

A reliance on diversified delivery: the case of asylum seekers and refugees in France

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Introduction

France has experienced a distinct increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees since 2014, bringing the total population of the beneficiaries of international protection living in the country at the end of 2018 to almost 280,000.¹ Entering the French labour market is not easy either for asylum seekers or for refugees. The former are actually not allowed to work while the latter come up against several challenges that will be detailed in this chapter.

Until 2015, with the exception of a few programmes implemented by NGOs, there were no public policies aimed at supporting the occupational integration of refugees: the state authorities consistently held that no targeted measures were necessary as refugees enjoyed the same rights as any other resident. Since 2015, however, civil society organisations have launched a variety of initiatives promoting access to the labour market, including French language courses, vocational training and support for access to housing. Public policy on these issues is developing but, for the time being, is mostly at the stage of being piloted.

This chapter offers an overview of the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the French labour market based on the official data available as of June 2019, as well as surveys and research reports and interviews with key interlocutors.² It is organised in three sections. The first briefly presents data on new arrivals and refugee recognition rates in the past few years. The second section gives an overview of what we know about the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the French labour market in terms of data, the legal framework and the challenges which experts have identified. The third section presents the evolving policy approach of the French authorities and reviews the main programmes being implemented by state agencies and private organisations. The conclusion wraps up the key elements and takes stock of the situation.

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1. This includes the holders of refugee status, persons under subsidiary protection and stateless persons (OFPROA 2019).
 2. Twenty interviews were conducted between January 2016 and June 2019 with representatives of state agencies, civil society organisations and experts.

1. Refugees and asylum seekers in France

As regards population structure, Table 1 shows that the total immigrant population in France in 2018 was 6.5m (9.7 per cent of the total population), out of whom 2.4m had acquired French citizenship while 4.1m (6.7 per cent) had foreign nationality,³ one-third of whom were from another EU country. Half of the foreign-born population arrived in France before 1998. The share of EU citizens within the foreign-born population has decreased over time, reaching 35 per cent in 2015 (compared to 66 per cent in 1975). Around 45 per cent of the immigrant population was born in an African country (nearly two-thirds of whom, 29 per cent of the total, were born in north Africa), 14 per cent in an Asian country and six per cent in the Americas and Oceania (INED and INSEE 2018). It should be added that, across western Europe (EU-15), only Finland and Portugal have a lower share of foreign nationals in the total population than France.

Table 1 The share of foreign citizens and immigrants in the population of France (2018)

Characteristics	Foreign citizens	Immigrant population
Share of males (%)	50.3	48.6
Breakdown by age group (%):		
Under 15 years	17.0	4.5
15 to 24 years	8.9	8.0
25 to 54 years	48.6	53.7
55 years and above	25.4	33.8
Number (in millions)	4.1	6.5
Share in total population (%)	6.7	9.7

Source: INSEE (2019a).

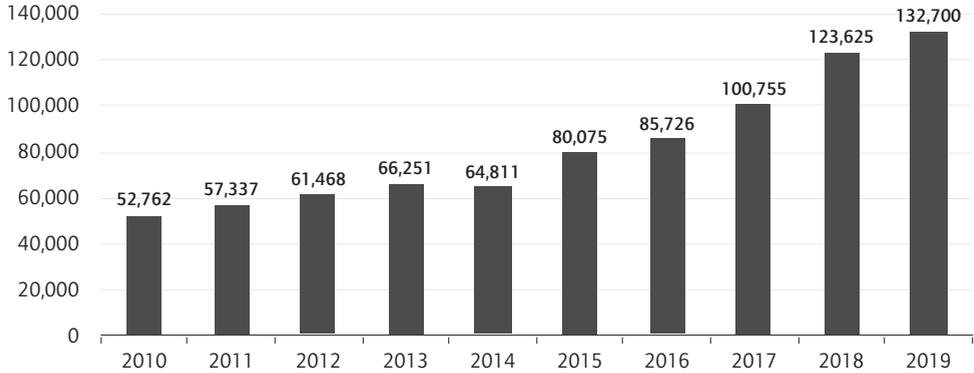
While the ‘refugee crisis’ in the rest of Europe, such as for example in Germany or Sweden, appeared as a sudden and massive increase in the number of asylum applications in 2015–2016, followed by a decrease after 2017, France experienced a more gradual, but continual, increase between 2014 and 2019.

1.1 Asylum applications

Figure 1 shows that, in 2019, the total number of asylum claims submitted in France rose to 132,700, twice as many as in 2013 (66,251) (OFPRA 2019). In 2018, France received the second largest share of asylum applications in the EU after Germany but, relative to the size of population, it was only in ninth place as regards first-time applications in Europe (Eurostat 2019). Despite being preferred to southern or eastern European countries for its more favourable job market situation and as regards state support for asylum seekers, France is also a transit country towards other destinations such as the United Kingdom.

3. In referring to the foreign population in France, institutional reports distinguish between ‘foreigners’ (*étrangers*) and immigrants (*immigrés*). The first category refers to non-French nationals, while the latter refers to individuals born outside France as foreigners – some 700,000 ‘foreigners’ were born in France with foreign citizenship and are, therefore, not counted as immigrants.

Figure 1 Total number of asylum claims submitted in France (2010-2019)



Source: OFPRA 2019.

The main countries of origin for first-time asylum applicants are Afghanistan, Albania, Georgia, west African countries (Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali), Syria and Sudan (OFPRA 2019). The population of asylum seekers in France differs from other EU countries: some nationalities – such as Syrians, Iraqis and Eritreans – are comparatively under-represented while asylum seekers from francophone countries are over-represented. Focused operations targeting migrants in transit – especially in the informal camps in Calais in 2015-2016 – have resulted in an increase in applications submitted by nationalities that had traditionally preferred the United Kingdom, such as Afghans and Sudanese. France also receives considerable ‘secondary flows’ of asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected in other European countries. In addition, France has developed resettlement programmes through the EU relocation scheme and through UNHCR schemes in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Niger and Chad.

In 2018, 33,216 positive decisions were taken by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (*Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides* – OFPRA) and the asylum appeal court (*Cour nationale du droit d’asile* – CNDA),⁴ amounting to a recognition rate (for refugee status, stateless status and subsidiary protection) of 36 per cent (OFPRA 2019). This brought the total number of people in France under the protection of OFPRA to 278,765 at the end of 2018, compared to 190,000 at the end of 2014 (OFPRA 2019). Those who have obtained French citizenship are not counted in these statistics. Refugees and stateless persons are granted a ten-year renewable residency permit, while those under temporary protection used to receive a one-year renewable residency permit before this was extended to four years in 2018.

