

Comprehensive Report of Identification of Needs

Assessing Competences
For Future | SCOUT

Profil**PASS**
SCOUT



Erasmus+



Deutsches Institut für
Erwachsenenbildung
Leibniz-Zentrum für
Lebenslanges Lernen



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SCOUT/ IO1-A1 Comprehensive Report of Identification of Needs

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Background of the Erasmus+ Project SCOUT

The Erasmus+ funded EU-Project SCOUT focuses on the recognition of skills, qualifications and competences of new immigrants by developing and using a set of tools to assess and document those skills. Based on the analysis of competences and with the guidance of counsellors, new immigrants will find education or training that suits their competences best and their way into employment more easily. SCOUT helps new immigrants to develop their full potential. The project offers innovative solutions to foster integration of people with a disadvantaged background and fewer opportunities regarding the integration into the labour market and into society.

Background of the Comprehensive Report of Identification of Needs

Before starting to create the SCOUT toolkit, the partners carried out an identification of needs including a synopsis of examples of good practice in the SCOUT partner countries. The activity was led by the Austrian project partner *die Berater*[®]. The guiding questions were:

- What do organizations working with new immigrants need in order to assess their competences?
- What examples of good practice are already available?
- What do new immigrants need in order to make their competences visible?
- What should be included in addition to an adopted ProfilPASS?

The needs assessment combined desk research and focus group meetings with experts (or alternatively individual interviews with experts). During the desk research phase, information on the topic already available in the partner countries was gathered and analysed. For the expert groups, representatives of stakeholders in the field tackled by the SCOUT project (employers, professionals working with new immigrants, researchers, decision makers, funders, programme developers, new immigrants) were asked to participate in a focus group meeting or to be available for an interview (cf. annex 1 for the focus group/interview guideline). The aim of the focus group meetings/interviews was to gain a broader view of the needs targeted in the SCOUT project proposal and to get an assessment of the measures already available and to identify concrete needs from different perspectives.

All findings of the national research activities were gathered in a national report template (cf. annex 2 and the individual reports provided by the project partners). The following partners provided national needs reports (also annexed to this document):

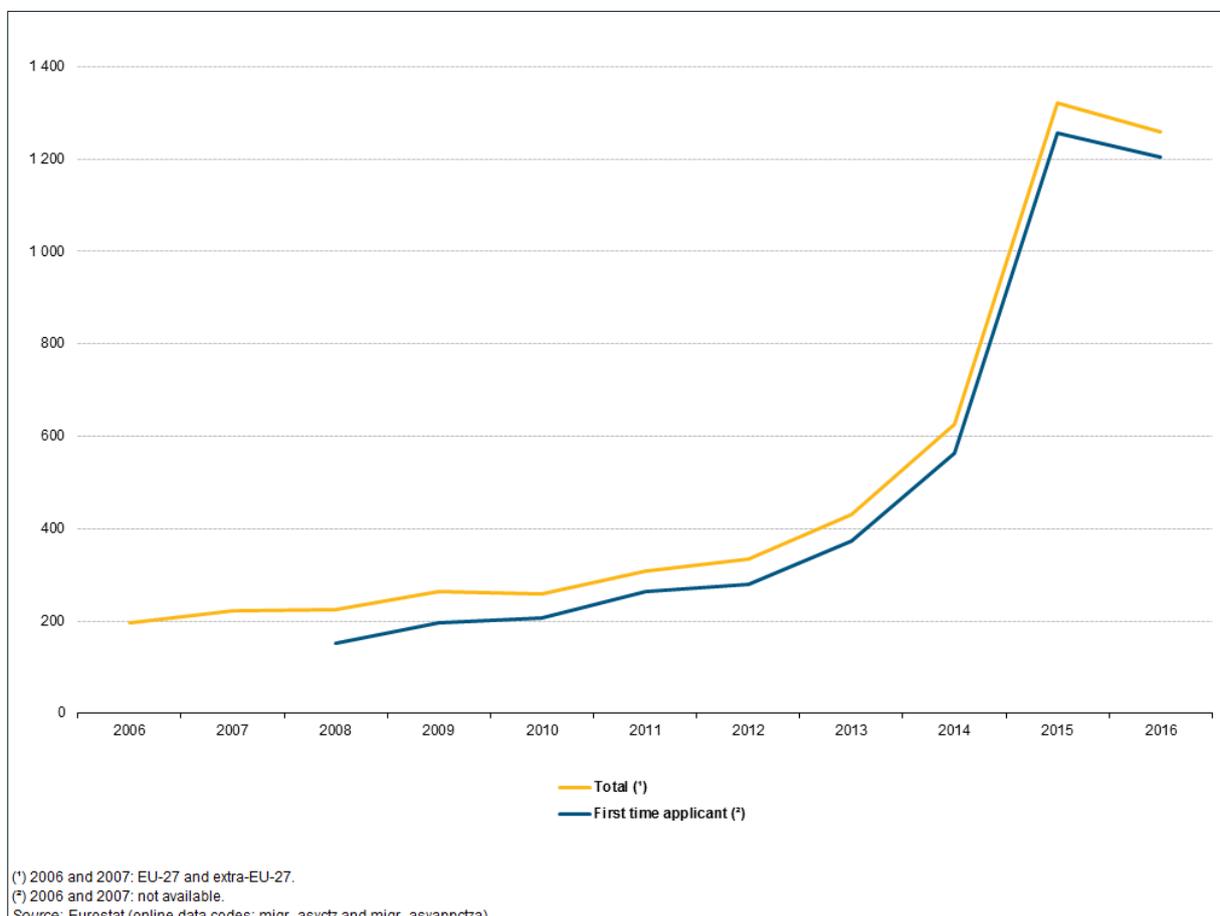
- DIE (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung): national report Germany
- DAFNI KEK (Dafni Kentro Epaggelmatikis Katartisis): national report Greece
- LUV (Andragoski zavod Ljudska univerza Velenje): national report Slovenia
- DEFOIN (Formacion para el Desarrollo y la Inserción): national report Spain
- SwIdeas: national report Sweden
- die Berater[®]: national report Austria

Main Findings of the Needs Analysis

Parallel to the current migration flows, Europe has also witnessed important and profound developments in the policy area of migration and integration in the past years. As a result of the so-called “refugee crisis”, much effort has been put into designing social policies, actions and projects to facilitate the integration of new immigrants into the labour markets of their host countries. Some of these will be highlighted here. In addition, we will also sum up results from the national focus group meetings/individual interviews with experts according to the national report template which was filled in by the project partners (cf. annex 2).

