



SIRIUS

Skills and Integration of Migrants,
Refugees and Asylum Applicants
in European Labour Markets

Social Partners Barriers and Enablers

WP5 report

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List of Acronyms

3F	Fagligt Fælles Forbund (3F)
ADEDY	Supreme Administration of Civil Servants' Trade-Unions
AKAVA	The Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland
ASO	Association of Independent Trade Unions
CARA	Centre of reception for asylum seekers (Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo)
CAS	Emergency accommodation centre (Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria)
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreements
CDA	Centre of reception (Centri Di Accoglienza)
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (International Labour Organization)
CGIL	Italian General Confederation of Labour (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro)
CIA	Italian Agriculturists' Confederation (Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori)
CISL	Italian Confederation of Trade Unions (Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori)
ČLK	Czech medical chamber
ČMKOS	Czech Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions
CNA	National Confederation of Craftmanship and Small Middle Enterprises (Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e della Piccola e Media impresa)
CNEL	National Council for Economics and Labour (Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro)
DA	Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening (Danish Employers' Confederation)
EK	The Confederation of Finnish Industries
ESEE	Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
FNIA	Federal Act on Foreign Nationals

GSEBEE	General Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Small Manufacturers of Greece
GSEE	General Confederation of Greek Labour
IGU	Integrationsgrunduddannelsen (Basic Integration Education)
ILO	International Labour Organization
INE/GSEE	Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Labour
ISMU	Iniziative e Studi sulla Multiethnicità (Initiatives and studies on multiethnicity)
Legacoop	Cooperative federation (Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative e Mutue)
LO	Landsorganisationen i Danmark (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions)
OMED	Organisation for Mediation and Arbitration
RHSD	Council of Economic and Social Agreement of the Czech Republic
ROH	Revolutionary Union Movement
SAK	The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions
SEB	Federation of Greek Industry
SETE	Greek Tourism Confederation
SPRAR	National system of protection for asylum seekers and refugees (Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati)
STTK	The Finnish Confederation of Professionals
UGL	General Labour Union (Unione Generale del Lavoro)
UIL	Italian Labour Union (Unione Italiana del Lavoro)
USB	Base Union (Unione Sindacale di Base)
USAM	Swiss Union of Crafts and Skilled Trades (Umbrella employer organization)
USS	Swiss Federation of Trade Unions

Executive Summary

As a component of the SIRIUS analysis of barriers and enablers in the labour market integration of third country nationals (or TCNs, such as migrants, refugees and asylum applicants) in European countries, we have undertaken a study of the role that social partners and social dialogue can play in it. Such analysis builds on the multi-dimensional framework of the SIRIUS project which assumes integration in the labour market depends upon elements of the macro (economic, legal and policy dimensions), micro (individual characteristics) and the meso (civil society and social partners) spheres. While we have dealt with civil society organisations in another research stream (Work Package 4), here we discuss the social partners' aspect of the 'meso' dimension.

Social partners play a key role in labour market dynamics as they contribute towards determining the policy and legal frameworks that shape labour markets, but also the social, political and economic trends in which labour markets are embedded. Therefore, an examination of social partners' understanding of the newcomers' capacities and their appreciation of opportunities and challenges to be addressed is unavoidable in any research willing to understand how to facilitate unlocking the employment potential of migrants, refugees and asylum applicants.

When social partners are at stake with reference to migration and asylum, extant research has investigated primarily the role of unions while less attention has been paid to the employers' side and even fewer studies have investigated the role of social dialogue. Hence, our study fills a gap in the existing literature as it presents findings from a four-month long process of field work of interviews with social partners (gathering overall 123 interviews) complemented by an experts' survey which managed to collect responses from 293 additional social partners' representatives across our seven countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Finland, Italy, Switzerland and the UK).

