the distinctions between migrants, which include migrant workers, and refugees is crucial for developing appropriate policies and providing adequate support and protection to individuals on the move, regardless of their migration status. Both migrants and refugees contribute to the diversity and richness of societies worldwide, and ensuring their rights and dignity is essential for upholding the principles of human rights and humanitarianism.

Migration is a global phenomenon driven by various factors, leading individuals to leave their country of origin in search of better opportunities or safety elsewhere. Migrants encompass a diverse group of people with different motivations and circumstances. Migrants are individuals who voluntarily leave their country of origin to pursue improved economic prospects, employment opportunities, education, family reunification or personal choice. This movement can be temporary or permanent, depending on the nature of the migration and the individual's intentions. Migrant workers specifically refer to individuals who migrate in search of employment opportunities in other countries, whether on a temporary or permanent basis.

While there is no universally accepted and legally binding definition of migration or migrants, the United Nations (UN) defines long-term international migrants as individuals who change their country of usual residence for at least 12 months, and short-term or temporary migrants as those who do so for a period between 3 and 12 months. These definitions are primarily used for statistical purposes. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which became an affiliated organization of the UN in 2016, provides a comprehensive definition of migrants as *"any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is."* This definition emphasizes the broad scope of migration, encompassing various circumstances and legal statuses (UNCTAD/DIAE/2018/2).

The World Migration Report 2022, conducted by IOM, reveals that in 2020, the global population of international migrants reached 281 million, accounting for approximately 3.6% of the world's population. This figure marks an 84% increase over the past three decades. Among these migrants, 169 million individuals were categorized as migrant workers, up from 164 million globally in 2017, contributing valuable skills and resources to the economies of their host nations. Simultaneously, they remitted hundreds of billions of euros back to their home countries, providing crucial support to their families and contributing to the development of their nations of origin.

International conventions and treaties play a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of migrants and ensuring their access to work and self-employment opportunities. These legal instruments provide a framework for protecting migrants from exploitation, discrimination, and abuse, while also promoting their integration and well-being in host countries. The most important international conventions and treaties are:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948 - The UDHR prohibits discrimination in connection to migrants. Article 2 asserts that all individuals, including migrants, are entitled to rights without discrimination based on factors such as race, color, or national origin. It emphasizes equal protection under the law for everyone, regardless of migration status. This means that migrants have the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination in all aspects of life, including access to work and other opportunities. It also asserts the right to work as a fundamental human right. Article 23 of the UDHR states that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment (United Nations, n.d.);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted in 1966 - This treaty recognizes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain a living by work which they freely choose or accept. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring equal access to employment opportunities for all individuals, including migrants (OHCR, n.d.);
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions - The ILO has several conventions related to migrant workers' rights, including the Migration for Employment Convention (No. 97, adopted in 1949) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention (No. 143, adopted in 1975). These conventions address issues such as equal treatment, access to employment, and protection against discrimination for migrant workers. They set standards for fair and decent work conditions, ensuring that migrant workers are not exploited and are treated with dignity and respect (ILO, n.d.);
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families - This convention, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990, specifically addresses the rights of migrant workers and their families. It sets out a comprehensive framework for protecting their human rights and ensuring equal treatment, regardless of their migration status. The convention covers various aspects of migrant workers' rights, including the right to work, fair wages, social security, and access to justice (OHCR, n.d.);

- The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants - Adopted at the 71st UN General Assembly in September 2016, the New York Declaration reaffirms the commitment of UN member states to protect the rights of refugees and migrants. While the declaration primarily focuses on refugee issues, it also addresses the rights and protections afforded to migrants. It underscores the importance of supporting both migrants and refugees in integrating into the labor market and becoming entrepreneurs as essential components of their successful resettlement and long-term integration (UNHCR, n.d.).

Unlike migrants, refugees have a universally recognized international definition, which is essential for providing them with appropriate support and protection as they seek safety and rebuild their lives in new countries. Some scholars refer to refugees as “forced migrants”, highlighting the involuntary nature of their displacement.

Refugees are individuals who are forced to flee their home countries due to well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. They seek refuge in other countries to escape immediate threats to their safety and basic human rights. The internationally recognized definition of a refugee comes from the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted by the United Nations. According to this definition, a refugee is someone who *"owing to 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 their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country"* (UNHCR, n.d.).

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol form the cornerstone of international refugee law. They define refugees, outline their rights, and establish states' obligations towards them. Refugees are entitled to work and be self-employed in their host countries, as stated in Article 17 of the Convention. The treaties aim to promote refugees' economic self-sufficiency and integration by facilitating their participation in the labor market and entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, the treaties emphasize that states have an obligation not to discriminate against refugees and to ensure their equal treatment in all aspects of life, including employment opportunities. Furthermore, the treaties address the treatment of asylum seekers, affirming the principle of non-refoulement and ensuring fair procedures for assessing refugee claims (UNHCR, n.d.).

UNHCR's Global Trends report, released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, indicates that by the conclusion of 2022, 108.4 million individuals globally had been displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights abuses, and significant disruptions to public order. In 2022, the global refugee count surged to 35.3 million, marking a significant escalation from 27.1 million in the previous year. This unprecedented figure, the highest since World War II, is largely driven by Ukrainian refugees seeking international sanctuary. Additionally, there were 5.4 million asylum seekers and 62.5 million internally displaced persons recorded during this period (UNHCR, n.d.). Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are individuals or collectives compelled to abandon their residences or habitual dwellings, primarily due to armed conflicts, widespread violence, human rights infringements, or natural or human-induced calamities, but they have not crossed internationally recognized state borders (UNCTAD/DIAE/2018/2).

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### 2.1. The Benefits of Migrant and Refugee Entrepreneurship

According to the definition provided by UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), entrepreneurship is "*the capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organization, and management of a productive new venture, accepting all attendant risks and seeking profit as a reward*". This comprehensive definition acknowledges a wide range of entrepreneurial endeavors, including self-employment, microenterprises, small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and high-growth firms (UNCTAD/DIAE/2018/2).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the entrepreneurial motivations of migrants and refugees. Across the globe, individuals displaced from their home countries due to economic, political, or humanitarian reasons are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as a means of survival and socio-economic integration. This phenomenon has sparked considerable scholarly attention, leading to the emergence of various theoretical perspectives aimed at elucidating the motivations behind migrant and refugee entrepreneurship. Two prominent theories in this regard are the Mixed Embeddedness Theory and the Disadvantage Theory.

The Mixed Embeddedness Theory was developed in the late 1990s by the Dutch sociologist, Jan Kloosterman. This theory suggests that the decision to become an entrepreneur among migrants and refugees is influenced by both the social context of their origin and the economic conditions of their destination. According to this theory, migrants and refugees possess unique social networks, cultural capital, and access to resources that shape their entrepreneurial endeavors. These networks not only provide valuable information and support but also serve as a bridge between their home and host societies, enabling them to navigate unfamiliar business environments more effectively. By leveraging their cultural and social capital within the new context, they can create businesses that cater to the needs of their communities or fill gaps in the market that traditional businesses overlook (Högberg & Mitchell, 2023).

The Disadvantage Theory is associated with a broader body of research on migrant and refugee entrepreneurship. While it doesn't have a single originator, scholars such as Jennifer Hochschild, Douglas S. Massey, and Nancy Denton have contributed to understanding the intersection of migration, disadvantage and entrepreneurship. This theory posits that migrants and refugees are disproportionately disadvantaged in the labor market due to factors such as language barriers, lack of recognized credentials, discrimination and limited access to social capital. Consequently, entrepreneurship emerges as a viable pathway to economic self-sufficiency and empowerment. By starting their own businesses, migrants and refugees can circumvent these barriers, create employment opportunities for themselves and others within their communities, and assert agency over their economic futures. Moreover, entrepreneurship

offers flexibility and autonomy, allowing individuals to adapt their businesses to suit their unique skills, experiences, and cultural backgrounds (Rinaldi, Arrighetti, Lasagni, Canello, 2023).

Both the Mixed Embeddedness Theory and the Disadvantage Theory provide valuable insights into the motivations behind migrant and refugee entrepreneurship. While the former emphasizes the interplay between social and economic factors shaping entrepreneurial decisions, the latter underscores the structural barriers and inequalities that drive individuals towards self-employment as a means of overcoming disadvantage. By recognizing the complex interplay of these factors, policymakers and stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to support migrant and refugee entrepreneurs and harness their potential contributions to economic growth and social cohesion.

Based on these theories, we can better appreciate the significant benefits entrepreneurship offers to immigrants and refugees, especially young people, as they navigate their new lives in host societies:

- **Social benefits** - Entrepreneurship often serves as a catalyst for migrants and refugees to achieve higher social standing, independence and autonomy. Amidst structural barriers to traditional employment, entrepreneurial ventures offer avenues for individuals to elevate their social status and assert control over their economic destinies. Migrant and refugee entrepreneurs can leverage not only in-country support networks but also diaspora co-ethnic connections, providing access to mentorship, financial resources, reliable suppliers, and a loyal customer base. Moreover, they can tap into broader networks, including religious, political, national and regional affiliations, enhancing their support system and fostering community integration (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009);
- **Economic benefits** - Entrepreneurship emerges as a beacon of hope for migrants and refugees, offering a pathway to improved economic stability and prosperity. Structural impediments such as racial discrimination, limited work rights, linguistic barriers, and the undervaluation of foreign qualifications often relegate them to unemployment or precarious job opportunities (the “3D jobs” - dirty, dangerous and demanding). In response, many turn to entrepreneurship as a means of circumventing these barriers and achieving financial security. Although driven more by necessity than market opportunities, entrepreneurship empowers migrants and refugees to forge their own paths toward economic self-reliance and success (OECD, 2010);
- **Psychological benefits** - The pursuit of entrepreneurship not only bolsters economic well-being but also nurtures psychological resilience among migrants and refugees. For refugee entrepreneurs, the preservation of dignity is paramount, with many compelled to start their own businesses to avoid dependency on welfare benefits amidst unemployment. Even for those who secure employment but find themselves overqualified, entrepreneurship offers a source of fulfillment and purpose. Furthermore, entrepreneurship provides a unique space where migrants and refugees can carve out their niche without displacing or competing with local workers, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing the impact of xenophobia (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009).

Supporting migrant and refugee entrepreneurship yields significant advantages, benefiting not only the entrepreneurs themselves but also host societies and countries of origin. Some of the most important potential contributions of migrant and refugee entrepreneurship to development in host countries include the following (UNCTAD/DIAE/2018/2):

- **Economic development, innovation and job creation** - Migrants and refugees play a crucial role as catalysts for economic growth in host countries. Their contribution extends beyond mere motivation and energy, as they bring a wealth of new skills, competencies, and innovative ideas, often termed as the "diversity dividend". This diversity enriches host economies by introducing fresh perspectives and problem-solving approaches. The varied experiences, ways of thinking, and social networks of migrants and refugees enable them to contribute novel knowledge and ideas, fostering innovation and market growth. Whether through entrepreneurship or employment within existing organizations, they actively participate in introducing new products and processes, thereby expanding markets. Moreover, the entrepreneurial activity of migrants and refugees has a ripple effect, stimulating entrepreneurship among others, regardless of their native or foreign-born status.
- **International trade** - Migrant and refugee businesses can significantly bolster international trade. Their unique advantage lies in their ability to leverage transnational networks and market insights from their home countries. This access facilitates the development of trade linkages with businesses in their host countries, enabling entrepreneurs to lower transaction costs, evaluate market opportunities, anticipate risks, and identify reliable partners to support business expansion.
- **Local economic development** - Migrant and refugee businesses are instrumental in rejuvenating local economic zones, especially in low-income neighborhoods where migrants and refugees commonly reside. Usually, these enterprises offer employment prospects and skill development opportunities for members of their ethnic communities. This is particularly significant as these individuals often face exclusion from the labor market, along with some native population members. By generating employment opportunities, these businesses reduce dependence on welfare benefits and facilitate smoother integration and resettlement processes.
- **Social cohesion and community well-being** - Migrant and refugee businesses often have significant community-level impacts. For instance, migrant shop owners frequently cater to local needs by providing specialty goods and services at affordable prices, often extending their operating hours to accommodate diverse schedules. Additionally, these businesses play a crucial leadership role in fostering social inclusion and cohesion by bridging cultural divides, breaking down barriers, and facilitating the exchange of information among different communities. Even migrant and refugee businesses with modest profits and growth rates contribute to the well-being of host societies, presenting valuable opportunities for policymakers to address geographical stagnation and demographic marginalization.

On the other hand, migrant and refugee entrepreneurship within host countries can also stimulate economic development in their countries of origin. Some of the most important contributions are the following (UNCTAD/DIAE/2018/2):

- **Creation of new businesses** - Migrants and refugees often possess advantageous positions to initiate or invest in businesses within their countries of origin. Their experience of working abroad enables them to amass financial resources, sector-specific knowledge, and familiarity with working practices that may not yet be prevalent in their home countries. Additionally, migrants may have established networks of business contacts spanning multiple countries. Importantly, their ability to contribute to the development of their countries of origin is not contingent on permanent return; temporary and virtual returns can leverage the efforts of individuals with diverse nationalities.
- **Remittances, diaspora investment** - Remittances sent by migrants globally now surpass three times the amount of official development assistance. From US\$29 billion in 1990, remittances to low- and middle-income countries have soared to US\$429 billion in 2016. These funds often rise during times of uncertainty and risk, unlike other foreign capital that may leave domestic markets. Migrant remittances aren't just for covering daily expenses. They also help recipients invest in their own businesses by easing financial constraints. They play a vital role in supporting the private sector, especially during economic crises. Recognizing this, some governments and organizations have created collective remittance funds. These funds provide startup and growth capital for local businesses in migrants' home communities. Additionally, diaspora contributions, whether through sharing knowledge or funding specific projects, are increasing worldwide, benefiting communities of origin across the globe.

## **2.2. The Challenges and Barriers faced by Migrant and Refugee Entrepreneurs**

Embarking on the path of entrepreneurship is often laden with challenges, and for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, these obstacles can be particularly daunting. Despite their aspirations and potential, they encounter unique hurdles that can impede their journey towards success. This is especially true for young aspiring entrepreneurs among migrant and refugee communities, who face a multitude of barriers in realizing their business dreams.

However, amidst these challenges, there are stories of inspiration, such as the remarkable success of immigrant-founded unicorns (private-held companies valued at over \$1 billion), which serve as beacons of possibility, demonstrating the immense potential of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs to thrive in the entrepreneurial landscape. For instance, nearly 80% of unicorn companies in the United States boast either an immigrant founder or an immigrant holding a key leadership position. One notable example is Elon Musk, a South African-born entrepreneur, who is the CEO of Tesla, the renowned electric vehicle manufacturer and owns most of its shares. Also, 58% of the American unicorns have solely immigrant founders or multiple immigrant founders, with no native-born founders involved (Forbes, 2022). Similarly, 60% of the German unicorns have at least one immigrant founder (Startup Verband, 2023).

Despite these success stories, it's essential to acknowledge that numerous migrants and refugees encounter obstacles to entrepreneurship, stemming from language and cultural



differences, limited financial capital (such as restricted access to banks and collateral) and a lack of social capital (like access to support networks). Refugee entrepreneurs, in particular, are confronted with barriers linked to their legal status, including limitations on the right to work and pursue self-employment, difficulties in obtaining recognition for refugee documentation, involuntary displacement and the associated psychological impact. Additionally, both migrant and refugee entrepreneurs may face discrimination and stigma based on their status within the host country.

According to the Policy Guide on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees, developed in 2018 by UNCTAD, the most common impediments they face can be classified into five main categories, each with specific problems and difficulties - Policy and regulatory environment, Education and skill development, Technology exchange, innovation and the environment for start-ups, Access to finance and Networks and awareness.

- **Policy and regulatory environment - Rights to work and support, Regulatory barriers to starting a business, Consequences of sudden forced displacement**

Restrictive immigration policies limit the rights of migrants and refugees to work and start businesses. Legal limitations, based on stay duration or specific professions, hinder their employment or self-employment opportunities. Moreover, obstacles like restricted access to credit and social security benefits pose challenges for aspiring entrepreneurs. Registering a new business in many countries may lead to loss of welfare benefits, and taxes and social security contributions are often required before profitability.

Setting up and running a business involves navigating complex regulatory and administrative procedures, including registering the business, obtaining permits, meeting social security and tax obligations. These challenges are often difficult for native-born entrepreneurs and even more so for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs who may lack language skills and familiarity with administrative systems in the host country. Registering a business may also require proof of qualifications or experience, which can be particularly challenging for migrants and refugees whose credentials were earned elsewhere. In many countries, the registration processes for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs are unclear. Although longer-resident migrants and diaspora entrepreneurs could offer valuable assistance, they are often underutilized due to a lack of organized support systems. Limited proficiency in the host country's language further hampers access to information and navigating bureaucratic processes.

Sudden forced displacement can have significant consequences for refugees and migrants. Often unprepared for life in a new country, they may lack essential documents, including educational certificates, making it difficult to demonstrate their status or qualifications. Even when documents are available, foreign qualifications may not be recognized, particularly in highly regulated sectors. These challenges are exacerbated in situations of multiple displacement, where refugees move within or to different countries. Similar difficulties may arise for migrants who change status, routes or destinations during their journey.

- **Education and skill development - Language and cultural barriers, Disconnection from entrepreneurship education**

Upon arriving in a new country, many migrants and refugees face challenges due to language and cultural differences, leading to a loss of human capital. These barriers often restrict the types

of businesses they can engage in. Understanding the needs and preferences of mainstream consumers, as well as the business culture of the host society, becomes difficult. Stigma and discrimination further hinder their entrepreneurial ambitions, particularly if they lack proficiency in the host-country language or if their businesses are associated with specific goods or services. The interconnectedness of cultural and linguistic competence with business success highlights the importance of tailoring integration support systems to meet the diverse needs of migrant and refugee populations.

Migrant and refugee entrepreneurs encounter challenges accessing entrepreneurship programs due to language and cultural barriers in host countries. Integration efforts often fail to connect with entrepreneurship support, and vocational education programs frequently overlook essential business skill development. This gap limits opportunities for labor market success beyond mere employment. To foster entrepreneurship among migrants and refugees, it's crucial to integrate them into broader support initiatives. However, existing entrepreneurship education programs often fall short in cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset. They tend to prioritize practical aspects like financial management over essential entrepreneurial skills. While short programs offer basic skills, sustained support is necessary to guide entrepreneurs through the process of launching and sustaining businesses. Additionally, the lack of translated educational materials adds to the barriers. Migrants and refugees themselves could play a pivotal role in providing ongoing mentorship and support, particularly in building connections within supply chains across different countries.

- **Technology exchange, innovation and the environment for start-ups - Weak ecosystem linkages, Weak diaspora networks**

The political economy of migration often confines migrants and refugees to environments that limit their economic activity and social mobility. They often reside in impoverished areas with multiple vulnerabilities, hindering successful entrepreneurship. In such contexts, they may be compelled to engage in low-profit or informal businesses. This disconnects them from broader entrepreneurship ecosystems, leading to limited access to necessary resources like working spaces and infrastructure. Policymakers should address the precarious living conditions shared by migrants, refugees, and host-community members and ensure equal access to entrepreneurship support measures for all.

