



Labour market  
integration  
of third-country  
nationals in **Croatia**,  
the **Czech Republic**, **Hungary**  
and  
**Slovakia**



## International Summary

This handout offers an overview of a Situational Mapping analysis based on national reports made by organisations In Baze, Centre for Peace Studies, Menedek and Mareena, through Erasmus + project, **Career Path**. The analysis aims to provide an overview of existing national legal frameworks and labour integration policies in **Croatia**, **Czech Republic**, **Hungary** and **Slovakia** targeting third-country nationals. It offers a perspective of integration policies with the focus on labour market integration policies, state approaches and measures, and measures conducted by the private sector. This Situational Mapping analysis represents a synthesis of national analyses that in-depth show specifics of labour integration policies in **Croatia**, **Czech Republic**, **Hungary** and **Slovakia**.

The integration of migrants into the host society has been on the political agenda for years. While integration itself is a joint objective of the European Union, Member States have the autonomy to form and implement their own legal and policy framework promoting the labour market integration of third-country nationals (further in-text "TCNs").

For countries analysed in this report it is characteristic that they experienced both emigration and immigration, and for some of this process is currently happening simultaneously. Free movement of labour to other EU countries led to labour shortages, which consequently encouraged governments to implement legislative amendments and promote labour migration of TCNs. This is why **Croatia**, **Czech Republic**, **Hungary** and **Slovakia** issue the largest share of permits for remunerated activities.<sup>1</sup>

Latest data collected by Eurostat confirms that all countries who are the subject of this report are recording growth in the number of TCNs. In 2019, in **Croatia** the number of TCNs almost doubled (comparing to the data from 2018), reaching 73,776. Growth was recorder both in the **Czech Republic** and **Slovakia**, almost by

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<sup>1</sup>European Commission (2019) "Labour Market Integration of Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States", p.10. Available [here](#).

20,000 TCNs comparing to 2018. Thus, 350,291 TCNs were living in the **Czech Republic** in 2019, and in the same year, 82,156 found home in **Slovakia**. There is currently no available data on **Hungary** and the number of TCNs living there in 2019, but comparing the numbers between 2017 and 2018, there is a visible trend of growth of the number of TCNs residing there. In 2018, 130,800 TCNs were residing in **Hungary**.<sup>2</sup>

In order to evaluate labour market integration of TCNs each partner conducted 20 semi-structured interviews with TCNs residing in their countries. The interviews aimed to understand the experience of TCNs in the process of economic and social integration and to give them a Platform to recommend what could be changed for the economic and social migration be more successful. Through Situational Mapping analysis project partners managed to map out common obstacles and opportunities TCNs face when going through the process of economic and social integrations. Through the interviews TCNs expressed their struggle with accrediting their job qualifications obtained outside of the European Union. Since this is an essential prerequisite for successful labour market integration, TCNs struggle to find a job that is matching their qualifications or career aspirations. Consequently, TCNs are forced to accept precarious forms of work, short-term contracts, undeclared work, or hard manual labour that is often not adequately paid. Interviews showed us that TCNs have limited and not as positive experience with public employment institutions and that they would need more guidance through the process of integration into the labour market. Lack of guidance by the employment institutions leaves TCNs alone in the process of searching for employment. This process is not as easy as it may seem, since, in the experience of TCNs, prejudice plays a great role in lowering the possibility of getting employed. Specifically, respondents felt that companies provided little to no feedback on applications or hiring decisions. The lack of communication on the part of prospective employers led many TCNs to hypothesize about the possible reasons behind their lack of employment. Lack of effective communication between TCNs and possible employers can be attributed to the fact that most of the TCNs are not proficient in local languages. Since the local language is still perceived as invaluable for forming connections with colleagues TCNs

<sup>2</sup> Data collected by Eurostat. Available [here](#).

sometimes even struggle to get employment for positions where the working language is English. Language proficiency would allow TCNs better access to information, and they would be able to tackle independently with often overly-bureaucratised national systems. Due to all these struggles, when searching for employment TCNs often rely on acquaintances or family members who are familiar with their new country of residence. It is not unusual that TCNs manage to find employment through their community and network that can recommend them to interested employers. Together with acquaintances, important role have non-governmental organisations who often fill in the gaps left by the public employment and state institutions. Organisations provide free counselling, CV workshops, and often through a different range of projects funded by the European Union, an alternative to qualification training that should usually be provided by the state. Admittedly, employers have the biggest impact on the process of integration, specifically with integrating TCNs into the work-place. Building a working environment that enhances intercultural relations, programmes and workshops on intercultural relations can build a healthy working environment in which everyone can fulfil his/her full potential.

