



Occupational promotion of migrant workers

Introduction
Employment situation
Recognition of qualifications and skills
Training provision
Policies for promoting equal opportunities
Collective bargaining
Good practices examples
Conclusions
References
Annex: Country codes and abbreviations

This report is available in electronic format only.

Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18, Ireland. - Tel: (+353 1) 204 31 00 - Fax: 282 42 09 / 282 64

56

e-mail: information@eurofound.europa.eu - website: www.eurofound.europa.eu

This report examines the situation regarding the occupational promotion of migrant workers in the EU Member States and Norway. Previous research has shown that migrant workers are frequently segregated into low-paid, unskilled and precarious employment. This report confirms this research, providing clear evidence of barriers to the occupational promotion of migrant workers – such as the prevalence of temporary employment, higher level of over-education, fewer training opportunities and poor recognition of qualifications among these workers. The second part of the report looks at some public policies and good practices which aim to foster the occupational promotion of migrant workers – including education and training programmes, and collective bargaining initiatives. The report points to the lack of well-documented cases of such practices, as well as the need for greater monitoring of these initiatives.

Introduction

The report on the [Employment and working conditions of migrant workers](#) (2007 report henceforth), published in 2007 by the [European Working Conditions Observatory \(EWCO\)](#), clearly shows that migrant workers in the European Union tend to be segregated into low-paid, unskilled and precarious occupations. This, in turn, exposes them to a high risk of poverty, unemployment, over-education, as well as to more frequent work-related health problems and accidents.

Migrant workers face a twofold inequality in this regard: they are not only more often recruited into these types of jobs, but also remain more frequently in such employment. Although most of the current empirical evidence on their employment conditions is still based on cross-sectional surveys, the 2007 report gives clear indications that migrant workers experience extremely limited opportunities for career advancement – which represents a crucial disadvantage for such workers. Research shows that, in economically advanced countries, native women and young workers are also often recruited into unskilled and unstable occupations in the services sector for some time; however, this usually represents a temporary situation in most cases, at least for skilled native workers. In contrast, for the majority of migrant workers, occupational and economic deprivation is a permanent condition, even if they are highly educated. Workers who have a poor educational background can acquire considerable technical expertise through on-the-job learning in manual occupations. However, this does not appear to be the case in relation to migrant workers, for whom even the transition from unskilled to skilled blue-collar positions is highly problematic, mostly due to widespread and covert [discrimination](#).

This social and economic devaluation of migrant workers' skills represents a blatant form of social inequality and a considerable waste of human capital. There is also a danger that, if something is perceived as a permanent condition, it can become even more difficult for the individual to accept and tolerate. At the same time, it develops into a form of [social exclusion](#) that poses a serious challenge for the social cohesion of European societies. For these reasons, a specific focus on the occupational promotion of migrant workers is undoubtedly justified. It also offers a logical continuation of the 2007 report, providing a particular focus on the dynamics of inequality experienced by migrant workers. Moreover, this report goes one step further by addressing the issue of labour market policies and best practices developed so far, which have the potential to combat the occupational discrimination faced by migrant workers.

Outline of report

This report is divided into two parts. The first part presents an overview of the current evidence on barriers to career mobility experienced by migrant workers in the EU, by matching information on their occupational trajectories with data on their opportunities for competence development. In particular, these workers' segregation into low-level, precarious jobs, their chances of career advancement, as well as their formal qualifications and

This report is available in electronic format only.

opportunities for training will be addressed. The second part of the report focuses on public policies for fostering the workplace promotion of migrant workers, including education and training programmes. It also describes the role of multi-employer and company-level bargaining, as well as considering best practices in the successful promotion of migrant workers at the workplace.

The report relies on information provided by experts in migration and labour market issues in the current 27 Member States of the EU (EU27), along with Norway. The accompanying national reports have summarised results from existing surveys, ad hoc studies and documents concerning the aforementioned issues. As these studies cover a considerable amount of data, this report will only outline the main findings that emerge from a systematic comparison of information reported by the national experts; nevertheless, readers can also consult the individual reports directly to find more detailed information on the national situations, as well as all references to the primary sources of information (not reported here). This report also relies heavily on the aforementioned 2007 report on the employment conditions of migrant workers, where a more wide-ranging discussion of migration phenomena and of migrant workers' labour market conditions is presented. Thus, the 2007 report provides a useful, if not necessary, framework for the contents of this report.

For the purposes of this research, migrants are defined as non-nationals living in a foreign country. While such a definition is only one of many, at least it has been applied consistently by the national experts to standardise across countries the target population of this report. Two exceptions should be noted in this regard: that is, with respect to Estonia and Latvia. In the latter country, migrant workers refer to foreigners who have arrived in the country after 1990 to work and who are not citizens of Latvia. The national report for Estonia distinguishes between Estonians and non-Estonians on the basis of ethnicity rather than nationality. These differences can be traced back to the history of these two countries, which were part of the Soviet Union until 1991. It should also be noted that the definition used in this report is not only restricted to regular migrants, which is particularly relevant for some countries where illegal immigration is widespread, such as Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain. Not surprisingly, for a variety of reasons, it is extremely difficult to collect information on illegal migrants. Therefore, the real representativeness of several estimates presented in this report – as well as in other similar publications – may be open to interpretation.

It is also worth highlighting, at this point, some other significant limitations of the research. Firstly, it should be noted that almost all of the national experts have indicated that the issue of migrant workers' occupational promotion has received limited attention in the public debate of their respective countries. In some cases, most often in the Member States of eastern Europe – namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – the simple reason for this is that the issue of migration itself is virtually ignored by policymakers. In other cases, policymakers are more focused on other issues – such as illegal immigration, crimes committed by migrants and the need for tighter restrictions to gain access to and work in the EU. At best, migrant workers are more or less implicitly regarded as a cheap and highly flexible segment of the workforce that can be easily exploited, but not as an important target of public policies. In short, the lack of public debate and systematic interventions to foster the occupational promotion of migrant workers is a highly critical point underlined by most of the national experts.

While this point will be revisited in the second part of the report, it is important to highlight it at this stage in order to stress the vicious circle that can arise as a result of a dearth of public attention to such issues and a serious lack of empirical evidence on the occupational advancement of migrant workers. In other words, as this issue has been a low priority for national policymakers, it has also created a limited incentive to collect information about it, not to mention the lack of funding and resources resulting from such underexposure. In turn, the lack of systematic and reliable data contributes to perpetuating the low public attention given to this issue. It appears that European societies do not know much about this issue thus far and, at the same time, may not want to increase their knowledge in this respect as they

seem to be ignoring its dramatic consequences for social inequality, economic efficiency and social cohesion in the EU.

Unfortunately, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, independent academic research has also devoted limited attention to this topic in most countries. While some knowledge about the occupational attainment of migrant workers has been gathered for this report, the longitudinal analyses necessary to assess its dynamic and prospective dimension, crucially implied by the issue of career promotion, have yet to be conducted in the majority of cases. Hence, due to several of the research issues already mentioned, there is a lack of information; in other cases, or for some countries, information can only be indirectly inferred. The problem is even more serious with regard to the specific issue of public policies, programmes and best practices seeking to foster the occupational promotion of migrant workers, as discussed in the second part of this report. National experts often recognise that systematic studies on these topics have never been carried out and, therefore, it is often difficult to go beyond anecdotal evidence.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this report represents one of the first efforts to break the vicious circle between the limited public attention given to these issues and the poor, selective knowledge that is available about them. In spite of the methodological limitations of such research, which will be carefully alluded to in the course of this report, it is apparent that sufficient knowledge about the occupational promotion of migrant workers already exists to regard it as a core challenge for the future of European societies.

Employment situation

Migrant workers constitute a flexible component of labour supply, which is one of the reasons why they are particularly appealing to employers. However, if these workers are forced to move frequently from one job to the next, their career advancement opportunities are dramatically reduced. Therefore, fostering the occupational stability of migrant workers is the basic premise for enhancing their workplace promotion opportunities. For this reason, it seems logical to begin this first part of the report with an analysis of the extent of temporary employment among migrant workers.

However, it should be borne in mind that countries differ considerably with regard to the occupational protection and social rights associated with temporary employment contracts and that, within any given country, several forms of atypical contracts exist, often entailing markedly different implications in terms of occupational protection. Moreover, the overlap between **atypical work** and some 'weak' forms of self-employment is yet another point to consider. It should also be pointed out that the higher exposure to temporary employment does not necessarily indicate weak labour market integration. For instance, in Bulgaria and Luxembourg, which are characterised by high proportions of skilled migrant workers from west European countries (Member States excluding aforementioned east European countries), atypical contracts may be voluntarily accepted by foreign workers employed as freelance professionals or consultants.

