

« EQUAL RIGHTS. EQUAL VOICES »

**MIGRANT WOMEN'S INTEGRATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN SIX  
EUROPEAN CITIES: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH**

*European Network of Migrant Women and European Women's Lobby*



**EUROPEAN NETWORK  
OF MIGRANT WOMEN**



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
**LOBBY**  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



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## Introduction

### Rationale

The objective of the study is to produce a comparative report on migrant women's integration into the labour market based on studies of six European Union (EU) cities: Athens, Dublin, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Madrid and Marseille. By looking at the specific impact that local, regional and national integration policies have had on migrant women's employment, this research aims at opening up a debate on the specific gendered impact of integration policies, especially concerning their experiences of participation in the labour market.

In short, the aim of the study is to understand the characteristics and particularities of the integration process of migrant's women in EU in the field of employment and education, including:

- Background and statistical reviews of migrant women, employment and labour markets in the European Union;
- The legal regime, criteria and conditions in the 6 Member States that contextualise both the level of access and affiliated rights in labour market and education;
- The definitions and conceptualisation of education and labour market integration of migrant women in the 6 Member States;
- Empirical evidence from 5 cities based on fieldwork with migrant women from diverse background, political actors, the research community and other stakeholders (for example, immigrants' associations; national NGOs).

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### Importance of issue

Migrant women, defined in this report as women born outside a country<sup>1</sup>, play essential roles in labour markets and make a valuable contribution to the economies and societies of receiving countries. However, they also face specific challenges to their effective integration into the labour market. This goes beyond simply finding employment but includes obtaining work that utilises and values their qualifications and skills. Their pattern of employment is as gender-segregated amongst non-foreign born women but with some differences in occupational sector (see part 1). They tend to find work in traditional women's roles – as domestic and care workers in households as employers, accommodation and food services, human health and social work, manufacturing and administration and support service – where they often work long hours for low pay and may be at risk of being severely exploited, especially if working in households. The main difference with native-born women is that far fewer work in households, accommodation and food services.

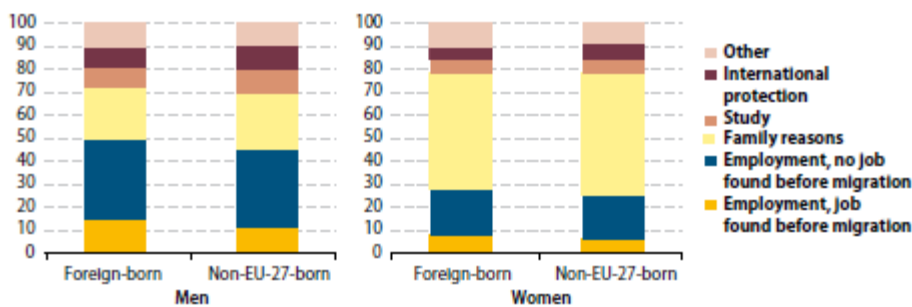
A significant number of women enter countries as the spouses of migrant workers, which may impact on their legal status, limit their personal entitlements and render them dependent on their spouse,

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<sup>1</sup> Their immigration and residence status varies from citizens to temporary residents with insecure status and the undocumented. Statistics may break foreign-born down into those born within the EU-27, OECD countries and non-OECD countries. This report is primarily concerned with non-EU foreign born women.

especially in the first few ‘probationary’ years. Though family reunification has declined during the past decade, from about half of all legal migrants to a third (Huddleston & Niessen 2011), it remains for foreign-born, and especially non-EU 27 women, by far the most significant route of entry (fig. 1). Many women also enter for purposes of employment, although the majority have not found a job before arrival. A substantial number have also entered as asylum seekers and refugees and are a particularly vulnerable category of women in the labour market as their legal status depends on lengthy asylum applications and the lack of permanence makes it difficult for them to obtain employment.

**Figure 1: Foreign-born population aged 25-54 years and that entered country aged 15 years and over by main reason for migration and gender EU-27, 2008**



(1) This information is based on data from BE, DE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LT, LU, NL, AT, PT, SE and UK.

Source: Eurostat, LFS 2008 ad hoc module (online data code: lfso\_08cobr)

In the past decade a number of research reports (European Commission 2010, OECD 2005; Rubin et al. 2008) have addressed the difficulties, in particular, issues of overqualification and discrimination, migrant women face in entering the formal labour market. The Council of Europe (2011), for example, has recognised the need for receiving countries to develop and implement measures to promote the integration of immigrant women in Europe and specifically to address the protection of migrant women in the labour market.

The European Women’s Lobby (EWL) and the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) have made specific recommendations for measures aimed at increasing migrant women’s participation in employment. It highlights that throughout the EU member states, many migrant women and men are denied the right to work in the formal labour market because of their legal status (as asylum-seekers, joining spouses or undocumented migrants). Long periods of denial of the right to work, as is the case for asylum-seekers, have proven to be a huge obstacle to their future integration into the labour market. Additionally, many migrant women, some of whom are undocumented and working in the informal care and domestic sectors, are living and working within the European Union without any kind of protection and with very limited access to rights and services.

Beyond the legal status of migrants, the report also cites the lack in many Member States of efficient systems for recognition of qualifications obtained in third countries and the possibility of top-up training opportunities for those lacking certain competencies. This, it argues, means that too many well-qualified migrant women are employed in low paid jobs, especially in cleaning and caring, a situation which, despite the importance of these roles, denies society the benefit of migrant women’s skills and qualifications. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2011) has, in



particular, drawn attention to the deskilling of educated women<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, migrant women returning to the work-place after having children are often under-employed or discriminated against by employers. Such discrimination, under-recognition and “deskilling” of migrant workers is incompatible with the obligations and principles of the European Union and, furthermore, constitutes a waste of human capital it can ill-afford at such a time of economic downturn.

## Countries selected

Six countries with diverse histories of immigration and incorporation of migrant women into the labour market were selected for an analysis of national and local policies. Two – France and Germany – are both countries of long-standing immigration, for which there has been a certain amount of academic and policy discussions of gender, women and migration and their education and labour market integration. The remaining four are relatively new countries of immigration – Finland, Greece, Ireland and Spain, though the latter has now one of the largest migrant populations in Europe. Compared to the older countries of immigration, there has been much less discussion of migrant women’s labour market integration.

In 5 major cities (Athens, Dublin, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Marseille), small-scale studies involving interviews with a small number of migrant women, policymakers and NGOs concerned with migrant women’s labour market integration examined the significance of integration policies and initiatives at a local level. The sample of women interviewed varied considerably due to differences in the individual countries and the organisations conducting the research which often served specific groups of migrant women. In some instances such as Frankfurt, the study focused on a single broad category such as African women. In Marseille, most of the women (of North African origin) had long-term residence or citizenship and were bilingual. In Athens the two groups (Albanian and Eastern European) represent the most significant flows of migrant women. In Dublin and Helsinki, the sample was more diversified.

As can be seen from the Appendix detailing the socio-demographic composition and migration status, a number of characteristics emerge. The interviewees tend to be older, that is there are only a few in their twenties. Their level of education is high. In part this may have to do with the way the interviewees were recruited, that is, through associations, but it may also reflect a greater diversity of circumstances and educational backgrounds, especially amongst more recent migrants, than the traditional representation of migrant women (see section on education levels and overqualification).

## Statistical data

Data has been a problem in studying the labour market integration of migrant women and their occupational profiles (Kofman 2003). All too frequently statistical evidence is not available by gender categories although this is slowly improving (OECD 2008). In 2008 an ad hoc module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendents was added to the European Labour

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<sup>2</sup> In launching the project *Crushed Hopes* on 9 March 2011, it was noted that the following questions needed to be asked: What are the obstacles keeping skilled migrant women away from qualified jobs? What is the psychosocial cost for qualified women of occupying low-skilled jobs? What are some of the strategies women adopt to mitigate this situation? How can these women be best supported by governmental, intergovernmental and civil society actors? The research was based on case studies of Switzerland, Québec and the UK. It has not yet been published.



Force Survey and was carried out by all EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland. The data that were collected within this module included country of birth of the father and the mother to identify second-generation migrants as well as information on the main reason for migration, legal barriers on the labour market, qualification and language issues. More detailed information was collected for 16 countries only (BE, DE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LT, LU, NL, AT, PT, SE, UK and CH). However, analysis has shown that the quality of the information collected was not optimal in all cases.

In the following sections, this data is used to outline the occupational profile of migrant women in the labour market and, wherever possible, to ascertain differences between recent and settled migrants. Then the difficulties and challenges they face in entering the labour market are discussed.



## PART 1 Occupational profile of migrant women in the labour market

Like male migrant workers, the large majority of women migrant workers are increasingly single, aged between 20 and 40, with at least secondary education, and occupying low-skilled jobs at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. These jobs are often shunned by local women because of low incomes, poor working conditions and limited job prospects and security.

Worldwide, fewer women migrate into highly skilled sectors than men, even if their numbers are increasing. One of the main reasons for this is that women's education tends to be concentrated in the humanities and social disciplines that qualify them for professions such as teaching, health and social work. Highly skilled migrants circulate as employees of transnational companies or international institutions, in information technology-related occupations or other highly specialised professions, such as doctors, but these sectors, apart from medicine tend to be male-dominated (Kofman and Raghuram 2010).

Studies of migration show that women's labour migration is concentrated in a few female-dominated occupations associated with traditional gender roles. Demand is increasing mainly in low-skilled jobs, such as domestic work (including cleaning and childcare), hotel cleaners and waitresses, as well as in skilled occupations, such as nurses and other health care workers. Recent migrants in particular are heavily concentrated in the household as employer, and accommodation and food services, as indicated in table 2 and figure 2. Many of these jobs are not registered, or if they are, they still offer worse working conditions for migrant women than for native-born women: short-term contracts without the possibility of renewal, low wages, long working hours, and physically demanding jobs. Migrant women are also commonly found in retail sales and in labour-intensive manufacturing. Amongst recent, as compared to settled migrants, employment in these sectors is even more marked (see figure 2). Lastly, though not counted in official statistics of employment, significant numbers may be involved in prostitution and the sex industry – some of them involuntarily through trafficking for sexual exploitation.

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**Table 1: Top 10 principal sectors of employment of native-born and foreign-born women, aged 25-54 years, 2010 (% of total corresponding population)**

	Employment of Women %													
	EU-27		DE		FI		FR		EL		IE		ES	
	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born	Native-born	Foreign-born
Activities of households as employers	1	11	1	2	0	:	3	11	1	35	0	2	3	30
Accommodation & food service	4	10	4	10	4	8	3	7	6	18	5	13	7	18
Administrative & support service	4	8	5	11	4	6	3	8	2	5	3	6	6	7
Other service activities	3	4	4	5	4	6	4	5	2	3	3	3	3	2
Human health & social work	18	17	20	20	30	17	22	19	10	6	22	23	14	8
Professional, scientific & technical	5	4	6	4	6	8	5	5	7	1	5	4	6	2
Manufacturing	11	9	12	14	9	12	8	7	7	7	8	10	8	6
Wholesale and retail trade	15	12	15	14	11	14	13	11	20	11	13	15	18	14
Public administration	8	3	8	3	6	3	12	6	9	1	8	2	9	1
Education	13	7	10	7	11	12	10	8	14	3	15	7	11	3
<b>ALL SECTORS</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

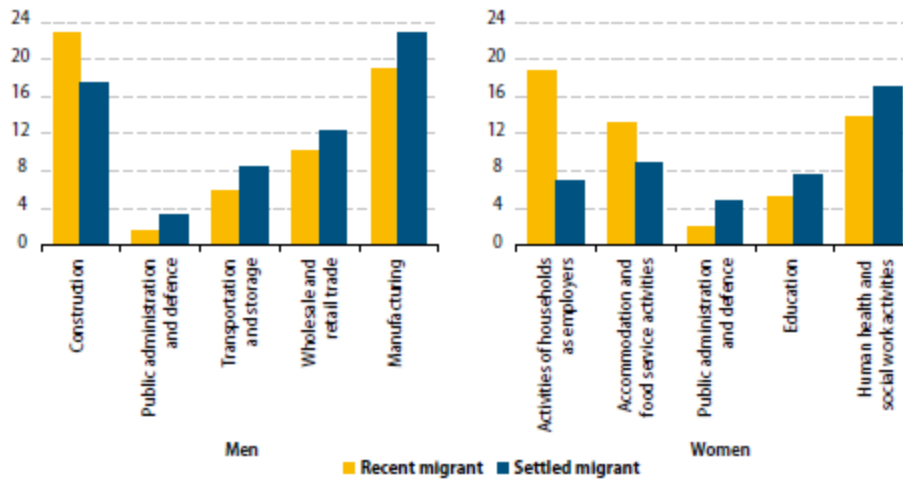
Year: 2010

Source: Eurostat, LFS

DE = Germany FI = Finland FR = France



**Figure 2: Distribution of employed persons aged 25 to 54 years by selected employment sectors (with the highest percentage differences between recent and settled foreign-born persons, EU-27, 2008)**



Source: Eurostat, LFS 2008

Unemployment and underemployment are more prevalent amongst migrant women than amongst native-born women, and more common than amongst native men. Especially in the established migrant-receiving countries, there is very low labour-force participation amongst migrant women during their initial years in the country compared to native-born women. Even after six to ten years in the country, the labour force participation rates of migrant women in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom are still at least 15 percentage points lower than those of native-born women (Dumont and Isoppo 2005). In certain instances the economic crisis has led to a sharp rise in unemployment, for example, since mid 2008 in Greece.