In 2018, women represented 33 per cent of the asylum-seeking population, a slight decrease compared to previous years (it was 35 per cent in 2013). The inflow of unaccompanied minors has constantly increased in the last decade, while there has also been an acceleration after 2016: 13,000 new arrivals were recorded at the end of

4. The figure including children accompanying their family is: 46,838.

2016 but more than 26,600 at the end of 2018 (France terre d'asile 2019), although they rarely file an asylum application: just 742 did so in 2018 (OFPRA 2019). Those who are declared to be under 18 after an age assessment process are made the responsibility of Child Protection Services.

In 2017, some 240,000 new residence permits were delivered by the Ministry of Interior to first-time applicants for family reasons (36 per cent), study (32 per cent), humanitarian reasons (15 per cent), work (11 per cent) or for other reasons (six per cent) (Ministry of Interior 2019). Refugees are included under the 'humanitarian reasons' rubric; this has almost doubled in size in the past decade but still represents a minority of the total foreign population.

Asylum procedures were reformed in 2015, aimed mainly at reducing their length. This had exceeded nine months in 2013 but, in 2018, the average length of the procedure had been reduced to three months. An 'accelerated procedure' dramatically reduced the delay for people originating from a list of so called 'safe countries' (including Albania and Georgia, among others), while the 'normal procedure' currently lasts, on average, around four months (OFPRA 2019). This, however, does not take into account the effects of the Dublin Regulation under which the *préfecture* (which controls immigration administration) can transfer an asylum seeker to the EU country where his/her presence was recorded before arrival in France. According to Eurostat data, France filed more than 45,000 Dublin procedures in 2018, although less than ten per cent resulted in an effective transfer.⁵ After a certain delay, if the asylum seeker remains in France, the *préfecture* can eventually allow him or her to file an asylum application. This situation increases the transitional period for asylum seekers in France considerably.

1.2 Reception and support

Asylum seekers are entitled to reception support (*conditions matérielles d'accueil*). The number of accommodation centres for asylum seekers (CADA) has doubled since 2012, up to a total of 40,000 places. The French government has rejected the creation of large emergency reception centres, but special accommodation schemes have been developed to solve an accommodation crisis that had resulted in the multiplication of informal camps. Around Paris, shelters for homeless migrants were created, with a national scheme emerging in 2015 via a network of reception and orientation centres (CAO). An estimated total of 100,000 places existed in 2019 for the accommodation of asylum seekers, although this remains insufficient, resulting in the frequent usage of homeless shelters and occurrences of homelessness. In the metropolitan areas (Paris, Marseille and Lyon), large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees sleep on the streets, in informal campsites or in squats.

People in need of protection while in transit, as well as failed asylum seekers who remain in France, are invisible in the statistics. Several thousand people were estimated to

5. See <https://www.lacimade.org/application-du-reglement-dublin-en-france-en-2018/>

be staying in the ‘jungles’ in Calais at the beginning of 2016 (Agier *et al.* 2019) and several hundred in 2019. Given the high rejection rate for asylum seekers, the limited opportunities to obtain a residency permit on other grounds and the relatively low numbers of actual returns to the country of origin, there is a sizeable population living undocumented on French territory.

In addition, an increasing number of people are falling through the cracks of the asylum support system because of the Dublin procedure: asylum seekers affected by this can be deprived of all support until they are returned to the country determined to be responsible for examining their claim or until the procedure expires. Another group exposed to extreme precariousness are young people claiming to be minors but who have been assessed as over 18 years old by Child Protection Services: they cannot access any support, either for children or for adults.

2. Access to the labour market: what we know

2.1 Data

Data on the employment situation of asylum seekers and refugees in France are scant. Most studies on occupational integration in the French job market do not single out refugees from other migrants. Reports issued by OFPRA and by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (*Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration* – OFII) do not include information on the socio-occupational profile of asylum seekers, while refugees are registered as ‘clients of foreign origin’ in national files on the unemployed population. Thus most of the relevant studies on the job market concern ‘foreigners’ or ‘migrants’ and do not specify refugees.

In 2018, 71.9 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 64 in France were active, according to the International Labour Organisation definition, i.e. they were employed or looking for a job (INSEE 2019a). Table 2 shows that, in 2016, foreigners and immigrants made up 6.6 per cent and 9.5 per cent of the active population, respectively. The data by selected occupational category also show that they were significantly over-represented among the unemployed who have never worked (reaching shares of 14.6 per cent and 17.5 per cent), among industrial workers (11.1 per cent and 15.3 per cent) and crafts workers/traders and entrepreneurs (8.0 per cent and 13.5 per cent). In contrast, they were under-represented among managers and professionals (4.7 per cent and 8.6 per cent) and in intermediate occupations (3.2 per cent and 5.7 per cent) (INSEE 2019a).

Based on another recent survey by INSEE (2018a), one-third of employed immigrants consider that they are overqualified for their current occupation.

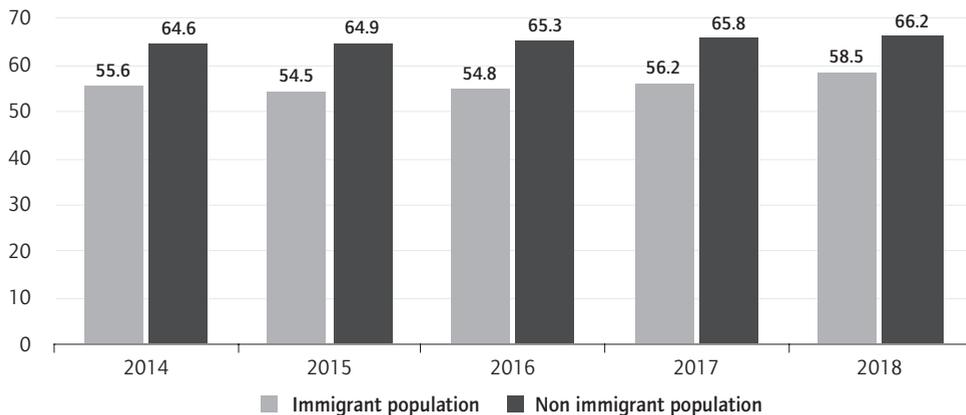
Figure 2 shows that, since 2014, the employment rate among immigrants has been consistently lower by nearly ten percentage points than for French citizens (INSEE 2019a).