Migrants and refugees often face the risk of losing connections to their social networks in their home countries and broader diaspora communities. This loss can weaken the diverse resources needed to launch and sustain successful startups. However, coethnic communities and diaspora networks in the destination country can help offset this challenge. Over time, migrants and refugees may establish new connections or revive old ones to support their entrepreneurial goals. Diaspora networks offer valuable resources for both migrant and native business owners, facilitating the establishment and expansion of enterprises, especially into international markets. These resources include start-up and growth finance from diaspora communities, market information, regulatory insights, and access to potential business partners across different regions.

- **Access to finance - Limited access to finance, Reliance on informal finance**

Migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, particularly those from less developed countries, often encounter challenges accessing credit through formal banking channels. Factors such as a lack of credit history and collateral make it difficult to secure loans. This struggle is exacerbated for refugees who had to flee their countries hastily, leaving behind their capital and documentation. Loan providers may perceive migrant and refugee enterprises as high-risk and low-profit ventures, leading to distrust and reluctance to lend. Additionally, refugees may face obstacles due to a lack of documentation from the country of asylum, hindering their ability to open bank accounts or access credit.

In addition to facing legal and administrative barriers, migrants and refugees may hesitate to engage with formal banking institutions due to concerns about discrimination and a lack of welcome. Limited knowledge of available financial support and regulatory requirements further distances these communities from formal financial services. Challenges such as low levels of financial literacy and a lack of language support also contribute to limited access. Cultural norms and beliefs may deter migrants and refugees from utilizing formal financial services, leading them to rely on personal savings and informal lending from family, friends, and diaspora networks to fund their businesses.

- **Networks and awareness - Lack of support networks, Populism and xenophobia**

The absence of co-ethnic support networks can hinder entrepreneurial activity for migrants and refugees, especially if they are not in traditional receiving countries or have become disconnected from previous networks due to migration. Studies highlight that digitally supported diasporic networks cannot fully replace local community support. Without local social capital, migrants and refugees may struggle to access vital support, information, and navigate the host country's business environment. Additionally, they often lack broader social networks crucial for entrepreneurial success, which can be particularly challenging for recently arrived migrants from less represented countries and cultures. Despite these challenges, shifting migration patterns have created new opportunities for strong, transnational business networks, with expanding diaspora organizations and networks supporting global entrepreneurship efforts.

Migrants and refugees frequently encounter discrimination and stigma in many host countries, posing significant obstacles to their business success. Policies, whether formal or informal, public or private, play a pivotal role in determining whether migrant and refugee entrepreneurs can overcome the loss of human, financial, and social capital experienced during migration. Enabling factors such as national legislation granting rights to freedom of movement, employment, self-employment, and property ownership, along with favorable government policies supporting the recognition of qualifications, access to welfare benefits, affordable language training, and other educational opportunities, are crucial. Active engagement from the private sector, including inclusive financial institutions, business associations, and local businesses, as well as supportive local communities that advocate for the socioeconomic integration of newcomers, can further facilitate successful entrepreneurship among migrants and refugees.

Several international organizations play a vital role in assisting migrants and refugees, particularly young individuals, in integrating into the labor market and fostering entrepreneurship. These international organizations, among others, play a crucial role in

empowering migrants and refugees to overcome barriers to economic integration and pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. Through their initiatives and support, individuals are equipped with the skills, resources and opportunities needed to thrive in their host countries and contribute to sustainable development. Some of these organizations and programs include:

- **The International Organization for Migration (IOM)** - It operates globally Migrant Training and Integration Centers (MTICs), providing vocational training, language courses and job placement services to enhance the employability of migrants and refugees. Additionally, the IOM's "Enterprise Development Fund" offers financial assistance and business training to aspiring entrepreneurs, facilitating the launch and expansion of their businesses (IOM, n.d.);
- **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** - It runs the "YouthCo:Lab," an initiative empowering young entrepreneurs, including migrants and refugees, to address social and environmental challenges through innovation and entrepreneurship. Through funding, training, mentorship, and technical assistance, the initiative empowers young entrepreneurs to establish and scale their businesses, with a focus on regions with high youth unemployment rates and significant migrant populations (YouthCo:Lab, n.d.);
- **The International Labour Organization (ILO)** - ILO's "Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)" program provides entrepreneurship training to migrants and refugees, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to launch and manage successful businesses. The program covers topics such as leadership skills, business planning, marketing and financial management (ILO, n.d.);
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** - It implements the "Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion" program to enhance the economic self-reliance of refugees through vocational training, microfinance access, and entrepreneurship support. Operating globally, the program aims to reduce refugees' dependency on humanitarian aid by facilitating sustainable livelihoods (UNHCR, n.d.).

### **2.3. Entrepreneurial Skills and the Role of Inclusive Leadership and Management**

Inclusive leadership and management stand as beacons of progress in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. Beyond mere rhetoric, they embody a commitment to equity, respect, and empowerment for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity. To fully appreciate their significance, it's essential to explore their meanings, development, connections to other leadership theories, and the specific skills they entail.

Inclusive leadership and management encapsulate the ethos of creating environments where every voice is heard, every perspective is valued and every individual is empowered to contribute their best. They transcend traditional hierarchical structures, recognizing that diversity—whether in race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or thought—is a wellspring of innovation, creativity, and resilience. Inclusive leaders and managers prioritize fairness, equity, and justice, fostering cultures of belonging where collaboration flourishes, and individuals thrive (Crawford, 2023).

The genesis of inclusive leadership and management can be traced to the struggles and triumphs of marginalized communities throughout history. Movements for civil rights, women's

rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and disability rights have spurred a broader societal recognition of the importance of inclusion. Concurrently, research in psychology, sociology and leadership has shed light on the tangible benefits of diversity and inclusion for organizational performance and employee well-being. From the Civil Rights Movement to contemporary diversity and inclusion initiatives in corporate boardrooms, the journey towards inclusive leadership and management is one marked by resilience, reflection, and continuous evolution.

Inclusive leadership and management intersect with and enrich various leadership theories, offering new perspectives and dimensions to traditional frameworks. Organizational leadership emphasizes the importance of strategic vision, goal-setting, and effective teamwork, all of which are integral to fostering inclusive cultures. Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on inspiration, motivation, and individual empowerment, shares common ground with inclusive leadership in its commitment to driving positive change and fostering a sense of collective purpose. Moreover, authentic leadership underscores the importance of self-awareness, transparency, and integrity, qualities that are foundational to building trust and credibility as an inclusive leader (Northouse, 2018).

Inclusive leadership and management call for a nuanced set of skills and attributes, empowering leaders and managers to adeptly navigate the complexities of diversity while fostering inclusive cultures, to tap into a diverse spectrum of ideas and unlock the full potential of individuals from diverse backgrounds within the workforce or communities (Bourke, 2016; Dillon & Bourke, n.d.):

- **Commitment** - Cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce is a task that demands significant time and energy, two of a leader's most precious resources. In addition to recognizing the business case, inclusive leaders are propelled by their core values, which often include a profound sense of fairness rooted in personal experiences. They firmly believe that creating a welcoming culture begins with their own actions, and they take personal responsibility for driving change. When executives invest their time, energy, and resources into nurturing inclusive workplaces—by empowering individuals and inspiring shared passion and goals—their actions demonstrate a genuine commitment.
- **Courage** - Inclusive leaders exhibit courage in distinctive ways. Initially, they fearlessly confront entrenched organizational norms and traditions that perpetuate uniformity, even when their suggestions are met with resistance due to political or cultural reasons. Additionally, they demonstrate humility by openly acknowledging their own limitations and actively seeking input from others to overcome them. While some leaders struggle to admit they lack all the solutions, for inclusive leaders, courage and humility complement each other seamlessly.
- **Cognizance of bias** - Inclusive leaders recognize the impact of personal and organizational biases, which can limit their perspective and hinder objective decision-making. They actively engage in efforts to identify and mitigate their own biases, striving to ensure that talent decisions are made impartially. Additionally, they advocate for the implementation of policies, processes, and structures aimed at combating organizational biases and fostering diversity and inclusion. Aware that unchecked biases may

inadvertently lead to homogeneity, inclusive leaders acknowledge the need for a paradigm shift in today's dynamic business landscape.

- **Curiosity** - In today's dynamic landscape, traits like open-mindedness, a thirst for knowledge, and a willingness to explore diverse perspectives have emerged as essential leadership qualities, particularly in times of adversity. Inclusive leaders embody curiosity and openness, actively seeking out alternative viewpoints to mitigate their blind spots and enhance their decision-making abilities. Beyond simply accessing a broader range of perspectives, inclusive leaders excel at engaging in respectful inquiry, actively listening to others, and synthesizing diverse ideas. By valuing and respecting the contributions of those around them, inclusive leaders foster an environment where individuals feel empowered and represented. Moreover, they understand the importance of avoiding hasty judgments, recognizing that snap decisions can inhibit the flow of ideas within their teams and are often influenced by unconscious biases.
- **Cultural Intelligence** - It extends beyond theoretical knowledge, encompassing leaders' capacity to adapt their approaches to suit diverse cultural contexts. For instance, culturally astute leaders, typically extroverted and expressive, exercise restraint when engaging with individuals from cultures valuing modesty or humility. They adjust the pace and tone of their communication and modify nonverbal cues—gestures, facial expressions, and body language—in response to situational demands. Moreover, these leaders exhibit self-awareness of their own cultural background, understanding its impact on their worldview and acknowledging the potential influence of cultural stereotypes on their perceptions of others.
- **Collaboration** - Inclusive leaders recognize that successful collaboration hinges on the willingness of team members to share their perspectives openly. To foster this environment, they establish a culture where every individual feels empowered to voice their opinions freely within the team. Moreover, inclusive leaders understand the significance of diverse perspectives in driving effective collaboration, thus, they carefully consider team composition and dynamics. For instance, they proactively prevent the formation of subgroups within teams, as this can undermine cohesion and breed conflict. Instead, they cultivate a unified team identity and shared objectives, fostering a sense of cohesion and common purpose. Additionally, inclusive leaders actively promote mutual understanding and appreciation among team members, ensuring that each individual's knowledge and abilities are valued and respected.

Two significant components of inclusive leadership are particularly relevant to young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs - the presence of inclusive leaders within their communities and the development of inclusive leadership skills among themselves.

When inclusive leadership is demonstrated by individuals in positions of influence within the community, it sets a powerful example and creates an enabling environment for young migrants and refugees to succeed. Whether in corporate boardrooms, government offices or community organizations, the presence of inclusive leaders signals a commitment to equity and opportunity for all. For example, government officials who exhibit inclusive leadership traits are more likely to champion policies that support immigrant-owned businesses, provide funding for culturally

sensitive entrepreneurial training programs and actively engage with migrant entrepreneurs to understand their unique needs and challenges. In such an environment, young migrants and refugees are not only encouraged to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations but also have access to the resources and support networks necessary to thrive. Similarly, companies that embrace inclusive leadership mindsets are more likely to implement diversity-focused hiring practices, provide mentorship opportunities and establish inclusive workplace policies. This creates avenues for young migrants and refugees to access employment, resources and support networks, thereby facilitating their entrepreneurial aspirations. For example, consider a food delivery company with inclusive leadership values. If the managers of such a company recognize the culinary talents of a young migrant or refugee employee, they may go beyond traditional support mechanisms. They might offer resources such as entrepreneurship training or assistance in accessing grants to help the individual establish their own restaurant or similar business venture. In return, this food delivery company could potentially collaborate with these entrepreneurs in the future, creating mutually beneficial partnerships that further enhance inclusivity and innovation within the business ecosystem.

On the other hand, young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs themselves have a unique opportunity to lead by example and champion inclusivity within their own ventures. By incorporating inclusive practices into their business operations, they can create environments where employees feel valued, respected and empowered to contribute their talents fully. This might involve implementing flexible work policies to accommodate diverse cultural practices, providing language interpretation services to ensure effective communication or offering training programs to promote cultural competency among staff members. Moreover, young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs can leverage their cultural heritage as a source of competitive advantage in the marketplace. By embracing their unique identities and experiences, they can develop products and services that resonate with diverse consumer segments and tap into niche markets that are often overlooked by mainstream businesses. In doing so, they not only achieve commercial success but also challenge stereotypes and perceptions about migrants and refugees, paving the way for greater social inclusion and acceptance. Furthermore, by actively participating in industry networks, mentorship programs and community initiatives, young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs can amplify their voices and advocate for systemic change. Whether by advocating for inclusive policies within their industry associations, sharing their success stories to inspire others, or mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs from similar backgrounds, they can contribute to the creation of more inclusive ecosystems that nurture the next generation of diverse talent.

Embarking on the journey of entrepreneurship as a young migrant or refugee demands a diverse set of entrepreneurial skills that extends beyond inclusive leadership. These skills not only empower individuals to navigate the challenges of starting and running a business but also contribute to their long-term success and resilience in the entrepreneurial landscape (Cote, 2020; Jain, 2024):

- **Adaptability and Resilience** - Entrepreneurs must be adaptable in the face of uncertainty and change, particularly as newcomers to a new country or community. This adaptability enables them to pivot their strategies, embrace new opportunities and navigate cultural

and economic shifts effectively. Moreover, resilience is essential for overcoming setbacks and persevering through challenges inherent in entrepreneurship. Young migrants and refugees often face unique hurdles, such as language barriers or limited access to resources, making resilience a critical trait for sustaining entrepreneurial ventures. For example, a young refugee entrepreneur who faces initial rejection when seeking funding for their business must demonstrate resilience by seeking alternative funding sources or refining their business model.

- **Networking and Relationship Building** - Building a strong network of contacts is vital for accessing resources, mentorship and opportunities. Effective networking involves cultivating relationships within communities, industries, and support networks to garner support and guidance. Additionally, strong relationship-building skills enable entrepreneurs to establish trust and credibility with stakeholders such as customers, investors, and collaborators. For instance, a young migrant entrepreneur may leverage their network to secure partnerships with local businesses or organizations, allowing them to expand their customer base and access new markets.
- **Financial Literacy and Business Management** - For young migrant or refugee entrepreneurs, understanding financial concepts and mastering resource management are essential for sustainable business growth. Financial literacy involves skills such as budgeting, cash flow management, and risk assessment. For instance, a young migrant entrepreneur launching a small catering business must carefully budget for ingredients, equipment, and marketing expenses to ensure profitability. They also need to manage cash flow effectively to cover day-to-day operational costs while awaiting payment from clients. Similarly, business management encompasses activities like planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling resources to achieve business objectives. For example, a migrant entrepreneur starting a clothing boutique must develop a business plan outlining their target market, product offerings, and sales strategies. They also need to organize staffing by hiring employees with relevant skills and experience to assist with inventory management, customer service, and sales. By integrating financial literacy with business management principles, young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs can make informed decisions, optimize resource allocation, and build sustainable and successful ventures that contribute to their personal and community's prosperity.
- **Creativity, Innovation and Problem-Solving** - Creativity and innovation are essential for identifying new market opportunities, developing unique solutions, and differentiating offerings in competitive markets. Cultivating a mindset of creativity encourages entrepreneurs to think outside the box and adapt to evolving market demands. Additionally, effective problem-solving skills enable entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles and address challenges in the entrepreneurial journey. For instance, a young migrant entrepreneur may use innovative marketing strategies or product features to differentiate their offerings and attract customers in a saturated market.
- **Marketing, Sales, and Communication** - Understanding marketing principles, sales techniques and effective communication are critical for reaching target customers, generating revenue and building brand awareness. Entrepreneurs should develop skills in



market research, branding, customer acquisition and persuasive communication to promote their products or services effectively. For example, a young migrant entrepreneur launching a fashion brand may use social media platforms to engage with customers, showcase their products and drive online sales.

- **Strategic Thinking and Time Management** - Strategic thinking and time management are crucial for young migrants and refugees venturing into entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs must anticipate market trends, identify opportunities and develop innovative strategies for long-term success while efficiently allocating time and resources to balance tasks and maximize productivity. For instance, a migrant entrepreneur launching a digital marketing agency needs to analyze industry shifts, plan strategic marketing campaigns, and manage time for tasks like website development and customer engagement. By mastering these skills, young migrants and refugees can navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship and build thriving businesses.
- **Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Competence** - Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. Entrepreneurs with high emotional intelligence can navigate interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts and inspire trust and collaboration among team members. This skill is particularly valuable in leadership roles where effective communication and empathy are essential for building strong relationships. Cultural competence is equally important for young migrants and refugees navigating diverse markets and communities. Entrepreneurs should strive to understand and respect cultural norms, preferences and communication styles to effectively engage with customers and stakeholders. By embracing cultural competence and emotional intelligence, entrepreneurs can foster inclusive and collaborative work environments that celebrate diversity and promote innovation.
- **Risk Management and Decision-Making** - Entrepreneurs must possess the ability to assess and mitigate risks associated with their ventures. This involves identifying potential threats, evaluating their likelihood and impact and developing strategies to minimize or mitigate adverse outcomes. Effective risk management allows entrepreneurs to make informed decisions and safeguard their businesses against potential challenges. Additionally, decision-making skills are crucial for evaluating alternatives, weighing potential outcomes and selecting the best course of action. By applying risk management principles and sound decision-making processes, entrepreneurs can navigate uncertainty and capitalize on opportunities for growth and innovation.
- **Salesmanship and Negotiation** - The ability to sell products or services effectively is crucial for entrepreneurial success. Salesmanship encompasses persuasion, negotiation, and relationship-building skills, allowing entrepreneurs to attract customers, close deals, and generate revenue. Entrepreneurs must understand customer needs, communicate value propositions persuasively, and build lasting relationships to drive sales and business growth. Moreover, negotiation skills are essential for securing favorable terms in business transactions, such as partnerships, contracts, and agreements. By honing salesmanship and negotiation skills, young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs can

navigate complex business environments, establish mutually beneficial partnerships and maximize opportunities for growth and profitability.

By honing these entrepreneurial skills alongside embracing inclusive leadership principles, young migrants and refugees can enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship and achieve their business goals.

### **3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND YOUNG MIGRANTS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

#### **3.1. Overview of the Migration Situation in the European Union**

Over the past decade, the European Union (EU) has grappled with a multitude of challenges that have profoundly shaped the migration debate. One of the most significant events was the 2015 European migrant crisis, which saw a massive influx of migrants and refugees primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, fleeing conflict and persecution in their home countries.

The 2015 European migrant crisis strained the resources and capacities of EU member states, highlighting the need for a coordinated and comprehensive response to irregular migration. Images of overcrowded boats, perilous sea crossings, and makeshift refugee camps garnered international attention and prompted urgent calls for action.

In the years following the crisis, the EU implemented various measures to address the humanitarian needs of migrants and refugees while also enhancing border security and migration management. However, the challenges posed by irregular migration persisted, further complicating the migration debate within the EU.

The Ukrainian refugee crisis, which began on 24 February 2022, added another layer of complexity to the migration debate. The surge in Ukrainian refugees seeking shelter within EU borders underscored the importance of solidarity among member states and the necessity of providing support to those in need.

