

Foreword

The integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in the host countries is essential to foster social cohesion and promote the economic benefits of migration. OECD countries were taken by surprise by the recent increase in inflows of humanitarian migrants. The refugee population in OECD countries tripled in just four years, between 2013 and 2017. But in addition to the recent upsurge in refugees, there have also been an increasing number of migrants admitted to OECD countries on other grounds; many of them face similar vulnerabilities and challenges in integrating in the host country. The humanitarian crisis raised many challenges to the host countries, but reception systems largely managed the strain of coping with sudden, large and unexpected inflows of people seeking protection. Record inflows, however, leave a legacy of increased demand for integration. Successful integration is as much a challenge as providing initial reception. Failure on this front would carry significant economic and social costs, constrain future policy-making and weaken trust in government.

The OECD has worked with member countries for decades to support effective management of migration and the integration of migrants, especially the most vulnerable, into the labour market and society of their host countries. To support OECD countries in improving integration policies, the Secretariat launched in 2017 a Horizontal Project on Ensuring Better Integration of Vulnerable Migrants. This report highlights the main elements of this work. In particular, the report is aimed at informing, sharing policy experiences and good practices, and helping governments promote the integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants. Integration is not only about what happens in the OECD countries which have granted protection to these migrants; it also embraces support in developing transit and host countries as well as return and reintegration of migrants who do not have leave to remain and those who later choose to return when the situation improves in their home country.

Drawing on expertise and recent experience, the report addresses two main questions: *How can we be better prepared and enhance international co-operation in the context of protracted refugee crises? How can we foster the integration and reintegration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants?*

To answer these questions, this report brings together contributions from numerous OECD Directorates in 22 thematic chapters, each focused on a specific integration issue. The report identifies areas for improvement in the capacity of OECD member countries to co-ordinate and react faster and better.

A key lesson drawn in this report is that countries cannot act alone. Co-operation and sharing information and good practices is required at the international level. Domestically, governments need to work with a wide variety of stakeholders involved in the integration of migrants: civil society, the private sector, social partners, and government bodies at the sub-national level. Without a whole-of-society approach, it is difficult to achieve sustainable integration. The public should also be made aware of how

governments intend to address integration challenges. A plan of action for integration should be in place, identifying partners and roles, and providing continuity.



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