

Are we there yet?: Recognition and validation of prior learnings of refugees and migrants in European documents

Assist. Dr. Filiz Keser Aschenberger

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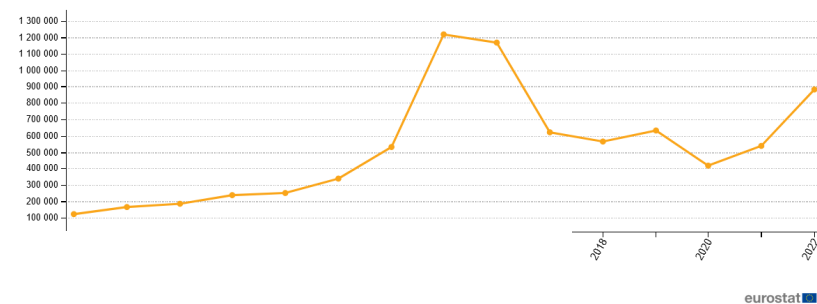
“This is a world in which one is condemned to wander across, within, and between multiple borders and spaces marked by excess, otherness, difference, and a dislocating notion of meaning and attention” (Giroux 2000: 180).

Background

Situation of Refugees and Migrants in Europe

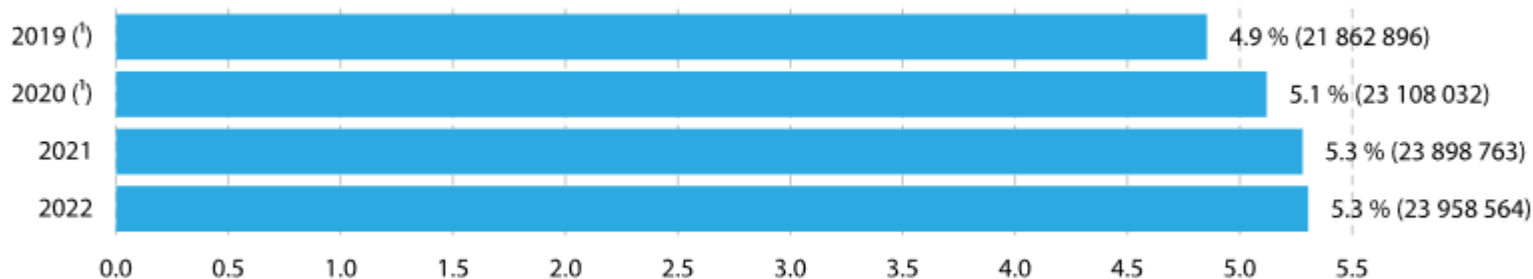
- High number of refugees and third-country nationals
 - Europe: 880.000 asylum seekers (2022)
 - Austria: 112.000 asylum seekers (2022)
 - Europe: 24 million third-country nationals

First-time asylum applicants (non-EU citizens), EU, 2008–2022



Third-country nationals, EU and Norway, 1 January 2019–2022

Share of the total population in % (and the absolute number)