Employment amongst migrant women varies, however, from country to country and disparities between members of the same ethnic group can be observed depending on the receiving country, and between the different ethnic groups in the same receiving country. Variations in employment of migrant women seem to be due less to their cultural background than to the features of mainstream society, such as attitudes towards the participation of women in the labour market and national employment patterns. Nevertheless, many traditional ethnic communities do not expect women to work and therefore formal employment means working in the familiar environment of the ethnic economy or around childcare responsibilities.

Amongst women who migrate to fill labour shortages, many may not intend to remain permanently but to stay temporarily in order to support their families back home and then to return. However this can turn out to be an expensive project for the family and the desired length of stay depends on returns on this investment. In some sectors, such as care work, catering or cleaning, the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, and the consequent freedom of mobility, has meant that Eastern European migrant women have replaced those from the traditional sources.



## 1.1 The challenges and difficulties faced by migrant women in the labour market

Migration can often be contradictory in its outcomes. On the one hand, it may lead to significant gains for migrant women in their autonomy, income, levels of empowerment and education; on the other, it can also result in downward job mobility, “deskilling” and reorientation away from paid work and towards the domestic sphere, and in extreme cases, in physical abuse and exploitation. The Council of Europe report (2011) listed some of the following significant issues affecting migrant women’s integration into the labour market:

### Limited legal channels for migration

In spite of the increasing number of women migrating worldwide, women are underrepresented in the legal inflows of migrants into most industrialised countries. The most targeted for recruitment are highly skilled migrants in male-dominated occupations, such as information technology, finance and management (Kofman and Raghuram 2010). The emphasis on high salary levels in the current EU Blue Card and other national schemes for highly skilled workers promotes these sectors (Kofman forthcoming). Migration policies are not openly biased by gender, but in some countries restrictions have been imposed on admission of migrants for female-dominated occupations, for example in the health sector which is affected by cyclical variations in welfare provision and carers. Temporary migrant workers’ schemes comprising semi-skilled and unskilled workers are also often for male-dominated occupations such as construction or agriculture. Women’s opportunities to migrate legally continue to be more limited than those of men and oriented towards less well remunerated domestic and care labour in Southern European countries. In a number of Northern European countries, there is increasingly no route for entry into less skilled jobs by non-EU migrants. Since the 2004 enlargement, EU migrants have come to replace non-EU migrants in many countries.

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### Restriction on the independent right to migrate or to stay in the destination country

Migrant women and girls have long been regarded mainly as spouses and children outside the labour force and their presence simply as a consequence of the arrival of male workers. Women arriving to rejoin their families have therefore been regarded as dependents lacking personal status. The conditions in which these women arrive in the new country also may not facilitate their entry into the labour force, learning the language of the receiving country or playing an active part in its society.

In most European Union member states, a woman who enters with a family reunification or “spouse” visa has to wait for a number of years to be able to acquire an autonomous status independent of her spouse. If she is a victim of domestic violence during this period or if she applies for divorce, she is not entitled to a residence permit in her own right, nor does she have access to shelters (Finnish report). Leaving an abusive relationship would therefore mean becoming undocumented with very limited rights and being at risk of deportation. This dissuades many women who have suffered violence from making an official complaint. Linguistic barriers, family pressure, isolation and cultural traditions are additional problems which may prevent victims from making formal complaints.

### Education, overqualification, lack of recognition of skills and qualifications and deskilling

While the majority of migrant women find jobs in low-skilled professions, they are far from being “unskilled”. In terms of educational attainment in the EU (see figure 3), there is a slightly lower



percentage of highly educated foreign-born than native born but considerably more with a low level of education.

The country reports refer to evidence of relatively high levels of education. For example, in France, of the 50,993 migrant women who signed the *Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration* in 2009, although only 3.2% had entered for work purposes and the vast majority for family reasons, 28.4% had a tertiary level of education and 55.1% secondary. Only 5.8% had no formal education. In Madrid, out of the 421,667 female migrants in 2010, well over 50% had an educational level of medium or higher professional or tertiary level (Spanish report)<sup>3</sup>. In Greece, migrant women have a higher educational level than migrant men with 16% of women compared to 7% of men who have tertiary level education, and 57% and 49% respectively with secondary education. Overall only 2% were illiterate (Greek report). Educational levels vary by nationality. For example in Greece, Albanian migrants have a relatively high level of education and the majority speak good or fluent Greek compared to Asian migrants (see Greek report). In Ireland, where there had also been a high level of skilled migration, over 40% of migrant women had a tertiary degree or above, compared to under 20% of Irish women. Under 5% had no formal primary education compared to almost 10% of Irish women (Pillinger 2007).

Overall, recent migrants were more likely to be highly educated (Widmaier and Dumont 2011)<sup>4</sup> than settled migrants though this is not the case in countries such as Finland, Norway, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the UK. In fact, people who emigrate are generally better educated than the people who stay behind. In most countries of the Global South, emigration rates for skilled workers are substantially higher amongst women than men (Docquier & Rapoport 2007). Women with tertiary degrees are at least 40% more likely than male graduates to emigrate to developed economies.

However, whereas most of these skilled and highly skilled women migrants are leaving to find a better-paid job abroad, they end up in occupations below their qualifications. According to the United Kingdom Migration Advisory Committee, in August 2009, 81% of spouses of highly skilled and skilled migrants were employed in unskilled jobs compared to 38% of principal applicants.

Research shows that in many cases migrant women in occupations like domestic work have relatively high levels of education. There is evidence from the studies in this report that many are educated, especially those from Central and Eastern European countries. Many are channelled into domestic work or as carers in residential homes, as emerges in the country studies.

Deskilling may also occur amongst those working in skilled occupations, such as health-care professionals. Many doctors work as nurses or trained nurses work as assistant nurses because their certificates are not recognised in the country of destination. In the UK, for example, Sondra Cuban's study (2009) of migrant nurses working as senior carers and carers concluded that it may be particularly difficult to overcome the systematic deskilling of women health professionals, because of the close connections between immigration policies, educational establishments and recruitment agencies.

In other instances they may work in their chosen profession but at lower levels and salaries (Buchan

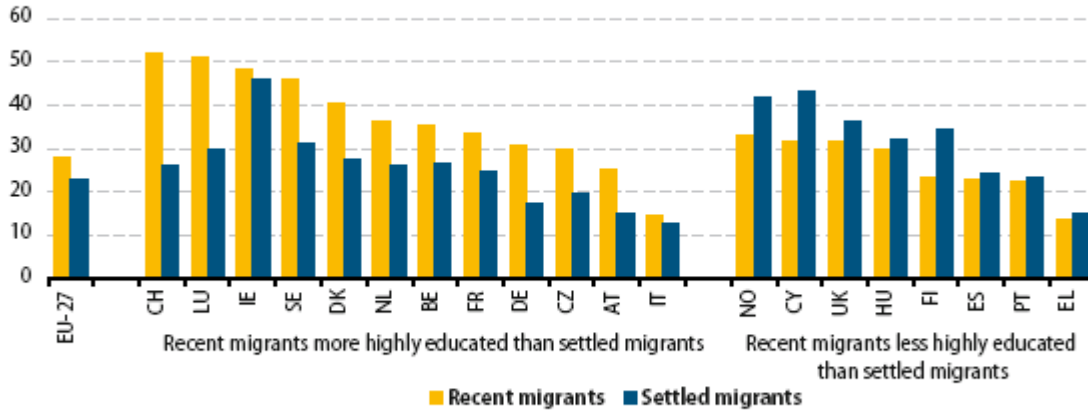
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<sup>3</sup> Primary 17.2%; secondary or similar 19.2%; Bachillerato/ciclos medio-superior FP 42.2%; universitaria media 8.5%; universitaria superior 12.8%.

<sup>4</sup> They note that amongst women this has been increasing with a third of those recently arrived in 2005/06 having a tertiary level diploma, the same as for men.

et al. 2005). Despite deskilling, these positions are attractive to many, since they can still earn more abroad than practising their original professions in their countries of origin.

**Figure 3: Highly educated foreign-born population aged 25-54 by duration of stay, 2008 (%)**



(†) Data not available or unreliable (in at least one category) for BG, EE, LV, LT, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK and IS.

Source: Eurostat, LFS 2008

This "deskilling" or "brain waste" is cause for serious concern, not only for the individual migrant but also for the society in which they work. It deprives society of the benefit of migrant women's skills and qualifications. As Laura Thomson, the Deputy Director of IOM, stated in her presentation of the IOM project on *Crushed Hopes*, "The economic implications of deskilling are also enormous. Failing to utilise the wealth of skills, experience and know-how migrant women bring with them is not only a missed opportunity for the economies of countries of destination, but for also for countries of origin... It is, therefore, vital for governments to critically review some of the biases implicit in migration regulations". Migrant women's skills, competencies, talents and rights should be recognised and valued by the states and societies that receive them and transparent procedures for the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad should be set up. They should also have access to vocational and life-long training as well as free language courses to be able to participate on equal terms with national workers.

Increasingly studies are measuring overqualification, which refers to the "situation where a person has a level of skill or education higher than is required for his or her job." Eurostat (2011: 51) has defined the overqualification rate as the share of persons with tertiary education working in a low- or medium-skilled job amongst employed persons having achieved tertiary education. As can be seen from figure 4, although foreign-born women may only be slightly more overqualified than foreign-born men, both are considerably more so than native born, especially in Greece and Spain.