Labour market integration is an extensive process that includes cross-coordination among different stakeholders. For labour integration to be successful, concrete efforts must be put by state institutions, regional and local authorities, public employment services and non-governmental organisations. To understand internal dynamics between all these different stakeholders, each project partner conducted 5 to 7 semi-structured interviews with representatives of non-governmental organisations and state/public institutions. Both representatives of non-governmental organisations and state institutions stressed the lack of policy coordination across various institutions and levels of government. This discord was generally attributed to a lack of a concrete vision from the national governments. Representatives of non-governmental organisations emphasized that the whole process of labour integration is very slow, not customer friendly and over-bureaucratized. Implementation of labour market integration policies is dependent on the state strategy and institutional coordination mechanism between all relevant stakeholders. That is why a centralized source of information would help stakeholders coordinate their actions, lessen

misunderstandings and redundancies, and facilitate the integration process for third-country nationals. It is important to note that a well-designed and implemented integration policies can expand economic growth, but most importantly build social cohesion. If given a chance to integrate into the labour market TCNs will not only contribute to economic growth but culturally enrich the whole society.

Lastly, labour market integration policies can only be successfully implemented if there is a strong partnership between the public and private sector. After all, the private sector is the one that aims more specifically at supporting the integration of TCNs into the labour work-force. The private sector has the opportunity to fill in the gaps left by the public measures, specifically due to limited funding. This is why every project partner conducted 3 to 5 semi-structured interviews with human resource managers and employers, which allowed us to see their perception of labour market integration policies and the collaboration between the public and private sector.

For all of the HR respondents, the main challenge was the slow and over-bureaucratized process of visa and work residence permit application. Companies would be willing to navigate complex rules and subjectivity if it meant that they could hire workers quickly. Bureaucracy makes the hiring of TCNs costly, in both time and effort. Bureaucratic processes should be simplified. Furthermore, HR managers agreed that TCNs bring high-quality professionalism, and are usually filling a gap that the labour market has at the moment. They also point out the importance of having international experiences in the workforce.

In order to better understand the issues raised within the Situational Mapping Analysis and to see how they reflect into Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, the Slovakian context we will closely look into the results of the national analysis.

## National report - Hungary

## 1. National context and law regarding labour integration of TCNs and refugees

The number of foreigners granted any type of protection status in Hungary, i.e. refugee or beneficiary of subsidiary protection (BSP), has stayed extremely low since the systematic dismantling of the Hungarian asylum system after the migration crisis of 2015. This crisis and the reaction of the government and governing political parties also caused a rise in the negative attitude towards migrants amongst Hungarian nationals, affecting not only refugees and BSPs, but also other - visibly non-European - third-country nationals (TCNs). Despite the unfavorable social conditions for TCNs and refugees, the Hungarian government has made some efforts to integrate foreigners in the labour market.

Hungary has been suffering from a labour shortage for several years following the abolition of the last restrictions on free movement of labour to other EU countries, leading the government to encourage international recruitment strategies and legislative amendments. While many workers come from neighboring countries like Ukraine and Serbia (legislative amendments were introduced to facilitate employment migration from these countries), large numbers of people also come from countries outside of Europe - China, Vietnam, Iran, and Turkey just to name a few. According to EUROSTAT data, in 2018 55,739 first residence permits (not including the renewals) were issued to third-country nationals specifically for the purpose of employment (more precisely: remunerated activities). (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00170/default/table?lang=en>) Although it may seem like a lot, this is significantly less than the annual quota set by Hungary's minister in charge of employment. Although the Hungarian government has promoted the employment of skilled workers from countries outside the European Union, their claimed main goal is to mitigate the labour shortage through re-training and reintegration of currently inactive potential Hungarian employees.