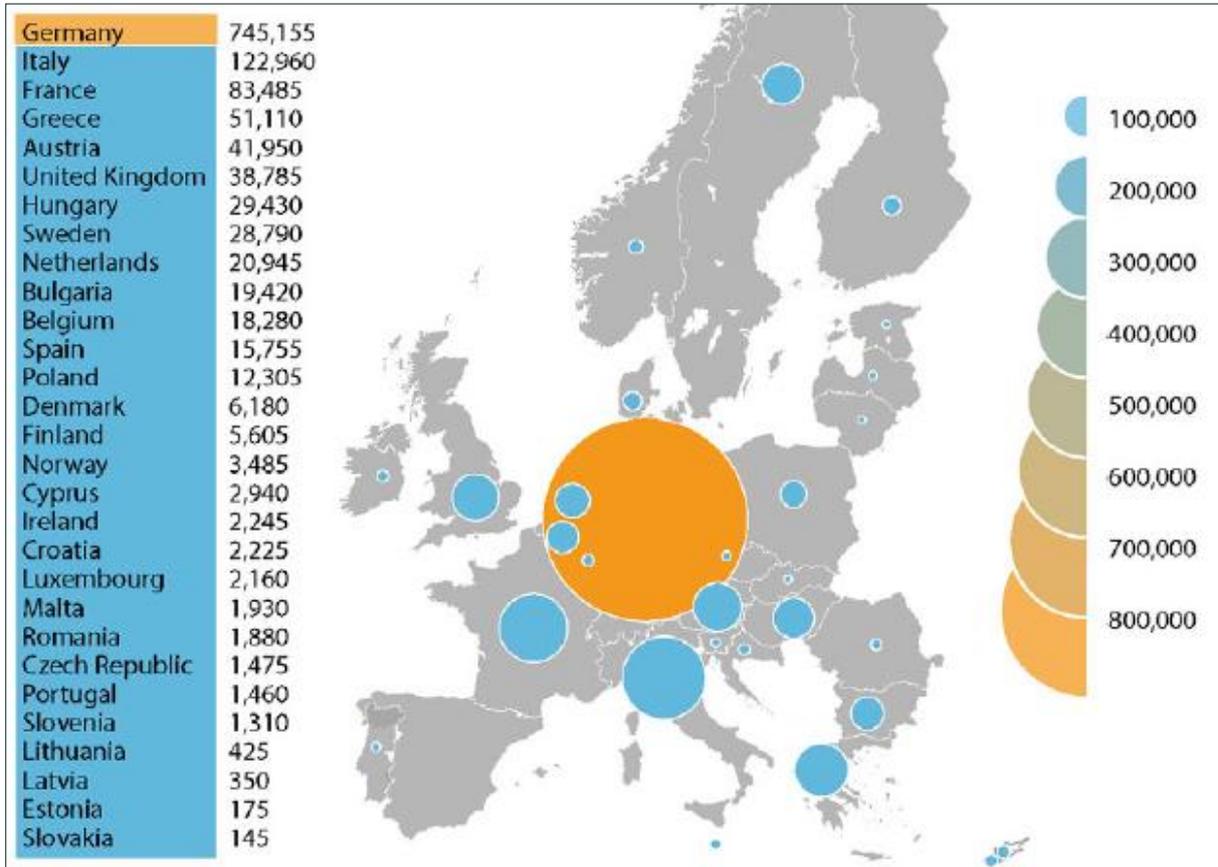
Demographic data

Europe saw an exponential growth in the number of asylum seekers and migrants arriving in 2015 (**more than 1,2 million migrants and refugees arrived** that year, cf. graph 1).



GRAPH 1: ASYLUM APPLICATIONS (NON-EU) IN THE EU-28 MEMBER STATES, 2006–2016 (THOUSANDS) SOURCE: [HTTP://EC.EUROPA.EU/EUROSTAT/STATISTICS-EXPLAINED/INDEX.PHP/FILE:ASYLUM APPLICATIONS \(NON-EU\) IN THE EU-28 MEMBER STATES, 2006–2016 \(THOUSANDS\) YB17.PNG](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Asylum_applications_(non-EU)_in_the_EU-28_member_states,_2006-2016_(thousands)_YB17.png)

In 2016, the main countries of origin of asylum applicants in the EU were **Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq**. Together, the three countries represent more than half (644 760) of all asylum applications submitted in the EU in 2016 (EMN, 2017). In 2016, the majority of asylum seekers registered in Germany, Italy, France, Greece or Austria (cf. graph 2).



Graph 2: Overview of asylum applications per EU member state and Norway 2016 (source: EMN, 2017)

Some statistics provided in the SCOUT national reports further underline the significance of the immigration issue in the partner countries:

In the period between 2014 and 2017, more than 2.7 million new immigrants have come to **Germany**.

Since 2000, **Spain** has experienced high population growth as a result of immigration flows, despite a birth rate that is only half of the replacement level. According to the Spanish government, there were 5.6 million foreign residents in Spain in 2015; independent estimates put the figure 14% of total population. According to 2015 census data, the most important foreign communities were Romanian (almost 800 000 persons), Moroccan, Ecuadorian, British and Colombian.

With the closure of the so-called "Balkan migration route" in March 2016, tens of thousands of refugees were left stranded in **Greece**. Following the EU-Turkey Statement, the number of new arrivals in Greece has dropped significantly. The number of people that have applied for asylum in Greece is, from 7 June 2013 to 30 November 2017, 133 263, out of which 54 731 applications were made in 2017.