The experts' responses reveal that some of the key issues that had been discussed by extant studies, and in particular the dilemmas faced by unions vis-a'-vis migrants (e.g. if they are to include them among their beneficiaries and members, how to mitigate the potential competitive spirals newcomers bring in the receiving society labour markets, how to avoid social/wage dumping, etc..) are still relevant. Our data also show the social partners' awareness about the higher (than local workers) risks migrants incur for their health and safety due to the poor regulations of migration and asylum which often confine newcomers to employment in the irregular economy, or to jobs requiring lower skills, leading to wasted talent, demotivation, and potential social isolation.

However, our study also reveals the appreciation that social partners have of newcomers' skills, of their potential for the wellbeing of our societies and economies, a potential which very often remains unrealised. This is due to reasons that are at a time pertinent to our society's regulation of migration (migration and asylum law, recognition of skills and educational attainment levels, services to improve newcomers' capacities to adapt to our labour markets, etc..) and a time connected with the characteristics of the migrants themselves (language proficiency, social capital, personal well-being and health). Such results are fully consistent with the analyses we have carried out in previous work packages, providing us with robust

(triangulated) evidence about the further efforts policy makers, but social partners too, should engage in.

What we can take from this analysis of social partners is the need for both policy makers at various levels of government and social partners to commit to create further social dialogue opportunities. Too few cases of social dialogue have occurred across our seven countries in the field of labour migration, but social dialogue seems to us a (if not *the*) fundamental tool to solve problems occurring in such a polarized domain of migration, and in what is even a more contentious one, that of labour migration. Rather than leaving space to single-actor claims and activities, even when these are very positive in problem solving –see our country reports in the following sections for examples about how unions and employers solve problems in labour migration—we should encourage a more coordinated multi-actor effort based on dialogue and mutual understanding, as represented by social dialogue.

Comparative report

1 Social Partners Barriers and Enablers – Introduction to the WP5 Integrated Report

Simone Baglioni, Tom Montgomery, Francesca Calo'

1.1 Introduction

As a component of the SIRIUS analysis of barriers and enablers in the labour market integration of third country nationals (or TCNs, such as migrants, refugees and asylum applicants) in European countries, we have undertaken a study of the role that social partners and social dialogue can play in it. Such analysis builds on the multi-dimensional framework of the SIRIUS project which assumes integration in the labour market depends upon elements of the macro (economic, legal and policy dimensions), micro (individual characteristics) and the meso (civil society and social partners) spheres. While we have dealt with civil society organisations in another research stream (Work Package 4), here we discuss the social partners' aspect of the 'meso' dimension.

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When social partners are at stake with reference to migration and asylum, extant research has investigated primarily the role of unions (Penninx and Roosblad 2000; Marino et al. 2015, 2017) while less attention has been paid to the employers' side (Adecco 2017, OECD and UNHCR 2016) and even fewer studies have investigated the role of social dialogue. Hence, our study fills a gap in the existing literature as it presents findings from a four-month long process of field work of interviews with social partners (gathering overall 123 interviews) complemented by an experts' survey which managed to collect responses from 293 additional social partners' representatives across our seven countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Finland, Italy, Switzerland and the UK) (*see the next section for a detailed presentation of our research methods*).

The debate surrounding migrants and refugees in European countries is often polarized around narratives that portray newcomers as a burden for the public budget and the welfare state, as people in constant need of support and services, or, if these are active in the labour market depicts them as potential competitors with the 'native' workforce. Within such polarized debates, social partners as well as 'hybrid' corporate actors such as social cooperatives and social enterprises, have given voice to a range of positions which sometimes appear to be diverging. Unions have been faced by the dilemma of including or excluding newcomers from

their activities and membership (when inclusion could be considered a ‘betrayal’ of native and traditional workforces exposed to the risk of social dumping and further deregulation), and, consequently, whether or not migrants could be considered as an untapped reservoir of support and recruitment that may mitigate the de-unionizing trends, a common characteristic across the European (particularly young and precarious) workforce (Penninx and Roosblad 2000; Gorodzeisky and Richards 2013; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013). On the other hand, employers have been supportive of migrants meeting the market-driven flexible and cyclical shape of labour demand, in particular (but not only) in agricultural and tourism seasonal work, as well as in personal and home care services or in the construction sector (Van Hooren, 2012; Bernsten, 2016). While social enterprises and the social economy have favoured migrants in part to respond to the same workforce needs in the service (for example social care) industry, but also to promote more innovative and inclusive business models and a new generation of entrepreneurs (Harina and Freudenber 2019).