Employment of TCNs is controlled by Act II of 2007 on the Admission and Right of Residence of Third-Country Nationals

and by Act IV of 1991 on Facilitating the Employment and on Unemployment Benefits. Act II of 2007 dictates which authorities handle immigration proceedings and in what capacity, along with the necessary requirements for TCNs to obtain a residence permit. As a general rule, third-country nationals may only be employed if they hold a valid residence permit. There are exceptions from this rule: BIPs do not need any permit to be employed, in addition, long-term resident TCNs do not need any additional permit for work. The residence permit can be issued for a number of reasons including employment, seasonal work, studies, highly skilled employment and research. The residence permit for employment, seasonal work, highly skilled employment (i.e. Blue Card), and research are issued as a single permit for work and residence. Once issued, the residence permit for the purpose of employment may be valid for a maximum of three years (but the validity cannot be longer as the validity of the consent of the employment authority, i.e. 2 years, so in practice, employment residence permits are only valid for a maximum of two years); for seasonal work, it is set to a maximum of six months. In general, in order for a migrant to obtain a residence permit, they must prove that they have two things - a stable source of revenue to support themselves, and appropriate housing. However, if a TCN loses their job, the residence permit shall be withdrawn. Due to the fact that residence permits for employment are dependent on being employed and that the most common residence purpose is employment, the employment rate is higher among migrants than Hungarian nationals.

Despite the fact that they can access the labour market under the same conditions as Hungarian nationals, beneficiaries of international protection (BIP) face more difficulties, as they often do not speak the language. In general, the Hungarian government does not consider the integration of BIPs or other foreigners into the labour market as a priority. Their primary goal is to ensure that BIPs are protected and allow them to return to their home countries once it is safe to do so.

Act IV of 1991 on Facilitating the Employment and Unemployment Benefits addresses equal treatment, stating that the rights and obligations pertaining to Hungarian nationals will also apply to those BIPs, including refugees and long-term

resident TCNs. Thus, they do not need any permit to access the labour market (to be employed).

Long-term resident TCNs and BIPs are granted the right to attend state financed training and re-skilling sessions that are aimed toward labour market integration. One of the difficulties associated with these training sessions is the requirement of having finished primary education, which not all BIP have done or cannot present the necessary documentation from their countries of origin to prove it. Other obstacles include a lack of knowledge of the Hungarian language, and the possibility that foreign qualifications may not be recognized as they are not in possession of the original documents verifying those qualifications. The Hungarian language is difficult to learn, and it can be very hard to find a job without knowing it.

For asylum applicants on the other hand, it has been very unlikely to find work as an amendment was made to the Asylum Act in March 2017 making asylum applicants access to the labour market impossible. Before the amendments, asylum seekers could be employed in the reception centres without needing to obtain a work permit beforehand, and then after nine months they could work on the basis of a work permit applied for by their employers. The amendments in 2017 obliged all asylum applicants (with only a few exceptions) to stay in the closed transit zones for the whole duration of the asylum procedure and stripped them from the right to stay in Hungary. This means it is now much more difficult for asylum seekers to find employment, making their integration into the labour market very unlikely.

Overall, it is important to remember that the Hungarian government's first and main concern are Hungarian nationals. The government pronounces an anti-immigrant rhetoric, and especially considering that Hungary is considered to be a "transit" country for immigrants by the government, on the level of political commitments, the government does not want to invest their resources into them. In practice, however, many steps were taken to facilitate labour immigration and the employment of foreigners in Hungary showing a visible contradiction between politics and employment policies.



## 2. Statistics and relevant actors regarding labour integration in your country

The relevant actors in regards to labour migration integration in Hungary are the national government, the European Union, third-country nationals, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, non-governmental organizations that assist with the integration process, and private companies that hire third-country nationals.

Third-country nationals make up one percent of the total population in Hungary. Most live in the capital city of Budapest or in university towns because there are more job opportunities in those areas. Specifically, 60 percent of TCN workers live in Central Hungary, and of that number, 53 percent live in Budapest. (source: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/13a\\_hungary\\_labour\\_market\\_integration\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/13a_hungary_labour_market_integration_2018_en.pdf))

As mentioned in the previous section, in 2018 55.539 third-country nationals were granted first residence permits for the purpose of employment out of 156.000 foreign citizens residing in Hungary (source: Hungarian National Statistical Office, Eurostat). The five largest ethnic groups from outside the European Union that were granted permits for employment were from Ukraine, Serbia, China, Vietnam, and Kosovo. In terms of gender, migrant men have a higher rate of economic activity than migrant women. Among third-country nationals, 70% of men are economically active compared to 50% of women. (source: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/13a\\_hungary\\_labour\\_market\\_integration\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/13a_hungary_labour_market_integration_2018_en.pdf)).