Generally speaking, however, the national reports confirm that the prevalence of temporary employment is higher among migrant workers and that this reflects their weaker labour market integration. Estonia is indeed the only country examined in this report where the differences between nationals and migrants with regard to their exposure to atypical contracts are negligible, at 2.5% for the former and 3.3% for the latter. In other countries, such as Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Malta, the differences between nationals and migrants are quite modest in absolute terms, as temporary employment in general is not that widespread. Nevertheless, relative differentials are noticeable. In Germany, for example, 14.9% of native workers and 17.8% of migrant workers held a temporary contract in 2006; while the absolute difference between these two percentages is quite small, it also indicates that the relative risk of accessing these contracts is 23% higher for migrant workers (based on the odds ratio of being employed on a temporary contract, calculated as follows: $[17.8/(100-$

17.8)]/[14.9/(100-14.9)]). In other words, among the small proportion of workers who are found in temporary employment, migrant workers are clearly overrepresented.

In Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg, evidence also emerges that unskilled migrant workers are more exposed to temporary employment, while in other countries marked absolute differentials have been documented, although with strong variations according to the country of origin. In Finland, for example, 90% of native male workers held a permanent contract in 2003; this proportion declined to just 88% in the case of Vietnamese men, but significantly lower to 52% for men from Somalia. The corresponding values for permanent female workers in Finland were 83%, 86% and 21% respectively. In the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Sweden, migrant workers generally benefit from lower occupational protection, although this does not apply to those from their rich European neighbouring countries. In the United Kingdom (UK), some 52% of migrant workers held temporary contracts in 2004. The absolute differentials between native and migrant workers on temporary contracts are also considerable in Norway, Slovenia and Spain. In Slovenia, it is estimated that at least 49% of migrant workers are employed on a temporary basis, compared with less than 15% of the total employed population. In Spain, just as in other Mediterranean countries like Italy or Malta, the disadvantages experienced by migrant workers are particularly amplified by their much higher involvement in the irregular economy, where did they no enjoy employment protection rights. It should also be noted that national experts report that the absolute disadvantage of migrant workers is higher in the case of non-EU nationals. For instance, in Norway, migrant workers from Iraq and Somalia face a particularly high exposure to temporary employment.

In short, it appears that migrant workers have poor occupational protection compared with native workers: this is a systematic tendency, although its intensity, as well as its qualitative characteristics, can vary considerably across countries. Given these findings, it may be expected that the career patterns of migrant workers are characterised by greater instability – a reality which is reflected in the statistics on job tenure available in some countries. In particular, in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands, national experts are able to document substantially shorter job tenures for migrant workers. For example, in Austria, whereas the average job tenure of native workers amounts to 10 years, it only reaches about half of this amount for migrant workers, at 5.3 years. This pattern is similar for both sexes in Austria; in Italy, on the other hand, women are particularly disadvantaged in this respect. However, it should be noted that immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Italy, which means that only a small number of migrant workers could have had a long job tenure. Nonetheless, their higher exposure to temporary employment and to unstable jobs also plays a role, probably together with some form of covert discrimination. Finally, given the previously mentioned results regarding the relatively low levels of temporary employment among migrants in Estonia, it is not surprising that the differences between native and migrant workers with regard to job tenure are negligible in this country.

If a significant proportion of migrant workers move from one precarious, unskilled job to the next, it is difficult for them to maintain positive expectations about their occupational attainment; this is confirmed by data on migrant workers' current job, coded on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO)-88 (Table 1). The data could only be examined at the highest level of aggregation of ISCO – that is, at its nine one-digit categories. However crude this measure may be, the results are too strong and consistent across the countries to raise any doubts about the main characteristics of occupational inequalities between native and migrant workers. The latter are systematically underrepresented in ISCO categories 1 to 3 – that is, among managers, professionals and high-level technicians. Conversely, they are overrepresented in categories 7 to 9 – namely, among the manual occupations. In some countries – such as Belgium, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden – ISCO-coded data are not available. Nevertheless, information regarding the sectoral distribution of migrant employment confirms this general result: migrant workers are overrepresented in agriculture, industry, construction, tourism and restaurants, that is in the sectors characterised by high proportions of manual workers. This finding is in line with those of the 2007 EWCO report, where a detailed discussion of the

sectoral distribution of migrant employment was presented. It should be noted that differentials in favour of native workers would probably be even greater if it was possible to include information about seasonal employment in agriculture and jobs in the informal economy.

One exception to this trend can be found in Bulgaria and Romania, where a high proportion of migrant workers are managers and professionals; however, this is not necessarily surprising given that these countries seem to have a small share of migrant workers, mainly concentrated among highly-skilled workers from the original 15 EU Member States (EU15). In Malta, about 20% of migrant workers can be found in professional occupations, compared with around 12% of the general population. Migrant workers are also slightly more prevalent among managerial occupations in Malta – although they are also overrepresented in unskilled blue-collar jobs, while irregular migrant workers, not captured in these findings, tend to find unskilled jobs such as cleaners or labourers in construction and catering. A similarly dualistic structure of migrant employment can also be found in Luxembourg: in this country, workers of Portuguese and Italian origin are overrepresented in manual occupations and underrepresented among skilled white-collar jobs; at the same time, cross-border workers from Belgium, Germany or the Netherlands often have higher qualifications than nationals and they typically work in professional and managerial jobs. Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic, Finland and Spain, migrant workers experience a strong disadvantage in the labour market, unless they come from economically advanced nations. Finland confirms this trend, with migrant workers from Somalia experiencing a particularly weak position in the labour market.

Table 1: Occupational distribution of migrant workers in EU, by country

Country	Occupational or sectoral distribution of migrant workers
AT	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in unskilled and skilled manual occupations
BE	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors and industries with a high proportion of unskilled manual positions: agriculture, industrial cleaning, hotels and restaurants
BG	EU15 nationals are mostly employed as consultants, chief managers, engineers and technicians
CY	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors and industries with a high proportion of unskilled manual positions: retail trade, personal services, hotels and restaurants, manufacturing and construction
CZ	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled and semi-skilled manual occupations, craft workers and related trades Professionals and technicians account for 13.7% of migrant employment; however, 85.5% of EU15 nationals work in these occupations
DE	Significant concentration of migrant workers in unskilled occupations
DK	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors and industries with a high proportion of unskilled manual positions: personal services, wholesale, restaurants, manufacturing and construction A share of migrant employment can also be found in financial intermediation and business activities
EE	Moderate overrepresentation of migrant workers among clerks, shop and sale workers, and unskilled manual occupations Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among craft and trade workers

EL	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors with a high proportion of unskilled manual positions: agriculture, industry, personal services, hotels and restaurants
ES	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled occupations, personal care and trade jobs, but also among skilled workers in manufacturing and construction
FI	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual workers
FR	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual workers; equal share among clerks and craft workers
HU	Overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual occupations, craft and service workers, as well as shop workers EU nationals are mostly employed as professionals
IE	Overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual occupations Moderate underrepresentation of such workers among clerks; equal share among managers and professionals, craft and trade workers, along with service workers
IT	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers
LU	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual workers in industry and construction Cross-border workers are mostly employed in skilled professional jobs
LV	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors with a high proportion of unskilled manual positions: construction and industry
MT	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual occupations, but also some overrepresentation among managers and professionals
NO	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers among unskilled manual occupations
PL	Overrepresentation of migrant workers in industry, trades and among teachers
RO	EU nationals are mostly employed as managers
SE	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors with a high proportion of unskilled manual positions: industry, construction, hotels and restaurants, personal services
SI	Strong overrepresentation of migrant workers in sectors with a high proportion of manual positions: industry and manufacturing

Source: Responses to EWCO national correspondents' questionnaire, 2008

It should be highlighted that the results regarding the poor occupational achievement of migrant workers are likely to underestimate their overall disadvantage in the labour market, due to a standard bias of selection in employment, as it is known that unemployment is higher among non-nationals.