Additionally, the rise of populist and nationalist movements across Europe fueled anti-immigrant sentiment and shaped political discourse on migration. Debates over border control, national sovereignty, and multiculturalism became increasingly polarized, challenging the EU's commitment to open borders and solidarity. Integration challenges, including language barriers, employment discrimination and social exclusion, continued to be significant obstacles for migrants seeking to rebuild their lives in Europe. Efforts to foster inclusive societies and promote intercultural dialogue became essential components of migration policy within the EU. Moreover, heightened security concerns following terrorist attacks in European cities prompted debates on the relationship between migration and security. Striking a balance between safeguarding national security and upholding humanitarian principles remained a central point of contention in the migration debate.

Economically, the impact of migration on labor markets, public services, and social welfare systems remained a topic of intense discussion. Policies to maximize the economic contributions of migrants while mitigating potential strains on host countries' resources were continuously debated and refined.

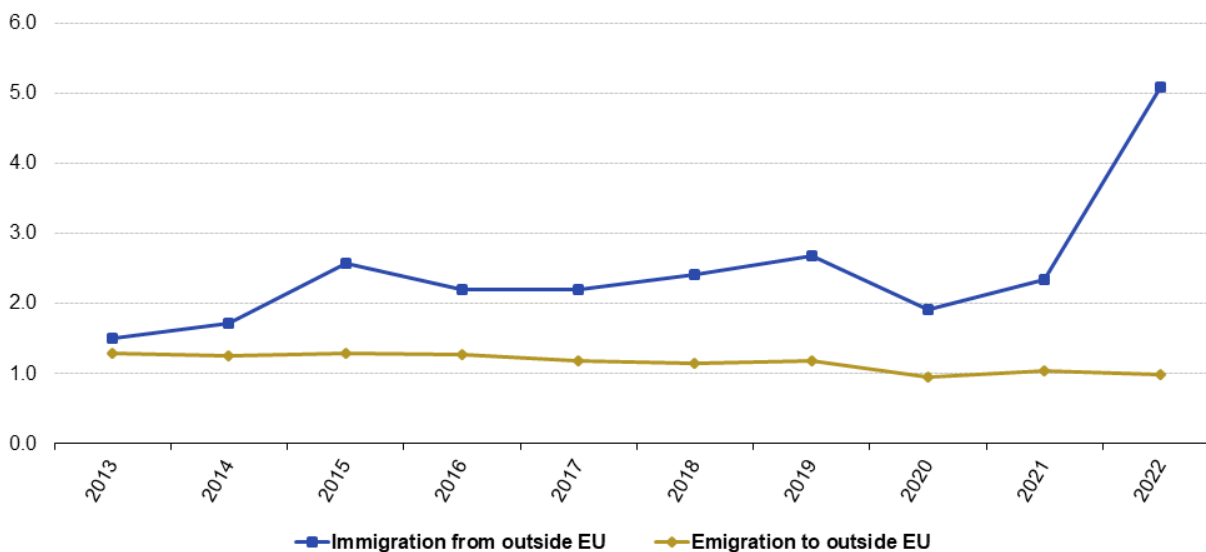
Throughout these challenges, the EU remained committed to integrating and assisting legal migrants while finding the best solutions for those living in the shadows. Efforts were made to streamline immigration processes, improve access to education and employment opportunities, and promote social inclusion for migrants. The EU has reaffirmed its commitment to upholding its values of solidarity, compassion, and respect for human rights, striving to forge a future where migration is managed effectively, and all individuals have the opportunity to thrive.

According to the Eurostat report published on 27 March 2024, in 2022, the European Union saw a significant influx of 5.1 million immigrants arriving from non-EU states, alongside 1.5 million individuals relocating from one EU Member State to another. Additionally, approximately 0.4 million migrants with untraceable previous residency moved to an EU Member State, culminating in a total of 7.0 million international arrivals through immigration that year. Conversely, about 2.7 million people left the EU, either relocating to another Member State or departing for countries beyond the EU borders. Among these, around 1.0 million individuals departed an EU Member State to settle in non-EU nations.

In comparison and as can be observed from the Eurostat graphic below, the immigration landscape in 2021 showcased an estimated 2.4 million immigrants from non-EU countries entering the EU, with 1.4 million intra-EU migrants relocating within Member States. Approximately 1.0 million individuals emigrated from the EU to non-EU countries during that year. Preceding the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2019, there were approximately 2.7 million immigrants from non-EU nations arriving in the EU, alongside 1.4 million intra-EU migrants. Approximately 1.2 million people left the EU to settle outside its borders in 2019.

## Immigrants from outside EU and emigrants to outside EU, EU, 2013–2022

(million)



Note: Cyprus (2013-2019) migration data include the United Kingdom in the composition of the EU. Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and Liechtenstein did not include refugees from Ukraine who benefit from temporary protection in their population and migration statistics.

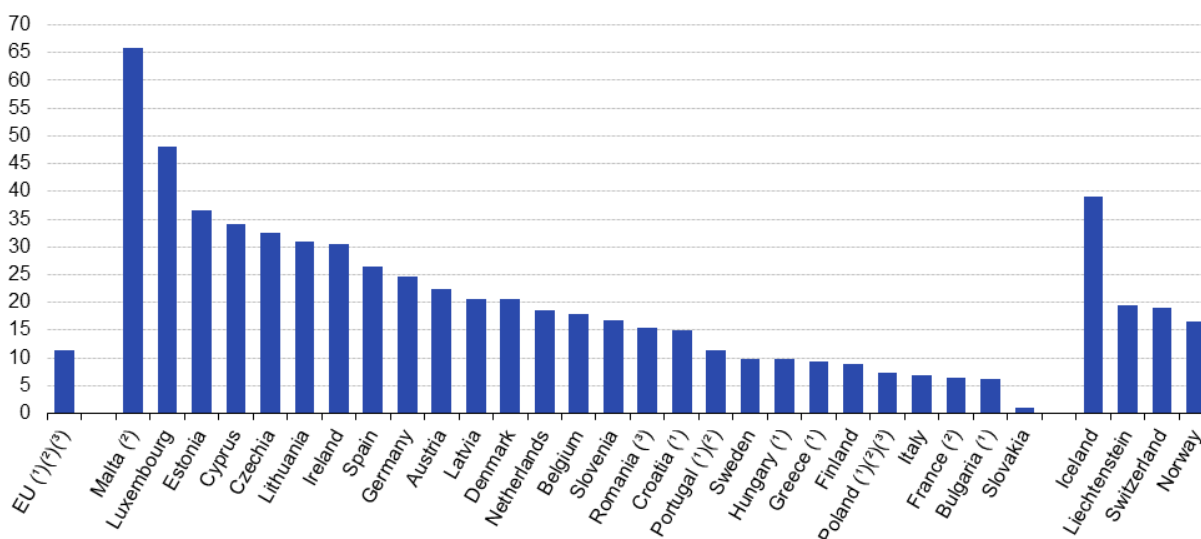
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr\_imm5prv, migr\_imm12prv, migr\_emi3nxt and migr\_emi5nxt)

eurostat 

In 2022, Germany reported the highest overall number of immigrants, totaling 2.1 million (of which 80% are citizens of non-EU countries), followed by Spain with 1.3 million (70% are citizens of non-EU countries), France and Italy each with 0.4 million (60% are citizens of non-EU countries). Furthermore, when compared to 2021, nearly all Member States, except Slovakia, noted an increase in total immigration figures in 2022. According to the Eurostat report, the most notable relative increases between 2021 and 2022 were observed in Czechia (401%), Latvia (205%), Estonia (153%), Germany (137%), and Portugal (132%).

According to the Eurostat graphic below, in terms of the resident population's size, Malta registered the highest immigration rate in 2022, with nearly 66 immigrants per 1,000 persons. Luxembourg followed closely with 48 immigrants per 1,000 persons, trailed by Estonia with 37 immigrants per 1,000 persons. Cyprus recorded 34 immigrants per 1,000 persons, while Czechia, Lithuania, and Ireland reported 33, 31, and 30 immigrants per 1,000 persons, respectively. The European Union average is 11 immigrants from non-EU countries per 1,000 residents. It also should be noted that on average, immigrants in EU Member States were younger than the established resident population. As of January 1, 2023, the median age of the EU's total population was 44.5 years, contrasting with the 30.5 years median age among immigrants in 2022.

## Immigrants, 2022 (per 1 000 inhabitants)



Note: Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and Liechtenstein did not include refugees from Ukraine who benefit from temporary protection in their population and migration statistics.

(1) break in series

(2) provisional

(\*) estimate.

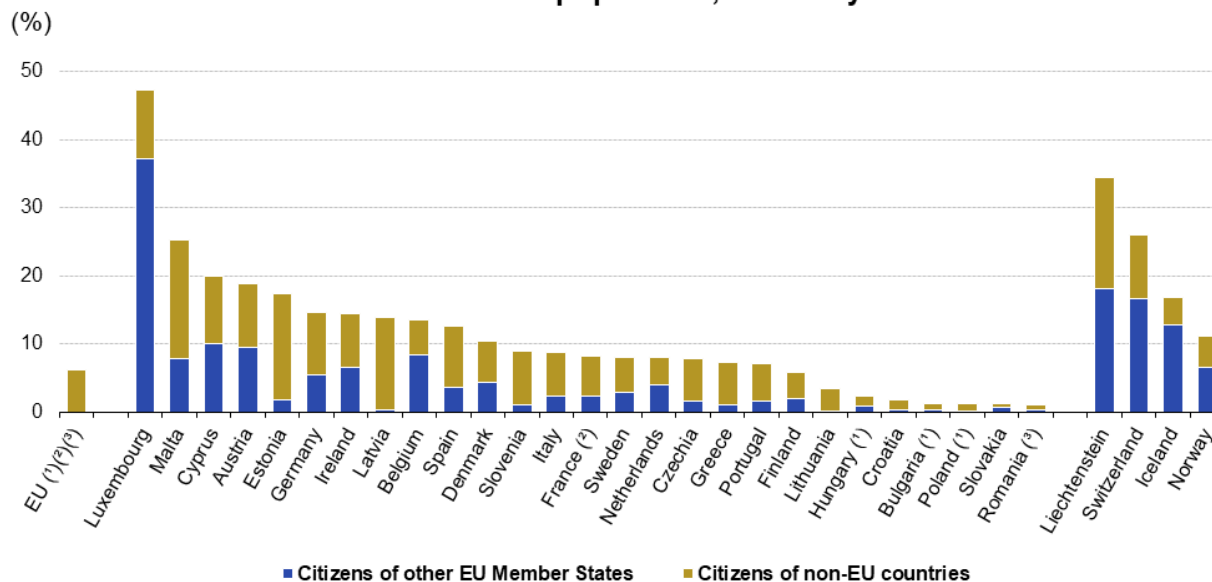
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr\_imm1ctz and migr\_pop1ctz)

eurostat

On 1 January 2023, a total of 27.3 million persons from non-EU countries were residing in an EU Member State, constituting 6.1% of the EU's population. This marked a notable increase of 3.5 million compared to the preceding year. Additionally, on the same date, 13.9 million individuals living in EU Member States were citizens of another EU Member State. The largest concentrations of non-nationals residing in EU Member States were observed in the same first five countries with the most immigrants in 2022: Germany (12.3 million - 14.6 % of the entire population from which 9.1 % are citizens of a non-EU country), Spain (6.1 million - 12.7 % of the entire population from which 9.1 % are citizens of a non-EU country), France (5.6 million - 8.2 % of the entire population from which 6% are citizens of a non-EU country), and Italy (5.1 million - 8.7 % of the entire population from which 6.4% are citizens of a non-EU country). Together, these four Member States accounted for 70.6% of the total non-national population in the EU.

Across most EU Member States, the majority of non-nationals were citizens of countries outside the EU. Exceptions to this trend were observed in Luxembourg, Cyprus, Austria, Belgium, and Slovakia, where citizens from other EU Member States constituted more than 50% of the non-national population. Latvia stood out due to a significant proportion of non-citizens, primarily former Soviet Union citizens permanently residing in the country without acquiring any other citizenship.

## Share of non-nationals in the resident population, 1 January 2023



Note: Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and Liechtenstein did not include refugees from Ukraine who benefit from temporary protection in their population and migration statistics.

(1) Break in series.

(2) Provisional.

(3) Estimate.

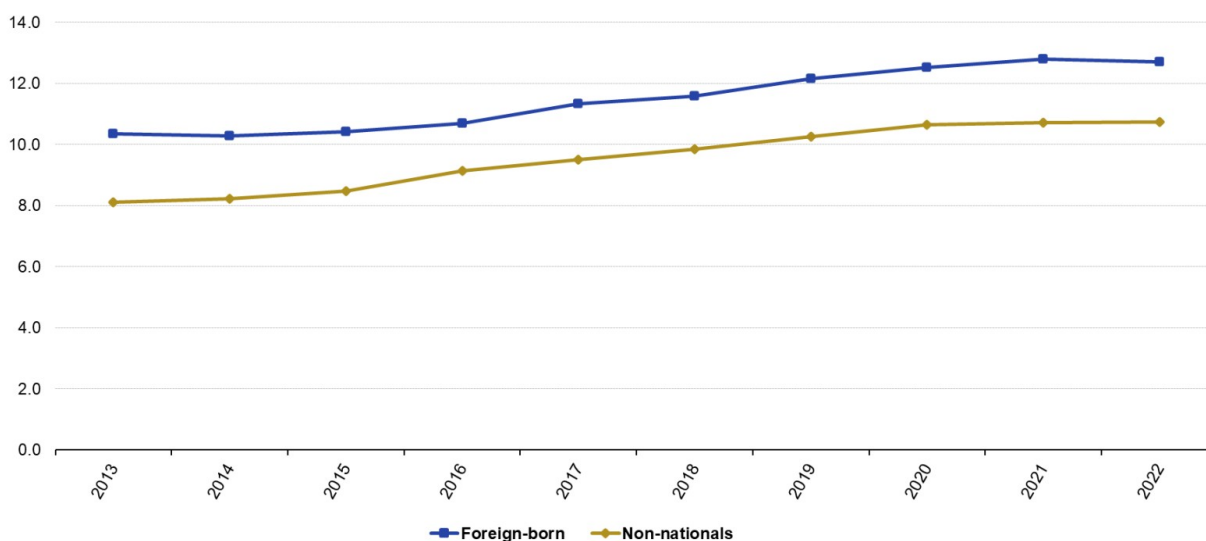
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr\_pop1ctz)

eurostat

Regarding the situation of young immigrants between the ages of 15-29, we will refer to the data from the Eurostat report published on 27 November 2023. First of all, we must distinguish between the terms non-national and foreign born. The first refers to people without the citizenship of their country of residence, and the second to people born outside their country of residence. According to the graphic below, we observe that following an upward trend from 2013, in 2022 young non-nationals comprised 10.7% of the population aged 15 to 29 years in the EU, whereas young foreign-born individuals constituted 12.7%.

**Development of the share of young foreign-born people and young non-nationals in the total EU population aged 15 to 29 years, 2013-2022**

(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr\_pop1ctz and migr\_pop3ctb)

eurostat 

The proportion of young non-nationals and young foreign-born people in 2022 exhibited significant variation across different EU Member States. It spanned from 0.3% (in Romania) and 0.9 (in Slovakia) to 40.9% (in Luxembourg) and 27.4% (in Malta) for non-nationals, and from 1.9% (in Romania and Lithuania) to 43.2% (also in Luxembourg) and 32.6% (in Cyprus) for foreign-born people.

During the period from 2013 to 2022, the proportion of young non-nationals increased in 18 EU Member States, while the share of young foreign-born individuals increased in 23 Member States. The most significant growth in the share of young non-nationals was observed in Malta (+20.4 pp), Germany (+7.3 pp), Austria (+7.1 pp), and Slovenia (+6.4 pp). As for the share of young foreign-born individuals, Malta (+19.7 pp) also experienced the highest growth in percentage points (pp), followed by Slovenia (+5.9 pp), Sweden (+5.5 pp), Germany (+5.4 pp), and Estonia (+5.3 pp).

It is also important to understand the situation of vulnerable people seeking protection on the territory of the European Union. The EU has long recognized the significance of international protection for vulnerable individuals, affirming its commitment to upholding human rights and providing refuge to those in need, as established by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Central to this commitment is the EU's dedication to ensuring that the persons fleeing persecution, conflict, and other forms of adversity receive the necessary support and safeguarding within its borders.

Moreover, EU countries share a collective responsibility to welcome asylum seekers with dignity, ensuring fair treatment and uniform examination of their cases following standardized criteria. This approach guarantees consistency in outcomes regardless of where an applicant

applies. It is imperative that asylum procedures are equitable, effective across the EU, and resilient against exploitation or misuse.

According to the information provided by the European Commission's department in charge of Migration and Home Affairs, in 1999 the European Council pledged to strive for the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), grounded in the comprehensive application of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees. The initiatives outlined in the Tampere Programme, adopted during the European Council special meeting in 1999, marked the initiation of the Common European Asylum System and resulted in the enactment of numerous EU legislations, emphasizing the need for solidarity and burden-sharing among member states.

The CEAS is governed by five legislative instruments and one agency:

- The Asylum Procedures Directive guarantees fair and efficient asylum decisions, with special support for vulnerable applicants.
- The Reception Conditions Directive ensures consistent living standards for asylum seekers, covering housing, healthcare, and education.
- The Qualification Directive clarifies criteria for granting international protection and access to integration measures.
- The Dublin Regulation determines which EU state is responsible for processing asylum claims.
- The EURODAC Regulation aids in identifying the state responsible for processing asylum claims by storing fingerprints.
- The European Union Agency for Asylum supports member states in processing asylum applications effectively.

Also, Frontex, as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is a key component of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). It focuses on managing the EU's external borders, preventing irregular migration, and supporting member states in border control efforts. By enhancing border security and cooperation among EU countries, Frontex contributes to the overall goals of the CEAS in managing migration flows and ensuring the security of the EU's external borders. Frontex currently deploys 2,500 EU border guard officers and staff in joint operations at Europe's borders. Their efforts support EU member states and third countries in managing migratory flows and combating cross-border crime, including migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism. For example, Frontex reports that in 2023 the EU witnessed approximately 380,000 irregular border crossings, the highest number since 2015 (1.3 million) and 2016 (511,000). With over 100,000 irregular crossings, Syrians led among nationalities, followed by Guineans and Afghans. Together, these top three nationalities accounted for over a third of all detections in 2023 (Frontex, 2024).

Proposed in September 2020 and endorsed by both the European Parliament and the Council in December 2023, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum encompasses a series of regulations and policies aimed at fostering a fairer, more efficient and sustainable migration and asylum process within the European Union. This comprehensive framework seeks to manage and regularize migration over the long term, ensuring certainty, transparency, and dignified conditions for individuals arriving in the EU. Furthermore, the pact establishes a unified



approach to migration and asylum grounded in principles of solidarity, shared responsibility, and the protection of human rights.