Since 2015, the employment of TCNs has grown significantly in the sector of information and communication services. Although it has grown, in 2017 the highest number of valid work permits was found in sectors of processing industry and retail trade, along with storage, transport, and vehicle repair.

## 3. Analysis of interviews with stakeholders including relevant quotes

### 3.1. TCNs

Summary of structural dimensions of integration:

#### *Main reasons for coming to Hungary*

The reasons for living in Hungary vary from person to person; however, we can spot several patterns among the subgroups interviewed. In the case of refugees or persons under subsidiary protection it is usually an escape from unbearable circumstances in the home country. In the case of migrant workers the reason is usually choosing better circumstances either in everyday life or in their career. There are two subcategories among the migrant workers: arrived as a student and or arrived as a migrant worker. We summarized their reasons for coming to Hungary separately.

Those who arrived as a student and then remained as migrant workers with a work-based residence permit, usually claim that they came for the good academic scholarship. Stipendium Hungarikum is a very popular scholarship, a programme based on bilateral educational cooperation agreements signed between the Ministries responsible for education in the sending countries/territories and Hungary or between institutions. Currently around 70 countries are engaged in the programme. In the case of former students interviewed, they said that they usually started to work part time during their studies, and after graduating, they applied for a full time job in Hungary. According to the opinion of respondents in this subgroup, they continue to stay in Hungary only if they can find a job that fits their career goal. While working they often apply to jobs in other European countries, and they choose to leave Hungary only if the relocation package is better there.

The second subgroup consists of TCNs who arrived straight to the labour market either because they were looking for jobs or a headhunter found them (specially in the IT sector). According to the respondents, they are usually searching for a better place of

living. They also claim that certain Hungarian companies has a very good relocation package for TCNs.

*General opinions about living in Hungary. What good and bad things for third-country nationals can be found in living in this country?*

The most common reason for living in Hungary among the respondents was that everyday life is good and comfortable and it is a safe country. Especially people coming from South America or from the Middle East are happy that they can walk freely on the street, and that no violence happens in public places. However, another common conclusion about Hungary was that it is not a welcoming country. Some interviewees had bad experiences from tenants, from employees, from doctors, some even suffered from racist attacks on the street. They all agreed that if you are a foreigner and don't speak Hungarian, it is very hard to be integrated. The majority of the interviewees mentioned that the health institutions are very poor quality and that the whole system is very bureaucratic.

*What kind of experiences do you have regarding employment?*

According to the refugee respondents the major problem was not that they could not find a job, but to have the exact qualification that suits their career aspiration. One former refugee explained that she was starting from the bottom, low paid work, cleaning in houses for many years, and later she realized she must study, finish high school and then university to fulfill the career dream.

TCN workers also explained that in many cases they cannot find jobs according to their degrees and career aspirations, so they take lower qualified jobs. They believe that this is because either you have to "know somebody" to have a nice job, or because employers are not willing to take the extra energy that employing a TCN means in comparison to a Hungarian citizen.

However, according to the interviewees once you are in the labour market, you can have more and more choices, and companies are more willing to employ you. It seems that the complicated

process of obtaining the work residence permit deters employers from hiring TCNs, and they often lack information on the fact that employing refugees is almost as easy as employing Hungarian citizens.

*What would be your needs regarding employment/work?*

There were 2 subgroups among TCNs according to their experiences in obtaining the work residence permit: people in the first group had no information about the complicated process, as their company did it for them: all they had to do was sign the papers at the end of the process. People in the second group either tried to organize their work permit by themselves or with their company. They had endless stories about the immigration office, the slow and over-bureaucratized procedure, how many times they had to go there, how many hours they had to wait or how many times the immigration office lost their documents. They all agreed that there is a huge demand for a quick and transparent process for getting the work permit in Hungary.

*What were the challenges you faced when searching for employment?*

First of all there was a common agreement that it is very hard to find jobs if you don't speak Hungarian. Only some of the respondents work in international companies, where they felt their lack of Hungarian is not a disadvantage. Second, not all companies are willing to take the extra time and energy for employing a TCN. This depends on the nature and on the size of the company as well. Big companies are usually outsourcing the task to relocation agencies if they need the TCN workforce. Smaller companies however, are in many cases reluctant to employ them, as they save time and money with employing a Hungarian instead of a TCN.