Over-education

Empirical data on over-education provide further evidence of the poor occupational achievement of migrant workers, even among those who are highly qualified. Over-education is where workers possess an educational degree or professional qualification that is of a higher level than that required for the job they hold. Although this definition is uncontroversial, it is far from clear how to measure the lack of correlation between formal qualifications and occupational positions – particularly when the latter refer to credentials acquired in a foreign country whose ‘content’ is not always clear. Different approaches have been proposed, and it is widely recognised that they can lead to different substantive conclusions. The national experts relied mainly on a comparison between the level of education – for example, as measured through the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) – and occupational position – coded, for instance, on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) schema – rather than on the subjective judgements of respondents. Results point unequivocally to a higher prevalence of over-education among migrant workers. For instance, whereas in Austria only 7% of native female workers with an Austrian third-level education certificate work in unskilled jobs, some 32% of women with a foreign educational certificate work in such jobs. The corresponding values for men are 5% and 32%, respectively. This suggests that the incidence of over-education is more dependent on whether the educational qualification has been obtained in Austria or abroad. In Germany, the risk of over-education is twice as high for migrant workers than for native workers and, once again, a major obstacle is the complex and strict regulations regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications. The German national report estimates that 20.4% of foreign-born migrant workers were overqualified, compared with just 11.4% of native workers. Similarly, the Czech national correspondent reports that 18.9% of foreign workers were over-qualified for the work they did in 2007. In Estonia, native workers more frequently have jobs which correspond to their educational level compared with foreign workers. A similar conclusion is reported for Ireland, Norway and the UK. In Italy, migrant workers are heavily disadvantaged, with gender and education playing a significant role in this case: among third-level graduates, female migrant workers appear to be in a similar position as their male counterparts; however, among migrant workers with an upper-secondary education, women are in a better position. The Spanish national correspondent also provides evidence of higher levels of over-education among migrant workers, although their disadvantage decreases along their career trajectory. In Greece, there are indications that migrant workers are highly subject to a devaluation of their formal qualifications, while in Cyprus it emerges that foreign third-level graduates are often employed in unskilled jobs in the hotel industry and agricultural sector.

Therefore, the results point to a serious waste of human capital in European societies. Moreover, in the absence of policies to combat this problem, the prevalence of over-education among migrant workers is likely to remain a serious problem in the coming decades, as the proportion of skilled migrant workers is growing and also due to the substantial influx of foreign workers expected from eastern Europe (Alvarez-Plata et al, 2003), where educational attainment rates are substantially higher than in most other countries of origin of migrants, particularly relative to Muslim countries and Africa ([United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#), 2005). In the case of females, these educational differentials are impressive, with women from eastern Europe displaying particularly high levels of education, even compared with native women, and especially relative to female migrants from Muslim countries who often exhibit poor educational achievement; despite this finding, well-qualified women from eastern Europe women are typically recruited into unskilled care jobs.

Educational attainment

The relationship between nationality, education and gender varies considerably between the countries. In some countries, like the Czech Republic, Germany and Slovenia, migrant workers are considerably less well-educated than native workers, although in Germany this disadvantage is stronger among Turkish migrants, and particularly among Turkish women, whereas such a disadvantage appears much weaker among migrants from eastern Europe, especially among women. In Slovenia, 54.6% of migrant workers only had a primary education in 2007 and just 3.7% had a third-level degree. In Finland, migrant workers display lower third-level education attainment rates than nationals and more often only have a primary education, although this disadvantage is substantially smaller among male and female migrant workers from Russia. For instance, the rate of third-level education attainment is 32% among all employees, 21% among Russian migrant workers and 10% among foreign workers from Somalia. Similarly, in France, which has a high proportion of migrants from northern Africa, a significantly higher proportion of migrant workers only had a primary-level education than native workers in 2006, at 46.2% compared with 21.6% respectively. In Austria, the proportion of migrant workers with a primary or lower secondary education is 36.7%, compared with 23.3% of all Austrians. Turkish migrants face a strong disadvantage in this regard, particularly in the case of women. In Hungary, foreign workers from the EU15 are usually highly qualified, while an overwhelming proportion of migrant workers from Romania and the Ukraine have obtained only a primary or lower secondary education. Significant differences between the educational levels of migrant and native workers are also evident in Luxembourg: slightly over three quarters of Portuguese migrant workers and 20% of Italian migrant workers have no education beyond primary level, although this proportion is much smaller among workers from other EU countries – such as Belgium, France and Germany. In the Netherlands, non-western migrant workers are more often less well-educated than their national counterparts, although those from western countries are likely to have even higher education levels than native workers.

The lower educational attainment of migrant workers compared with native workers is not, nevertheless, evident in every country. In Spain, for example, even non-EU migrant workers display higher educational attainment rates than nationals: in 2006, 26.3% of non-EU migrant workers only had a primary education, compared with the national average of 32.6%. In Italy, migrant workers' educational levels are similar to those of native workers, and particularly high in the case of women from eastern Europe. In Estonia and Greece, the educational levels of native and foreign workers are also largely similar. In Ireland, the overall proportion of migrants – including employed, unemployed or inactive migrants – with degree-level qualifications stands at 31.8%, which is almost identical to the corresponding value for the native population, although the share of low-skilled workers is probably increasing among the migrant population. In Malta, migrant workers have a relatively high level of education: while only 18% of the general working population have obtained a third-level education, the corresponding figure for migrant workers is significantly higher at 35%. Moreover, migrant workers' education level improved at a faster rate between 2003 and 2007, particularly among women, when compared with that of the general working population. In Sweden, migrants are even overrepresented in the category of 'long higher education' compared with the total population, a factor which could also be related to the fact that professionals may have first secured a job in Sweden before migrating to this country. Nonetheless, in general, problems of comparability between educational qualifications attained in different EU countries should be borne in mind, and even more so in the case of non-EU country nationals.

Participation in training

Turning to the data on participation in training, the findings point to significantly lower participation levels among migrant workers compared with native workers (Table 2). In Spain, for instance, 20.8% of migrant workers claim that the company for which they work offers training activities for its employees, which is significantly lower than the national average of 31.4%. Moreover, only 10.2% of migrant workers actually participate in the training activities offered by their company, whereas the national average in this respect is higher at 17.6%. In Austria, only 4.3% of migrant workers take part in occupational or further training compared with 8% of all national employees. Although this difference may seem small in absolute terms, it is significant in relative terms as it implies that the participation rate of migrant workers is about half that of nationals. Similarly, in the Netherlands, non-western migrant workers receive less training than native and western migrant workers, both at the workplace and outside. In Estonia, some 8.2% of nationals and 4.8% of migrant workers participated in [lifelong learning](#) in 2007. Moreover, women participated more often than men: 10.9% of Estonian women and 6.2% of non-national women took part in lifelong learning, compared with 5.3% and 3% of men respectively. In Germany, the proportion of migrant workers who participated in [vocational training](#) programmes funded by the Federal Employment Agency ([Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA](#)) is quite small at 10.7% of all participants, although this figure is rapidly increasing, tripling between 2005 and 2007. In Cyprus, participation in training is virtually non-existent among migrant workers, since training programmes are offered only in Greek. In Italy, all workers only have a limited access to adult education or training, although the figure for migrant workers is considerably lower than that for native workers, at 4.1% and 7.1% respectively. This is related to a number of structural factors, such as the high proportion of small companies, which are often less willing to invest in training, and the comparatively modest share of skilled employment in Italy. Interestingly, female migrant workers in Italy invest more in training and education than their male counterparts, with 6.7% of women compared with 3.4% of male migrant workers participating in these activities in 2005.

Once again, substantial differences are evident in relation to the nationality of migrant workers: women from eastern Europe display particularly high training participation rates, while the reverse is true for women from Muslim countries. The Czech Republic and Malta stand out as exceptions in this respect, as they seem to offer almost equal opportunities in terms of access to training for migrant workers (Table 2). However, in the case of Malta, illegal workers are excluded from the reported estimates, although they represent a substantial portion of migrants in this country, while the Czech data are solely based on results from employer surveys.

Table 2: Migrant workers' participation in training, by county (%)

Country	Type of training	Native workers	Migrant workers
AT	Occupational training	8%	4.3%
CY	Occupational training	–	Virtually non-existent
CZ	Occupational training (based on results of employer surveys)	46.2%	44.5%
DE	Publicly funded vocational training programmes	–	Migrants account for 10.7% of all participants
EE	Lifelong learning activities	8.2%	4.8%
ES	Occupational training	31.4%	20.8%
IT	Training	7.1% (all workers)	4.1%
MT	Training or education	9%	8.4%

Source: Responses to EWCO national correspondents' questionnaire, 2008

As can be inferred from the results in Table 2, not all of the national experts could provide data on participation in training and those who did adopted slightly different definitions of 'training'. Overall, however, these data indicate that participation in training is generally not that widespread in a number of EU countries, particularly among migrant workers. On one hand, this is hardly surprising, as it has already been shown that these workers are more frequently employed in unstable and unskilled jobs, as well as in economic sectors where both employers and employees have limited incentives to invest in training – such as in the domestic services industry or in the agriculture and construction sectors. At the same time, the effects of these structural constraints are likely to be magnified by language barriers and by largely covert forms of discrimination, whereby – given that participation in training activities facilitates career advancement – native workers may be the preferred choice of employers and supervisors as candidates for internal promotion.