According to the statistical office of the Republic of **Slovenia** there were 112 767 registered foreign citizens in Slovenia on 1 October 2016; the data show an increase of their proportion in the last quarter, reaching 5.5% of the total population. During the economic crisis, many migrant workers were the first ones fired and left the country. By 2010, Slovenia transformed from a country of largely seasonal migration to a country of family migration and settlement. This story is similar to other new labour migration destinations in Southern Europe (IT, PT, ES). Nevertheless, it is noted that migration and integration is rarely a topic of public or policy debate in Slovenia.

In Austria, German nationals represent the highest number of immigrants living in the country by total numbers (161 618 in 2017), followed by Serbian, Turkish and Bosnian nationals. The average number of monthly asylum applications in 2015, 2016 and 2017 were 7346 / 3506 / 2082 asylum applications per month respectively. The additional expenses for refugee labour market integration and active labour market policy in the years 2015-2019 is expected to be approximately € 485 millions.

BOX 1: EXCERPT OF DATA ON MIGRATION ELABORATED IN THE SCOUT NATIONAL REPORTS

The significant rise in asylum applications has placed the **issue of integration of beneficiaries of international or humanitarian protection at the top of the political agenda** with labour market integration being of particular importance. In one of the OECD's most recent publications on this issue, Stefano Scarpetta, the Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, highlights the following important points regarding migration and integration (OECD, 2017, p. 7f):

“The peak of the humanitarian refugee crisis is behind us: the unprecedented high inflows of the second-half of 2015 and early 2016 have receded over the past year. In the first six months of 2017, the total number of landing on European shores reaches 72 000, slightly below the flows in 2014 and more than 12 times less than the flows in second-half 2015. Many of those who arrived in Europe from conflict countries are likely to stay for some time, at least until their home countries are safe again. It is now time to focus on how to help people settle in their new host countries and integrate into their labour markets. [...] The OECD-EU report, Indicators of Immigrants Integration: Settling In (2015), showed very clearly that all too often life chances of people are determined by their country of origin rather than their abilities and ambitions. The unemployment gap between native-born people and immigrants has widened in many countries since 2007 and is now almost 5 percentage points in Europe. [...] Furthermore, it has taken 5 to 10 years for most previous generations of family migrants and refugees to be employed in Europe and as much as 15 to 20 years for them to reach a similar level of employment as natives - if ever. Improving the integration outcomes of immigrants and their children, including refugees, is vital to delivering a more prosperous, inclusive future for all. [...]”

Although more than two in three immigrants in the OECD are employed, the unemployment rate of foreign-born workers reached 12,4% in European OECD countries (4,3 percentage points higher than the rate of native-born workers) in 2016. **Migrants are overly represented in jobs involving routine tasks** which means they are more at risk for job loss due to automation. In European OECD countries, 47% of

foreign-born workers are working in occupations that primarily involve routine tasks (OECD, 2017).

After the Czech Republic, **Germany** has the second lowest unemployment rate within the European Union. In September 2017, 3.6% of the labour force (15- to 74-year olds) in Germany was unemployed. More than 40% of the unemployed in Germany have a migration background. According to the unemployment statistics of the Federal Employment Agency, 455 000 refugees were listed as job-seeking in February 2017 of which 178 000 were supported by an employment agency or job center as unemployed persons.

According to the Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Sweden in 2016, the unemployment rate of foreign born residents in **Sweden** was three times as high as of those born in Sweden at 15% compared to 5% whilst the unemployment rate for foreign born residents from outside the EU rises to around 22.5%. The employment rate of immigrants increases the longer they have resided in Sweden, nevertheless it is still lower than that of native born residents.

In **Greece**, the unemployment rate, at 23.2% in February 2017, is the highest among OECD countries. Despite a moderate fall since late 2013, much of the steep crisis-related increase in unemployment remains. Most of the unemployed have been without a job for one year or longer (73% in Q4 2016 compared to 32% in the OECD area). Unemployment rates for non-nationals slightly decrease (from 29.4% to 28.1% in the second half of 2015 and first half of 2016). Unemployment of women third country nationals is higher than that of men (30-40% in the same period).

Statistical data from **Slovenia** shows that the majority of immigrants come to the country in order to search for employment (family reunification and study are less important reasons for migration to the country). The majority of immigrant workers are male, between 30 and 40 years old, almost half of them are employed in construction, a significant part also in manufacturing.

BOX 2: EXCERPT OF DATA ON (MIGRANT) UNEMPLOYMENT ELABORATED IN THE SCOUT NATIONAL REPORTS

Further statistics on the employment rate of beneficiaries of international or humanitarian protection indicate that **participation rates in the labour market are low in the first four or less years of residence in the host country** but increase over time. After 20+ years (!) the employment rate becomes almost the same for all categories of migrants. Moreover, many newly arrived who can secure jobs usually work below their qualification levels in low-skilled/low-paid jobs often of temporary nature (EMN, 2016). The labour market outcomes of specific groups of humanitarian migrants (e.g. the very low-skilled, women or older refugees) lag behind for much longer. **Female refugees have significantly worse labour market outcomes in the short to medium run** which might partly be due to cultural patterns as participation rates of women in their home countries are usually lower than in the host countries (EP, 2016).

Another important statistical pointer regarding labour market access and integration is the age of beneficiaries of international protection. Over the period 2010-2015, **more than 50% of those granted international protection in the EU were within the age category of 18-34 years**, i.e. of working age (EMN, 2016).

However, **with regard to skills of new immigrants, little reliable data is available.** Overall, it seems that their qualifications are below the level that would be needed for a qualified occupation on European job markets (cf. Aumüller, 2016 with a comparison for the German job market). Data from the European Social Study analysed by the IMF (2016) indicates that immigrants (not distinguishing between economic immigrants, asylum seekers and recognised refugees) born in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Eritrea, and the former Yugoslavia are on average less educated than the native population or other immigrants. They are twice as likely to only have a lower secondary education or less, and significantly less likely to have gone to college. However, the causes of migration might likely impact the demographic characteristics of migrants from the same country and it is possible that asylum seekers who have arrived recently are better educated than past immigrants from the same countries of origin. For example, a non-representative survey from Austria suggests that many refugees from Syria, Iraq and Iran who arrived in 2014/15 are higher educated than expected (cf. AMS, 2016) and in Germany, 21% of the Syrian asylum seekers who arrived in 2013-2014 reported having tertiary education which is close to the average of the native population (23%) (IMF, 2016).

