

FINDING THEIR WAY
THE INTEGRATION OF
REFUGEES IN
PORTUGAL



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACM	<i>Alto Comissariado para as Migrações</i> (High Commission for Migration)
ARP	<i>Autorização de Residência Provisória</i> (Temporary Residence Permit)
CAR	<i>Centro de Acolhimento para Refugiados</i> (CPR's reception centre)
CPR	<i>Conselho Português para os Refugiados</i> (Portuguese Refugee Council)
IEFP	<i>Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional</i> (Portuguese Institute for Employment and Professional Training)
ISS	<i>Instituto Segurança Social</i> (Portuguese Institute for Social Security)
JRS	Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Services
NAIR	<i>Núcleo de Apoio à Integração de Refugiados</i> (ACM's Support Unit for the Integration of Refugees)
PAR	<i>Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados</i> (Refugee Support Platform)
SCML	<i>Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa</i>
SEF	<i>Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras</i> (Portuguese Immigration and Border Service)

Executive Summary

Portugal has historically received few refugees. The 2015/16 surge of asylum seekers in Europe led to a tripling of asylum requests from 2014 to 2017. Despite this increase, the number of asylum requests per capita remains modest in international comparison. That being said, the efforts of the Portuguese Authorities to develop a brand new and comprehensive system to relocate and facilitate the integration of asylum seekers need to be praised.

Two thirds of the increase in asylum requests was driven by Portugal's active participation in the EU emergency schemes. In challenging times for EU solidarity, Portugal received 1 550 asylum seekers transiting from Italy and Greece under the EU relocation programme, and 142 Syrian citizens under the 1:1 EU Turkey scheme, according to which for every individual returned to Turkey from the Greek islands another was resettled to the EU. The remaining third of the increase (and 60% of all requests) was accounted for by spontaneous asylum seekers, mainly from Ukraine, Angola, and other sub-Saharan African countries.

While overall in the period 2015-17 about one in two asylum seekers obtained international protection in Portugal, asylum seekers under the EU schemes have a much higher likelihood of being granted international protection. This is driven by the selection criteria for participation in the EU programmes, which was restricted to asylum seekers from countries for which the average recognition rate of international protection at the EU level was above 75%. Moreover, Portugal committed to receive 1010 resettled refugees under the EU resettlement programme in 2018-19. Hence, a large share of individuals applying for, or in need of, protection currently arriving in Portugal already has or will be granted international protection.

In Portugal, all migrants, irrespective of the category of migration, benefit from a range of integration services offered by the High Commission for Migration (ACM). Although asylum seekers and refugees can use these services, they are not their primary target given the historically small numbers of humanitarian migrants in the country. Nevertheless, since 2016, the ACM has adapted all their services to the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

Portugal also has a specific integration system for humanitarian arrivals, which is rather complex and fractionalised in spite of the small numbers involved. In order to receive and integrate the asylum seekers under the EU schemes, Portugal introduced in 2015 an 18-month decentralised integration programme. Hosting entities, which are in most cases municipalities, foundations, or NGOs, are in charge of the integration of the asylum seeker along the different dimensions – housing, health, education, employment, and language. These entities are co-ordinated by the ACM. Within these entities, there are four main civil society actors which together account for three quarters of all hosting entities.

In contrast to the programme for asylum seekers under the EU schemes, the integration of spontaneous asylum seekers relies on the Portuguese public institutions and is coordinated by the Institute for Social Security (ISS). Spontaneous asylum seekers are also dispersed

throughout the country, but do not benefit from the support of a hosting entity. Furthermore, there are no specific integration measures targeted at them. Instead, the local ISS office directs them to the existing public services (such as the local employment centres) and the integration programmes for migrants (such as the Portuguese language classes for immigrants).

Portugal is one of the few OECD countries in which all asylum seekers may access the labour market already within a month after arrival. Asylum seekers also face no geographical, sectoral, nor occupational restrictions in the labour market. However, the access to public services and the labour market for asylum seekers is conditional on having a valid temporary residence permit (ARP). This permit is initially valid for six months and must then be renewed until there is a final decision on the asylum claim. In practice, asylum seekers may need to renew their ARP several times due to the long processing of asylum requests. The renewals of ARPs are done at the local Immigration and Border Service (SEF) offices and there is wide heterogeneity in processing duration across regional offices. This affects the asylum seekers' access to health care, employment, and subsistence support.

Further to these administrative obstacles, asylum seekers and refugees face three main challenges in preparing to enter the Portuguese labour market: learning the language, getting their credentials recognized, and having their skills validated. There is a Portuguese language learning programme in place that is freely available to all migrants – including asylum seekers. However, it requires a minimum number of participants to open a course. Since asylum seekers and refugees are dispersed throughout the country, this implies that there are often too few participants to open a language class. In the framework of the EU schemes, the ACM has found alternative solutions, such as developing an online platform to learn Portuguese or creating new partnerships for language teaching. This approach has the drawback that there are no minimum standards guaranteed and that some of these classes do not lead to certification of the level achieved. Moreover, these solutions are not available for spontaneous asylum seekers.

There is no established process in Portugal for the recognition of qualifications when individuals cannot present their original diplomas. This group is sizeable since even among the 24% of spontaneous asylum seekers with some tertiary education many lack a formal certificate. Furthermore, there is no systematic assessment and validation of skills of incoming asylum seekers. While only a small fraction of asylum seekers under the EU schemes has tertiary education, a significant share has previous work experience in skilled trades, which could be validated.

Several programmes and initiatives have been put in place to match asylum seekers and refugees with job opportunities. The ACM launched an online job search platform targeted at refugees in 2018, and adapted their existing programmes to the recent wave of asylum seekers, such as an entrepreneurship and a mentorship program. While it is still early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives, the take up is estimated to be high. Furthermore, asylum seekers and refugees under the EU schemes benefit from the support of their hosting entity and their local community in finding employment.

Asylum seekers under the EU schemes only started arriving in Portugal in December 2015. Hence, it is still early to evaluate fully their integration in the Portuguese labour market. Nevertheless, the first results are encouraging. Almost half of all working age asylum seekers and refugees under the EU schemes were employed or in training in November 2018, although there is no information on the quality of their jobs. Unfortunately, there is

no information available on the labour market integration of spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees.

Several key questions remain presently unanswered on the labour market integration of refugees in Portugal. First, it is unclear whether asylum seekers and refugees are in stable career paths leading to a sustainable integration in the long run. Second, there is a lack of information about how female asylum seekers are faring in the labour market, as there are no data on labour market outcomes by gender. Third, outmigration may lead to bias in employment rates if individuals leaving the country are selected. However, given the lack of data on out-migrants, it is impossible to investigate this issue.

Such outmigration is an important issue. At the end of 2017, available estimates suggest that 54% of asylum seekers and refugees under the EU schemes had left the country. The estimated rate is approximately 67% for asylum seekers migrating alone (i.e. without family), which are mainly young men. Almost half of these secondary movements occurred within the first month after arrival in Portugal, and 70% within the first three months. This quick departure indicates that Portugal was not the intended destination country for many asylum seekers and that the high onwards migration rate is not primarily driven by a failure of the Portuguese integration programme.

The civil society plays a key role in the integration of asylum seekers and refugees in the system put in place in 2015. To sustain this integration model, Portugal needs to ensure the continuing support of the civil society. Supported by a broad consensus across the key political parties to continue receiving refugees, governmental and non-governmental entities have launched several innovative initiatives to raise awareness on refugee topics.

Against this backdrop, and taking into account the efforts already undertaken by Portuguese authorities to accommodate the situation of asylum seekers in challenging times for EU solidarity, the following actions are recommended to improve further the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees:

- Consider **expanding the tailored support** that is currently provided by hosting entities to participants in the EU schemes to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.
- **Monitor the process for treating asylum applications** and take corrective action if the average processing time is above standard.
- **Simplify the renewal process of the temporary residence permit for asylum seekers** as done in some other OECD countries.
- **Define common minimum standards** that all entities in charge of the integration of asylum seekers and refugees should meet on the different integration services, and make funding at least partly dependent on meeting them.
- **Develop and co-ordinate data collection** across all key stakeholders on the characteristics and integration outcomes over time of all asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.
- **Ensure the provision of language classes even if there are few participants for all asylum seekers and refugees.**
- **Reinforce the framework to assess and recognise the skills and foreign credentials of humanitarian migrants.** Systematically assess the skills of asylum seekers with a high probability of remaining in the country and improve the offer

of bridging courses. Develop pathways for the recognition of qualifications for individuals who cannot present their original diplomas.

- **Monitor the outmigration of all asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection**, irrespective of their humanitarian migration channel. Analyse the determinants of outmigration to adapt the dispersal policy and/or the integration programmes offered if necessary.

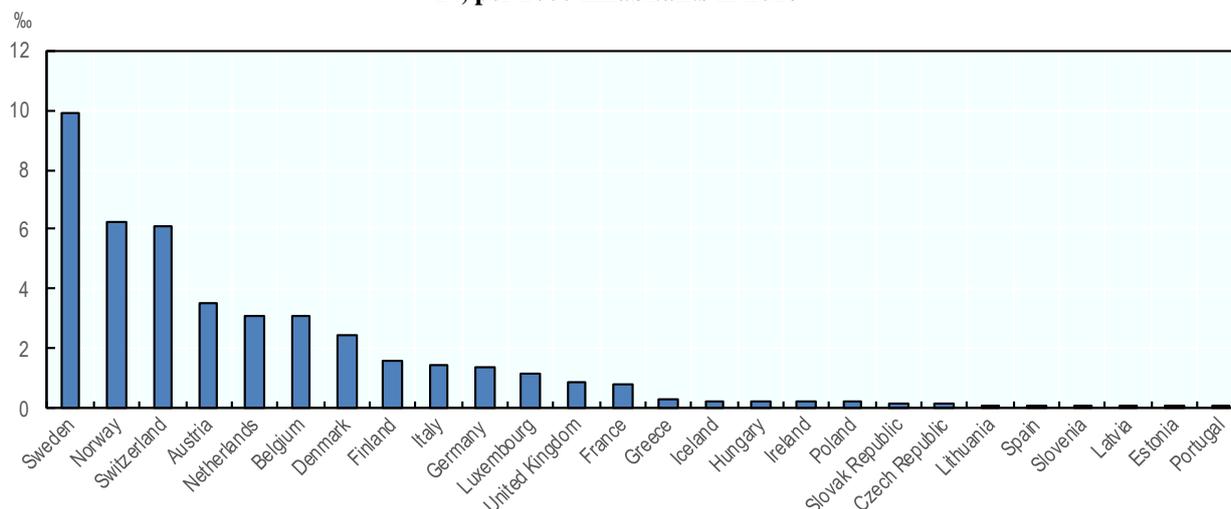
1. Portugal – A Short History as a Destination Country for Humanitarian Inflows

Portugal has a long history as an emigration country. Despite several immigration episodes in the past half century, the share of the foreign-born population remains low in Portugal relative to other OECD countries (9% compared with a 13% OECD average in 2018).

Until the mid-1990s, most immigrants came from the former Portuguese African colonies and to a lesser extent from Brazil. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a new wave of labour migration came first from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, followed by a more recent wave from Brazil. As a result, the four main nationalities of foreign residents in 2018 are Brazilian (20%), Cape Verdean (8%), Ukrainian (8%), and Romanian (7%).

Most immigration to Portugal has been labour and family related. Given its geographical position, the country has historically received few humanitarian migrants. From 2008 until 2014, just before the 2015/16 surge in asylum seekers in Europe, Portugal granted humanitarian protection to less than 600 individuals. This number is small, both in absolute and in per-capita terms, when compared with other European OECD countries (Figure 1.1). For Portugal, humanitarian inflows represent less than 1% of permanent migration inflows over this period.

