

Flight to Europe

REPORT by Karl Brenke

Distribution of refugees very uneven among EU member states — even when accounting for economic strength and total population

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INTERVIEW with Karl Brenke

»Germany particularly affected by current influx of refugees«

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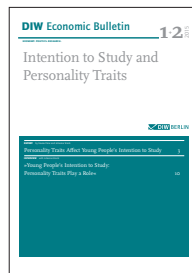
Press office

Renate Bogdanovic
Tel. +49-30-89789-249
presse@diw.de

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NEXT ISSUE OF DIW ECONOMIC BULLETIN

Gender quota

Distribution of refugees very uneven among EU member states — even when accounting for economic strength and total population

By Karl Brenke

The European Union is currently experiencing its largest influx of asylum seekers in years. Yet the distribution of these refugees across the member states is highly uneven: Large countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Spain, as well as the Eastern European countries (apart from Hungary), have received relatively few asylum seekers. Far more refugees are headed to Central Europe, Sweden, and the small countries on the outskirts of the EU (Malta, Cyprus, and Bulgaria).

Germany is likewise receiving an above-average number of asylum seekers: Assuming a uniform distribution across all EU countries, Germany receives three times as many in relation to its total population, and twice as many in relation to its economic strength. And now, as some of the member states are beginning to enact more restrictive refugee policies, this geographic concentration of asylum seekers is expected to increase even more. There is therefore an urgent need for the EU Member States to agree on a more uniform — and thus more fair — distribution of the refugees.

In Germany, 37 percent of asylum seekers were granted protection status upon completing the asylum procedure in the first seven months of 2015. According to available data, however, the integration of these refugees into the German labor market has presented numerous difficulties. The number of unemployed individuals — which was initially low — has increased among the members of the most frequently represented refugee nationalities. Among all Syrians living in Germany with a residence permit, for example, there are more unemployed individuals than there are social security-paying employed individuals. The ratio is only slightly better for people from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Eritrea. Accordingly, the proportion of Hartz IV benefits recipients among these groups is high. It is assumed that these problems are significantly mitigated the longer the recognized refugees remain in Germany and the greater command they have over the German language. The study of German should therefore be better supported.

Germany is currently experiencing a major influx of asylum seekers (Box). Authorities responsible for processing asylum applications are vigorously increasing their headcount,¹ and municipalities are substantially in need of additional resources and staff in order to accommodate and care for the applicants.² The Federal Government recently decided to define additional Balkan countries as “safe countries of origin,” which means that individuals from these countries would generally not be entitled to an asylum procedure. In November of last year, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Serbia were given this status.³

This report presents the development of asylum seeking in the EU, and aims to give an overview of the integration of recognized asylum seekers into the German labor market. Primary data foundation is the information on asylum applications sourced from the database of Eurostat, the EU’s statistical office. These data are based on reports by the authorities in each member state that are responsible for asylum-related issues. The number of asylum applications is roughly equivalent to the number of asylum seekers.⁴ In this report, no distinction is made between first-time and follow-up applications, because both cases deal with asylum seeking in general — and it is irrelevant to this study whether a rejected applicant, for instance, applies again at another time (for example, after a previous departure) or in another country.⁵ In addition to the Eurostat data, the

¹ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2015): *Bundesamt stellt neues Personal ein*. Press release from August 3.

² For an example, see: Küpper, M. (2015): *Berlin, wir flüchten nach Berlin*. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, August 11.

³ Until November 2014, the influx of refugees from Serbia had been increasing for months — following the ruling it declined significantly, but did not come to a standstill. Far less great in the last year was the number of incoming asylum seekers from Macedonia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina: During the course of the year, there was no increase; but even this year, people of these nationalities still applied for asylum. Another 4,400 asylum seekers from all of these groups came in June.

⁴ Accordingly, Eurostat accounts for the statistical information on asylum applications under the category “asylum seekers.”

⁵ It is unclear, however, how the statistics account for individuals who apply for asylum in several different countries at the same time.

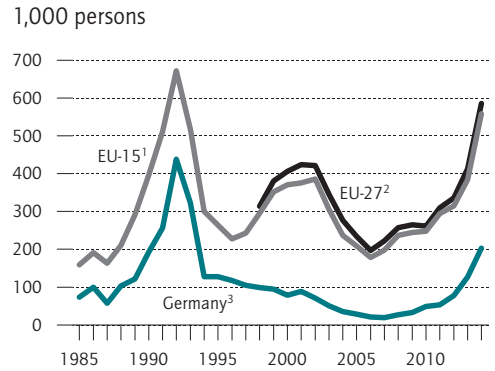
Box

Glossary

Asylum seekers or asylum applicants are individuals who have made an application for asylum that has not yet been decided upon. *Recognized refugees* are granted protection after the asylum process due to different legal regulations – unlike *tolerated persons*, who are encouraged to leave Germany voluntary or risk being deported. After three months in Germany, both asylum seekers and tolerated persons are permitted to work as long as they have been granted a work permit by the competent authorities (foreign offices and institutions of the labor administration). This is a discretionary decision made by the authorities. For recognized refugees, the labor market is open without this restriction.

Figure 1

Entries of asylum seekers in the EU and Germany



1 EU until 2003.
 2 EU with accession countries of 2004 and 2007.
 3 Until 1991 "old" Federal Republic.

Sources: Eurostat; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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data from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and the Federal Employment Agency also serve as a basis for this study.

Unequal distribution of asylum seekers within the EU on the rise again

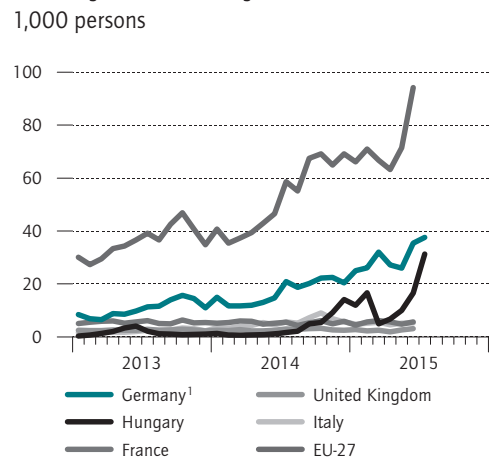
Since the mid-1980s, the entire EU has been registering all asylum seekers upon arrival. Since then, there have been three significant waves of migration: in the early 1990s; at the turn of the millennium; and from approximately 2010 onward (Figure 1). The first and second waves subsided rapidly, but the third wave has persisted. The monthly EU-wide statistics available through April of this year indicate a very high level of stagnation compared to previous years (Figure 2).

Asylum seekers are distributed very unevenly among the Member States.⁶ Using relevant concentration measurements, it can be shown to what extent the actual distribution of asylum seekers deviates from a hypothetical uniform distribution based on the population of each country; for this study, the Hoover index⁷ is used.

Until the early 1990s, the reception of asylum seekers was very unevenly distributed throughout the EU, which at the time comprised only 15 countries (Figure 3). The first wave of migration further increased the al-

Figure 2

Monthly entries of asylum seekers



1 For Germany the asylum applications of the last months do not show the whole size of entries because not all applications had yet been recorded in the official registries.

