

## TREE PROJECT – INTEGRATION CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Overview of Asylum and Integration Policies in four sub-regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion and the Obstacles to the Implementation of New Training Measures

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## Foreword

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Integration is a disputed term in migration studies and in governmental policy and programming. The term raises more questions than it can aid us in answering. For example, who are we asking to integrate and what are they expected to integrate into? Europe's identity, if it exists at all, is constantly in flux with contestations around what it means to be European. The rise of populist movements around Europe has shown the appeal of some who offer easy answers to complicated questions. And it is in this context, that questions about integration become more urgent.

In European policy discourse, there has been an attempt to answer these questions by defining integration as a two-way process that requires adaptation from both immigrants and the host country. If we take this definition at face value then it is important to understand not only how newcomers adjust to their new environments, but also how they are welcomed.

The TREE project, with its focus on the practitioners and volunteers who are the forefront of welcoming and supporting refugees, delves precisely into this issue. This context analysis lays the groundwork for understanding the conditions in which these practitioners are working. The report, one of a series, offers us a snapshot into the policies and practices involved in four sub-regions of the Euroregion Meuse-Rhine and how these host societies have, or have not, left space for adjustment from 'both sides.'

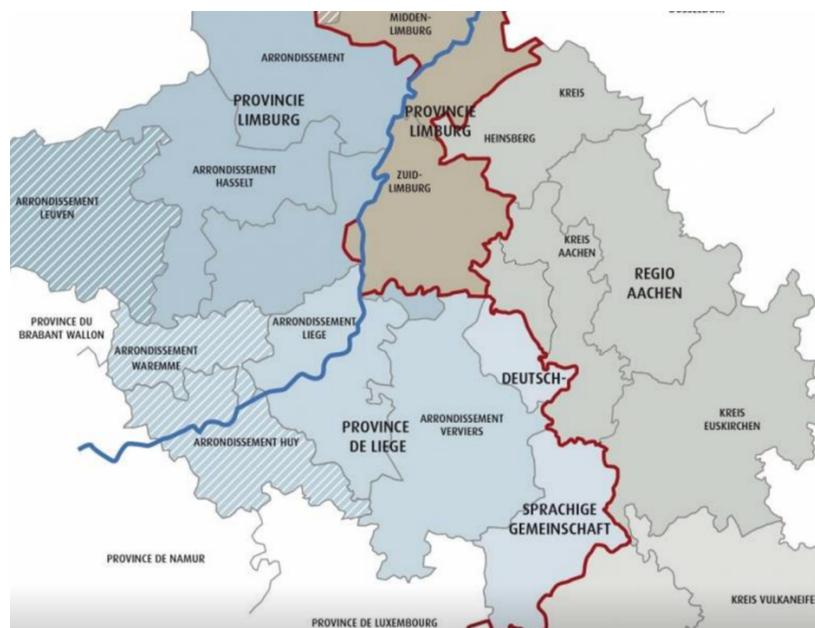
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# 1. INTRODUCTION: The TREE Project and Integration in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine

The increased inflow of refugees to the European Union beginning in 2015 resulted in many changes in immigration policy and issues of refugee reception and integration. The escalating violence and economic hardship in Africa and the Middle East have, with few exceptions, led to European governments tightening border controls and insisting upon varying levels of ‘assimilation’ for refugees. However, there are opportunities for European regions to benefit from this new migration and the TREE (Training for InteGrating Refugees in the Euregio) project aims to support the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (see figure 1) - specifically the sub-regions of the Province of Liège in Belgium; Limburg Province in the Netherlands; and the Aachen Region (in North Rhine-Westphalia) and the Eifel region (in Rhineland Palatinate) in Germany – to harness these opportunities by supporting refugees in their adjustment to their new lives. This will be done by targeting the workers who support refugees on a regular basis and helping them to improve the skills necessary for this work. The TREE project will result in new training modules that focus on the skills that workers themselves identify as most important in their work with refugees.

**Figure 1: Map of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine**



<https://www.interregemr.eu/about-us#image-2>

The target group of the TREE project are people working with refugees (teachers, social workers, interpreters, lawyers, healthcare workers, and employees in regional and municipal administrations) as both volunteers and paid professionals. The project aims to facilitate the integration of new immigrants into society by improving the qualifications of the practitioners who work with refugees in the included sub-regions. It will both teach them new skills and cultivate the skills they already have. The project will develop a programme of training modules that will help practitioners, whether they are professionals or volunteers, to better carry out their tasks of integrating refugees. The project consists of the following steps:

The first step in the project is the production of two reports: the context analysis and the practice analysis. The current report, the context analysis, provides an overview of the context of integration policy and practices in the involved sub-regions. This will help to situate and contextualise the following practice analysis. The practice analysis is based on fieldwork undertaken in each of the four sub-region which are involved in the project. The research will discover, directly from practitioners, their most crucial training needs. It will investigate which trainings are already available and where there may be significant gaps. It will then provide a framework for the competences that will be defined in the training programme. Next, these training needs and the specific conditions of the sub-regions will be the basis of a modular training programme. One point of emphasis will be to enhance the dialogue between the local population and refugees. The training programme/modules, which also includes the creation of non-professional interpreter pools and training for these participants, will be put into practice in the four sub-regions. During the evaluation stage, those who have participated in the trainings will give feedback on their experiences of the training programme, and this feedback will be analysed, and the training programme will be revised accordingly. The final programme will then be presented and subsequently made public by the participating institutions.

All of the sub-regions face varying degrees of anti-immigrant sentiment, racism and discrimination as well as difficulties in terms of the cooperation between different levels of government. The regions, provinces, and states involved in the study are all part of systems that

have transferred certain key responsibilities to the local or regional level. This includes aspects of integration. Each sub-region also struggles with a higher demand for services than they are able to provide and, while some systems of integration are much younger than others, the new context of migration in each region demands new approaches. Each partner would like to further professionalise their work and, through collaboration, gain insight into how this could best be done.

In order to support these goals, the context analysis provides a contextual overview in which to situate the new training programme. This report outlines: (1) the recent history of integration and a description of the official integration pathway in each sub-region; (2) a description of the asylum process in each sub-region; (3) distribution practices for refugees and asylum seekers, (4) the supports available for refugees with special needs; (5) the process of recognition of foreign degrees in each sub-region; (6) and the qualifications of certain categories of support workers and obstacles to implementing the training programme.

## **1.1 Trends Towards Mainstreaming and Assimilation**

Public concern about immigration has been increasing across Europe and became particularly acute since the recent influx of refugees. Some of the most pressing questions concern how best to support integration for immigrant communities. In general, research has shown that education and training services are not accomplishing their goals where immigrants are concerned. This is often due to limited resources. In Europe, young immigrants and young people with an immigrant background do not perform at the same level as their non-immigrant peers. Highly educated immigrants do not often find work that matches their skill level, and people who are not highly educated find it difficult to gain the necessary skills to enter the labour market (Benton et al. 2015). To counteract these undesirable outcomes, mainstreaming has become a central feature of integration discourse in Europe at the EU and national levels. Mainstreaming is intended to create space for a more pragmatic response to the needs of refugees and immigrants by making all public services capable of meeting the needs of diverse populations, but also to reassure the

wider public that scarce resources are not being spent on specialised services (Ahad et al. 2018:4). It means that policy should no longer be targeted toward specific groups, but should be more general. It is a policy trend that has already been applied in regards to gender and disability, but is a newer movement for integration (Scholten et al. 2016). In terms of integration, mainstreaming in practice means that refugees are more often coming into contact with services that serve the entire population of a neighbourhood or city, rather than services focusing specifically on refugees. The TREE project recognises that mainstreaming results in public service providers having to adjust and learn new skills in order to support populations who used to receive targeted/specialised services – in this case, refugees. For those who are not focused exclusively on serving refugees and immigrants, the TREE project will offer training to support them in this work, and for those who already have experience, the project will offer trainings to enhance their existing skills.

Overall, mainstreaming can be seen as a positive development in integration policy, but there are risks involved. These include overlooking the unique needs of refugees and immigrants, and losing people who are specifically trained to deal with the intercultural, psychological, and legal matters involved in working with this population. As responsibility for the integration of refugees becomes diffused across numerous sectors, workers in many fields are being asked to inform their work in new and complex ways. This is why the aim of the TREE project is to create a training programme that will not only benefit those who work in the migration sector, but professionals from a diverse array of governmental and civil society sectors.

While the EU does have a common **asylum** policy (European Commission 2018), it does not have any competence of **integration** policy. Thus, member states still have a degree of autonomy over integration policies.

*[The] process of suppressing national boundaries within the European space and the free circulation of European citizens have produced a European convergence of national immigration legislation, which deals more with the control of migratory flows than with*

*integration policies. The member states of the Union are not free anymore to decide on their own what immigration policy to implement. In the field of integration, their margins of autonomy remain.*

Martiniello 2003: 223

Nevertheless, the EU does seek to set standards and offer guidelines, funding, and policy networks to promote best practices. A foundational document on integration at this level is the Common Basic Integration Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU (Council of the European Union 2004). It lays out basic principles for member states and stresses, as do the stakeholders in the TREE project, that integration is a two-way process requiring action and adjustment on the part of both the host society and immigrants. It links integration to the respect of EU values. These include democracy, adherence to laws, respect for human rights, freedom, etc. It further lays out certain responsibilities on the part of the immigrant such as learning the host country language, being employed, and engaging in education. There is also the expectation that immigrants will have access to certain services and support (Council of the European Union).<sup>1</sup> The trend of speaking about integration as a ‘two-way process’, goes hand in hand with the trend of ‘mainstreaming’ integration policy. When integration becomes a part of the wider policy arena, and the responsibility for it becomes diffused amongst different actors and in different fields, this means that adjustment on the part of the host society is also occurring – or is at least *expected* to occur.