*Would you say that public employment institutions informed you about possible administrative barriers?*

There was nobody who would have tried to get help from public employment institutions among the interviewees.

*Did you have the possibility of recognising your qualifications? Did you have any support through the process of recognizing your foreign qualifications and access to any subsequent trainings?*

Recognizing the qualifications was not difficult, according to the GCNs interviewed. Either the relocation company did it for them, or they did it themselves.

*Would you say that your employers successfully integrated you in their workforce?*

Like in the previous section, this varies from company to company. Small or medium size companies pay more attention to the integration process. Bigger multinational companies sometimes have integration programmes (in some there are even language classes), but these are usually very short and have little impact.

## Education

As a general experience, GCNs who arrived to study in a Higher Education Institution, were satisfied with the education part, but unsatisfied with the extracurricular support they got. Many felt neglected by the international offices, and did not receive support either in the housing or the integration process, or in the legal issues, like residence permit, etc.

## Summary of feedback regarding social interaction

*What kind of relationships do you have with your co-workers?  
From which origins/citizenships?*

Again, each story is unique, but there is a pattern showing that it is easier to integrate into a small company or a big international company. According to the interviews, it is more difficult to integrate socially into medium size companies, especially with mainly Hungarians. Most of the respondents mentioned that they have more international friends, and some Hungarians. There is a pattern that international staff members hang out together, and only some Hungarians join them. Interestingly, only very few had relationships with their co-patriates, they usually preferred mixed international social life.

*What kind of relationships do you have with the local community?*

There was a common agreement that if you don't have Hungarian friends from school or from work, it will be very difficult to have it later. In some cases having children or having a dog helped to have new relationships with Hungarians.

*Have you had support from your employer or co-workers? Please describe.*

Again, this depends on the company. According to the interviewees many companies do not pay attention to the integration of foreigners. Only some big multinational companies have an integration program for a few weeks that includes mentoring and language classes. Some of the interviewees also mentioned that Hungarian co-workers are not willing to switch to English during lunch time, which would be the only space for socializing.

## *Recommendations*

We can identify 3 categories among the recommendations: *General, Employment, and Immigration office experiences.*

### *General*

Generally participants would suggest to pay more attention to foreigners living in the country. This means a more welcoming and friendly attitude starting from integration programs to

Hungarian classes and English signs in the public spaces. Another common area of recommendations is the living conditions- that includes higher salaries, better health system etc. Many participants mentioned the need for more online and more modern communication systems in various areas. Participants mentioned that they feel themselves in a schizophrenic situation because although the Hungarian government is anti-migration, the number of the applications for the work residence permit increased a lot, and the immigration office cannot deal with the workload.

Here is a collection of quotes:

- *"Hungary sees everyone as an enemy."*
- *"Bureaucracy is too slow in Hungary, and not modern."*
- *"Have customer friendly communication in public offices."*
- *"Go more online Hungary, I really like magyarorszag.hu, it pretty cool."*
- *"There should be a more friendly environment language wise and culture wise."*
- *"Health system and also the education system are pretty weak."*
- *"Stop the campaign against migrants."*
- *"I'm worried about living here, it is not a welcoming country, and had too many racist attack because of my skin colour."*
- *"Life would be better if documents would be translated in English in public spaces and offices."*
- *"Hungarian Police should receive a training on how to deal with minority harassment."*
- *"Education should include intercultural and gender studies."*
- *"Hungarian Health care is not good - doctors don't speak English."*
- *"There should be integration program or language program for foreigners provided by the State."*

## Employment

Participants usually criticized the Hungarian employment system of TCNs. Almost all of them mentioned the fact that the road for being employed is very hard and slow, mostly because of the employment authorities and immigration offices. They also felt that the employers are not willing to take the extra burden for employing TCNs and choose Hungarians instead, even if they have less experience for a certain position. A huge problem often mentioned is that if you want to switch jobs, you have to apply for the new work permit 70 days before, and it is not realistic, since you can switch jobs within a few weeks. It is neither fair on employees nor on the employers.