**Table 3: Over-qualification rate of employed population aged 25-54 by groups of country of birth, gender and duration of residence in the receiving county, EU-27, 2008 (%)**

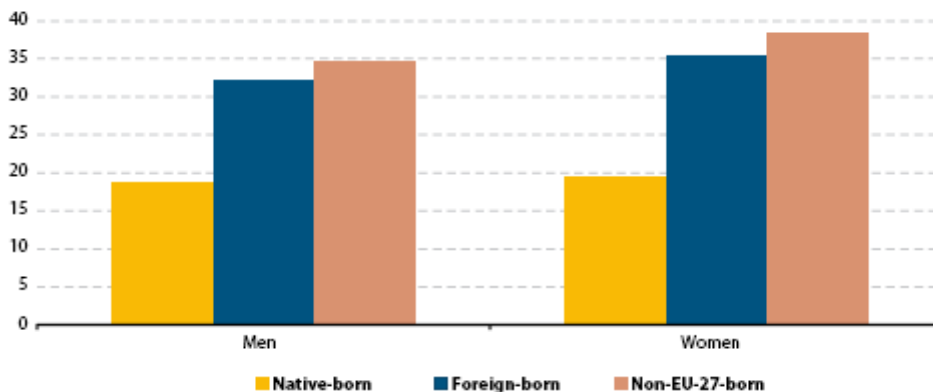
	Native-born	Foreign-born	Of which			
			EU-27-born	Non-EU-27-born	of which from countries with	
					high HDI	low and medium HDI
EU-27	19	34	29	36	34	38
Men	19	32	27	35	32	36
Women	19	35	30	38	35	41
Recent migrants	—	43	37	47	38	52
Settled migrants	—	29	24	32	32	32

Source: Eurostat, LFS 2008

**Table 4: Over-qualification rate of employed population aged 25-54 by groups by country of birth and gender, EU-27, EL, ES, DE, IE, FR, FI 2008 (%)**

	Native born			Foreign born			Difference between Foreign and Native born		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	+/- Total	+/- Men	+/- Women
EU-27	19	19	19	34	32	35	15	13	16
EL	18	19	17	62	59	64	44	40	47
ES	31	33	29	58	57	59	27	24	30
DE	20	22	17	31	30	33	11	8	16
IE	29	28	29	41	43	38	12	15	9
FR	19	16	22	27	25	28	8	9	6
FI	18	13	22	30	:	:	12	:	:

**Figure 4: Over qualification rates of persons aged 25-54 by groups of country of birth and gender, 2008**



Source: Eurostat, LFS 2008

There are of course migrant women in highly skilled occupations both amongst labour and family migrants and those who entered initially as students and have remained. In countries such as the UK where there are official skilled migration routes which have attracted much intra-EU migration and students, the percentage of foreign-born non-OECD migrant women in highly skilled occupations is higher than for native-born. In Belgium, Hungary and Portugal too, the number of foreign-born



women migrants is about the same or higher than native-born. On the other hand, the percentage of women in countries where women have been channelled into low skilled employment, such as Greece, Italy and Spain, is particularly low.

**Table 5: Percentage of women in highly skilled occupations by origin, 15-64, 2004**

	Native-born	Foreign-born	Foreign-born non-OECD
Austria	38.2	25.3	18.6
Belgium	42.9	41.6	42.5
Denmark	43.3	38.6	33.9
Finland	42.8	32.5	21.9
France	37.7	30.5	31.1
Germany	46.0	30.5	..
Greece	36.6	13.5	6.8
Hungary	40.8	42.7	40.8
Ireland	40.0	47.9	-
Italy	43.9	29.2	20.4
Luxembourg	51.3	38.5	26.3
Norway	42.2	38.9	23.8
Portugal	25.7	33.6	31.3
Spain	36.2	21.6	12.3
Sweden	45.4	38.3	25.7
Switzerland	44.1	38.0	29.2
United Kingdom	36.2	43.7	39.8

"-" indicates that the figure is not significant

".." no explanation

SOURCE: Table I.15. SOPEMI 2006.

## Gender-based discrimination and migrant women in the labour market

Gender discrimination in the labour market takes various forms, both indirect and direct. Three specific phenomena – the wage gap between women and men, labour market segregation by gender and the "glass ceiling" (in which women are clustered in the lower rungs of the employment ladder) – are of particular concern to women workers in both sending and receiving countries.



Wage-based discrimination is a major factor. Not only are migrant women's wages often lower than those of their male counterparts, but wages are also often linked to the employee's national or ethnic origin. A European Union study (Rubin et al. 2008) shows that third-country migrant women experience higher unemployment rates, more frequent part-time employment because of inability to find full-time work, greater likelihood of temporary-contract employment, and a higher incidence of "deskilling", compared to European Union-born migrant women, native-born women and migrant men. This study also reveals that the age of the migrant woman's youngest child and how recently she has arrived in the country affects participation rates.

### **Protection gaps, working conditions and vulnerabilities in the domestic service sector**

A wide range of activities, such as cooking, cleaning, care, gardening and household maintenance are included in this sector. Domestic work is the single most important category of employment for millions of documented and undocumented migrants (Lutz 2008; FRA 2011). There are estimates of over a million irregular workers in this sector in Europe (Schwenken & Heimeshoff 2011:9). Overall, 10% on average of foreign-born women are employed in this sector compared to 1% of native-born but amongst recent migrants it rises to almost 20%. It is nonetheless socially undervalued, often legally unrecognised and unregulated. Yet at the same time in some countries such as Belgium and France, this sector is viewed as facilitating job creation though often part-time. It is clear that recent migrant women are being channelled into this sector in which employment opportunities exist (see part 3 on French initiatives).

Many European countries do not consider domestic work as valid work for the allocation of a residence or work permit. In others, where there are work permits for care workers in households, such as Italy and Spain, the conditions may be different and less secure. The Government of Spain promulgated Royal Decree 1620/2011 of 14 November 2011, regulating the special relationship that characterises service within the family household. The fact of working in a household makes it difficult for undocumented women migrants to supply proof of employment and benefit from regularisation schemes.

More recently, government, worker and employer delegates at the 100th annual Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted on 16 June 2011 a historic set of international standards aimed at improving the working conditions of tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide. While the new instruments cover all domestic workers, they provide for special measures to protect those workers who, because of their young age, nationality or live-in status, may be exposed to additional risks relative to their peers.

### **Lack of support for migrant women's ability to organise for their rights**

In many countries, migrant women face barriers and restrictions on their ability to organise for their rights. In some countries, the restrictions are enshrined in law and based on migrants' alien status: non-nationals may not be entitled to lawfully organise or join unions of other organisations. In other places, domestic workers may be specifically barred from union membership because they are not legally considered full employees under applicable labour law. Even in places where these restrictions are not in force, undocumented women are often unable to openly join organisations for fear of reprisal and deportation. Some barriers are less formal. For example, women domestic workers may find it difficult to organise themselves because of their inability to meet with other workers or because of problems with the language of the receiving country. Employers of domestic workers often place limits on the workers' access to the wider community, and may monitor communications and activities.





## PART 2 Country-level studies

In this part, we explore the following themes in each of the six countries:

- National definitions of integration;
- To what extent are women targeted by integration policies and to what extent is gender seen as an issue?
- To what extent is labour market integration specifically mentioned?
- Existing legislation and recent changes to integration and migration legislation;
- Who is involved in making policy for increased integration of migrant women?

### 2.1 Definitions of integration

The majority of the background reports give the nationally-recognised definition of integration as set out either in state law (Greece) or in the official literature of government-level bodies responsible for migrant integration (France, Ireland, Spain). Some, however, derive their conceptualisation of integration purely from the academic literature (Finland, Germany) and do not mention whether or not a national definition of integration exists for legal or political purposes. The reports that seek to include a combination of these sources (notably the Greek report) demonstrate the degree of fluidity possible in defining integration, either as a broad concept or a more narrowly-focused policy objective.

**Greek Law 3386/2005** defines integration as: “the pursuit of the implementation of equal treatment in any aspect of economic, social and cultural life, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, aimed at promoting economic and social cohesion.”

According to the **French Haut Conseil à l'Intégration**, the process occurs over time, and is one of effective participation in French life and society which respects shared principles, such that they represent an expression of equal rights and common responsibilities. Pursuing a policy of integration means to define and develop actions to maintain social cohesion at a local and national level, so that everyone can live peacefully and normally in accordance with the laws and through exercising their rights and responsibilities. Conceived thus, a policy of integration does not only concern immigrants. It must, however, still take into account the particular problems that are raised by some of them. Integration is not assimilation and is not aimed at reducing differences. Neither is integration the same as inclusion, because it is not limited to helping individuals to achieve socioeconomic equality. Integration requires a reciprocal effort, an openness to diversity that is an enrichment but also a subscription.

The Interdepartmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in **Ireland** (IWGIRI) defines integration as “the ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity”. Furthermore, throughout the Irish Government’s National Action Plan against Racism, the term “inclusiveness” seems central to the definition of integration. Integration is understood to be a two-way process that places duties and obligations on both cultural and ethnic minorities and the state to create a more inclusive society.





In **Spain** the official definition refers to the Common Basic Principles of the EU in which integration is a two-way process in view of social cohesion (Plan Estratégico Ciudadanía e Integración 2007-2010:5). The second Plan for 2011-2014 spoke of integration as a process of mutual adaptation and was to be based on responsibilities shared between the state and social actors (Plan Estratégico Ciudadanía e Integración 2011-2014:8).

Academic definitions of integration abound and the literature on migration, acculturation and integration raises different conceptualisations of the process. The **Finnish report** affirms the notion of integration as inside a process of acculturation, where the new culture transforms immigrants, and migrants transform the new culture. This process takes place socially, economically and politically (Berry et al. 2002; Liebkind 2000). Integration is thus an interactive development of immigrants and the society. The goal of integration is to acquire knowledge and skills needed in the society and working life while the possibility of maintaining culture and language of one's own is supported. (ETNO 2010:1)

The **German report**, however, points out that the concept of 'integration' with respect to immigrants can take on a number of meanings. At one end of the spectrum is the notion of economic or social convergence between the immigrant and native populations with respect to a number of statistical measures, such as the unemployment rate, the employment/population ratio, average earnings, school achievement, home ownership, fertility rates, voting behaviour, participation in community organisations, etc., without this convergence necessarily implying an abandonment of home, country, culture and beliefs. At the other end is the much broader notion of integration as assimilation, i.e. acceptance of, and behaviour in accordance with, host-country values and beliefs, including similarity of economic and social outcomes (Liebig 2007: 10).

There are nonetheless a number of commonalities in terms of the definitions:

- Integration as a two-way process;
- Promotion of economic and social cohesion;
- Equal treatment;
- Effective participation in all aspects of society;
- NOT the same as assimilation.

## 2.2 Targeting of women in integration policy and legislation

### Definition of gendered dimension of integration

The UN defines gender analysis as: "evaluating the impact on both women and men of any envisaged action, notably within any legislation, policies or programmes, in all sectors and at all levels. It consists of a strategy that aims to incorporate the concerns and experiences of women, as well as those of men, in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all domains – political, economic and social – in a way that women and men benefit equally and through which inequality is not allowed to perpetuate... The ultimate goal is to achieve complete equality between the sexes" (Conclusion of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997/2).

There is little mention of a gender approach and specific targeting of women in legal and policy framework on integration in any of the countries. For example, in **Ireland** there is no specific mention of the gender dimension of integration in national policy as exemplified by the absence of any



mention of "gender" on the Irish Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration website. However, the local integration strategy for the city of Dublin does discuss the relative disadvantage faced by female migrants. It emphasises that gender must be named and addressed in all analysis, policy development and measurement of outcomes in this framework, even if there is no legal or policy requirement to do so at central government level.

Similarly, the **German legal framework** centres around the 2006 'Anti-Discrimination' Law, which prohibits employers from discriminating against applicants and employees on the grounds of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. However it was apparent that, "with regards to women, there is a continuing gender differentiation in job opportunities, pay and working time arrangements" (Heron 2005: 10). Moreover, it has been noted that women from ethnic minorities face discrimination on the basis of both ethnicity and sex (Agocs 2002). Migrant women, therefore, may suffer from discrimination on the basis of both their gender and their country of origin. The German National Integration Plan does not mention the reality of the discrimination that these groups face, especially when it is considered that discriminatory practices may often be indirect (for example, seeking new employees informally from friends and family of existing employees; imposing unnecessarily high language requirements).

In *Greece*, there is also only limited official discourse relating to the different ways in which integration processes and policies affect women and men. However, gender equality is a principle guaranteed by the Greek Constitution and further reinforced by the harmonisation of Greek law with European-level protection of non-discrimination, particularly in the sectors of employment and social security. It must be noted, though, that many migrant women have no access to such opportunities precisely because they are not Greek citizens.