Figure 1.1. Individuals granted international protection in European OECD countries, 2008-14, per 1000 inhabitants in 2018

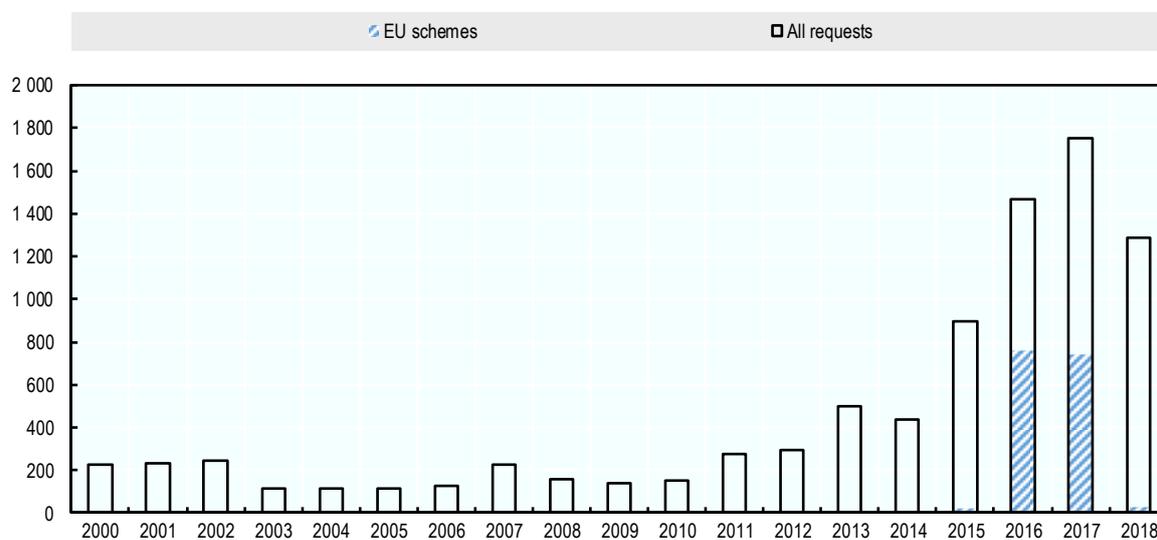


Note: Only first instance decisions are considered here.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asydcfst)

From 2014 to 2017, the number of asylum requests in Portugal tripled, following the surge of asylum seekers in Europe in 2015/16. Portugal received 1750 asylum requests in 2017, whereas in the fifteen years from 2000 to 2014, it received a relatively constant average of 200 asylum requests per year (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Number of asylum requests in Portugal, 2000-18



Note: The numbers for the EU schemes are for the EU relocation scheme only. The difference between all requests and EU requests is *spontaneous* asylum requests.

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza); NAIR

In 2015/2018, asylum seekers and refugees arrived in Portugal through four distinct channels (Figure 1.3). First, *spontaneous* asylum seekers travelled independently to Portugal and filed an asylum request in the country. These are the only asylum seekers arriving in Portugal before 2015. Their number doubled from 2014 to 2015 and remained at this higher level in 2016/17 (Figure 1.2).

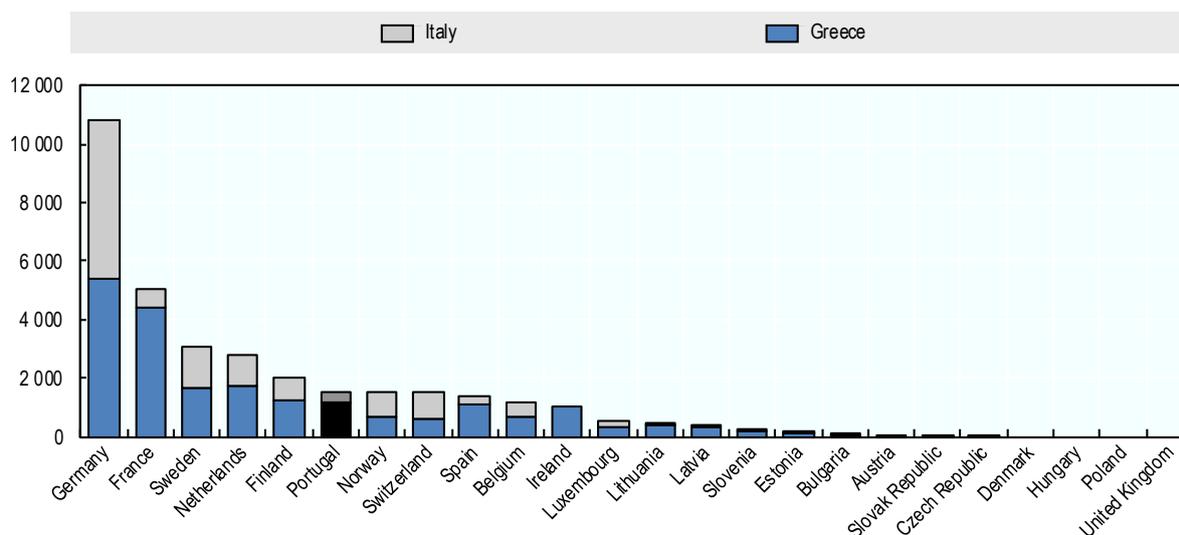
Figure 1.3. The four humanitarian migration channels to Portugal



Second, Portugal participated actively in the EU relocation and resettlement schemes. The European Council adopted the EU emergency relocation scheme in September 2015. Under this scheme, asylum seekers arriving in Italy and Greece with a high probability of being

granted international protection would be relocated to other EU member states. Portugal hosted 356 asylum seekers from Italy and 1192 from Greece from late 2015 until March 2018 under the relocation scheme (Figure 1.4). In 2016 and 2017, relocated asylum seekers made up almost half of all asylum requests (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.4. Number of asylum seekers relocated from Italy and Greece by European OECD country, 2015-18



Source: European Commission “Members States’ Support to Emergency Relocation Mechanism (as of 31 May 2018)”

In 2015-18, Portugal also participated in the EU resettlement schemes, and in particular in the resettlement of Syrian citizens from Turkey under the EU-Turkey 1:1 agreement of March 2016. Under the EU-Turkey 1:1 agreement, for every Syrian national returned from the Greek islands another would be resettled to the EU directly from Turkey. Portugal hosted 142 Syrian citizens under this agreement.

Portugal resettled approximately 80 refugees in 2015-17 from other transit countries such as Morocco and Egypt under the EU resettlement scheme. These resettlements replaced the ones usually done under the Portuguese National Resettlement Programme. From 2008 until 2014, Portugal resettled a yearly average of 20 refugees under this programme in coordination with the UNHCR.¹

The number of asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Portugal is unlikely to fall in the near future. While the EU relocation and resettlement schemes are now closed to new participants, Portugal continues to receive asylum seekers and resettled refugees. In 2018, Portugal received 1285 asylum requests and committed to resettle 1010 individuals under the EU resettlement programme in 2018-2019. Hence, it is an opportune moment to review the key strengths and weaknesses of the integration framework in place.

¹ Calculation made using Eurostat data (series migr_asyresa)

This report reviews the reception and integration of all individuals applying for, or beneficiaries of, international protection in Portugal. It focuses on individuals who have arrived in Portugal from 2015 until mid-2018.²

In most OECD countries, integration programmes are targeted at persons who have obtained international protection, and not at asylum seekers (see Box 1.1). This is because a large share of asylum seekers will not benefit from international protection and consequently will not be allowed to remain in the host country.

However, in this report, we review the integration of beneficiaries of international protection *and* asylum seekers for two reasons. First, asylum seekers under the EU schemes have a very high likelihood of being granted international protection (see Section 3) and integration measures for these start immediately upon arrival in Portugal. Second, even in the case of spontaneous asylum seekers, integration measures in Portugal start soon after arrival and before the final decision on the asylum claim is taken (see Section 2).

The remainder of the report is organised as follows: Section 2 reviews the reception and integration framework in place. Section 3 draws a portrait of asylum seekers and refugees in Portugal, and Section 4 focuses on the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees and its key challenges. The last two sections address two important and often overlooked challenges: understanding onwards migration and maintaining public support for integration.

Box 1.1. Terminology

Asylum seekers are individuals who have filed an asylum request and whose claim is pending. In Portugal, these may be spontaneous asylum seekers or participants in the EU schemes. Relocated migrants under the EU relocation scheme apply for asylum upon arrival in Portugal and as such are asylum seekers while waiting for a final decision on their status. Similarly, individuals “resettled” from Turkey under the EU-Turkey agreement do not benefit from international protection upon arrival in Portugal. Nevertheless, a key difference between spontaneous and asylum seekers under the EU schemes is that the latter have a much higher likelihood of being granted international protection than the former (see Section 3).

Beneficiaries of international protection are individuals who have been granted international protection in Portugal, be it **refugee status or subsidiary protection**, irrespective of the humanitarian migration channel. This includes resettled migrants through the National Resettlement Programme and the EU resettlement scheme (except the EU-Turkey agreement) who are granted international protection before arrival in Portugal. Likewise, individuals arriving in Portugal under the new EU resettlement programme are granted international protection upon arrival.

² This review does not include refugees arrived through the more recent 2018/19 resettlement programme. In 2018, only 33 refugees arrived in Portugal, in December, under this programme.

2. The Reception and Integration Framework for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

2.1. The integration policy for migrants in Portugal

In Portugal, all migrants, irrespective of the category of migration, benefit from a range of integration services offered by the High Commission for Migration (ACM). These services are offered on-demand. The National Migrant Support Centres (CNAIM) are illustrative of this on-demand approach. The centres are one-stop shops for integration services operating in Lisbon, Porto and Faro. Migrants go to the centres to meet, for example, with representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Immigration and Borders Service, or the Labour Inspectorate, according to their individual needs.

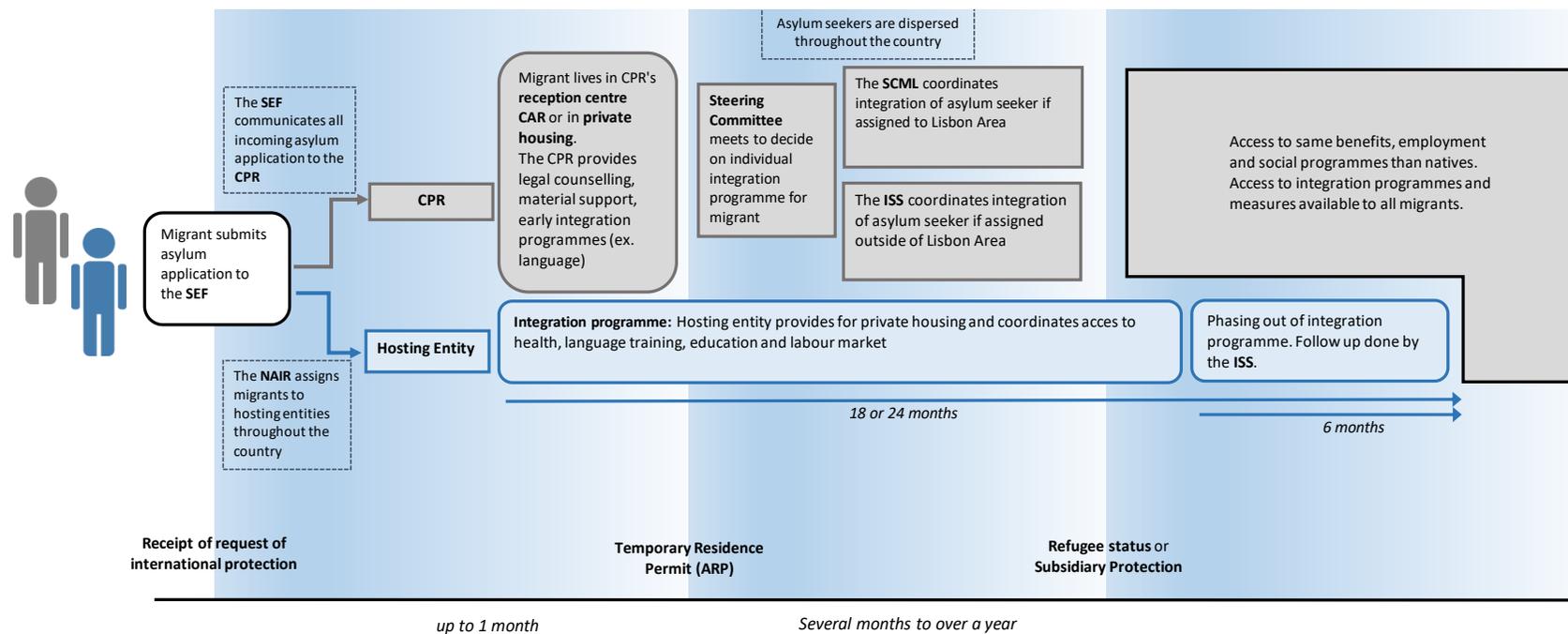
Furthermore, the ACM developed integration measures in different areas, which are available to all migrants. A main example is the Portuguese language programme (*Português para Todos*, PPT) offered by the ACM jointly with the Portuguese Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP). Other measures include a telephone translation line and programmes to support employment and self-employment (see Section 4).