Table 2 Share of foreigners and immigrants by selected occupational category within the active population, by socio-economic classification (2016)

	Total active population (thousands)	Share (%) of foreigners	Share (%) of immigrants
Crafts workers/traders, entrepreneurs	1,825	8.0	13.5
Managerial occupations, professionals	4,993	4.7	8.6
Intermediate occupations	7,247	3.2	5.7
Employees (clerical, sales, services)	8,134	6.7	10.9
Industrial workers	6,453	11.1	15.3
Unemployed and never worked	471	14.6	17.5
Total	29,668	6.6	9.5

Note: Active population by category does not sum to the total active population as a result of a number of non-declarations. Unemployed people with a working history are classified in line with their former category. Source: INSEE (2018b).

Figure 2 Employment rates for the immigrant and non-immigrant population in France (2014-2018)



Source: INSEE (2019a).

With an unemployment rate that has been oscillating between 10 per cent and 8.5 per cent in the period from 2015 to 2019, France ranks above the average rate in the EU28. In 2018, the unemployment rate was 9.1 per cent; that is, there were 2.7m unemployed people, while 1.6m people (that is, six per cent of the employed population) were in a situation of under-employment. The unemployment rate is higher among lower-skilled workers, young people aged between 15 and 24, and women (INSEE 2019a). Table 3 shows that the unemployment rate for non-EU foreign nationals was almost three times higher than for French nationals; this difference was even more pronounced among women (an unemployment rate of 26.4 per cent against one of 8.7 per cent for French women).

Table 3 Unemployment rate by nationality (2017)

	French nationals	Non-EU foreign nationals	All foreign nationals
Men	8.8	22.2	17.9
Women	8.7	26.4	19.4

Source: INSEE (2019).

Most studies of foreigners in the French job market (INSEE 2009; OECD 2015; CAS 2012; DSED 2010; INED and INSEE 2008; Jolly *et al.* 2012; INSEE 2019a) show that non-EU foreigners have a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the population: foreigners perform less well than French citizens on the labour market, even when equally qualified. They tend to have more precarious jobs and are concentrated in sectors such as hotels and restaurants, retail, temporary work obtained through employment agencies, security, cleaning and domestic services and construction. They more frequently experience low-paid jobs, part-time work and short-term contracts, exposing them to relative poverty. The jobs held by non-EU foreigners also appear to be segmented by gender, with women predominating in caring roles (personal care assistant, nursing assistant, childcare assistant) and men in construction ones.

Some studies, however, do make specific reference to the employment situation of refugees⁶ as distinct from other immigrants. These include studies carried out both by researchers and by NGOs (Tcholakova 2012; UNHCR 2013; France terre d'asile 2019); as well as two carried out by DARES and the Ministry of Interior (Okba 2018b; DSED 2015; DSED 2017; Ministry of Interior 2010). Both the two official surveys provide statistical data referring to a sample population that included, among other categories of foreigners, around 600 refugees.⁷

Beside confirming the trends highlighted elsewhere on the immigrant population in general, these studies underscore the specific vulnerabilities affecting refugees' involvement in the labour market, to which we have just referred. Equally, they also highlight that this gap tends to reduce over time as the employment rate for refugees increases in the medium-term and their employment conditions improve (Okba 2018a, 2018b).

The DARES study reveals the greater difficulties experienced by refugees in accessing the French labour market than those faced by other immigrants. Only 39 per cent of the refugees interviewed were employed (53 per cent of men and 19 per cent of women), whereas 70 per cent had been employed in their country of origin (Okba 2018b). The same study shows that 76 per cent of refugee men and 42 per cent of refugee women

6. Asylum seekers are not actually entitled to work, so none of the studies mentioned in this paragraph refers to asylum seekers.

7. The study *Migrants' Trajectories and Profiles* interviewed some 6,000 signatories of integration contracts (since 2007, migrants from outside the EU, including refugees, have to sign a *Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration* (CAI) (Reception and Integration Contract) at the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) upon their arrival in France). Out of these, 10 per cent were refugees. In addition, the *Direction Générale des étrangers en France* of the Ministry of Interior launched a study in 2010 to measure the integration of new arrivals; among other foreigners holding long-term residence permits, the sample included some 600 refugees who had entered France in 2009 (Ministry of Interior 2010).

were active (employed or looking for a job), whereas the percentage of active people was higher among other foreigners, in particular among those having a permit for family reasons or for salaried work. According to the survey, refugees perceive a downgrading in their labour market position, with 38 per cent considering that they have a less favourable position than the one they held in their country of origin (Okba 2018a, 2018b).

In explaining these data, the study points to three main factors. Firstly, the younger age of refugees compared to the sample population might explain their lower employment rates. Secondly, they have a comparatively less good command of the French language as a result of having come from non-francophone countries, while their arrival at a late age or a low level of schooling might compound other difficulties. Thirdly, refugees are often less qualified than other immigrants (one in four in the sample population had no diploma).

The DARES survey highlights that refugee women are particularly vulnerable in the labour market. In explaining why the women interviewed performed poorer than men in the job market, the study mentions four main factors: lack of command of French; family constraints (mostly related to childcare); health reasons (mostly related to maternity); and that they had been less often employed in their countries of origin than men.

2.2 Legal framework

The legal framework regarding refugees and asylum seekers is detailed in the French Immigration and Asylum Law (*Code de l'Entrée et du Séjour des Etrangers et Demandeurs d'Asile* – CESEDA), which consolidates the various legislative packages on immigrants' rights and asylum policy in France.

Asylum seekers

Since 1991, asylum seekers in France have not been allowed to work during the examination of their application, during which time they receive a monthly allowance (*allocation de demandeur d'asile*). However, after a six-month period, if the asylum administration (OFPRA) has not ruled on their application, they may seek a work permit (Article L.744-11 CESEDA).

Work permits – in the form of a refugee 'card' – are issued by the *préfecture*, where the applicant has an employment contract of more than three months and where the employer obtains authorisation from the local branch of the Ministry of Labour. The department responsible is the regional directorates for companies, competition, consumption, work and employment (*Directions régionales des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi* – DIRECCTE), which examines the need for labour in a specific territory, the skills and qualifications of the applicant and the situation of the employer. It must take a decision within two months. Where it delivers its agreement, the employer must then pay a tax to the immigration administration (OFII). Work permits have the same validity as the temporary residence permits issued to asylum seekers, i.e. they are renewable every three months. Work

permits are issued only for salaried activity, not for self-employment, which further limits employment possibilities.

In accordance with Article R341-4 of the Labour Code, DIRECCTE may undertake a 'labour market test' of the employment situation in the occupational sector and geographical area concerned. A refusal of work authorisation may be motivated by the unemployment rate in the sector or area under consideration, with the exception of specific occupations characterised by high labour demand and which are recorded on an official list for each of France's regions.

