

## *Foreword*

This review of the skills and labour market integration of immigrants and their children in Sweden is the first in a new series conducted by the International Migration Division in the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DELSA). It builds on previous country-specific reports by the OECD in the series *Jobs for Immigrants* (Vols. 1, 2 and 3).

With 16% of its population born abroad, Sweden has one of the larger immigrant populations among the European OECD countries. Estimates suggest that about half of the foreign-born population originally came to Sweden as refugees or as the family of refugees and in recent years, among all OECD countries, Sweden has had by far the largest inflows of asylum seekers relative to its population. In all OECD countries, humanitarian migrants and their families face greater challenges to integrate into the labour market than other groups. It is thus not surprising that immigrant versus native-born differences are larger than elsewhere, which also must be seen in the context of high skills and labour market participation among the native-born.

2015 was a record year as 163 000 asylum seekers arrived in Sweden to seek shelter, the highest per-capita inflow ever registered in an OECD country. A significant share of these asylum seekers are expected to receive international protection. Favourable labour market conditions and highly-developed and longstanding integration policies ensured that Sweden was well prepared to deal with this sudden increase. Existing integration measures have been scaled up and several new initiatives launched – including a fast-track initiative to integrate skilled refugees into shortage occupations.

This review examines the skills and labour market situation of immigrants and their children in the context outlined above. The remainder of the report is structured as follows: The report starts with an assessment and recommendations. Chapter 1 presents an overview of context in which integration in Sweden takes place – the labour market context and the background and composition of Sweden’s foreign-born population. Chapter 2 sets out the framework for the settlement of newly-arrived refugees in Sweden and outlines the core policies at the heart of early

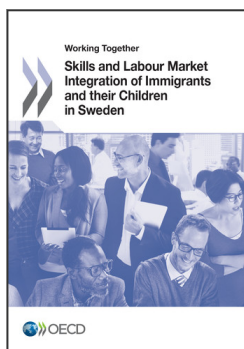
integration efforts. Chapter 3 examines the routes through which migrants can acquire and build the skills that are necessary in Swedish society and on Swedish labour markets before Chapter 4 turns to the employer demand for these skills and how policy is working to strengthen this demand. Finally Chapter 5 looks at the mechanisms through which skills supply is matched to skill demand in order to ensure that migrants are able to find employment that makes appropriate use of the skills, qualifications and experience.

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