Although asylum seekers and refugees can use these services, they are not their primary target, given the very small numbers of humanitarian migrants in the country. Nevertheless, since 2016, the ACM has made some changes to the offer of services to adapt them to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. For example, the ACM adapted its entrepreneurship programme to refugees by offering the course in Arabic (see Section 4).

Parallel to these integration services, there is an integration system for asylum seekers and refugees. Since Portugal's participation in the EU schemes in 2015, this integration system has been composed of two parallel reception and integration systems: the already existing system for spontaneous asylum seekers and a new system for asylum seekers under the EU schemes.

Figure 2.1 summarises the asylum procedure and the integration system for these two main humanitarian migration tracks, which are described below. See also Box 2.1 on the key actors in the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees.

Figure 2.1. The reception and integration system for asylum seekers of the two main humanitarian tracks



2.2. The asylum procedure

All asylum seekers, irrespective of the humanitarian migration channel, go through the same asylum procedure. The Asylum and Refugee Office (*Gabinete Asilo e Refugiados*) is responsible for processing all requests of international protection. This office is part of the Portuguese Immigration and Border Service (*Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras*, SEF), which operates under the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministério da Administração Interna*).

Upon arrival in Portugal, asylum seekers file a request with the SEF. The SEF has seven days to decide whether the application is admissible if the applicant filed the request at the border, and 30 days if he/she filed it on the territory.

If the request is deemed admissible, the asylum seeker receives a temporary residence permit (*Autorização de Residência Provisória*, ARP) valid for 6 months, the time it is normally expected to take the SEF to reach a decision on the individual's request. The SEF does not collect data on whether requests are admissible. However, the Portuguese Refugee Council (*Conselho Português para os Refugiados*, CPR) estimates that the vast majority of asylum requests are deemed admissible (CPR, 2017).

This permit is renewable until the SEF reaches a final decision, which may be the granting of refugee status, subsidiary protection or the denial of international protection. In Portugal, the residence permit for refugees is a five-year permit and the one for individuals granted subsidiary protection is a three-year permit.

2.3. The reception and integration system for ...

2.3.1. ... spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees

Several ministries and public institutes as well as one NGO are responsible for the reception and integration of spontaneous asylum seekers at the different stages of the asylum procedure.³

Once asylum seekers have filed an asylum request, they are initially supported by the Portuguese Refugee Council (*Conselho Português para os Refugiados*, CPR). The CPR is a NGO that represents the UNHCR in Portugal. The SEF notifies the CPR of all new incoming asylum claims. A main role of the CPR is to provide legal counselling to asylum seekers throughout the asylum procedure.

Furthermore, the CPR hosts spontaneous asylum seekers in its reception centre (*Centro de Acolhimento para Refugiados*, CAR) and provides them with a monthly living allowance (see Section 2.4). It also offers early integration support, such as Portuguese language training, workshops to prepare for the Portuguese labour market, as well as artistic workshops and cultural events.

When the asylum seeker receives the temporary residence permit (ARP), a steering committee led by the Institute of Social Security (ISS) meets to devise a tailored integration plan. The other members of the committee are the Borders and Immigration Services (SEF); the Portuguese Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP); the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML); the High Commission for Migration (ACM) and the

³ The 2012 Protocol of Cooperation for the Support of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (*Protocolo de Cooperação em Matéria de Apoio a Refugiados e Requerentes de Asilo*) divides the responsibility of the different steps of the reception and integration of asylum seekers among the different stakeholders.

Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR). In 2014, the steering committee was broadened to include also the Ministries of Education and Health, the Association of Portuguese Municipalities, and the Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS).

Asylum seekers are dispersed throughout the country. The steering committee decides on the asylum seekers' location. This decision weighs the profile of the asylum seeker (mainly the existence of family ties, ongoing employment or employment possibilities), the availability of housing and the policy objective that asylum seekers are distributed evenly across the country.

While asylum seekers wait for the decision of their asylum claim, their integration follow up is the responsibility of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML) - the main Portuguese charity - if they are located in the Lisbon area, or of the ISS, through their local offices, if they are located outside of the Lisbon area.

The SCML and the ISS provide asylum seekers with a monthly allowance (see Section 2.4) and redirect them to the necessary services (for example, health, schooling, or housing) by the SCML or the ISS. The different members of the steering committee contribute to the integration plan for each asylum seeker. In particular, the IEFP supports job search or training for each individual case.

Once asylum seekers receive international protection, they stop benefiting from this specific support of the ISS or the SCML. However, they become eligible to the same benefits as natives. There is some continuity for the beneficiaries of international protection who need social assistance given that in Portugal it is provided by the ISS.

2.3.2. ... asylum seekers under the EU schemes

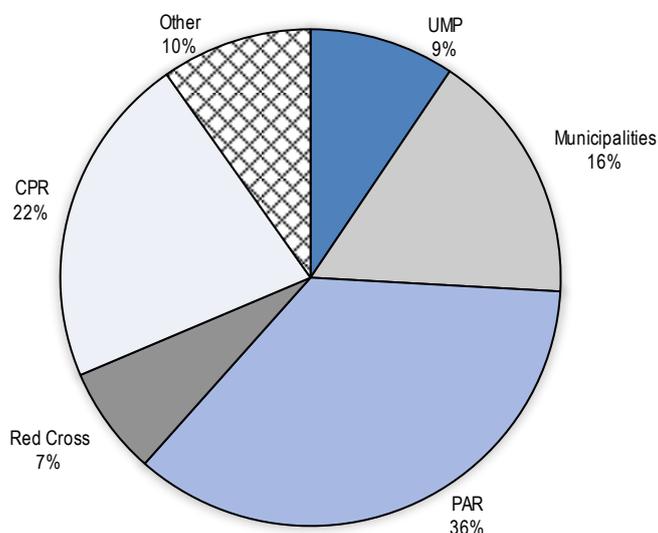
The reception and integration of asylum seekers arriving through the EU schemes operates differently from that of spontaneous asylum seekers. The system was designed in 2015 by the inter-departmental Working Group for the European Agenda on Migration, composed of representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; the SEF; the ISS; the IEFP; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education; and the ACM.

Upon arrival in Portugal, asylum seekers under the EU schemes also file an asylum claim with the SEF but are then immediately referred to a hosting entity, which will be in charge of their reception and integration for 18 months. While all hosting entities commit to support asylum seekers for 18 months, hosting entities belonging to the Refugee Support Platform (PAR) choose to provide support for 24 months (see below).

Hosting entities are the key actors in this integration framework. Hosting entities may be municipalities, parishes, foundations and NGOs among others. Only institutions may host asylum seekers. Private entities such as families are not eligible.

More than one third of asylum seekers under the EU schemes are hosted by institutions that are members of the Refugee Support Platform (*Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados*, PAR), almost one quarter by the CPR, 17% by municipalities throughout the country, and 17% by two major Portuguese NGOs: União das Misericórdias Portuguesas (UMP) and the Portuguese Red Cross (CVP) (Figure 2.2). Hosting entities of the PAR are for a large share foundations and associations (30%), parishes (29%), religious associations (18%), as well as municipalities, congregations, and schools (PAR, 2017). See also Box 2.1 for further details on these entities.

Figure 2.2. Distribution of asylum seekers under the EU schemes across hosting entities, 2015-18



Source: NAIR.

Hosting entities are responsible for the asylum seeker's integration along five dimensions: housing, health, language training, education, and work. Hosting entities provide for housing and utilities, as well as a monthly allowance (see Section 2.4). They help asylum seekers enrol in the local health centres and the children in the local schools. In terms of support in learning the host country language and in integrating into the labour market, different hosting entities provide different forms and levels of support (see Section 4). The programme is financed by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The hosting entity receives a €6 000 lump sum for each asylum seeker for the total duration of the programme.

The match between the asylum seeker and the hosting entity is done by the ACM, through its Support Unit for the Integration of Refugees (*Núcleo de Apoio à Integração de Refugiados*, NAIR). In principle, the match takes into account the background of the asylum seekers in terms of whether they previously lived in an urban or rural area, as well as their education and previous occupation to find the most suitable hosting entity. However, in practice, the match had to be done based on the often-incomplete migrant profiles sent to the authorities before arrival.

Three months before the end of the 18 or 24 months programme, there is a *phasing out* of the integration programme. The responsibility of the integration of beneficiaries of international protection⁴ shifts from the hosting entity to the ISS, who will do the necessary social assistance follow-up through its local offices.

⁴ Currently, all asylum seekers in this group had received refugee status or subsidiary protection by the end of the 18/24 months programme.

Box 2.1. Key actors in the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees

The **Immigration and Border Services (SEF)**, an agency under the Ministry of the Interior, is responsible for processing and deciding on asylum requests. The SEF is also a member of the steering committee for the integration of spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees. The SEF communicates with the CPR whenever a new asylum request is filed, to ensure the asylum seeker benefits from CPR's legal advice and reception services. The SEF is also responsible for the travel of asylum seekers and refugees to Portugal in the context of relocation and resettlement.

The **Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR)** is a NGO created in the early 1990s. It is an operating partner of the UNHCR in Portugal. A main role of the CPR is to offer legal counselling to spontaneous asylum seekers. The CPR hosts asylum seekers in its reception centre upon their arrival in Portugal and provides first integration services. It is also a hosting entity in the EU schemes in partnership with municipalities, hosting almost one quarter of relocated asylum seekers. The CPR also plays a role in sensitisation of public opinion for issues linked to refugees (see Section 6), and is responsible for the Portuguese Asylum Information Database (AIDA) report coordinated by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

The **High Commission for Migration (ACM)** is the government body in charge of the integration of migrants. It runs the CNAIMs and CLAIMs, one-stop centres where migrants can access different services such as those provided by the SEF, the ISS, the Ministry of Education or the Authority for Working Conditions (see (OECD, 2008) or acm.gov.pt for more information). The ACM expanded all its integration services and programmes in 2016 to include also asylum seekers and refugees as target populations. Also in 2016, the ACM created a new division, the **Support Unit for the Integration of Refugees (NAIR)**, which coordinates the decentralised integration programme for asylum seekers under the EU schemes. In particular, the NAIR is responsible for the match between the asylum seekers and the hosting entities. It also does follow-up visits and collects data from the hosting entities. Furthermore, the NAIR organises regional meetings so that hosting entities can share best practices and meet with representatives of the key governmental institutions involved in refugee integration. Finally, part of ACM's mission is to contribute to the sensitisation of public opinion to immigration and refugee topics (see Section 6).

The **Institute for Social Security (ISS)** leads the steering committee on the reception and integration of spontaneous asylum seekers. It is responsible for the follow up on the integration of asylum seekers out of the Lisbon area through its local offices. It also follows up with asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status and subsidiary protection if they require social assistance. The ISS is also a member of the Working Group for the European Agenda for Migration, and is in charge of the phasing out period of the integration programme for asylum seekers under the EU schemes. This entails that the ISS meets with the participants of the integration programme in the last six months of the programme to determine whether they will need social assistance at the end of the programme and if so, to ensure the transition between programmes.

The **Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP)** is the Portuguese public institute in charge of the recognition of skills for technical, low- and medium-skilled professions, and of professional and vocational training. It is also responsible for

Portuguese language training through the programme “Portuguese for all” (Português Para Todos, PPT).

The **Refugee Support Platform (PAR)** is a platform of civil society organisations created in the fall of 2015 to help migrants seeking international protection. Over 300 institutions are members of PAR. These include NGOs, associations, foundations, universities, and schools among others. A main activity of PAR is the PAR-Famílias programme through which it hosted over one third of asylum seekers who came to Portugal in 2016-2017 through the EU schemes. Hosting entities members of PAR commit to providing support to relocated/resettled families along the same dimensions than other hosting entities (housing, health, education, language training and work). PAR entities commit to 24 months of support instead of the usual 18 months and they host exclusively families with children. The Portuguese Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is responsible for the coordination across entities of the PAR. The PAR also offers support to the hosting entities by organising meetings among hosting entities or through training. It also has an active role in the media to raise public awareness about refugee issues (see Section 6).

The **Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)** plays a part in several dimensions of the reception and integration of the different tracks of asylum seekers. The JRS is a founding member of the PAR. The JRS is in charge of coordinating and providing training to PAR hosting entities, as well as collecting data and monitor the integration process. The JRS also integrated the steering committee for the integration of spontaneous asylum seekers in 2014. In addition, it offers vocational and training advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers.