The Aliens' Law (3386/2005) makes reference to a strategy for the "social integration" of migrants, including their "equal treatment in employment", "respect of fundamental rights", and "support of family reunion". Furthermore, it introduced certain provisions which were intended to regulate issues mainly of concern to migrant women, for instance, the provision of a residence permit which does not depend on the husband's will, status, income, or ethnicity in case the family member has suffered domestic violence. However, apart from the very few regulations in favour of women, the new immigration law as a whole very rarely takes into consideration female migrants' specific needs and characteristics concerning their status, and the multiplicity of reasons leading women to emigrate, the diverse elements of their immigration. In fact many regulations amount to direct or indirect discrimination against them. It therefore becomes evident that female migrants are visible in policy terms only as family members, or as victims of domestic violence or trafficking.

In **France**, there are several legal and policy instruments regulating and managing the status and integration of female migrants. For example, wives who have come within the framework of an official process of family reunification can only (since the RESEDA law of 26/11/03) obtain temporary rights, which maintains dependence in relation to their husband. The length of time a couple must have been living together in order to obtain a right of residency has nevertheless been increased with each new reform.

The spouses of French citizens themselves can only access, according to the Sarkozy law of 2006, a temporary three-year right to stay and must wait four years to be able to submit an application for naturalisation. Reunified spouses can have their right to residence revoked in the event of a change of family circumstances, if the spouse decides to return to their country, or even if the household is deemed no longer to have sufficient resources. Furthermore, many attacks on immigrant women



have taken place while they were without the legal right to remain. Women who have come with a right to family reunification or who have married in France to men from their own country and who were victims of marital violence, were until recently likely to be deported.

The RESEDA law of 2003 forbade the revocation of a permit to remain when the marital home had broken due to violence (Article 431-2 of CESEDA). The law of 20/11/2007 allowed for the issuing of a 'family and private' permit if the attacks had been reported after arriving in France and before the issue of a first permit. The banning of the revocation of a permit was extended to the case of women who had obtained a temporary residence permit if married to a French citizen.

Women who arrive as labour migrants can only obtain a residence permit on condition that they take a job within certain specific professions. A large proportion of these professions are in fact management or intermediary professions that require a higher education qualification. As qualifications obtained in a country outside of the EU are often not recognised (for health professions, see Hatzfeld et al. 2009), the acquisition of an equivalency qualification requires a procedure, consisting of complementary training, passing of exams and a language test. In addition, a growing number of women are emigrating alone to escape specific oppression which they have suffered as women in their country of origin (forced marriage, violence). Since the law of 10/12/2003, requests for asylum from certain countries considered 'safe,' come under a specific procedure and are often subject to rejection.

In **Finland**, although the Government has introduced policy and strategies for the promotion of migrants' integration and the prevention of discrimination in social, political and economic contexts, there has been little specific focus on the particular issues affecting female migrants. Immigrant women's position in Finland started to be taken into account for the first time in the 1990s, when the Advisory Board of the Refugee and Immigrant Matters appointed a working group to address the issue. However, migrant women are often analysed in terms of their of traditional gender roles and, as such, are seen primarily as wives and mothers instead of their activity in the labour market.

In **Spain** integration measures concerning migrant women fall into the competencies of the Autonomous Communities and Regions through their Equal Opportunities policies. However, the policies developed in Madrid do not specially pertain to migrant women.

## 2.3 Labour market integration of migrants

### Finland

The development of integration policies in Finland started to flourish in the 1980s when migrants' risk of isolation became a generally shared concern in Finnish society. Finland adopted its first government action plan on immigrant and refugee police in 1997 and in 2010 the Finnish Parliament established the new Integration Act (1386/2010). The Integration Act determines that early integration measures should be directed to all immigrants arriving to Finland, regardless of their permit status (refugee, labour migrant, family member). They are provided with basic information about Finnish society, service system, their rights and obligations and how to access integration programmes.

Immigrants' access into the labour market is an essential part of integration and integration policy. This is emphasized in Finland by moving integration issues from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Employment and the Economy at the beginning of 2012. (Martikinen & Tiilikainen 2007:



29; Ministry of the Interior, Finland, 2011a.) Although the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is in the process of taking responsibility for integration, the individual municipalities are responsible for developing, planning and monitoring the integration of immigrants.

## France

Migration policy in France has been influenced by the recommendations of European institutions, which since 1994 have advocated an 'EU preference' in terms of immigration and access to employment. An EU Green Paper (2005) advocated a reorientation of flows towards economic immigration, the implementation of a system of 'quotas' which would be coordinated and managed at a European level and the selection of migrants in possession of high-level qualifications. In response to this, various modifications have been made to legislation concerning the allocation of residency rights for foreign nationals and the acquisition of French nationality. Conditions for allocation have been consistently toughened up and labour migration, in particular, is dependent on a work contract, which gives access to the right to remain, mainly for a short time (often less than 3 years).

The policy for 'selective' immigration as defined by the government combines professional criteria with geographical origin of migrants. From 2006, the professions open to immigrants are those defined as experiencing a 'shortage' of labour, mainly concerning high skilled workers and in trades, often male-dominated sectors. Personal services, such as care of children and older people as well as a range of other household tasks, is a female-dominated and growing sector and constituted the first economic sector for which an agreement was reached with the *Agence nationale des services à la personne* (ANSP) involving the employment of 10,000 migrants per year who have signed the *Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*. The move to favour labour migration has for the first time posed the problem of regulating women through work. The regularisation of the undocumented is increasingly through the employment route on a case by case basis and this means that women who may have not declared or only partially declared their work, render their legal status totally dependent on their spouse (French report)<sup>5</sup>.

## Germany

The German labour market places great emphasis on formal qualifications, particularly of the vocational kind – educational attainment will be an additional focus – since this is likely to affect present and future employment prospects. Due to this emphasis on certification and vocational training, the Chambers of Commerce and the Chambers of Trade play a key role with respect to the labour market integration of immigrants. Since 2005 Germany has moved away from group-specific labour market programmes (such as programmes targeted at immigrants) towards better inclusion of these groups in the mainstream programmes (see section on national and local initiatives).

## Greece

The Aliens' Law 3386/2005 in Greece introduced measures to regulate residency permits, including for those foreign nationals undertaking financial investment activities or who are employees working in Greece for a specific period of time. In addition, the Complete Action Plan for the social integration of immigrants, introduced by the Law, emphasised key areas for their successful

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<sup>5</sup> Regularisation through employment requires at least 5 years residence in France, work for the past year, promise of recruitment or a contract from an employer for a job on the shortage list and the expertise to do the job.



integration, including knowledge of Greek language, culture and history as well as active integration into the Greek labour market. However, this programme has, so far, remained largely on paper with hardly any successful actions implemented, leaving Greece with a limited formal framework for migrants' labour market integration.

## Ireland

The definition of labour market integration used in the European Commission's Peer Review on Social Inclusion and Social Protection entitled, *Making a success of integrating immigrants into the labour market* is:

"Access to employment [that] requires the acquisition of country specific human capital (including the knowledge of the language of the receiving country), but also the recognition of the migrant qualifications and educational level, the possession of a legal status, of an accommodation, and the possibility to access education and training. The labour market integration of an immigrant also means the possibility to access good jobs providing adequate wages and social security benefits, including unemployment benefits or other contribution-based benefits" (EC 2010:7).

Despite this, the term "labour market integration" does not appear to feature in any government policy document in Ireland dealing with integration. The workplace strategy of the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration uses the term "integrated workplaces" which does not have an identical meaning. Rather it relates to the "context of cultural diversity hold[ing] significant promise for business success, employee wellbeing and societal harmony – promise that can only be realised where a successful integration of different cultures is achieved in the workplace. Integration means doing business in a way that values all cultures in the workplace and enables the contribution of all cultures to business success in a context characterised by non-discrimination and equality" (EA 2008:5)

However, policy documents that form Irish national strategy on integration include the 2000 IWGIRI report, *Integration: A Two Way Process*. Within this, employment is described as a key factor in terms of facilitating integration. The barriers to accessing employment, however, are also identified: poor language skills, lack of knowledge of the labour market and skills requirements, lack of recognised skills or qualifications and discrimination. Furthermore, the Irish National Action Plan against Racism (2005) is focused on the integration of three groups: migrants, refugees and Travellers. Labour market policy is dealt with in the plan under the objective titled 'Inclusion' – the objective is concerned with "economic inclusion and equality of opportunity for cultural and ethnic minorities, including a focus on employment, the workplace and poverty" (p. 3). The plan states that employment training and employment services play a key role in promoting social inclusion in Ireland and they help support the integration of the most marginalised minority ethnic groups into the labour market.

The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in Ireland has also released a policy document (*Migration Nation*, 2008), stating that "barriers in the area of language skill acquisition and recognition of degree and non-degree level qualifications keep many migrants in jobs they are over-qualified to do" (p. 8). In terms of labour market policy, the document proposes measures to protect migrants from exploitation and discrimination, in order to ensure "integration in the workplace". This term refers to managing diversity and integrating immigrants into the workplace as a necessary element of social inclusion.



The Equality Authority strategy to support integrated workplaces also advocates a range of initiatives to assist employers and trade unions to respond effectively to the potential and challenges of a culturally diverse workforce and to create integrated workplaces.

## **Spain**

The Instituto de la Mujer, an official body of the Ministry of Health, Services and Equality has responsibility for promoting equality between women and men and their participation in political, social, economic and cultural life and sees migrant women as being different to migrant men and women in general. Labour market measures and resources are managed and developed by the respective Autonomous Communities. The resources for employment policies are managed by private, non profit-making organisations. It has a number of programmes for which details are given in the next section on national and local initiatives.

The initiatives and policies that have been implemented by the different countries for the benefit of migrant women's labour market integration are outlined and discussed in further detail in the next section.





## PART 3 National and local initiatives

### 3.1 Government initiatives

#### Finland

Integration in Finland is supported by several measures and services. Those services provide guidance, advice and information. They aim to facilitate access to information about Finnish society and Finnish and Swedish language teaching, as well as providing adult skills training and implementing labour market policy measures. In addition, integration measures and services contain special training and education in reading and writing for those immigrants who might need it. There are also interpretation services given when necessary. Integration policies also try to promote equality by assessing the special needs of immigrants and providing services to address it. Moreover, measures are evaluated and provided to encourage immigrants themselves to gain the skills and knowledge needed in the Finnish society (Seppelin 2010: 1–2).

The Ministry of Interior has published a practical guidebook, *Life in Finland* (2011), which is provided for every migrant person who comes to Finland. The guide book is planned to help the integration process and settling in Finland by giving basic information about Finnish society, for example, about housing and working or about which authorities should be contacted in the case of further questions or problematic situations (Ministry of the Interior, Finland 2011c). Although the Ministry of Employment and the Economy is taking responsibility for integration, the individual municipalities are responsible for developing, planning and monitoring the integration of immigrants.

#### France

In France it has been noted that there is no single national or local approach towards migrant women and their integration into the labour market. There are, though, political initiatives and projects that have been implemented with public regional and local funds.

The domestic service sector, which is heavily reliant on the labour of migrant women, has undergone a structural reorganisation and this has led to the creation of such initiatives as the CES (*Chèque emploi services*) simplifying the process of employing workers in this sector for individual employers. The effects of these policies have led on the one hand to an increase in employment and of part-time work, whilst on the other, these measures have produced an extreme individualisation of labour relations, by-passing the possibility of employee unionisation.

In relation to the conditions of female migrants, the French government has also implemented an 'Inter-Ministerial Plan for the Fight against Violence against Women 2011-2013' aimed at combating issues of domestic violence and sexual discrimination, which provides for information campaigns to increase awareness and prevention amongst young and second-generation migrants in France.