No official data is available on the number of applications for a work permit requested by and granted to asylum seekers. Furthermore, our interviews indicate that, in practice, work authorisations are almost systematically denied by DIRECCTE as a result of the employment situation and that, in any case, very few asylum seekers apply for a work permit. This is, in part, due to the administrative hurdles: the employment contract has to be for a minimum of three months but cannot exceed the length of the temporary residence permit granted to the asylum seeker. On their side, employers are reluctant to consider the application of an asylum seeker whose documents indicate they are not allowed to work and for whom they would have to engage in a long administrative process and pay tax to OFII. Our interviews also highlight the general lack of information on this subject among asylum seekers, even in accommodation centres.

Article L.74411 of CESEDA also provides that asylum seekers who have access to the labour market can benefit from the Labour Code's provision on continuing professional development. However, this measure remains theoretical because *de facto* most asylum seekers do not work.

There is, however, one exception to this general rule: asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors who are placed with Child Protection Services and who are enrolled in work-training programmes are automatically authorised to work.

Refugees

Once they receive their status, refugees enjoy full residency rights. They have the same social and economic rights as French citizens, including unrestricted access to the labour market. They enjoy services offered by the national public employment agency *Pôle Emploi* and personalised support for employment and accommodation provided by refugee support organisations such as *France Terre d'Asile* or *Forum Réfugiés* (Article L.7511 CESEDA). In case they are not in work, they are entitled to welfare support (*Revenu de Solidarité Active* – RSA) whereas other foreigners have a five-year waiting time before being able to access it.

Labour market regulations

A large number of occupations restrict access to non-French or non-EU citizens, mostly in the public service, while employment in certain protected occupations (i.e. in the army, the police or the security forces; justice; tax administration; diplomacy;

etc.) is restricted to French citizens. These accounted for approximately twenty per cent of all jobs in 2019. Other areas of employment in the public service – such as in education, public hospitals⁸ and in national or local administration – are restricted to EU citizens, although third-country nationals can be hired under temporary contracts; full positions are accessible to foreign nationals only in university and research; and as medical doctors in public hospitals.

Public or private companies which used to be state-owned (such as the electricity company, EDF; the airline, Air France; and the urban transport company, RATP) have progressively cancelled the nationality limitation, although SNCF, the train company, has announced that it would apply it in 2020. In contrast, some strategic companies (such as Banque de France and the Commission for Atomic Energy) continue to maintain it. Furthermore, private businesses controlled by a state monopoly (e.g. alcohol or tobacco dealers), as well as professions with an official legal capacity (e.g. notary, bailiff), are not authorised to non-EU citizens. Following a parliamentary report in 2010 (Assemblée nationale 2010), some occupations have cancelled the nationality limitation, however, including insurance dealers, financial counsellors and funeral directors.

In addition, several professions are regulated (*reglementées*); that is, being able to practise requires either a French or EU diploma and specific authorisation (including, among others, for nurses; laboratory technicians; ambulance drivers; and opticians); or prior authorisation by a professional association (*ordre professionnel*): this is the case for solicitors; medical doctors; pharmacists; midwives; architects; veterinarians; chartered accountants; and land surveyors. Professional associations rarely grant authorisation to practise to someone with a foreign diploma, especially if it is a non-EU diploma; they often require a probation period and/or the passing of an exam.

2.3 Challenges

Based on our interviews and on the studies we have cited, the main labour market barriers for asylum seekers and refugees include the following.

No right to work and no access to training programmes

Interviews and reports indicate that asylum seekers are willing to start working as soon as possible but, as mentioned earlier (see section 2.2), official work permits are delivered only in extremely rare circumstances. Asylum seekers, however, do need to find sources of income to ensure their livelihoods (considering that the asylum seeker allowance ranges between €200 and €300; while the RSA is €500-€550); frequently, they also have debts to repay and need to support family members.

Furthermore, considering the pre-application period, the asylum procedure itself and OFPRA's administrative requirements for obtaining a refugee card, several years can pass from the moment a refugee arrives in France to the moment that he/she obtains

8. This applies only to public hospitals, not to private clinics or freelance nurses.

a work permit. This long period, spent in a situation of segregation, destitution or employment in the informal labour market, may trigger a vicious circle and hamper access to the formal labour market once international protection has been obtained.

Refugees granted protection in another EU country are not allowed to work in France and cannot access training programmes.

Recognition of professional titles and qualifications

Refugees often cannot provide documentary evidence of their qualifications as they may have lost the certificates or left them in their country of origin. Moreover, in France there is no principle of juridical equivalence between diplomas obtained abroad and those delivered by the Ministry of Education, except where a bilateral agreement exists. *Enic-Naric*, the body responsible for validating foreign qualifications, is able only to certify the validity of the documents and attest to the duration of the studies abroad, although its attestations have no legal value.⁹

The gap that frequently exists between the level of diploma attained or previous occupations and occupational activity in France results in perceptions of downgrading that might have far-reaching subjective consequences (Tcholakova 2016). The DARES study highlights not only that – as we reported above – 38 per cent of the refugees interviewed consider their professional status to be less favourable than the one they had in the country of origin, but also that only 19 per cent declared that they are making use of their competences or their higher diploma in their occupational activity in France (Okba 2018a).

The length of the administrative procedure to obtain a refugee card

Even after the asylum authorities have taken a positive decision, in order to obtain a refugee card permitting work, OFPRA has to issue a civil status certificate which can take more than one year. During this time, refugees continue to receive temporary permits of stay valid for three months. The lack of a residency permit attesting to a durable presence on French soil may be an obstacle in finding an employer and, in some cases, even to benefiting from the services of *Pôle Emploi*.¹⁰

On the more positive side, the most recent reform of the asylum law did extend the right of residence for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection to four years, thereby giving greater certainty as regards residence rights.

Language skills

Very often, command of the French language is essential in finding a job outside ethnic enclaves. In addition, effective access to the services provided by *Pôle Emploi* is possible

9. According to *France Terre d'Asile*, 3,000 attestations were delivered by *Enic-Naric* on behalf of refugees in 2016 (FTDA 2018).

10. See, for instance, France Terre d'Asile and Forum Réfugiés (2015).

only if the refugee has a certain level of French.¹¹ For non-francophone refugees, the lack of language skills is a major obstacle to employment. Opinion is widespread that the language training provided by the French authorities is insufficient; while some of our interviewees mentioned that several refugees actually start learning French only when they have found a job. According to OFII, half the refugees who signed integration contracts in 2018 mentioned a lack of command of French as the main obstacle to their integration.