A great deal of emphasis is placed on national differences in integration policy (Scholten 2013) while often overlooking local level practices. While important and often illuminating, Hoekstra (2015) warns that focusing solely on national-level integration policy can place us at risk of

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<sup>1</sup> It is also worth noting that EU policy discourse makes a distinction between EU and non-EU migration and EU immigrants are not a target of integration policies. “The process of establishing freedom of movement for all nationals of Member States was finalised with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which created the European Union (EU) and introduced the concept of a common European citizenship.” The process of establishing freedom of movement for all nationals of Member States was finalised with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which created the European Union (EU) and introduced the concept of a common European citizenship. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/147/free-movement-of-persons>

'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002) in investigations of integration. Another common misstep is overestimating "the consistency and coherence of national discourses (cf. Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012)" (Hoekstra 2015: 1799). As this analysis will show, even when components of integration are subject to certain national government measures, civic integration is measured by behaviour and participation at the local level (Schinkel 2010; Hoekstra 2015). The focus of local-level integration highlights practical, everyday efforts towards integration. Some scholars stress that "while national governments adopt restrictive policies, large cities have been found to retain 'old' multiculturalist policies or to experiment with new inclusive forms of immigrant incorporation (Uitermark, Rossi, and Van Houtum 2005)" (Hoekstra 2015:1799). Those working on integration at the local level have the benefit of proximity to the outcomes and daily functioning of the policies they enact, and in some cases design. Indeed, it is often the case that, "city-specific policies and discourses predate national ones, which makes them resistant to change 'from above'" (Hoekstra 1801).

## **1.2 Integration and Intercultural Projects in Europe**

Recent years have seen the initiation and completion of various projects, at the European and supranational levels, focused on the improvement and promotion of intercultural mediation, immigrants' integration into the labour market, the deepening of empathy and understanding, etc. This trend is partly a result of recent migration flows and the increased focus on improving integration processes and/or social cohesion in Europe. These projects are numerous and cannot all be addressed in this short overview, so this section highlights projects with aims similar to those of the TREE project.

Recent projects include ERASMUS Plus projects such as the DIME (Digital Media – a bridge to inclusion) project, which had its closing conference in June 2018. With partners from European countries in the Mediterranean, the project endeavoured to identify the competencies *immigrants* need in order to improve their integration into different facets of life in the new country and will also create and test training modules to this end (DIME website). TIME (Train

Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe) is an ERASMUS Plus project co-funded by the EU commission with a focus on service providers. It created a training module for intercultural mediators and trainers of intercultural mediators (TIME 2015).<sup>2</sup>

It's clear from projects like SONETOR (Training of cultural mediators utilising new Social Networking Software), part of the European commission's Life Long Learning programme, that there is a need for sharing best practices amongst refugee and immigrant support workers. The SONETOR project, completed in 2014, aimed to create a training and sharing platform to improve the skills of intercultural mediators by utilising social networking (SONETOR 2018). Empathy and understanding of trauma, both already identified by TREE partners as key competencies, were foci of the FLAM (Feel Like a Migrant) project which targeted teachers and education professionals working with immigrants. Its aim was to construct trainings and workshops that promoted a multicultural approach to teaching.

In the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, two current INTERREG projects focus on the important task of integrating refugees and immigrants into the labour market. They both recognise the labour shortage in the region and the possible solutions offered by immigration.

Unemployment rates (%) 2018

	Prov. Liege (BE)	Dutch Limburg (NL)	North Rhine- Westphalia (DE)	Rhineland- Palatinate (DE)
Ages 15-74	8.2	3.4	3.8	3.1
Ages 15-24	21.1	6.4	7.1	6.4

Eurostat 2019

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<sup>2</sup> Their project focused on the employment of intercultural mediators as a distinct profession.

The YouRegion project aims to promote the Euregio Meuse-Rhine as a tech region and focuses on attracting new immigrants by creating a 'welcoming environment', highlighting career opportunities, and offering support and career placement (interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine b). Similarly, the IDZ-UDZ (in de zorg - uit de zorg) endeavours to support the integration of immigrants into the labour market, but with aim of helping refugees to enter the healthcare sector. This is a notoriously difficult task for new immigrants in the region, even when they have previous experience in the field (interreg Euregio Meuse-Rhine a). While the aims of these and other similar, noteworthy projects<sup>3</sup> are undoubtedly valuable, the TREE project fills an important gap.

By focusing on the training of refugee and immigrant support workers from diverse fields, the TREE project will assist in the important task of incorporating this population into the labour market. This will be accomplished by working with job centres, unemployment offices, and those offering career advice and training. The project's aims, however, go beyond the labour market and also include aiding social integration. The TREE project offers a much-needed element to the bank of integration research and practice, by focusing on creating training modules that can be adapted in different sub-regions and to different fields of work/refugee support.

The information that will inform the training modules comes from the practitioners themselves and will be gathered from various fields of work across the sub-regions. It will build on existing knowledge and best practices in order to sharpen the expertise of those working with refugees, and will also trains practitioners who were once refugees themselves. This fulfils the dual aims of

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<sup>3</sup> **ADAPT** (Adapting European Health Systems to Diversity) (2011).

[http://members.costadapt.eu/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://members.costadapt.eu/index.php/Main_Page) Aimed to create real change and policy and practical recommendations while also hoping to have an impact on policy more broadly. **European project, MFH** (migrant friendly hospitals) (2004). It was sponsored by the European Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection and worked to share and promote instruments that supported immigrants in their use of health services through "culturally competent health care". <http://www.mfh-eu.net/public/home.htm>

**CreE-A** was also cofounded by the Erasmus Plus programme of the European Union.

"Social mediation already has its European history. The CreE.A project is part of this story by creating 'the European area of mediation for social inclusion' to connect its different actors and institutions, give it more visibility and offer it a sustainable framework: a space for collective learning." <https://www.cree-a.eu/la-mis-en-europe/>

enhancing the competences of support workers while also filling gaps in the labour market and providing refugees with highly marketable skills (such as social interpreting which is in high demand in all the sub-regions). The TREE project takes in to account the fact that integration is a two-way process, and is increasingly recognised as such by governments and organisations. It therefore focuses on the *service providers* rather than only on the refugees and immigrants who are often the sole focus of integration initiatives. In order to fulfil these aims, it is first necessary to understand the integration context in each of the involved sub-regions – including the recent history of integration policy and integration philosophies, the asylum process, official integration pathways, and the qualifications of support workers. This will illuminate the potential obstacles, needs for adjustment, and opportunities that exist for such a programme.

## **2. From multiculturalism to assimilation – Development of Immigrant Integration in the involved sub-regions**

Following the second world war and the subsequent labour shortages, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany all instituted guest worker programmes with the assumption that immigrants would only remain temporarily. In fact, over time, this assumption proved to be false and resulted in permanent migration, family reunification, and marriage migration (van Meeteren 115, Oezcan 2004, Martiniello 2003). Since that time, countries have experimented with different versions of multiculturalist and assimilationist policies, and currently many parts of Europe are shifting towards assimilationist integration measures. This is attributed to the feeling in Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium that multiculturalism has failed. This determination is based on, among other things, assessments of immigrant integration such as labour market integration, income, and school performance of immigrant populations. Immigrant populations fall below native populations in these measures and policies have not had the desired effect in changing these outcomes (Mann et al. 2014). “With increased cooperation between EU governments, immigrant integration policies have been slowly converging in the last decades, though significant variations still remain” (Hübschmann 2015:1). This convergence can also be seen in the trend of

mainstreaming and is linked to the rejection of multiculturalism which has become ever more prevalent across Europe. The impact of this has resulted in services for refugees and asylum seekers becoming less targeted. Providers of general social welfare services now provide services to refugees along with the populations they have traditionally served, but training for these service providers has in many cases lagged behind.

There are many examples of the assimilationist trend. In Wallonia, Belgium, an integration programme has just been created; the Netherlands has seen the emergence of participation agreements and a focus on the dispersal of immigrants to avoid concentrations of immigrant groups; in Germany we see restrictions on where asylum seekers and refugees are allowed to live (which will be described below).

The following sections will provide a brief history of recent integration policy in the involved sub-regions and the content of the current official integration programmes, all of which have the aim of successfully teaching the host country language and providing an overview of the culture and the history of the host country. It is important to note that all of these measures are aimed only at non-EU immigrants and that the ultimate goal of these programmes is that immigrants become familiar with the way of life in the host society so that they can function in their daily lives without needing the intervention of third parties.

## **2.1 Netherlands – Limburg Province**

### *Historical Overview of Integration Policy*

From the 1970s until an official policy change in 1994, the Netherlands focused on ethnic minorities and the promotion of group cultural and religious identity (Batteau et al. 2017, Duyvendak and Scholten 2010, Mann et al. 2014 etc). Funds and subsidies were available to ethnic group organisations and the values of the immigrants' own culture and group identity were protected (Mann et al. 2014:3). From the late 1990s, however, the Netherlands began to state that its own multicultural policies had failed (Batteau et al. 2017:8). The debates that gained

traction in the 1990s are often traced back to the 1989 report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy which stated that immigrants were not actually making measurable progress in areas considered key to integration. This included markers such as upward mobility in the labour market, education level, etc. The concern was that the preference for promoting ethnic group identity was in fact having a negative impact on individual integration/participation and that placing more emphasis on the *duties* of immigrants, with special weight given to learning the Dutch language, would lead to better outcomes. In the early 90s more money was diverted to programmes to support the improvement and expansion of Dutch courses for adult learners. When integration policy was officially changed in 1994, there was broad political support for compulsory Dutch language education for immigrants (Bateau et al. 2017:8).