- *“During the integration process refugees should have a job training in English, so they can start to learn something and don’t need to wait until they learn Hungarian.”*
- *“Applying for legal status, so much time is wasted.”*
- *“During the period of waiting for the work permit, there should be a legal way to have some kind of a part time job (otherwise they just strengthen the illegal labour market).”*
- *“If you are having a gap year in your studies, you should work full time.”*
- *“Job searching residence permit should be like a work permit, and it should be OK for the companies.”*
- *“The government turns a blind eye on the international workforce.”*
- *“Although international workforce and tourism is important and they rely a lot on the international income, is reluctant to the people who come here. They don’t help the process.”*
- *“Here in Hungary your degree and future salary don’t match - my salary should be 3 times more, according to other countries (working in the NGO sector). That is why NGO sector is not stable, people come and go.”*
- *“Employers don’t know what to do with a TCN, before and during employment.”*
- *“All the TAX papers and contracts are in Hungarian.”*

*Immigration office*



Only a few participants did not mention any problem with the immigration office. The most common criticisms were that the system is very slow, not transparent, not all officers speak English and there are many mistakes the office makes (losing documents, etc.)

- *“Immigration office should be more “modern”, and clients should not wait for 2-3 hours just to get a number. Immigration service officers should speak English. Online system should be introduced.”*
- *“The system is too complicated and not logical for a TCN.”*
- *“An operational manager needs at the immigration office.”*
- *“They are losing papers, why papers, ask an IT company and go online.”*
- *“Why do they send still letters, such a waste of time.”*
- *“Keep the 70 days deadline, please.”*
- *“Immigration officers should speak English in 2020.”*
- *“Please do not include public holiday in the deadlines.”*
- *“The system in the Immigration Office is very slow, and if one document is missing you have to wait another day – it should be more smooth and quick.”*
- *“There is too much paperwork for getting the work permit.”*
- *“Have a legal advisor at the Immigration office for clients.”*

## 3.2. NGO and public officials

### General experiences

For employers planning to recruit and employ a TCN, there are 2 options where they can get help: private companies and relocation firms that offer their services for managing work residence permits for both sides. At this moment there are approximately 10-15 firms in Hungary (The most relevant are: Settlers, Helpers, Deloitte, EU, MoveOne, InterRelocation, SantaFe, Expatriate Center) that provide help in employing TCNs. In the case of refugees and asylum seekers the option is Menedék Association, the biggest NGO in the field, where social workers and a legal advisor help the process. Although refugees don't need

work residence permits, they need help in many legal and social issues in the process of employment.

*How does the existing legal framework answer the challenges of employing migrants from non-EU countries?*

Both relocation consultants and NGO professionals agreed that it is a very slow, not customer friendly and over-bureaucratized system. However, there are signs from governmental institutions to make it more customer friendly. First of all, not too long ago it became a one-stop-shop approach (model offering customers the convenience of having multiple needs met in one location), where you can apply for a work and residence permit in the same process. Second, the immigration office launched an online platform (<https://enterhungary.gov.hu/eh/?en>) This is still in the pilot phase, but it has the intention of being customer friendly. Also, they are more and more willing to communicate via email instead of post mail.

The major problems however are connected to the capacity of the immigration and employment authorities. Probably in connection to the low capacity, it now takes 70 days to get the work permit (30 days for the employment services and 40 for the immigration office), which is far from being customer friendly and realistic in the employment processes. Moreover, the employment system is not customer friendly in terms of communication, as immigration officers often don't speak English or are not professional user managers. Respondents also mentioned that they often lack information about the system. There is no information for example on how to be a VIP client at the immigration office, or how to obtain information in English. Employment authorities work with an old fashioned system and vocabulary (for example, there are no "modern" jobs from the IT sector). However, if you have personal contact with the officer, things can go better, they said.

*Is there any support provided by the state institutions to employers who wish to employ migrants from non-EU countries?*

At the employment authorities you can have some help, according to the interviewees. But there is really no support at the Immigration Office. Moreover, there is no separate department for employers who are hiring TCNs, they are all treated in the same system (employers and employees).

*Do public employment institutions offer support to migrants from non-EU countries through the process of recognizing their foreign qualifications and subsequent trainings?*

This is a very long and bureaucratic procedure, however there is no support on behalf of public employment institutions.

## Recommendations

We list the recommendations of the participants according to the questions provided. Respondents agreed that there is a need to harmonize and optimize labour market law and regulations. Various involved authorities often do not know what the applicable regulations are, and their systems often do not overlap. The constant delay, conditions in the immigration office are discouraging new applications.