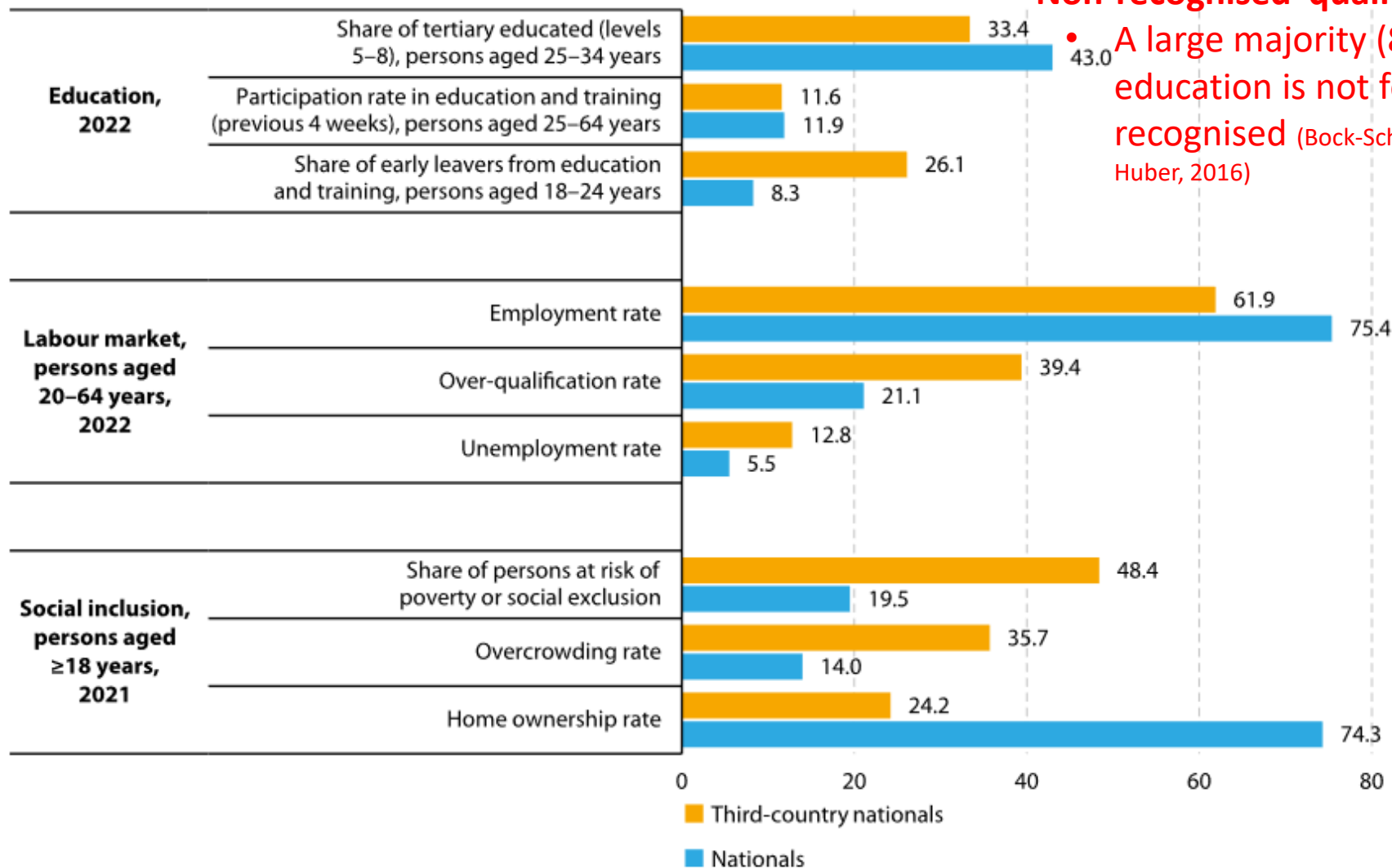


⁽¹⁾ Excluding Cyprus and Malta for which data are not available.

Source: Eurostat (migr_pop1ctz)