The Netherlands was among the first countries to turn from the model of multiculturalism back to a model of immigrant assimilation and “rather than focusing primarily on socio-economic participation, the socio-cultural sphere now became much more central to policies” (Mann et al. 2014:3). Things shifted dramatically in the 2000s and debates in the public and governmental/political forums centred on how immigrants should better adapt to Dutch values and way of life. Ultimately a parliamentary investigative committee (Blok Committee) was tasked with discovering why past integration policies had failed; September 2003 saw the publication of the ‘Integration Policy – New Style’. The emphasis was to be on shared citizenship, cohesion, and common values and ways of life. The old philosophy of supporting immigrants in maintaining their own culture and values disappeared (Mann et al. 15). In 2007, the Netherlands took what can be considered another step on the path away from the multi-cultural model by implementing the Civic Integration Act which made **integration exams** mandatory for non-EU immigrants who wanted to obtain a residence permit (Suavarirol and Kirk 2015).

As of 5 November 2012, the overall responsibility for immigrant integration in the Netherlands was moved from the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In 2012 amendments to the Civic Integration Act, confirmed in 2014, placed the major responsibility for finding and financing integration courses on the

immigrants themselves. This was a change from when local governments were allowed to organise the courses for immigrants (European Commission 2017) and is evidence of the emphasis being placed on making immigrants independent as quickly as possible.

In addition to the general civil and administrative laws, the Integration Law of 2015 requires foreigners to complete an integration programme when they arrive in the local community. Unless there are special circumstances, for instance medical complications or cognitive disabilities, if one fails to pass the exam in the allotted time then the immigrants may be fined and required to pay back the loan for their courses (Naturalisatiedienst 2018). Immigrants should pay for their own courses, though exceptions exist, and may take a loan from the Dutch government (Dutch Refugee Council 2017). The Dutch Language Requirement Act (onderdeel van de Participatieverklaring) also came into effect in 2015 and states that those receiving benefits can see them reduced if they do not “have a satisfactory proficiency of the Dutch language” (Yakubi et al. 2017: 5-6).

Beginning in October of 2017, at the level of the municipality there has been a further requirement for integration: Participation Statements. In addition to the DUO (Dutch Ministry of Education - ensures the enforcement of the Civic Integration Act) requirements of learning Dutch and gaining knowledge of Dutch society, in order to complete one’s official integration the newcomer must sign the Participation Statement. “The participation statement does not involve taking any DUO exams. The municipality decides what you need to learn and how to do it” (inburgeren.nl). Municipalities in Dutch Limburg can ask for help from the Dutch Refugee Council of South Holland (Vluchtelingenwerk Zuid Holland) to prepare their participation statements. In fact, it was municipalities in Dutch Limburg that first started using/piloting participation statements before this became law.

While having a localised system allows for important specific and practical local knowledge to be imparted, the requirements from other levels of government means that there can be conflict between the different requirements placed upon refugees from different levels.

*There is also a conflict between national laws and local decrees. So, one of the new laws now since 2015 is the Immigration Act, says you're required to follow language classes within 2 years, all these directives, but now they have a participation act that is effective as of 2017 and they have to find a job, go to the municipality where they will help you find a job, and you have to accept that job. They're required to have a job for 40 hours a week and also follow language classes. The municipality thinks ok, the integration is proceeding/taking precedence over the participation act but it's not true. They're equal. So, if you then work part time in order to take language classes then you don't have enough money.*

DRC interview, 23 Nov 2017

### ***Current State of Integration***

Integration in the Netherlands is meant to begin at arrival and the philosophy is 'participation from day 1' (COA a). Permit holders and asylum seekers are able to take part in the preparation programme for civic integration and/or the VOORwerk project. "The preparation for integration consists of NT2 lessons, the 'Knowledge of the Dutch Society' (KNM) training course, and individual guidance. Participation in the programme is not mandatory, but we do encourage the permit holders to get well prepared. ... Here, permit holders learn through training how to find and keep a job in the Netherlands by developing their social and communication skills." (COA a). Asylum seekers are also expected to engaged in volunteer work and if the decision on their case takes longer than six months then they are allowed to begin working (COA a). One possible issue with the expectation for people to "participate from day one" is that they have other demands on them while waiting for the outcome of their asylum proceedings. These include struggles such as ongoing legal battles and mental health issues due to trauma.

Those granted refugee status have a wider range of job prospects and are required to begin the official integration process. At this stage, the COA will help them transfer to life in a municipality

near the reception centre where they lived and it becomes the responsibility of the municipality to supply refugees with adequate housing. Only when housing has been acquired must the refugee leave the reception centre. Prior to the Civic Integration Act of 2013, municipalities had a great degree of autonomy. Municipal actors contend that the recent changes from this act have led to unnecessarily long wait times before refugees can be working. The Participation Act, mentioned above, may be a way of **giving more autonomy and responsibility back to municipalities**. “Prior to 2013, we managed on our own and knew how to accompany these people in learning Dutch and finding jobs. Now they are supposed to know which language and integration course is right for them. That can be very hard for someone not familiar with Dutch or this country and its people,” says alderman Martijn van den Heuvel from the city Weert (Life in Maastricht 2017).

In the 2019 provincial elections, some radical right-wing parties in the Netherlands, like the Party for Freedom (PVV), endured losses. At the same time, however, populist anti-immigrant parties (some more mainstream) like the FvD, saw major gains. The upper house of the parliament is currently incredibly fragmented, hosting a record number of parties (12). While the most extreme parties in terms of anti-immigrant sentiment have seen a decrease of support, they have succeeded in forcing more mainstream parties to take up anti-immigrant platforms in order to win votes. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/european-parliamentary-election-results-in>. It is in this difficult political climate that integration policy is evolving.

### **Components of the Official Integration Programme**

- Gaining proficiency in Dutch – pass the NT2 exam (achieve level B1)
- Knowledge of Dutch society
- Passing an exam which evaluates both the level of Dutch and knowledge of Dutch society.
- Signing of a Participation Statement in the municipality
- **To be completed within three years**

## **2.2 Germany – Aachen and Eifel Regions**

### *Historical Overview of Integration Policy*

The origin of the official integration pathway in Germany has its roots in the programmes created in the 1990s. These programmes were created to integrate ethnic Germans who came to the country after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Hübschmann 13). In order to support their adjustment to German society, they participated in language classes provided by the German government despite the fact that, based on their ethnicity, they were automatically granted citizenship.

Fears that immigrants were not integrating led to increased requirements for naturalisation (Hübschmann 14-15). Even though it has received large numbers of immigrants for many decades, it took until the 2000s for Germany to finally accept the label 'country of immigration' (Heckmann 2016:3). There were clear signs of permanent migration, such as family reunification in the 60s and 70s, but the government did not create a broad system of integration until 2005 ("Zuwanderungsgesetz"). There were several attempts at some type of integration programme before this time, such as the 'Measures for Social and Professional Integration' enacted in 1987, but the focus was very much on labour market integration alongside governmental

encouragement of return migration (Bendel 2014: 2-3). From 1974-2003 there was also the 'Sprachverband Deutsch' which offered language courses and certain types of support, but this was not accompanied by a robust integration programme.

In 2005, however, the label 'country of immigration' was recognised by all the major political parties, including conservatives, in the first significant renovation of the immigration system (Heckmann 4). This change saw the creation of the BAMF (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge - the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) as part of the Federal Ministry of the Interior. While in the past it was only responsible for the implementation of the asylum procedure and decisions on asylum applications (Bundesamt für die Anerkennung ausländischer Flüchtlinge -BAFL), it has since become responsible for promoting and coordinating integration (including language and integration courses), prevention (of radicalisation for example), administration of the central register of foreigners and general information on asylum and migration, and supporting academic research on migration (BAMF 2016).

Major changes in immigration law came about in 2004 as a result of the Süßmuth Commission (formally the Independent Commission on Migration to Germany - ICM), which was an effort of the federal government to evaluate the state of asylum and migration law (Hübschmann 15). The commission's report on *Structuring Migration - Fostering Integration* clearly stated that integration measures were needed, that Germany was a country of immigration, and that immigration could indeed benefit the country. The new plan used the integration programme for ethnic Germans as a starting point for a new, more extensive integration plan (Hübschmann 16). The new immigration law of 2005 cited integration as a "legal duty" and stated that certain new immigrants were required to take language courses (DOMiD). According to Hübschmann, "Germany has had the most extensive migrant integration programme in Europe, with more than a million participants since 2005" (p.ii).

As immigration has increased, due to Germany's rising popularity as a destination country (Hübschmann 1), the integration programme has become even more important. There has been

some conflict over which level of government should have responsibility for integration - federal, state or local – with the current situation being that the federal government provides funding for the integration courses but allows states to organise them (Rietig 2016: 11). Different levels of government, however, must still cooperate. For example, certain aspects of integration, such as examinations by language schools, are still overseen by national committees (Hübschmann P.19) and the initial reception of asylum seekers, including their registration, is the responsibility of the states (Länder). At the same time, the actual administration and management of those entering the country, as well as the processing of asylum claims, lies with federal authorities.