The main reforms of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum include the following:

- **Efficient Asylum Procedures** - The pact aims to streamline asylum procedures across the EU, ensuring greater uniformity and efficiency in assessing asylum claims. It introduces a screening process at the EU's external borders to promptly identify individuals in need of international protection.
- **Solidarity and Responsibility-Sharing** - Acknowledging the disproportionate burden faced by certain member states in managing migration flows, the pact introduces mechanisms for enhanced solidarity and burden-sharing among EU countries. It suggests a more equitable distribution of responsibility for hosting refugees through a system of "mandatory solidarity," allowing member states to either relocate asylum seekers or provide support for returns and other measures.
- **Return and Integration Policies** - The pact seeks to bolster return policies for individuals with rejected asylum claims, while also promoting comprehensive integration measures for those granted protection. It proposes standardized procedures for returns and increased assistance for reintegration in countries of origin. Moreover, it underscores the significance of integration initiatives to facilitate the inclusion of refugees and migrants into European societies.
- **Cooperation with Third Countries** - Highlighting the importance of cooperation with countries of origin and transit, the pact aims to address migration root causes and enhance external border management through partnerships and agreements with non-EU nations. It advocates for reinforced collaboration on migration management, border control, and addressing migration drivers with third countries.
- **Humanitarian Protection and Resettlement** - The pact reaffirms the EU's commitment to providing humanitarian aid and resettlement opportunities to vulnerable individuals, including refugees and asylum seekers. It suggests bolstering support for humanitarian assistance and promoting legal pathways for resettlement, including through private sponsorship schemes.
- **Prevention of Irregular Migration** - Emphasizing a comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing irregular migration, the pact includes measures to combat migrant smuggling and enhance border management.
- **External Dimension** - The pact aims to strengthen the EU's involvement with countries of origin and transit to tackle migration root causes and bolster cooperation on migration management. This involves promoting economic development, governance, and stability in origin countries, as well as addressing displacement and irregular migration drivers (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 2023).

According to Eurostat, in 2023, a total of 1,129,640 non-EU citizens sought asylum in countries across the EU, with 1,048,880 of these being first-time applicants for international protection. This marks a notable increase of 20.1% compared to the previous year (873,680 in 2022) and represents the highest recorded number since the peak periods during the Syrian war refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016.

## First-time asylum applicants in EU countries

(2008-2023)



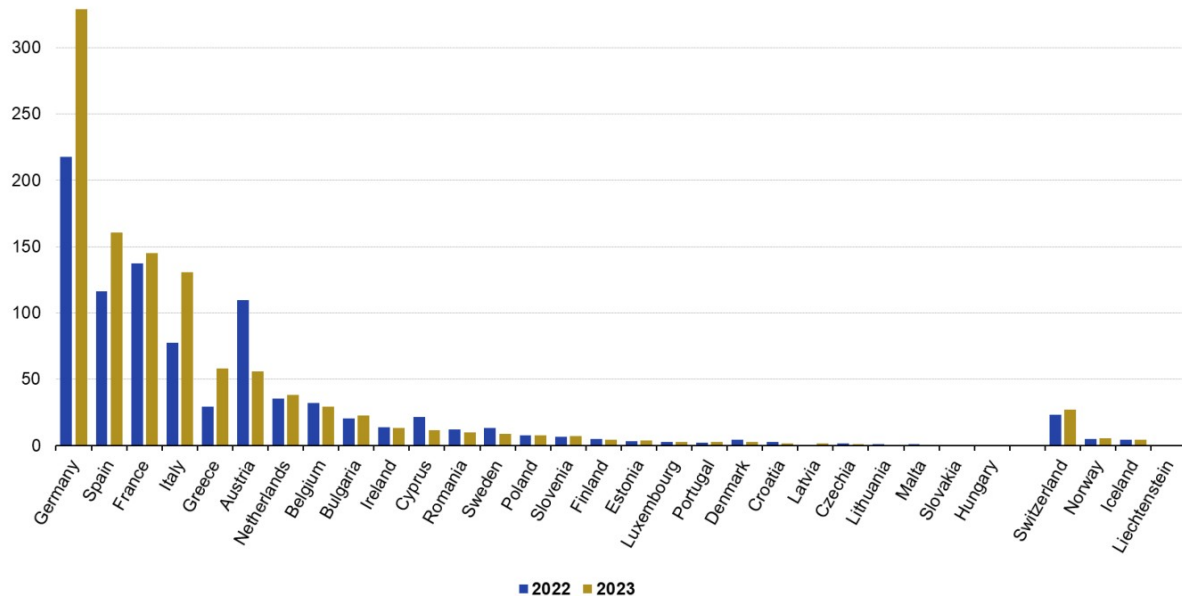
Notes: 2008-2013 sum of available data. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.

eurostat

Germany held the highest share of first-time asylum applicants within the EU, accounting for 31.4% of the total with 329,035 applicants. Following Germany were Spain with 160,460 applicants (15.3%), France with 145,095 (13.8%), and Italy with 130,565 (12.4%). Conversely, Hungary, Slovakia, Malta, and Lithuania reported the lowest numbers of first-time asylum applicants in 2023, with figures ranging from 30 to 510. Among EU countries, the number of first-time asylum applicants rose in 13 nations.

### First-time asylum applicants (non-EU citizens), 2022 and 2023

(thousand persons)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr\_asyappctza)

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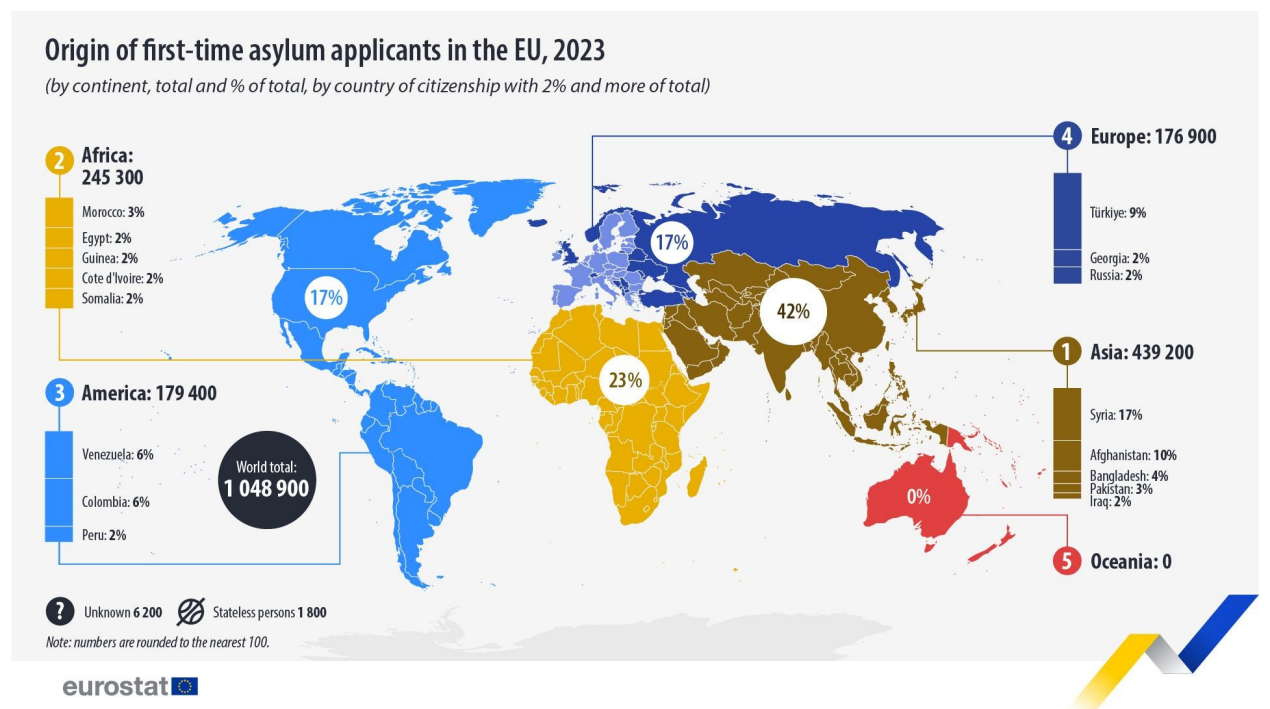
Syrians, Afghans, Turks, Venezuelans, and Colombians were among the top nationalities lodging asylum applications, collectively representing nearly half (48.0%) of all first-time asylum applicants in EU countries in 2023.

Since 2013, Syria has consistently been the primary country of citizenship among asylum seekers in the EU. In 2023, the number of Syrian first-time asylum applicants in the EU surged to 183,035 (from 131,790 in 2022), with their share of the total EU first-time asylum applicants rising from 15.1% to 17.5%.

Afghanistan maintained its position as the second main country of citizenship for the sixth consecutive year, with 100,935 applicants in 2023, accounting for 9.6% of the EU total. Applicants from Turkey represented 8.6% of the EU total, with 89,970 applicants in 2023. Venezuela and Colombia ranked as the fourth and fifth main countries of citizenship in 2023, comprising 6.4% and 5.9% of the EU total, respectively, totaling 67,085 and 62,015 applicants.

The most substantial relative increases were recorded for citizens of Burkina Faso (+569.2%) and Côte d'Ivoire (+124.1%). Conversely, citizens of India experienced the most substantial relative decrease (-67.3%).

The largest numbers of Syrians, Turks, and Afghans seeking asylum were registered in Germany (accounting for 56.2% of all Syrian asylum seekers in the EU, 68.0% of Turks, and 50.8% of Afghans). Similarly, for Venezuelans and Colombians, the vast majority were registered in Spain (comprising 89.4% and 85.5%, respectively).



The 2023 Strategic Analysis, “Latest Asylum Trends”, published by the European Union Agency for Asylum, reports that in 2023, the recognition rate, representing the percentage of asylum applications resulting in decisions granting refugee status and subsidiary protection, reached approximately 43% (24% - refugee status, 20% - subsidiary protection). This marks the highest level observed since 2016, when the recognition rate was 58% ( 34% refugee status, 24% subsidiary protection).

For example, the EU recognition rate for Syrians in 2023 reached 94%, however only 26% were granted refugee status, whereas 68% were granted subsidiary protection. Among the countries processing the highest number of favorable decisions for Syrians, Austria boasted a recognition rate of 99% (65% were granted refugee status), Bulgaria 98% (only 1%) , Germany 95% (13%), and the Netherlands 94% (17%).

On the other hand, the EU recognition rate for Turks in 2023 reached only 24%, with 23% granted refugee status, and 1% subsidiary protection. In the case of Afghans, 61% were granted favorable decisions - 50% acquired refugee status and 11% were granted subsidiary protection.

It's crucial to acknowledge that various objective factors contribute to fluctuations in recognition rates. The intricacy of an asylum application and its assessment cannot be simplified to solely the nationality of the applicant. Disparities in the applicant's background, national legal systems and policies, as well as the interpretation of legal principles, all influence these rates and may yield divergent outcomes. It's also worth mentioning that certain applicants, particularly those from Venezuela, and to a lesser extent Afghanistan, often receive national forms of protection instead of international ones. These national protections are not standardized at the EU level and are thus categorized as negative asylum decisions in these statistics.

At the moment, the European Union is facing the most acute refugee crisis since the end of the Second World War - the Ukrainian refugee crisis caused by Russia’s aggression in February 2022. According to the data provided by UNHCR, as of 14 March 2024 there are 6,486,000 Ukrainian refugees recorded globally, of which 5,982,900 are recorded across Europe.

The European Union swiftly acted with solidarity, providing tangible assistance to those in need. This encompassed direct humanitarian aid, emergency civil protection aid, border support, and extending protection to individuals seeking refuge from the conflict and seeking entry into the EU.

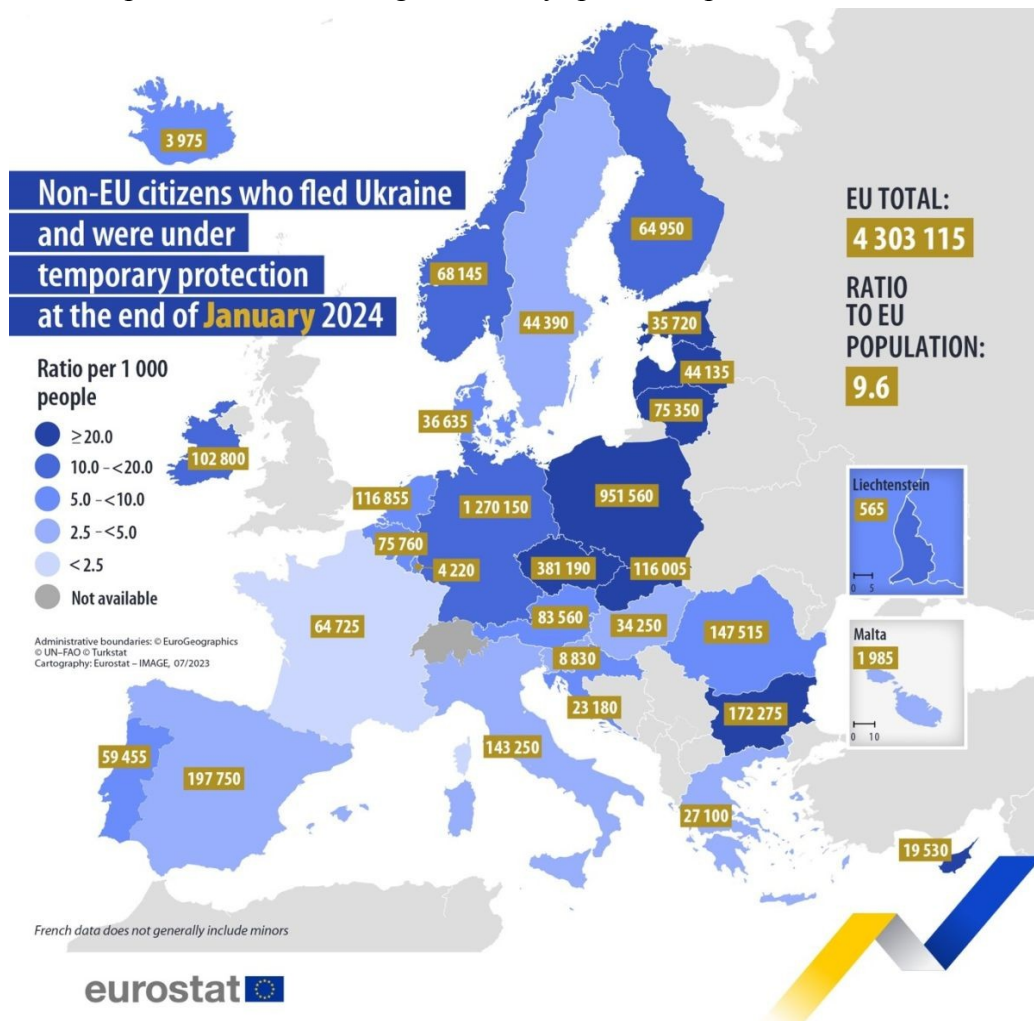
Just 10 days following Russia's invasion, on 4 March 2022 a unanimous decision by Member States was made to enact a law offering protection to Ukrainian nationals seeking refuge, marking the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time since its inception in 2001 (Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382). Temporary Protection guarantees immediate access to residency rights, employment opportunities, housing, social welfare assistance, medical aid and means of sustenance, and it is implemented when there's a risk that the regular asylum system might face challenges in managing the influx of people, potentially leading to delays in processing claims and negative repercussions. The Directive also applies to stateless persons, as well as citizens of third countries other than Ukraine, who had received international protection or similar national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022. In

light of the ongoing situation and to offer assurance to Ukrainian beneficiaries residing in the EU, in September 2023 the Council of the European Union unanimously decided to extend the duration of temporary protection in the EU until 4 March 2025 (Council of the EU, 2023).

According to the Eurostat report from 5 March 2024, as of 31 January 2024, approximately 4.3 million non-EU citizens (4,303,115) who fled Ukraine were granted temporary protection in the EU. The majority of these beneficiaries were distributed as follows: Germany (1,270,150 individuals, constituting 29.5% of the total EU count), Poland (951,560, 22.1%) and Czechia (381,190, 8.9%). The least Ukrainians granted temporary protection were found in Malta (1,985), Luxembourg (4,220) and Slovenia (8,830). Relative to the EU population, the ratio of temporary protection beneficiaries stood at 9.6 per thousand people by the end of January 2024. Among EU Member States, the highest ratios were observed in Czechia (35.2), Bulgaria (26.7), Lithuania (26.4), Estonia (26.2), Poland (25.9) and Latvia (23.4).

At the close of January 2024, approximately 98.3% of those under temporary protection in the EU after fleeing Ukraine were Ukrainian nationals. Among the remaining non-EU citizens receiving temporary protection, the primary countries of origin were Russia (12,569 individuals, comprising 0.29%), Nigeria (5,296, 0.12%), and Azerbaijan (4,372, 0.10%). Regarding the structure of beneficiaries of temporary protection by age and sex, at the end of January 2024, 25.3% were women aged 35 to 64 years, 16.4% women aged 18 to 34 years, 10.5% men aged 35 to 64 years, 8.6% men aged 18 to 34 years, 4.3% woman aged 65 years and over, 1.6% men aged 65 years and over. Children accounted for 33.2% of the total, with similar proportions of boys and girls under 14 years old (12.9% and 12.5%) and between 14 and 17 years old (4.2% and 3.6%).

Eurobarometer surveys, which track public sentiment throughout the EU, have consistently revealed robust backing for Ukraine following the 2022 Russian invasion. In a recent Eurobarometer poll conducted in August 2023 by Ipsos European Public Affairs at the request of the



European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, 86% of EU residents endorsed the bloc's ongoing provision of humanitarian aid to those impacted by the conflict (the highest level of support was recorded in Portugal with 95% and the lowest in Czechia and Slovakia with 74%) and 77% expressed willingness to welcome refugees fleeing the war into the EU (the highest level of support was also recorded in Portugal with 93% and the lowest in Czechia and Slovakia with 55%).

### 3.2. Legislative Framework for the Integration of Migrants

Within the mosaic of cultures and backgrounds that define the European Union (EU), the integration of migrants, particularly young migrants, emerges as a matter of great importance, in line with the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 and the European Commission priority - „Promoting our European way of life” (European Union, n.d.). The EU's steadfast commitment

to this endeavor is grounded in a profound recognition of the immense value migrants bring to the community and the critical role they play in forging a cohesive and prosperous Europe.

Central to the EU's dedication is the acknowledgment of the foundational principles of unity and solidarity that bind its member states. By embracing the integration of migrants, the EU reaffirms its core values of inclusivity and diversity, nurturing a sense of belonging and shared identity across borders. Migrants enrich the European tapestry with their diverse perspectives, traditions and contributions, fostering an environment where mutual respect and understanding flourish.

Moreover, migrant integration is indispensable to the EU's economic dynamism and resilience. As Europe navigates demographic shifts and evolving labor market needs, harnessing the potential of immigrants is not only prudent but imperative. By facilitating their integration into the labor market and entrepreneurial ecosystem, the EU taps into a wellspring of talent and innovation, driving economic growth and competitiveness. Migrants bring skills, expertise, and entrepreneurial spirit, invigorating industries and fueling prosperity for all.

Furthermore, migrant integration serves as a linchpin for social cohesion and solidarity. By providing pathways to education, employment and civic engagement, the EU empowers migrants to become active participants in their communities. Through inclusive policies and initiatives, the EU fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance, countering prejudice and discrimination. Migrants, in turn, enrich their adopted societies with their resilience, creativity and cultural vibrancy, contributing to the fabric of European identity.

Crucially, the EU recognizes the pivotal role of inclusive leadership in advancing migrant integration, particularly among young migrants. By cultivating leaders who champion diversity, equity, and inclusion, the EU empowers communities to thrive in an interconnected world. Inclusive leadership fosters empathy, fosters collaboration, and amplifies diverse voices, driving positive change and innovation across all sectors of society. Through inclusive leadership, the EU nurtures a culture of belonging and empowerment, ensuring that all individuals, including migrants, have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from Europe's collective success.