SwIdeas, the Swedish SCOUT partner, conducted an online survey among 59 immigrants. The results highlight some of the problems faced by immigrants when trying to enter the labour market: (1) 85.4% of the respondents expected it to take less than a year to find work, but in fact according to the National Audit Office, 7-10 years after coming to Sweden, only 50% of new immigrants are in work. This time is usually shorter for men (3-7 years), whereas for women it even takes 9-11 years. (2) This can partly be attributed to the long waiting time for a decision on the asylum application in Sweden which is currently around 24 months which is one of the greatest frustrations for immigrants coming to Sweden. The long processing time for asylum application prevents them from accessing any educational programme and consequently also delays the inclusion into the labour market. Most asylum-seekers have the right to work in Sweden under their asylum process; however, few manage to find work. The factors hindering this are on the one hand, the immigrants' lack of network, information about the job market, language skills and the processes via which they can validate their educational degrees and competencies. On the other hand side, employers have a lack of knowledge of the regulations regarding employing asylum seekers and hesitate to employ them. (3) Employers' hesitancy to employ immigrants due to their lack of language skills is one of the immigrants' greatest frustrations expressed in the questionnaire. 73.6% of respondents cited that the requirement to speak Swedish hindered them from finding work. (4) 43.4% of respondents cited their lack of network as a difficulty to finding work and were frustrated with the difficulty to find an opportunity within the scope of one's educational background and, therefore, often taking jobs below their skills level.

BOX 3: HINDRANCES TO ENTER THE SWEDISH LABOUR MARKET (CF. SWEDISH SCOUT NATIONAL REPORT)

In 2017, *die Berater*® ran four surveys with overall more than 500 respondents within the Erasmus+ project LikeHome concerning obstacles for migrants to find employment. The surveys addressed migrants, staff from vocational education

institutions, enterprises, and representatives of government organizations and certification bodies. Some findings: (1) All four analysed target groups agreed that the language barrier is the most important obstacle for a successful integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees into the labour market and education/training system of the respective European host country. 80.65% of economy representatives, 89.33% of the questioned vocational education trainers and 95% of government organisation and certification body representatives think that language barriers cause serious problems. 68.48% of the involved newly arrived migrants and refugees felt that language barriers are causing integration problems. (2) An especially interesting finding from the VET staff survey is that there is a need for more wide-spread information about the recognition and validation of competencies of newly arrived migrants and refugees: Although the surveyed VET staff was rather confident in managing cultural diversity, they were not too sure about how to assess foreign proofs of qualification, how to handle the rating of competences of foreign applicants and where to find respective information on these topics. (3) A very high share of the vocational education trainers (64.79%) feel that more support and information regarding the assessment of competences and prior learning of newly arrived migrants and refugees would be useful. Overall, 56.38% of the migrants and refugees participating in the study want more support in this specific field. From the view of government and certification bodies representatives, there is an especially high approval (81.36%) to the statement that not recognizing competences and prior learning leads to difficulties in the integration process. The answers of the local economy representatives made no exemption. 66.67% of them were convinced that problems regarding the recognition of working experience, prior learning and competences are challenges which need to be addressed.

BOX 4: FINDINGS FROM THE LIKEHOME SURVEYS (CF. DIE BERATER ET AL., 2017)

Types of new immigrant integration measures

Obviously, there are no quick and easy solutions for new immigrants' integration into the labour market. Among the stakeholders, studies and reports consulted for this needs analysis, there seems to be consensus, that to get immigrants into employment or, for that matter, into vocational education and training, the focus should be on **language proficiency, skills and competence acquisition, assessment, and recognition.**

In a review of employment-related measures applied in European member states, the European Migration Network identified the following good practices (EMN, 2016):

- **linking language learning to the job market** to increase the likelihood that learning supports employment;
- providing **orientation services** with the aim to **directly support workplace integration** in order to help the beneficiary prepare for the workplace;
- provision of **tailored** measures to facilitate beneficiaries' access to **education**, e.g. by financial assistance, exemption from course fees, guidance during studies etc.;

- provision of **'complementary' education** and training (**bridging courses**) specifically for beneficiaries or third-country nationals as a means of acquiring additional earning and getting qualifications recognised;
- provision of **tailored vocational educational training** which helps to increase employment participation rates;
- provision of employment **counselling** by a **wide range of actors** and in **different foreign languages** to ensure an optimal level of services;
- provision of **tailored** schemes for the **recognition of qualifications** and accreditation of prior learning, including tailored information and assistance to beneficiaries to identify and access suitable schemes;
- provision of **additional housing assistance** to beneficiaries, e.g. pro-longed stay at reception facilities, transitional facilities, housing counseling, priority given to beneficiaries in the context of social housing, dispersal policy which takes account of employment opportunities etc.

However, there are **numerous obstacles for new immigrants to access employment-related support measures**. Most importantly, some of these measures are not widely available (e.g. they are offered on a project-basis only, or only in certain geographical areas, or they are restricted to a certain number of participants). Other factors which impede the participation of beneficiaries in support measures include financial costs (both direct and indirect), lack of language proficiency, low educational levels, lack of educational qualifications and/or documents to proof qualifications etc. (EMN, 2016)

On a European level, the Commission adopted an **Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals** in June 2016 (EC, 2016). This action plan contains a framework to support Member States' efforts in developing and strengthening integration policies, including actions such as online language assessment and learning for newly arrived migrants, promoting the upgrading of skills of third country nationals, pilot projects for migrant entrepreneurship, and supporting projects for labour market integration through "fast-track" insertion and vocational training.

As part of the "New Skills Agenda for Europe" the European Commission has also recently developed and launched a **"Skills and Qualifications Toolkit"** to help newly arrived third-country nationals produce a profile of their skills and to help an adviser identify recommendations and next steps (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>). It is, however, not intended to be used as a recognition or authentication tool. The tool is now available in all EU languages (except Irish) and in Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Sorani, Somali, Tigrinya and Turkish and can even be used in two languages at the same time reducing language barriers between case workers and migrants. The Skills Profile tool is intended for the use by any services that may be offering assistance to citizens of non-EU countries and should be used in an interview situation to get to know the individual, his/her skills, qualifications and experiences. The information collected can be used to support further assessment, to form a basis for offering guidance and identify up-skilling needs but also to support job-searching and job-matching.