Sources: Eurostat; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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ready high concentrations. Following this, there was a significant decrease in the unequal distribution, and the concentration did not increase again during the second wave of migration. But now with the third wave it is increasing once again, even if it is nowhere near the extreme concentration of the early 1990s. Strikingly, the uneven distribution within the enlarged EU (EU-27) is more pronounced than it was within the earlier, 15-member EU.

6 Croatia was excluded in the examination of the distribution of asylum seekers over time, as it has only been reporting on asylum applications since 2014.

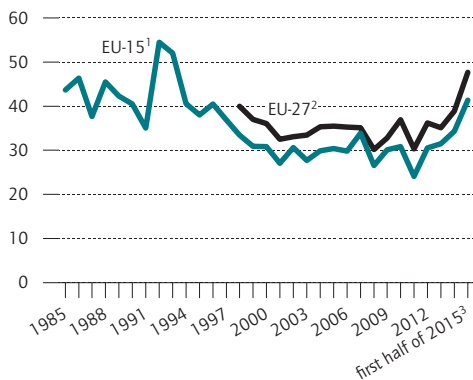
7 The Hoover index has a value of 0 in the case of total equal distribution and 1 in the case of maximum inequality.

Figure 3

Concentration of asylum seekers across countries of the EU

Hoover index of concentration—in relation to the population of the countries

... percent of asylum seekers would have to be redistributed to reach a uniform distribution



1 EU until 2003, Germany until 1991 "old" Federal Republic.
 2 EU with accession countries of 2004 and 2007.
 3 In relation to the population of 2014.

Sources: Eurostat; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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Germany receives an above-average number of refugees

For the first wave of asylum seekers, Germany served as a focal point: In 1992, the country received 440,000 asylum applications, well over half of all those submitted throughout the entire EU. At the time, migrants were coming primarily from the recently collapsed Eastern Bloc. During the second wave, when asylum was increasingly being sought in connection with the Iraq war and the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Germany was less involved. Now, during the third wave, Germany is once again playing a significantly greater role: According to the currently available monthly figures, numbers are emerging that could far surpass those from 1992. For example, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF, *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*) is expecting a total of 800,000 asylum seekers this year.⁸ From January until July, 216,000 new asylum applications were registered; but the actual number of accepted asylum seekers stands at 309,000⁹—and the number of admissions has been increasing significantly with every passing month.

8 Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2015): *Prognoseschreiben zur Zahl der im Verteilungssystem EASY registrierten Personen nach §44 Abs. AsylVfG.*
 9 Federal Office for Migration and Refugees: *Prognoseschreiben zur Zahl der im Verteilungssystem EASY registrierten Personen nach §44 Abs. AsylVfG.*

Relative to their total populations, 11 of the 28 EU member states have accepted above-average numbers of asylum applicants over the past year (Table 1). Sweden received 85 percent more asylum seekers than it would have in an equal distribution scenario; Hungary, 71 percent more; and Austria and Malta, over 60 percent more each. Germany accepted over 50 percent more in 2014. Above-average numbers of asylum seekers also migrated to the Benelux countries, as well as to Bulgaria and Cyprus. In contrast, nearly all Eastern European countries and most of the Southern European countries (Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal) received relatively few asylum seekers. This was also the case for some of the larger countries, such as France and the United Kingdom.

Little changed in this situation during the first four months of 2015. Hungary, Sweden, Malta, Austria, and Germany continued to receive far more applicants than they would in an equal distribution scenario. The Southern European countries—with the exception of the small states—would have to accept considerably more asylum seekers. The same is true for nearly all Eastern European EU countries and—even more so than was the case last year—for France and the United Kingdom. Worth noting is that Denmark now has relatively few asylum seekers as a result of a more restrictive asylum policy; a similar change can be observed in the Netherlands.

Another way of measuring the distribution of asylum seekers across the EU member states is to use economic performance (gross domestic product) instead of total population as the reference base. From this perspective, the pronounced unequal distribution remains basically the same. For one example, an especially large number of asylum seekers are heading for economically depressed Bulgaria. Based on economic performance, crisis-ridden Greece would need to take in somewhat fewer asylum seekers, and Luxembourg would have to take in significantly more. Apart from Hungary, the Eastern European countries also receive relatively few asylum seekers relative to economic performance—and the same holds true for large EU like countries France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain. Germany, Sweden, Austria, and Cyprus, however, recorded twice as many asylum-seekers in the first few months of this year as they would have in an equal distribution based on economic performance. Even higher values have turned up for Malta and Hungary.

Asylum seekers choose destination countries that are already populated by their fellow citizens

The countries of origin for most EU asylum seekers fall into four groups: several Balkan countries; Sub-Saharan

Table 1

New asylum seekers assuming a uniform distribution across EU countries

	2014					First half of 2015				
	Actual number of asylum seekers	Change necessary to reach a uniform distribution according to population ¹		Change necessary to reach a uniform distribution according to GDP		Actual number of asylum seekers	Change necessary to reach a uniform distribution according to population ¹		Change necessary to reach a uniform distribution according to GDP	
	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	percent	1,000 persons	percent	1,000 persons	1,000 persons	percent	1,000 persons	percent
Hungary	42.8	-30.6	-71	-38.1	-89	66.8	-58.4	-87	-63.7	-95
Austria	28.1	-17.5	-63	-13.3	-47	28.3	-21.1	-74	-18.5	-65
Sweden	81.3	-69.4	-85	-62.0	-76	29.0	-20.8	-72	-15.8	-54
Germany	202.8	-102.9	-51	-72.2	-36	171.8	-102.8	-60	-82.3	-48
Malta	1.4	-0.8	-61	-1.0	-74	0.8	-0.4	-55	-0.6	-70
Cyprus	1.7	-0.7	-39	-1.0	-55	0.9	-0.2	-20	-0.4	-43
Belgium	22.9	-9.0	-39	-4.8	-21	11.7	-2.2	-18	0.5	4
Luxemburg	1.2	-0.5	-41	1.1	93	0.6	-0.1	-18	1.0	173
Bulgaria	11.1	-2.1	-19	-9.2	-83	7.3	-1.1	-16	-6.1	-84
Denmark	14.7	-7.8	-53	-3.1	-21	4.1	0.7	18	3.8	94
Netherlands	24.5	-3.7	-15	5.3	22	9.7	4.6	47	10.5	108
Greece	9.4	4.0	43	-1.4	-15	6.2	3.1	49	-1.1	-17
Italy	64.6	10.5	16	8.1	13	30.5	21.3	70	17.8	58
France	64.3	17.1	27	31.6	49	32.2	24.0	75	33.3	104
Finland	3.6	3.1	86	5.6	155	2.6	2.0	78	3.5	134
Ireland	1.5	4.2	293	6.9	475	1.5	2.5	166	4.7	316
United Kingdom	31.9	47.6	149	68.1	213	15.1	39.8	263	60.6	401
Spain	5.6	51.9	924	42.0	748	6.7	33.0	497	26.0	390
Poland	8.0	39.0	486	10.6	132	4.1	28.3	686	8.3	201
Estonia	0.2	1.5	950	0.7	467	0.1	1.0	877	0.5	422
Latvia	0.4	2.1	560	0.7	189	0.2	1.6	1,002	0.6	356
Czech Republic	1.2	11.8	1,025	5.8	503	0.8	8.2	1,050	4.0	507
Slowenia	0.4	2.2	562	1.3	335	0.1	1.7	1,659	1.0	1,035
Lithuania	0.4	3.2	727	1.2	271	0.1	2.4	1,761	0.9	684
Portugal	0.4	12.4	2,798	7.3	1,649	0.4	8.5	1,970	4.8	1,125
Romania	1.5	23.1	1,496	5.2	337	0.7	16.3	2,216	3.4	463
Croatia	0.5	4.8	1,067	1.5	331	0.1	3.5	3,525	1.2	1,156
Slovakia	0.3	6.4	1,929	3.1	925	0.1	4.5	4,303	2.1	2,035

Countries ordered by percent change in 2014 (according to population).