In essence, the EU's commitment to migrant integration and inclusive leadership is emblematic of its vision for a Europe that is united and prosperous. By embracing migrants and empowering them to thrive, while fostering inclusive leadership, the EU not only upholds its values but also secures a brighter future for all its citizens. In fostering migrant integration and inclusive leadership, we nurture the foundation for a Europe that celebrates diversity, promotes economic opportunity, and stands as a beacon of unity in a complex world.

The Treaty of Amsterdam and the Tampere Programme represent a crucial turning point in the EU's approach to migrant integration. Enacted in 1999, the Treaty of Amsterdam expanded the legal framework for EU action on immigration and asylum, laying down principles of social inclusion, solidarity and human rights. It provided the foundational principles necessary to address the complex challenges of migrant integration within the EU.

Building upon the foundation laid by the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Tampere Programme, adopted in the same year, marked a significant shift towards a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to immigration and asylum policies. Through the Tampere Programme,

EU member states recognized the importance of proactive measures to support the social, economic, and cultural integration of migrants. As stepping stones in the evolution of EU migrant integration policy, these initiatives laid the groundwork for subsequent efforts to promote the full participation and inclusion of migrants in European societies (European Commission, n.d.).

The integration of third-country nationals legally residing in EU Member States and the establishment of policies for a secure labor environment for migrants saw significant advancements in 2000 with the adoption of the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC). These directives were crucial steps towards prohibiting discrimination in various areas, including employment, occupation, social protection, education, and access to public goods, on grounds such as religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, race, and ethnic origin.

In the same year, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was adopted and serves as a cornerstone of the European Union's commitment to upholding human rights and promoting equality for all individuals within its jurisdiction. Among its provisions are key principles aimed at safeguarding the rights of migrants, including non-discrimination (Article 21) and the right to work (Article 15) or be self-employed (Article 16). These fundamental rights underscore the EU's dedication to ensuring that migrants are treated fairly and have access to opportunities for employment and economic self-determination within the European Union (Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012/C 326/02). It should be mentioned that since the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights holds equivalent legal status to that of the European Union treaties.

The rights of asylum seekers and refugees to work are defined by specific EU legal frameworks. The Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) mandates immediate access to the labor market for those granted international protection. Refugees who have obtained international protection typically have the same rights as nationals in terms of engaging in self-employment activities. Regarding asylum seekers, the Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU) stipulates that Member States must allow access to the labor market no later than nine months after applying for asylum. A recent amendment, agreed by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU in 2022, has reduced this waiting period to six months in the revised Reception Conditions Directive, which also requires Member States to ensure or facilitate access to language courses, civic education, or vocational training.

The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy, adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 and reaffirmed in 2014, offer guidelines for immigrant integration within the EU. These principles enable member countries to assess their integration efforts and cover essential aspects such as employment, education, access to institutions, goods, services, and societal participation. Importantly, they define integration as a mutual process requiring accommodation by both migrants and residents of EU Member States (Council of the European Union, 2004).

The European Commission has been actively shaping integration policies for third-country nationals within the European Union (EU). In 2005, it adopted the Communication “A common agenda for integration — Framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the



European Union” marking a foundational step towards establishing a coherent European framework for integration. This initiative proposed concrete measures aimed at implementing the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy through supportive EU mechanisms. In 2010, the Commission emphasized the need for a new agenda for migrant integration through the “Europe 2020 - a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. This strategy aimed to enable migrants to fully leverage their potential for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth within European societies (European Commission, n.d.).

Building upon these efforts, in July 2011, the Commission proposed the “European agenda for the integration of third-country nationals”. This agenda highlighted actions to enhance economic, social, cultural, and political participation by migrants, with an emphasis on local action and addressing challenges to fully benefit from migration's potential and diversity. In June 2016 the European Commission adopted an “Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals”. This comprehensive framework supported Member States' efforts in developing and strengthening integration policies, addressing specific challenges faced by refugees. The Plan encompassed actions across crucial policy areas, including pre-departure measures, education, employment, access to basic services, and social inclusion (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, n.d.).

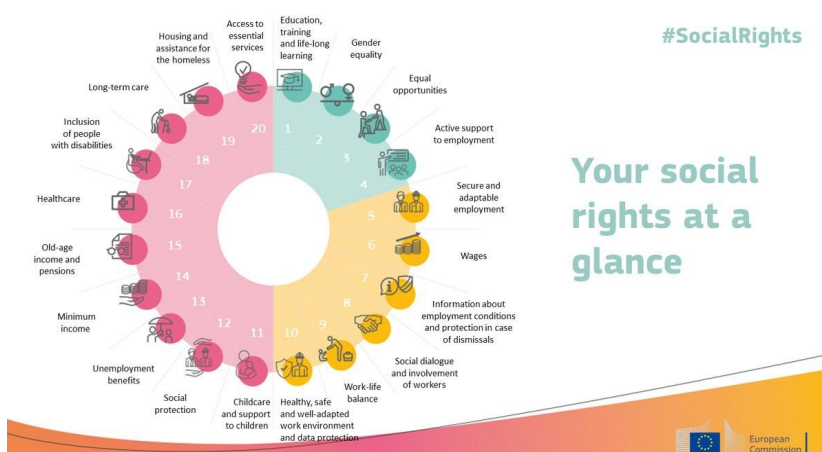
Of particular importance to labor market integration, the Action Plan emphasized early integration into the labor market and supported migrant entrepreneurship. It aimed to prepare migrants for integration, promote language training, enhance vocational training, and facilitate access to housing and healthcare services. Additionally, it emphasized the importance of active participation, social inclusion, and combating discrimination. The Action Plan also presented tools to strengthen coordination between different players working on integration at national, regional, and local levels, and advocated for a more strategic approach to EU funding for integration. Through initiatives like the European Integration Network, the EU promoted mutual learning between Member States to enhance integration efforts.

The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan was also of great importance in terms of supporting migrant entrepreneurship. Adopted by the European Commission in 2013, it aimed to foster entrepreneurship and create a conducive environment for entrepreneurs within the European Union. One of its key focuses was on supporting migrant entrepreneurs as part of efforts to promote diversity, innovation, and economic growth.

Specifically, the Action Plan recognized the potential of migrant entrepreneurs to contribute to the EU's entrepreneurial ecosystem and emphasized the importance of providing them with adequate support and resources. It included measures to facilitate access to finance, business development services, and networking opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs. Additionally, the Action Plan aimed to address barriers that migrant entrepreneurs may face, such as language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications, and limited access to markets. It proposed initiatives to promote language and skills training, facilitate the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, and enhance access to markets and networks (Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, n.d.).

In 2017, the European Union adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights, a comprehensive framework aimed at fostering equitable and inclusive societies across the EU. Comprising 20

principles, it centers on three core areas: equal opportunities and labor market access, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, n.d.).



It underscores the EU's unwavering commitment to upholding the rights of migrant workers and entrepreneurs, outlining specific measures to guarantee their equitable treatment, social inclusion, and economic participation within EU societies:

➤ **Equal Opportunities**

**and Labor Market Access** - Regardless of nationality or migrant status, the Pillar champions equal footing in the labor market. It ensures migrant access to employment services, training, and lifelong learning opportunities, condemning any form of discrimination in recruitment or employment practices based on nationality or migrant status.

- **Fair Working Conditions** - Migrant workers are guaranteed fair and dignified working conditions under the Pillar's guidance. This encompasses fair wages, safe workplaces, and measures promoting work-life balance. Additionally, it addresses concerns such as precarious employment, safeguarding migrant workers from disproportionate vulnerabilities.
- **Social Protection and Inclusion** - The Pillar extends social protection and inclusion rights to migrant workers and entrepreneurs. It advocates for their access to comprehensive social safety nets, including healthcare, unemployment benefits, and retirement pensions. Furthermore, it emphasizes combating social exclusion and poverty within migrant communities, ensuring their holistic integration into society.

In particular regard to migrant entrepreneurs, the European Pillar of Social Rights recognizes their pivotal role in driving economic growth and innovation within the EU. It advocates for an enabling environment for migrant entrepreneurs by:

- **Facilitating Access to Finance** - The Pillar supports initiatives to enhance migrant entrepreneurs' access to financing through tailored microfinance schemes, grants, and loans.
- **Providing Business Support Services** - It champions the provision of business support services such as mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities to aid migrant entrepreneurs in establishing and expanding their ventures.

- **Ensuring Non-Discrimination** - The Pillar reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination, advocating for equal access to public procurement contracts, business support programs, and entrepreneurial networks for migrant entrepreneurs.

The European Skills Agenda, launched by the European Commission in 2020, embodies the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights by promoting social equity and guaranteeing universal access to education, training and lifelong learning throughout the EU. It also plays a crucial role in supporting migrants by enhancing their access to education, training, and skills development opportunities:

- **Recognition of Prior Learning** - The agenda facilitates the recognition of skills acquired through various educational avenues, including formal, non-formal, or informal training. This is particularly advantageous for migrants who bring valuable skills from their home countries, helping them integrate into the labor market more seamlessly.
- **Upskilling and Reskilling** - Prioritizing upskilling and reskilling efforts, the agenda ensures that migrants possess the requisite skills demanded by the labor market. It offers tailored vocational training programs, language courses, and skill development initiatives, enabling migrants to enhance their employability and adapt to evolving job requirements.
- **Integration into the Labor Market** - By providing relevant skills and qualifications, the European Skills Agenda facilitates migrants' integration into the labor market. It promotes apprenticeships, traineeships, and work-based learning opportunities, enabling migrants to gain practical experience and forge connections within their chosen industries. Additionally, it addresses employment barriers such as discrimination and non-recognition of foreign qualifications, thereby enhancing migrants' job prospects.
- **Digital Skills** - Recognizing the significance of digital literacy in today's economy, the agenda emphasizes improving digital skills among all citizens, including migrants. It offers digital skills training and support, empowering migrants to navigate digital tools and technologies effectively, participate fully in the digital society, and seize employment opportunities in the digital economy (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, n.d.).

While the agenda primarily focuses on technical and vocational skills, it indirectly supports the acquisition of leadership skills. Leadership capabilities such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making are often embedded into vocational training programs and work-based learning initiatives promoted by the agenda. Additionally, migrants may have access to supplementary training or mentorship programs targeting leadership development, further enhancing their overall employability and potential for career advancement.

Furthermore, the European Union has long recognized the importance of empowering youth, including migrant youth, by facilitating their integration into the labor market and fostering entrepreneurship. At the heart of this endeavor lies a comprehensive framework comprising various policies, initiatives and funding programs aimed at equipping young people with the skills, resources and opportunities necessary for successful economic participation.

The primary strategy concerning youth is the European Union Youth Strategy 2021-2027, which was adopted in 2018 (2018/C 456/01). It was crafted to address the diverse needs and aspirations of young individuals throughout the European Union, based on their opinions during

a 2017-2018 dialogue process which involved young people from all over Europe. This comprehensive framework spans various dimensions, including education, employment, social inclusion, health and democratic participation, which are incorporated in 11 European Youth Goals. A central aim of this strategy is to bolster youth employment and entrepreneurship by ensuring access to quality job opportunities and avenues for entrepreneurial endeavors, while extending its benefits to young migrants and refugees:

- **Labor Market Integration** - The EU Youth Strategy prioritizes initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment rates and ensuring smooth transitions from education to employment. It promotes the development of skills and competencies aligned with the labor market demands through various means, including vocational training, apprenticeships, and internships. Additionally, the strategy encourages the creation of supportive environments for young people seeking employment by fostering collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and policymakers. By addressing barriers to entry, such as lack of experience or qualifications, the strategy aims to enhance youth access to quality job opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurship** - Recognizing the potential of young individuals to drive innovation and economic growth, the EU Youth Strategy places emphasis on supporting youth entrepreneurship. It facilitates access to financing, mentorship, and networking opportunities for aspiring young entrepreneurs. Moreover, the strategy promotes entrepreneurship education and training to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset among young people. By providing resources and guidance, the strategy aims to empower youth to start their own businesses and contribute to job creation and economic development.
- **Inclusivity for Young Migrants and Refugees** - Importantly, the EU Youth Strategy is inclusive and applies to all young people, including migrants and refugees. It acknowledges the unique challenges faced by young migrants and refugees in accessing education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities. As such, the strategy advocates for targeted support measures tailored to their specific needs, such as language training, recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, and tailored integration programs. By addressing these challenges and providing equal opportunities, the strategy contributes to the social inclusion and economic integration of young migrants and refugees into European societies.

Amidst the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the European Union stands committed to ensuring the seamless integration of Ukrainian refugees, particularly the youth, into European societies. Recognizing the urgent need to support this vulnerable population, the EU has implemented various measures aimed at facilitating their access to the labor market and fostering entrepreneurship.

Central to these efforts is the Temporary Protection Directive, adopted in March 2022, which grants Ukrainian refugees the right to work and pursue entrepreneurial ventures within EU Member States. This directive serves as a crucial legal framework, ensuring that refugees can fully participate in economic activities and contribute to their host communities' growth and development. Furthermore, the European Commission has issued two significant communications outlining its strategy to support the integration of Ukrainian refugees:

- "Ukraine: EU support to help Member States meet the needs of refugees" - This communication underscores the EU's commitment to providing comprehensive support to Member States in addressing the needs of Ukrainian refugees. It emphasizes the importance of coordinated efforts, financial assistance and resource allocation to ensure effective integration, with a specific focus on youth empowerment and access to education, training, and employment opportunities (European Commission, 2022).
- "Ukraine: Commission presents guidance to help people fleeing war access jobs, training, and adult learning" - This communication outlines practical guidance and recommendations aimed at facilitating Ukrainian refugees' access to jobs, training, and adult learning opportunities. It emphasizes the importance of removing barriers to employment, recognizing foreign qualifications, and providing tailored support to ensure refugees, including youth, can fully utilize their skills and talents in their host countries (European Commission, 2022).

### **3.3. Employment and Self-Employment Policies for Migrants**

Migrants play a pivotal role in the vitality of Europe's economy and society. Over the past decade, they have substantially filled new job positions, effectively addressing labor market needs within the European Union. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, their invaluable contribution has become increasingly evident. Many stepped forward to combat the crisis, with up to 13% of workers engaged in essential functions, ranging from doctors and nurses to drivers, being migrants (JRC, 2020).

The migrants contribution in general is particularly critical given the demographic challenges Europe faces: an aging population and a shrinking workforce. By 2070, the working-age population is projected to decline from about 65% in 2019 to between 56% and 54% of the total EU population (European Commission, 2022). These trends exert pressure on labor markets, undermine competitiveness, and threaten economic growth.

To counteract these challenges and ensure sustained economic prosperity, the EU recognizes the necessity of attracting migrant workers and entrepreneurs. The ongoing demographic shifts and labor market shortages necessitate a proactive approach to talent acquisition from both within and outside the EU borders. With labor shortages reported across almost all Member States, the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic further underscores the urgency of addressing these gaps, especially in sectors such as healthcare, IT, engineering, hospitality, construction (European Labor Authority, 2023). Also, a research conducted in 2020 by The Joint Research Centre (JRC) indicates that fully integrating migrants into the labor market could yield substantial economic gains, including fiscal profits and contributions to national pension schemes and welfare programs. For example, it could result in an increase of up to €3,500 in the average net fiscal contribution of each migrant by 2035.

Furthermore, the EU acknowledges the vital role of migrants in supporting its transition towards a green and digital economy. As industries evolve and technological advancements reshape the labor landscape, specific skills become increasingly crucial. Sectors such as

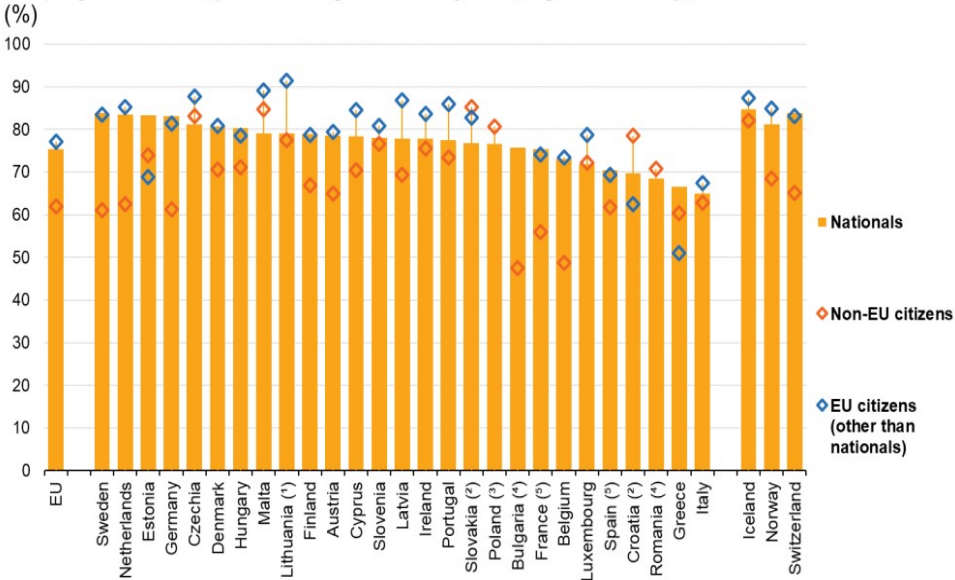
construction, energy, manufacturing and transport will be significantly impacted by this transition, requiring additional labor and new skill sets.

In addition to addressing immediate labor market needs, attracting migrants contributes to the EU's global competitiveness. Highly qualified individuals from non-EU countries currently tend to favor destinations like North America or Oceania over Europe. Enhancing the EU's attractiveness for talent acquisition is, therefore, imperative. Measures to improve rights and streamline employment and self-employment procedures for migrants, while combating labor exploitation and discrimination, are crucial steps in this direction.

In essence, the EU's drive to attract migrant workers and entrepreneurs stems from the imperative to maintain competitiveness, address demographic challenges, and alleviate labor market shortages. By welcoming skilled migrants and fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurship, the EU aims to ensure sustainable economic growth and prosperity for its citizens and residents alike.

According to the Eurostat report from May 2023 regarding labour market indicators in 2022 within the European Union, 61.9% of non-EU citizens aged 20–64 were employed, compared to 77.1% for citizens of other EU Member States and 75.4% for nationals. These percentages indicate an increase in the employment rate compared to the level of 2019, before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (60% for non-EU citizens, 75.6% for the citizens of other EU citizens, 73.8% for nationals). It is important to note that in Eurostat statistics, employed persons refer to someone working as an employee, self-employed or contributing family workers. In 2022, the unemployment rate for nationals aged 20–64 in the EU stood at 5.5%. Comparatively, citizens of other EU Member States faced a higher rate of 7.1%, while non-EU citizens experienced a

**Employment rate, persons aged 20–64 years, by citizenship, 2022**



(\*) EU citizens: low reliability.  
 (\*) EU citizens and non-EU citizens: low reliability.  
 (\*) EU citizens: not available.  
 (\*) EU citizens: not available. Non-EU citizens: low reliability.  
 (\*) Definition differs.  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: ifsa\_ergan)

substantially higher rate of 12.8%, nearly double that of nationals.