Support/counseling and advice services

Germany: (1) The [Migration Advisory Service for adult immigrants](#) (Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer, MBE) is an essential basic counseling offer to support adult migrants in all kinds of concerns (available for up to three years before, during or after an integration course). The aim is to purposefully initiate, coordinate and accompany the integration process of migrants. Professional counselors create an individual counseling program and provide information on various topics regarding integration (e.g. language development offers), changes in law or the access to work life. The counseling is confidential and free of charge in counseling centers for migrants that are open to all migrants with or without residence status. (2) Since 2005, the [Network "Integration through Qualification \(IQ\)"](#) has worked on improving employment opportunities for people with a migration background. It is funded by the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the European Social Fund. One central objective is that occupational qualifications acquired outside of Germany lead to employment appropriate to the level of education of the respective person. Dedicated voluntary helpers with or without migration background, so-called "integration guides", assist refugees and migrants with the integration into Germany free of charge.

Sweden: The Establishment Programme (Etableringsplan) is the main governmental labour market integration programme. It's a two years programme supervised by the Swedish Public Employment Service for all new immigrants and has a number of tracks depending on the qualifications and capabilities of the ones enrolled.

Slovenia: (1) Various adult education programs are available to new immigrants. (2) The Legal-Informational Centre (LIC) has an aid program for international protection seekers in asylum homes, foreigners, and persons under international protection. The goal is to provide information and legal consultations.

Spain: Many institutions, companies and NGOs like the Red Cross (Cruz Roja) support the needs of new immigrants. The Spanish administration works together with NGOs to offer basic counseling to immigrants in Spain.

Austria: (1) Any measures for the integration of new immigrants are subject to the recognition and assessment act, the integration act and the integration year act. Most measures are directed to persons entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection or other third country nationals, few measures are also targeted to asylum seekers with a high probability of recognition. (2) "StartWien for Refugees" offers comprehensive integration assistance for asylum seekers in Vienna from day one in several languages.

Integration courses and language trainings

On national levels of EU member states, measures to enhance migrants' language skills and their understanding of the host countries' societies are broadly fostered. The following examples have been mentioned in the SCOUT national reports:

Germany: (1) The [integration courses](#) are the basic language offer in Germany offered to beneficiaries of international protection but also to asylum seekers and

tolerated persons with solid prospects of permanent residence. Recipients of unemployment benefits are exempt from the costs for the integration course which covers language lessons as well as lessons relating to orientation in fields such as politics, democracy, history, society, culture. (2) In addition, several organizations offer open educational resources for new immigrants, such as the [ZUM-Willkommen](#) platform.

Slovenia: Since the implementation of the decree on integration of foreigners, several integration programs have been implemented by the Ministry of Interior, Employment Service and NGOS, such as Slovenian language courses for foreigners, learning Slovenian culture and history, etc. The program "Initial Integration of Immigrants" provides a free Slovene language course that also includes contents on the knowledge of the Slovene society. Depending on the duration of residency in Slovenia and the kind of residence permit the courses last 60, 120 or 180 hours.

Sweden: (1) SFI courses (Svenskaundervisning för invandrare/Swedish for immigrants) are offered to all new immigrants as part of the aforementioned establishment programme across Sweden. The programme aims to give new immigrants a basic knowledge of the Swedish language, and many of the SFI tracks now include the option to combine the language courses with an internship programme (though that this option is not often offered by case workers). (2) Lund University and other Swedish Universities run dedicated programmes for Swedish as a Foreign Language (both on campus and as distant courses). These one-year programmes start at beginners level and aim for participants to have reached university level by the end of the course. Upon the successful completion of these tracks, the new immigrants are qualified to apply for first or second cycle university courses taught in Swedish. A similar programme exists for new immigrants who want to qualify to apply for technical schools or first cycle university education levels (Swedish as a second language tracks).

Greece: (1) There is a National Plan in place which foresees various measures for the integration of migrants including pre-departure measures, (intercultural) language tuition, capacity building for Migrant Support Centres, and housing of vulnerable groups. However, this plan is still in need of complementary financial resources to be fully implemented. (2) Currently, the Community (and Migrant Support) Centers are the core of One Stop Shop services, with a personalized holistic approach, which collaborate with the social services directorates of the local authorities. (3) There is no official obligation to attend specific Greek language classes. The state is only interested in seeing whether you have learned the language or not. There have been some EU- funded projects implemented by private lifelong learning centers; right now it's mainly NGOs and voluntary independent groups that organize Greek language courses targeting migrants and refugees.

Spain: There are different initiatives offering complete counseling to new immigrants to achieve a good integration into the Spanish society. For example, the Participation and Integration Centres (CEPI) are meeting places for new locals and those of always, where they can have access to various activities such as training courses, legal advice, job search and improvement workshops, various cultural programs and sports activities. The socio-labour insertion activities are co-financed by the European Social Fund.

Austria: (1) The Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) organizes value- and orientation

courses for new immigrants covering aspects such as work and employment, gender, health, environment and neighborhood, culture and society, and safety and police. (2) Persons already entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection as well as asylum seekers with a high probability of recognition must attend a compulsory integration year. It enables them to collect work experience, to complete language and value classes and to pass labour market orientation trainings and gain working experience.

Vocational orientation, transition into training and work

There is a multitude of organizations in the partner countries offering services such as vocational orientation, initial profiling, individual guidance and counseling, competence assessment, placements, support with gaining school-leaving qualifications, validation and recognition of education/certifications, coaching, support with job applications and qualification measures for new immigrants seeking help on their way to integrating into work and training. The boundaries between "orientation" and "transition" are often blurred, so we are pooling the good practice examples that have been mentioned in the SCOUT national reports here:

Germany: (1) LernNetz Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. which offers mobile educational counseling for vocational orientation, (2) [TIO educational counseling](#) in Berlin focusing primarily on multi-lingual services for female refugees, (3) [Arbeit und Bildung e.V.](#), (4) the project "[Training in sight](#)" by Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Integration und Frauen offers gaining school-leaving qualifications, accompanying German lessons, and help with transition into vocational training.