Integration indicators, EU, 2021 or 2022

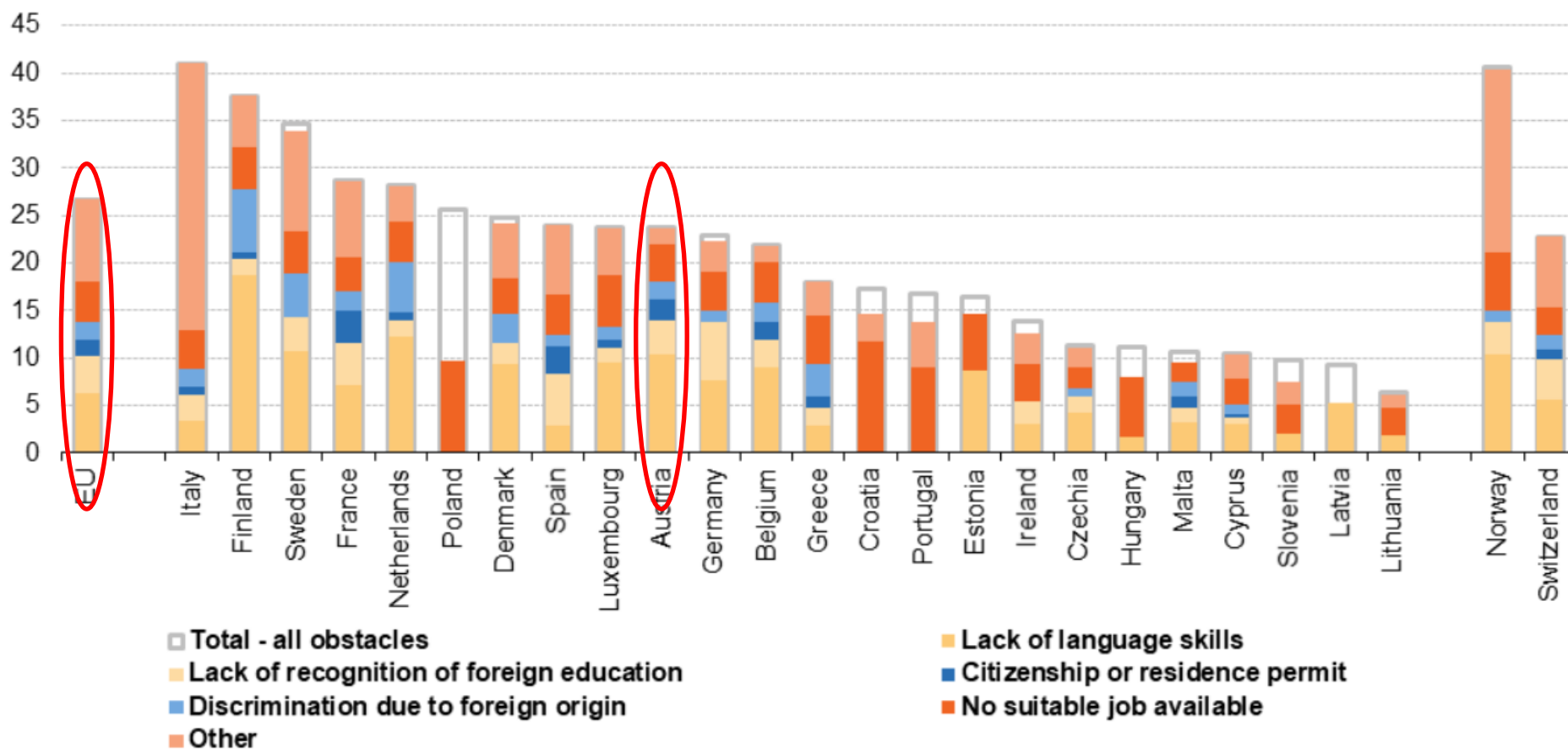
%



- **Non-recognised qualifications:**
- **A large majority (84.4%) of education is not formally recognised** (Bock-Schappelwein, & Huber, 2016)

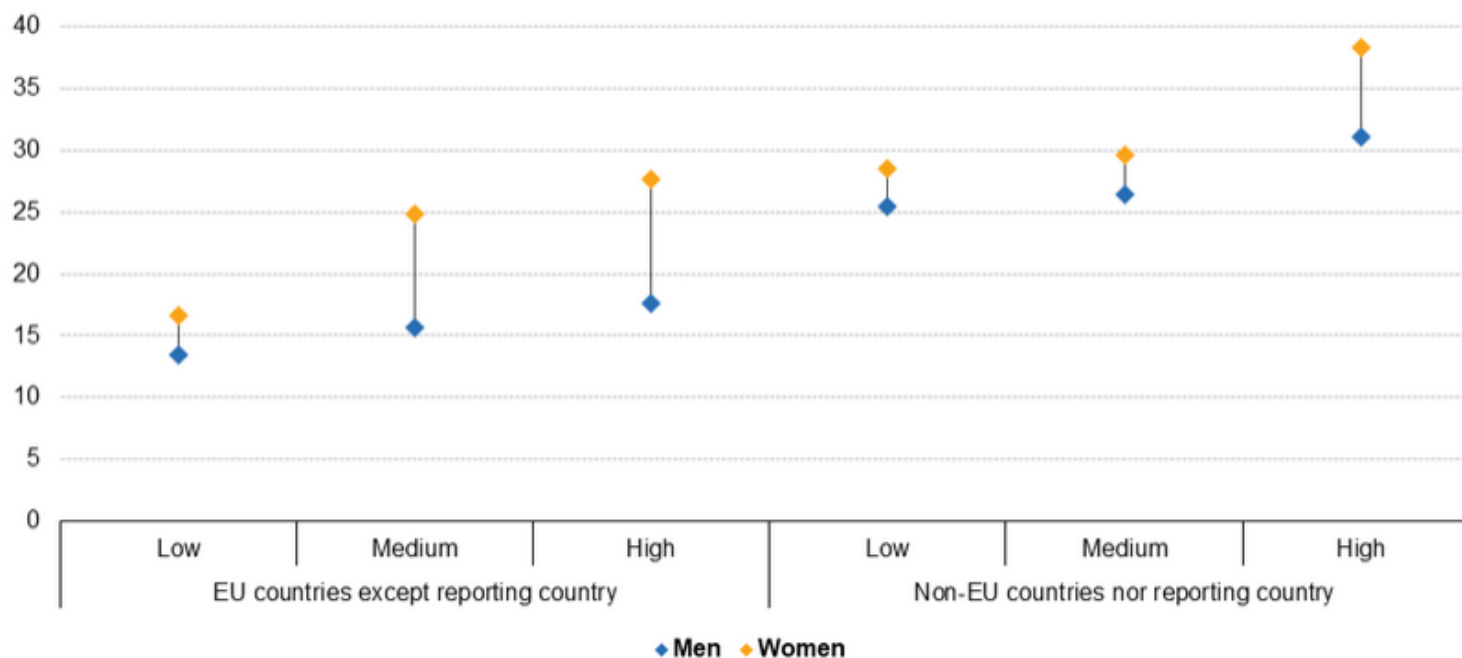
Foreign-born people who have faced obstacles to getting a suitable job in the host country, by main obstacle, 2021