Lack of social networks

Refugees' social networks tend to be less well developed and less diversified than the networks of other foreigners. Indeed, refugees choose their country of destination less often in the first place and more often belong to a community with a more recent immigration history. As social networks are often key to entering the job market, any weakness here makes their situation more difficult once opportunities within ethnic communities have been exhausted. Socially isolated, they also have lesser access to intermediaries in terms of becoming more familiar with the French job market, including practices of job search and recruitment.

Geographical concentration and housing

Asylum seekers and refugees are highly concentrated geographically: in 2018, almost one-half of all asylum applications in France were registered in the area around Paris (Ile-de-France: 46 per cent). The French Office for Immigration and Integration has, since 2018, developed a mandatory scheme to disperse them across the territory (OFPRA 2019), while medium-sized cities and rural areas are encouraged to promote the reception of refugees (France terre d'asile 2019; Ministry of Interior 2018). However, in 2018 36 per cent of all asylum seekers still declared residency in or around Paris. This situation contributes to hampering the match between workforce offer and supply, in particular in sectors and regions which have labour shortages.

Many observers stress that, frequently, difficulties in finding housing and employment are complementary, triggering a vicious cycle of exclusion: without stable revenue, it is difficult to find accommodation and, *vice versa*, it is difficult to search for, and find, a job without having proper accommodation. In addition, the situation of housing and employment tend to be inverted throughout the country: in Ile-de-France, where it is easier to find a job, the housing situation is catastrophic due to high prices in the private housing market and long waiting lists for social housing. In contrast, areas where the housing situation is easier usually offer fewer employment opportunities.

Many asylum seekers are employed on the informal market

In some cases, asylum seekers prefer not to engage in undeclared work because they fear compromising their legal situation. However, many try to find roles in the informal market (in sectors such as construction, the restaurant industry and personal care), as

11. All services are provided in French. Reportedly, in some cases *Pôle Emploi* might even refuse enrolment on the grounds of the lack of language skills (France terre d'asile and Forum réfugiés 2015).

do many refugees as well as most of the ‘invisibles’ (people in need of protection while in transit and failed asylum seekers). Once an individual has found employment in the informal sector, the motivation and the time that can be devoted to entering the formal labour market decreases.

Evidently, this population is contributing to the national economy without benefiting from the rights and protections available to regular workers (absence of social protection; lack of access to rights; no minimum salary; etc.).

Other challenges

Other challenges include the experience of poverty, racial or religious discrimination and poor mental health.

Services targeted at refugees’ mental health are insufficient. Several studies have underlined the specific challenges refugees face because of the traumatic experiences they have endured in their countries of origin and during their journeys (Saglio-Yatzimirsky 2018), as well as the stressful situations related to the asylum procedure and protracted family separations. In particular, the length of family reunification procedures worsens refugees’ psychological conditions. A recent report on the integration of young refugees in Europe states: ‘Family reunification is recognised as one of the key mechanisms for the better integration of migrants and refugees. The absence of family members and worries about their wellbeing hinder effective participation in language courses, school and training and finding a job.’ (FRA 2019)

3. Policies and private initiatives

3.1 The policy framework

For the past twenty years, the French authorities have dealt with the refugee issue by taking a short-term approach and with a clear focus not on integration but on the asylum procedure and on the reception of asylum seekers, the latter characterised by a situation of constant emergency due to the chronic shortage of accommodation places (Létard and Touraine 2013; Tuot 2013; Karoutchi 2014). The logic of electoral competition and budgetary reform, as well as the wish not to become an attractive destination within the EU or to spend resources on people who might be issued with a deportation order, are further factors that may explain this attitude.

Following this, the consistent position of the French authorities towards asylum seekers has been that they should not be the target of integration measures because, until the asylum authorities have taken a decision on their right to stay in France, their presence has to be considered as temporary. Consequently, they are entitled neither to French language courses nor to occupational training. The authorities have, therefore, focused on reducing the length of the period during which their case is examined rather than on introducing integration schemes. In spite of the criticisms of NGOs, this is an approach that has been maintained unswervingly to date.

As far as refugees are concerned, the French authorities have adopted, until recently, a mainstream approach: no particular measures are needed to favour integration in the labour market because refugees have the same rights as French citizens and other legal residents, including the possibility of benefiting from social protection mechanisms such as the services and protection checks provided by *Pôle Emploi*. This was the reason that no specific integration measures were adopted until 2015. For their part, NGOs have criticised this approach, advocating targeted measures in light of the special needs and specific challenges presented by the refugee population.

The so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015 triggered fresh policy attention to the integration of refugees, as highlighted by an inter-ministerial memorandum issued by the ministries of Labour, Interior and Housing in 2016 (Ministry of Labour *et al.* 2016). In February 2018, a report devoted to proposals for an ‘ambitious policy of integration’ (Taché 2018) was presented to the Prime Minister. This report highlighted the shortcomings of French integration policy and advocated a more comprehensive approach, further measures and additional resources. Regarding occupational integration, it stressed the importance of individualised integration paths, calling for more language courses, occupational training and personalised support, and highlighted the need to extend partnerships and to target economic sectors with labour shortages.

This change of emphasis led to a modest public policy shift towards the labour market integration of refugees, addressing some of the challenges listed above. This includes:

- 1) the creation, in 2017, of the DIAIR (*Délégation Interministérielle à l’Accueil et à l’Intégration des Réfugiés*), an inter-ministerial body for the integration of refugees based in the Ministry of Interior, with the purpose of steering integration policies and coordinating the activities of the different ministries and administrations.
- 2) A national strategy for the reception and integration of refugees was issued in 2018, calling for more efforts on training and on access to housing and medical care, as well as for the strong coordination of local actors including associations, training bodies, local authorities and economic actors (Ministry of Interior 2018).
- 3) That year, the Ministry of Labour also launched an investment plan (*Plan d’Investissement des Compétences*) with a budget of €15m together with a related call for projects aiming at developing occupational competences among populations with labour market vulnerabilities, including refugees.

Since 2015, several initiatives from the private sector (non-profit organisations and economic actors) have created programmes of labour market integration targeted at refugees. The general orientation is to favour medium-term programmes managed by non-state actors but supported by state funds. Such non-state actors include historical organisations supporting refugees (*Forum Réfugiés* and *France Terre d’Asile*); national actors in the social field (*Aurore* and *Emmaüs*) and in the field of occupational training (AFPA); and new start-ups in the social field (*Singa* and AER).

3.2 State-led programmes

The French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) is the main administration in charge of the reception of migrants and of different aspects of the integration of refugees, including as regards the labour market. When a person receives a residency permit (after obtaining refugee status, or any other type of immigration status), he or she has to sign an 'integration contract' – *Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine* (CIR). In 2018, 25,000 beneficiaries of international protection had signed a CIR.