Sweden: (1) The Korta Vägen (Short Route) programmes implemented by Folk University for new immigrants who have a university degree or have completed at least three years of academic studies in their home country includes Swedish language courses, an introduction to Swedish society and working culture, job coaching, and practical work experience in a Swedish workplace related to their professions. It also prepares new immigrants for university studies, if they need to supplement their degrees. (2) Vägledningscentrum: These guiding centers exist in all main Swedish cities and provide information regarding the validation process, guidance for all types of vocational, technical and academic educational tracks, also including competency assessments and assessments of language levels. Services are offered to all individuals including new immigrants having the right of residency in Sweden. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the centers and the services they offer. (3) Socialstyrelsen: The National Board of Health and Welfare is responsible for the validation of new immigrants' qualifications in healthcare. (4) The Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets-och högskolerådet, UHR) evaluates foreign qualifications and provides support for all including new immigrants looking for work in Sweden, persons who wish to continue studying, or employers who wish to employ candidates with foreign qualifications.

Greece: Immigrants do not enjoy equal rights with Greek and EU citizens, unless they have the status of long-term residents, which guarantees access to a wide range of employment and labour activities. Long-term residents and certain categories of holders of temporary work permits and family reunion permits have equal access to self-employment just like EU nationals. In the field of life-long

learning, there are targeted vocational training programmes for third country nationals such as craftsmanship, housekeeping etc. Furthermore, unemployed immigrants legally residing in Greece can participate in vocational training, which is run by the Organisation for Manpower Employment in cooperation with the EU-funded Centres of Professional Training.

Slovenia: The Slovenian SCOUT partner LUV carried out a program intended for foreigners aged 50+ who wanted to improve their employment options.

Austria: (1) Several Austrian institutions work in cooperation with the AMS (Austrian Labour Market Services) to deliver counseling regarding education, starting a business, employment of foreign nationals, social security, residence law and citizenship. (2) The Competence Check allows to assess professional competences of new immigrants. It is based on the evaluation of professional experience and methodical expertise, funded by the AMS and conducted by several organizations, including the Austrian SCOUT partner die Berater. After the competence check, clients are transferred to suitable courses. (3) "Start Vienna - the Youth College" (funded by the ESF) is an offer for young people from 15 to 21 years and offers 1000 course places in two locations. The aim is to help young people prepare for secondary schools, vocational training or a permanent job.

BOX 5: OVERVIEW ON NEW IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION MEASURES IN THE SCOUT PARTNER COUNTRIES

Competence assessment or validation of new immigrants (good practices)

With regard to migrant integration into the labour market, the European Commission continues to promote the facilitation of skills validation and recognition of qualifications. This is seen as particularly important for refugees, who may not have the necessary documentary evidence of their previous learning and qualifications, may have had their education interrupted or may not have participated in formal education (cf. European Commission, 2016).

Most EU countries already have different pathways for assessing, validating and recognizing (formal) qualifications acquired abroad. In addition, the on-going debate about accreditation of non-formal and informal learning has led to the implementation of procedures for the accreditation of prior learning in various member states. However, all these recognition systems continue to differ largely from one country to the other (for a deeper discussion of this topic, please refer to Schuster et al., 2013).

The following initiatives for competence assessment and validation have been identified in the SCOUT national reports:

Sweden: (1) Many of the Swedish programs already mentioned further above (Vägledningscentrum, Folkuniversitet Korta Vägen) can be considered best practices. (2) Snabbspår (Fast Track) and its regional supportive programmes (Lanstyrelsen) is a validation programme implemented by the Swedish Public Employment Services. It aims at shortening the time taken to validate competencies and qualifications and integrate new immigrants into the Swedish labour market as quickly as possible. (3) Other best practices mentioned in the

national report are the Malmö University's [programme](#) for students with foreign academic backgrounds and programmes linked with the Establishment Programme implemented by the Swedish Public Employment Service: [jobskills.se](#) in 6 languages, [New in Sweden Programme](#) and [Validation Support](#).

Greece: Although the procedures in Greece for the recognition of professional qualifications acquired outside the EU are in principle the same for immigrants and EU nationals, titles acquired in non-EU countries are often downgraded or not recognized. The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) is an all-encompassing statutory body investing in better quality and more efficient lifelong learning services in Greece. In principle, migrants who have a legal residence status can go through the procedures to recognize their qualifications and degrees. The process of having qualifications recognized from non-EU countries, however, is fairly long, bureaucratic and demanding. Furthermore, migrants, especially women, have limited access to information about procedures, requirements, fees etc, therefore they either postpone this process or choose not to pursue it at all. Interestingly enough, the interviews with Greek SCOUT stakeholders revealed that there are barely any official or wider-known state provisions aiming at assessing migrants' knowledge and skills (except for individual consultation sessions by OAED, the Greek Manpower organization).

Germany: Competence assessment and preparation for the labour market for new immigrants are to some extent included in many integration measures and are also offered in different educational offers in single projects funded on a national or federal state level. However, a comprehensive funding of the competence assessment of new immigrants does not exist in Germany yet. Several initiatives are mentioned in the national SCOUT report: (1) the multilingual portal "Recognition in Germany" (das [Anerkennungsportal](#)) by the German federal government primarily addresses persons who have acquired a professional qualification abroad. The portal also supports the staff of recognition counseling services, job centers and employment agencies in their daily work. The legal basis for the portal is the Federal Recognition Act and corresponding federal state regulations. These legal provisions simplify the recognition of foreign vocational certificates and promote the integration of qualified migrants into the German labour market. (2) Regarding the recognition of non-formal and informal competences, various approaches and initiatives have emerged in Germany (such as the [ValiKom](#) project or the project "[Identification of vocational competences](#)") and currently a strategy for a generally applicable validation system in Germany is being developed. (3) Generally speaking, there are various projects and initiatives in Germany focusing on the assessment of competences of new immigrants. One good practice example is the program "Counselling on vocational development" (Beratung zur beruflichen Entwicklung, [BBE](#)) which offers counseling on competence assessment with different methods (ProfilPASS, Talentkompass) for persons with vocational qualifications acquired abroad and a basic counseling on the recognition of foreign vocational qualifications. Those seeking advice can make use of up to nine free consultation appointments. (4) The ProfilPASS has been tested in two projects with new immigrants. In the project "Finding a job that suits me", the [ProfilPASS](#) was used in combination with the Life-Work-Planning method with the aim of assessing competences and facilitating the entry into the labour market. In the project "ProfilPASS for Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers", the competence assessment tool was also used for assessing individual strengths and interests of young