Hosting Entities throughout the country participate in the decentralised integration programme for asylum seekers under the EU schemes. The main actors are municipalities (stand-alone or through the PAR), NGOs and Foundations. The largest NGOs hosting asylum seekers were the CPR, the União das Misericórdias Portuguesas (UMP), and the Portuguese Red Cross (CVP). The UMP and the CVP are in a prime position to host asylum seekers in the decentralised programme. In fact, these two NGOs have a network of local offices spread throughout the country and make use of their existing programmes, resources and activities to complement the help given to asylum seekers.

The **Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa (SCML)** is the largest and oldest Portuguese charity. It is overseen by the Portuguese government. The SCML is in charge of the integration support to spontaneous asylum seekers who live in the Lisbon area.

2.4. First needs: health, accommodation and subsistence support

In Portugal, as in most OECD countries, asylum seekers have immediate access to healthcare, accommodation and subsistence support. Below we review some specificities of the reception of asylum seekers in Portugal with respect to these services.

2.4.1. Health

Asylum seekers and refugees have full access to the Portuguese National Health System and are exempted from payment of user fees. As in other OECD countries, the main barrier to health care is linguistic and in some cases cultural.

To overcome the language barrier, the ACM hired Arabic, Farsi and Tigrinya translators to its Telephone Translation Service (TTS). The TTS was created in 2006 and may be used on the spot if there is a translator available, or by pre-reserved appointment. Medical

providers may use the TTS but, contrarily to the Australian telephone-based translating and interpreting service, they do not benefit from a priority line.

Mental health is a specific and main health concern for asylum seekers and refugees. Nationwide, there is no special provision for mental health issues targeting asylum seekers and refugees. Some small-scale initiatives have been put in place in the last two years. For example, in Lisbon, at the Temporary Reception Centre for Refugees (*Centro de Acolhimento Temporário para Refugiados*), meeting with a psychologist is part of the reception routine. Meeting with a psychologist as part of the reception routine is an example of good practice in OECD countries as it allows for early screening for mental health problems - avoiding the escalation of untreated issues- and contributes to destigmatise mental health care.

How to provide such care in a decentralised setting remains a challenge. A recent initiative to tackle this issue was the establishment in 2016 of a protocol between the ACM and the Portuguese Psychologist Professional Order. This protocol has put in place a network of psychologists willing to support the ACM and hosting entities on a needs base in the context of the EU schemes.

2.4.2. Accommodation

In contrast to several other OECD countries, asylum seekers do not wait for the decision on their asylum request in reception centres. Spontaneous asylum seekers may stay in CPR's reception centre, CAR, while they wait for the decision on the admissibility of their request and the subsequent transfer of their process to the ISS or the SCML. The average length of stay is approximately 90 days. It takes on average 45 days for the SEF to reach a decision on the admissibility of the asylum request. However, it may take one additional month or more until the steering committee led by the ISS meets and decides on the tailored integration programme and the asylum seeker effectively leaves the reception centre and moves on to private accommodation.

The CAR has a capacity of 52 places. It has been highly oversubscribed in the last years. Throughout 2018, the CPR provided reception assistance to 1171 asylum seekers. Approximately one quarter of these were accommodated at the CAR, the other half being housed in alternative private accommodation, mainly in the municipality where the CAR is located (CPR, 2018). To solve the CAR's capacity constraint, a new CPR reception centre, CARII, opened in December 2018 with a capacity of 90 places.

Asylum seekers coming to Portugal through the EU schemes go directly to private housing that is arranged, and financed for the duration of the integration programme, by the hosting entity. An exception is the reception of asylum seekers hosted by the Lisbon Municipality. The Temporary Reception Centre for Refugees (*Centro de Acolhimento Temporário para Refugiados*) with a capacity of 26 places opened in February 2016 to provide transitory reception to relocated asylum seekers. In contrast, spontaneous asylum seekers need to find private accommodation themselves and pay for it from the subsistence support.

2.4.3. Subsistence support

Asylum seekers from the two humanitarian migration channels and at the different stages of the asylum process benefit from different financial and in-kind support. This adds to the complexity of the integration system in place.

The Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR) supports spontaneous asylum seekers upon arrival and before the Institute of Social Security (ISS) takes charge of their integration. In 2017,

the living allowance was 150€ per person and 50-75€ per child depending on the child's age. The CPR provides also for housing, second hand clothes, and food with the support of the NGO Food Bank (*Ajuda Alimentar*). Once spontaneous asylum seekers start their individual integration programme decided upon by the steering committee headed by the ISS, they are entitled to a different living allowance. The allowance is higher than that provided by the CPR (269€ for the household head, 202€ per additional adult, 75€ per child), however it is meant to cover all expenses, including housing.

The living allowance for asylum seekers under the EU schemes is similar to that of spontaneous asylum seekers while they are initially supported by the CPR (150€ for the household head, 107.5€ per additional adult, 75€ per child). Hosting entities provide also for housing, including utilities, and in many cases for in-kind help through local NGOs. For example, the Portuguese Red Cross uses its food and clothes banks to complement the support to the asylum seekers and refugees it hosts.

Once spontaneous asylum seekers receive international protection, they become entitled to the same benefits as nationals. For asylum seekers under the EU schemes, this transition occurs at the end of the 18-24 month integration programme, and not when they receive refugee status or subsidiary protection.

2.5. Structural and Administrative Challenges in the Integration Framework for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Given the multidimensionality of the integration process itself, it is not surprising that integration systems tend to be complex in all OECD countries. Portugal is no exception. In fact, some features of the integration system make it rather more complex than in most countries.

- A first key structural challenge relates to the co-existence of two parallel integration systems. Indeed, depending on the entry channel, individuals who are at the same stage of the asylum procedure face quite different material conditions and support in the different areas of integration. For example, spontaneous asylum seekers must wait until they receive the temporary residence permit (ARP) to be dispersed throughout the country, have access to private accommodation or benefit from the integration measures and follow up done by the ISS or the SCML. This may take up to three months (see Section 2.4.2). In contrast, the support is immediate for asylum seekers under the EU schemes.
- A second set of challenges relates to the decentralised approach implemented in Portugal in the EU schemes context. This raises two main issues: the coordination of all local stakeholders and the heavy reliance of the system on the civil society. In the current system, different hosting entities are providing integration services of rather different quality. Perhaps the most noticeable difference is between the Refugee Support Platform (PAR) and the other hosting entities. The PAR provides support for 24 months whereas other entities do so only for 18 months.
- In 2015, the Portuguese civil society responded in an unprecedented way in providing solutions to accommodate the surge in asylum seekers. Nevertheless, despite continued efforts to maintain the support of the civil society in the integration of refugees (see Section 7), the enthusiasm and mobilisation of the civil society cannot be taken for granted in the future.
- A final bottleneck and challenge relates to the asylum process itself. As in other countries, asylum seekers need to renew their temporary residence permit (ARP) after six months if a decision has not been reached on their asylum request. The following ARPs may have different durations. In practice, asylum seekers may need to renew their ARP several times. Bureaucratic difficulties when renewing documents emitted by the SEF, such as the ARP, have been reported (CPR, 2017; ACM, 2017). The renewal of ARPs is done at the local SEF offices and a wide heterogeneity in process duration across regional offices has been reported. Asylum seekers sometimes find themselves in a legal limbo while waiting for the renewal of their ARP. This affects their access to health care, employment, and subsistence support.

3. A Portrait of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Portugal

The asylum seekers who arrived in Portugal through the different humanitarian migration channels represent distinct populations in terms of country of origin and socio-demographic characteristics. In the rest of this section, we provide a portrait of recent asylum seekers in terms of their country of origin, and basic socio-demographic characteristics, namely age, gender and education, drawing on different data sources available (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. Data on Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Portugal

There is no comprehensive data source on the characteristics and labour market outcomes of asylum seekers nor refugees in Portugal. Several datasets managed by different stakeholders provide information, albeit limited, on the different groups of asylum seekers and refugees. These are the main data sources used throughout the report.

Eurostat data contains information on all asylum requests, by gender, age, and country of citizenship, as well as on decisions on international protection, provided by the Portuguese Immigration and Border Service (SEF). The data is not available disaggregated by humanitarian migration channel.

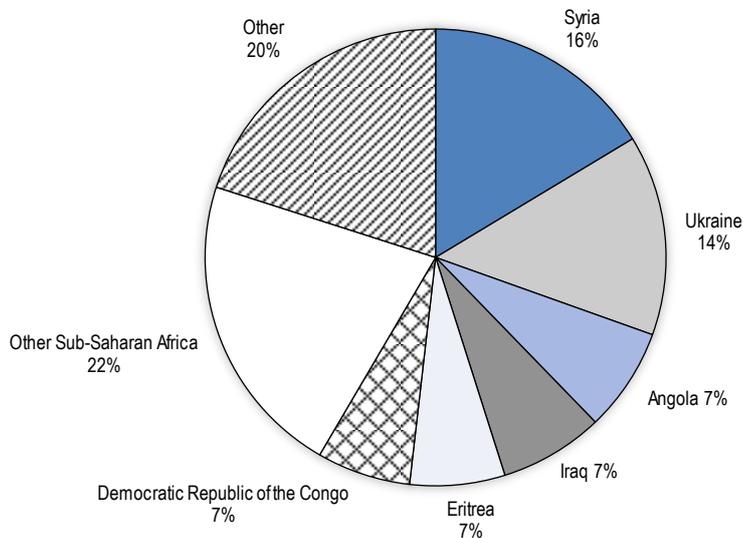
The High Commission for Migration (ACM) collects data from entities that host asylum seekers under the EU schemes. The data contains information on the characteristics of the asylum seekers and some information on their outcomes.

The Institute for Social Security (ISS) collects data on asylum seekers and refugees that it supports. These are spontaneous asylum seekers, asylum seekers under the EU schemes who have finished the integration programme and resettled refugees. Unfortunately, the information available is limited and is not disaggregated by status in the country, nor by humanitarian migration channel.

The Immigration and Border Service (SEF) collects data on asylum seekers under the EU schemes whom it cannot locate in Portugal, and as such are likely to have left the country. This information is not collected for spontaneous asylum seekers.

3.1. Country of origin

Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of countries of origin of all individuals who filed an asylum request in Portugal from 2015 to 2018. Syrians, Iraqis and Eritreans account for 30% of all asylum requests. Almost all individuals from these three countries came to Portugal through the EU schemes. Together, they represent 98% of the asylum seekers that entered through the EU schemes. On the other hand, spontaneous asylum requests mainly came from countries from which there is an immigrant community in Portugal, such as Ukraine or Angola.

Figure 3.1. Distribution of all asylum seekers by citizenship, 2015-18

Source: Eurostat (migr_asyappctza)

Not all asylum seekers have the same probability of being granted asylum, be it refugee status or subsidiary protection. 55% of decisions on asylum requests taken in 2015 to 2018 were positive. 71% of the positive decisions granted subsidiary protection and 29% granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention.

There are large disparities in the share of positive decisions depending on the country of citizenship. The rate of positive decisions was over 90% for requests from citizens of Syria, Iraq or Eritrea. The vast majority of these asylum requests were from asylum seekers under the EU schemes. 84 % of asylum seekers from Ukraine were also granted international protection, but only 7% of those from Democratic Republic of Congo and none from Angola.

The fact that most recently arrived asylum seekers, and in particular, most asylum seekers who are actually granted international protection, come from the same handful of countries implies that there is the potential for the development of immigrant networks. Consequently, the number of spontaneous asylum requests from these countries may also increase in the years ahead.