In the 2000s, the multicultural model was openly questioned in German political discourse, despite the fact that it did not really exist in practice. In 2010, the phrase was almost entirely replaced in political discourse with the “welcoming culture” and “recognition culture” principles. These focus on attracting new migration (especially skilled workers for German companies) and supporting and respecting the diversity of existing immigrant groups (Heckman 5). In 2015, however, these principles became something more like policy when Germany opened its borders to refugees for one month. It temporarily set aside the Dublin Agreement<sup>4</sup> for those coming from Syria, and an estimated one million refugees from various countries entered Germany. Not all of them remained, however, and many were later rejected as economic immigrants or on the basis of having come from safe countries<sup>5</sup>. Others left to make their way to Scandinavia. 30 per cent of the arrivals were from Syria, most of whom were granted refugee status in 2015 (BAMF 2015: 17, 21 in Funk 2016:290). Until about 2015, public opinion in Germany was in favour of ‘welcoming’ immigrants and there has been a great deal of public support for immigrants despite the fact that “Germany is the main recipient of immigrants and asylum seekers in Europe” (Heckmann 2016:2).

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<sup>4</sup> An EU regulation requiring that refugees must apply for asylum in the country where they first enter Europe.

<sup>5</sup> A country that has been deemed ‘safe’ by in order to expedite asylum proceedings.

### *Current State of Integration*

While the state received intense criticism for its response to the inflow of refugees, important steps were made in terms of integration. An Integration Law, passed in the summer of 2016, permitted all those living in collective housing to take workfare jobs (temporary low-skilled employment to be taken up in order to receive social assistance), and for three years employers who hired refugees did not have to meet the previous requirement of proving that there were no German citizens available to take available positions (Funk 291-292). Currently, asylum seekers who are deemed to be likely to receive a positive decision are also able to attend language classes. If asylum seekers fail to attend integration courses, however, they can see a reduction in their benefits (Rietig and Müller 2017). Clearly, a great deal of concern and opposition against refugees remains. Migration has been, and continues to be, a dividing factor in German political leadership. In 2018, migration was the key factor that led Chancellor Merkel to leave her position as leader of the centre-right Christian Democrats (CDU) and it has led to a schism between her party and the Christian Social Union (CSU). It has been posited that the main reason Merkel lost political favour was due to her decision, mentioned above, to welcome almost one million asylum seekers to Germany. At the same time, “the anti-immigration Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) now has representation in every German state parliament and 94 seats in the Bundestag following 2017 elections - the first such showing for a far-right party in the country since World War II” (Mittelstadt 2019).

Indeed, Germany has accepted a significant number of refugees in a very short period of time. While there has been a marked increase in budgets for integration and reception services, it remains difficult to meet the needs of the new population. Targeted programmes have quickly been implemented (Scholten et al. 2017), but trainings for those providing services, and training with long-term goals in mind, are still necessary.

### **Components of the Integration Pathway**

State integration courses include the following elements:

- 600 to 1.200 hours of language lessons; the participant should reach level B1 of the international classification of language skills. The language course includes practical daily life topics such as health and hygiene, housing, shopping, etc.
- 100 hours orientation course (Lorenz 2018). The orientation course includes topics including the German legal system, history and culture, rights and obligations in Germany
- Final examination which involves a language and integration exam (300 hours of extra course work if one does not pass the exam on the first attempt)
- **To be completed within three years**

## **2.3 Belgium – Liège Province**

### *Historical Overview of Integration Policy*

Like Germany, Belgium was also resistant to being classified a country of immigration. This impeded the development of immigration and integration policy despite the significant immigration that marks the country's history (Martiniello 2003: 225). Due to the belief that migration to Belgium was temporary – based on 'guest worker' programmes- it wasn't until the 1980s, after the formal ending of the 'guest worker' programme in 1974, that integration policy was established (Martiniello 2003; Petrovic 2012).

Even before the end of the guest worker programme, cities in Wallonia tried to involve immigrants in local political life with programmes that put immigrants in contact with local authorities. "In 1971 for example, a Local Consultative Comity of Immigrants (CCCI) was implemented in Liège" and lasted until immigrants were allowed to vote in local elections

(Mandin 2014:15). This supports research that highlights how immigrants in Belgium tend to feel closely connected to cities. They use the city and local levels as markers of identity rather than the national, linguistic community, or country levels (Petrovic 2012).

After the end of guest worker programme, immigration continued through various channels such as family reunification, and integration policy finally made it onto the political agenda. Until this point, migration and asylum policy were created in response to current/critical needs. Policy in the 1980s was created with more enduring goals in mind (Petrovic 2012). It did not, however, outline specific, formal requirements. At the same time, responsibility for several policy areas was transferred to the regions. Among these were housing, education, and integration (Petrovic 2012).

There was a shift in the 1990s and the cultural diversity of the country was finally addressed. This time period also saw the federal government make moves to include integration in legislation and to limit the length of the asylum process (Martiniello 2003:232). Also, during this period, integration decrees were created in the Flemish and the French communities, and various supports such as a language learning, programmes to assist with entry into the labour market, and assistance with housing were considered. Integration policy in Wallonia did not single out specific immigrant or ethnic groups, but tended to be more general and to focus on broader social inclusion (Petrovic 2012). This suggests that integration in Wallonia had been mainstreamed in the past.

In 2015-2016, when much of Western Europe saw a significant inflow of refugees, Belgium welcomed nearly the same number of refugees as the Netherlands (despite having a much smaller population), and yet it is often overlooked as an important destination country (Scholten et al. 2017: 37). Scholten et al. describe the integration approach in Belgium as “a mix of multiculturalism and assimilation”. Targeted measures mainly existed for asylum seekers and not for refugees (37) and assimilationist trends were more likely to be seen in Flanders – where targeted integration programmes exist for specific minority groups - than in Wallonia. The

approach to official integration in Wallonia, however, has changed quite drastically in the past few years – as will be explained below.

### *Current State of Integration*

Currently, issues of foreign policy, immigration, and public health are the responsibility of the Federal government, leaving the regions (Flanders region, Brussels Capital region, and the Walloon region – where the Province of Liege is located) and communities with a great deal of autonomy over key issues, such as education and integration. *Immigration* issues are the responsibility of Federal Public Service Immigration and Asylum Policy and Federal Public Service Home Affairs, all under the direction of the Federal Public Service Interior which is also in charge of border control, detention centres, and fighting radicalisation<sup>6</sup> (Ibz Office des étrangers). *Integration*, however, is the responsibility of the regions meaning that integration policy for the province of Liège comes from the Walloon regional government.

In the past, the Walloon approach to integration was comprised of ‘positive discrimination and the financing of social inclusion measures’ (European Commission 2016). This approach did not, however, single out specific groups based on, for example, ethnicity or country of origin. “In Wallonia and in Brussels, ethnic minorities are not recognised. Integration is tackled through more general socio-economic policies targeting not only immigrants but large segments of the population” (Mandin 2014:9). This changed when the Walloon government officially approved a decree in 2016 that introduced a compulsory integration programme for newly arrived immigrants (European Commission 2016) and these requirements were already increased in 2019 (Service public de Wallonie).

In Wallonia, the Regional Integration Centres, or “CRI”, are responsible for “new migrant settlement”. Their services are available to immigrants (foreign nationals who are not from EU member states, the European Economic Area or Switzerland) who have a residence permit valid

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<sup>6</sup> All translation from French to English were the author’s own translation

for more than three months and who have been in the country less than three years. In the Province of Liège, the integration centres are CRIPEL and CRVI. They provide various services to asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants, including offering the integration courses. Each Regional Integration Centre is also required by the Region of Wallonia to create a local integration plan which is meant to “focus on the local needs of ‘foreign people’ and to create specific practices to meet these needs” (CRVI 2018). This came into effect in a decree in 2009 (CRIBW)

The DisCRI is an organisation that provides support for all of the Regional Integration Centres in Wallonia. It provides some standardisation by creating the trainings that practitioners must complete in order to offer integration courses. This training is funded by the European Integration Fund (EIF) and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). It also aims to foster communication and the sharing of practices between the CRI and those who work in the sector of integration. Together with the DGO5, the eight Regional Integration Centres are responsible for developing, implementing, and organising the Integration Pathway. Municipal administrations inform immigrants of their rights and duties, including the obligation to follow the Integration Pathway (Service public de Wallonie).

An evaluation of Wallonia’s official integration pathway was commissioned by IWEPS (The Wallonian institute of evaluation, foresight, and statistics) and completed in May 2019. The report found that the pathway meets many of the needs of new immigrants in terms of their language ability and socio-professional integration, but that there are major gaps in terms of housing and mental health support. The report also cites a lack of interpreting services and complications arising from the fact that many different actors with different aims and types of expertise are involved in providing the courses and services. This can make collaborations difficult and cause added confusion and obstacles for the participants (Gossiaux, Mescoli, Rivère 2019).

In 2015, Mipex stated that, “Belgians have maintained more favourable attitudes towards immigrants than most in Europe” (MIPEX 2015). The 2019 victory of right wing, anti-immigrant parties in Flanders, however, shows that this may no longer be the case for Belgium as a whole.