immigrants while also taking all of their relevant living areas into account. A particular focus was put on informal learning. The project was targeted at enabling the young people to reflect their own actions, to make them identify with their personal competences and interests and thus to enhance their self-confidence and motivation. (5) Other tools for the assessment of competences are the [Kompetenzenbilanz](#) and [Talentkompass NRW](#). Other competence assessment methods specifically addressed to migrants are the [Kombi-Laufbahnberatung](#) (mainly available in Bavaria) and the [competence cards](#) (developed by the Bertelsmann Foundation).

Slovenia: Several national institutions are involved in competence and knowledge assessment (ENIC.NARIC and RIC-National Examinations Centre). During integration courses only Slovenian language knowledge is assessed, there is no assessment of competences or skills provided. A model project on competence assessment ran between 2012-2014 with tools still being used in counselling and follow-up projects. However, replies from migrants show that the evaluation and recognition of (non-formal) competences rarely happens, and there is a lack of tools and processes available to the general public.

Spain: There is no specific competence assessment for new immigrants provided.

Austria: Besides the measures already mentioned above (competence check, Youth College), the following initiatives were mentioned in the national report: (1) The online portal for evaluation of certificates, degrees of educational qualifications [berufsanerkennung.at](#) supports users in working in a chosen profession, attending school or professional training or to start studying at an Austrian university. (2) The website [migrant.at](#) provides consultation regarding the recognition of academic degrees and regarding the admission to study at an Austrian University.

BOX 6: OVERVIEW ON GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES RELATED TO ASSESSMENT OF NEW IMMIGRANTS' COMPETENCES IN THE SCOUT PARTNER COUNTRIES

Conclusions for the further development of the SCOUT toolkit

The following points are a round up of important topics to consider for the further development of the SCOUT toolkit and reflect the issues risen in the national reports as well as during discussions at the SCOUT kick-off meeting on 23 and 24 of January 2018 in Vienna.

Problem areas and needs related to the assessment of new immigrants' competences

In the following box 7, research findings related to problematic situations and existing needs related to the assessment of competences of new immigrants are collected and summarized.

- According to the research findings, low language skills are an entry hindrance to access recognition services and further support.

- No information provided in the native languages of new migrants and a lack of translators who could provide necessary information are serious problems which have to be faced.
- Other important reasons why new immigrants either postpone the process of assessing their competences or choose not to pursue it at all are limited access to information about procedures, requirements and fees. In general, it can be said that understandable information for the target group must be provided.
- Individuals with low education levels need trained personnel to support them in going through the process of an expedient competence assessment.
- Competence assessment does not guarantee finding a job, let alone in economies with high unemployment rates (e.g. Greece), so the "costs" or hassle of going through a competence assessment might not pay off. At least not immediately.
- A problem area reported from Greece is that many new migrants do not even plan to stay in the country, so they merely want to find a job to cover expenses. According to the interviewed experts, they do not care about generating or assessing skills. Their main objective is to earn money to be able to continue their travel as soon as possible. In general, when arriving to a new country finding work is often a priority and new immigrants have little contact to educational organizations. Their first contact with educational institutions is usually a language course.

BOX 7: NEEDS AND KEY PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCES OF NEW IMMIGRANTS

Advice regarding the development of the SCOUT toolkit

During the intense research phase of SCOUT especially in the focus groups and qualitative interviews, several experts with long-standing experience in migration related fields gave advice regarding the development of the SCOUT toolkit. Box 8 summarizes those findings which have been generated in all partner countries.

- A great emphasis in the toolkit should be placed on languages. Speaking foreign languages is a plus in the job market. The experience of the experts says that refugees often speak more than one foreign language and that the host country's language is in many cases their third language. This is an advantage which should be used and made more visible. Especially in our plural society and globalized world, skills related to any kind of communication become more and more important. In politics, economy but also in the social sector, individuals who have the ability to speak foreign languages are much in demand, for example for translating or interpreting activities. Enabling successful communication is one of the key points of the functioning of our society. The importance of this skill can therefore not be underestimated.
- According to the research findings it would be advisable to support new immigrants in their job seeking activities. Assessment of competences should therefore be connected with career coaching, job preparation and job searching elements.

- The findings generated in the qualitative interviews say that digital tools would enhance the chance to reach a high number of participants.
- According to the findings in a focus group conducted in one of the partner countries, the tools with a high number of visualizations are especially successful when implemented in the relevant field.
- As we learned from studying best practices, there is a tool which can be used simultaneously in two languages. This function is highly rated by the questioned experts and the SCOUT project team should therefore keep the "Skills and Qualifications Toolkit" provided by the European Commission in mind.
- The new SCOUT tool should allow the counsellor and candidate to work on only those modules relevant for the candidate. More flexibility is suggested. Also, the language should be simple, and graphical elements should be used. Parts of the tool should allow candidates to work on them on their own, without the help of a counselor. These parts would require guidelines.

BOX 8: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE OF THE SCOUT TOOLKIT

Important challenges which could arise during the development work within SCOUT

Box 9 includes key findings related to the discussion about potential challenges which the SCOUT project team will face within the development phase of the SCOUT toolkit. These discussions have been conducted in all partner countries in form of focus groups or qualitative interviews. Experts gave their opinion on potential risks, in order to support the working process and prepare the SCOUT team in the best possible way on their upcoming tasks.