¹ Population at the beginning of 2014.

Sources: Eurostat; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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African countries; Eastern European countries such as Russia and Ukraine; and, most of all, Middle Eastern countries affected by war or volatile political situations (Table 2). Foremost among the last-mentioned group are refugees from Syria.

Asylum seekers from Eastern Europe as well as from Afghanistan and Pakistan are distributed relatively broadly across the EU. This can be demonstrated using the Herfindahl index, in which the total population and economic power of individual EU member states are removed, and only the concentration of refugees is measured. Somewhat stronger is the geographical concentration among Syrians, although it has recently been in decline. In 2014, Germany received a relatively large

proportion — one-third — of all Syrian asylum seekers.

¹⁰ An increase in the concentration within the individual EU member states can be seen for asylum seekers from Iraq as well as Eritrea, Albania, and, above all, Serbia. For all of these migrant groups, Germany was the most prominent destination country last year. Serbs had the highest concentration, with a Herfindahl index of roughly 0.78 for 2014. Nearly 90 percent of asylum-seeking Serbs immigrated to Germany. Fifty percent of

¹⁰ The proportion of Germany's population relative to that of the entire European Union (EU-28) amounts to 16 percent.

Table 2

Concentration¹ of new asylum seekers across EU countries², 2010 and 2014

	Number of asylum seekers 2014	Concentration of asylum seekers across EU countries Herfindahl index		EU country with the highest share of asylum seekers of the particular nationality		Correlation between the distribution of the asylum seekers of the particular nationality across EU countries in 2010 and 2014 R ²
		2010	2014	Shares in percent		
				2010	2014	
Syria	122,115	0.214	0.197	Deutschland (40,6)	Deutschland (33,7)	0.84
Afghanistan	41,370	0.130	0.137	Deutschland (29,4)	Deutschland (23,4)	0.72
Kosovo	37,895	0.228	0.386	Frankreich (36,9)	Ungarn (56,6)	0.21
Eritrea	36,925	0.162	0.242	Schweden (32,3)	Deutschland (35,9)	0.80
Serbia	30,840	0.290	0.778	Deutschland (37,6)	Deutschland (88,0)	0.74
Pakistan	22,125	0.123	0.158	Griechenland (29,9)	Italien (32,3)	0.62
Iraq	21,310	0.192	0.232	Deutschland (38,8)	Deutschland (44,6)	0.97
Nigeria	19,970	0.087	0.306	Italien (20,4)	Italien (50,8)	0.78
Russia	19,815	0.177	0.185	Polen (25,8)	Deutschland (27,8)	0.83
Albania	16,825	0.219	0.278	Griechenland (36,0)	Deutschland (48,2)	0.26
Somalia	16,470	0.247	0.221	Schweden (39,5)	Deutschland (34,5)	0.75
Ukraine	14,050	0.085	0.114	Schweden (14,5)	Deutschland (19,3)	0.49

¹ Concentration measured by the Herfindahl index. In the present case with 27 EU countries the minimum of the Herfindahl index is $\frac{1}{27}$ (or 0.037); this would mean a perfectly uniform distribution across countries. The maximal value of the index is 1; this would mean concentration of all asylum seekers in one country.

² Without Croatia.

Sources: Eurostat; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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all Nigerian migrants head to Italy. A large group from Kosovo migrated to Hungary in 2014.¹¹

In general, target countries that received, in 2010, a relatively high number of asylum seekers representing a particular nationality also received a high number of such asylum seekers in 2014. This embodies the so-called „anchor effect“: Asylum seekers favor destination countries that have already been chosen by their fellow citizens. This correlation is apparent in nearly all major groups of asylum seekers. The only exceptions are refugees from Albania and Kosovo: Albanians are now coming most frequently to Germany instead of Greece, and Kosovars are migrating most frequently to Hungary instead of France.

Primarily young men are the ones seeking asylum

Little information is available on the social composition of asylum seekers: Apart from nationality, Eurostat records only the sex and age of the applicants. According to these data, it is primarily men who are seeking asylum: In the EU, men account for nearly three-quarters of all asylum seekers, and in Germany, for two-thirds

¹¹ This is the main reason for the high number of asylum seekers in Hungary. Apart from that, Hungary still receives relatively large numbers of migrants from Afghanistan.

(Table 3). The outstanding group among them comprises young men between 18 and 34 years old. This situation has barely changed in the past few years.¹² In Germany, the proportion of young male asylum seekers is not quite as large as it is in the entire EU, but the proportion of children among asylum seekers in Germany, at around one-eighth, is relatively high. Conspicuously, among these young asylum seekers (up to 17 years old) boys consistently make up a larger proportion than do girls. The reason behind this cannot be clarified using the available data.¹³ The proportion of asylum seekers older than 35 is low, especially among women.

Approximately one third of asylum seekers are allowed to remain in Germany

Only some asylum applications are approved. In the first seven months of 2015, this was the case in nearly one third of the concluded application processes in Germa-

¹² Reliable data for a breakdown according to age and sex for the entire EU are not available for 2010, because the corresponding data for the United Kingdom are missing.

¹³ Minors unaccompanied by parents or other adults also apply for asylum. Perhaps those responsible for them assume fewer risks on the way to their target country for boys than for girls. Perhaps the fact that boys are often forcibly recruited in their countries of origin – which should be prevented – also plays a role.

Table 3

New asylum seekers by sex and age
Shares in percent

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	first half of 2015
	Germany					
Men						
below 14 years	13.1	13.6	15.0	14.8	13.4	12.2
14 to 17 years	6.4	5.9	5.0	4.1	4.2	3.8
18 to 34 years	32.9	32.6	29.3	32.1	35.3	38.5
35 to 64 years	10.6	10.8	11.7	11.4	12.3	12.9
65 years and more	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
total	63.4	63.2	61.5	62.7	65.4	67.6
Women						
below 14 years	12.3	12.2	13.4	13.7	12.1	10.9
14 to 17 years	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.9
18 to 34 years	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.4	12.9	12.2
35 to 64 years	7.2	7.5	8.3	7.7	7.2	7.0
65 years and more	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
total	36.6	36.8	38.5	37.3	34.6	32.4
	EU without Germany¹					
Men						
below 14 years	10.1	8.6	9.7	9.6	8.4	8.1
14 to 17 years	4.9	4.6	5.0	4.3	5.5	7.0
18 to 34 years	37.8	43.6	38.9	40.3	44.5	46.8
35 to 64 years	12.9	12.5	13.1	13.7	13.9	12.4
65 years and more	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
total	65.9	69.7	67.0	68.3	72.7	74.7
Women						
below 14 years	9.3	7.9	9.0	8.7	7.4	6.9
14 to 17 years	1.9	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5
18 to 34 years	14.9	13.8	14.6	13.8	11.7	10.8
35 to 64 years	7.6	6.7	7.3	7.1	6.2	5.8
65 years and more	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4
total	34.1	30.3	33.0	31.7	27.3	25.3

¹ Until 2013 without Croatia.

