



## Integration Exchange: Online integration services of third country nationals

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### Employment of Citizens of Third Member Countries in the European Union

Orientation paper on employment of third-country nationals

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Migration and the way to manage it are part of heated debates today across the enlarged European Union. Most Member States are now experiencing migratory phenomena – legal and illegal – and are confronted with integration challenges. The integration of legal third-country nationals (TCN) living and working in the EU has gained increasing importance on the European agenda in recent years. Nevertheless, there is a major concern in a number of EU countries and policies are challenged. The Hague Programme (adopted by the European Council, 4–5<sup>th</sup> November 2004) underlines the need for greater co-ordination of national integration policies and EU initiatives in this field.

The effective and responsible integration of immigrants in the labour market is part of the integration of TCNs. The European Commission stimulates and supports Member States’ efforts in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, stressing the gender perspective in the labour market. The new Integrated Guidelines for Jobs and Growth call on Member States to take action to increase the employment of immigrants.

As ideal fulfilment, migrant worker (or entrepreneur) is eligible for the same opportunities as EU nationals to work in most sectors. (S)he can count on help from labour market integration measures to adjust to the language and professional demands of the labour market, to get skills recognised, to access training, and to develop language skills that are critical for the job market. Secure employment, possibility to renew work permits and remain in the country and look for work, if (s)he loses job. Job security means equal rights for all workers to change employer, job, industry and work permit categories, or to join a trade union.

In many cases, however, migrants experience an excluding labour market, where their skills and qualifications are not recognised or are downgraded through an unfair, long and costly procedure. Even if qualified, they are not eligible to work or become self-employed in many sectors, due to government restrictions. Without access to any labour market integration measures, training, or

study grants, migrants face great difficulty in overcoming language and professional barriers. The status of TCN as a worker is insecure. Rigid administrative criteria prohibit migrants from retaining work permit if they are fired and changing employer, job or industry.

Looking more in details, a distinct study on integration (Migrant Integration Policy Index, British Council & Migration Policy Group, 2007) found that Labour market access in the EU-25 is, on average, only halfway to fulfil the proper integration and migrant workers rights. Migrants are partially eligible and can take up labour market integration measures. If migrants find jobs, they have slightly favourable security and rights as workers. Most can renew all but seasonal work permits, and participate in trade unions and work-related negotiation bodies. Mediterranean countries and also the Scandinavian countries offer a better integration for TCNs in the labour market while the New Member Countries in CEE lag substantially behind the rest of the EU, particularly on measures and security.(The Migrant Integration Policy Index – MIPEX)

The differences across the EU countries labour market integration will be investigated and the lessons will be discussed. Various programs have been lounged and financed within the European Union with various successes concerning labour market integration. Good practices and failed success of programs will be discussed in the paper.