In the 2019n elections, traditional mainstream parties endured the loss of seats in both Flanders and Wallonia, but that is where the similarities end. The Vlaams Belang (a far-right party) enjoyed a revival in Flanders, while the Workers' Party of Belgium (a far-left party) and the Ecolo party (a green party) - who hold decidedly less anti-immigrant sentiment – were successful in Wallonia (SPF intérieur 2019). At the same time, however, Wallonia has already significantly increased the requirements of the integration pathway since its inception in 2016 (as stated above), suggesting that Wallonia is not immune to assimilationist trends.

## **Components of the Integration Pathway**

Newly arrived immigrants are obliged to follow the Integration Course. The integration course requires:

- Social interview
- 120 hours of training in French (if necessary) – to reach Level A2
- 20h of citizenship
- There is no exam
- **To be completed within 18 months**

(Service public de Wallonie)

The information for this report was mainly gathered in 2017, but there have been significant changes to the integration pathway in 2019. The new system is below.

- A welcome module which consists of information on the rights and duties of all persons residing in Belgium, an individual social report that allows a first support according to the needs expressed (housing, health, employment, family, leisure ...), a test of the level of French and help with administrative procedures
- 400 hours of training in French (if necessary)
- 60 hours of citizenship training
- A socio-professional orientation according to needs
- **To be completed within 18 months**

**While the requirements have significantly increased, the time in which they must be completed remains the same.**

<http://actionsociale.wallonie.be/integration/parcours-integration-primos-arrivants>

## 2.4 Section Conclusions

	<b>Germany – Aachen and Eifel Regions</b>	<b>Netherlands– Limburg Province</b>	<b>Belgium– Liège Province</b>
<b>Integration pathway components set by</b>	National level	National level	Regional level
<b>Language requirement</b>	B1 plus exam	B1 plus exam	A2 no exam
<b>Time available</b>	3 years	3 years	1.5 years
<b>Other</b>		Additional participation statement required by municipality	

Interviewees in all sub-regions who had taken the integration courses themselves felt these programmes did indeed help them to integrate. They appreciated having dedicated time after their arrival to be able to focus on learning about their new community. They stressed, however, that **there are conflicting demands on their time when they arrive in the host country. This means that initial arrival in the country is not solely focused on integration activities** – and things such as legal proceedings for family reunification are very time sensitive.

Interviewees also stressed that for most jobs B1 language level is insufficient. Simply increasing the requirements, however, would not have the desired outcome. The most necessary thing in terms of language acquisition is learning language that is relevant for the specific field in which one will work. To answer this concern, the integration pathway in Germany offers an optional 400 hours of job-related language training after participants have achieved level B1 of German – which of course applies to the Aachen and Eifel Regions.

### 3.1 Asylum Application Process

Integration, both the official and the unofficial processes (such as learning the language of the host society, understanding customs, building a social network, becoming financially independent, etc.), may begin when one is an asylum seeker. Integration is a long journey and the sooner immigrants are allowed to begin this journey, the quicker they can reach certain goals – such as becoming ‘independent’. Indeed, when asylum-seekers spend long periods of time in reception centres awaiting decisions on their cases and separated from the host society, this is time lost if these asylum seekers are eventually granted refugee status. In each sub-region, asylum policy and key decisions from national governments are the responsibility of ministries and offices that are also responsible for security measures. Decisions on immigration, distribution of asylum seekers and refugees (what area they will live in), and decisions on asylum applications are all competences of national governments. Integration, on the other hand, is the responsibility of local – state, regional, and municipal – governments.

In Germany, asylum seekers are registered upon arrival and then lodge their asylum applications with the arrival centre. The federal office on migration and refugees (BAMF) makes the decision on asylum cases. While awaiting the decision on their asylum applications, which can be 6 months or more, asylum seekers typically are expected to stay in initial reception centres (*Aufnahmeeinrichtung*). These centres are run by the states.

When arriving in the Netherlands to seek asylum, one must go to the application centre, which is run by the IND (Immigration and Naturalisation Service). The asylum seeker is then placed in a reception centre, run by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), to complete the rest of the asylum procedure (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland). The COA is responsible for the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers until they are given other accommodation or leave the country.

When people wishing to apply for asylum enter Belgium they must apply for protection at the port of entry or at the Immigration Office in Brussels. The Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) reviews all applications and makes a decision. While their applications are being processed, they are placed in reception centres run by FEDASIL (The Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers) or one of FEDASIL's partners – namely the Red Cross.

In all cases, the national bodies making the decisions on asylum applications are meant to follow the Geneva Convention in order to determine which applications merit the granting of refugee status. As stated above, after initial registration and the granting of temporary documents/residence permits, asylum seekers are often sent to reception centres where they will stay for the duration of the application process, but in some cases, they may be placed in individual accommodation. Before applications are processed by national governments, they undergo the Dublin Regulation check to ensure that the country where the application was lodged is indeed the country responsible for the asylum application proceedings. According to the Dublin Regulation, asylum seekers must lodge their applications in the first country they enter the European Union; they should not have previously applied for asylum in another EU country.<sup>7</sup>

If the country where the asylum application is lodged is deemed to be the responsible country, then there is a hearing or official interview. Applicants are entitled to official interpreters for these proceedings. In Germany, there is no official time limit for asylum proceedings but the BAMF must notify applicants if the process will take longer than six months (BAMF). In the Netherlands, officially, the asylum process should only take up to six months to be completed, with possibility for this time to be extended in difficult cases (IND). In the case of Belgium, the CGRS has six months to process the application and make a decision, but “there is no sanction when this delay is not being respected” (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen) and it can take nine more months when there are complications or a backlog of applications. After this, even further prolongations are possible (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen). Typically, financial support –

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<sup>7</sup> The Dublin III entered into force in July 2013. (Migration and Home Affairs 2018)

meaning food, accommodation, healthcare, and basic needs – are met in reception centres until an asylum seeker is granted refugee or subsidiary protection status, or rejected and forced to leave the country.

Given how long the asylum process often takes, national governments of the involved sub-regions have decided to allow asylum-seekers to begin taking certain steps on the integration pathway and to seek employment before they are granted refugee status (BAMF 2016 b; Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen 2018; Ministerie van Algemene Zaken 2018 b). Therefore, there are many instances in which the asylum-seeking process and the official integration process overlap.<sup>8</sup> After a waiting period, which varies between countries, asylum seekers can seek employment while waiting for decisions on their cases.

The waiting period is:

3 months in Germany – Eifel and Aachen regions (reduced in 2016)

4 months in Belgium - the Province of Liege (reduced in 2015)

6 months in the Netherlands - Dutch Limburg

This policy means that asylum seekers often come into contact with certain employment related services (such as job centres and trainings) before they have spent time learning the host country language and before they are accustomed to their new cultural environment.

### 3.2 Section Conclusions

**Asylum seekers often become refugees, so allowing them access to integration programmes and the labour market is a way to avoid delaying the integration process.** This supports the goal, held by most national and local governments, of having refugees become independent as quickly as possible. The asylum processes in each of the involved countries are similar, but even the

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<sup>8</sup> The trajectory of refugees who are part of a refugee placement programme, and therefore enter the country having already obtained refugee status, is different from those who ask for asylum upon entering a country, and resettled refugees are able to begin the integration process sooner.

difference between waiting three or six months before entering the labour market can have a significant impact on the lives and wellbeing of asylum seekers, as will be discussed further in the following sections.

#### **4. Distribution of Refugees and Asylum Seekers – Where Do They Live?**

In terms of housing, research on integration (Scholten et al. 2017, Robinson et al. 2003, Eding et al. 2004) highlights important factors that contribute to the successful integration of refugees.

Two of these factors are as follows:

- **They quickly move into private housing in order to become familiar with their new place of residence.**
- **They live in places where the local community has experience in supporting refugees and where other members of the refugee's community are also living.**

Both of these factors allow refugees to make contacts and build social capital – which is often essential for their entry into the labour market (Robinson et al. 2003, Scholten et. al 2017:9, Turner 2010). For this reason, it is important to understand how and where asylum seekers and refugees are housed. The following section will describe how these decisions are made and the level of government that is responsible for them.

In Germany, the federal government follows a quota system (EASY) for the initial distribution of asylum seekers. This is done in order to ensure fair distribution to the states based on space and resources (BAMF 2016 d). In Belgium, distribution – in terms of which reception centre applicants will live in, is decided by FEDASIL (The Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers). The decision is based on, among other things, where space is available and the applicant's language abilities - whether one speaks French, Dutch, or German (CGRS and Fedasil). In the Netherlands, the decisions on placement are taken by the COA (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers). Decisions are generally based on where there is space, but also takes labour market factors into account (COA c).

Refugees and asylum seekers in Germany and Belgium are mainly distributed based on measures of population. This is done in order to avoid overburdening a particular area. In Belgium, however, language ability is also considered given that there are three language communities in which a refugee might live in Belgium (French-speaking, Dutch-speaking, or German-speaking. In Dutch Limburg (and all of the Netherlands) a positive aspect of distribution is that, in addition to population measures, labour market opportunities are also considered (Scholten 2017).

In the Aachen and Eifel regions (and in all of Germany), local councils have the power to determine where refugees and asylum seekers can, and cannot, live - meaning certain neighbourhoods can be off limits in order to avoid “ethnic enclaves” (Scholten 2017:26, Spiegel Online, 20.01.2016). Keeping refugees and asylum seekers from living near people with similar backgrounds removes the possibility of using this community as a support system and keeps them from building certain kinds of social capital that can aide their integration.