The services provided by OFII as part of this contract include:

- 1) an assessment of occupational skills, prior experience and qualifications. Information is also provided on the labour market situation and on obtaining recognition of diplomas. A written assessment is produced which can be used in conjunction with job counsellors in *Pôle Emploi*.
- 2) An assessment of language skills. Depending on French proficiency level, free language courses are offered to obtain basic (A1) level. In 2018, the length of free language courses was increased from 200 hours to 400 hours, and to 600 hours for illiterate people. Those whose language proficiency appears to be higher than beginner level have limited access to free language training, even though the level of oral and written proficiency required to obtain a job or register with a university is intermediate (B2).
- 3) Information sessions on life in France are also provided, giving cultural but also practical information including administrative procedures, asserting rights and accessing the job market.

OFII's integration policy has sparked criticisms that it is both insufficient and poorly adapted to refugees' needs. Several of our interviewees highlighted that, for the existing refugee population, these measures (conceived as they have been for newly-arrived foreigners) actually reach them only when it is too late – often two years or more after their entry into France. It is also stressed that the offer of language courses is relevant and useful, but insufficient to cover the need (Karoutchi 2014; Tuot 2013; Taché 2018). The level is basic and, according to some interviewees, all those who demonstrate that level of ability are exempted from the training. Another criticism is that OFII's job orientation focus is on jobs not requiring higher-order skills and which are low-paid and unstable (e.g. in construction, catering and personal care), thus reproducing the social and ethnic stratification of the job market (Gourdeau 2015).

Recently, OFII developed a specific mission focused on developing job opportunities for refugees in coordination with DIAIR (see below). A service was created to write sourcing strategies and put refugees in contact with economic actors or temporary work agencies needing labour, for example in eastern and western regions. According to an interview with a programme coordinator, refugees have a good reputation as hardworking people, but the challenge is to 'Design a sustainable trajectory of

integration, without confining them to jobs not requiring higher-order qualifications and with few opportunities.’ (Interview with OFII, 2019).

Pôle Emploi is the French public employment service that provides job search counselling. However, it has no specific branch for refugees and does not provide any services for asylum seekers. The lack of translation services within *Pôle Emploi* is a further obstacle to counselling. Most recently, however, OFII has promoted training and awareness-raising programmes to counsellors in *Pôle Emploi*, while some *Pôle Emploi* offices have set up a refugee reference service aiming to provide legal advice to employers.

The HOPE Programme (*Hébergement Orientation Parcours Emploi*) is the main tool of public policy at national level regarding the labour market integration of refugees. It is conducted by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and inspired by programmes conducted by voluntary agencies such as *Accelair* (see below). The programme was developed in 2018 and aims at supporting labour market integration through a combined approach offering both occupational training and accommodation. Occupational training is provided by AFPA (*Agence nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes*), focused on sectors with high labour demand such as construction, catering, personal care and major retailing. Some 1,500 people graduated from the programme in 2019, of whom 78 per cent obtained a certificate in language proficiency and 89 per cent a certificate of vocational training, while 68 per cent obtained a job at the end of the programme. Over 150 private companies are involved as partners. The programme is currently under evaluation.

DIAIR (*Délégation Interministérielle à l’Accueil et à l’Intégration des Réfugiés*) was created in 2018 and seeks to facilitate co-operation between institutions and support initiatives for refugee integration. It launched a programme of community service in Autumn 2018 promoting both the volunteering of French citizens to help refugees (1,500 in 2019) and volunteering by refugees (500 in the same year) as an initial occupational experience to help advance their integration in the labour market. The community service concerned takes the form of state-subsidised volunteering in public interest organisations, targeted at young people between 18 and 25 who receive a monthly allowance of €580. The main community service organisations employing refugees are *Unis-Cité* (290 in 2019), *la Ligue de l’Enseignement* (60) and the non-profit association *Concordia* (30). The goals of the programme are: involvement in community activities, learning French, acquiring occupational skills and creating social relationships with other young people in France.

On behalf of the Ministry of Labour, a number of programmes have been launched set out in the following paragraphs.

PIC Réfugiés (*Plan d’Investissement des Compétences*). The national programme of investment in the development of competences is a major (€14bn) five-year government programme to combat unemployment among the unemployed and young people, under the direction of a Senior Commission. A specific component of this plan targets refugees through state-supported initiatives offering support for integration in the

labour market and access to housing (€33m). Non-profit organisations and economic actors have developed specific programmes, such as at the car manufacturing company PSA in Rennes or in agrobusiness at Laval.

PIAL (*Parcours d'Intégration par l'Acquisition de la Langue*) is a programme run by *Mission Locale*, a public employment service similar to *Pôle Emploi* but specifically for young people under the age of 25. The programme was initiated in October 2018 and includes counselling over a 46 month period on the basis of a €1,440 allowance (*l'Allocation PACEA*) and language training offered through OFII.

The programme EMILE (*Engagés pour la mobilité et l'Insertion par le Logement et l'Emploi*) was launched in June 2019. This aims to relieve congestion in the housing market around Paris by diverting refugees to less populated and more rural regions (such as Lozère, Ain, Doubs, Seine Maritime, Lot and Maine et Loire) while also providing support in accessing job opportunities. The programme is not, however, specifically targeted at refugees.

A further project was also started at the end of 2019 concerning the facilitation of the recognition of refugees' prior occupational experience, delivering specific diplomas validated by the Ministry of Labour and concerning such sectors as personal care and warehouse management.

3.3 Programmes developed by voluntary agencies

A significant part of the reception, accommodation and social services provided to asylum seekers and refugees in France is managed by non-profit organisations (such as *Forum Réfugiés* and *France Terre d'Asile*) or social enterprises (such as *Adoma*, *Coallia* or *Groupe SOS*). In accommodation centres, social counsellors provide information on the labour market and orientation regarding access to housing.

Some agencies have developed broader programmes for refugees. The main one is *Accelair*, an integrated programme of vocational training developed by *Forum Réfugiés* since 2002, with EU funding and favouring a combined approach to housing and work. In 2017 and 2018, this was extended to other regions with governmental funding as PRIR (*Programme Régional d'Intégration des Réfugiés*). In 2018, this reached 1,792 households and resulted in 721 work contracts and 930 courses of vocational training. The programme, which may last for up to 24 months, is based on providing accelerated access to housing, language courses focused on the requirements of specific vocational skills and cooperation with administrations and economic actors to help with labour market integration and access to social rights. According to *Forum Réfugiés*, one of the key strengths is the extended network of local actors that the association has built and strengthened since 2002. The project relies on a broad partnership that brings together institutional actors (*Pôle Emploi*, OFII, *prefectures*, local public authorities and social housing landlords), private actors and those specialised in assisting refugees (such as *Entraide Pierre Valdo* and *Adoma*).

