

## **Migrant Labour Market Integration Individual Level Barriers and Enablers: in Short Policy Lessons from the SIRIUS Research Project**

**Research topic:** The main purpose of WP6 is to understand nuances and dynamics of labour market integration (LMI) from the insider (Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers--MRAs') perspective and it has the three following objectives: to analyse MRAs' insights into barriers and enablers of LMI; to analyse the difference/similarity between the official knowledge about LMI and the MRAs' experiences on the ground; and to create a comprehensive narrative of LMI that would present the findings to wider, non-academic audiences.

**Research data:** The research presents findings from a four-month long process of field work of interviews with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. We have conducted 100 semi-structured narrative-biographic interviews with post-2014 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in 7 countries, namely: 16 interviews in Greece; 10 in Italy; 11 in Switzerland, Finland and the UK each; 14 in the Czech Republic; and 27 in Denmark.

**Findings:** Our findings reveal that there are various combinations of personal agency and capacity at play, with contextual opportunities acting as both enablers of and barriers for migrant agency. Some migrants react to change by rejecting the contextual requirements of the country of settlement, while others may be more persistent in their integration efforts. The mode of migrants' agency depends on their agency resilience, which they have learned and mastered through their crucial events and epiphanies, through sometimes rather hard life experiences that underpin their non-linear migration paths. The reasons for emigration can be related to the overall socio-economic and political conditions in the country of origin or to more personal issues. Such decisions can emerge as an outcome of the autonomous process of reflection about life and life-chances. Alternatively, the person may experience the pressure of other actors involved (which is a typical case in migrant trafficking). Sometimes there is a mix of both paths in migrants' emigration histories where self-made decision mixes up with a proactive external push.

**Recommendations:** The critical analysis of the needs of migrants and refugees suggests several policy implications. In the WP6 report we further discuss the adequacy of LMI alongside the six following dimensions: (1) administration services, (2) language provision, (3) public discourse, (4) labour market integration, (5) social and health care provision and schooling, and, finally, dealing with (6) the dark sides of employment related to working conditions and contracts.

Migrants identify the following needs useful to understand the policy work: better matching of educational training with market skill demands; to enhance MRAs freedom to engage in educational training of choice at the appropriate level; to recognise MRAs educational qualifications obtained in countries of origin; the need of transparent and fair labour market practices and as recruitment norms; a system that allows de facto equal and fair valuation of MRAs labour market capacity and a national database.