#### Germany

Liebig (2007) noted in his review of migrant integration in the labour market that under the new Immigration Act which came into force on 1 January 2005, there is a uniform introduction programme for all permanent immigrants. As in the past, integration services focus largely on language training. There is little evaluation with respect to the effectiveness of this kind of training and it is generally not linked to labour market needs. Indeed, the scarce empirical evidence suggests



that language training in Germany may not in fact be very effective as a means of labour market integration.

Most major local communities have established advisory services for migrants or even run their own integration offices, such as, for example, Stuttgart or Frankfurt. In principle, German integration aid is based on 5 pillars: linguistic training, education, vocational qualifications, social advice and the promotion of societal integration. Primacy is given to linguistic training to which the majority of funding is given at federal and sub-national levels. Whilst most other measures are discretionary, only language courses constitute entitlements and then only for certain groups.

However, it is clear that the basic competence level under the integration courses (European Reference Level B1 – self-sufficient language knowledge) will not suffice for most labour market needs. In Germany, the only pillar of integration policy which directly targets labour market integration is the fostering of vocational qualifications. However, since 2005 Germany has moved away from group-specific labour market programmes (such as programmes targeted at immigrants) towards better inclusion of these groups in the mainstream programmes. The mainstream structure has been augmented with networks and special consultancy offices for vocational integration. These networks, co-funded by the EU Equal initiative, are aimed at tackling deficiencies in information and counselling, as well as fostering the identification and further development of the qualification potential of migrants and their offspring. The reliance on formal qualifications tends to hamper the prospects of immigrants with formal higher qualifications obtained abroad, those who developed their competencies in a different/foreign environment.

## Greece

In Greece, the policy context relating to immigrants consists of a number of EU and national programmes. Hence, migrants as a distinct target group are included in a number of programmes aimed at combating social exclusion. Since 2000, all official texts and National Employment Action Plans (NAPS), explicitly recognise the beneficial effect of migrants' employment (Zeis 2008). Moreover, within the Greek social welfare system, the position and rights of migrants are quite difficult even for those who are regularised and well integrated into the labour market. The basic problem remains the lack of coordination amongst various public services with competencies to implement the migration law together with the active employment policies.

Yet, in the framework of the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, the Multi-Annual Programme of the Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and e-Governance, the competent authority<sup>6</sup>, selects and implements a series of projects which cover the period 2007-2013 (Balourdos 2010). Amongst them are the programmes, such as:

- “Education of immigrants in the Greek language, the Greek history and the Greek civilization”;
- “Teaching the Greek language as a second language for migrant workers”;
- “Learning the Greek Language in certified Centres for Vocational Training for unemployed returning Greeks, migrants, refugees and other unemployed persons whose lack of adequate

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<sup>6</sup> Law 3613/2007 and Law 3649/2008





knowledge of the Greek language constitutes an obstacle for their social integration (2006-2008”);

- “Manpower Development – Full integration of all manpower in an equal opportunities society”;
- “Local social inclusion actions for vulnerable groups”.

Overall, it is worth pointing out that the projects and initiatives funded through the European Social Fund, have primarily focused on addressing the problems faced by different immigrant and minority groups in accessing mainstream employment and social support services and mechanisms<sup>7</sup>. Besides this, ESF interventions relating to Greek language courses have contributed to developing basic/key skills and career counselling services, thus increasing the employability of migrants and minorities and facilitating their integration into Greek society (Balourdos 2010).

With a few exceptions, female immigrants are not taken into consideration in policy formation and policy implementation. Female migrants are almost “invisible” in both the labour market and society as a whole (Liapi 2008). However, a commonly cited critique is that these interventions do not address some of the more significant problems faced by immigrants, such as the fact that their skills and experience are not being adequately recognised by Greek employers, thus preventing them from moving beyond low-skilled and low-paid jobs. Moreover, the institutional framework has been designed in order to cover the needs of the original majority of migrants, i.e. men, and only covers the particularities of migrant women to a very limited degree. On the other hand, the new law makes no provision at all for a number of other issues, regarding, for example, unmarried or single mothers, religion or culture, labour rights, and women’s dependence on their husbands for permit issues or renewals. Policies are not only male-orientated but they are also family-orientated, adopting a rather patriarchal approach towards migrants. This stands in sharp contrast with the new reality and the fact that there is a growing trend towards the feminisation of migration (Liapi 2008). Finally, these initiatives are exclusively targeted at documented immigrants residing in the country, thus leaving out the large number of undocumented immigrants living in Greece.

## Ireland

In Ireland there are a number of integration programmes and labour market programmes currently operating. These include:

FÁS, National Training and Employment Authority – enhances the skills and competencies of individuals through the provision of tailored training and employment programmes suited to the needs of both workers and employers. These services are open for Irish citizens, EU-nationals and those non-EU nationals who hold Long Term Residency.

The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform), 2000-2006 – The type of funding that was available under the programme included funds to establish, renovate or upgrade childcare facilities for community based and not-for-profit groups and funds to build, renovate or upgrade childcare facilities for self-employed childcare providers catering for not more than 20 children at any one time (DJELR 2000). The programme was meant to support

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<sup>7</sup> Public social care for undocumented immigrants is limited to providing health services only in case of an emergency, whilst NGOs and migrant communities step in to fill some of the significant gaps in the provision of social and health care.



the cost of childcare for disadvantaged families who may be in employment but who would otherwise be unable to afford childcare and remain in work.

EPIC programme – Initiated by the Irish Government and delivered by the Business in the Community organisation, EPIC stood for ‘Employment of Parents of Irish Born Children’. It was aimed at approximately 17,000 parents who were granted residence on the ground of parentage of Irish born children and were in need to demonstrate that they have taken steps towards becoming economically independent in the state in order to maintain residency.<sup>8</sup> As shown above, in the legislation section, employment is one of the strongest pre-conditions for granting residence permits in Ireland. The initiative was therefore concerned more with issues of economic viability rather than with integration. The programme later evolved into ‘Employment for People from Immigrant Communities’, which provides a six-week Pre-Employment Training and one-to-one individual support with Training and Employment Officer.

## Spain

In Spain there are two main national government initiatives:

Programa Sara which seeks to improve the quality of life of migrant women in relation to their social participation and in particular employment. It is managed by non-profit making private bodies such as Cruz Roja and Fundación CEPAIM; and

Programa Clara is oriented towards migrant women who face cultural and social barriers which prevent them from participating in the labour market.

## 3.2 Non-governmental initiatives

### Finland

Besides the legal framework and official integration measures, there are non-governmental organisations that carry out development projects to promote the integration of immigrants into Finnish society (Seppelin 2010:5). NGOs’ role in the integration of immigrants has increased with the implementation of the new integration law. (Svensk 2011) According to the new law, authorities have to develop integration in diversified cooperation. Immigrant NGOs thus have a better chance than before to participate in the planning and implementing of integration strategies. They, therefore, act as specialists of integration (Suomen Pakolaisapu 2011).

### France

NGO strategies for migrant integration in France are concentrated at a local level, as can be seen in the French study on Marseille.

### Germany

A particular feature of the German welfare services is the role of non-governmental agencies, as these services rely primarily on semi-public and non-governmental institutions. The new immigration law assigns them a stakeholder role in the development of new integration services. These services

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<sup>8</sup>See [www.bitc.ie/epic](http://www.bitc.ie/epic)



are now mainly focused on “social advice” and labour market integration is *not* generally emphasised as a priority. However, these NGOs have been one of the principal providers of language training for migrants and are now the main contractors for the new integration courses.

## Greece

In Greece it is noted that public social care for undocumented immigrants is limited to providing health services only in case of an emergency, whilst NGOs and migrant communities step in to fill some of the significant gaps in the provision of social and health care. The projects and initiatives funded through the European Social Fund have primarily focused on addressing the problems faced by different immigrant and minority groups in accessing mainstream employment and social support services and mechanisms.

## Ireland

Door to Work - Work experience programmes – led by AkiDwA, migrant women network and is open to EU women and non-EU women holding long-term residency. The programme aims to assist migrant women to access labour market by facilitating work placement with employers across various sectors. The placements are sourced based on candidates’ qualifications and interest. Apart from placements, AkiDwA offers assistance with CV writing and exploring other employment options. The programme is currently in the second phase, each cycle lasting 6 months.<sup>9</sup>

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland – Domestic Workers Action Group (DWAG) – A part of MRCI’s work is to deal with workplace exploitation of migrant workers, offering information, advice, referrals and, exceptionally, representation at court hearings.<sup>10</sup> DWAG was set up by MRCI to respond to the exploitation and unfair treatment that many domestic workers, predominantly migrant women, experience in Ireland.<sup>11</sup> The group has launched a number of successful campaigns, demonstrations and has had significant media presence in the last few years. DWAG’s work has been crucial in exposing a number of foreign embassies in Ireland, which employed domestic workers who alleged unfair treatment. Currently, the group is involved in a campaign against diplomatic immunity; it is demanding that the domestic workers are given their right to due process and to have their employment complaints heard in court. In order to achieve this, embassy staff should not be allowed to use the diplomatic immunity clause in such hearings.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) – Towards a Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrant Workers in Trade Unions – addresses the commitment to develop a strategic approach to the inclusion of black and minority ethnic members into trade union movement. This includes representation of minorities in the decision making structures within unions.

## Spain

Many of the programmes are initiated by government but implemented by non-profit making organisations as previously noted.

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<sup>9</sup>See [www.akidwa/employment](http://www.akidwa/employment)

<sup>10</sup> See [www.mrci.ie](http://www.mrci.ie)

<sup>11</sup>See [www.mrci.ie/Domestic-Workers/](http://www.mrci.ie/Domestic-Workers/)



## 3.3 Local initiatives

### Finland

In Finland, municipalities organise measures and services to promote the integration of immigrants (Söderling 2010:2), for example, the local Employment and Economic Development Offices are responsible for offering labour services to immigrants (Ministry of the Interior, Finland 2011b:11).

The aim of the immigration strategy of Helsinki as a municipality is to improve immigrants' position in the labour market by developing an inclusive system to guide immigrants towards education and labour market, in cooperation with the municipalities in the metropolitan area and the employment administration. It seeks to make use of the resources of migrant people by improving their integration. Helsinki intends to use different levels and tactics: 1) political level – using public voice to appeal for migrant's treatment as equal citizens and their ability to develop common welfare; 2) personnel level – not only management but the whole staff of municipality will commit to the strategic aims which are set together; 3) state-municipality level – the municipality and the state will collaborate and frame their roles, responsibilities, resources etc. for providing the services to migrant people; 4) association level – the municipality will help strengthening the role of the migrant associations, which encourages migrant people to participate in developing the municipality of Helsinki (Helsingin kaupunki 2009: 3).

Helsinki's immigration strategy focuses on providing services to immigrants who have recently moved to Finland and who are in the first phase of their integration process. This includes developing and putting into operation a customer-oriented service path. Integration of immigrants into the labour market, and in the broader sense, into Finnish society is supported by increasing and improving Finnish language skills of adult immigrants. The indicator for this is that the differences in welfare will diminish amongst those immigrants who get income support and the whole population, and the supply and demand of language teaching will come into balance (Helsingin kaupunki 2009:9).

Otherwise immigrants are treated like all other citizens of the municipality of Helsinki. Although the services are based on equal treatment, the different backgrounds of different migrant groups are taken into account. Equal treatment is implemented for example by positive discrimination. The municipality of Helsinki also intends to recruit more immigrants and people with migrant background to its personnel. This is not only because of the social responsibility but also because of their know-how (Helsingin kaupunki 2009:10).

### France

In terms of what has been done and is being done at a local level, there are essentially two strategies in the Marseille region: that of the CIERES and that of the *Mêmes Droits, Mêmes Voix* network. CIERES has created several strategies for the professional integration of migrants, notably the ETOIL (*Espace Territorialisé Ouvert d'Insertion par les Langues*) plan that consists of giving language training to a high level for foreigners with higher educational qualifications. It is financed by the ACSÉ, the region, the *département*, the CUCS and, since 2011, by the European Integration Fund.