(as a percentage of foreign-born people who have worked or looked for a job in the host country, age group 15-74)



Foreign-born people who have faced obstacles to getting a suitable job in the host country, by sex, country of birth and level of education, EU, 2021

(as a percentage of foreign-born people who have worked or looked for a job in the host country, age group 15-74)



Source: Eurostat (lfsa_21obst01)

eurostat

Figure 4: Foreign-born people who have faced obstacles to getting a suitable job in the host country, by sex, country of birth and level of education, EU, 2021

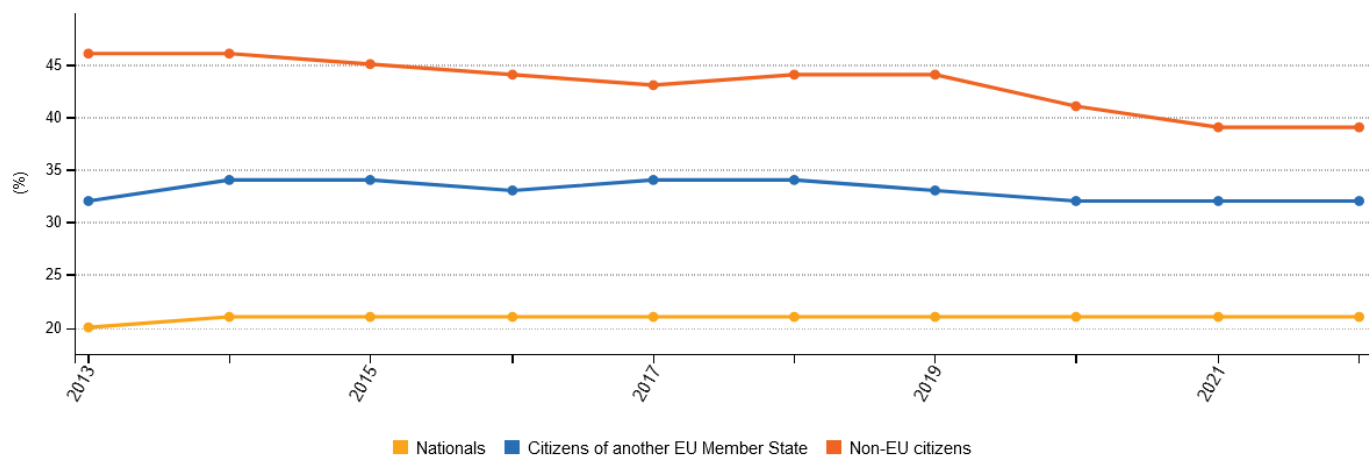
Source: Eurostat (lfsa_21obst01)

Background

Situation of Refugees and Migrants in Europe

- Over-qualification

Over-qualification rate for persons aged 20–64 years, analysed by citizenship, EU, 2013–2022



2014 and 2021: break in series

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ifsa_eoqgan)

Conceptual Framework

Validation

- Confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

or

- Process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard. Validation consists of four distinct phases:
 - identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual
 - documentation to make visible the individual's experiences;
 - formal assessment of these experiences; and
 - certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.(CEDEFOP, 2014)

Conceptual Framework

Recognition

- Formal recognition: process of granting official status to knowledge, skills and competences either through:
 - validation of non-formal and informal learning;
 - grant of equivalence, credit units or waivers;
 - award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles).

and/or

- Social recognition: acknowledgement of value of knowledge skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders.(cedefop, 2014).