In 20 out of the 27 EU Member States in 2022, employment rates for non-EU citizens were lower compared to nationals. The most significant disparities were observed in Bulgaria (75.9% vs 47.7%), Belgium (73.1% vs 48.7%) and Sweden



(83.8% vs 61.1%). Conversely, among the seven Member States where non-EU citizens had higher employment rates than nationals, Croatia and Slovakia had the largest gaps (69.7% vs 78.6% and 76.7% vs 85.2%).

An Eurostat report from July 2023 reveals that in 2022, the over-qualification rate was 39.4% for non-EU citizens and 31.8% for citizens from other EU countries. In contrast, nationals of the countries they resided in had an over-qualification rate of 21.1%. Over-qualified employed individuals refer to those with tertiary-level educational attainment who are working in low-or medium-skilled occupations. This means that numerous migrants possess valuable skills that are in high demand on the European labor markets, but they frequently encounter challenges in having these skills recognized and securing jobs that align with their skill level.

According to the data provided by the European Commission, in 2022 non-EU citizens were over-represented compared to EU citizens in some specific economic sectors such as: accommodation and food service activities (11.3% vs 4.2%); administrative and support service activities (7.6% vs 3.9%); domestic work (5.9% vs 0.7%); construction (9.1% vs 6.6%). In terms of occupations, non-EU citizens were over-represented among: cleaners and helpers (11.4% vs 2.9%); personal services workers (7.3% vs 4.1%); personal care workers (5.5% vs 3%); construction workers, excluding electricians (6.1% vs 3.7%); workers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport (6% vs 2.5%); food preparation assistants (2.6% vs 0.6%); agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (2.4% vs 0.7%). On the other hand, non-EU citizens were under-represented compared to EU citizens in other economic sectors, including: public administration and defence, compulsory social security (1.1% vs 7.4%); education (3.9% vs 7.6%); human health and social work activities (8.5% vs 11.2%); professional, scientific and technical activities (3.8% vs 6%). In terms of occupations, non-EU citizens were under-represented among: teaching professionals (2.4% vs 5.5%); business and administration associate professionals (2.6% vs 6.8%); clerical and administrative workers (1.5% vs 4.4%); science and engineering associate professionals (1.7% vs 3.5%); business and administration professionals (2.3% vs 4.5%); health professionals (1.5% vs 3.1%).

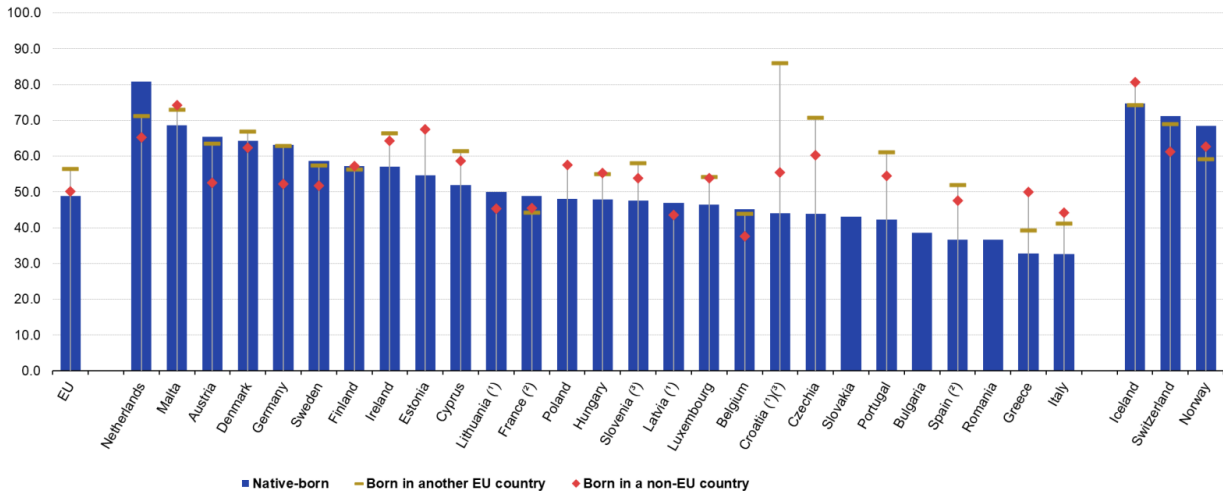
Furthermore, adult learning plays a crucial role in the labor market by enabling individuals to acquire new skills and adapt to evolving job requirements. In today's rapidly changing work environment, technological advancements and shifting market demands necessitate continuous skill development. Therefore, adult learning equips individuals with the capabilities needed to meet these demands and remain competitive in the job market. Some of the new skills that individuals may acquire through adult learning include digital literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication and collaboration, adaptability and flexibility, emotional intelligence, and leadership and management. According to the Eurostat report from July 2023, in 2022, among individuals aged 25–64 years, participation in adult learning varied based on citizenship, although the differences are not significant, especially between non-EU citizens and nationals. Specifically, 11.6% of non-EU citizens residing in the EU, 9.8% of citizens of an EU Member State living in another EU Member State and 11.9% of nationals residing in their own country had participated in adult learning in the four weeks prior to the survey, which may

include courses, seminars or conferences, or receiving private lessons or instruction outside the regular education system.

Furthermore, we must address the situation of young people (15-29 years) in the EU depending on the country in which they were born, based on the information provided by the Eurostat report from 27 November 2023. The employment rate in 2022 for young people is the following: 48.9% for native born, 50.1% for those born in a non-EU country and 56.4% for those born in another EU country. The employment rate among young individuals born in other EU countries consistently exceeded that of their native-born counterparts and of those born in non-EU countries from 2013 to 2022. Conversely, the employment rate of young individuals born outside the EU remained lower than that of native-born individuals until 2021. However, in 2022, the employment rate for non-EU-born individuals surpassed that of their native-born counterparts, with 1.2 percentage point (pp).

In 2022, among EU countries with available data, the employment rate for young non-EU-born individuals was generally lower than that for young persons born in other EU countries across most Member States. However, exceptions were observed in Greece, Italy, Malta, France, Finland and Hungary. However, the employment rate of non-EU-born individuals surpassed that of native-born individuals in 13 EU countries.

**Employment rate of young people aged 15-29 years by country of birth, EU, 2022 (%)**



Note: Only available data are presented in the graph.  
 (\*) Born in a non-EU country: low reliability.  
 (\*) Definition differs.  
 (\*) Born in another EU country: low reliability.  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth\_empl\_020)



The labor market disparities for young individuals who are non-EU-born are evident when analyzing unemployment rates. Young non-EU-born individuals experienced higher unemployment rates compared to their native-born counterparts and young nationals in 2022, with a level of about 15% whereas the unemployment rate for the other two groups was around 10%. In 2022, among Member States with available data, the unemployment rate for non-EU-born individuals exceeded that of native-born individuals in all Member States except Italy and

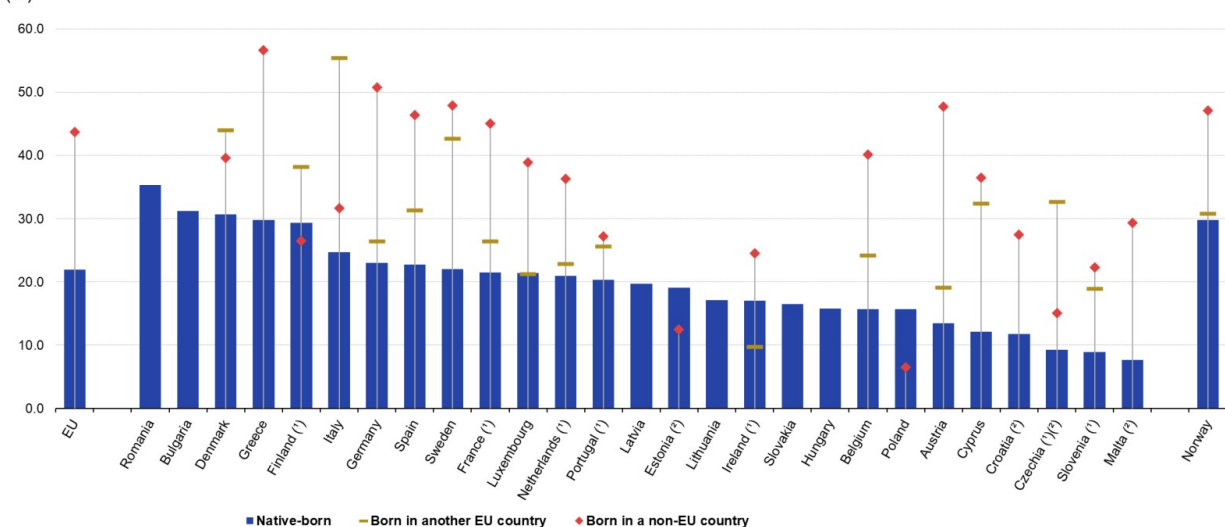


Greece. Similarly, the unemployment rate for non-EU-born individuals was higher than that of young persons born in other EU countries in all Member States except Spain and Italy. Notably, a lower unemployment rate for young individuals born in other EU countries compared to native-born individuals was observed solely in Luxembourg. Increased attention must also be given to young people who are not employed and not involved in further education or training. In 2022, the percentage in the case of young people born outside the EU countries was 21.1% compared to 11.8% in the case of native-born young people and 14.2% in the case of young people born in other EU states.

There is an alarming situation regarding the risk of poverty or social exclusion among young migrants. The risk of poverty or social exclusion refers to the likelihood of individuals experiencing low income, material deprivation or social marginalization within a society. This risk encompasses various factors, including income inequality, insufficient access to essential services and limited participation in social and economic activities. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (ARPE) often lack the means and opportunities to actively engage in the economic, political, social and cultural life of the host country. Based on the Eurostat data, in 2022 the most exposed at risk of poverty or social exclusion were young people (aged 16-29 years) who are not EU citizens with a percentage of 46.2%, compared to 27.3% in the case of young EU citizens residing in another EU country and 19.3% in the case of nationals.

In 15 out of 17 EU Member States with available data, the proportion of non-EU-born young individuals at risk exceeded that of young native-born individuals by 10 pp or more. The largest gap was observed in Austria, reaching 34.2 pp. However, there were exceptions to this trend, as the risk of poverty or social exclusion among young non-EU-born individuals was lower than among young native-born individuals in Finland and Poland.

**At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate of young people (aged 16-29 years) by country of birth, 2022**



Note: Only available data are presented in the graph.  
 (\*) Born in another EU country: low reliability.  
 (\*\*) Born in a non-EU country: low reliability.  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_peps06n)

Entrepreneurship stands as a formidable force propelling economic growth and fostering job creation within societies. It serves as the catalyst for the birth of new companies, the generation of employment opportunities and the exploration of uncharted markets, all while cultivating fresh skills and capabilities. However, within the European Union, a significant demographic often overlooked as potential entrepreneurs are migrants. Despite their potential, they encounter a myriad of obstacles—ranging from legal and cultural barriers to linguistic challenges. These hurdles are not exclusive to migrants but also affect other vulnerable groups within society. Among these underrepresented groups, young migrants face particularly daunting barriers when endeavoring to access self-employment opportunities. The pathway to entrepreneurship remains arduous for them, further exacerbating existing challenges in the job market.

Acknowledging entrepreneurship as an effective piece of the employment puzzle, it becomes apparent that self-employment serves as both a shield against marginalization and a gateway to economic empowerment. Through self-employment, individuals carve their paths, independent of conventional job markets, thus evading the specter of marginalization. Yet, beyond mere survival, successful self-employment breeds fertile ground for economic growth, benefitting not only immigrants but also the host country's society at large.

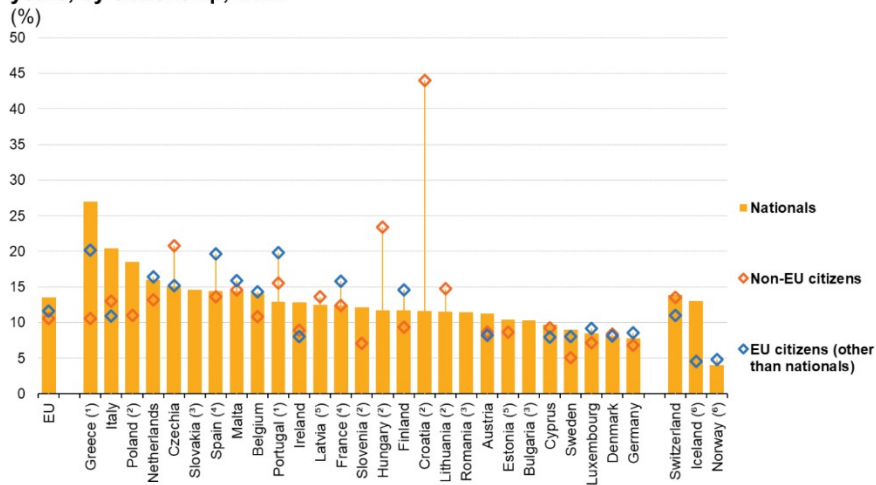
The Eurostat report from May 2023 states that in 2022, 10.6% of the non-EU citizens pursued self-employment activities, slightly lower than the 13.5% self-employment rate among nationals and the 11.7% self-employment rate among citizens of another EU country. Self-employed individuals are characterized as those who operate their own businesses, which may encompass professional practices, agricultural endeavors, retail establishments, and various other ventures, all with the primary objective of generating profit. The self-employment rates in 2022 are similar even if we analyze the country of birth - 11.2% for those born in a non-EU country, 13.6% for native-born and 11.9% for those born in another EU country. Among migrants, the self-employment rates are lower than the record established in 2015-2016 (13.4% in 2015 for those born in a non-EU country and 12.5% in 2016 for non-EU citizens), and have not yet reached the level of 2019, before the start of the pandemic (11.8% for non-EU born and 11.2% for non-EU citizens). The ratio between men and women regarding the self-employment rate is in favor of males. In 2022, among non-EU citizens, males aged 20–64 years had a self-employment rate of 12.1%, compared to 8.4% for females aged 20-64. Among non-EU born, the self-employment rate for males was 13.3% and for females it was 8.5%.

It is important to mention that self-employment can be categorized into two distinct types: employers, who hire and oversee other individuals within their business, and own-account workers, who operate independently without employing any additional staff. In the European Union in 2022, the proportion of employers among non-EU citizens stood at 32.1%, slightly higher than 31.8% observed among native born and 30.8% among citizens of other EU Member States. Furthermore, recent studies conducted in Germany indicate that businesses owned by immigrants are more prone to achieving notable levels of growth compared to enterprises led by non-immigrants (OECD/European Commission, 2023).

Among the 24 EU Member States with available data, the self-employment rates for non-EU citizens ranged from 44.3% in Croatia and 23.1% in Hungary to 5.1% in Sweden and 7% in Slovenia. In the majority of Member States (15 out of 24), the self-employment rate was higher

for national citizens than for non-EU citizens, with the widest gaps observed in Greece (16.4 percentage points), Poland (7.5 percentage points) and Italy (7.4 percentage points). Conversely, among the nine Member States where the self-employment rate was higher among non-EU citizens, Croatia and Hungary showed the widest gaps at 32.4 and 11.7 percentage points, respectively.

**Share of self-employed in total employment, persons aged 20–64 years, by citizenship, 2022**



(\*) EU citizens: low reliability.  
 (\*) EU citizens: not available. Non-EU citizens: low reliability.  
 (\*) EU citizens and non-EU citizens: not available.  
 (\*) Definition differs.  
 (\*) EU citizens: not available.  
 (\*) Non-EU citizens: not available.  
 Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ifsa\_esgan and ifsa\_pganws)



When examining self-employed immigrants born outside of the EU, Croatia, Germany, and Austria showcased the highest proportions of immigrant employers, standing at 50%, 48%, and 48%, respectively. Additionally, in nine EU Member States, a minimum of one-third of self-employed immigrants assumed the role of employers (OECD/European Commission, 2023).

The study “The Missing Entrepreneurs 2023: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment” conducted by OECD and the European Commission presents relevant information about the economic sectors of self-employed immigrants in the European Union. Notably, in 2022, people born in non-EU countries exhibited slightly lower self-employment rates in Professional and scientific activities (23%), Construction (19%) and Administrative and support services (8%) compared to those born in another EU Member State or the reporting country. However, immigrants born outside of the EU demonstrated higher self-employment rates in Other service activities relative to their counterparts born in another EU Member State (26% vs. 24%), albeit both rates fell below the share of native born in the sector (30%). Conversely, those born outside of the EU displayed a greater propensity for self-employment in Wholesale and food services (18%), Transportation and storage (11%) and Education (9%) compared to those born in another EU Member State or the native born. Similarly, among individuals born in another EU Member State, the self-employment rate was slightly higher in Construction than among those born in the reporting country (26% vs. 25%).

Entrepreneurship among young people, including young migrants, plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic landscape of the European Union. As a dynamic force driving innovation, job creation, and economic growth, entrepreneurship empowers young individuals to unleash their creativity, harness their talents and pursue their aspirations. For young migrants, entrepreneurship offers a pathway to economic independence and integration into their host

societies, providing opportunities to contribute to local economies and foster social cohesion. Moreover, by nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset among young people, the EU cultivates a culture of innovation and resilience, essential for tackling contemporary challenges and seizing emerging opportunities in an ever-evolving global market. Thus, fostering an ecosystem conducive to entrepreneurship among young people, inclusive of migrants, is not only a matter of economic prosperity but also a means to unlock their potential and build a more inclusive and vibrant future for Europe.

In 2022, nearly 26 million young people (aged 20-29 years) were self-employed within the European Union, accounting for 7% of all young people working in the EU (OECD/European Commission, 2023). Throughout the past decade, the self-employment rate among young people in the EU remained relatively consistent. Currently, there is no comprehensive data regarding the level of self-employment among young migrants in the EU. However, Eurostat reports that around 3% of working young non-EU citizens (aged 15-24 years) were self-employed in 2022. Thus, we will present the available data on all young people (aged 20-29 years) in the EU, which include native born, those born in other EU states as well as young people born outside the EU.

According to “The Missing Entrepreneurs 2023: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment” study, in 2022, young people had the highest self-employment rates in Poland, the Czech Republic (11% each), Greece, Italy (12% each) and Slovakia (13%). In contrast, only a small percentage of young individuals were self-employed in Germany, Sweden, and Ireland, each accounting for less than 3% of the total working young people. Furthermore, we can observe a significant gender disparity in self-employment. In 2022, approximately 5% of working young females were self-employed, contrasted with 8% of their male counterparts. Consequently, young men were 1.6 times more likely to be self-employed than young women. While gender parity in self-employment among young people is a reality in a few EU Member States, it remains elusive in most countries. In 2022, Hungary and Portugal boasted no gender gap among young self-employed workers, with Italy and Lithuania showing only a slight disparity. Interestingly, in Cyprus and Luxembourg, young women were more likely to venture into self-employment than their male counterparts. However, significant gender gaps loomed in Croatia, Malta, the Slovak Republic and Sweden, where young men were over three times more likely to be self-employed than young women. These disparities signal a need for tailored strategies to inspire and support young women's entrepreneurial aspirations, reflecting their unique interests and business ventures.