Direct discrimination

While there is substantial evidence of indirect discrimination against migrant workers, it has proved extremely difficult to provide conclusive proof of the prevalence of 'direct' forms of discrimination – defined here as negative, prejudicial treatment based solely on grounds of ascriptive attributes. Empirical findings on the poorer occupational attainment of migrant workers – even among those who have obtained the highest level of educational attainment – cast a number of doubts over the effectiveness of the principle of [equal treatment](#). Information about lower promotion rates and the higher downward mobility of migrant workers, reported for instance in the case of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia and France, raises similar concerns; however, it is difficult to assess if, and to what extent, these outcomes reflect direct forms of discrimination. Direct discrimination implies differential treatment of someone relative to someone else in the same situation, with the same characteristics, but different ascriptive attributes.

A straightforward research strategy for collecting data on cases of direct discrimination is to ask migrant workers directly if they have been discriminated against at the workplace, or to collect information about their complaints in this regard. Once again, evidence emerges of widespread discrimination – cited for instance in the national reports of Italy, Finland and the

Netherlands – although this kind of subjective assessment also seems to be easily open to methodological criticism. Moreover, if the research solely relies on legal complaints, the risk of underestimating the phenomenon is high.

The most convincing proof of the existence of direct forms of discrimination is reported in the Belgian report. In 1997, a study commissioned by the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) examined case studies to determine whether, and to what extent, migrant workers were discriminated against by employers. The case studies paired up jobseekers who had the same scores with regard to important objective characteristics, such as their knowledge of the native language, education, training and work experience. The crucial difference between the two applicants was that one was a native of the country, while the other belonged to the largest migrant group in the region. Results revealed widespread discrimination, more specifically in up to 40% of the cases in some Flemish sectors. The conclusions of this study were also later confirmed by another piece of research concerning the use of the database of the Flemish public employment service in relation to jobseekers' curriculum vitae (CV), which revealed that the CVs of people with a foreign name were clicked on far less often.

This kind of quasi-experimental methodology is probably the best solution to the problem of inferring discrimination from the poorer occupational outcomes of migrant workers – given that nationals and non-nationals often differ along several characteristics that, in principle, might explain their differential performance in the labour market, also in the absence of direct forms of discrimination. For instance, factors such as linguistic fluency, social networks, informal knowledge of the labour market and financial resources could be mentioned. Unless all of these characteristics are 'controlled', any claim about direct discrimination is methodologically biased. However, it is likely that these characteristics play a crucial role in explaining ethnic labour market inequalities. In other words, it is mainly through these 'indirect' forms of discrimination that migrant workers are recruited into unskilled, low-paid and unstable jobs. As shown in this section, the cumulative dynamics of inequality therefore complete the picture: once recruited into these jobs, migrant workers will display more unstable career patterns, shorter average tenure, lower access to training and a substantial devaluation of their skills and credentials, thus experiencing a further reduction in their chances of career advancement.

Recognition of qualifications and skills

Rules on the recognition of migrant workers' educational credentials and qualifications probably represent one of the most striking and significant forms of indirect discrimination. In several EU countries, the prevalence of skilled workers among migrants is not insignificant, but their risk of being segregated into unskilled jobs is very high. Almost every national report underlines how the problematic recognition of migrant workers' educational credentials and skills plays a significant role in this regard, thus hindering the full utilisation of their qualifications. For instance, according to the UK correspondent, although a body of anti-discrimination law has been built up in Great Britain over a period of more than 30 years, it makes no specific reference to the recognition of migrant workers' qualifications and skills, thus hindering their full integration into the workplace. A similarly negative situation is reported for Greece and Ireland. In Slovenia, this problem has been almost completely ignored thus far and no specific initiative targeting migrant workers has been undertaken; the process for the recognition of their qualifications can be rather long in this country. As noted by the Finnish national correspondent, the fact that the qualifications acquired in the migrant workers' country of origin are meant for a different labour market than the Finnish one represents a major, objective obstacle for the career advancement of foreign workers.

However, additional barriers may also contribute to their poor occupational prospects. In the Czech Republic, for example, the inability to speak the native language creates another obstacle, making it difficult for migrant workers to perform the same occupation than in their country of origin. Similar language barriers are also reported in the case of Slovenia. Moreover, asylum seekers often completely lack the necessary documents for the recognition procedure, which is often far from simple and clear, as reported by the Austrian and Norwegian experts, for instance. Legal constraints can also play a role: when work permits are tied to particular jobs, for example, the recognition of qualifications and change of job would involve a complex bureaucratic procedure if the employee wanted to apply for a new work permit.

In short, while the assessment and certification of the value of foreign credentials may be a difficult process in itself, legal, bureaucratic, economic and linguistic barriers often coexist, making the situation even more problematic. In all these instances, inequality is not generated by direct discrimination: rather, it results from the lack of positive actions to overcome these barriers. However, it is clear that social prejudice and direct forms of discrimination may also play some role. For instance, in Malta, some well-established certification procedures already exist and a number of new ones are going to be introduced; nevertheless, according to the national correspondent, they cannot be expected to provide a major change in practice, as they would need to be complemented by greater efforts to bring about a change in attitude among employers.

Germany and Austria represent particularly complex national cases in this regard, given the strong connections between education and labour market institutions in countries characterised by a strong vocational sector. Austria's complicated recognition rules for skilled occupations – which often require the attendance of specific courses, as well as the successful completion of additional exams – together with the recognition process itself, often make the overall procedure extremely expensive. Not surprisingly, many migrant workers cannot afford to take part in this process. However, several initiatives have been introduced in Austria to facilitate the recognition of foreign workers' credentials, mainly in the context of the EU-led [EQUAL](#) projects – for example, projects promoting advice and support to migrant workers for the recognition of their educational and occupational attainments, with the aid of funding from the European Social Fund ([ESF](#)). For example, a counselling centre for migrant workers has developed a special handbook providing clear information on this topic.

In Germany, EU citizens and German 'repatriates' can all apply, at least in principle, for the recognition of vocational training qualifications related to occupations belonging to the so-called 'licensed trades' – such as opticians, technical and commercial assistants, and nurses. Acceptance procedures are mostly conducted by the regional chambers of commerce and

industry. In practice, however, these acceptance procedures are mainly only conducted for German repatriates, as it is considered that these repatriates are the only migrant group clearly entitled to an acceptance procedure for their qualifications. As a result, most migrant workers are denied the chance of having their vocational training qualifications recognised, unless they are German repatriates, which indicates a clear disparity of treatment.

Other forms of differential treatment involve the distinction between EU and non-EU citizens. In Hungary, rules on the recognition of diplomas and qualifications differ considerably in the case of EU and third-country nationals. In relation to EU citizens, recognition rules are simple, whereas in the latter case procedures are less straightforward; this is also compounded by the fact that ethnic preference is part of the controversial immigration policy in Hungary, where the large majority of migrants are ethnic Hungarians. In Latvia, the educational credentials of migrant workers from EU countries are never doubted, while problems of diploma recognition for workers from other countries are simply ignored. In Luxembourg, the majority of migrant workers are cross-border workers who maintain their residence in neighbouring countries such as Belgium, France and Germany; as a result, employers and public authorities recognise their diplomas rather easily. Cross-border workers also have the advantage of being able to speak the national languages of English, French or German. However, it is more difficult for non-EU workers to obtain recognition of diplomas and skills in Luxembourg, as these workers must submit an application to the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training ([Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la formation professionnelle, MEN](#)); the latter will then investigate the content of the studies they have undertaken, as well as their knowledge of languages and formative years preceding higher studies. However, the proportion of employees from outside the EU is small in this country. In Czech Republic, recognition of qualifications held by EU nationals is based mainly on European directives: such workers merely have to apply for recognition of professional qualifications, whereby they prove their work experience and supply education certificates, but these are not scrutinised in detail.

In the case of Bulgaria and Poland, bilateral agreements with other countries play a major role in recognition procedures. Bulgaria has agreements with 40 countries for mutual recognition of educational qualifications; with 21 of these countries, Bulgaria has stipulated contracts for legal aid for obtaining such recognition. Similarly, on the basis of international agreements, Poland recognises the educational credentials of workers from several countries, particularly the former communist countries. The recognition of vocational skills is based on the submission of an application to the institutions responsible for recognising such competences in specific occupations. The decision is issued within a short time, possibly four months. However, another form of disparity in treatment is evident among migrant workers in the case of citizens not covered by bilateral agreements.