Insights

Importance of RVPL

- associated with better outcomes, especially for disfavored migrant groups and disadvantaged groups (Harris, 1999, Andersson, 2008).
- plays a crucial role in
 - creating pathways to education, training and qualifications;
 - promoting workforce development and participation in the labor market;
 - enhancing social inclusion and democratic citizenship;
 - personal and professional empowerment (Singh, 2015, p. 63).
- a key to build inclusive societies
 - Recognition of a qualification = recognition of the human behind the qualification
 - Inclusion – empowerment – participation
 - Reduce the risk of (social, political, economical) alienation
 - Effective use of the resources in society (Skjerven, 2016, NOKUT)
- **BUT**

Insights

Critical Perspectives on RVPL

- Few migrants use existing recognition offers (Liebig, 2015)
 - Less than 17% of disadvantaged groups, including low-skilled individuals, early school leavers, jobseekers/unemployed, individuals at risk of unemployment, older workers, migrants/refugees and people with disabilities are users of RVPL in countries with validation arrangements in one or more education subsector (cedefop, 2016).
- RVPL process normalizes the misrecognition of immigrants' experience and knowledge (Andersson, 2008; Diedrich, 2013).
 - acts as a dividing practice;
 - the targeting of certain vocations for assessment, (lack of holistic perspective)
 - the degrading of competence
 - labor market is part of the process of inclusion/exclusion in/from the orders of the labor market (Andersson and Osman 2008)
 - Lack of culturally responsive and equitable recognition practices. (Pastore, 2023)
- RVPL reproduce the status quo (Harris, 1999)
 - May not address social exclusion and perpetuate discrimination (Lodigiani & Sarli, 2017)

Insights

Critical Perspectives on RVPL

Challenges with RVPL

- Technical and systemic challenges and complexity
- Lack of certificates and documents
- Lack of information for refugees
- Lack of mechanisms and motivation to support validation of work experience and non-formal/in-formal learnings
- Costs of the process

State of Art

Gap on refugee qualifications and RVPL

- Mainly based on policy documents, recommendations, regulations
- Overqualification is well-explored and documented (Biffl & Pfeffer, 2013)
- Very few empirical studies on RVPL and migrants and refugees and especially from their perspective (Andersson & Osman, 2008; Sigh, 2015).

Purpose

The aim is

- to provide a picture of RVPL approach (policy and practice) targeting the refugees and migrants in Europe

Method

Qualitative Study

- Data Collection
 - Document Analysis
 - Policies, regulations, legal documents and project reports

Findings: Political & Legal Framework

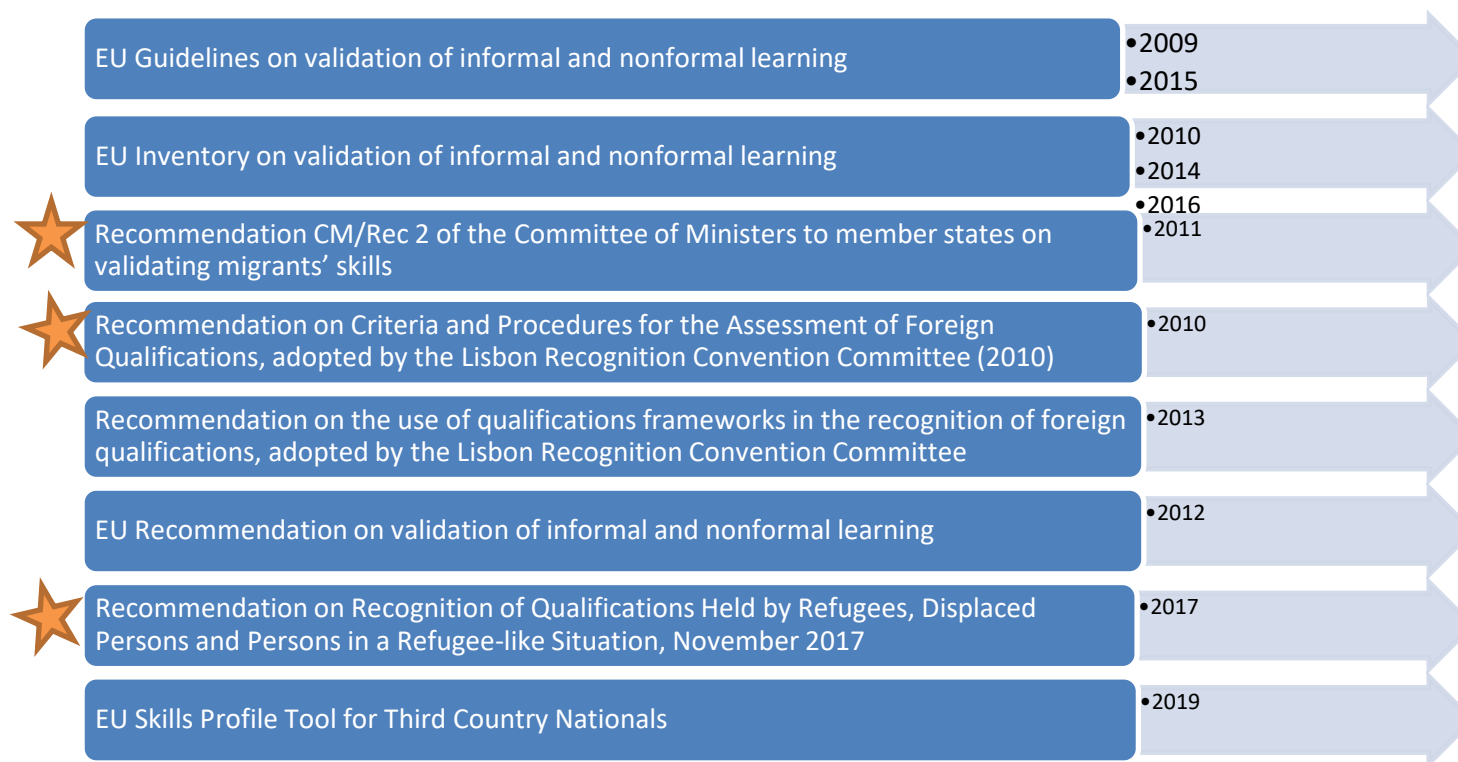
EU regulations, initiatives and infrastructures to support Recognition of Formal Qualifications