Sources: Eurostat; calculations by DIW Berlin.

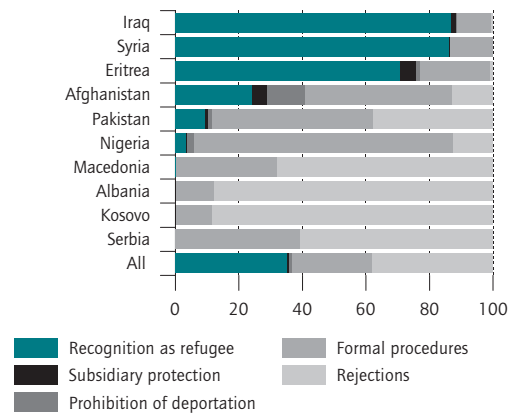
ny (Table 4);¹⁴ indeed, the application approval rate has risen by about 15 percentage points since 2010. A quarter of the decisions fell under the collective category of “formal procedures” which primarily include the withdrawal of asylum applications as well as the forwarding of asylum seekers to other EU member states within the framework of the so-called Dublin procedure.¹⁵ Around

14 The Eurostat data on asylum application decisions seem to be unreliable, as evidenced by a plausibility check using Germany as an example. For this reason, no international comparison was carried out.

15 Every time a person requests asylum in an EU member state, a verification is carried out to determine whether this country is actually responsible for the asylum seeker. For instance, if the person initially passed through another EU country, the country where asylum has been requested is not responsible and can in principle return the asylum seeker to the first country. For the latest on this topic, see: Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 26, 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for

Figure 4

Decisions on asylum applications in Germany by nationality from January to May 2015
Shares in percent



Sources: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; calculations by DIW Berlin.

one third of the applications processed between January and July 2015 were rejected.

Of the approved asylum applications, only a very small number fall under the rules of the Basic Law (German constitution), which grants protection from political persecution—provided that the asylum seekers have not crossed through a safe third country. Far more prevalent by now is the broader conception of refugee protection in accordance with § 3, Para. 1 of the Asylum Procedure Act (fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion). Of all the protections granted between January and July 2015, more than 90 percent fell under this category. Subsidiary protections for people who are not being persecuted, politically or otherwise, but are at risk for other reasons, have only minor prevalence. The number of people that fall under the prohibition of deportation (for example, because of danger to life and limb for certain ethnic and social groups in their country of origin) is not very significant, and has stagnated somewhat in recent years.

The proportion of accepted applications varies widely depending on the nationality of the asylum seekers. In 2014, this proportion was very high among refugees from Syria and Iraq (Figure 4). For Eritrean asylum seekers, it was slightly above average; in their case, subsidiary protection in the event of a rejection of refugee sta-

international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (revised edition).

tus took effect quite often. Afghans and Somalis, two other major refugee groups in Germany, are recognized as refugees to a lesser extent. Here, a “formal method” is often employed. Of the asylum seekers from the Balkan countries, almost no right to protection has been granted in recent years. This led to a policy debate on whether to label these states as safe countries of origin in order to reduce the influx of refugees, unburden the competent authorities in Germany, and thereby catalyze the process for other asylum seekers.

Difficult integration into the labor market

...

Although the number of protections granted in Germany is still relatively low, it is exhibiting a strong upward trend, which means that the question of how to integrate recognized refugees is becoming even more pressing. Integration into the labor market is of utmost importance, as it enables those who require protection to support themselves as independently as possible. However, there are no data that can reliably provide information on the extent to which recognized refugees were employed or unemployed over the past few years. Therefore the present study can only offer suggestions of potential answers to these questions based on available statistics.

For instance, the statistics on social security-paying employees is useful — despite methodological problems.¹⁶ ¹⁷ According to these data, the number of employees belonging to one of the nationalities of the major groups of asylum seekers has increased significantly in terms of percentage over the past few years. This is especially true for Somalis and Syrians; for Afghans and Eritreans, there was also a significant increase (Table 5). It is highly probable that it is the recognized refugees in particular who account for this growth.¹⁸ The absolute numbers for this employment growth are not large, however. For example, just 3,000 more Syrians, 1,300 more Afghans, 600 more Somalis, and 400 more Eritreans were employed in mid-2014 than in mid-2010. For Iraqis, there was no growth.

¹⁶ The primary flaw of these figures is that the data were subjected to a revision with regard to the nationality of the employees from 2013 onward, but not for years prior. For employees of non-German citizenship in particular, this may result in distortions, because in the unrevised data, there is the risk that higher values are reported. This can also lead to distortions in a time comparison. It can be assumed that the employment growth among foreigners appears better than it actually was.

¹⁷ Details on the nationalities of social security-paying employees are only available through June 2014.

¹⁸ The possibility of the legal immigration of highly skilled individuals by means of a so-called Blue Card is only used very infrequently. By the end of 2013, fewer than 10,000 of these cards had been approved.

Table 4

New asylum seekers and decisions on asylum applications in Germany

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Jan. to July 2015
	New asylum seekers					
Non-EU Balkan countries ¹	13,040	11,245	25,250	38,360	62,825	96,220
Non-EU eastern European countries ²	1,585	2,055	3,680	15,805	8,610	7,170
Middle East ³	19,145	23,590	29,550	35,655	71,655	68,065
<i>thereof</i>						
Syria	2,035	3,435	7,930	12,855	41,100	40,920
Iraq	5,945	6,210	5,675	4,195	9,495	10,255
Afghanistan	6,065	7,955	7,840	8,240	9,675	9,640
Northern Africa ⁴	1,075	1,830	1,920	5,620	6,485	4,510
Africa – Sub-Sahara	6,185	5,145	6,895	17,365	33,830	18,675
<i>thereof</i>						
Eritrea	660	650	670	3,640	13,255	4,570
Somalia	2,260	1,010	1,295	3,875	5,685	3,055
Nigeria	775	810	965	1,975	3,990	3,315
Selected regions altogether	41,030	43,865	67,295	112,805	183,405	194,640
Asylum seekers altogether	48,590	53,345	77,650	126,995	202,815	209,315
	Decisions on asylum applications					
All protection measures	10,395	9,675	17,140	20,128	40,563	50,018
Asylum according to Art. 16a GG	643	652	740	919	2,285	1,319
Refugee status according to § 3 Para 1 AsylVfG ⁵	7,061	6,446	8,024	9,996	31,025	46,782
Subsidiary protection ⁶	548	666	6,974	7,005	5,174	785
Prohibition of deportation	2,143	1,911	1,402	2,208	2,079	1,132
Rejections	27,255	23,717	30,700	31,145	43,018	51,729
Formal procedures ⁷	10,537	9,970	13,986	29,705	45,330	34,671
All decisions	48,187	43,362	61,826	80,978	128,911	136,418
Protection measures as percentage of all decisions	21.6	22.3	27.7	24.9	31.5	36.7

¹ Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo.

² Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova.

³ Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Yemen, Qatar, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Armenia, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria.

⁴ Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, West-Sahara.

⁵ Fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

⁶ § 4 Para 1 AsylVfG., e.g., war refugees.

⁷ Redistribution according to the Dublin procedure, withdrawal of asylum application etc..

Sources: Eurostat; Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; calculations by DIW Berlin.

Far more significant was the growth in employment among Eastern Europeans whose home countries are not part of the EU. In this instance, the various derogations allowing third-country nationals to take up employment could be seen as an important migration channel to Germany apart from asylum seeking.¹⁹ This also

¹⁹ These derogations include work permits for, among others, senior executives and specialists; individuals deemed particularly qualified by the EU Blue Card scheme or other regulations; workers with specialized professions such as chefs, language teachers, and cultural and entertainment professionals; particularly skilled workers; international exchange of personnel, au pairs etc.

Table 5

Social security-obligated employees of selected nationalities
1,000 persons

	June of the respective year ¹					Change from June 2010 to June 2014	
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1,000 persons	percent
Non-EU Balkan countries ²	131.6	133.3	134.9	135.8	140.3	8.6	6.6
Non-EU eastern European countries ³	79.0	86.0	92.0	93.5	99.6	20.6	26.1
Middle East ⁴	60.1	63.1	65.5	65.1	70.2	10.1	16.8
<i>thereof</i>							
Syria	5.2	5.9	6.3	6.6	8.1	2.9	55.5
Iraq	14.7	15.3	15.4	14.4	14.7	0.0	0.1
Afghanistan	10.8	10.9	11.1	10.9	12.1	1.3	12.1
Northern Africa ⁵	35.3	36.9	37.6	37.0	39.0	3.7	10.3
Africa – Sub-Saharan	154.2	164.8	175.9	175.5	189.3	35.1	22.7
<i>thereof</i>							
Eritrea	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	0.4	19.7
Somalia	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.3	0.6	97.0
Nigeria	5.3	5.9	6.2	6.4	6.9	1.6	30.0
Selected regions altogether	460.3	484.1	505.9	506.8	538.3	78.1	17.0
Other non-EU foreigners	617.8	649.7	665.0	652.0	662.3	44.4	7.2
EU foreigners ⁶	846.9	926.9	1,062.4	1,181.9	1,362.7	515.8	60.9
All foreigners	1,925.0	2,060.7	2,233.3	2,340.7	2,563.3	638.3	33.2
Total social security-obligated employment	27,966.6	28,643.6	29,280.0	29,615.7	30,174.5	2,207.9	7.9

1 Until June 2012 unrevised data.

2 Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo.

3 Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova.

4 Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Yemen, Qatar, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Armenia, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria.

5 Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, West-Sahara.

6 EU within the borders of 2014.

Sources: Federal Agency for Labor; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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applies to people coming from non-EU Balkan countries—especially since hardly any of these individuals are recognized as refugees in Germany.

Since 2010, unemployment in Germany has seen contrasting developments: While it has continued to fall among those with German citizenship, it has increased among foreigners. In mid-2015, the number of unemployed foreigners was nearly one-fifth higher than it was in mid-2010. The increase in unemployment among foreigners, however, cannot be traced primarily back to individuals with citizenship from the major recognized refugee groups. Of greater concern was the increase in unemployment among people from other EU member states—particularly from the countries that joined the union in 2004 and 2007 (Table 6).²⁰

20 The rising unemployment among people from other EU countries is related to the increased immigration. However, employment has increased more strongly among these groups than has unemployment. See: Federal Employment Agency, Statistics: Background Information. *Auswirkungen der Arbeitnehmerfreizügigkeit und der EU-Schuldenkrise auf den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt*. Reference month: May 2015. Nuremberg, July 2015.

Approximately one third of the rise in unemployment among foreigners can be attributed to those from the Middle East: Among them, the number of unemployed individuals has increased since 2012 by roughly 34,000. In terms of percentage, the growth among Syrians was particularly strong, with an increase of more than 500 percent (23,000 people); unemployment figures have also significantly increased among Iraqis and Afghans. For all of these nationalities, [registered] unemployment increased even more than did social security-obligated employment between mid-2010 and mid-2014, and the rise in unemployment has continued in recent years at an increased pace. That many of the recognized Middle Eastern refugees have not been in Germany very long likely also plays a role. The longer these refugees remain in Germany and the more they improve their language skills, the more the proportion of those who are able to find employment could grow.²¹

21 Although studies on recognized refugees related to this topic are not available, there are studies encompassing all immigrants living in Germany. According to these studies, the language skills improve the longer the

Table 6

Unemployed foreigners of selected nationalities

1,000 persons

Selected regions and countries	June of the respective year						Change from June 2012 to June 2015		Contribution to the increase of unemployment of foreigners 2012 to 2015 in percent
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	1,000 persons	percent	
EU until 2003	71.6	69.8	69.7	77.7	81.5	81.3	11.7	16.7	13.5
Accession countries of 2004	29.3	31.8	34.0	41.0	48.1	51.4	17.5	51.5	20.3
Accession countries from 2007 ¹	16.7	16.8	18.5	22.1	30.5	40.4	21.9	118.7	25.4
Non-EU Balkan countries ²	48.0	47.9	46.1	49.1	49.9	52.0	5.9	12.8	6.8
Non-EU eastern European countries ³	34.6	34.8	32.9	32.5	31.6	30.5	-2.4	-7.2	-2.7
Middle East ⁴	39.8	44.6	45.2	51.2	58.7	78.7	33.5	74.0	38.8
<i>thereof</i>									
Syria	3.1	3.5	4.4	7.3	11.9	27.2	22.7	510.8	26.3
Iraq	12.3	12.8	13.1	13.9	14.4	16.2	3.2	24.2	3.7
Afghanistan	5.4	6.6	6.7	7.5	8.6	9.9	3.3	49.1	3.8
Northern Africa ⁵	12.2	13.8	13.9	14.7	13.1	13.4	-0.5	-3.5	-0.6
Africa – Sub-Sahara	16.1	16.0	16.3	17.2	20.1	21.4	5.2	31.8	6.0
<i>thereof</i>									
Eritrea	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.8	0.6	50.1	0.7
Somalia	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3	0.4	47.7	0.5
Nigeria	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.7	2.9	0.7	31.8	0.8
All unemployed foreigners	458.3	462.0	464.1	494.0	520.6	550.3	86.3	18.6	100
Total unemployment	3,148.6	2,894.0	2,809.1	2,864.7	2,832.8	2,711.2	-97.9	-3.5	

1 Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania.

2 Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo.

3 Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova.

4 Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Yemen, Qatar, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Armenia, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria.

5 Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, West-Sahara.

Sources: Federal Agency for Labor, calculations by DIW Berlin.