3.2. Age and gender

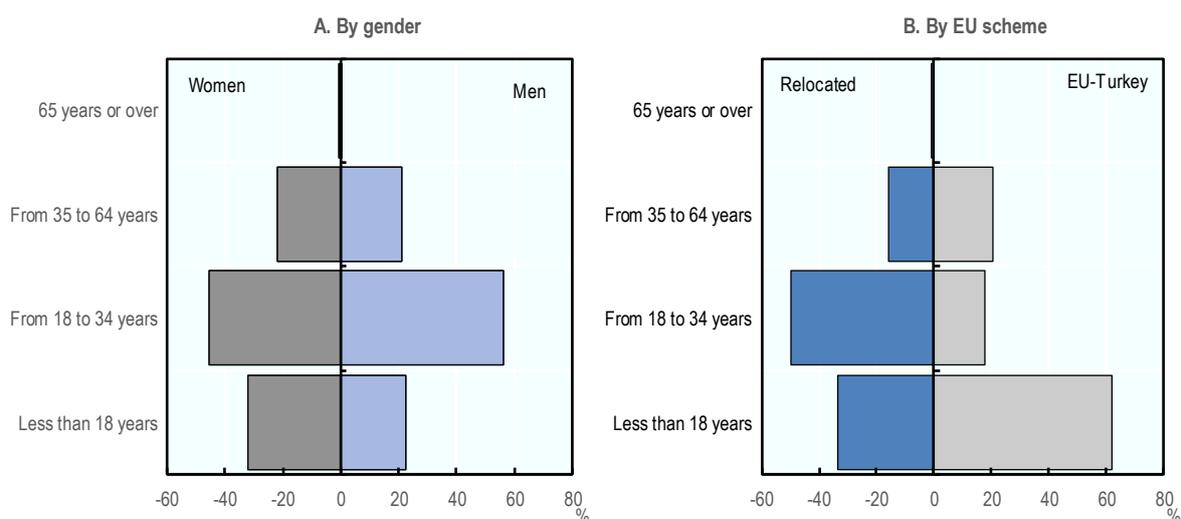
Figure 3.2 shows the age distribution by gender of all asylum seekers, and separately for asylum seekers under the EU schemes. Men represent 61% of all asylum seekers who arrived in Portugal in 2015-18. Men are over-represented among all age groups, but especially so among asylum seekers aged 18 to 34, where they represent 64% of the total. Half of all asylum seekers – 55% of men and 45% of women – are aged 18 to 34. Hence, one third of all asylum seekers who arrived in Portugal between 2015 and 2018 are men aged 18 to 34.

Individuals migrating alone, who tend to be young and male, drive the predominance of young men among asylum seekers. One in five relocated asylum seekers is migrating alone and 88% of those are men. The information on the share of spontaneous asylum seekers

who migrated alone is not available, and only families came to Portugal under the EU-Turkey agreement.

Differences in family composition explain the observed differences in age distribution across schemes (Figure 3.2, Panel B). Over 60% of EU-Turkey asylum seekers are children compared with one third of relocated asylum seekers. Families coming to Portugal under the EU-Turkey agreement are also larger than relocated families: an average of five versus four individuals per family.

Figure 3.2. Age distribution of all asylum seekers 2015-18



Source: Eurostat (asyappctza); NAIR

3.3. Educational attainment

Refugees are over-represented among the lowest educated in European OECD countries. In 2014, 40% of refugees in European OECD countries are estimated to have at most lower-secondary education, compared with 37% of non-EU immigrants, and 24% of natives (EC/OECD, 2016). This picture also holds in Portugal; indeed, the limited evidence suggests that many of Portugal's asylum seekers and refugees are low-educated.

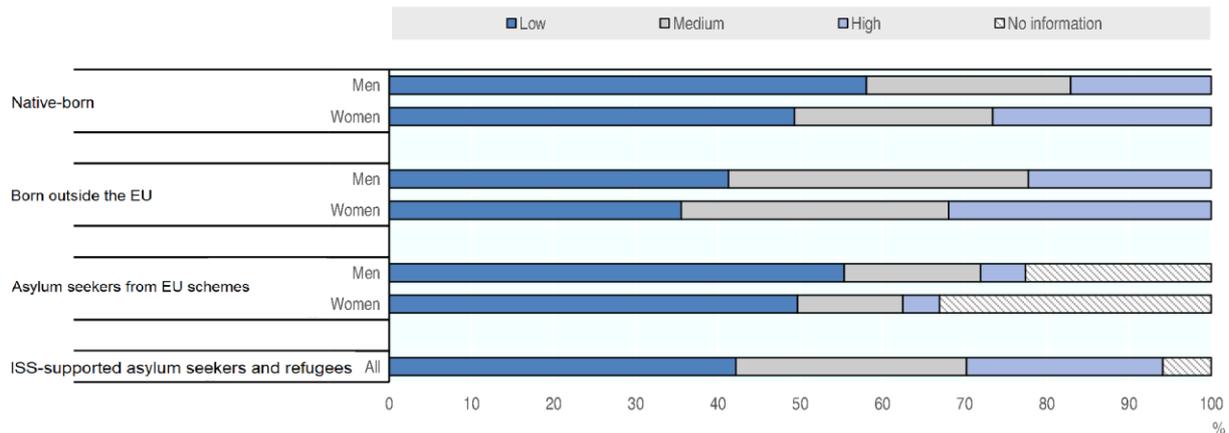
The educational attainment of the asylum seekers under the EU schemes is particularly low relative to natives and to other non-EU foreign-born individuals living in Portugal. Only 5% of asylum seekers from these schemes are reported to have some tertiary education, compared with 22% of natives and 28% of non-EU migrants (Figure 3.3). The gap is larger when considering natives aged 25 to 34, who are closer in age to asylum seekers. In fact, in 2017, 34% of natives of this age group had completed some form of tertiary education.⁵

There is no information available on the educational attainment of one quarter of asylum seekers under the EU schemes. These are mainly asylum seekers who left the country before the information on their demographic characteristics was collected (see Section 5).

⁵ Calculation made using the Labour Force Survey.

The educational attainment of spontaneous asylum seekers is significantly higher than that of the asylum seekers under the EU schemes. 24% of spontaneous asylum seekers have some tertiary education. This share is similar to that of all natives, but ten percentage points lower than that of natives aged 25-34.

Figure 3.3. The educational attainment of asylum seekers and refugees in Portugal, 2015-18



Source: (OECD, 2018); NAIR; ISS.

3.4. The geographical dispersion of asylum seekers and refugees

Asylum seekers are dispersed throughout the country, irrespective of the humanitarian migration track. As a result, they are less concentrated in Portugal than other immigrants, who tend to live in the metropolitan areas.

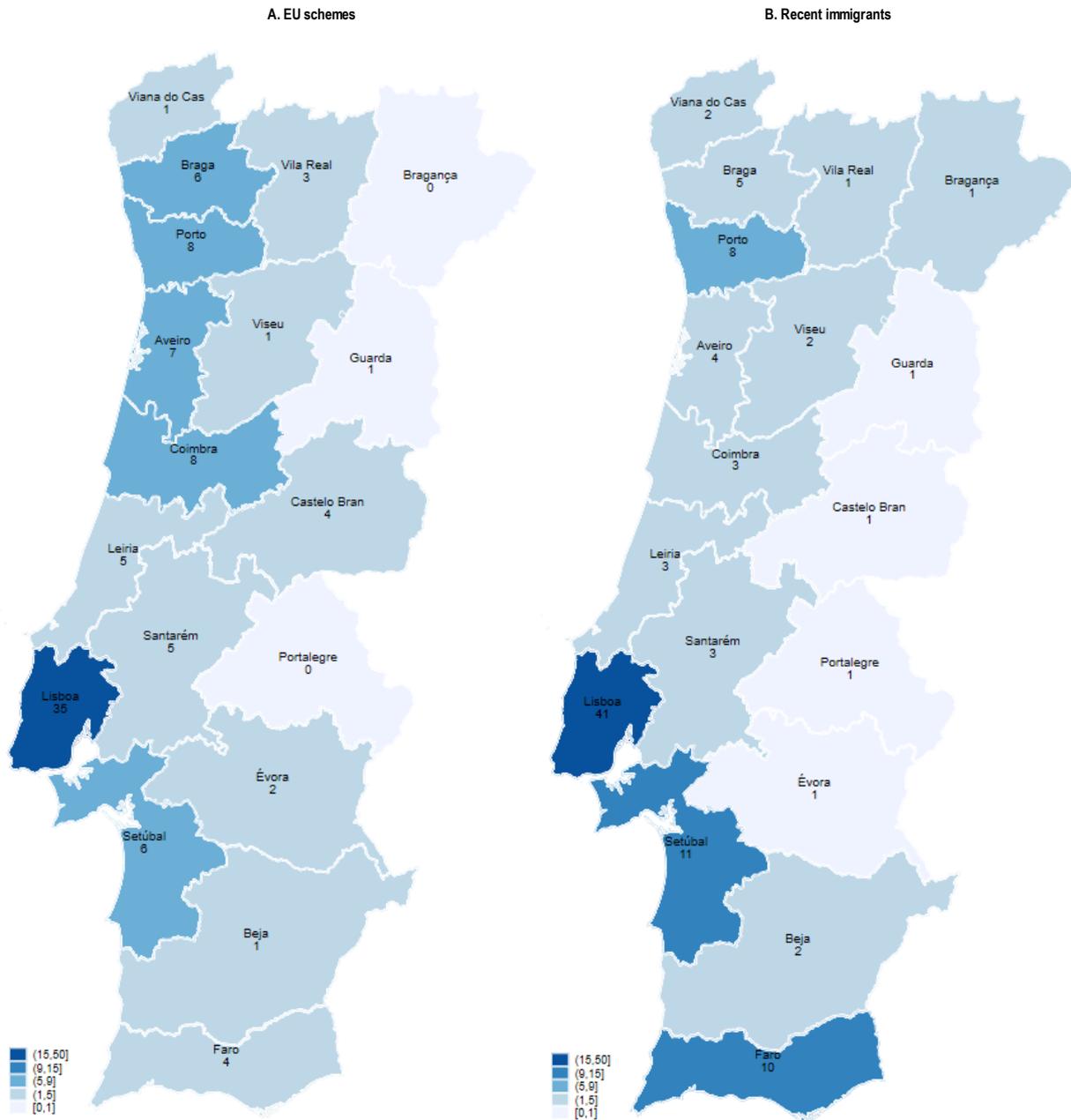
Figure 3.4 compares the initial distribution of asylum seekers under the EU schemes and of recent immigrants in Portugal across Portuguese districts. While 70% of recent immigrants live in four districts (Lisbon, Setúbal, Porto and Faro), only 53% of asylum seekers under the EU schemes were assigned to those districts.

The distribution of asylum seekers under the EU schemes may change over time in the host country. While asylum seekers under the EU schemes are unlikely to move within Portugal, a large share has left the country. The little evidence available on onwards migration indicates that asylum seekers leaving the country are over-represented among those placed in the least populated areas (see Section 5). Hence, the observed concentration in the more populated areas may increase over time.

The distribution of spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees across districts is not available at this stage. However, information provided by the Institute of Social Security (ISS) suggests that spontaneous asylum seekers may be more concentrated than asylum seekers under the EU schemes. Approximately 70% of asylum seekers and refugees supported by the ISS, who are mainly spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees, live in the districts of Lisbon, Santarém and Setúbal.⁶ This compares with 47% of asylum seekers under the EU schemes and 55% of recent immigrants.

⁶ A further 15% live in the districts of Aveiro, Coimbra, Viseu, Guarda, Castelo Branco and Leiria; 10% in Viana do Castelo, Vila Real, Bragança, Braga and Porto; 6% in Évora, Beja and Portalegre.

Figure 3.4. Distribution of EU asylum seekers and recent immigrants across Portuguese districts



Note: Recent immigrants are foreign-born individuals living in Portugal in 2011 who lived abroad in 2006. The numbers represent the share of migrants assigned to in the case of the EU schemes, or living in the case of recent immigrants, in the district. Note that shares may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Source: NAIR; Census 2011.

4. Integrating into the Labour Market

A successful integration into the host country labour market is key to economic self-sufficiency and a powerful driver of social integration. However, migrants, and refugees in particular, struggle in the labour market. For example, in 2014, the unemployment rate in the EU was estimated at 20% for refugees and 16% for other non-EU migrants compared with 10% for natives (EC/OECD 2016).

There are several lines of explanation for why refugees struggle in the host country labour market. First, refugees tend to be overrepresented among the lowest educated. In addition, transferring their skills to the host country labour market may be challenging because of differences between the origin and host country labour markets, difficulties in the recognition of qualifications, and lack of fluency in the host country language.

Second, upon arrival in the host country, all migrants need to learn to navigate the host country labour market and develop social networks, which are a prime way to find employment. This is often more difficult for refugees than for family or labour migrants since they generally do not have any prior links with the host country, nor established networks to rely on.

Finally, many refugees suffer from health problems, and in particular mental health problems, which hinder their labour market prospects.

4.1. Labour market outcomes: first results

The first asylum seekers under the EU schemes arrived in Portugal in December 2015. As labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees tends to take more time than for other migrant groups, it is still early to evaluate fully the integration of this recent wave of humanitarian migrants. To allow for a monitoring over time, ACM's Support Unit for the Integration of Refugees (NAIR) regularly collects information from the hosting entities about the employment of asylum seekers and refugees.