In Italy, the recognition of educational qualifications is highly variable and in the case of third-level degrees related to access to specific professions, the relevant Ministry is also involved – for example, the Ministry of Justice ([Ministero della Giustizia](#)) for lawyers. Therefore, the recognition procedure is generally conducted on a case-by-case basis, rather than being based on explicit and predefined criteria; such a situation increases the risk of differential treatment based on contingent and extrinsic criteria.

In summary, the findings outlined in this section indicate that the recognition of foreign educational credentials is a source of multiple inequalities, which not only affect migrant workers as a whole, but also generate strong disparities between individuals with different backgrounds.

Finally, it is worth mentioning two national cases where some progress has in fact been made with regard to recognition procedures. In Denmark, a government agency undertakes the recognition of foreign qualifications, mainly in accordance with EU legislation. The procedure is based on specific assessments of migrant workers' skills, which also allow the individual to appeal the final decision. Many migrants come to Denmark with either a qualification or work experience that are assessed and 'clarified' by a company and/or an

educational institution – for example, through engaging in job training at the company for a number of weeks. The municipality or Danish public job service facility will then issue a card listing the worker's competences in collaboration with the company or educational institution. This card describes the skills of the migrant worker and eases their route into employment. Similarly, in Sweden, migrant workers' educational background is systematically validated, documented and sometimes supplemented. After the workers secure their residency permit, the assessment of professional skills is made within three months.

Training provision

In all EU Member States, a legal framework against discrimination is in place, and several national experts report that ethnic discrimination is explicitly forbidden by the laws of their respective countries. However, these formal statements address only direct forms of discrimination. If the poor occupational achievement of migrant workers is mainly driven by subtle mechanisms of inequality, these legal provisions are likely to be ineffective. Moreover, even if the focus is only on direct discrimination, violations of the principle of equal treatment are difficult to detect if one is to rely solely on the voluntary complaints of the victims. For instance, in Italy and the Netherlands, the public agencies in charge of recording complaints about ethnic discrimination at the workplace report such a small number of cases that it raises serious questions over the effectiveness of such agencies.

For these reasons, this report focuses primarily on active policies seeking to mobilise skills and other resources that can foster the occupational promotion of migrant workers. The current implementation of such policies varies considerably across countries. The situation regarding education and training programmes specifically targeting migrants is a telling example in this regard. In several countries, few measures, if any, have been put in place thus far to actively develop training and requalification opportunities for migrant workers. No specific programmes targeting these workers are evident in Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia. This does not necessarily mean that migrant workers are given no opportunities to participate in training programmes in these countries. Rather, such programmes are addressed to all workers, regardless of their citizenship or ethnic background. It could be argued that this constitutes a universalistic approach that avoids any risk of training-related ethnic segregation. Unfortunately, however, as the previous section has shown, the reality is far less favourable in the case of migrant workers: in several EU countries, opportunities for access to training are quite limited for all workers, but particularly for migrant workers. The core problem is that migrant workers face particular constraints that call for specific solutions. Hence, offering training to everybody in principle, and without any special support for migrant workers, ignores the fundamental consideration that linguistic barriers make training programmes extremely difficult to access for many migrant workers, as noted in several of the national reports.

It is therefore not surprising that governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and companies are beginning to organise language courses as a basic, preliminary step of any reasonable labour market policy to support migrant workers. This is the case, for example, in Bulgaria, France, Ireland, Luxembourg and Malta. In Estonia, few language courses are offered specifically targeting migrant workers; however, since 2006, courses on the country's constitution and the Citizenship Act have been provided free of charge. These courses are open to all migrants, regardless of their labour market status.

Germany also promotes 'integration courses' for all migrants. These courses are organised by private or semi-public providers and are restricted to a maximum of 25 participants in each course. They mainly seek to enable migrants to improve their German language skills, but also include lessons on German history and culture, as well as its political and legal system. It should be noted that eligible persons can even be obliged to participate in integration courses, particularly if they exhibit limited knowledge of the German language, and they could face severe sanctions if they fail to participate in such courses – including cuts of up to 10% in social benefits or of up to 30% in unemployment benefits. However, the completion rate of these courses is very low, with less than 50% of eligible migrants passing the final test. More generally, the coverage and the effectiveness of language courses organised for migrant workers in EU countries remain open to question and deserve greater attention.

In the Czech Republic, language courses are the most common type training programme provided for foreigners, followed by introductory courses on socio-cultural aspects of society and soft skills, such as CV writing and computer courses. In addition to the large number of training courses offered by NGOs, migrant workers may also avail of the services of employment agencies and participate in training and requalification activities open to

nationals, although it is unclear to what extent they manage to take advantage of these opportunities in practice.

In Denmark, all migrants – not just migrant workers – are offered Danish language classes for up to three years. In 2007, a basic course on ‘Danish for the labour market’ was introduced, giving participants the opportunity to acquire linguistic skills specifically related to their job function. In Austria, although there are hardly any specific programmes targeting employed migrant workers, a recent initiative worth mentioning is a programme on ‘mentoring for migrants’, which offers support by a mentor, usually an experienced Austrian manager, for five hours a week over three months. This programme gives migrant workers the opportunity to gain access to the specific knowledge, experience and social networks of their mentor. The target group of this initiative is restricted to skilled workers and the minimum requirement for participation is an apprenticeship certificate. In Malta, migrant workers are offered training programmes in active citizenship, along with orientation regarding Maltese culture and the Maltese labour market; this includes training on employment regulations and job-seeking skills, such as self-presentation and CV writing. In Belgium, migrants have access to language courses, training and socio-professional insertion initiatives.

In Spain, training programmes are offered to both employed and unemployed workers, and are increasingly being devoted to migrants and foreign workers. Italy is also increasing the number of training courses available to migrant workers or migrant job-seekers – although low participation and high drop-out rates, as well as the weak connections of these courses to labour market demands, are mentioned as serious limitations of such initiatives. Limited attention is also given to the constraints faced by migrant workers, particularly when they are employed, which partly explains the low completion rates of these initiatives.

In Sweden, the programme ‘Swedish for immigrants’ targets migrants and migrant workers who are keen to learn the Swedish language. This particular initiative dates back to 1965. Subsequently, the migrant labour law approved in 1973 stipulated that migrant workers were entitled to 240 hours of Swedish language training during working hours, maintaining their full salary. Moreover, in recent years, specific workplace insertion courses have been introduced for migrant workers to provide counselling and support during the initial stages of a new job. Employment subsidies for employers compensate for a large proportion of the wage costs involved in employing a migrant worker who has recently arrived in Sweden. Workplace introduction schemes are usually combined with the aforementioned ‘Swedish for immigrants’ programme. In addition, the government is increasing the level of resources it is allocating to employment services, in order to strengthen migrant workers’ employment skills. In Sweden, these programmes are integrated through traditional labour market instruments that not specifically directed towards migrant workers, but which are nevertheless open to them, including internships for unemployed people with limited work experience. In Norway, language courses are particularly widespread among unionised companies with a high proportion of migrant workers and a strong commitment to skills development. A recent competence development programme included a number of initiatives specifically targeting migrant workers.

To summarise, several countries integrate basic language skills training into a broader approach that focuses on migrants’ socialisation into the national culture, on the one hand, and on specific employment skills on the other. This comprehensive strategy of labour market integration may seem promising; nevertheless, little is known about rates of participation and completion in these initiatives, nor about their effectiveness in terms of the labour market outcomes of their participants. However, the few national cases for which some data are available – such as for Germany and Italy – suggest that their coverage is often quite low.

Policies for promoting equal opportunities

The previous section clearly indicates that EU Member States differ considerably regarding the provision of specific training opportunities for migrant workers. National cases range from an almost complete lack of such opportunities to a broad spectrum of programmes, as seen in Sweden for example. More generally, such divergence is also observed with respect to labour market policies and other initiatives for fostering the occupational promotion of migrant workers. Such initiatives are almost completely absent in several east European and Mediterranean countries. In particular, in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia, policies and programmes specifically aimed at the promotion of equal opportunities for migrant workers at the workplace have yet to be developed. Moreover, some of the countries in northern and western Europe have done little more thus far than provide a legal framework of anti-discrimination laws and publish brochures and other information materials. This is the case in Denmark and Finland, for instance, but also in Luxembourg, where the Ministry of the Interior and Regional Administration ([Ministère de l'intérieur et de l'aménagement du territoire](#)) is coordinating an extensive ESF-related programme specifically targeting the promotion of work-related migration over the period 2008–2013. In the UK, an extensive body of law exists prohibiting the discrimination of workers, for example on the basis of gender, race, disability and religion. This body of law is regarded by trade unions as being pivotal in preventing the discrimination of migrant workers. However, active policies implementing the principles of such legislation have yet to be introduced.