In the pages that follow we present and discuss how social partners perceive and portray the contribution that extra-EU migrants, refugees and asylum seekers bring to European economies and societies, but also their ideas about the (still many) barriers and the (few) opportunities that interject between newcomers and their gaining decent employment. While the national reports which follow this introductory chapter present the situation in each of the SIRIUS countries, here we present some common threads and contrasts that have emerged from the social partners’ expert survey we have conducted to complement our in-depth interviews.

1.2 Methods

Underpinning the findings of this integrated report is a research design that is committed to a mixed methods approach. The approach was operationalised through three key elements: i) a review of the existing literature on social partnership and its intersection with the labour market integration of migrants and refugees across each country; ii) an online experts’ survey of social partners conducted across each of the SIRIUS countries with the purpose of exploring the views, values, attitudes, expectations, and behaviours of social partners and how these vary across countries; and iii) semi-structured interviews with social partners across each of the SIRIUS countries designed to elaborate key issues of labour market integration with social partners such as: skills shortages that could be filled by migrants, tensions between migrant and native workers, the role of informal labour markets, the involvement of social partners in policy design, and the role of collective bargaining and social dialogue in the integration process. Through adopting this mixed method approach we were thus able to glean a complementary quantitative and qualitative insight into the barriers and enablers of labour market integration for migrants and refugees from the perspective of social partner organisations across Europe and the similarities and variations that exist across these distinct contexts.

The process of creating our experts’ survey involved firstly drawing upon the experience of members of the SIRIUS team and producing a draft questionnaire that was then shared across all team members for feedback. The input from the team members helped us as coordinators to modify the questionnaire in a way that key concepts and terms could be easily translated for deployment across each of the SIRIUS countries. At this stage we then provided the SIRIUS Ethics Board with a copy of the proposed online questionnaire and sought their advice on any potential ethical issues and modifications required. Our finalised questionnaire covered

encompassed questions including the perception of migrants and refugees as an asset or burden, how social partners perceived the skills levels of migrants and refugees as well as questions relating directly to the issue of social dialogue between partner organisations relating to the issue of labour market integration. In order to deploy our finalised survey, we drew upon the expertise of colleagues at the University of Geneva using survey software (in this case, namely Qualtrics¹) in which each team would input the translated version of the final survey for deployment in their country.

As with our survey questionnaire, the interview guide we created for the conducting of semi-structured interviews with social partners was produced in a similarly collaborative manner with a first draft being circulated by the GCU team across all teams with input being provided by team members to ensure the smooth translation of key terms and concepts across each of the SIRIUS countries. As with the online survey, we provided the SIRIUS Ethics Board with a copy of the proposed interview guide and sought advice on any potential ethical issues and modifications required. The final interview guide translated and deployed by the SIRIUS researchers was designed to elicit responses from social partners that would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues explored in our online survey.