As of November 2018, 48% of asylum seekers and refugees of the EU relocation scheme aged 15 to 64 were either employed or in training. Unfortunately, the hosting entities do not report separately the numbers for employment and training. This makes it difficult to assess the success of the integration activities in place and to compare the outcomes with international evidence.

The Refugee Support Platform (PAR), which hosts approximately 40% of asylum seekers under the EU schemes arrived in 2015-17, collects outcomes from its hosting entities that are more detailed. In December 2017, 39% of adults hosted by the PAR were in employment. This is lower than that reported by the NAIR but excludes training.

The reported employment rates of asylum seekers and refugees is encouraging, particularly considering that the population in question had been in the host country for at most two and a half years. In comparison, the employment rate of refugees across the EU was estimated

in 2014 at 27% in the first five years after arrival and at 56% for all refugees irrespective of length of stay in the host country (EC/OECD, 2016).

Furthermore, asylum seekers under the EU schemes seem to find employment rather quickly after arrival. A snapshot of the employment rate of asylum seekers and refugees hosted by the PAR at the end of 2017, disaggregated by duration of stay in Portugal, shows that the employment rate was close to 40% for individuals with 6 to 12 months of residence, and 60% for individuals with between one and two years of residence. No asylum seekers in their first six months in Portugal were working (PAR, 2017).⁷

Since the integration process is still in its early stages and only little information is available on the labour market outcomes of refugees, several key questions remain presently unanswered.

First, there is no information on the quality of the jobs of asylum seekers and refugees. Career perspectives for refugees will depend on whether their educational and professional background matches the occupations they are working in, and whether they have the necessary skills to integrate sustainably into the Portuguese labour market.

Second, the aggregate employment rate may mask substantial heterogeneity in the labour market outcomes between men and women. Employment rates of refugee women are low in many OECD countries. The employment rate of refugee women was 17 percentage points lower than that of refugee men in European countries in 2014 (EC/OECD, 2016).

The labour market integration of refugee women remains a challenge in OECD countries, more so than for refugee men or other migrant women. In Portugal, the education level of refugee women arriving under the EU schemes is low (see Section 3) and most have no labour market experience. In fact, only one third of female asylum seekers under the EU schemes report to have worked outside of the household in the country of origin.⁸

Third, almost half of asylum seekers under the EU schemes have left Portugal (see Section 5). The evidence available on labour market integration is based on the asylum seekers and refugees who chose to remain in Portugal. If only the individuals with the best prospects in the Portuguese labour market stay in the country, then the employment rate, and other measures of labour market integration, will be biased upwards. Unfortunately, only anecdotal information is available on the individuals who leave, partly because in many cases, they leave soon after arrival, and thus it is impossible to gauge the magnitude and direction of the selection bias at play.

This section discussed only the labour market outcomes of asylum seekers and refugees under the EU schemes. Unfortunately, there is no available information on the labour market outcomes of spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees in Portugal. Given the difference in integration systems and in the composition of the refugee populations, one might expect the integration in the labour market to be different. Being able to compare the outcomes of the different refugee populations would be important to better analyse the weaknesses and strengths of the two integration programmes in place.

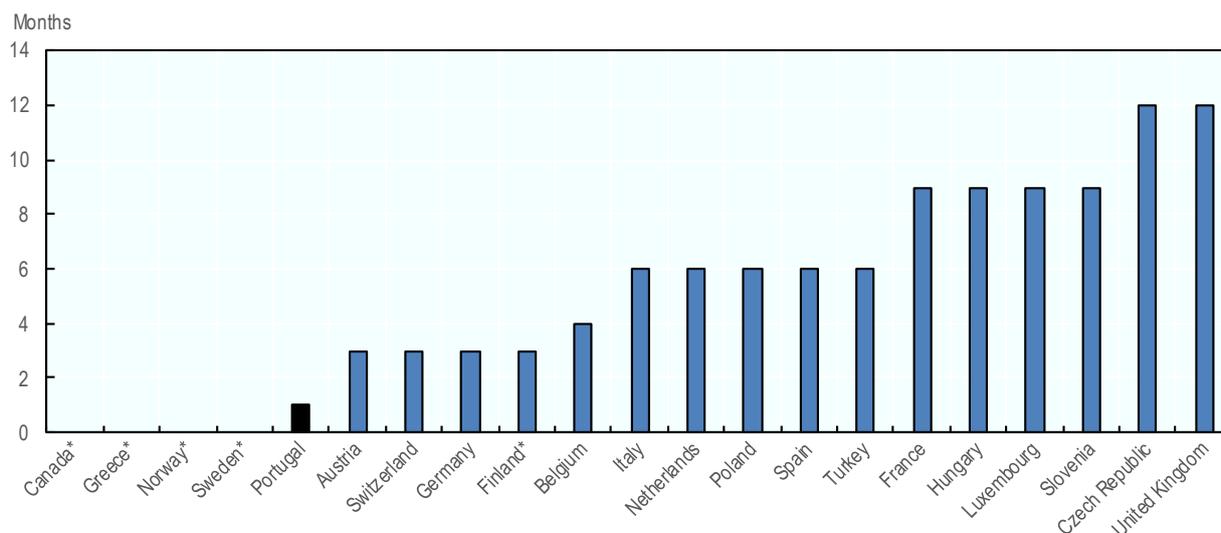
⁷ No similar information exists for all asylum seekers and refugees under the EU schemes. However, PAR hosted approximately 40% of the target population.

⁸ Calculation based on the occupational distribution of asylum seekers under the EU schemes provided by the NAIR.

4.2. Asylum seekers have full labour market access in Portugal

Asylum seekers have full access to the labour market in Portugal as soon as their asylum request is deemed admissible, that is at most one month after filing the asylum claim. Portugal is among the OECD countries in which asylum seekers have the earliest access to the labour market (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Most favourable waiting periods for accessing the labour market for asylum seekers in selected OECD countries



Note: * No waiting period

Source: OECD (2018b)

Contrarily to several other OECD countries, asylum seekers face no occupational nor sectoral restrictions. In addition, asylum seekers are free to move within Portugal as long as they notify the SEF of their change of address. In practice, geographical mobility remains difficult. In the context of the EU schemes, the individual may request to change hosting institutions in order to move to another location, in particular when he/she finds employment elsewhere. However, finding another hosting entity is difficult, especially in the short delays generally needed to take up employment. Given the strong support of the hosting entities in the integration programme (see also Section 2), the disincentives to move for work and leave the programme are strong.

Finally, the design of the 18/24 month integration programme for asylum seekers under the EU schemes aims at providing no financial disincentives to work. If asylum seekers or refugees find employment, they may continue receiving the full monthly allowance of the integration programme (150€ in 2016)⁹. If the wage earned is lower than the Portuguese minimum full-time monthly wage (530€ in 2016), the hosting entity has to continue to pay the monthly allowance. However, if the wage earned is higher, that is if the individual has a full-time job, then the hosting entity has some discretion on the use of funds. The programme rules state only that the allowances are to be used for the integration of the

⁹ The monthly allowance is 150€ for the head of the household, and 107.5€ for the remaining adults of the household.

household. The hosting entity may decide to continue the monthly payments or instead finance other integration measures not included in the baseline programme, such as driving lessons for example.

4.3. Main challenges in integrating into the labour market

The remainder of this section reviews the main challenges asylum seekers and refugees face in integrating into the labour market: learning the Portuguese language; getting their qualifications recognised and their skills validated; and navigating the Portuguese labour market to find job opportunities or to become self-employed.

4.3.1. Learning the host country language

Speaking the host-country language has been shown to be a strong predictor of a successful integration (cf. Chiswick and Miller, 2015 for a review of the literature). It allows the migrant to integrate into the labour market and the host country society at large.

The language training of refugees in Portugal represents a new and challenging situation for Portugal. There has been no immigration to Portugal from the countries of origin of recent asylum seekers. Hence, in 2015 when the EU relocation scheme started, there were few speakers and translators of Arabic in Portugal and none for some other languages spoken by refugees such as Tigrinya, which is spoken in Eritrea.

This is not to say that Portugal has no experience integrating non-native speaking immigrants. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, immigrants from Eastern Europe arriving in Portugal also spoke no Portuguese upon arrival and there was no history of immigration from Eastern European. However, this migration wave was mainly composed of labour migrants who benefited from immigrant networks and worked mainly with other immigrants who spoke the same language.

In contrast, most of the asylum seekers and refugees arrived in Portugal since 2015, have no network to rely on and no labour market attachment upon arrival. This makes language training all the more important.

Portugal is one of the OECD countries in which asylum seekers have access to Portuguese classes practically upon arrival. Spontaneous asylum seekers first have access to classes taught by volunteers at the CPR's reception centre. Once their asylum request is deemed admissible and they receive the temporary residence permit (ARP), they are entitled to Portuguese classes offered to all immigrants in Portugal by the IEFP through the programme *Português Para Todos* (PPT). There are no specific language classes for refugees.

Asylum seekers under the EU schemes often also have access to Portuguese classes organised by their hosting entity, in addition to their entitlement to the PPT. In fact, language training is part of the commitments of the hosting entity for the duration of the integration programme. The type of language training provided is left at the discretion of the hosting entity. In some cases, asylum seekers enrol in the PPT classes, and in other cases, they participate in non-formal training provided mainly by volunteers.

Participation in Portuguese classes of the PPT programme is voluntary and free. The courses follow the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and aim at level A2 (basic user) and B2 (independent user). Apart from that, the language offer is limited. There are some technical Portuguese courses available for the sectors of retail,

hospitality, beauty care, and civil construction, with a total duration of 25 hours, as well as a non-formal literacy programme targeted at individuals with little or no schooling.

The main difficulty is that all the PTT courses require a minimum of 12 participants to open a class. The programme is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the participation thresholds are part of the fund rules. In a decentralised integration framework with often only a handful of asylum seekers and refugees in a single municipality, this requirement implies that few asylum seekers and refugees can benefit from this programme, although actual figures on participation of this group are not available.

Several alternatives have been developed since 2016 to adapt language training to the demand for local classes. The ACM launched an online version of the PPT. The website is available also in English, Spanish, and Arabic. The ACM also developed a project named “Portuguese for Refugees” in collaboration with a Portuguese language learning social enterprise named SPEAK. SPEAK is a culture and language exchange group, whose aim is the local integration of newcomers in a city, be they immigrants or natives. Classes are taught by two volunteers and participation fees are relatively low (24,99€ for an 18h course) There are also frequent social events organised. The joint ACM-SPEAK programme waived fees for refugees and developed tailor-made content. The course is 30 hours, longer than the standard SPEAK courses. By the end of 2017, approximately 100 asylum seekers and refugees had participated in SPEAK classes (ACM, 2017).

In the current integration system, several challenges remain in the area of language training. First, in the EU schemes context, there is no monitoring of the quality of the classes across hosting entities. Many of these are non-formal education, which does not lead to certification.

A second concern is specific to spontaneous asylum seekers. While the CPR provides Portuguese classes early on, it is not clear how many asylum seekers follow up with language training once their cases are transferred to the ISS or the SCML. Asylum seekers are dispersed throughout the country and may find it challenging to access the PPT classes for the reasons mentioned above. There are no additional language programmes or initiatives targeted at spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees, and it is not clear whether spontaneous asylum seekers are being redirected to the alternative solutions put in place for asylum seekers under the EU schemes.

4.3.2. Recognition, validation and development of skills

The recognition of foreign qualifications is more difficult for refugees than for other migrants. Portugal has ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention that establishes the right to an assessment of higher education that was obtained in one of the signatory countries or is held by refugees. However, most origin countries of asylum seekers are not signatories of the convention. Furthermore, there is no established process in Portugal for the recognition of qualifications when migrants cannot present their original diplomas. This is a major limitation for refugees who in many cases do not have documents to prove their qualifications.

The difficulties in recognition of foreign credentials affects a larger share of spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees than asylum seekers and refugees arrived through the EU schemes so far, given their higher educational attainment (see Section 2). The low educational attainment of asylum seekers under the EU schemes does not mean that these individuals worked mainly in low-skilled occupations. In fact, according to data collected by the NAIR on the job titles of asylum seekers in the country of origin, approximately one

third of men who were working in the country of origin worked in skilled trades,¹⁰ such as tailor, mechanical, plumber, or barber. These are competencies in demand in Portugal – as in other OECD countries - and that can be assessed and certified without the need for formal qualifications.