The ALIS (*Action Linguistique d'Insertion Sociale*) plan is aimed at older female migrants. Additionally, the PISTE (*Parcours Inversé soutenu par le Travail des Employeurs*), which involves the



creation of direct access beyond the writing of a CV for those who, although they possess skills have difficulty in communicating them due to the fact they are from abroad<sup>12</sup>.

The second strategy is that of the *Mêmes Droits, Mêmes Voix* network, initiated by the Mediterranean Women's Forum along with the European Network of Migrant Women. This aims at bringing together the different associations involved in migrant women's rights in Marseille and in the region: to this end, a one-day training session was organised for February 2011 in Paris.

The strategy by the Culture and Mediation association, founded by the training officer, Thérèse Basse, seeks to bridge the gap between employers and foreign job seekers, by working on their social representation and on its deconstruction through a better knowledge of the other from a different culture. Basse says: "At the moment I am in the middle of creating a scoop, which proposes cross-cultural mediation for enterprises and individuals. Today we need to support people with issues of a personal nature. Because when people know 'who I am, where I want to go', we manage to integrate them better into the society; whatever the difficulties, we manage to overcome them. If we manage to put into place a social and cultural capital which allows us to tackle the difficulties of the labour market, we arrive differently: this is the work I am doing, especially with young people (*Reseau Mêmes Droits, Mêmes Voix* 2011)."

## Germany

Although most emphasis has been on language and social skills, there are a number of organisations in Frankfurt concerned with migrant women and labour force integration:

Berami - Berufliche Integration e.V. – This organisation offers vocational training in a three-phase programme. First, after a detailed analysis of language skills, it evaluates the language level of the particular candidate and then provides a four month job-related language course, vocational training and professional orientation. In this first phase there is customised individual advice and support when looking for an internship that is in keeping with personal preference and qualifications. Phase II affords candidates a four-week internship which ensures initial contact with potential employers and gives an insight into the operational structures of organisations. In Phase III all their experiences are analysed and evaluated, consequently concrete steps are taken in planning a future career. Its courses, especially its language ones, form a rich synergy in cooperation with Berlitz and the Cooperative International Federation. Practical subjects taught are the fundamentals of computer and Internet use and a professional knowledge of German. Additionally, it has a ten-month qualification programme which is oriented towards gaining qualifications, specific skills and German, with a focus on job-related language. These qualifications are supported by the Chamber of Commerce. This particular course is aimed at women migrants in receipt of unemployment benefits. The initiatives of this organisation are supported by the City of Frankfurt, the Social Fund of the European Union and the state of Hesse.

Frauenbetriebe Verein zur Qualifikation für die berufliche Selbständigkeit – caters for women who are returning to work after being unemployed and after taking parental leave, as well as employed migrant women. It seeks to promote and preserve the professional skills of women through organised training. It also gives opportunity for such women to organise in the Frankfurt region. Its

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Françoise Nasri, Director of CIERES, Marseille



focal point is to link women with the regional labour market. The aim of the coordination centre is to enable women to reconcile work and family with advantageous working situations.

GFFB Gemeinnützige Frankfurter Frauenbeschäftigung – This organisation offers advice, career oriented profiling, qualifying temporary workers, qualifying additional jobs, coaching and matching and mediation. This is particularly aimed at those on the lowest unemployment benefit. The organisation can train many in the catering business as a result of a restaurant project, and enables people to develop vocational skills that people can usefully employ in the mainstream employment sector. It is supported by the City of Frankfurt, the Job Centre Frankfurt and the Employment Agency.

FrauenSoftwarehaus e.V. – This organisation runs parallel courses for women returning to the workforce after they have had a period of unemployment resulting from either parental leave or unemployment. Courses are aimed at developing the personal skills of participants and their professional interests. Both courses have a common core of modules, namely competence analysis, developing and implementing strategies as a result of previous analysis, an understanding of the labour market, use of the Internet and training in preparing applicants. They differ in terms of one course offering certain core computer skills as compared to the other, while the other offers advice and assistance in finding a job, language training and basic mathematics.

Jumpp – This organisation has as its specific aim, the enabling of entrepreneurship amongst women and the affirmation of women's economic potential. Women are enabled and supported through all stages of their business development through training opportunities, networking events, seminars and project management. It also provides mentoring for professional women wanting to return to work and other unemployed women between the ages of 25-50 years. This is particularly focused on developing training programmes that can strengthen and enable professional women to become successful in the labour market.

Kompass-Zentrum für Existenzgründungen – This organisation works particularly at giving women the opportunity to become entrepreneurs through providing them with a similar service to Jumpp. They provide experts to take people through various aspects of the business start-up cycle. Some of their services need to be paid for by the user, as only a certain amount of advice is free. Their aim is to improve the overall entrepreneurial climate of Frankfurt and provide more jobs. It is supported by Jumpp, Frankfurt Economic Development GmbH and the Educational work of the Hesse Industry Association and funded by the City of Frankfurt, Youth and Social Department, Frankfurt Economic Development GmbH, Rhein-Main Job Centre GmbH, Frankfurt Employment Agency, Consult Personnel Services GmbH, Consultancy Hessen Trade and Service Ltd. and the Frankfurt Start-up Fund.

Although all these programmes are run successfully, they are not easily accessible to African migrant women, because they do not fit the criteria to be registered on these schemes. Additionally, entrepreneurship schemes, although desirable, are not accessed by African migrant women as they are already running their own businesses. Rather than spend money on advice, they know the African market better than their advisors. It should be noted that the Chancellor, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Integration Summit in Berlin on the 31.02.2012, said that the public sector should reflect the demography of Germany and that laws would be changed to allow immigrants to be recruited into it.

Two African organisations, although not specifically concerned with the labour market, do guide and direct their members towards job and training opportunities and language support, as they see these as important elements that enable integration. One organisation provided a teacher for almost two years free of charge to African women wanting to know the language for employment and





integration purposes. At no time were they able to access funding for their clientele, and they do not see that opportunities have arisen for employment of their members and clients despite their language training. Their view is that issues of discrimination exist, but that officials are blind to it and those applying for jobs are fearful to be deemed troublemakers and lose the opportunities for work. Both organisations still see African women who do not always qualify for these courses.

## Greece

Although in Greece a higher degree of autonomy has been transferred to the municipalities regarding social and educational policies it should be pointed out that from the perspective of the institutional transformation already launched, the transfer of significant financial resources from the central state to local administrations may prove to be quite difficult, if not outright impossible. Nevertheless, the impact of this institutional change will probably amplify the importance of local systems in providing social protection, in the reduction of poverty and in promoting better targeted active inclusion policies (Balourdos 2010). This can be seen in that the main initiatives for migrant integration in Greece are still very much concentrated at the central government level.

## Ireland

Vocational Educational Committees – Vocational Educational Committees are involved in English language provision at a local level. The VEC Adult Refugee Programme runs short-term courses for persons with refugee status, which are specifically designed to enable participants to effectively integrate into Irish society, both from a language and a social and cultural perspective.<sup>13</sup>

Civic Participation of Third Country Nationals through Local Authority Platforms – is a project led by the Dublin Employment Pact, New Community Partnership (a migrant-led umbrella organisation for various ethnic communities in Ireland) and four local authorities operating in the Greater Dublin Area. The project is primarily aimed at developing capacity amongst new communities and especially amongst women and young people to actively engage to the fullest possible extent in opportunities for economic, social, civic and political participation.<sup>14</sup> The actions of the project include:

- Organising pilot workshops in four Dublin local authorities, briefing migrants on history, norms and values of the Irish society. These workshops are first of its kind in Ireland;
- Creating work placement opportunities in Dublin local authorities to enhance the employability skills of third country nationals and develop a diversity of culture in the authorities.

## Spain

Madrid has taken into account the situation of vulnerable women in its integration plans, the last one being for 2009-2012. There are two resources for migrant populations – CASI (*Centro de atención al inmigrante*) which provides complementary services for social services and the CEPI (*Centros de Participación e Integración de Inmigrantes*) which offer spaces for meetings between majority society and migrants. It provides a variety of services for the “nuevos madrileños”. There are also specific services for migrant women such as La Pachamama for Latin American women, which offers

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<sup>13</sup>See [www.adultrefugee.ie](http://www.adultrefugee.ie) for details on Adult Refugee Programme

<sup>14</sup>See [www.integratingireland.ie](http://www.integratingireland.ie) for more details on the project



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information relating to employment. Apart from courses for neighbourhood services, there is also a strategy to encourage self-employment.





## PART 4 Themes arising from interviews with migrant women

The interviews with migrant women carried out in each of the European urban settings uncovered several themes relating to integration, labour market participation and discrimination. The barriers faced by female migrants included the specific obstacles that arose from their positioning at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, nationality, legal status, language ability and cultural difference.

Whilst not placing any of these obstacles as any more problematic than any other, it is nevertheless evident that female migrants are positioned at the intersection of several of these minority social groups. As mentioned in the German report, it has been noted that women from ethnic minorities face discrimination on the basis of both ethnicity and sex (Carles and Jubany-Baucells 2010). Migrant women, therefore, may suffer from discrimination on the basis of both their gender and country of origin. Furthermore, it was noted in relation to second-generation migrants in France that discrimination occurred owing to their family name, their appearance, or the area in which they live attesting that these prejudices persist across generations and can often rely on factors beyond levels of language ability, social integration and cultural knowledge.

Discrimination on the grounds of gender, race or cultural difference ranges from overt racism to more indirect forms of employment discrimination. This latter consideration has a significant effect on the labour market integration of female migrants. Beyond the simple participation of migrants in the labour market, it is also necessary to examine their distribution across occupational sectors and the reasons for which migrants – and particularly female migrants – are weakly represented in certain sectors of the labour market. Although employment discrimination is, in many cases, an unintentional by-product of migrants' lack of social and cultural resources it can also be attributed to overt prejudice and discrimination. As one Ugandan interviewee in Germany commented: *"I went for a job and they were more concerned with my dark-skin rather than my ability"*.

Moreover, on an institutional level, there appears to be a channelling of foreign labour towards low skilled, badly paid, insecure employment in each of the countries under study, which goes against the grain of true labour market integration as set out in the EU principles. This channelling of foreign labour into the lowest paid and least skilled occupational sectors has been previously discussed in general studies, but was also a problem raised by many interviewees. Such practices reveal a discrimination that occurs at the level of national and local policy initiatives which must be addressed in order to ensure the effective integration of migrants into the labour market of the receiving countries. In particular, this discrimination leads to the situation whereby the overqualification rate – that is, the proportion of highly-educated workers employed in low- and medium-skilled sectors – for migrant workers is 15% higher than for native-born workers (see above). Female migrants in particular face a significant level of downward job mobility, 'deskilling' and reorientation away from paid work and towards the domestic sphere.

The female migrants interviewed in each of the country studies mentioned similar perceived barriers to labour market integration, including their difficulties with the language, cultural differences and racial discrimination. On a more practical level, they also cited a lack of work experience in the receiving country, the non-recognition of qualifications gained in their country of origin and a perceived preference of employers to hire native-born workers. The Irish study explicitly talks about the gender barriers faced by migrant women in the labour market and particularly relating to issues of childcare provision and maternity benefits that affect the labour market opportunities of both native- and foreign-born women. That being said, however, the women who participated in the Irish



study were primarily concerned with the preference of employers for native employees and lack of Irish work experience and Irish qualifications were the most frequent responses on the issues of perceived barriers.

In Ireland, seven migrant women were interviewed, of whom only one was employed at the time of interview. This was despite all the participants having tertiary education (two having obtained their university education in Ireland). The one employed participant was hugely overqualified for the work she performed, giving rise to significant 'deskilling'. Although she had obtained an MSc in Industrial Chemistry in Nigeria, this participant worked as a cleaner, expressing a complete absence of job satisfaction and a desire to work in the area of her studies. She cites the non-recognition of her non-EU qualifications and a lack of Irish work experience as her biggest obstacle to occupational mobility.