In terms of our sampling, each of the teams undertook the same process to construct their national samples of social partner organisations. Firstly, teams were asked to take into consideration the findings of our earlier work under Work Package 1 (Macro-economic and labour market related barriers and enablers) and the sectors identified as having the potential to absorb migrant and refugee workers. Next, we asked teams to draw upon those sources from previous work packages to identify key actors in sectors which held potential for the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. We then asked teams to map large umbrella organisations (e.g. trade union confederations, employer representative organisations, business federations, etc.) of social partners in each of their countries to assist in populating their national samples. Teams were asked to draw upon the membership of these large umbrella bodies to identify key individuals who could be potential research participants. These same samples were utilised by researchers across the SIRIUS teams to recruit participants for both the online survey and the semi-structured interviews. Once the national samples were constructed teams were asked to contact – via an email invitation containing a link to the translated version of the online survey – those key individuals identified within social partner organisations to participate in our research. Teams then followed up these initial email invitations with phone calls to social partner organisations and were encouraged to adopt a snowballing strategy and draw upon these new contacts to identify other potential research participants within social partners. As teams undertook the process of contacting social partner organisations for both the survey and the interviews, it became clear that although they were eventually successful in recruiting participants the process appeared to encounter difficulties across a number of the SIRIUS countries with a degree of reluctance being expressed by a range of social partners across various sectors to engage in discussions relating to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. To some extent this reluctance to participate in providing responses to a research study reflected a degree of uncertainty and lack of engagement of social partners from across different sectors and geographies with the specific issues facing migrants and refugees seeking to integrate into

¹ <https://www.qualtrics.com/uk/core-xm/survey-software/>

European labour markets. Nevertheless, the persistence of teams in identifying key individuals within social partners across the SIRIUS countries has produced a unique expert level dataset that provides key insights into a somewhat unexplored area of research which has been complemented with interview data that provides context, clarity and nuance to our survey findings.

Table 1 presents the experts' distribution across social partners' categories by country (although our survey was overall taken by 293 experts, we have decided to include in most of the analyses that follow only responses by those who had filled in at least 70% of the survey, to allow us reporting experts' views with a higher reliability degree given the complexity and length of the survey itself). Unions are the most popular category with overall 110 experts' having responded our survey (ranging from 28 in Finland to 7 in Greece and Italy); employers' organisations are the second most frequent category with overall 46 experts-respondents (ranging from 16 experts having responded the survey in Switzerland to one in Greece and the UK); but we have also captured overall 7 experts from Chambers of commerce; and finally we have 33 experts overall responding from a mix of categories including private companies, social enterprises, professional guilds, and associations of precarious workers.

Table 1 - Distribution of survey experts' respondents by social partner categories (by country), figures are numbers²

Social Partners	Countries							
	CZ	DK	FI	EL	I	CH	UK	<i>Total</i>
Unions	19	18	28	7	7	10	21	110
Employers	7	4	12	1	5	16	1	46
Chamber of Commerce	1	0	0	1	3	0	2	7
Mix category*	12	3	0	6	8	7	0	33
Total N	39	25	40	15	23	33	24	199
*it includes: private company (DK, IT, CH), social enterprises (DK, EL, IT), association of precarious workers (EL), professional guild (EL, CH).								

1.3 Newcomers' skills: an unlocked potential?

As a way to start discussing the extent to which social partners appreciate the contribution that migrants provide to European societies and in particular to our labour markets, we can look at experts' responses to the question: "*What perception do you have of the skills levels of most migrants or refugees arriving in your country?*". As discussed by the literature, and in particular with reference to unions, the understanding that social partners have of migrants depends among other factors (discussed later) also from the characteristics of migrants themselves and from the experience that a given country has had with immigration (which type of migrants has the country experienced, more economic migrants type or more refugees-in need of protection ones, how culturally distant migrants are perceived to be from the receiving society, etc.). Table 2 provides a first piece of evidence to support such an assumption: results point to a different appreciation of newcomers depending on their (legal) status or reason for immigration. While two thirds of social partners' think that so-called

² we have included in the analysis only respondents who had filled in at least 70% of the survey

economic migrants are either highly skilled or moderately skilled, the percentage goes down to less than one every two for refugees. Conversely, only one in five respondents believe economic migrants do not possess meaningful skills, versus almost one in every two thinking the same for refugees. Such results resonate with a popular, albeit not evidence based, assumption that those who migrate to seek a better life or to seek an economic advantage arrive with more skills than those who enter Europe to escape violence and persecution at home.

Although evidence suggests that asylum seekers and refugees experience an extremely stressful situation which may hinder their well-being and capacity to work, the skills they have acquired in their earlier life and work do not disappear as they move forward. Hence, we should all refrain from an aprioristic evaluation of people’s skills on the simple basis of their reason to migrate.