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Although the significant rise in unemployment among Germany's major refugee groups up until this point is not large in absolute terms, given the recent spike in the number of refugees, the unemployment situation among accepted refugees could have a stronger impact on the labor market situation than previously estimated.²²

immigrants remain in the Federal Republic. While 12 percent of the immigrants already display "good" or "very good" knowledge of the German language upon arrival, this proportion rose to 41 percent up to two years later, and 45 percent up to four years later. Among the immigrants who stayed up to ten years, 51 percent spoke "good" or "very good" German. See Liebau, E.; Romiti, A.: *Migranten investieren in Sprache und Bildung*. In: DIW Wochenbericht Nr. 43/2014, p. 1137. In addition, it was found that language skills contribute to labor market integration. Immigrants with "good" knowledge of German were 9 percent more likely to be employed than those with poor language skills. For immigrants with "very good" knowledge of German, the probability was 15 percent higher. See Brücker, H.; Liebau, E.; Romiti, A.; Vallizadeh E.: *Anerkannte Abschlüsse und Deutschkenntnisse lohnen sich*. In: DIW Wochenbericht Nr. 43/2014, p. 1148.

²² Institute for Employment Research (2015): *Asyl- und Flüchtlingsmigration in die EU und nach Deutschland*. Brief from the Institute, Nr. 8, 9f.

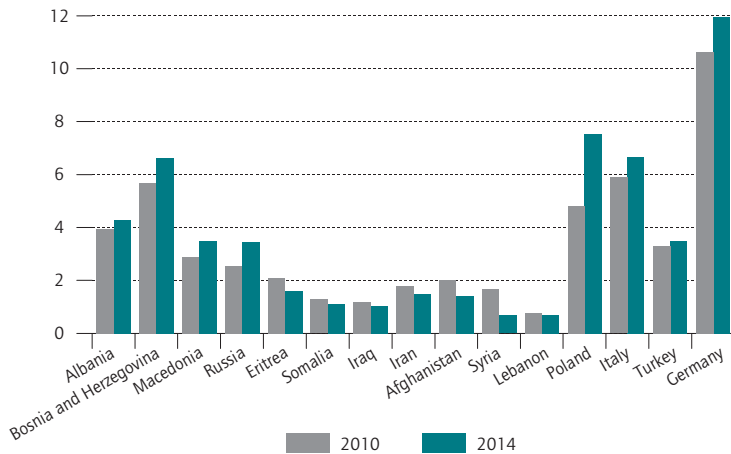
By evaluating the ratio between the social insurance-obligated employed and the registered unemployed, the approximate extent of underemployment can be determined.²³ In June 2014, there was a ratio of twelve employed individuals to every unemployed individual among Germans (Figure 5). Among Turks, the largest group of foreigners, this figure was 3.7; among Italians, the second largest group of foreigners, there were just under seven employed individuals for every employed individual.

Far more unfavorable are the employment-to-unemployment ratios among people belonging to one of the recent major recognized refugee groups' nationalities. Among the Syrians, there are now more unemployed

²³ Civil servants were not included here; however, people with foreign citizenship usually do not hold these positions. Also not taken into account are mini-jobbers and the selfemployed. These jobs may well be very prevalent in many groups of Germany's foreign workers.

Figure 5

Social security-obligated employees per unemployed person by nationality



2010: data not yet revised.

Sources: Federal Agency for Labor; calculations by DIW Berlin.

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individuals than social insurance-paying employees; for Iraqis, the ratio is equal. The situation does not look much better for Afghans, Somalis, and Eritreans. The problems these groups face when integrating into the labor market have clearly existed long before the onset of the recent migration influx; at least this is suggested by the fact that even back in 2010, the ratio of employed to unemployed individuals among the major refugee groups' nationalities was already unfavorable. However, this does not necessarily have to remain the case: The recent refugees can distinguish themselves considerably in their social structure from their fellow citizens who immigrated earlier. For example, it is possible that more refugees are migrating from cities instead of rural areas, which can reflect a higher level of education, among other things.

... and highly dependent on social transfers

The unfavorable unemployment trend among some groups of foreigners is reflected in the number of those receiving benefits under the Social Code Book II (Hartz IV). A special analysis conducted by the Federal Employment Agency²⁴ shows that since 2010, the number of Syrians receiving unemployment aid — which was initially

²⁴ At this point, a sincere thank you must be extended to Ingo Wermes of the Federal Employment Agency, department for statistics/job market reporting, for the kind evaluation and provision of data.

low — has seen an immense increase (Table 7). By far not as strong, yet noteworthy nevertheless, was the corresponding increase among people from Afghanistan, Somalia, and Eritrea — for the latter two groups, the number of cases is very low. The increase among unemployed Iraqi Hartz IV recipients has taken place more slowly.

Hartz IV benefits are paid out to households in need (*Bedarfgemeinschaften*, or benefit communities). Because the number of unemployed Hartz IV recipients has grown, there has also been an increase in the [number of] benefit recipients among the dependents: that is, people who are unable to work (primarily children) as well as people who are capable of working, but are also not „unemployed“ (including older students and caretakers).

To determine the extent of social welfare dependency, a figure known as the „assistance rate“ — that is, the ratio of beneficiaries to the total population — is normally used. But due to considerable problems in the population registries — particularly when it comes to the registration of foreigners — this is problematic.²⁵ Nevertheless, the available data indicates that a large part of Germany's population belonging to the nationalities of recent refugee groups is dependent on social benefits. Of all Syrians living in Germany, significantly more than half are likely to receive Hartz IV benefits; of all Afghans and Iraqis, roughly half.²⁶

As with evaluating the integration into the labor market, when assessing the dependence on aid it must be taken in account that many of recognized refugees have not been living in Germany for very long. Over time, some of them are likely to succeed in establishing themselves on the labor market — especially once they have improved their language skills. The key issue is how long this process takes. The key issue is how long this process takes: Those who are persistently unemployed could lose the ability to integrate into the labor market.

Conclusion and prospects

The European Union is facing a massive and continuous influx of refugees whose distribution across the member states is very uneven: While large countries

²⁵ For example, the total population in the 2011 census differed from the total population according to the civil register, which was too high. Deviations were most common among foreigners, whose numbers had been overestimated by approximately one seventh. The most significant cause of this discrepancy was that departures had not been being fully reported. As of now, no adequate adjustments have been made to the statistics. The Federal Statistical Office does not report any registration data; information on the number of foreigners living in Germany can only be found in the Central Register of Foreigner Nationals.

²⁶ It is striking that the number of Hartz IV recipients from Serbia and Kosovo has also increased significantly.