Programmes for the Recognition of Prior Learning certify competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning, as is often the case for asylum seekers and refugees. In many OECD countries, such programmes exist but are not often used by immigrants, in particular not by refugees. For example, in France, the share of immigrants among participants in Recognition of Prior Learning programmes is estimated at less than 10% (OECD, 2017). In Portugal, there is a network of centres for the assessment of qualifications (*Centros Qualifica*). The network is run by the Portuguese Agency for Qualifications and Vocational Education (*Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional*), the branch of the IEFP that assesses and certifies competencies and provides bridging offers to finishing secondary school and vocational training. However, it seems that no refugees have participated in these programmes yet, for reasons that are not entirely clear.

One possible reason is the lack of proficiency in the host-country language by the candidates. To address this problem, several OECD countries have put in place systems to assess informal skills of refugees in their own language. This is the case of “MYSKILLS”, a computer-based skills identification test developed by the German public employment service to assess refugees’ informal skills; and of the “Fast Track” Swedish programme, which validates skills and provides bridging programmes for approximately 20 occupations with labour shortages in the refugees’ native languages (OECD/ UNHCR, 2018).

4.3.3. Matching asylum seekers and refugees with job opportunities ...

A large share of jobs in OECD countries are found through informal contacts and social networks. Refugees generally cannot rely on social networks to find a job, especially upon arrival in the host country. Supporting the match between employers and refugees is a necessary and potentially fruitful investment (see Box 4.1).

The fact that the integration of asylum seekers and refugees under the EU schemes is decentralised and based on the civil society mitigates the lack of pre-existing social networks. Whether and how the hosting entity actively supports the asylum seekers in their labour market integration varies widely, however. In some cases, the support is very direct: the hosting entity itself employs the asylum seekers, or engages with local employers to find jobs for the asylum seekers, sometimes even before their arrival.

Mentorships are another way to address the lack of social networks of refugees and provide help in navigating the host country labour market. To this end, the ACM has developed a “Mentors for Migrants” programme. This programme matches migrants with volunteer mentors who commit to support them with all aspects of daily life in Portugal, including finding a job. The commitment is for a minimum of three months and with meetings at least every other week. This programme was not designed for refugees but as all other general integration programs is open to asylum seekers and refugees. With the surge of asylum seekers in Europe 2015/16, there was a sharp increase in the enrolment of mentors, although

¹⁰ The share of workers in skilled trades was calculated by translating the job titles into the Canadian National Occupational Classification. One third of job titles correspond to skill level B, that is skilled trades.

participation of asylum seekers and refugees has been rather modest. As of April 2018, 19 refugees arrived under the EU schemes, all of them in the *phasing out* of the integration programme had participated in the mentorship programme. At this stage, there is no evaluation of the impact of this programme on the integration of refugees yet.

Also with the aim of facilitating the match between refugees and employers, in May 2018, the ACM launched “Refujobs”, a pilot online job search platform targeted at refugees, available in Portuguese, English and Arabic. On one side of the platform, employers can post ads for jobs or training. On the other side, refugees, and other users, can upload their CV. The platform aims to be a matching tool between the skills of the user profiles and the available jobs.

Hiring a refugee brings about more uncertainty for employers than hiring a native. First, in the case of asylum seekers, there is some uncertainty with respect to whether they will be granted international protection in Portugal, although this is less of an issue for those under the EU schemes since recognition rates are high. The temporary residence permit (ARP) states explicitly that asylum seekers have access to the labour market, but its validity is at most six months (see Section 2). Second, given that there are few refugees in Portugal, employers know little about the asylum process, the skills of refugees, or about how to integrate refugees into the workplace. This is particularly challenging for small and medium enterprises that do not have a human resources department, and these account for the vast majority of employment in Portugal. There are also no direct employment subsidies nor any other kind of support to encourage employers to hire refugees.

4.3.4. ... and promoting their self-employment

Immigrants are over-represented among the self-employed in Portugal as in several other OECD countries. Migrant entrepreneurship is supported through an ACM programme called “Promoting Migrant Entrepreneurship”, which exists since 2009. The programme consists in a 62h course in entrepreneurship, split into group classes and individual meetings to develop a business idea. A personalised follow up is done after the course is completed for the most promising business ideas. This programme was adapted to serve the needs of humanitarian migrants in 2016. The programme was offered twice in 2018 specifically targeted at asylum seekers and refugees and taught in Portuguese and Arabic. 15 asylum seekers and refugees participated in the first course offered in 2018.

Box 4.1. OECD-UNHCR action plan on “Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees”

Through a series of regional dialogues on “Employing Refugees”, the OECD and UNHCR have brought together employers and employer organisations to share lessons learned on how to promote refugee employment. Based on these consultations, the two international organisations have drawn up an action plan for employers, refugees, civil society and governments on Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees.

The plan has been further informed by subsequent consultations with refugees, governments, and civil society to validate the outcomes of the dialogues with employers and employer organisations. Released in April 2018, it is composed of 10 “action areas” identified as key to supporting the successful labour market integration of refugees. The action areas are illustrative of the process and issues faced by employers concerning the hiring of refugees. The Action Plan is structured as follows: As a starting point, employers must be in a position to navigate the administrative framework regarding work rights (Action 1) and have sufficient legal certainty on the length of stay of refugee workers (Action 2). Once these preconditions are met, the necessary first step in the labour market integration process is the initial assessment of refugees’ skills (Action 3). Some skills gaps may be identified in this process, and measures for re- and upskilling may be needed to increase refugee employability (Action 4). With this base, a proper matching can be done with employers’ skill needs (Action 5). For a fair recruitment process, equal opportunities are a precondition (Action 6), and the working environment must be prepared (Action 7). Enabling long-term employability requires specific attention (Action 8). To ensure that scalable models for refugee employment are sustained and championed by employers, building a real business case for employment is essential (Action 9). Finally, different stakeholders need to work effectively and efficiently together throughout the process (Action 10).

The Action Plan intends to inspire focused policy action and structural coordination among different stakeholders with the aim of facilitating the process of refugee employment for employers, governments, civil society actors and refugees, and thereby getting the most out of refugees’ skills to the benefit of all stakeholders.

Source: OECD (2018b)

5. The Challenge of Onwards Migration

Individual migration paths often involve several transit and destination countries. This is not exclusive to asylum seekers and refugees. Across OECD countries, it is estimated that one in five permanent immigrants leaves the host country within five years. While some return to the country of origin, others choose to migrate to a different host country.

Onwards migration of asylum seekers and refugees may represent a challenge for the host country along several dimensions. First, it represents a waste of scarce resources put into the integration of individuals who do not stay in the country. This is perhaps even more challenging in a decentralised setting, like the one in Portugal; since there are no economies of scale and individual hosting entities bare most of the cost.

Second, in the European context, asylum seekers who leave Portugal for another country may be sent back when they apply for asylum in another EU country following Dublin rules. The return of asylum seekers entails its own difficulties. The asylum seeker must restart the integration programme, having lost months of potential integration time. Hosting entities tend not to be enthusiastic to re-host migrants who have left, making for a more difficult relationship, which may hinder the integration process.

Third, onwards migration represents a public opinion challenge. Onwards migration statistics have attracted significant media coverage and are often interpreted as a failure of the integration system. Communicating efficiently on onwards migration is a communication challenge for the government.

In order to tackle these challenges, it is crucial to understand the drivers of onwards migration. Unfortunately, in Portugal as in most other OECD countries, little data is available that would allow to draw a comprehensive picture of onwards migration. In this section, we present the key statistics available on this topic.

Systematic accounting of onwards migration has been done in the context of the EU schemes. The statistics provided by SEF suggest significant onwards migration of asylum seekers arrived in Portugal through the EU schemes.¹¹ The share of asylum seekers under the EU schemes who at some point left Portugal was 54% until the end of 2017 (Table 5.1). This rate varies by country of citizenship. It is 70% for Iraqis, 56% for Eritreans and 50% for Syrians.

There is no such information available on spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees. Given the different contexts of the two main humanitarian migration tracks (spontaneous and EU schemes) and the different integration programmes in place, one may expect the two onwards migration rates to differ. Comparing onwards migration patterns of the two populations could be insightful into the selection of the two groups of migrants that arrive in Portugal, as well as into the strengths and weaknesses of the two integration programmes in place.

The reasons why migrants decide to leave a host country for another are disparate. While some decisions are taken before arrival (the migrant sees the host country as a transit country and not a destination country), others are the result of a re-optimisation process

¹¹ All SEF statistics on onwards migration presented are on individuals that the SEF cannot locate. They are not necessarily out of the country, although this is very likely to be the case.

(the migrant finds he/she can have better prospects in another country). The timing of the migration is a first insight into the determinants of onwards migration.

Table 5.1. Onwards migration rates 2016-17 EU schemes

		Percentages
Total		54
By citizenship	Syria	50
	Iraq	70
	Eritrea	56
By duration of stay in Portugal	1 month and under	46
	1 to 3 months	23
	Over 3 months	31
By program	Relocation	57
	EU-Turkey	20
By family status	Migrating alone	67
	Migrating as a family	51

Note: Calculations made using data provided by the SEF and the NAIR.

Source: SEF; NAIR.

Almost half of the asylum seekers who leave do so within one month after arrival in Portugal, and approximately 70% within the first three months in the country (Table 1). The quick departure after arrival suggests that, in most cases Portugal was not the intended final destination country. It also suggests that the high observed onwards migration rate is not primarily due to a failure of the integration programme in place.

A main reason why Portugal is not the intended destination of many of the relocated asylum seekers is that, contrarily to some other European OECD countries, there are no established immigrant communities of these origin countries in Portugal. Furthermore, despite pre-departure information provided by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there is a sense that migrants had no information on Portugal and on the reception conditions offered to humanitarian migrants.

Mid-2018, the SEF and the ACM started interviewing and meeting with refugees potentially to be resettled to Portugal from Egypt and Turkey.¹² Pre-departure interviews are a crucial step since it allows informing refugees about Portugal and ensuring their expectations are correct. This could be important in reducing onwards migration. It may also be useful in terms of collecting information on the individual profiles to ensure the best match with the hosting entities.

Disaggregating the onwards migration rate by programme (relocation and EU-Turkey agreement) shows that the onwards migration rate for EU-Turkey scheme asylum seekers was only 20% until the end of 2017, compared with 57% for relocated asylum seekers. The

¹² There were no pre-departure interviews conducted by Portuguese officials in the first wave of relocation and resettlement. However, PAR organised some missions to Greece to meet with asylum seekers before their departure to Portugal.

number of participants in the EU-Turkey schemes in Portugal is small and the programme is still recent -- 30% of the participants arrived in December 2017. Hence, data on the existing programmes for 2018 and on the new 2018-2019 resettlement programme will confirm, or not, the lower rate of onwards migration of resettled versus relocated migrants.

When comparing onwards migration rates of different migrant groups, one must take into account differences in composition. In particular, a potential main driver of differences in onwards migration rates is family composition. Individuals who migrate alone have a higher likelihood of moving on than families: 67% of relocated individuals migrating alone have left Portugal at some point after arrival, compared with 51% of those migrating as a family (Table 1). Given that only families were resettled from Turkey, this difference explains part of the observed difference in migration rates across the two EU schemes.

More generally, from a methodological standpoint, the relevant level of observation for onwards migration rates is the household. In fact, migration decisions are taken at the household level and it is this decision that policy makers aim to understand. The rates presented in Table 1 are at the individual level. If families of different sizes have similar propensities to migrate, this is not a problem. However, as illustrated above this is not the case for single migrants versus families, and likely not to be the case also for small families versus large families.

A question raised by the dispersal policy in place is whether asylum seekers who are assigned to less populated areas, which on average have fewer job opportunities and fewer immigrants, are more likely to leave the country. The Refugee Support Platform (PAR), which hosts approximately 40% of asylum seekers under the EU schemes, publishes numbers on onwards migration at the district level. What is more, given that the PAR hosts exclusively families with children, the statistics are available also at the household level.

In Portugal, the four districts that account for the highest shares of the population represent over half of the Portuguese population.¹³ Two thirds of families and 73% of individuals, hosted by the PAR were assigned to entities in these districts (PAR, 2017). The onwards migration of families in these four most populated districts was 44% at the end of 2017 compared with 60% for families assigned to the other districts.¹⁴ This difference in onwards migration rates does not show that the locations families were assigned to played a role in their decision to leave the country. It could be that families with the highest likelihood of leaving Portugal for other unrelated reasons were assigned to the least populated areas. It does imply however that the issue should be studied further.