In the Eifel region, there is a lack of communal housing for refugees and asylum seekers so, unlike the other involved sub-regions where the norm is communal housing, newly distributed refugees and asylum seekers live in private housing (Informationsverbund Asyl und Migration 2019). This can be seen as a positive condition for integration as long as refugees are indeed able to find adequate housing.

#### **4.1 Section Conclusions**

Where refugees and asylum seekers live has a significant impact on their integration into the local community, entry into the labour market, and their mental health and wellbeing. While allowing asylum seekers entry into the job market and to begin taking integration courses is a positive development, many problems still remain. Key among these are the negative impact of living in reception centres and being disconnected from co-nationals after distribution.

	<b>Dutch Limburg</b>	<b>Eifel Region</b>	<b>Aachen Region</b>	<b>Province of Liege</b>
<b>Distribution System</b>	Population and labour market based	Population based and local councils determine where refugees and asylum seekers can, and cannot, live	Population based and local councils determine where refugees and asylum seekers can, and cannot, live	Population and language based
<b>Accommodation for Asylum Seekers</b>	Reception centres/collective housing	Mainly decentralised/private accommodation	Reception centres/collective housing	Reception centres/collective housing
<b>Assistance in Procuring Housing - Refugees</b>	Yes – the municipality is required <b>to provide</b> refugees with adequate housing	Yes - local social welfare office or the local job centre <b>with finding and financing</b>	Yes - local social welfare office or the local job centre <b>with finding and financing</b>	Yes – assistance at the local level <b>to find</b> permanent housing

## 5. Support for Refugees with Special Needs

In each involved sub-region, there are certain types of support for refugees who have special needs. The UNHCR has stressed, however, that "refugees with disabilities are more likely to be side-lined in every aspect of humanitarian assistance due to physical, environmental and societal barriers against accessing information, health and rehabilitation services and human rights protection" (EDF). Disabilities and special needs encompass a wide variety of needs and while resources may be inadequate, some supports do exist.

First of all, **there is a general problem in all the sub-regions in terms of a lack of data on the number of people with disabilities who are refugees.** People with disabilities are normally considered 'vulnerable', a label which includes victims of violence and torture, children, the elderly, etc. but with no further categorisation (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2016, Bridging the Gap 2019). Therefore, what can definitively be said about support for those with disabilities and special needs is also limited. Additionally, a European-wide problem is that

**there is not much available training for people working with refugees who have special needs and disabilities** (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2016). Most often the support for people with special needs is for those who have been victims of violence and who have suffered trauma and need extra mental health support. While this support is crucial, there is a gap in terms of support for other types of needs. Issues such as a housing, interpretation, and mobility are often addressed on a case by case basis, but the integration pathway in each involved sub-region does offer specific measures for those with special needs.

## 5.1 Mental Health

For people who have been **traumatised, were victims of torture or human trafficking, and who need mental health support**, each sub-region offers some type of specific support. The concern of various refugee advocacy groups is that assistance is often short term and inadequate in terms of duration and follow up. In Dutch Limburg, Pharos (knowledge and advisory centre for immigrants, refugees and people with limited health literacy) provides trainings to support workers (including the DRC and asylum authorities) and healthcare providers on early detection of special needs. They also provide advice and information on resources for immigrants and refugees and work to promote the health of children from a young age (Pharos).

For those who need special services in Germany there are several actors that provide different types of assistance. The BAMF works together with actors in the public and private sector to offer the approved integration courses and trainings for teachers, including how to work with people who have experienced trauma (5). If there are further needs on the part of the refugee there are general counselling services available. These include services from the German Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, German Caritas, German Red Cross, Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) and Diakonia Germany. PEZ in Aachen, for example, provides psychological support specifically for immigrants.

In Belgium, the Reception Act allows Fedasil and organisers of other reception centres to make agreements with specialised services – namely psychological services. “The Secretary of State accords funding for certain projects or activities by royal decree, but these are always short-term

projects or activities so the sector mainly lacks long-term solutions” (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen c). Short term services include housing at the “Centre d'accueil rapproché pour demandeurs d'asile” (CARDA) which is a Red Cross reception centre in the Province of Liège that focuses on providing specialised support to asylum-seekers and refugees who are facing psychological difficulties (Red Cross EU Office). For those who have a medical issue (including disability, pregnancy, or mental health needs) or who are determined to be ‘vulnerable women’, there are special reception centres or facilities to meet their needs (Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen b).

## 5.2 Children and Unaccompanied Minors

In terms of **children and young people**, there are (as is the case in most countries) special provisions for minors who are refugees and asylum seekers in each involved sub-region. In the Netherlands, they are typically placed into a foster family by the Nidos Foundation. If they are over the age of 15 or cannot be placed with a family, then they are given accommodation by the COA in a special reception centre (Government of the Netherlands 2016).

In Germany, unaccompanied minors (UAMs) are under the care of the local youth welfare office and followed by specific staff from this office - guardians, who are specialised in working with unaccompanied young people. UAMs’ “asylum applications are taken care of by specially-commissioned case-officers who have been specially trained to take a sensitive approach” (BAMF 2016 b). They may live in specialised facilities or in youth welfare institutions unless a more specialised type of accommodation is deemed necessary (for example for young people who have been traumatised) (BAMF 2019). The same is true in Belgium where unaccompanied minors are appointed a guardian by the CGRS (the Commission General for Refugees and Stateless Persons) who assists the child in finding a lawyer and is present with the child at asylum interviews. Unaccompanied minors may choose to live with relatives in Belgium, but if none are available they live in reception centres, separated from adults (CGRS 2019).

### 5.3 Special Considerations in the Integration Pathways

All of the **integration pathways** under study allow more time or special provisions for those with learning disabilities or people who are illiterate. There are special language classes with specially trained teachers. In the Netherlands, people with developmental disabilities are allowed extra time to complete the integration pathway. If someone has an illness or handicap then DUO can make certain adjustments to the exam, such as providing a larger screen and larger print. To access this service, one must file an application and then be examined by a doctor who will make a recommendation. It is DUO, however, that makes the final determination as to whether or not these special services are necessary. If one needs more time to integrate based on a handicap or disability, time beyond the three-year limit can be arranged. In some cases, it is possible to be exempt from taking the exam. (DUO).

In Germany, there are special considerations and targeted integration courses for women, parents, young adults, those who have already been in the country for some time (catch up courses), those who are illiterate, and those who learn very quickly and need accelerated courses (BAMF 2017). For people with learning disabilities there are special services offered by the “Lebenshilfe e.V.” (Lebenshilfe Rheinland – Pfalz and Lebenshilfe Nordrhein-Westfalen). It has the aim of integrating people fully into society, but does not focus solely on immigrants. The national association also trains volunteers in working with refugees with disabilities (Dockery 2018).

In Wallonia, the requirement to complete the integration pathway can be waived for “severely ill or handicapped people unable to follow civic integration...” (Van de Pol and Vanheule 2018). Lire et Ecrire and La Bobine are centres that focus on integration and the education of adult foreigners, including literacy courses. Lire et Ecrire is a continuing education centre that adheres to the principle that everyone is entitled to literacy education. In addition to offering courses, they also conduct research and training in this field. La Bobine has a broader mission of working to combat xenophobia and does this through social integration services and literacy and foreign

language education. They also train teachers in the integration pathway to offer integration courses to illiterate populations.

## 5.4 Section Conclusions

Overall, there are few targeted services for refugees with special needs. Important obstacles in providing services for this population are that categories of special needs are not clearly defined and there is very little data gathered on this population. The lack of consideration of special needs amongst refugees is illustrative of the tendency to consider refugees as a homogenous category. The benefit of the TREE project is that the information gathered for the training programmes comes directly from practitioners, some of whom were once refugees themselves, and many of whom understand the diverse needs of refugees.

## 6. Recognition of Foreign Degrees

An important part of integration is the ability to work or study, and this section details the treatment of foreign degrees and qualifications in each sub-region. Diploma equivalency (having foreign credentials recognised in the country of residence) can be one of the major barriers to achieving full labour market integration with individuals working at a level commensurate with their qualifications (Yakubi et al. 2017). In some cases, diploma equivalency is the responsibility of a national office and in other cases this responsibility falls to local actors, but is still based on national decrees/laws.

There is little localised information on this topic that pertains specifically to refugees. In each sub-region, **equivalency processing for refugees is either automatically free of charge or the fee can be waived**. Once a refugee has a residence permit, they can also apply to have their educational credentials or their work experience validated in order to study or start working. The IcDW (Information Centre for International Credential Evaluation) on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible

for the recognition of skills and diplomas in the Netherlands. This service is free for refugees and the regular processing time is typically four weeks (idw).

In Germany, the 2012 Recognition Act guarantees immigrants the right to have their qualifications and degrees recognised in Germany. The recognition act is only for qualifications/professions that are overseen by the federal government. The recognition of state-regulated professions (for example, educator or engineer) falls under state recognition laws. Foreign university degrees that are not a prerequisite for the pursuit of a regulated profession have no professional recognition procedure (IQ Network 2019). However, “five years after the recognition law came into effect, education transfer experts are still criticising the lack of standardisation in implementation. According to them, this leads to the recognition system remaining non-transparent” (Hanewinkel and Oltmer). In each state and for each state-regulated profession, there may still be a different procedure which may vary in length.