Ireland also has well-developed anti-discrimination legislation in place, which prohibits unequal treatment on the grounds of nationality; nevertheless, beyond legal rights, few policy measures exist which are specifically designed to promote equal opportunities for migrant workers at the workplace. However, the Irish government launched a new immigration policy in 2008 that may represent an important shift towards the better integration of migrants into Irish society. The main idea behind this initiative is to provide integrated services for both the migrant and indigenous populations, thereby avoiding separate systems. Moreover, citizenship and long-term residency will be contingent on people's proficiency in the spoken language of the country. Key roles are also envisaged for Ireland's local authorities, major sporting organisations, political parties and religious groups.

In Belgium, the country's entire body of anti-discrimination legislation was revised in 2003 and 2007. The changes introduced in 2007 have reversed the **burden of proof**, whereby the employer must now demonstrate the absence of discrimination; at the same time, protection measures for witnesses have been extended and the whole legal procedure simplified.

In Sweden, a specific law against ethnic discrimination in workplaces has been in place since 1994. This was followed by substantial legal amendments in 1999, whereby the legislation now addresses both direct and indirect forms of discrimination, as well as ethnic harassment at the workplace, and encompasses the whole labour market. The law also prescribes a shared burden of proof in the case of a legal trial. Moreover, since 1986, an ombudsman against ethnic discrimination has been appointed to collect filed reports to investigate discrimination; the ombudsman can take the case to court if they suspect that discrimination has occurred. Funding has also been provided for the anti-discrimination agencies in charge of monitoring and ensuring that laws are complied with and of supporting victims of discrimination. In addition, a discrimination committee has been established to review the issue of diversity plans in all organisations.

In France, a new law against discrimination was due to be issued in 2008. The legislation defines more precisely the concept of direct and indirect discrimination. A previous law in 2004 provided for the establishment of the High Authority on Fighting Discrimination and for Equality ([Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l'Égalité, HALDE](#)), which is in charge of preventing discriminatory practices based on ethnicity, gender or on any other grounds, collecting complaints from victims of discrimination and offering support to such persons. In 2007, this authority received 6,222 complaints about discrimination: 53% of

the complaints concerned discrimination at the workplace, while 27% of them were based on ethnic discrimination.

In Italy, some recent regional laws have emphasised the issue of equal opportunities for migrant workers. However, the few policies that exist for actively supporting the occupational promotion of these workers are largely restricted to education and training initiatives. Nonetheless, Italy has also established an authority in charge of collecting complaints from victims of discrimination. In Germany, most of the initiatives specifically targeting migrant workers tend to focus on training, although a number of campaigns also exist seeking to increase awareness of migrant workers' issues in companies, administrations and other organisations; such measures include organising conferences, workshops and competitions, as well as courses on issues such as intercultural communication, intercultural conflict resolution and cultural mainstreaming. Similarly, in Cyprus, Belgium and the Netherlands, seminars, conferences and other awareness-raising initiatives are promoted in collaboration with employers and representatives of ethnic minorities. Belgium also provides specific training on migrant workers' issues to labour inspectors.

In general, it appears that, besides training, the main area of policy innovation directed at migrant workers involves anti-discrimination legislation. Several EU countries are now introducing or revising specific laws aimed at combating discrimination. In some cases, these laws provide a more in-depth definition of discrimination, and a national authority supporting victims of discrimination has also been created. However, little is known about the effectiveness of such initiatives thus far: for instance, it is not known what proportion of migrant workers are aware that they can complain to these authorities, nor is it known how many victims of discrimination actually complain. A detailed law against discrimination practices, as opposed to generic and abstract declarations, can represent an important policy shift; moreover, such provisions need to be actively implemented, as centralised authorities merely 'waiting for' complaints of victims of discrimination may not be a fully effective measure in this regard.

Collective bargaining

The aforementioned 2007 report indicated that, although migrant workers are a particularly weak segment of the labour force, in several countries they are poorly represented in trade unions and their unionisation rates are relatively low. The data collected for this report show that **collective bargaining** addressing the occupational promotion of migrant workers has had little if any significance in the majority of EU Member States. This is particularly evident in the east European countries – such as Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia. In the latter country, trade unions have long neglected the issue of migrant workers, although more recently the country's largest trade union organisation – the Union of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (*Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije*, [ZSSS](#)) – has launched a public awareness campaign on the poor living conditions of many migrant workers. However, Slovenian trade unions seem to perceive the issue of migrant workers' occupational promotion as being more related to public policies and labour inspection than to trade union actions and collective bargaining. Similarly, in Bulgaria and Poland, no concrete initiatives are documented, with the exception of some isolated human resource management (HRM) initiatives in a few large companies with a high proportion of migrant workers. In the Czech Republic, a small minority of **collective agreements** contain provisions prohibiting discrimination, while some transnational companies employing a large number of migrant workers have recently introduced a number of HRM initiatives.

The poor representation of migrant workers' issues in collective bargaining is not only a phenomenon in eastern Europe. In Cyprus, Malta and Portugal, collective bargaining completely ignores such issues, according to the national experts. In Greece, the general collective agreements contain only two references to immigration issues: that is, a statement against xenophobia made in 1997 and a commitment made to providing some bureaucratic assistance to migrant workers. At sectoral level in Greece, not even the slightest mention is made of equal treatment issues. In Italy, a few of the sectoral collective agreements make a limited reference to the occupational promotion of migrant workers. These few initiatives focus on training and Italian language courses; in some cases, 'quotas' to hire migrant workers have been introduced, although little is known about the actual implementation of such measures. Ireland and Spain have also paid little attention to these issues, although the situation is gradually changing, as the right to equal treatment irrespective of ethnic origin is increasingly being mentioned in collective agreements. In Spain, as in most of the countries mentioned so far, although the principle of equal treatment is formally stated, it is not supported by specific initiatives in the context of collective bargaining. Hence, the prevailing understanding of equal treatment is simply that collective bargaining covers all workers, irrespective of their nationality.

In the Netherlands, limited reference is made to migrant workers' issues in a few sectoral agreements, while in Austria and Luxembourg such issues are almost completely ignored at all levels of bargaining. In Germany, collective agreements condemn discriminatory actions and introduce procedures to sanction such violations. Several agreements also appoint a person in charge of their implementation and this person is supposed to receive continuous training on migrant workers' issues. In France, a national intersectoral agreement on diversity at the workplace was signed in October 2006. This agreement focuses on intercultural communication and training for managers at all levels of the hierarchy; in relation to recruitment, it also recommends experimenting with new methods that guarantee the equal treatment of candidates – such as the use of anonymous CVs. Moreover, in 2004, under the initiative of managers, a document on the promotion of diversity in companies through information, communication, training and **social dialogue** was signed by over 1,700 companies. Nevertheless, no independent assessment has been conducted on the actual implementation of these commitments in such companies.

Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that collective agreement initiatives seeking to foster the workplace promotion of migrant workers are only in the early stages in the majority of EU Member States. Belgium and the Scandinavian countries are the main exceptions in this

respect. In Belgium, the social partners are strongly involved at different levels in implementing labour market policies relating to migrant workers. Anti-discrimination measures, particularly those concerning recruitment and selection, along with diversity plans are the main dimensions of employment policies. Anti-discrimination legislation enables trade unions to initiate actions in case of violations, while centres for equal opportunities can play the role of mediators in this context. Moreover, since the early 1980s, collective agreements in Belgium have begun to include explicit anti-discrimination and anti-racism clauses. For instance, in the Flemish employment agreement for 2001–2002, the sectors were asked to develop action plans that included references to the workplace promotion of migrant workers. These plans formed a basis for covenants between the sectors and the government containing a chapter on intercultural diversity, and sectors were assigned diversity consultants for the execution of these plans.

In Finland, no collective or company-level agreements exist specifically addressing the workplace promotion of migrant workers: the main principle is that migrant and Finnish workers alike must be covered by collective agreements. However, several trade unions and employer organisations have been active in many forms of cooperation seeking to promote the quality of migrants' working life. These activities include, for example, providing information on terms of employment contracts and employers' obligations, projects promoting equal opportunities in multicultural workplaces, and distributing educational material to workplaces about the promotion of equal opportunities in working life. Meanwhile, in Denmark, an agreement was concluded between the government, the municipalities and regions, and the social partners. This agreement includes measures such as a mentor scheme, as well as 'job packages' divided into 12 job categories based on which sectors are experiencing the most problems in recruiting people. In some of these packages, employers and trade unions specify circumstances where promotion and further educational procedures may take place after a migrant worker has been recruited: this could include, for instance, shorter working hours to enable the worker to learn Danish or to continue their education.