Close to one-fifth of young self-employed individuals were job creators themselves as, in 2022, 17% of self-employed youth in the EU employed at least one person. Thus, young self-employed individuals have contributed to the creation of at least 350,000 additional jobs in the EU. Interestingly, the percentage of young self-employed individuals who assume the role of employers in the EU has remained steady over the past decade. The proportion of young employers varied significantly across EU Member States, ranging from 7% in the Czech Republic to 37% in Germany.

Young entrepreneurs often face resource constraints and encounter challenges in accessing external support, leading them to gravitate towards sectors with lower entry barriers. In the EU in 2022, Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, along with Other service sectors, emerged as the top

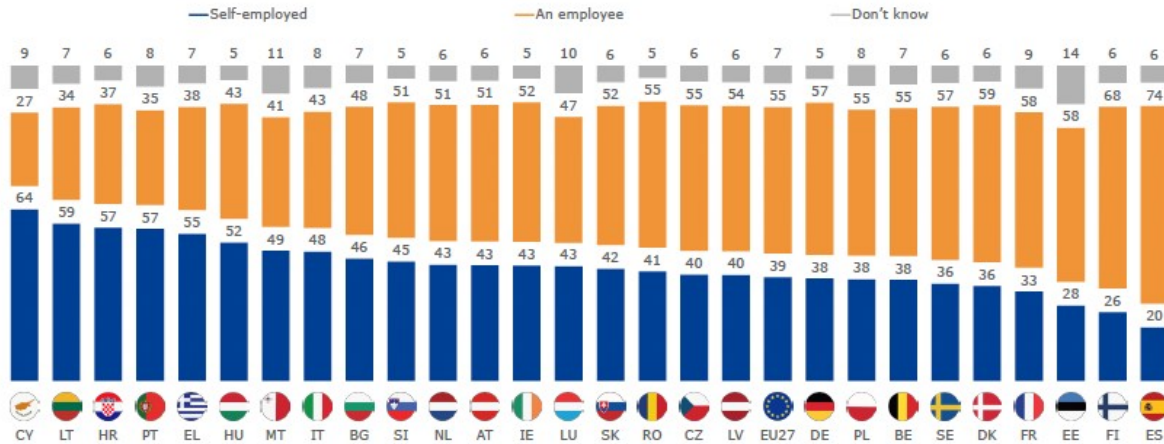
sectors where young workers were most likely to be self-employed. Approximately 30% and 18% of young individuals in these sectors pursued self-employment. Moreover, other sectors with above-average self-employment rates for young people included Real estate activities (16%), Arts, entertainment, and recreation (15%), Construction (12%), Professional, scientific activities (11%), and Information and communication (8%). Notably, most sub-sectors within these industries require minimal capital investment. Conversely, self-employment among young individuals was scarce in sectors such as Transportation and storage or Manufacturing.

Intriguingly, the distribution of self-employment among young people is influenced by various factors, including the country's economic landscape and vocational systems. For instance, nations with a significant share of economic activity in Agriculture, such as France and Italy, often witness higher rates of self-employment among young individuals in the agricultural sector. Conversely, countries like Austria and Germany, renowned for their robust vocational systems, tend to see a greater concentration of youth self-employment in professional and technical sectors. Moreover, a notable trend in recent years is the rapid expansion of technology sectors across many eastern EU Member States. This surge can be attributed to heightened investments in technology education and the allure of low living costs, which attract multinational IT companies. This influx of tech investment not only fuels economic growth but also creates opportunities for young entrepreneurs to thrive in the dynamic and evolving landscape of technology-driven industries (OECD/European Commission, 2023).

In 2022, the European Year of Youth, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion commissioned a Flash Eurobarometer to analyze the preferences and attitudes of around 26,000 young people, aged 15 to 30 from all EU member states, regarding entrepreneurship. The results of this survey are important and relevant in terms of providing better support and designing policies closer to the needs and aspirations of all young people in the European Union who want to become entrepreneurs, including young migrants.

When presented with various job options, 39% of surveyed young individuals express a preference for self-employment over traditional employment, while 55% favor working as an employee rather than being self-employed. The inclination towards self-employment versus traditional employment varies significantly across EU Member States. In six countries, over half of respondents lean towards self-employment: Cyprus (64%), Lithuania (59%), Croatia (57%), Portugal (57%), Greece (55%) and Hungary (52%). Conversely, the highest proportion selecting 'employee status' is observed in Spain (74%), followed by Finland (68%).

**Q3** If you could choose between different kinds of jobs, would you prefer to be...? (% EU27)



The desire for independence and the freedom to dictate one's work schedule and environment, chosen by 49% of respondents each, emerge as the leading factors driving young people's preference for self-employment. 33% of participants cite personal satisfaction derived from realizing their ideas, while 29% perceive self-employment as offering superior income prospects. The remaining rationales are less commonly selected, ranging from 5% for the scarcity of employment opportunities to 17% for the potential to make a positive societal contribution.

The primary reason cited for preferring to work as an employee is the assurance of a regular, stable income (selected by 46%), followed closely by considerations of job security (39%) and fixed working hours (29%). Approximately 21% highlight access to social protection, including health insurance and unemployment benefits, as a significant factor in their preference for employee status.

Nearly four in ten respondents (37%) believe that a significant barrier preventing young individuals from pursuing entrepreneurship is the lack of capital or resources necessary for self-employment and 36% identify financial risks associated with entrepreneurship as a deterrent for young people. A slightly lower proportion (31%) cite a deficiency in knowledge, education, or skills required to initiate and manage a business venture as another notable obstacle. The remaining barriers are recognized by fewer respondents, ranging from 11% for concerns about access to social protection, including health insurance and unemployment benefits, to 25% for apprehensions regarding bureaucratic hurdles and administrative complexities. Interestingly, in five EU Member States, namely Estonia (49%), Sweden (46%), Czechia (42%), Romania (40%) and Lithuania (39%), a deficiency in knowledge, education, or skills necessary for initiating and managing a business emerges as the primary barrier to youth entrepreneurship.

Nearly half of the respondents (46%) express willingness to establish their own business, even though they have not initiated any steps towards entrepreneurship. Also, 14% are in the process of taking steps to start their own venture. Notably, the proportion of respondents willing to consider entrepreneurship but yet to take any steps is highest in Cyprus (67%), while it is lowest in Germany (38%) and France (39%). Among those surveyed, the largest shares of

respondents who are not considering starting a business are found in France (34%), Finland, and Luxembourg (both 32%). However, in more than half of the Member States, this figure remains below 25%. This indicates that while a preference for traditional employment may be more common, many young people still entertain the idea of working for themselves in the future.

In terms of preferred sectors, if given the opportunity to establish their own business, young people show a strong inclination towards sectors such as IT, Internet, e-commerce, or social media (13%), followed closely by arts, design, and culture (10%). Additionally, commerce, trade, and retail (9%) as well as hospitality, entertainment, and tourism (9%) emerge as popular choices among respondents.

Moreover, if presented with a question regarding the types of support they would find most beneficial – ranging from financial assistance in the form of grants to guidance from experienced entrepreneurs – no single type emerges as distinctly more useful than the others for the respondents. For instance, 23% of them cite financial support in the form of grants, while 22% indicate a preference for education and training, and also coaching and mentoring by experienced entrepreneurs. Additionally, 21% mention the importance of support with legal requirements, while 19% emphasize the significance of assistance in marketing their products or services.

Young people exhibit a strong preference for acquiring entrepreneurship training both within and outside formal education settings. While 32% are inclined to seek such training at school or university, a significant portion (27%) also looks to online content creators, such as YouTube and Instagram, as valuable sources of entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, 21% expect to benefit from the guidance of an entrepreneurship coach or network. Additionally, smaller shares of respondents express interest in seeking training from institutions such as the chamber of commerce (18%), a job center (16%), EU institutions (15%), a business incubator (13%), or local administration (12%).

In recent years, the European Union has reaffirmed its commitment to fostering the inclusion of migrants, especially focusing on the integration of youth. Central to this commitment is the EU's dedication to facilitating migrants' integration into the labor market and supporting their entrepreneurial endeavors, alongside empowering migrant youth. By actively promoting the inclusion of all migrants, including youth, the EU aims to harness their talents and skills, attract labor to the continent, and create a more dynamic and inclusive society. Through various initiatives and policies, the EU has taken significant strides toward these goals, demonstrating its ongoing efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for migrants across its member states.

The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 is a policy framework adopted by the European Commission on 24 November 2020. It aims to support Member States in their efforts to integrate migrants and ensure their inclusion into society. The plan outlines various actions to promote the social, economic and cultural integration of migrants, including access to education, employment, healthcare and housing (COM/2020/758 final). In connection with the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, the Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson stated that "*Migrants are 'us', not 'them'. Everyone has a role to play in making sure our societies are cohesive and prosperous. Integration and inclusion mean listening to migrant communities and ensuring that everyone can enjoy rights, regardless of background. Inclusive*

*integration is giving the same tools and support needed to contribute to society, so that migrants can reach their full potential and our societies benefit from their strength and skills”* (European Commission, 2020). However, the plan also underscores the importance of a two-way integration process, emphasizing that migrants should actively engage in integrating themselves while also receiving assistance in their integration efforts.

The Action Plan is closely connected to the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which was proposed by the European Commission in September 2020. As mentioned before, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum is a comprehensive approach to managing migration in the European Union, focusing on both external and internal dimensions. It seeks to provide a more predictable and sustainable approach to migration management, including measures to enhance integration and ensure the effective inclusion of migrants into European societies. Therefore, the Action Plan is one of the key components of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, as it outlines specific measures and initiatives to support the integration of migrants in the EU. It places a significant emphasis on integrating migrants into the labor market and supporting their entrepreneurial activities. This aspect of the plan is crucial for ensuring the economic empowerment and social inclusion of migrants in European societies.

One of the key initiatives outlined in the plan is to provide migrants with access to education and training opportunities that align with the needs of the labor market. This includes language courses, vocational education and training (VET), and recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, helping migrants acquire and develop the skills necessary for employment. Additionally, the plan emphasizes the importance of addressing barriers to employment, such as discrimination and lack of recognition of foreign credentials.

Furthermore, the plan emphasizes the significance of nurturing migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle for economic integration. This encompasses not only providing migrants with financial support, but also offering mentoring programs and networking opportunities aimed at enhancing their leadership and management skills. By empowering migrant entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and resources, the plan aims to stimulate job creation, foster economic growth, and facilitate their full integration into European communities.

EU member states are responsible for the adoption and implementation of integration and inclusion policies, programs and projects, aimed at helping migrants to more easily access the labor market and follow their entrepreneurial aspirations, based on the directions provided by the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion. Government agencies (at national, regional and local levels), as well as non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, public institutions, such as universities and research centers, private enterprises and even individuals can access European funds in this regard, benefiting from the support of the European Institutions, which can include the development of guides and practical tools, coordination and monitoring.

Some of the main European funds available are (European Commission, n.d.):

- **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)** - The AMIF specifically targets the early phases of integration of third-country nationals, including migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, into EU societies. It supports projects related to education, employment,



language training, social inclusion and entrepreneurship. The budget for the AMIF for the 2021-2027 period is approximately €10 billion.

- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** - The ESF+ is one of the primary sources of funding for social inclusion, education and labor market integration initiatives in the EU in the medium and long term. It supports migrant integration into the labor market through various initiatives. It funds employment services (such as job counseling), skills development programs, and language training to enhance migrants' job prospects. ESF+ also supports entrepreneurship training (which can include the development of leadership and management skills), mentoring and access to financial resources for migrant entrepreneurs. ESF+ also supports the development and delivery of integration services tailored to the specific needs of migrants, including social support, cultural orientation, and legal assistance. Furthermore, ESF+ encourages partnerships and collaboration between public authorities, NGOs, employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders involved in migrant integration efforts. By fostering cooperation and coordination, ESF+ maximizes the impact of integration initiatives, promotes knowledge sharing, and leverages resources to address complex challenges. The total budget for the ESF+ for the 2021-2027 period is around €100 billion.
- **The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** - The primary objective of the ERDF is to promote economic development and reduce regional disparities across the European Union. ERDF indirectly supports migrant integration into European societies by investing in economic development, job creation and infrastructure projects in regions with significant migrant populations. The total budget for the ESF+ for the 2021-2027 period is around €220 billion.
- **InvestEU Programme** - It facilitates access to financing and reduces risks for entrepreneurs, including migrant entrepreneurs, across the EU. While not providing direct grants, InvestEU offers financial instruments such as loans, guarantees, and equity investments through partnering financial institutions. These resources empower entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses, invest in innovation, and expand into new markets. By leveraging public and private investment, InvestEU stimulates economic growth, job creation, and social integration, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in Europe. It is estimated that InvestEU will mobilize over €372 billion in the 2021-2027 period.
- **Horizon Europe** - It is the EU's main research and innovation funding program, supporting projects ranging from fundamental research to market-oriented innovation, aiming to drive scientific excellence, technological advancement, and societal impact. It indirectly assists migrants in integrating into the labor market and entrepreneurship through various means. It funds research on migration and integration issues, which could inform policymakers about effective strategies for migrant employment and entrepreneurship, provides resources for migrant entrepreneurs through technology hubs, thus aiding in business development, invests in vocational programs tailored to migrants' needs, and promotes diversity and inclusion in research and innovation. The total budget for Horizon Europe for the 2021-2027 period is around €95 billion.

- **The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV)** - It indirectly assists migrants in integrating into the labor market and starting businesses by funding projects that promote equality, combat discrimination and foster social inclusion. Through training activities, networking opportunities, and support for legal rights awareness, CERV empowers migrants with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary for success, including inclusive leadership skills. By creating an inclusive environment and promoting collaboration among stakeholders, CERV contributes to the integration of migrants into European societies. The total budget for the CERV for the 2021-2027 period is around €1 billion.

These European funds can be also accessed with the aim of improving the integration of refugees, including Ukrainian refugees, who benefit from the right of temporary residence, on the labor market and supporting them in their entrepreneurial aspirations. According to available data, Ukrainian refugees in the EU are making progress in terms of finding jobs and starting businesses, compared to other refugee groups, but employment and self-employment rates vary widely by country.

According to a recent survey conducted by the UNHCR (2024), approximately 45% of Ukrainian refugees across the EU were engaged in employment or self-employment as of February 2024. Based on the OECD report, International Migration Outlook 2023, and on various other sources, it is estimated that the highest employment rates among Ukrainian refugees are in Denmark - 80% (February 2024, source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment), Czech Republic - 66% (December 2023, which also include daily workers and self-employed Ukrainians, source: IOM), Poland - 62% (July 2023, source: Narodowy Bank Polski), Sweden - 56% (May 2023), Netherlands - 55% (November 2023, source: Statistics Netherlands), Lithuania - 53% (July 2023). Ukrainian refugees in the EU often find employment in sectors like construction, agriculture, manufacturing, and hospitality, where jobs tend to be lower skilled. This is despite many refugees having higher education qualifications. The mismatch between skills and available opportunities can present challenges for their integration into the labor market.

Germany has provided refuge to more than a million individuals fleeing Ukraine over the past two years. However, by the end of 2023, only 214,000 of them had secured employment within the country (20%). A possible explanation is the fact that every month they receive generous welfare payments, higher than the support other refugees and asylum-seekers receive, from €563 per adult to €471 per child. Also, Germany bears the expenses for health insurance and housing, including rent and heating. Moreover, financial assistance is allocated for home furnishings and school supplies. On the other hand, other important aspects must be taken into account. A significant 72% of Ukrainian refugees are highly educated. However, the process of verifying and recognizing their professional qualifications, academic degrees and doctorates is notably intricate and time-consuming. Mastering the German language has also emerged as a challenge for Ukrainian refugees. In response to the low employment rate among Ukrainian refugees, the German government initiated a pilot program called "Job Turbo." This program allows individuals to learn German while simultaneously engaging in employment. Also, women constitute 65% of the adult Ukrainian war refugees. Many of them arrived in Germany as single

parents, bringing approximately 350,000 children and young people with them. However, securing childcare has proven to be challenging, as daycare centers, kindergartens and schools are grappling with severe staff shortage (Deutsche Welle, 2024).

Poland stands out as the most attractive country in the European Union for Ukrainian refugees who want to become entrepreneurs. According to data from the Central Registration and Information on Economic Activity (CEIDG), over 44,500 Ukrainian companies commenced business activities in 2022-2023. In 2023, Ukrainian citizens accounted for 9.4% of all new businesses established in Poland. Ukrainian companies in Poland hold a strong presence in various industries, with significant dominance in sectors like construction (24%), information and communication (18%) and other service activities (14%). This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that Ukrainian entrepreneurs starting their businesses benefit from financial relief and preferential rates offered by the Social Insurance Institution for the first two years, and the procedures for establishing businesses are more simplified than in other European countries. A notable trend is the involvement of women in Ukrainian businesses operating in Poland. Approximately 37% of these companies are owned by enterprising Ukrainian women. Although this proportion experienced a slight decline in 2023 compared to the previous year, it remains higher than the share of companies founded by Polish women, which stands at 34%. It's worth highlighting that following the outbreak of the war, there was a significant increase in the number of businesses founded by Ukrainian women, reaching its peak in July 2023 (Trade.gov.pl, 2024). Also, in April 2024, the Ministry of Finance of Poland decreased the VAT tax rate from 23% to 8% for various services, including beauty services, where many Ukrainian women are employed. This change is expected to further incentivize Ukrainian women to become entrepreneurs in Poland (Visit Ukraine, 2024).

As mentioned before, the COVID-19 pandemic left a lasting imprint on national labor markets, amplifying pre-existing shortages and bottlenecks. Within this challenging context, the European Union prioritized the attraction and retention of migrant qualified workers as a critical objective, particularly in light of the aging working population across the EU.

In 2021, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU adopted the recommendations proposed in 2016 by the European Commission regarding the EU Blue Card Directive. The EU Blue Card is a residence and work permit aimed at attracting highly qualified non-EU nationals across 25 EU countries to contribute to the EU's labor market. The objective of this new directive is to simplify procedures, expand eligibility criteria and strengthen the rights of EU Blue Card holders. In 2022, only 82,000 highly qualified non-EU workers successfully applied for and received an EU Blue Card. Among these, the majority were issued in four EU countries: Germany (63,242, comprising 77.3% of the total), Poland (4,831, accounting for 6.0%), Lithuania (3,924, making up 4.8%) and France (3,876, representing 4.7%). The top five countries whose citizens were granted the most EU Blue Cards in 2022 were India, Russia, Belarus, Turkey, and Iraq (Eurostat, 2023).