¹³ The four districts are Lisbon, Porto, Setúbal and Braga, which account for 21%, 17%, 8% and 8% of the Portuguese population.

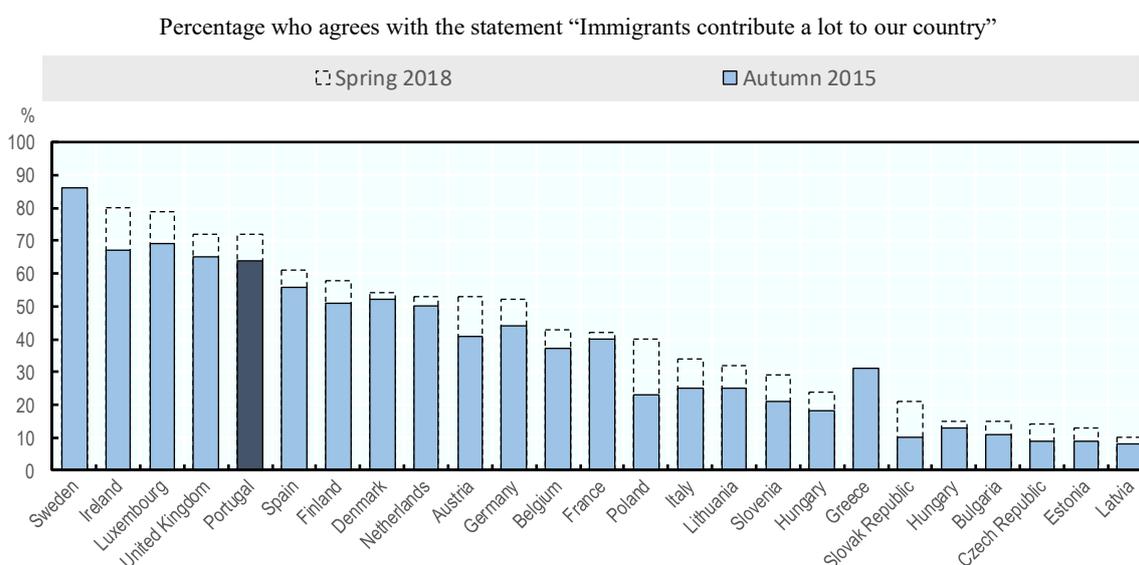
¹⁴ Calculation made using data in (PAR, 2017).

6. Ensuring the Continuing Support of the Civil Society

Before the 2015 *asylum crisis*, refugees were not a topic in the public debate. The surge in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Europe through the Mediterranean and the Balkans, and its media coverage, brought the topic of refugees into the spotlight in Portugal. As in several other European countries, there was a solidarity wave towards asylum seekers. This led to a mobilisation of the Portuguese civil society, and in particular to the creation of the Refugee Support Platform (PAR), which jointly with the government built an integration system to host relocated asylum seekers from Italy and Greece.

Thus far, refugees have not been a controversial political topic and there is a consensus among all major political parties on the willingness to welcome and host refugees. This consensus is built primarily on moral and ethical grounds, but also on a general perception that immigration is positive for the country in demographic and economic terms. Immigration and integration policies have been well developed in Portugal since the early 2000s and there is a wide political consensus on this topic. This positive view of immigration is reflected in public opinion surveys. Figure 6.1 shows the share of the population who agrees (tends to agree or strongly agrees) with the statement that immigrants contribute a lot to the host country. Portugal is the fourth EU country with the highest share of positive perceptions on the contribution of immigrants in the spring of 2018. A rank quasi-unchanged from 2015.

Figure 6.1. Perception of immigration in European OECD countries, 2015 and 2018



Note: Percentage of individuals who tends to agree, or strongly agree, with the statement.

Source: Eurobarometer (questions QD9.4_st89 and QD11.6_st84)

Portugal has a lot of experience with raising awareness towards immigration issues. It has been an important area of action of the High Commission for Migration (ACM). An example of ACM's early work on this field was the 2005 public-awareness campaign on immigration with the slogan "Immigrant Portugal. Tolerant Portugal." (*Portugal Imigrante. Portugal Tolerante.*) at the height of the early 2000s labour related immigration wave. The campaign included outdoor posters each with a photo of an immigrant represented in a specific occupation (health sector, construction, etc.) thanking him/her for his/her contribution.

Raising awareness towards refugee issues is part of the mission of several of the key stakeholders in the reception and integration of refugees, and in particular, of the ACM, the PAR, and the Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR). Since 2015, several awareness-raising campaigns were launched. In most cases, these were the result of a cooperation between governmental and non-governmental agencies. Three examples of such campaigns are pictured in Figure 6.2 and described in turn below.

The ACM produced a **Welcome kit** for relocated asylum seekers. The kit includes a welcome guide, which presents Portugal and explains the rights and duties of asylum seekers in the country; a dictionary with everyday expressions in five languages; a sim card; a map of Portugal; and an original drawing made by a Portuguese school age child on the topic of refugees; among others. The kit was distributed to asylum seekers under the EU schemes before departure to, and upon arrival in, Portugal. The kit served a practical purpose but it was also an important communication campaign. It sent a strong signal of a welcoming community to the asylum seekers themselves but also to the Portuguese population. As most other campaigns, the welcome kit was produced in cooperation with other governmental institutions (among which the Portuguese Border Services (SEF) and the Portuguese Tourism Office) as well as the media (the Portuguese Regulatory Authority for the Media and the main television channels).

In April 2016, PAR organised a public awareness campaign targeted at children in Portuguese schools with the title "**E se fosse eu? Fazer a mochila e partir**" (What if it were me? Packing a backpack and leaving). It asked children of approximately 600 schools to pack their backpacks as if they were refugees needing to flee their homes. The project "What's in my bag?" in which a photographer photographed the content of the bags of several refugees in Lesbos in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), inspired the campaign. The aim of the campaign was to develop empathy and to foster the discussion on the topic of refugees in schools. Targeting young children testifies of the long-term perspective of the awareness campaigns developed. As most other campaigns, it was organised in partnership with other institutions, in this case with the ACM, the Ministry of Education, and the National Youth Council (*Conselho Nacional da Juventude*). It counted with widespread political support with the participation of several Ministries and Secretary of States, as well as the President of the Republic.

At the height of the asylum crisis in October 2015, the PAR and the ACM released a magazine, titled *Refugees*, to put the asylum crisis in context and address the most common misperceptions about refugees. The magazine was distributed for free as a supplement in four newspapers and magazines with a wide readership in Portugal. This campaign was similar to a 2005 campaign in which the ACM released a free magazine, *Immigration: Myths and Facts*, distributed with one of the most widely read daily Portuguese newspapers. The magazine on Refugees was nevertheless targeted at a much wider audience.

The three campaigns described above were close to zero cost campaigns in terms of *realization*. It is not obvious how to measure the success of an individual campaign. A main difficulty is that the objectives of these campaigns were diverse (informing the Portuguese population on the asylum crisis, or informing refugees on their rights and duties) and some are difficult to measure such as developing empathy towards refugees.

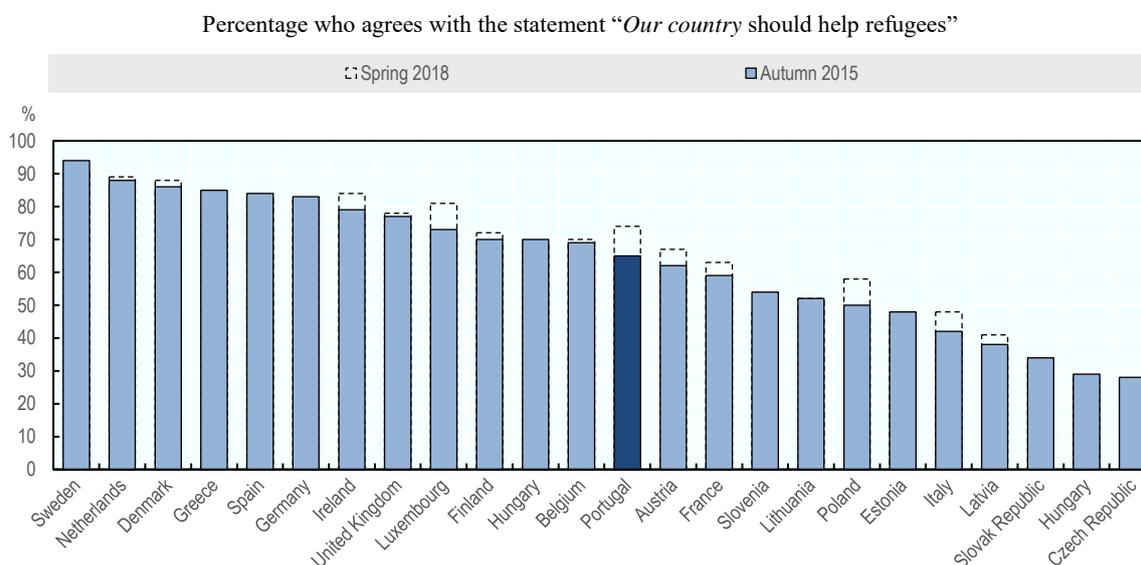
Figure 6.2. Pictures of selected awareness raising initiatives



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An indirect and imperfect way of measuring the attitude of the population towards refugees, and its changes over time is through public opinion surveys. Figure 6.3 shows the share of individuals who agree (tends to agree or strongly agrees) that the host country should help refugees. Portugal ranks 12th among EU countries in 2018 and ranked 15th in 2015. It had the largest increase in positive opinions among EU countries in these years.

Figure 6.3. Opinions regarding refugees in European OECD countries, 2015 and 2018

Note: Percentage of individuals who tend to agree, or strongly agree, with the statement.

Source: Eurobarometer QD9.1_st89 and QD11.3_st84.

The sustained effort in raising public awareness and sensitisation to immigration and refugee topics by the Portuguese key stakeholders in integration is an example of good practice among OECD countries. This effort will be particularly important in the coming years, since the country may be considered to be at a critical juncture. On the one hand, many actors in the government agencies and of the civic society have acquired experience in the integration of refugees since 2015. On the other hand, a very enthusiastic civil society is gradually confronted with some of the difficulties of refugee integration. In Portugal, as in several other OECD countries, this is complicated by the challenge of onwards migration (see Section 5).

7. Conclusion

The efforts of the Portuguese Authorities to develop a comprehensive system to relocate and facilitate the integration of asylum seekers, in challenging times for EU solidarity, need to be praised.

Looking ahead, the composition of asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Portugal will likely change in the coming years. The EU emergency schemes, which accounted for approximately half of all humanitarian intakes in Portugal in 2016-17, are now closed to new participants. However, Portugal's commitment to receive refugees continues. Portugal received 86 asylum seekers from rescue boats in 2018, is currently resettling recognised refugees under the new EU resettlement programme, and will continue receiving spontaneous asylum seekers.

Despite the phasing out of the EU schemes, the integration framework designed for its participants will stay in place for incoming resettled refugees. This implies that there will be continued differences in available integration support for beneficiaries of international protection, depending on their initial humanitarian migration channel.

High levels of onwards migration of asylum seekers under the EU schemes has represented a main challenge for the Portuguese authorities. In the years to come, onwards migration rates are expected to be lower given that resettled refugees are less likely to leave the host country than relocated asylum seekers. Moreover, there will be an opportunity to improve the match between the refugees and the hosting entities based on information on the profiles and expectations collected in pre-arrival interviews. Nevertheless, it will be important to expand the monitoring of onwards migration to all asylum seekers to understand the drivers of secondary movements.

The decentralised integration system put in place for the EU schemes relied on the participation of the civil society. Hosting entities bear the responsibility for the integration of the individual along the different integration dimensions. After an initial phase of enthusiasm of the civil society in 2015/16, ensuring its continuing participation is a challenge well understood by the Portuguese government.

Both integration systems currently in place imply the geographical dispersion not only of refugees but also of asylum seekers soon after arrival. In this respect, Portugal is similar to several other OECD countries that face the trade-offs brought about by dispersal policies. On the one hand, dispersing migrants across the country may facilitate the integration into local communities. On the other hand, living in low-density areas may make it harder for migrants to find jobs and develop immigrant networks, and prevents the realization of economies of scale in the provision of integration services.

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