In Sweden, although collective bargaining does not specifically address the workplace promotion of migrant workers, several intersectoral and sectoral agreements, as well as joint policy documents, deal with their integration in the workplace; these measures maintain a specific focus on education, training and equal opportunities. In 1998, the [Council of Integration in Work Life](#) was set up in Sweden by a number of important social partner organisations; the mission of this council is to develop integration at the workplace. In addition, the country's largest trade union confederation, the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions ([Landsorganisationen i Sverige, LO](#)), has adopted a number of concrete measures – such as the 'LO Platform' project implemented between 2000–2004 and the 'Equal value – Equal right' project, which consists of various policy documents and educational efforts seeking to support migrant workers.

Good practices examples

As part of the research, the national experts were asked to give information on any existing analyses or cases of good practices focusing on the workplace promotion of migrant workers. The results confirm several previous observations concerning weaknesses and contradictions regarding current efforts to promote the career advancement of migrant workers, as indicated by the following findings.

Firstly, in several countries, no analysis exists on this topic, partly due to the fact that very little public attention has been given to these issues. Although the lack of analyses cannot be equated with the shortage of initiatives in this regard, most national experts in these countries suspect that the development of such good practices is, at best, only at the preliminary stage and is far from widespread. This is particularly the case in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. However, in most of the other countries, with the possible exception of France, very little systematic monitoring of good practices takes place either, and there are indications that such initiatives are not common.

Secondly, even when some initiatives are mentioned, it is not always clear whether they should be properly regarded as good practices fostering the workplace promotion of migrant workers. For instance, formal statements about the equal treatment of all employees, or against any form of discrimination, as well as studies and surveys about equal opportunities in workplaces, cannot be described as good practices – although they may indicate an increasing awareness about these issues and, possibly, some form of commitment to combating discrimination on the part of employers.

Thirdly, the few good practices that have been documented are often reported by the external relations departments of companies that promote them. Independent assessments by third parties are still quite uncommon. Given that such good practices are regarded by companies that promote them as being critical for their public reputation, there is a risk that their success and efficacy are overemphasised.

Fourthly, most good practices are aimed at the successful integration of migrant workers into companies, rather than at fostering their chances for promotion (Table 3). In other words, the main focus lies on fair recruitment practices and anti-discrimination measures, rather than on migrant workers' career advancement. Although the former is a prerequisite for the latter, it is nothing more than that. Besides language courses, commendable initiatives include welcome information and initiatives for new employees, legal support for bureaucratic procedures, logistic support with housing and schooling of children, health security courses or special leave for holidays. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether such measures are truly effective in promoting career opportunities for migrant workers, instead of only reducing their job dissatisfaction.

Other good practices seek to put in place some basic but nonetheless pivotal preconditions to support the career advancement of migrant workers. These include intercultural management courses dealing with neutral selection procedures and equal treatment in companies' recruitment policies, along with awareness-raising campaigns targeting native workers and local communities. Such initiatives aim to create a culture of openness, which recognises the skills and competences of migrant workers.

Examples of more proactive measures are found in only a few cases. For instance, only the French expert cites an example of a company that has introduced quotas for the recruitment of migrant workers in management positions. In Norway, three companies have expressed their commitment to increase the representation of migrant workers among their managers. In Austria, an ombudsman has been appointed to promote equal opportunities within certain companies. Only in Portugal is there an example of good practices focusing on the recognition of migrant workers' educational credentials for the purposes of their professional advancement.

Similar to the situation regarding public policies, training courses are the most frequent type of initiative mentioned in terms of the good practices developed by companies and private organisations. Such measures ensure the accumulation of skills, as well as their certification and recognition within the company. In some cases, these initiatives may also indicate that the public supply of training schemes targeting migrant workers is underdeveloped, as suggested by managers and employers.

Overall, this short review indicates that few well-documented cases of good practices effectively targeting the workplace promotion of migrant workers are available in the EU Member States – although the quality of good practices varies and the small number of such practices does not necessarily discount their value or quality. Moreover, the qualitative assessments made by the national experts should be interpreted with caution, as several potential sources of bias exist. For example, migrant workers are unevenly distributed between as well as within Member States, and in some countries or regions migrant workers are the exception; therefore, conclusions cannot be easily drawn about the efforts made in this direction. More generally, the lack of reliable, standardised data on good practices for most countries makes it difficult to make conclusive observations about cross-country differences.

This review also suggests that public agencies, as well as independent researchers, have devoted limited efforts to monitoring such initiatives. As a result, the ‘vicious circle’ of low public interest in these issues and poor availability of empirical data is once again reinforced.

Among the companies showing a greater interest in migrant workers’ issues, the large and often transnational enterprises are overrepresented, as indicated in Table 3. This is not surprising, as large companies are more likely to have a more varied workforce and therefore to adopt incentives to foster good internal relations. Other factors that may also play a role include the availability of financial resources, access to information concerning opportunities and funding from the EU, as well as the importance that companies attach to their external reputation. Small companies usually have less money to undertake or publicise such initiatives. They also face lower external pressures because of lower public visibility and trade union coverage. In some cases, the national experts also indicate that good practices tend to target the more skilled migrant workers, which further enhances the disparities of treatment among migrant workers as a whole.

Table 3: Evidence of good practices for fostering workplace promotion of migrant workers, by country and characteristics

Country	Are there analyses of existing good practices targeting migrant workers? Are such good practices widespread?*	Actors involved (initiators)	Focus of good practices
AT	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are quite uncommon	Most initiators are NGOs Large transnational companies are mentioned Important role of EQUAL-projects	Language courses Ombudsman for migrant workers Migrant specific counselling
BE	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are quite uncommon	Big companies are mentioned, along with public sector organisations	Language courses Intercultural management and recruitment policies Employment security
BG	No systematic analysis has been conducted	–	–

	Such initiatives are not documented		
CY	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	–
CZ	No systematic analysis has been conducted Very few initiatives are documented	Skilled workers are the target of the few initiatives	Language courses Accommodation, education, legal assistance, medical care, children's schooling Sensitisation campaigns
DE	No systematic analysis has been conducted Only a few such initiatives can be documented	–	Language courses Intercultural management and recruitment policies Training courses and education
DK	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are quite uncommon	Big companies are mentioned	Language courses and informal learning Mentor programme Training Holiday policies
EE	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	Language courses
EL	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	–
ES	Only one systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are very uncommon	Big companies and public sector organisations are mentioned Skilled workers are mentioned as a preferred target	Training courses and recruitment policies Logistic support (programmes of initial welcome, support for housing) Intercultural management and recruitment policies Holiday policies
FI	No systematic analysis has been conducted, although a few documents dealing with these issues do exist Several examples of good practices can be documented	Big transnational companies are mentioned	Language courses Welcome and informal socialisation (key concepts and legal provisions concerning working life in Finland)

			Vocational training Community sensitisation campaigns
FR	Several analyses deal with these topics and several examples of good practices can be documented	Big companies and NGOs are mentioned Core role of EQUAL projects is highlighted	Intercultural management and recruitment policies Community sensitisation campaigns Quotas for manager positions
HU	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	–
IE	No systematic analysis has been conducted, although a few recent documents do exist Such initiatives are quite uncommon	Big companies and public sector organisations are mentioned	Intercultural management and recruitment policies Employee sensitisation campaigns Holiday policies
IT	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are very uncommon	Big companies are mentioned	Training
LT	No systematic analysis Such initiatives are very uncommon	–	–
LU	No systematic analysis has been conducted A few initiatives are documented	–	Recruitment policies Language courses
LV	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	–
MT	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	–
NO	No systematic analysis has been conducted A few initiatives are documented	Big companies and public sector organisations are mentioned	Intercultural management and recruitment policies Language courses Training courses Employment security courses Recognition of credentials

PT	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are very uncommon	Big firms and public sector organisations are mentioned	Language courses Workplace introduction Logistic and legal support Training courses Recognition of credentials
RO	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	
SE	No systematic analysis has been conducted Only a few such initiatives can be documented	Big companies and public sector organisations are mentioned Involvement of the ESF is highlighted	Recruitment policies Language courses Training courses Workplace introduction
SK	No systematic analysis has been conducted Such initiatives are not documented	–	–
UK	No systematic analysis has been conducted, except for some guides on good practices Only a few such initiatives can be documented	Big transnational companies are mentioned	Language courses Health courses Workplace introduction Logistic and legal support

*Note: * For some countries, national experts explicitly note that these kind of initiatives are quite or very uncommon. However, in other countries, the national experts have little information on such initiatives, although this does not necessarily mean that some good practices have not been implemented. This is indicated by the statement 'such initiatives are not documented'. Finally, in other countries, experts are able to provide examples of good practices but do not give exact figures on the number of such initiatives; this is indicated by the statement 'several/ a few initiatives can be documented'.*

Source: Responses to EWCO national correspondents' questionnaire, 2008

Impact of good practices

A more encouraging observation is that good practices fostering the workplace promotion of migrant workers are regarded positively by the companies that have introduced them. In some cases, companies claim that such practices have even enhanced workers' productivity and the company's performance, although this is not easy to prove. However, at least in one case, a correlation with performance is self-evident: namely, where the effectiveness of a service can be enhanced if the workforce composition reflects the composition of the surrounding local community, especially in terms of language and cultural values. This applies, for example, to public services like hospitals, which, not surprisingly, are often mentioned as initiators of good practices, and can also be seen in the case of private organisations, such as the fast-food chain [McDonald's](#). Other companies report that good practices improve the internal climate, along with workers' commitment and the retention of experienced employees. Moreover, such practices are clearly regarded by companies as being increasingly important in terms of promoting their external reputation. The latter is a powerful incentive, which could probably

be better exploited to help promote work opportunities for migrant workers, although it is also thought that an external, independent assessment of good practices and initiatives at company level should be given greater attention in the future.