In Belgium, the process is different in each region. In Wallonia, those wishing to obtain equivalence for regulated professions go through the Wallonia-Brussels Federation-Academic and Professional Recognition Service for Foreign Higher Education. The process takes a maximum of **four months** for the evaluation procedure and then up to 40 days to for the applicant to be notified of the decision. In the province of Liège, refugees can get assistance with qualification equivalency from the regional integration centres (CRIPEL and CRVI) and from CIRE.

## 6.1 Section Conclusions

When there is overwhelming demand to have foreign credential recognised, as is often the case, people do not receive answers in a timely manner and are left in a state of limbo. They are unable to work and take this important step towards integration and independence. With the emphasis from government policies clearly being that refugees should become independent as quickly as possible, there are often insufficient resources to bolster this process.

## 7. Current Trainings for Support Workers

As the TREE project aims to create trainings for those working with refugees, it is important to have an overview of the current training offers for the targeted professions. This allows for an understanding of what obstacles may exist in terms of implementing new training programmes and the reality of the difficulties encountered by service providers. In the sub-regions, certain professions are regulated at the federal/national level while others are regulated at the local level or have no official regulations. This means that the training measures in certain professions may vary greatly and that **it can be difficult to require further trainings**. The following section will provide an overview of the qualifications for three key professions that are included in the qualitative practice analysis. These were chosen for the important aspects they highlight in terms of the training modules that will be created.

### 7.1 Social Interpreters

Social interpreting is the name for interpreting services outside of legal situations. It takes place in community-based situations, such as medical appointments, in schools, etc. In all of the sub-regions, outside of court settings, public services are under no legal obligation to use certified interpreters. As a result, NGOs often fill the gap (such as certain partners in the TREE project: Arbeit und Leben, Le Monde des Possibles) by providing social interpretation services. This means there is a lack of standardised training/requirements. In addition, a lack of available interpreters often means refugees are expected to bring a family member or friend with them to serve as an interpreter when they go to the doctor or for meetings at their children's schools. This leads to critical information being lost or misunderstood.

The Province of Liège is unique among the sub-regions in having a professional social interpreting service that receives governmental support. The SETIS serves the region of Wallonia, which is reflective of the overall practice in Belgium of transferring responsibilities to the regions. They are, however, overburdened and other NGOs are also involved in providing social interpreting services. For the city of Liège, these services are also provided by Le Monde des Possibles (both

Le Monde des Possibles and SETIS are partners in the TREE project). Having this service at the regional level means that paid social interpreters from the SETIS all have a common training and adhere to the same standards and practices. In 1992, following a call from immigrants, the Belgian state offered funding to Culture & Santé in Brussels to hire interpreters in order to avoid relying solely on volunteers. In 1994, this interpreting service became its own non-profit interpreting organisation and eventually this service evolved into the non-profit organisations SETIS Brussels and SETIS Wallonia.

Starting in October 2018, SETIS Wallonia has had an in-house training programme for interpreters. They have a four-day working week in order to devote one day of every week to training. The SETIS administration created the programme by listening to the desires and needs of interpreters and also by speaking with institutions where the interpreters have worked. The content of this course includes:

- Legal proceedings (such as the integration pathway),
- Improving French language skills
- Learning to deal with stress and emotions
- The rights of foreigners (led by a trainer from CRVI)
- Radicalisation
- Mental health.

These topics overlap with the training needs that have been recognised in the research. One part of the SETIS training will help interpreters get their driving licenses. As the organiser stated, in addition to being a useful skill for an interpreter who has to travel between appointments, it is a skill they can take with them when/if they leave SETIS. The demand for languages is always changing, and if the language an interpreter speaks is no longer needed, they have to look for other work. In this case it is important for them to have developed skills that are more widely useful. Recruiting workers for potentially precarious work can also be a daunting task, so it is important that SETIS offers their interpreters opportunities for professional growth.

The social interpreting programme at Le Monde des Possible, Univerbal, attempts to fill the gap in the local area by training volunteer interpreters. The interpreters do not get a salary, but their expenses are paid by the organisation. The Univerbal programme is funded by the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) and offers participants (immigrants wishing to obtain pre-professional qualifications) four modules of training for a total of 200 hours.

*The project focuses on the social, the citizen, and to a lesser extent, legal issues encountered by project partners such as the Red Cross and CRIPEL. Module 1 is made up of social interpreting techniques and placements. Module 2 introduces the intercultural approach and module 3 provides social, legal and citizen information. Module 4 is about creating and designing content such as online articles.*

Marangozov 2017

At the end of the classroom training there is an internship/practical field experience where trainees go on an interpreting assignment. When the researcher was in the Univerbal class, those in the course said they found this practical experience to be valuable. Le Monde des Possibles also organises regular peer support meetings for interpreters to come together and speak about their experiences.

The situation of social interpreting in Dutch Limburg, Netherlands is characterised by a distinct lack of social interpretation service.

*To my knowledge, we do not have a programme like DOOR or Univerbal [both social interpreting programmes in different sub-regions included in the project] our region or elsewhere in the Netherlands. Institutions here work with the 'tolkentelefoon' - translators on the phone - which are very expensive and that is why hospitals etc. often do not call or use this facility but demand that the client takes along a person who speaks Dutch and*

*translates for him or her. In Tilburg, we recently started to offer the municipality ex- clients of the Refugee Council who speak Dutch as a translators-pool.*

Personal correspondence DRC 14 February 2019

In the 1970s the Dutch government set up six regional interpreting centres, similar to SETIS as will be described below. These centres were later provided subsidies so clients could use the services for free. In 2000, these centres were merged into one service called the Interpreter and Translation Centre – hereafter called the TVCN (TVCN). In recent years, government funding for interpreting, outside of legal matters, has gradually decreased (de Boe 2015: 173). Indeed, there have been no reimbursements for interpreters working in the healthcare field since 2012 when funding to the centralised and state-subsidised interpreting service was cut (PILP 2017; Zendedel et al. 2015). “This decision also reflected gradual changes in the political climate. The use of interpreters had come to be seen as a ‘wrong signal’ to citizens of foreign descent, obstructing integration and discouraging them from mastering the Dutch language (Ministeries van Justitie en voor Vreemdelingenzaken en Integratie, 2004, p. 3) (see also section 3.2)” (de Boe 2015:177). In 1996, the IND (Immigration and Naturalisation Service) created regulations and guidelines for interpreters working in the asylum system. In 2009, they created the Sworn Interpreters and Translators Complaint Committee so that feedback could be given about services in order to ensure their quality. In 2006, the TVCN transitioned from a public to a commercial company. In 2015 they partnered with the Dutch Refugee Council to create a training programme to help refugees become freelance interpreters of ‘scarce’ languages (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland b). Various interviewees spoke about making use of the TVCN telephone interpreting services. The Dutch Refugee Council also has volunteer interpreters who get a course of training when they begin interpreting (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland a).

Both the Eifel and the Aachen regions bear the cost of the German federal government’s belief that interpreting needs, outside of a court setting, are adequately met by voluntary or NGO provision (Ozolins 2018). This could explain, at least partially, why social interpreters from the interpreting programme DOOR (Interpreting in Social Space), at Arbeit Und Leben in the Eifel

region, are in such high demand. There is no official translation service for health care. The professional association for interpreters and translators lobby for governmental financing of interpretation in the healthcare field. Part of their argument in support of state supported interpretation is that state supported interpretation for sign language already exists. They argue that support for spoken languages should be no different (BDÜ-Pressemappe 2016:2). The cost for court interpreters is paid by the state and in this area there are guidelines governing the quality of interpretation services (though they may vary marginally from state to state). No such guidelines exist for Public Service Interpreting (BDÜ-Pressemappe 2016:3).

*Indirectly, there is budget for interpreting in the social field. Different authorities (alien's department, employment agencies etc.) in a city like Mainz have a certain budget for interpreters, but in most cases, they don't use it. Mostly, they rely on their clients [to] procure an interpreter [for] themselves. There is one exception: The youth welfare system uses pretty often their (additional) budget to get social interpreters ... All the authorities could use the budget also for professional interpreters.*

Personal correspondence AUL 14 February 2019

The interpreters in the DOOR programme are not required to have any specific training before beginning their work, however, they do have their language levels tested. There are also many optional training modules available to them. DOOR is funded by the Rhineland-Palatinate State Ministry for Family, Women, Youth, Integration and Consumer Protection and they endeavour to fill the gap where professional interpreters are not available or cannot be paid for. This includes situations such as meetings in schools, government offices, counselling sessions, medical appointments, etc. (ARBEIT& LEBEN gGmbH). The need for social interpreting is so great that "In Rhineland-Palatinate there are at least 20-30 programmes of social interpreting, but the quality, funding and size [varies]" personal correspondence AUL 14 Feb. 2019). An important obstacle in the Eifel region is that the geographic area is quite large and rural. Interpreters must travel long distances to provide services. This is costly in terms of time and finances.

The SprInt (Language and Integration Pool) interpretation programme run by PÄZ Aachen (The Pedagogical Centre Aachen- a charitable organisation) is similar in nature to DOOR. They have a

pool of interpreters who they have trained. These interpreters also “analyse conversational situations and intervene appropriately in the event of communication disruptions, apply mediation and conflict resolution technique, have the necessary professional vocabulary in the areas of education, social and health.” They are required to have basic knowledge in the areas in which they interpret (medical, education, etc.) and need to understand their clients’ cultures (PÄZ 2017).

In all of the involved sub-regions social interpretation services struggle to meet the demand, even in the Province of Liège where a regional service exists. NGOs make efforts to fill the gap and provide services, but they are limited by budgets and the lack of a standardised training programme. It is precisely this lack of standardised training which the TREE project aims to address.