	Legally binding	Legally non-binding
Regulations on recognition	-Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997 -Professional Qualifications Directive 2005	
Harmonization of qualification systems		-Bologna Process, 1999 -Copenhagen Process, 2002
Qualification frameworks		-QF-EHEA (Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area), 2005 -EQF (European Qualification Framework), 2008
Transparency instruments		-Europass, 2004 -European Professional Card, 2015
Institutional infrastructures	-ENIC-NARIC network -National contact points for the professional qualifications directive -EQF national coordination points -EURES network	

Source: Biffel & Pfeffer, 2013

Findings: Political & Legal Framework

European initiatives to promote validation of qualifications and informal and nonformal learning



Findings: Political & Legal Framework

Specific Regulations and arrangements related to Refugees and Migrants

- Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997
 - Section VII – **Recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation**
 - Article VII
 - Each party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.

Findings: Political & Legal Framework

Specific Regulations and Documents related to Refugees

- Common Basic Principles (CBP) on Immigrant Integration, 2004
 - 2 action points :
 - 'Exploring additional ways of recognizing newcomers' qualifications, training and/or professional experience, building upon existing laws and
 - Facilitating transparent recognition of qualifications, notably through proposals for a European Qualifications Framework.'
- 2.4 Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies 2016, EC
 - Under education, recognition is suggested.
- European Area of Recognition Handbook
 - The refugees, displaced persons or persons in a refugee-like situation who have formal education from a recognised and/or accredited educational institution and others who for valid reason and in spite of their best persistent efforts cannot document the qualifications they claim, should have a right to have their qualifications assessed by a competent recognition authority. (EAR Handbook, Chp 12)

Findings: Political & Legal Framework

Issues to address

- Lack of common political and legal framework special for refugees
 - only 10 countries have initiatives that directly serve the migrants
- Lack of coordination Europe wide
- Refugees and migrants are not visible in the policy and legal documents
- Lack of support and engagement from civil society / non-public partners (Obstacles Study, 2016)
- Lack of clarity regarding the recording of non-formal and informal education/qualifications (Obstacles Study, 2016)
- Several obstacles at every stage of the recognition (Obstacles Study, 2016)
- Systems are not able to deal with the current situation of refugees “neither in terms of number of individuals to be processed nor in terms of the particular problems caused by language, cultural background and lack of written, formal documentation” (CEDEFOP, 2016).
- Abundance of suggestions but limited concrete steps taken especially at the national levels (Lodigiani & Sarli, 2017)

Conclusion

- Are refugees and migrants visible at the policy and practice level?
- Social inclusion: is RVPL really inclusive?
- Are we there yet in terms of inclusivity and equality?



Danube University Krems.
The University for Continuing Education.

Thank You!

Filiz Keser Aschenbeger
University for Continuing Education
Krems

Filiz.keser-aschenberger@donau-uni.ac.at