DISTRIBUTION OF REFUGEES VERY UNEVEN AMONG EU MEMBER STATES

Table 7

Recipients of benefits under the Social Code Book II (Hartz IV) – selected nationalities

1,000 persons

	April 2010	April 2011	April 2012	April 2013	April 2014	April 2015	Change from April 2010 to April 2015 in percent	Population under 65 years	
								end of 2010	end of 2014
Employable recipients									
Syria	8.9	9.1	9.9	16.8	26.5	59.0	560.3		
Serbia	20.6	25.0	27.7	30.3	31.9	43.3	110.7		
Eritrea	2.7	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.3	4.1	52.2		
Afghanistan	19.3	19.7	20.5	21.8	24.0	26.8	39.0		
Iraq	34.7	34.9	34.7	35.7	36.3	38.0	9.6		
Kosovo	7.5	10.1	12.3	15.1	17.0	20.8	178.5		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17.5	16.5	15.6	15.5	15.2	15.3	-12.9		
Albania	9.6	8.8	8.0	7.8	7.7	7.6	-20.4		
Somalia	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.8	3.2	100.8		
Russian Federation	50.4	45.8	41.5	39.5	37.3	35.6	-29.3		
All selected countries	172.7	174.5	175.3	188.0	202.1	253.8	46.9		
All employable recipients	5,027.8	4,736.3	4,507.5	4,482.5	4,443.4	4,426.2	-12.0		
thereof: unemployed recipients									
Syria	3.3	3.4	3.8	6.5	10.5	24.2	625.5		
Serbia	8.3	10.1	11.3	12.3	13.1	17.8	114.3		
Eritrea	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.5	41.2		
Afghanistan	6.1	6.4	6.7	7.1	8.1	9.1	49.6		
Iraq	13.0	12.9	13.3	13.7	14.4	14.9	14.0		
Kosovo	2.9	3.7	4.6	5.8	6.5	8.0	178.1		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.9	6.5	6.2	6.1	5.9	5.9	-13.5		
Albania	3.8	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.0	-21.9		
Somalia	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	87.3		
Russian Federation	18.8	17.4	16.3	15.4	14.7	13.9	-26.1		
All selected countries	64.8	65.5	67.3	72.2	78.6	99.5	53.5		
All unemployed recipients	2,163.2	2,070.6	1,983.1	1,938.8	1,916.9	1,876.4	-13.3		
Non-employable recipients									
Syria	3.3	3.2	3.3	6.0	10.0	23.4	614.5		
Serbia	6.3	7.5	8.0	8.4	8.6	11.8	87.7		
Eritrea	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	22.6		
Afghanistan	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.1	8.0	9.4	44.0		
Iraq	17.1	17.5	16.8	16.5	16.4	17.2	0.7		
Kosovo	2.6	3.5	3.9	4.6	5.0	5.7	122.4		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.2	3.8	3.4	3.1	2.9	2.9	-31.2		
Albania	2.7	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	-41.4		
Somalia	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	90.2		
Russian Federation	7.8	6.9	6.2	5.7	5.4	5.7	-27.0		
All selected countries	51.9	52.9	52.1	55.2	60.0	80.1	54.2		
All non-employable recipients	1,850.8	1,763.0	1,714.0	1,712.3	1,717.5	1,727.7	-6.7		
All recipients									
Syria	12.2	12.3	13.1	22.8	36.6	82.4	574.8	29.4	115.1
Serbia	26.8	32.4	35.7	38.7	40.5	55.1	105.3	-	-
Eritrea	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.2	5.1	45.5	-	-
Afghanistan	25.9	26.4	27.3	28.9	32.0	36.3	40.3	48.1	71.5
Iraq	51.7	52.4	51.5	52.3	52.7	55.2	6.6	79.9	86.7
Kosovo	10.0	13.6	16.2	19.7	22.0	26.5	164.2	-	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina	21.7	20.4	18.9	18.6	18.1	18.2	-16.4	138.9	141.0
Albania	12.2	11.0	9.9	9.6	9.3	9.2	-25.0	9.7	23.6
Somalia	2.4	2.7	3.2	3.7	4.1	4.7	97.3	-	-
Russian Federation	58.2	52.6	47.7	45.1	42.7	41.3	-29.0	175.4	201.8
All selected countries	224.7	227.5	227.4	243.2	262.1	333.9	48.6		
Total	6,878.5	6,499.3	6,221.5	6,194.8	6,160.9	6,153.8	-10.5		

Sources: Federal Agency for Labor; Central Registry of Foreigners.

like the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Spain, as well as nearly all Eastern European countries, receive relatively few asylum seekers, other countries are more impacted. Among them is Germany, which in the first months of 2015 received three times as many refugees based on total population and roughly twice as many refugees based on economic power as would have been the case assuming a uniform distribution across the EU.

At first glance, the fact that Germany is among the EU countries receiving above-average numbers of asylum seekers is striking, since it is surrounded by other EU member states that can be considered safe host countries for asylum seekers. For all practical purposes, the EU is clearly far from a cohesive refugee policy that shares the burden of helping asylum seekers.²⁷ And in Germany, people are willing to broadly interpret the provisions of the Basic Law to the point that, evidently, protection can be granted even if the asylum seeker entered through a safe third country.

The expansion of the migration of refugees is creating counter reactions: Denmark and the Netherlands have already started to receive far fewer asylum seekers, and Poland does not want to accept any more. In the past, Austria and Hungary drew in above-average numbers of asylum seekers in terms of economic power and total population, but now Austria has just announced that it will no longer process asylum applications, and Hungary wants to secure its borders to prevent asylum seekers from entering. If certain immigration channels in the EU are blocked off, asylum seekers will be redirected to areas where the channels are still open. Countries that are already highly attractive to asylum seekers would then be even more challenged—and this would include Germany. Moreover, the experiences with migrant networks around the world have shown that asylum seekers of a particular nationality aim to settle wherever their fellow asylum-seeking fellow citizens have gone before.

Although the current migration of refugees is affecting the EU as a whole, a common approach is not observable: A cohesive asylum policy that would distribute the responsibilities fairly across the member states is missing. Rapid change is needed here. Corresponding agreements must also include common standards

²⁷ One policy that emerged from a decision by the European Court of Justice in accordance with the Dublin procedure—that member states are not permitted to send asylum seekers back to another EU country where they were treated poorly—is a good example of what does *not* constitute a “common refugee policy.” See: European Court of Justice (2011): *Ein Asylbewerber darf nicht an einen Mitgliedsstaat überstellt werden, in dem er Gefahr läuft, unmenschlich behandelt zu werden*. Press release no. 140 from December 21. The case discussed here concerns Greece, which cannot be regarded as a safe destination country.

on supporting and housing the asylum seekers, as well as standards for the granting of protection.

From time to time, the assumption that the current wave of refugees is a singular phenomenon forces its way into the public debate in Germany. The war in Syria could end, which means that the current wave could actually subside. However, this would in no way eliminate the renewed increase in the number of refugees, and that is because the causes of conflicts lie deeper than is generally believed. One fundamental problem is rapid population growth, particularly in the Middle East and Africa: In many countries, the economic basis is hardly sufficient to satisfy the basic need for employment (and sometimes food), and the increased expectations for a moderate level of prosperity. As well, wealth and power are concentrated among an elite few, and corruption is widespread. According to the UN’s recently announced World Population Prospects, the number of inhabitants will continue to increase substantially, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.²⁸ It is a constant that can be observed throughout history: High population growth often triggers internal conflicts²⁹ and migration flows.³⁰

It is also often assumed that recognized refugees need only pass through the necessary immigration procedure

²⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Department (2015): World Population Prospects. The 2015 Revision; as well as the corresponding data at <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/>.

²⁹ See: Kennedy, P. (1993): “Preparing for the 21st Century.” Frankfurt/Main, p. 53 ff. Goldstone, J. A. (2001): “Demography, Environment, and Security: An Overview.” In: M. Weiner, S. S. Russell (Pub.): “Demography and National Security.” New York, Oxford, p. 40ff. Rufin, C. (1993): “The Empire and the New Barbarians.” Frankfurt/Main. For example, a study of migration up until the Middle Ages: Toynbee, A.J. (1949). *Der Gang der Weltgeschichte* (“A Study of History”). Zürich, p. 13ff. For migration in 19th-century Europe: Hobsbawm, E.J. (1977): *Die Blütezeit des Kapitals* (“The Age of Capital: 1848-1875”). Munich, p. 246ff.