Key revisions introduced to the EU Blue Card Directive include (EU Blue Card, n.d.):

- Family Reunification - In an effort to attract and retain highly skilled workers from non-EU countries, the EU Blue Card program now allows for the reunification of family

members with EU Blue Card holders. This provision enables family members to accompany the cardholder and gain access to the EU labor market;

- Reduced Work Contract Duration - The minimum duration of the work contract required for obtaining an EU Blue Card has been shortened to 6 months from the previous 12 months, offering greater flexibility for employers and employees alike;
- Streamlined Residence Requirements - Prospective migrants now need to spend only 12 months in their initial Member State before being eligible to reside in another, down from the previous 18 months, facilitating intra-EU mobility;
- Enhanced Mobility Rights - EU Blue Card holders are now permitted to work for up to 90 days in other Member States without the need for additional work permits, promoting cross-border labor mobility;
- Extended Validity Period - The standard validity period of the EU Blue Card has been extended to at least 24 months or the length of the contract plus three months, providing greater stability for migrants and their families;
- Accelerated Decision-Making Process - The time frame for receiving a decision on the EU Blue Card application has been significantly reduced to 60 days, with a maximum of 30 days for applications submitted by 'recognized employers', ensuring a more efficient process;
- Revised Salary Thresholds - Salary requirements have been adjusted to a range between 100% and 160% of the average gross annual salary in the member state of employment, offering a more balanced approach to wage requirements;
- Recognition of Professional Experience - Professional experience can now serve as an alternative qualification, particularly in the ICT sector, where three years of relevant work experience within the past seven years can substitute for a diploma;
- Expanded Rights for Blue Card Holders - Blue Card holders are now permitted to engage in self-employed activities alongside their primary profession, providing greater opportunities for entrepreneurship.

In April 2022, the Commission took a significant step forward with the introduction of the 'Skills and Talent Package'. This forward-thinking initiative recognizes the importance of sustainable EU legal migration in not only attracting talent but also addressing the demographic challenge posed by the aging workforce. Facilitating the EU's transition toward a greener and more digital economy, this package acknowledges the urgent need for additional labor and new skills across various sectors (COM/2022/657).

First of all, in order to enhance the efficiency of legal pathways to the EU, the Commission proposed the revision of two existing Directives, the Single Permit Directive and the Long-Term Residents Directive. The Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU), adopted in 2011, establishes a common procedure for the issuance of single permits, combining residence and work permits into one document for non-EU citizens who want to seek employment in the EU. It also guarantees equality in treatment between third-country workers and nationals of the destination Member State, ensuring both groups enjoy equivalent working conditions and access to social security benefits. It stands as a key component of the EU's labor migration legislation. The Long-Term Residents Directive (2003/109/ EC), adopted in 2003, grants a permanent and secure

residence status for third-country nationals who have lived in an EU Member State for 5 years, and additional rights, such as the right to family reunification, allowing long-term residents to bring their family members to join them in the EU.

However, both pieces of legislation have fallen short of their intended goals. The Single Permit Directive has not fully simplified admission procedures for all non-EU workers, as Member States often prioritize their national migration schemes. For example, by the end of 2022, a total of 27.3 million individuals from non-EU countries were residing in an EU Member State, but only 3.6 million non-EU citizens acquired the right to both reside and work in the EU through the single permit administrative procedure (Eurostat, 2023). Similarly, the Long-Term Residents Directive remains underutilized by Member States and lacks provisions for effective intra-EU mobility. In response, the Commission has proposed a comprehensive revision of both Directives. The main aims are to enhance procedural efficiency, promote swifter processes, bolster intra-EU mobility for non-EU nationals already residing and working in the EU, foster deeper integration and mitigate labor exploitation.

On 13 March 2024, the European Parliament endorsed the political agreement for a revised Single Permit Directive and on 12 April 2024, the Council of the EU gave its formal approval (Sofia Globe, 2024). EU Member States will have two years from the directive's entry into force to implement the changes into their national laws. Key revisions to the Single Permit Directive encompass (European Commission, 2022):

- A requirement for Member States to accept applications submitted either within their territory or from a third country;
- Within a maximum period of 4 months, the member states must take a decision in terms of granting the Single Permit, and will now be required to issue a visa when the conditions of the Single Permit are fulfilled;
- The single Permit would no longer be tied to a single employer, allowing the holder to switch employers without losing the permit's validity. This change not only enhances mobility within the labor market but also decreases migrant workers' reliance on a single employer, thereby reducing their vulnerability to labor exploitation. However, EU countries may stipulate a minimum period during which the single permit holder must work for the initial employer;
- The Single Permit remains valid in the event of unemployment for a minimum of three months without being withdrawn, as opposed to two months;
- New provisions regarding penalties for employers who violate working conditions, freedom of association, and access to social security benefits, along with the introduction of complaint mechanisms, are to be implemented.

Currently, no political agreement has been reached regarding the Long-Term Residents Permit. The main changes proposed by the European Commission include (European Commission, 2022):

- The necessary 5-year residency period can be cumulative across various Member States, given that at least two years of uninterrupted residency have been completed in the Member State of application. Furthermore, periods of residency under temporary and national protection, as well as time spent as a student, should also be taken into account;

- Enhanced family reunification rights without integration requirements, granting family members full access to employment opportunities. Moreover, children born in the EU to long-term residents can immediately acquire residency status. Also, migrants will enjoy equal rights as nationals when acquiring private housing.

The 'Skills and Talent Package' also reiterated the desire to accelerate the implementation of the Talent Partnerships, first announced in 2021. The Talent Partnerships initiative, a key component of the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, aims to address labor market needs in a mutually beneficial manner for EU Member States and EU partner states, boosting international labour mobility and skills and talent development, benefiting students, graduates and skilled workers from third countries. Various types of mobility schemes for work or training, including vocational training and professional exchange schemes will be implemented. These mobility schemes can be temporary, long-term or circular in nature, as agreed by both sides. Also, partner countries will be assisted with capacity building in areas like technical and vocational education and training, thus contributing to skills development for a better integration on the labour market. Currently active with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh, these Talent Partnerships will contribute to promoting legal pathways to the EU, reducing irregular migration, and better assisting the returning migrants (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, n.d.).

In April 2022, the European Commission also proposed creating the EU Talent Pool, the first EU-wide platform and matching tool, which aimed to boost the EU's appeal to non-EU nationals and aid EU employers in overcoming talent shortages within the EU labor market. In November 2023, the Commission provided further details on the EU Talent Pool as part of the “Skills and Talent Mobility Package” (COM(2023)715). This innovative platform serves as a centralized hub where jobseekers residing outside the EU can showcase their talents and qualifications, while EU employers can advertise their job vacancies.

One of the key features of the EU Talent Pool is its emphasis on transparency and accessibility. Jobseekers from non-EU countries can create detailed profiles, highlighting their skills, work experience, and language proficiency, providing employers with valuable insights into their capabilities. Similarly, EU employers can specify their requirements and expectations for each vacancy, ensuring a tailored approach to recruitment.

Participation in the EU Talent Pool is voluntary for Member States, allowing for flexibility and adaptation to national contexts. National Contact Points established in participating Member States play a crucial role in managing the platform and providing support to users. This decentralized approach empowers Member States to leverage the Talent Pool according to their specific needs and priorities.

The EU Talent Pool also incorporates tools to facilitate matching between jobseekers and employers, streamlining the recruitment process. Filters and a semi-automated matching tool enable both parties to identify suitable matches efficiently. Additionally, the platform provides clear information on recruitment and immigration rules, qualifications recognition, and working conditions, ensuring transparency and fairness. Ethical recruitment practices are paramount within the EU Talent Pool. Employers are required to comply with Union and national laws, guaranteeing fair treatment and protection for recruited individuals. Any breaches of these

regulations may result in suspension from the platform, underscoring the EU's commitment to upholding standards of integrity and fairness.

Furthermore, the EU Talent Pool aligns with broader EU initiatives aimed at addressing labor market challenges and promoting legal migration pathways. By targeting occupations facing shortages in the EU job market, the Talent Pool supports efforts to fill critical skill gaps and boost economic growth. It also complements the Talent Partnerships initiative. Jobseekers who participated in Talent Partnerships can register on the platform with a 'Talent Partnership pass,' certifying their skills and facilitating visibility to employers in participating Member States.

In response to the urgent need to support individuals displaced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Commission initiated the EU Talent Pool Pilot in October 2022. This pilot, derived from the original concept proposed in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, is a temporary online job-search tool aimed at assisting temporary protection beneficiaries from Ukraine. Its primary objective is to identify and map the skills and qualifications of these individuals and facilitate their matching with potential employers across seven participating Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Spain). Accessible via the European Labour Authority's EURES portal, the pilot initiative seeks to aid in the labor market integration of those fleeing Ukraine's invasion by Russia (EURES, n.d.).

Apart from Ukrainian refugees, the EU Talent Pool serves exclusively as a platform for jobseekers from third countries residing outside the EU. While the Commission is actively engaged in supporting the integration of third country nationals into EU society, those legally residing in the EU already benefit from various tools, including EURES and assistance from Public Employment Services. EURES, a collaborative network between the European Commission, the European Labour Authority (ELA), national public employment services, and other partners, offers access to nearly 4 million job vacancies. Employers can efficiently search for candidates through a comprehensive CV database, supported by approximately 1,000 EURES Advisers offering guidance throughout the recruitment process (EURES, n.d.). Non-EU citizens residing in the EU, including refugees and migrants, also have access to the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals. This tool assists service providers in conducting early assessments during interviews, enabling the creation of detailed skills profiles. These profiles are beneficial for: further assessing skills; offering guidance and support; identifying opportunities for upskilling or additional education; streamlining job searching and matching processes by showcasing relevant skills and qualifications (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, n.d.).

To ensure the successful integration of foreign talent already present in the country, the streamlined validation of skills and recognition of qualifications are vital. In November 2023, the Commission adopted a recommendation on the recognition of qualifications for third country nationals as part of the "Skills and Talent Mobility Package". This recommendation aims to simplify and expedite the recognition process, granting access to regulated professions, employment visas, and learning programs.

Effective recognition of skills and qualifications is essential for talent attraction and recruitment, mitigating issues such as "brain drain" where individuals, especially women, are employed below their qualification level. Complex recognition procedures can deter third

country nationals from seeking employment opportunities, highlighting the importance of simplifying these processes. The Commission's recommendation proposes a systematic approach to enhance national recognition services, focusing on capacity building, cooperation with third countries, and user-friendly procedures. These measures aim to shorten processing times, reduce costs, simplify translation and authentication processes, and ultimately improve the efficiency of recognition processes without compromising professional standards.

Furthermore, as part of the “Skills and Talent Mobility Package” announced in November 2023, the European Commission proposed a Council Recommendation titled 'Europe on the Move – Learning Mobility Opportunities for Everyone' as a pivotal initiative within the European Education Area (EEA). This proposal aims to integrate learning mobility into all education and training pathways, presenting significant opportunities for migrant integration into the labour market, particularly among young migrants, through the development of important skills, including leadership and management skills (Erasmus+, 2023).

At its core, the proposal seeks to increase the accessibility of learning periods abroad, aiming to boost the share of individuals in the EU benefiting from such experiences. It also endeavors to enhance inclusivity by increasing the participation of people with fewer opportunities, including migrants, in learning mobility programs. By promoting learning mobility as an integral aspect of education and training across various sectors, such as higher education, vocational education and training (VET), school education, adult education and youth exchanges, the proposal creates avenues for migrants to access diverse educational opportunities.

Moreover, the proposal addresses barriers to mobility, such as language proficiency and recognition of learning outcomes, thereby facilitating the integration of migrants into the labor market. By promoting outreach and awareness, enhancing language learning, and facilitating the transition to the labor market, the proposal equips migrants with the necessary skills and competencies to succeed professionally. Additionally, the emphasis on digital tools and environmentally sustainable mobility aligns with modern learning trends, offering innovative solutions that can empower migrants to access educational opportunities more readily (COM(2023)715).

The proposal sets ambitious targets for 2030, including ensuring that at least 25% of graduates in higher education experience learning mobility, up from the current target of 20%; facilitating learning mobility for at least 15% of vocational learners, doubling the previous target set for 2025; ensuring that at least 20% of all learners benefiting from learning mobility are individuals with fewer opportunities, including young migrants. Furthermore, it aims to promote the EU as an attractive learning destination for talent from third countries, aligning with the geopolitical dimension of the European Education Area (Erasmus+, 2023).

While there isn't a single comprehensive EU-wide program specifically for supporting and financing migrant entrepreneurs, the EU member states have at their disposal the previously mentioned funds to finance policies, programs and projects for the integration of migrants into the labor market and to support entrepreneurship, both financially and through the development of specific skills, including leadership and management skills. Many EU countries offer start-up and entrepreneur visas to attract immigrants with in-demand skills and experiences, such as Red-



White-Red Card for Startup Founders in Austria, D-Visa in Germany, STEP Start-up Entrepreneur Programme in Ireland, French Tech Visa, Dutch Startup Visa (Mayes, 2023).

Likewise, some European states implement training or non-reimbursable financing programs to support entrepreneurs, to which migrants from the territory of these states can also apply, subject to certain criteria. For example, Germany offers various programs and initiatives to support entrepreneurs, including migrants. The EXIST program provides funding for startups launched by university graduates, including foreign students. Additionally, the "Gründerzuschuss" (Startup Grant) offers financial support to individuals who are unemployed and wish to start their own business. Furthermore, the Migrant Accelerator program provides workshops and personalized mentoring, delivered by a diverse group of mentors that mirrors the diversity of the entrepreneurs it serves. This approach sets a precedent for other immigrant entrepreneurship initiatives, as it is led by individuals from the targeted communities, with the majority of frontline workers also belonging to these communities. This model ensures that the support provided is both relevant and appealing to potential participants (European Commission/OECD, 2023).

As repeatedly mentioned, the European Union attaches great importance to the integration of young people into society, through equal access to jobs, education and entrepreneurial opportunities, especially young people neither in employment nor in education or training and young people from disadvantaged groups, such as migrants. The Reinforced Youth Guarantee, established as a commitment by all EU Member States, guarantees that young individuals under the age of 30 receive a high-quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. This initiative, outlined in a Council Recommendation of October 2020, is a pivotal component of the broader Youth Employment Support package proposed by the European Commission. Through this comprehensive framework, EU countries are dedicated to providing tailored support and opportunities to empower young people, including career guidance, skills development, job search assistance, vocational training, apprenticeships and employment opportunities (Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, n.d.).

Furthermore, Erasmus+ offers invaluable support to migrants, particularly young migrants, in integrating into labor markets and pursuing entrepreneurship ventures. It facilitates mobility exchanges, providing opportunities for migrants to study, train, or gain work experience abroad. Through these experiences, migrants can improve language skills, acquire new qualifications, enhancing their employability and integration prospects. Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is part of the broader Erasmus+ program. It offers a unique opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs, including young migrants, to gain invaluable experience and mentorship in starting their own businesses. Through this program, aspiring entrepreneurs are matched with experienced business owners in another EU country, allowing them to learn from their expertise and gain practical insights into running a successful venture. This cross-border exchange not only fosters entrepreneurship skills, such as inclusive leadership and management skills, but also promotes cultural exchange and networking opportunities (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, n.d.).

The Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy (YEPA), initiated by the EU and OECD, also supports young entrepreneurs, including young migrants, by engaging them in policy discussions

and advocacy. Through workshops, mentorship, and networking opportunities, YEPA equips young entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to thrive in the business world while advocating for youth-friendly policies that support entrepreneurship (YEPA, n.d.).

#### 4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

In contemplating the transformative potential of entrepreneurship for young migrants and refugees, we delve into a realm where economic prosperity intertwines with broader notions of societal progress. Throughout our comprehensive exploration of this multifaceted topic, we uncover the profound impact that entrepreneurship can have on individuals navigating the intricate pathways of migration and displacement. From offering avenues to attain economic self-sufficiency in unfamiliar lands to serving as catalysts for cross-cultural exchange and resilience-building, entrepreneurship emerges as a beacon of hope amidst the challenges and uncertainties faced by young migrants and refugees.

At the crux of our discourse lies the pivotal concept of inclusive leadership and management—an ethos that underscores the imperative of embracing diversity, equity, and collaboration within entrepreneurial endeavors. As we envision a world where every young migrant and refugee can harness their entrepreneurial spirit to drive positive change, it becomes increasingly apparent that the cultivation of inclusive ecosystems is paramount. These ecosystems must not only facilitate the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities but also ensure that every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, has equitable access to resources, mentorship, and support networks. By fostering environments where every voice is heard, every talent is nurtured, and every opportunity is accessible, we pave the way for the emergence of inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems that empower and uplift all members of society.

To policymakers worldwide, particularly those in countries hosting migrants and refugees, the following recommendations provide actionable steps toward fostering inclusive entrepreneurship. Amidst the intricate challenges of migration and displacement, policymakers hold a key position in crafting policies and frameworks that facilitate economic integration and social harmony. These recommendations present a blueprint in order to harness entrepreneurship as a driver for sustainable development and inclusive prosperity. While significant strides have been made, there remains ample opportunity for progress. While the primary focus is on hosting countries of migrants and refugees, the principles outlined herein hold relevance across borders and political landscapes, offering a pathway towards a more inclusive and prosperous future:

- **Developing a comprehensive strategy for migrant and refugee entrepreneurship** - Identifying the unique opportunities and challenges for migrant and refugee entrepreneurship at the national and local levels; Ensuring the alignment of migrant and refugee entrepreneurship strategies with broader policies on entrepreneurship, migration, and refugee integration at local, national and regional levels; Ensuring that the approach to migrant and refugee entrepreneurship aligns with international frameworks; Assessing and disseminating the outcomes of initiatives promoting migrant and refugee entrepreneurship.
- **Optimizing and improving the regulatory environment** - Streamlining the process for migrants and refugees to initiate businesses; Providing guidance and support to refugee

and migrant entrepreneurs as they navigate the startup process; Examining additional regulatory obstacles that could impede refugee and migrant entrepreneurship.

- **Improving entrepreneurial education and skill enhancement** - Creating, tailoring and concentrating entrepreneurship training for specific demographics and environments; Developing impactful entrepreneurship curricula and content to foster an entrepreneurial mindset, alongside with inclusive leadership and management skills; Involving proficient and seasoned trainers; Enhancing coordination between entrepreneurship training programs for refugees and migrants and vocational education initiatives, as well as support for essential needs.
- **Promoting the exchange of technology and fostering innovative start-ups** - Forging connections with the private sector and integrating refugees and migrants into entrepreneurship ecosystems; Establishing conducive working environments and providing access to essential infrastructure, such as internet, phone, and electricity, to support migrant and refugee entrepreneurship; Promoting broader adoption and training in ICT and emerging technologies within refugee and migrant communities; Encouraging the advancement of social innovation and social enterprises within refugee and migrant communities, led both by and for refugees and migrants.
- **Enhancing access to financial resources** - Advancing alternative and innovative funding sources for refugee and migrant entrepreneurship; Assisting refugee and migrant entrepreneurs in accessing formal banking services; Connecting access to financial resources with entrepreneurship education programs.
- **Encouraging awareness and networking opportunities** - Facilitating connections between migrant and refugee entrepreneurs and experienced mentors; Establishing and bolstering networking platforms for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs; Assisting migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in engaging with diaspora networks and networks in their countries of origin; Proactively challenging and changing the stigma associated with migrants and refugees.

Our exploration of entrepreneurship among young migrants and refugees extends beyond economic realms to embrace wider ideals of social unity, innovation and empowerment. Through the promotion of inclusive leadership and management principles and the creation of nurturing environments for diverse entrepreneurial endeavors, we pave the way for a future where entrepreneurship becomes a catalyst for positive societal change and an agent of inclusive progress. Embracing these recommendations, policymakers stand to unlock the latent potential within young migrant and refugee populations, fostering resilience, empowerment and economic independence. This research paper underscores the vital necessity of embracing inclusive policies and initiatives that not only acknowledge the intrinsic value of diversity but also empower individuals to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

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