Similarly, the experience of female Albanian migrants in Greece reveals the employment of university graduates in the domestic service and cleaning sector. The study based in Nikea-Renti municipality (Athens) interviewed nine women. One of them, Majlinda, expressed concern that she was losing her qualifications by working as a mere cleaner despite the fact that she had an Albanian university diploma. Tefta, another participant, describes her three jobs as a cleaner, a theatre usher and (informally) as a house cleaner. This is despite having an economics degree which is, nevertheless, not recognised by the Greek authorities. Her opinion is that there is no future for her qualification in Greece after so many years of deskilling and she therefore aspires to return home to Albania.

In the Finnish study, the authors affirm that the process of deskilling amongst migrant women seems to be more the norm than the exception. One of the study's participants, Fatima, who has a bachelor's degree in French literature, works as a cleaner in a kindergarten, and feels let down:

*"Sometimes I get very sad about it. I am there in the kindergarten cleaning the toilets, when I know I have the qualification for teaching the children too, but they are not willing to offer me that job. I see myself and I think: I am 40 years old, I have worked so hard, I used to be the best student in my class, and what was it for?"*

Several of the eight women interviewed are also working as cleaners or in sectors that differ from their university or vocation educational qualifications. Even in cases where the interviewees do work in their area of expertise, they are subject as migrant workers to levels of employment or wage discrimination. Lea, interviewed as part of the Greek study, and working as a teacher in an Armenian school, has found that in fact her salary is lower than that of teachers working at a Greek school. However, she feels lucky that she has never had to work as a cleaner or any other kind of "low-skill and dirty jobs."

In Germany with a large number of very highly educated African women, it took the form of women with master's and PhDs being employed in office work. One woman with a degree notes that: "it seems we are being put in narrow categories for jobs: I do not wish to work in an office".

Their abilities may also be under-estimated (A woman with a PhD: "People doubt my ability despite my education") or they are not fully recognised (A woman with German citizenship with an Economics degree obtained in Germany: "Yes [I am satisfied with my job], but it rarely uses my abilities.")

Thus, the restriction of labour market opportunities open to migrant women is apparent from the interviews carried out in the studies with those participants who are employed, and frequently overqualified for the jobs they do. In addition to this, as migrant workers they face considerable



levels of overt discrimination, prejudice and racism. Tefta, from Albania, states that there is racism and discrimination against Albanians in Greece and, in the same study, Maria, from Uzbekistan, sums up her experience in the Greek labour market with the words “prejudice, discrimination and exploitation”. Indeed migrant workers from outside the EU appear to bear the brunt of racist attitudes, which affect their integration into the labour market of the receiving country. French policy explicitly excludes non-EU migrants from certain sectors of the labour force and deters all but the most highly educated migrants from the Global South. However, in terms of highly-qualified women their qualifications, notably in the health sector, are not recognised in France. Obtaining an equivalency qualification for diplomas acquired from outside the EU being close to impossible, many women end up becoming cleaning ladies, waitresses or domestic carers, inflating a sector that is becoming more and more competitive and perpetuating the deskilling of female migrants’ human capital.

The idea that racist attitudes can lie behind deskilling is illustrated in the Finnish study by the case of Ameena, who is a highly educated woman from India and speaks English as one of her mother tongues, and who found a job in an English-speaking kindergarten. This was her experience:

*“I was somewhat satisfied with my job in the kindergarten because they were very nice to me, although I felt the pay could be more. I found out that there was another worker, a Finnish worker, whose salary was 200 euro more than me. Maybe it was because she had been working there for longer time.*

*The kindergarten took me in the position of a nursery teacher. They told me that they couldn’t take me in the position of a kindergarten teacher, which is better paid, because those were only given to Finnish people by a decision of the board members (it was a private kindergarten). I think that is strange, if I am a native English speaker and it is an English speaking kindergarten”.*

Gender-based discrimination in the workplace was raised as a barrier by the migrant women interviewed in each of the settings. This relates to employers’ fears that women may require maternity leave and/or more flexible working arrangements owing to childcare needs. This discrimination against women applies to migrant workers no less than to native-born workers but it should be noted that this is one of a number of prejudices that migrant women might come up against in their attempt to find employment. That being said, it was the issue of childcare provision and the costs associated with this that were of most concern to the interviewees who had caring responsibilities for young children – particularly in the Irish study. In the other country studies, the discrimination suffered by the women on grounds of their ethnicity or cultural background appeared to be more prominent than purely on the basis of gender. This lack of emphasis on gender discrimination may, however, be attributable to the fact that gender biases are just as likely to be encountered in migrant women’s countries of origin as the new societies in which they have settled and so is not unique to their experience of migration and integration.

Furthermore, the studies reveal that migrant women may also face discrimination depending on their age. The Irish study notes that, although younger women were approached to participate, the participants were all in their thirties or forties. This could signify that older migrant women face greater difficulties in terms of their flexibility to relocate for employment purposes or to undertake further qualification or retraining.

As noted above, one of the greatest challenges facing migrant women’s labour market integration is the indirect discrimination that persists from both employers and, more importantly, on an



institutional level in terms of the assistance and support provided by the receiving country. The non-recognition of qualifications obtained from outside the EU is a factor mentioned in all of the country studies. Migrants with university degrees from Nigeria in Ireland and Germany, from Albania in Greece and from India in Finland are forced to work in unskilled, low paid sectors. In France, migrant workers can only obtain a residence permit on condition that they take a job within certain professions. These are frequently in management or intermediary professions that require a French-recognised higher educational qualification. In this way, many migrants are forced into the informal sector or to take employment for which they are vastly overqualified.

Levels of direct discrimination may vary widely from country to country, depending on nationality, ethnicity, legal status and cultural awareness of migrant groups and the extent to which each of these factors diverges from the dominant culture. It is for this reason that the Finnish report highlights that those immigrants whose culture, language, education and colour of skin are closer to the local population are in better positions in the Finnish labour market – by contrast, in the weakest position are the women coming from the former Yugoslavia, Turkey, North Africa, Somalia, Iran and Iraq. However, in France and Ireland especially, it can be seen that cultural and ethnic factors play a more significant role than a lack of language ability (which appears prominently in the Finnish study) as migrants from French- or English-speaking parts of the world are affected by restricted access to the labour market in spite of this apparent linguistic advantage.

What is significant also is the degree of divergence between the level of integration support and assistance provided at local, regional or state level for migrants. The labour market structure is different in each of the countries and they also operate different welfare systems. These factors affect the eligibility of migrant workers for the various policies and initiatives designed to assist their integration on both a social and economic level.

For example, in Germany the majority of public expenditure on immigrant integration is focused towards language programmes that provide a basic level of German, with little attention to individual need, occupational insertion and development. There is little attempt to match up skills and employment opportunities and migrant workers are often channelled towards the lowest paid sectors that require the most basic level of language ability. Similarly, language courses form a main component of integration strategy in Finland and migrants are also required to have a high level of language ability required in order to access better quality jobs or jobs that would match their education level. Within the context of the state employment agencies, this may however cause tension, as highlighted in the Finnish study: in certain cases, the Employment Office might decide that the migrant is ready to access the labour market but the level of language ability achieved by that person might be high enough to work as a cleaner but not sufficient to access positions that require higher qualifications (qualifications that the migrant might possess already).

Beyond the channelling of migrant workers towards less skilled, low-paid occupational sectors there exists a wide variation in the level of eligibility of migrants for government support programmes. In France, for example, integration policies prioritise the insertion and integration of intra-EU migrants ahead of third-country nationals and the Irish FAS Social Inclusion Unit also focuses its attention on migrants from other EU countries. Migrant women are included within the FAS's target group if they fall within their general eligibility criteria; i.e. if they are from EU countries or in case they are from outside of EU, if they hold long-term residency. It does not recognise the specific needs faced by migrant women and large groups of vulnerable women who do not comply with the criteria are excluded altogether from accessing their services.



Finland's integration programmes are also subject to stringent eligibility criteria, which even if met, require strict compliance with an individual integration plan made by the Employment Office. The level of subsidy and assistance received by individual migrants is the decision of the Employment Office, which also has the ability to withhold such support in case of non-compliance. This has the further effect of disempowering the migrants and restricting the effectiveness of their labour market integration by increasing their dependence on the state. An interviewee spoke of the *"shifting labyrinth where it is not possible to predict which move will produce which results and where finding the right information seems very challenging"*.

This was a sentiment echoed by an interviewee from the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment who noted that the regulations were very complex even for Finnish-speaking people and that there existed a jungle of laws in each institution yet one regulation affects another. This may have particularly serious consequences for women finding their status and rights changing as a result of divorce. Hence the Director of Monika suggested the need to create spaces where migrant women could receive support and guidance for different issues, a sort of one-stop shop of advice.



## Conclusions

Efforts have been made to improve labour market integration but policies continue to disregard the gender dimension and the diversified needs of migrant women. Relevant differences include the needs of those with young children who may not be able to afford childcare and older women. Deskilling is a common theme throughout the reports and one that has increasingly been addressed by a number of international organisations. Issues of failure to recognise diverse situations and needs of migrant women and the educational levels of some; lack of recognition of qualifications of women from outside the EU; guiding them into jobs where there are jobs rather than reflecting their educational levels; necessity to provide transition courses for educated women that go beyond basic integration courses and which can enable them to access the labour market.

As the Greek report commented, “many find themselves trapped in the vicious circle of temporary/legal migrant status, insecure job environment and deskilling whereby they work in the domestic sector, cleaning and care services”. Indeed the growth of these sectors has pushed women into these sectors, including through formal labour market programmes, as in France. Diversifying opportunities should also include measures facilitating migrant women’s self-employment and participation in the social economy, as suggested by the French report.

The global financial crisis has also had an impact, especially in Greece, where national and EU funds targeting migrant labour market integration have ceased and where women may be ‘upgraded’ to a breadwinner status and take on additional burdens as their husbands’ work in the construction sector dries up.

Discrimination was frequently raised by interviewees in all countries. In Germany, a pilot study (May 2006) had stated that Black respondents displayed high rates of discrimination. On average, nearly 50 percent of Black respondents reported discrimination in the employment sphere and 57 percent felt that they had been denied a job for reasons of racist or xenophobic discrimination. Amongst our sample in Germany, even where their degrees had been obtained in the destination country, as with one with a bachelor’s degree, another with a master’s and two of the holders of PhDs, they only managed to gain access to office administration. In France, discrimination was highlighted against children of immigrants due to their family name, their appearance and where they lived. It could not be ascribed to language since the interviewees tended to be bilingual. In Greece, the majority spoke “good” to “very good” Greek and had lived for long time in the country. So too did most interviewees in Ireland – they spoke good English but lacked Irish experience. In contrast, in Finland, most of the interviewees only had basic Finnish in a country where one was even expected to speak good Finnish to work in low level jobs. In the Irish case it was felt that discrimination was only tackled once it occurred rather than at an earlier stage of promoting positive integration.

Thus, programmes for educational opportunity, access to the workplace and professional recognition should take into account multiple identities and diversity of circumstances. A wide range of organisations including the state, trade unions, NGOs and migrant organisations need to be involved in the development and application of such measures. Where the labour market participation of migrants was being encouraged through changes in legislation, these should be applied. In France, for example, following strikes by undocumented migrants in 2010, the regularisation-through-work legislation (June 2010) opened up a greater number of professions to those from outside the EU. In particular migrant women can get a temporary work authorisation on the basis of 20 hours work and





then seek to work 35 hours, which would enable them to request a residence permit. However this had not been applied by the relevant administrative authorities (*préfectures*).

As the EC Agenda for the Integration of Third Country nationals noted, local authorities play an important role in providing services and shaping the interaction between migrants and the receiving society. In several countries, such as Finland and Greece, responsibility for integration policies and services has recently been devolved to the local level. In others, such as Germany, NGOs have increasing involvement in delivering services, whilst in others such as Spain, services are provided by non-profit making agencies. Such organisations may be providing services in conjunction with local authorities or filling significant gaps, as in Greece.