## **7.2 Language and Integration Teachers**

Language and integration teachers varied slightly in profile between the sub-regions. In Germany and the Netherlands, training to teach integration courses occurs the federal/national government (from the BAMF and the IND respectively<sup>9</sup>), while this training in Belgium happens at the regional level.

The BAMF requires that teachers in the integration/orientation courses in Germany have the following qualifications: If teachers are not native speakers of German, they are required to provide proof of C1 level language ability. Alternatively, they must have a university degree from a German-speaking country, a qualification to teach German as a foreign or second language, and experience in adult education. Additional qualifications in literacy are required if teachers will be working with illiterate populations (BAMF). The preparation for teachers consists of training on integration, literacy, and orientation (which in the German case includes political content). Teachers who would like to teach in nationwide integration courses must be admitted to this

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<sup>9</sup> In the Netherlands, some training also come from the Association of Dutch Municipalities

programme by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. The prerequisites for admission are laid down by law in the Integrationskursverordnung (IntV) (BAMF b). As these requirements are set at the national level, they are the same for both the Eifel and Aachen regions.

In the Netherlands, the requirements for trainers of language and integration courses are outlined in the Integration Act (Wet Inburgering). Trainers must be competent in/have been trained in teaching Dutch as a second language. The Professional Association of Teachers of Dutch as a second language (BV NT2) created a competency profile that details what competencies teachers should have. In addition to this, there are training offers in cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication from the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG).

In the Province of Liège, these requirements are set at the regional level (Wallonia). In Wallonia, the DISCRI are responsible for creating and facilitating the training offers for those who will be trainers in the integration courses. Under the direction of the Regional Integration Centres (CRI), they also offer certain types of individual support to trainers and optional training courses on interculturality and adult education in a multicultural environment (DISCRI<sup>10</sup>). To teach FLE (French as a Foreign Language) one can take a training course at the Charleroi Regional Integration Centre or at Mons University. For training courses to teach illiterate populations, there are offers from the organisation Lire et Ecrire. If someone wishing to teach in the integration or language courses has prior teaching qualifications or specific experience, then this can also qualify them to teach in the integration pathway.

All of the involved sub-regions require that teachers in integration pathways have intercultural competence and that language teachers have special skills in teaching the host country language to non-native speakers. The trainings beyond this vary, however, and (as will be outlined in the practice analysis) teachers still see gaps in their competences – such as a working with people

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<sup>10</sup> DISCRI actions are supported by: [www.enmieux.be](http://www.enmieux.be), le fonds social Européen et la Wallonie investissent dans votre avenir.

who have been traumatised, understanding and dealing with gender differences, etc. – that are not readily available.

### 7.3 Employees in Regional and Municipal Administrations

In all the involved sub-regions' regional and municipal administrations, most interviewees stated that they did not have the obligation to take training specifically for working with refugees and asylum-seekers (aside from general diversity training). The exception for this was if working with asylum seekers and refugees was expressly laid out in the job description. Several interviewees stated that they feel refugees are entitled to the same benefits as other citizens, and they consider that refugees are given sufficient training to cope with daily life. Therefore, service providers do not need to adjust their behaviour.

*Special trainings [to work with refugees] are not really necessary. At the end, the refugees are recipients of benefits just as much as everyone else. They are able to receive all the support just like everyone else.*

Job Centre Team Leader, Bitburg, 14 August 2018

In Dutch Limburg, civil servants work in integration but do not have a job profile that is specifically designed for refugee assistance. Case workers who are on the professional register for social workers have completed a case management training at (post) bachelor level and must have “up-to-date work experience” (RNVC). For the Aachen and Eifel regions workers in this category are subject to federal regulations from the federal government. These are laid down in Article 33 (2) of the Basic Law. There is an ongoing training which is based on the level of the position. The situation is similar to the Province of Liège. In Belgium “initial training is used for all entrants to the civil service and is differentiated by seniority level. [...] Some institutions have specialised training programmes for certain functions” (OECD). The Federal Public Planning Service (PPS) Social Integration (SI) is a federal public service created in 2003 and it has certain social integration tasks (FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister and the FPS Fedict.). In order to be qualified, the applicant must be an “expert with proven experience in poverty and social

exclusion” - but what this means is not specified (FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister and the FPS Fedict).

## **7.4 Section Conclusions**

Aside from certain requirements that come from the federal/national or regional levels for people who specifically work with refugees, the involved sub-regions share a lack of formalised training requirements for working with refugees. One downside to mainstreaming is that people whose work is not focused specifically on refugees do not have the time, and are not required, to attend trainings for working with this population. This will be discussed further in the practice analysis.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

Sub-regions were unprepared to support the inflow of refugees in 2015-2016 and those who had not previously worked with refugees were suddenly working with a new population. In many cases, the support workers had not been specifically trained to work with refugees. This is an obstacle to the facilitation of integration. This problem will only grow with the trend of mainstreaming if specific training measures are not put into place. In cases where there is specific training for these professionals, they noted significant gaps in trainings - which will be highlighted in the practice analysis.

While the history of the involved sub-regions is different in terms of the evolution of integration philosophies and the timing, rate, and type of immigration involved, the present state of integration policy is quite similar. All of the involved sub-regions currently have official, required, integration programmes for non-EU immigrants. The criteria for these programmes are set at the national level in Germany and the Netherlands, and at the regional level in Belgium. Despite this difference, the integration programmes have similar requirements/components – and with the increase of requirements in Wallonia in 2019, they are becoming ever more similar. Integration begins from the moment immigrants arrive in the host country, even during the asylum

application procedure and while applicants are living in reception centres. In recognition of this reality, all the involved sub-regions allow asylum applicants to begin taking steps on the official integration pathway and, after a certain waiting period, to attempt to enter the labour market. Major obstacles still exist, however, such as asylum seekers having their time and attention occupied with ongoing legal proceedings and the difficulty of degree/qualification recognition in their new country.

Refugees often end up working in jobs below their education/qualification level or in fields unrelated to their area of expertise and interest. As distribution of refugees to municipalities is normally based on population measures, refugees often end up living in places where the job market is not favourable. They are also regularly placed in areas where they struggle to build social capital and networks because they do not live near others with similar backgrounds. In the Netherlands, where labour market needs are considered in distribution, the obstacle of refugees having to take jobs that do not match their skills still remains.

Support workers who do not specifically work with refugees have few options in the way of specific trainings on working with this population. General diversity training exists for most of the included professions but does not necessarily include specific issues involved in working with refugees. Many of the services are overburdened and there is little time available for further training unless these programmes become a requirement – which can prove especially difficult in the case of volunteers. Many employees in municipal and regional offices often adhere to the philosophy of mainstreaming, meaning they do not find it necessary to be trained to work with refugees. The targeted services provided to refugees by NGOs, however, suggest that refugees still need special consideration. Despite the scepticism this group felt about the need for specific training programmes for working with refugees, they still highlighted training needs that were similar to other professions (as will be further discussed in the practice analysis). The benefit of the TREE programme, and what makes the designed training modules especially attractive for the target group, is that the programme is designed based on input from the professionals themselves.

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## GLOSSARY

**AfD** - *Alternative für Deutschland* - Alternative for Germany – German political party

**Asylum-Seeker** – an immigrant who enters a country they are not a citizen of and seeks protection, and refugee status, in the host country due to fear of persecution in the country of origin

**BAMF** - *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge* – German federal office for migration and refugees

**DIME** - Digital Media – a Bridge to Inclusion – EU project

**COA** - *Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers* – Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers

**CGRS** - Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons - Belgium

**CRI** - *centre régionale d'intégration* – Regional Integration Centre – Wallonia, Belgium

**DISCRI** - *Dispositif de concertation et d'appui aux Centres Régionaux d'Intégration de Wallonie* - Concertation and support mechanism for the Regional Integration Centers of Wallonia

**DOOR** - *Dolmetschen im sozialen Raum* - Interpreting in Social Space

**DRC** – Dutch Refugee Council

**DUO** - *Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs* - Dutch Ministry of Education

**FEDASIL** - *L'Agence fédérale pour l'accueil des demandeurs d'asile* - The Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers

**FLAM** - Feel Like a Migrant

**IBZ/SPF** - *Service publique fédérale* – Federal public service

**IDZ-UDZ** - *in de zorg - uit de zorg* – In Healthcare-From Healthcare – INTERREG project

**Immigrant** – a person who moves to a foreign country with intention of living there permanently or for an extended period of time.

**TVCN** - *tolken en cultuurspecialisten* - Interpreter and Translation Centre

**IND** – *immigratie- en naturalisatiedienst* - Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service

**NGO** – Non-Government Organisation

**PÄZ Aachen** - *Pädagogischen Zentrum Aachen* - The Pedagogical Center of Aachen

**Pharos** - *Expertisecentrum Gezondheidsverschillen* - Dutch Centre of Expertise on Health Disparities

**Refugee** – In most cases, a person who has been forced to leave their country of origin for their own safety (due to fear of persecution or inability to live in their previous country) and who has been granted some type of protective status by the host country.

**SETIS** - *service de traduction et d'interprétariat en milieu social* - Translation and Interpretation Service for the Social Milieu

**SONETOR** - Training of cultural mediators utilising new Social Networking Software

**TIME** - Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe

**TREE** - Training for InteGrating Refugees in the Euregio

**UNHCR** – The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**UAM** – Unaccompanied Minor