A final consideration worth highlighting is the role of EU institutions and projects, most notably the EQUAL project, which seems to have played a significant role in countries such as Austria, France, Italy, Portugal and Sweden. In Austria, for instance, several initiatives have been introduced on the basis of EQUAL projects to support migrant workers in getting their qualifications recognised. In Portugal, one EQUAL-funded project promoted the recognition of migrant workers' qualifications so that they could be employed as nurses. In France, which is an example of a country where good practices seem to be better developed and documented, actions launched in the framework of EQUAL have played a crucial role, and a database was created in order to systematically record all projects that have been developed.

Conclusions

The first section of this report has confirmed and extended some important conclusions of the previous 2007 EWCO report. The segregation of migrant workers into unstable and unskilled jobs has been explored in greater detail, and its implications in terms of shorter job tenure, lower career opportunities and greater risk of over-education have been examined.

Furthermore, this report has described at least three core mechanisms hindering the occupational promotion of migrant workers. Firstly, they have lower access to training compared with native workers: in several countries, absolute and relative differentials in participation rates are evident. Legal, bureaucratic, economic and language barriers to the recognition of their qualifications and skills are a second widespread obstacle. Thirdly, migrant workers seem to be subject to direct forms of discrimination: although it is quite difficult to provide conclusive evidence of prejudicial treatment, there are several convincing indications that it may not be confined to just a few exceptional cases.

This report adds to the findings of the previous 2007 report in relation to another crucial point: the high heterogeneity of migrant workers. Multiple inequalities between migrant workers result in divisions, for example between: repatriates and all other migrants; professionals/managers and unskilled manual workers; EU citizens and non-EU nationals; and one ethnic group and another – such as between Somalis and Vietnamese working in Finland.

Moreover, the report shows that recruitment into unstable and unskilled jobs, as well as access to education and training, are heavily affected by migrant workers' nationality and gender. For instance, in several national cases, migrant women from eastern Europe display much higher rates of educational attainment and of participation in training than women from Muslim countries. Therefore, the former are better equipped for a successful integration into the labour market; however, it also means that these well-educated women are particularly exposed to a devaluation of their competences.

Hence, it is clear that, while migrant workers exhibit a strong and systematic disadvantage compared with native workers in most EU Member States, the image of the unskilled migrant worker recruited into precarious manual jobs is a characteristic of the majority of migrant workers only in some countries. In other countries, a dualistic structure of migrant employment is evident, where strong forms of segregation into unskilled jobs co-exist with areas of highly skilled employment. In some of the other countries, most notably in a number of the east European countries such as Hungary, the small proportion of migrants consist mainly of highly skilled workers from western Europe. Thus, the marked differentiation of the labour market prospects of migrant workers, both between and within European countries, should be the cornerstone of any European policy addressing the issue of their workplace promotion.

Although EU Member States may differ considerably with regard to the profile of their migrant employment structures, their labour market policies have at least one key feature in common: the limited attention paid to inequalities experienced by migrant workers. In most cases, this issue has been described by national experts as being completely marginal in the public debates of their respective countries and as a low priority for decision makers. At the same time, the contribution of trade unions in supporting migrant workers appears to be rather limited in general; in most countries, collective agreements do not specifically address these issues, or only slightly touch upon them. Not surprisingly, the data collection on labour market inequalities faced by migrants is poorly developed in most, if not all, of the countries examined, and there is very little systematic monitoring of the few initiatives or good practices undertaken to support migrant workers.

After examining the few initiatives that do exist, it is tempting to conclude that promoting the career advancement of migrant workers is often perceived as a premature goal: offering these workers a decent job, providing them with some logistic support or language and cultural training, or protecting them against the most blatant forms of discrimination are probably

considered as more realistic targets by the few NGOs, employers and policymakers that initiate some support in favour of migrant workers. Yet, if the restricted focus of the few existing initiatives is compared with the available information about the educational attainment and qualifications of migrant workers, these efforts do not seem that ambitious.

At any rate, it is clear that several national governments do very little beyond issuing formal statements against ethnic discrimination in workplaces, accompanying them with laws protecting against direct discrimination. This formal approach ensures some legal protection from abuses by employers or colleagues – at least for those victims who find a voice to react to such prejudices. However, in light of the empirical evidence provided in this report and in the previous 2007 report, this formal approach appears to be too restricted in its scope and of limited use in combating the bureaucratic, socio-cultural and linguistic barriers hindering the promotion chances of migrant workers.

A common feature of public initiatives more actively targeting the workplace promotion of migrant workers is the prevailing, sometimes exclusive, focus on education and training. However, even in this respect, disadvantages begin to emerge and, paradoxically, support is often denied to those who need it the most. For instance, the report shows that training, counselling and support initiatives are often targeted at skilled migrant workers or at unskilled workers in larger and more unionised companies that already benefit from some protection. Migrant workers employed in unskilled jobs in traditional sectors – such as construction or agriculture – or in the informal economy are excluded from these initiatives. Another critical weakness of this approach is the poor monitoring of training coverage and completion rates, and of the effectiveness of existing training programmes.

Unfortunately, good practices and company-level initiatives for fostering the promotion prospects of migrant workers share most of the abovementioned limitations of public programmes: for instance, the number of initiatives may be sparse; or the initiatives may be too formalistic and not very ambitious, focusing mostly on training and logistical support, or on promoting awareness-raising campaigns among native employers and employees; at the same time, the impact of such initiatives may be poorly monitored.

Finally, some important cross-national differences have also emerged with regard to the countries' commitment to supporting migrant workers. These differences are not only due to the fact that the east European countries clearly remain behind the rest of Europe in this respect, but can also be attributed to the peculiarities of migration in these countries compared with the west European nations. Moreover, the Mediterranean countries have given limited attention to these issues, whereas other west European countries are more active in this regard and a few of them, most notably Belgium and Sweden, have developed some systematic efforts to support migrant workers. A variety of tools are evident across these countries, even if focusing only on legal protection measures for migrant workers. Such measures include the following: more detailed legislation compared with the general and abstract statements of other countries; diversity plans for employers; tools for trade unions to initiate legal action to support victims of discrimination; faster court procedures, as well as legal and financial support for victims of discrimination; and funding for agencies in charge of monitoring complaints and which act as mediators in workplace conflicts.

The commitment of national governments also varies considerably with regard to training initiatives. Some countries do not even have a national language training programme in place for migrants, whereas others have adopted a comprehensive approach that integrates language training with socialisation and cultural initiatives, or which offers training in soft skills such as computers and CV writing, along with some form of occupation-specific training.

Overall, therefore, legal support initiatives and training schemes emerge as the two areas where examples of good practices are beginning to accumulate; such initiatives could also be beneficial for countries that may decide to develop more active policies in the future to support the occupational promotion of migrant workers.

Carlo Barone, University of Trento

References

Alvarez-Plata, P., Brücker, H. and Silverstovs, B., *Potential migration from Central and Eastern Europe into the EU15 – An update*, Final report, Berlin, DIW, 2003.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Global Education Digest 2005. Comparing education statistics across the world*, Montreal, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2005, available online at:
http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2005/ged2005_en.pdf (1.28Mb PDF).

Annex: Country codes and abbreviations

Table A1: Country codes

This table outlines the country codes for the EU27 Member States and Norway

Country code	Country name
AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia

SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom

Country abbreviations used

EU15 – 15 EU Member States before May 2004 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom)

EU27 – 27 EU Member States, comprising the EU15, the 10 new Member States that joined the EU in May 2004, in addition to Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU in January 2007.

EF/09/12