In this report, we have outlined some of the initiatives implemented at city level that could be adopted more widely. These include facilitating access to the labour market through organising work placements, assistance with CV writing (Dublin), providing language training at a high level for professionals, bridging the gap between employers and migrants, and targeting older female migrants (Marseille); vocational training and job-related language provision, courses for those returning to work for example after looking after children (Frankfurt); and entrepreneurship (Frankfurt, Madrid). Effort may also be put into changing representations, as in Marseille, or providing information about a country's history and values, as for example in Dublin. These initiatives may be financed by a range of local and regional authorities (Frankfurt, Marseille) and/or the local authority may work together in partnership with an umbrella organisation of migrant community groups (Dublin).

As the Finnish report concluded, "We also believe that in this work one can make a difference and from here we encourage all those who believe the same, from grassroots workers to stakeholders and policy makers, to coordinate their actions and help to make that difference".

## Recommendations

Based on the experiences of migrant women, NGOs and local authorities in the city and national studies, we recommend the following issues need to be addressed and services provided to tackle the different needs of migrant women's participation in the labour market:

1. **Tackle the deskilling of migrant women by recognising the diplomas and qualifications** obtained in countries outside the EU and provide appropriate and due services for their validation which are **not** complex, lengthy, costly and discouraging qualified immigrant women.
2. **Recognise the diversity of migrant women's educational levels, professional experience,** routes of entry and situations in the development and implementation of national, regional, local integration policies.
3. **Provide more successful and effective formal channels** for information about and access to employment for migrant women.
4. **Reflect migrant women's social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances** and rights in integration as well in gender-equality policies.
5. **Gender-mainstream national, regional and local migration and integration policies.**



6. **Identify and share best-practise examples** from other countries with the **most gender equitable immigration policies**.
7. **Provide a gender-based analysis of migration regulations** as an example of good practice (like Canada) and suggest that this be considered by other countries.
8. **Make the assessment of the skills of migrant women less dependent on gender-biased criteria like earnings** and assess instead language skills and knowledge.
9. **Provide language courses that reflect the diversity of needs**, including those at higher levels and designed to facilitate women's entry into the labour market into jobs appropriate to their qualifications.
10. **Provide affordable, accessible and appropriate professional language courses** for qualified immigrants which address also **women with childcare responsibilities**.
11. **Support skilled migrant women** by providing support structures for newly arrived qualified migrant women.
12. **Combat and address discrimination and racism in the workplace against** migrant women and **identify best-practise examples where anti-discrimination work place policies** are already in place.
13. **Support research on how the effect of gender is also affected by factors** such as race, nationality, age and religion in influencing skilled migration.
14. **Support, organise and finance entrepreneurship training**, networking and ex-change platforms for migrant women.
15. **Implement legal channels for migrant women's employment** and **address the problem of insecure immigration status** and lack of social rights often resulting from bureaucratic and complex regulations.
16. **Employment services should recognise the diversity in the jobs** proposed for migrant women and not seek to channel them simply into low level and precarious employment.
17. Reconsider the **legal restrictions on work placed on women with asylum status and improve their access to the labour market**.
18. **Agencies, NGOs, employers and trade unions should work together** to facilitate work experience and placements.
19. **Provide financial support to NGOs providing space for migrant women to exchange experiences**. The loss of social networks, personal and professional, after women migrate can be worse for women if family responsibilities prevent them from accessing new networks. Eventually, lengthy periods out of the labour market and under-employment harm the self-esteem of such migrant women and increase deskilling.





20. **Support multi-lingual counselling services for women** where migrant women could get information and advice on how to access labour market. **There support could be given for their need to re-skill or to get accreditation** when in families is given less priority to their professional career due to gender hierarchy within households.



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## Appendix 1 Characteristics of migrant women interviewees

### FINLAND: HELSINKI

The eight interviewees for the Finnish study were a diverse mix of migrant women who displayed a range of citizenship statuses, integration levels and migratory experiences.

This sample has very mixed nationalities and is well educated. The knowledge of Finnish tends to be basic but a very good level tends to be important to obtain good work.

Age	COB	Citizenship	Migration status	Migration route	Educational level	Level of Finnish	Currently employed?
40	South Africa	Finnish	Finnish citizen	Family reunification	Vocational	Basic	No
34	India	Indian	Long-term residency	Family reunification	Tertiary India	Basic	Yes - Teacher
40	Morocco	Moroccan	Permanent residence	Employment	Tertiary Morocco	Medium	Yes - Kindergarten /Cleaner
30	Algeria	Algerian	Temporary residence	Family reunification	Tertiary Algeria	Basic	No
44	Brazil	Brazilian	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Secondary Brazil	Basic	No
27	Switzerland	British/US/ Swiss	Permanent residence	Employment	Tertiary Switzerland	Basic	No
28	Brazil	Brazilian	Temporary residence	Family reunification	Tertiary Brazil	Basic	Yes - Embassy worker
24	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Deported	Asylum seeker	Secondary Ukraine	Beginner	No



## FRANCE: MARSEILLE

The French study interviewed six participants ranging in age from 27 to 63. The women were exclusively of North African origin, although both first- and second-generation migrants were represented.

The sample consisted of women either born in France or who came to France when young with or to join parents. Two of them set up local associations helping migrant women.

Age	COB	Citizenship	Migration status	Migration route	Educational level	Level of French	Currently employed?
53	Algeria	Algerian/French	Ten-year stay permit	Family	Secondary - Algeria	Native-speaker	Yes - Shop owner
30	France	Tunisian/French	French citizen	Second generation	Tertiary - France	Native-speaker	No
27	Algeria	Algerian/French	French citizen	Family reunification	Tertiary - France	Very good	Yes - Director of Employment Agency
55	Tunisia	Tunisian/French	French citizen	Family reunification	Tertiary - France	Bilingual	Yes - Director of NGO
44	France	French	French citizen	Second generation	Secondary - France	Native-speaker	No
63	Tunisia	Tunisian	Ten-year stay permit	Family reunification	Secondary - France	Very good	Yes



## GERMANY: FRANKFURT

This sample contains a larger number of older women and relatively large number of highly educated women (Master's and PhD). Despite acquiring their qualifications in Germany, several have ended up doing office administration.

Age	COB	Citizenship	Migration status	Migration route	Educational level -where obtained	Level of German	Currently employed?
52	Kenya	Kenyan	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Tertiary - Germany	Competent	Yes - Director of NGO
57	Sudan	Sudanese	Refugee	Asylum seeker	Secondary	Fair	No
46	Kenya	German	German citizen	Family reunification	Tertiary - Germany	Very good	Yes - Office worker
34	Nigeria	Nigerian	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Tertiary - Nigeria		No
35	Nigeria	Nigerian	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Vocational - Nigeria & Germany	Competent	Yes - Hairdresser
38	Ghana	Ghanaian	Permanent residence	Student	Tertiary - Germany	Competent	Yes - Office worker
35	Cameroon	German	German citizen	Family reunification			Yes - Waitress
34	Nigeria	Nigerian	Temporary residence	Student	Tertiary - Germany	Competent	No
42	Senegal	Senegalese	Temporary residence	Family reunification	Basic - Senegal		No
33	Kenya	Kenyan	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Vocational - Kenya	Competent	No
30	Kenya	Kenyan	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Basic - Kenya	Competent	No
44	Uganda	Ugandan	Temporary residence		Basic	Competent	No
50	Ghana	Ghanaian	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Basic - Ghana	Competent	Yes
46	Ghana	Ghanaian	Permanent residence	Family reunification	Basic - Ghana	None	Yes - Restaurant worker

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32	Kenya	German	German citizen	Family reunification	Tertiary Germany	-	Very good	Yes - Office worker
55	Togo	German	German citizen	Family reunification	Tertiary Germany	-	Competent	Yes - Nurse
54	Togo	German	German citizen	Family reunification	Vocational Germany	-	Competent	Yes - Nursery teacher
54	Cameroon	Cameroon	Permanent residence	Student	Tertiary Germany	-	Competent	Yes - Office worker
58	Nigeria	Nigerian	Asylum seeker	Family reunification	Tertiary Nigeria	-	Competent	Yes - Cleaner
34	Nigeria	Nigerian	Permanent residence	Student	Tertiary Germany	-	Competent	No
39	Kenya	German	German citizen	Employment	Tertiary Germany	-	Competent	Yes - Social education worker



## GREECE: NIKEA-RENTI (ATHENS)

The sample for the Greek report included nine interviewees, five of whom were of Albanian origin with the others coming from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc.

The interviewees had lived in Greece for between 13 to 20 years. The women all had one or two children and were mostly married, except for two Eastern European women – one of whom was divorced and the other was a lone parent.

Age	COB	Citizenship	Migration status	Migration route	Educational level	Level of Greek	Currently employed?
39	Albania	Albanian	Stay permit depending on work		Tertiary	Very good	Yes - Cleaner
34	Albania	Albanian		Family reunification	Secondary - Albania	Very good	No
44	Albania	Albanian		Family reunification	Secondary - Albania	Very good	Yes - Elderly care/Beauty services
35	Albania	Albanian		Family reunification	Tertiary (begun) - Greece	Very good	Yes - Shop's window designer
41	Albania	Albanian	Stay permit depending on work	Employment	Tertiary - Albania	Excellent	Yes - Cleaner
38	Russia	Russian	Independent stay permit		Secondary - Russia	Good	Yes - Self-employed small business
35	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Stay permit depending on work		Tertiary	Good	Yes - Waitress
47	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistani		Family reunification	Secondary - Uzbekistan	Very good	Housewife
45	Georgia	Georgian	Ten-year stay permit		Tertiary	Low	Yes - Teacher



## IRELAND:DUBLIN

The Irish study interviewed seven women, predominantly of African origin, who were all well-educated with competent language skills. All but two of the women were currently in employment.

Additionally, all but one were married, four of whom had children. Three had undertaken integration courses and all had found them to be of benefit. The others had taken courses to improve their skills.

Age	COB	Citizenship	Migration status	Migration route	Educational level	Level of English	Currently employed?
48	Georgia	Georgian	LTR*	Student	Tertiary – Georgia	Excellent	Yes – Freelance interpreter
37	DR Congo	Congolese	Refugee status	Asylum seeker	Tertiary – DR Congo	Good	No
42	Nigeria	Nigerian	LTR		Tertiary – Ireland	Very good	No
40	Nigeria	Nigerian	LTR	Family reunification	Tertiary – Nigeria & Ireland	Advanced	Yes – General operative
47	Argentina	Argentinian	LTR	Family reunification	Tertiary – Argentina	Fluent	No
46	DR Congo	Congolese	Refugee status	Asylum seeker	Tertiary – DR Congo	Conversational	No
37	Nigeria	Irish	Irish citizen	Visitor	Tertiary – Ireland	Excellent	No

\*LTR = Long-term residency



## APPENDIX 2 Organisations interviewed as part of the country studies

Country Study	Organisations
Finland	Ministry of the Interior
	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment
	MONIKA - Multicultural Women's Organisation (NGO)
France	Forum Femmes Méditerranée
	Réseau des Associations Françaises de Promotion des Droits des Femmes Migrantes
	Association HYGIA
	L'Arche (Marseille)
	Centre d'Innovation pour l'Emploi et le Reclassement Social (CIERES)
	Culture en Médiation
Germany	Frankfurt Office for Labour
	Frankfurt Office for Multicultural Affairs
Greece	Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Nikea-Renti
	Women Migrants' Movement for Political Participation (NGO)
Ireland	FÁS – Irish National Training and Employment Authority
	Equality Authority
	Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
	Integration Centre (NGO)
	Office for Integration of Dublin City Council
	Employment of People from Immigrant Communities (EPIC)