France Terre d'Asile has developed integration programmes based also on the combination of support in terms of access to housing and empowerment as regards labour market integration. For example, the programme RELOREF (*Réseau pour l'emploi et le logement des réfugiés*) was launched in 2004 with EU funding to establish partnerships with companies and networks of employers so as to create job opportunities for refugees while offering them access to housing. Other programmes have been developed such as *Cap'intégration mobilité* to encourage mobility across the territory of France.

Voluntary organisations running accommodation centres for refugees have developed initiatives with a view to labour market integration. The number of places available in such centres has greatly increased in the past few years (from 1,500 in 2015 to 7,000 in mid-2019, with 8,700 planned for the end of 2019). The centres are run by social contractors with state subsidies for each refugee given a place. New regulations were published in 2019¹² to develop the social integration of refugees concerning social rights and access to the labour market. People can be taken into temporary reception centres for refugees (CPH) usually for a nine-month period although these can be extended by OFII in successive three-month periods. In addition to social workers, a job counsellor has to be available in each CPH. Specific programmes vary and are dependent on the social contractor running the CPH.

For example, *Groupe SOS* has developed the programme NEXT STEP to support occupational integration starting in the accommodation centre, with vocational training, counselling and mentoring in private businesses. In Massy (to the south of Paris), the contractor *Cimade* (a non-profit organisation specialised in providing support for migrants) has instituted a team of social workers to provide individual counselling to deal with administrative procedures and to help people look for work and accommodation. Support for occupational integration includes support for developing a vocational project, based on the search for work and vocational training and in the search for funding for training. In addition, volunteers provide language training twice a week. Courses in mathematics and informatics are also available.

The *Centre d'Accueil et de Préparation à l'Insertion* (CAPI) run by *France Terre d'Asile* in Ile-de-France offers counselling to all refugees on how to access accommodation, work, training and social rights; it also offers some spaces in temporary housing and manages the project 'Keys to France' (*Clefs de France*) that uses mobility to foster integration: refugees are invited to move out of Ile-de-France to areas where the market offers more opportunities for housing as well as jobs. A total of 887 people received employment counselling through this programme in 2017.

Various other social sector organisations have developed refugee counselling programmes. For example, *CASP* (*Centre d'Action Sociale Protestant*) has an asylum unit in Paris in which two staff members offer personalised support to some 200 refugees per year, by providing assistance with finding a job or vocational training. They support refugees in dealing with *Pôle Emploi* and in following administrative

12. Note of the Ministry of Interior, 18 April 2019.

processes such as applications for the recognition of diplomas, and they also organise language training and workshops.

A few volunteering programmes targeting asylum seekers have been developed by NGOs to promote integration and facilitate access to the labour market once they have obtained their documents (Felder 2016). Asylum seekers are also recruited as peer-facilitators and translators in organisations such as *Cedre (Secours catholique)* and *Emmaüs-Solidarité*. In the Paris-La Chapelle reception centre (in 2016-2018), a dozen asylum seekers worked as unpaid volunteers with some later being hired as agents in reception centres once they had received their residency permit. Programmes combining volunteering and vocational training, like the *La Terre en Partage* pilot, near Limoges, bring together linguistic and vocational training in organic farming with social and legal counselling for twenty asylum seekers. The programme is supported by *Les Apprentis d'Auteuil*. The programme *Emmaüs Roya* is a farming community for asylum seekers and refugees. *Emmaüs* communities have some places for asylum seekers: these are non-profit groups offering a place to live and work to the destitute (homeless people, former prisoners and undocumented migrants) who are considered 'companions' and who are occupied with activities in the community for which they receive training and some financial support but no formal work contract.

3.4 Programmes and initiatives by other actors

Civil society organisations and actors in the for-profit sector have developed a variety of initiatives. Some employers have asked the Ministry of Labour or OFII for permission to recruit refugees, for example a bank needing computer specialists. Temporary worker sourcing companies, including Humando, have also launched a specific scheme to recruit refugees (*Horizon*, for sixty temporary workers in 2018). In addition, MEDEF (the major employer association in France) has launched *Action Emploi Réfugiés*, a programme which advocates the integration of refugees into the workplace and which has published a guide to help employers recruit refugees. The website of *Action Emploi Réfugiés* publishes job offers for refugees and offers support in the promotion of refugee CVs on job search websites.

Social businesses and associations have also offered a diversity of integration initiatives offering occupational training and counselling for the unemployed. Some of these specifically target refugees, such as *Les Potagers de Marcoussis* (an organic farming cooperative) or the Blois-based *BioSolidaire* association (vine growing). Professional associations that offer programmes of their own include the Association for the Reception of Refugee Doctors and Health Professionals (*Association d'Accueil aux médecins et Personnels de Santé Réfugiés en France – APSR*) which offers information and orientation for medical practitioners. Approximately one hundred people contact the Association every year for information on how to obtain a French diploma or find training or an internship. Most are doctors or nurses, with Syrian nationals representing up to forty per cent in 2015.

In the non-profit sector, *Adie*, a major player in microfinance in France, started Programme AGIR in 2017 which is directed towards refugee entrepreneurs. It funded some 59 projects in 2018 and provides support for business registration. *Singa* is a non-profit organisation providing support and integration opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers. It has run *Finkela*, a business incubator, since 2018 as a means of providing support for refugee entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs committed to the asylum economy. So far, 36 projects have been supported in various fields (including in the arts, fashion, culture, technologies, catering and counselling). The Jesuit Refugee Service (*Service Jésuite pour les Réfugiés – JRS*) has carried out an advocacy campaign for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers and also runs a mentoring programme to promote social and professional integration. Its *JRS Integration* programme offers a counselling service and also developed a pilot programme in Paris with ISS Group (which provides business services) and the CFDT trade union confederation supporting the recruitment of asylum seekers and refugees in the company (with language courses and mentoring). More generally, migrant rights organisations, such as *Cimade* and *Gisti*, have been involved in promoting access to the labour market for refugees and asylum seekers, including through litigation when a work permit is denied to an asylum seeker.

Local authorities, such as in the cities of Paris, Nantes and Lille, have supported projects run by volunteers to promote the integration of refugees. In a variety of places, counselling and schemes to facilitate access to housing have been developed, such as the ‘rolling lease’ (*le bail glissant*) under which an organisation signs a housing contract until the refugee family has enough resources to take on the official tenancy.