- According to the findings generated in the qualitative interviews it can be generally said, that information on available services is not widely accessible. Services are often unknown to potential beneficiaries and existing practices lack public visibility.
- Practical information concerning where to go, whom to ask and what to expect are often hard to acquire.
- When competence assessment tools based on self-reflection are used, overstatement related to competences cannot be avoided. Therefore, the SCOUT toolkit should include a concept to support honest self-estimation.
- When developing the toolkit, the project team should keep in mind that in many countries it is difficult to pay consultants to support or conduct the assessment.
- According to the research findings, many competence assessment tools are only useful for participants if trained personnel is supporting them in conducting the assessment. The SCOUT toolkit should develop or include tools which need no support or ensure that the necessary support is available.
- Competence assessment tools are often very complex and using it often costs time and effort. Therefore, a focus should be put on explaining the benefits for the users of the respective tools.

BOX 9: POTENTIAL CHALLENGES THAT MUST BE MET, TO ENSURE THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCOUT TOOLKIT

Suggestions for the ProfilPASS

Since the ProfilPASS is going to form the core of the SCOUT-toolkit, one of the main objectives of the conducted research activities was to gain knowledge about possible improvements of the ProfilPASS (profilpass.de). It is especially interesting for SCOUT to understand in which way the ProfilPASS has to be adjusted to fit the needs of new immigrants considering the recommendations and key findings in Box 9. In the following box 10, advice related to the advancement of the ProfilPASS are summarized. These findings will support the SCOUT project team in developing the envisaged results.

- The language barrier could be an issue, because it seems that the participants must already have good language skills to fill out the ProfilPASS. Native speakers in a counselling function could solve this potential problem.
- It would be advisable to use the work with ProfilPASS also as an opportunity to improve language skills. According to the experts involved in the research, working with the ProfilPASS could be supportive for acquiring the host country language. Existing language skills can be fostered through the competence assessment with the ProfilPASS. In addition, the competence assessment can be complemented by vocational orientation content.
- Keeping in mind that the tool will be used by non-native speakers, it would be important to develop a linguistically simplified and visually well-designed version of the ProfilPASS. It is also advisable to increase the number of visualizations within the tool.
- The ProfilPASS is intended to be used by new immigrants who already use their host country's national language at B1 level. Nevertheless, a dictionary for keywords or a similar tool could prove useful. A vocabulary book was suggested as an additional aid for the ProfilPASS counselling which could contain the most important key words for the ProfilPASS and would simultaneously contribute to the language development of the new immigrants. Furthermore, it would improve the quality of the tool if specific directions and clear goals were integrated in every unit.
- According to the findings of the interviews, interested stakeholders would prefer to use a html website version of the ProfilPASS instead of the current pdf version.
- The website format would also allow to implement an additional job search element into the ProfilPASS. This would be helpful, because all relevant personal information is already documented in a clear way in the ProfilPASS along with practical information concerning where to go, whom to ask and what to expect.
- Data protection is currently a very important issue all over Europe. Clear regulations in conformity with the data protection law must be established no matter which format is used - print, pdf or html.
- Participants of feedback meetings commented that the ProfilPASS is time-consuming and in a very long format. According to the research findings, it would make sense to develop a more compact form of the tool.
- The last advice in this section points to a similar direction. It was highly recommended by the involved experts to divide the new version of the ProfilPASS into three modules in separate files. This would enhance usability.

Box 10: KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS OF THE PROFILPASS

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Annex 1: Focus Group or Interview Guideline

Agenda for focus groups or qualitative interviews

- *Welcome and short presentation of the key elements of SCOUT*
 - *Introduction of the participants*
 - *Clarification of what is expected from the focus group participants or interviewees*
 - *Discussion on the questions prepared (see focus group or interview guideline)*
1. Please give us an overview about the most important types of new immigrant integration measures that you know about? Why are these measures especially important? Which institution is responsible for the integration measure? Are they successful and in what way?
 2. Please tell us if competences of new immigrants are assessed or validated in these integration measures. If yes, how is it done?
 3. Could you give us examples of good practice with regard to assessment of new immigrants' competences?
 4. Could you please describe existing or potential problem areas related to the assessment of new immigrants' competences?
 5. What are in your opinion the needs of new immigrants regarding the assessment of their competences?
 6. Please give us feedback on the existing ProfilPASS. Which additional elements would be helpful? (Interviewer instruction: *Give a brief overview about the concept and purpose of the ProfilPASS as well as its chances and limits that you see. Give out the printed version of the ProfilPASS, if it is not already known.*)
 7. What is your opinion on the objectives of SCOUT? Which potential challenges could arise? How could we overcome these challenges?
 8. What kind of product would you use or what do you think what kind of product (SCOUT toolkit) would be useful?

Annex 2: National Report Template

Demographic data related to the target group

(researcher instructions: *please conduct desk research and deliver concrete numbers on arrivals, labour market integration, unemployment rate, participants in integration measures – if there this is not possible please mark it in your report with “no data available”*)

Types of new immigrant integration measures (researcher instructions: *please add your findings from desk research and summarize the answers to question 1 of the interviews or focus group*)

Possible types of measures e.g.:

- Language courses
- Vocational guidance and counselling
- Integration in the labour market (e.g. by the chamber of commerce)
- Formal recognition of certificates
- Resources: educational materials (e.g. for voluntary workers)

Competence assessment or validation of new immigrants (researcher instructions: *please add your findings from desk research and summarize the answers to question 2 of the interviews or focus group*)

Good practice examples related to assessment of new immigrants' competences (researcher instructions: *please add your findings and summarize the answers to question 3 of the interviews or focus group*)

Problem areas related to the assessment of new immigrants' competences (researcher instructions: *please add your findings from desk research and summarize the answers to question 4 of the interviews or focus group*)

Needs of new immigrants regarding the assessment of competences (researcher instructions: *please add your findings from desk research and summarize the answers to question 5 of the interviews or focus group*)

Feedback on and possible improvement of the ProfilPASS (researcher instructions: *please summarize the answers to question 6 of the interviews or focus group*)

Important challenges which could arise during the development work within SCOUT (researcher instructions: *please summarize the answers to question 7 of the interviews or focus group*)

Advices regarding the development of the SCOUT toolkit (researcher instructions: *please summarize the answers to question 8 of the interviews or focus group*)

Annex 3: National Needs Reports