³⁰ At the end of the 18th century, Robert Malthus published an essay in which he argued that the population was growing much faster than production—at the time, agrarian. Inevitable consequences (“positive checks”) included extreme poverty, inadequate childcare, increased urbanization, diseases and epidemics, as well as other problems such as internal tensions. (Malthus, R.: “An Essay on the Principle of Population.” (Sixth revised edition, 1826). Library of Economics and Liberty, <http://www.econlib.org/library/Malthus/malPlong1.html>). Such bleak predictions reemerged in the 1960s and 1970s asserting that resources would become scarce due to the growing population. See: Ehrlich, P.: “The Population Bomb,” 1968, New York, or Meadows, D. L.; Meadows, D.; Zahn, E.; Milling, P.: *Die Grenzen des Wachstums* (“The Limits to Growth”), 1972, Munich. Commissioned by the Club of Rome on the state of humanity. Arguments were put forth against this Neo-Malthusianism that a transitory development was possible: In 19th-century Europe, for example, the mortality rate (infant mortality in particular) initially declined, followed by a decreased birthrate (albeit with considerable delay). Moreover, technological progress should be taken into account (see, among others, Simon, J.: “The Ultimate Resource,” 1981, Princeton). However, these optimistic expectations have only been fulfilled in some parts of the world—in parts of East Asia in particular, such as Korea. In China, population growth was curtailed by an authoritarian family policy (one child per family). In Africa and the Middle East, however, there is continuous and rapid population growth, even if mortality decreased [only] as a result of better (imported) medical care. The problem is also evidenced by the fact that the UN has had to continually revise its population forecasts upwards in the past few decades.

dures and learn the German language to be able to integrate themselves into the labor market without any major difficulties. But it is clear that things are not so simple: Many newly recognized refugees have difficulty finding a job—especially when they lack sufficient language skills and are still in the process of adapting to their new environment. Moreover, health restrictions—of both physical and mental natures—are not uncommon. For these reasons it would be useful, *inter alia*, if asylum seekers with a high chance of recognition would begin language courses while the asylum procedure was still in progress.³¹ Once refugees have learned the German language, employment opportuni-

ties should significantly improve,³² thus reducing the dependency on social benefits; it would therefore be only a matter of time before the refugees have successfully integrated. Nevertheless, static indicators show that integration, even in the long-term, is far from successful in every case—for whatever reasons.³³ For a sustainable integration of refugees, ad hoc measures are in no way sufficient. It is urgent that politicians propose viable strategies for integration, especially for education, vocational training, housing, and health care.

31 The Institute for Employment Research (IAB) calls for mandatory participation in language courses immediately following arrival in order to facilitate subsequent integration. See: Herbert Brücker (2015): *Reform des Einwanderungsrechts*. Contributions to the current discussion, August 2015: http://doku.iab.de/aktuell/2015/aktueller_beitrag_1501.pdf. Of paramount importance is a sufficient supply of language courses, but whether coercion increases the chances of learning success is quite dubious.

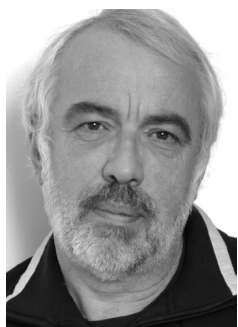
32 See: Brücker, H.; Liebau, E.; Romiti, A.; Vallizadeh, E. (2014): *Anerkannte Abschlüsse und Deutschkenntnisse lohnen sich*. DIW Wochenbericht Nr. 43. This study demonstrated that for all immigrants in Germany (that is, not only for asylum seekers), the likelihood of employment is 15 percent higher among individuals with “very good” German, and 6 percent higher among those with “good” German, than the likelihood of employment among those with insufficient German language abilities.

33 One aspect is the desire to return to the home country as quickly as possible once the acts of war have ceased.

Karl Brenke is Researcher in the Department of Forecasting and Economic Policy of the DIW Berlin | kbrenke@diw.de

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Karl Brenke, Researcher in the Department of Forecasting and Economic Policy of DIW Berlin

FIVE QUESTIONS TO KARL BRENKE

»Germany particularly affected by current influx of refugees«

1. Mr. Brenke, a large number of asylum seekers are currently making their way into Europe. Is this affecting Germany more than it is affecting other countries in Europe? Yes, this is quite clearly the case: According to current figures, half of this summer's asylum seekers are headed to Germany. Assuming a uniform distribution across the EU, Germany receives three times as many asylum seekers as do other countries, and based on each respective country's economic power, it receives twice as many. Some countries are being even more heavily affected: Hungary, Bulgaria, and Sweden, for example. The other large EU countries – Britain, France, Spain, and Italy – are accepting relatively few asylum seekers.
2. Why isn't there an equal distribution across Europe? For sure, the most significant reason is that some countries strongly oppose the quotas – which are calculated based on economic strength or total population – of asylum seekers they must accept. The UK is a major example: Measured against the average in a hypothetical equal distribution, the UK would have to take in more asylum seekers, but they don't want to. Other countries are sending similar messages. Another problem we have is that some countries have announced plans to make their asylum policies even more restrictive. If more and more countries seal their borders, the refugees will head to wherever the channels are still open – to countries like Germany.
3. Would defining other Balkan states as safe countries of origin be a solution? If you look at the approval procedure and its outcomes, you will find that hardly anyone from Albania or Kosovo, for example, is being accepted as an asylum seeker. There is no current evidence of war or systematic persecution in these countries. Ultimately you have to ask why they are not also being recognized as safe countries of origin.
4. How many refugees can be integrated into the German labor market? Asylum seekers understandably face significant obstacles when entering the labor market. The vast majority do not speak German, which means they must first learn the language – and some asylum seekers, especially those from the Arabic-speaking world, are not even familiar with Latin alphabet. Then there is the issue that some asylum seekers have health restrictions: for example, psychological disturbances resulting from civil war. This makes integration very difficult. And although employment has increased among the nationalities to which most asylum seekers belong, the number of unemployed individuals has increased even more.
5. The distinction between those who are entitled to asylum and those who are merely economic migrants is heavily debated in the current sociopolitical climate. Do the refugee acceptance criteria need to be reworked? I think we basically need to distinguish certain facts. Germany is a country of immigration, and for immigration we have certain rules. With regard to the labor force, we are completely open to workers from other EU countries. For migrants from third-world countries, we have the EU Blue Card. In principle, asylum for refugees is not intended to facilitate permanent immigration; rather, it is a temporary humanitarian aid and as such it should be treated that way. If there are people among the asylum seekers who can bring specific skills that fit the EU Blue Card scheme, the asylum procedure can be terminated right away, strictly speaking, and that individual can be given a work permit. But it is unlikely that many people fit such criteria. We can also offer vocational training to young people, but it needs to be made clear that such a plan is only designed for temporary migration – and this is where things get tricky.

Interview by Erich Wittenberg