In addition, several social start-ups have developed programmes to assist refugees’ labour market integration. *Wintegreat* is a twelve-week programme offering French courses and coaching in elite schools and universities to facilitate labour market integration. Over 760 refugees have benefited since 2016, among whom over sixty per cent resumed education and training while 22 per cent obtained a long-term employment contract. *Kodiko* has developed a buddy programme to help professional integration through a network of buddies in companies mentoring refugees. The organisation also offers workshops, coaching and ‘speed dating’ to help refugees develop a professional plan. Companies participate as part of a *compétence patronage* scheme including, for example, Total, Sanofi, Club Med and Société Générale. *Simplon* has established *Refugeek*, a computer program offer over seven months combining French language training, initiation into computer programming and intensive training. In addition, *Job Grant* has established a multilingual platform for refugees to submit their CV or job application to potential employers.

Several programmes have been developed to help refugees and asylum seekers resume their studies and access higher education. Universities in Lille, Saint-Denis, Paris, Poitiers, Dijon, etc. have developed programmes for refugees or ‘invited students’. In addition, the PAUSE programme (*Le Programme national d’Accueil en Urgence des Scientifiques en Exil*) was developed in 2017 by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education to offer scholarships to refugee academics. The programme supports scientists on the basis of their academic credentials rather than their administrative

status, and many Turkish academics have been able to benefit from the programme without claiming asylum in France. Every year, the *Entraide Universitaire française* grants scholarships to more than 130 francophone refugees in order to allow them to continue their studies in France. Scholarships target, in particular, refugees who are older than 28 who are not eligible for other grants. Since 1945, some 16,000 scholarships have been awarded (UNHCR 2013).

Compared to initiatives at the European level within the framework of the European Trade Union Confederation, trade union initiatives to support refugees in France appear more modest. National trade union confederations regularly take positions defending the rights of foreign workers, claiming equality of treatment between national and foreign workers and for the legalisation of undocumented workers (CGT 2018). However, unions have remained cautious about advocating the better integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market for fear of a ‘social dumping’ effect, especially as regards wages in jobs not requiring higher-order qualifications. Associations of employers, on the other hand, have regularly advocated greater access for immigrants to the French labour market, especially in the fields of construction, agriculture and in the restaurant industry,¹³ while MEDEF has, as we have seen, developed an integration programme targeted at refugees.

The need for a broader public policy coordinated by state institutions was officially acknowledged only in 2018 and national programmes are currently in their early stages: any assessment would be premature. A general trend, however, is the government priority to outsource the refugee issue to voluntary organisations, civil society groups and social start-ups rather than developing specific services within government agencies.

4. Conclusion

France has not been among the main destinations for asylum seekers, but it has experienced a distinct increase in numbers since 2014, triggering new public policy and civil society initiatives. The few existing studies on the occupational integration of refugees and asylum seekers in France highlight that this population still faces numerous difficulties in accessing the French labour market, in spite of their motivation to find employment as soon as possible. Due to the prohibition on work for the first six months of the asylum procedure and to the administrative difficulties in obtaining a work permit after that date, most asylum seekers do not enter the formal labour market. Refugees, in contrast, enjoy free access to the labour market, at least in principle. Even so, they face higher levels of unemployment than French citizens and other immigrants. When they work, refugees are mostly employed in occupations not requiring higher-order skills or which are precarious or tough, such as in the hotel and catering trade, temporary work, security, cleaning, construction and personal care. Ethnic networks are a major route to finding a job, even though asylum seekers and refugees are less able to rely on the existence of these than other non-EU foreigners. Frequently, asylum

13. See ‘L’hôtellerie-restauration veut embaucher des exilés’, Maia Courtois, *Libération*, 21/08/2018.

seekers and refugees work in the informal labour market, facing related vulnerabilities. Furthermore, many refugees experience professional downgrading which often brings its own social and psychological costs.

The key challenges identified by associations and experts include: the prohibition of asylum seekers from working, which negatively affects integration once they have obtained a long-term residence permit; several professions not being open to immigrants; a lesser French language proficiency among refugees than among other immigrants, mainly due to geographic origin, while several observers point also to shortages in the offer of language training; the match between labour demand and supply being hampered by mismatches between housing and employment offers across France, as well the geographical concentration of refugees; and the legal and practical obstacles to the recognition of qualifications and diplomas contributing to the overqualification of refugee workers and which can be experienced as social downgrading.

Until 2015, no public policy existed for the occupational integration of refugees other than the actions of a few NGOs that either provided individual support in accommodation centres or which ran dedicated regional programmes. Among the latter, the *Accelair* programme ran by *Forum Réfugiés* in the area around Lyon stands out for its effectiveness.

The so-called ‘refugee crisis’ has sparked fresh policy attention towards the integration of refugees. Even though the national authorities are still careful about not creating incentives for asylum seekers to choose or stay in France, they have now accepted the idea that, having specific needs and facing specific challenges, refugees should be targeted with dedicated measures. This change has resulted in focused funding and a centralised strategy that builds on the actions of NGOs and on those of other actors at local level. However, it is too early to assess the impact on the employment situation of refugees of this twist in public policy.

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Acronyms

CAI	<i>Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration</i> (Reception and Integration Contract).
CIR	<i>Contrat d'intégration républicaine</i> (Republican Integration Contract).
APSR	<i>Association d'Accueil aux médecins et Personnels de Santé Réfugiés en France</i> (Association for the Reception of Refugee Doctors and Health Professionals).
CESEDA	<i>Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile</i> (Code of the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and Asylum Law).
CNDA	<i>Cour nationale du droit d'asile</i> (National Court of Asylum).
CPH	<i>Centres Provisoires d'Hebergement</i> (Temporary reception centres for refugees).
DGEF	<i>Direction Générale Etrangers en France</i> (General Directorate for Foreigners in France), Ministry of Interior.
DIAIR	<i>Délégation Interministérielle à l'Accueil et à l'Intégration des Réfugiés</i> (Interministerial Delegation for the Reception and Integration of Refugees).
DIRECCTE	<i>Directions régionales des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi</i> (regional directorates for companies, competition, consumption, work and employment).
MEDEF	<i>Mouvement des Entreprises de France</i> (the major employer association).
OFII	<i>Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration</i> (French Office for Immigration and Integration).
OFPRA	<i>Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides</i> (French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons).
<i>Pôle Emploi</i>	(the national public establishment for access to employment).
RSA	<i>Revenu de Solidarité Active</i> (state social welfare benefit).