- *“There is a need for professional capacity development for immigration officers. Language and communication training.”*
- *“The system should be simplified and manageable in an online platform”*
- *“The other huge obstacle in the work permit procedure, that if you change jobs, the whole procedure must start again. Usually there are 30 days after you end a job, and even if someone started the new work residence permit before, there will be 40 days without a job.”*
- *“The other problem is that even if the employer or the company is doing a mistake, the employers also loses the residence permit.”*
- *“They should pay more attention to labour exploitation: employees can be easily blackmailed as they can lose very easily the residence permit and have to leave the EU.”*

- *“There are mistakes in the system, they send documents to wrong address, etc. and the 70 days counts again, even if the mistake is not the fault of the TCN.”*
- *“Without professional help it is almost impossible to manage residence work permit”*
- *“Employment authorities and immigration office should communicate more often.”*
- *“Documents should be more client friendly.”*
- *“Have a systemic approach for the international workforce, and pay attention to the fact that TCNs might stay in the country and look for the next job, and they might even “bring” their family members.”*

### 3.3. HR Managers

*What are, for you, the benefits and the issues of cooperation with third-country nationals?*

HR managers all agreed that TCNs bring high quality professionalism, and are usually filling a gap that the labour market has at the moment. They also point out the importance of having international experiences in the workforce. HR college organized an anti-bias training for the other employees before the refugee colleague arrived. Some also experienced higher “loyalty” in comparison to the Hungarian staff. According to one respondents, a “helper syndrome” was developed among Hungarian employees, as they started to help the refugee colleague in official processes, like visiting doctors, etc. This resulted in a friendlier and socially more sensitive work environment.

*What is the main motivation for employing migrant workers from non-EU countries ?*

For all of the respondents, the basic reason for employing TCNs was the lack of labour force in their sector (mechanical factory or IT sector). We can divide the companies in three subgroups: in the first one, they are specialized to employ refugees, and they enjoy the benefits of the easy employment procedure. In the second

group, we find companies with a must of "importing" TCNs from all over the world because of the lack of labour in Hungary. The third group consists of companies where TCNs can apply as well as Hungarians, and it doesn't really matter where the future employee is coming from. Moreover, we found that these companies usually have at least one TCN among the owners.

*What are the challenges employers face when employing migrant workers from non-EU countries?*

For all of the HR respondents, the main challenge was the slow and over-bureaucratized process of visa and work residence permit application. As one of the respondents explained, the first time she realized what the procedure to organize a work residence permit for a TCN is, she almost got a heart attack. They really needed that person though, so they outsourced the task and it was more expensive, but they could not do it alone.

*When employing migrant workers from non-EU countries did you have any support navigating rules and regulations by the state/public employment institutions?*

None of the respondents had any support by state/public employment institutions. They usually had to hire a relocation consultant for the job. As one of the HR interviewee mentioned, they would save a lot of money if they could manage the work permit but it takes a lot of time and capacity.

*How can employers provide appropriate support for TCN needs? What about the state?*

Employers can save time and also the work residence permit of a TCN if they know the rules surrounding this process. Otherwise they can do harm for the TCN, and it can often lead to labour exploitation (for example, the TCN is not quitting because of the work residence permit issue).

*Have you contributed to the integration process of TCN? How?*

All of the respondents have integration policies and stress the importance of intercultural cooperation, and its benefits. They believe that it requires different brain work and it helps in other areas of work too.

## Summary of recommendations

All of the respondents recommend speeding up the process of applying for a work residence permit, and making it more customer friendly. All agreed that they would love to see a correct website with all the relevant information, and FAQ-s and help line. They said they would even pay for it, since it takes a lot of time and energy.

They also mentioned centralizing the employment service for refugees and potential employers. They suggested speeding up of the social and language integration of refugees to speed up the possibility of finding a job. The accreditation of their diplomas and papers would also be very important. Employers should have more info on how to employ a refugee.

### Relevant quotes:

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*“customer friendly system, that would help the process, and would make life for both clients and officers more easy.”*

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*“If Hungarians work with non-Hungarians, it somehow results a better work atmosphere, and their “brain speed” develops.”*

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*“After several rejections, as a TCN, I decided not to be employed, but to employ.”*

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*“When I realized the process of employing a TCN, I almost got a heart attack”*

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*“I am so happy to work in this international environment. The process is slow, but once you have a TCN colleague, you know it is worth the effort.”*





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