However, we can also interpret such a sharp difference in the appreciation of the skills of economic migrants and refugees as an awareness among social partners that refugees and in general migrants seeking international and humanitarian protection, due to the stressful and perilous circumstances under which they flee their home countries, might need more bespoke services of support and guidance before becoming ‘employable’.

Having said that, overall there is an appreciation of skills for economic migrants.

Table 2 - Respondents’ perception of newcomers’ skills by type of newcomers (figures are percentages)

<i>What perception do you have of the skills levels of most migrants or refugees arriving in your country?</i>	Migrants	Refugees
Highly Skilled	22	7
Moderately Skilled	58	45
Low Skilled	20	48
<i>N</i>	167	161
<i>Total %</i>	100	100

We can now consider the perceptions of newcomers’ skills across types of social partners. Table 3 presents results by considering four categories of social partners: trade unions, employers, chambers of commerce, and a residual category of other organisations, which is mainly composed by social enterprises and cooperatives. Although the different appreciation of economic migrants and refugees mentioned earlier occurs across all social partners categories, with the exception of the ‘other’ which shows a more balanced appreciation between the two types of newcomers, there are some differences among social partners’ typologies that warrant closer scrutiny. Unions appear to have a stronger appreciation of newcomers’ skills than the other social partners: in fact, 29 percent of experts from unions consider economic migrants to possess high skills while only 14 percent of employers’ organisations and chambers of commerce believe so, and slightly lower than that (9 percent) believe the same among the residual ‘other’ category. Such a result contrasts with extant studies that have critically pointed to the ‘weak’ attitude of unions towards migrants. Although not openly challenging such an understanding, it does provide evidence that although unions

may express concerns regarding social dumping, they appear as the most open category among social partners towards migrants. Moreover, the large majority of respondents across the three categories consider economic migrants to be arriving with an existing set of skills (“moderately skilled” is the response item which scores higher across all social partners groups for economic migrants).

Table 3 - Responses to the question “*What perception do you have of the skills levels of most*”

	Unions		Employers		Chamber of Commerce		Other	
	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R
Highly Skilled	29	10	14	6	14	0	9	0
Moderately Skilled	54	42	64	39	72	80	55	65
Low Skilled	16	48	22	55	14	20	36	35
N	92	90	36	36	7	5	22	20
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(M=migrants, R=refugees)

To what extent does such a picture change if we consider differences between countries? Social partners’ appreciation of migrants’ skills in fact needs to be contextualised, as at least four contextual aspects affect social partners attitude towards migrants: a) the position of trade unions in society, the more institutionalized and organized, the less inclined they are to opening up employment and their own ranks to newcomers; b) the labour market structure and dynamics (which sectors are more in need of migrants and to what extent are these sectors unionized); c) wider societal trends (consensual versus conflictual traditions, political polarization, etc.); d) characteristics of the migrants (type, origin and earlier experiences with unions) (Marino et al. 2015). Appendix Table 1 presents an overview of the social partners perception of newcomers by receiving country. Countries like Italy, Greece and the Czech Republic, which have attracted primarily migrants to take up jobs requiring fewer qualifications, mainly in the agriculture, manufacture and the care sectors, or which are employed in the irregular economy, show a smaller share of social partners perceiving migrants as highly skilled individuals than the other countries (cfr. the Italian, Greek and Czech report later in this document).

Moreover, Appendix Table 1 shows that in Greece social partners’ experts have a particularly poor perception of refugees’ skills: 43 percent of social partners who responded to our survey consider refugees as being low skilled. While in countries that either have a long tradition of immigration such as the UK, or in countries where migrants have been employed also in skilled occupations, there is a far more developed appreciation of migrants’ skills. For example, in the UK more than half of the social partners who responded to our expert survey consider both economic migrants and refugees as arriving with well-developed skills; and in Finland four out of ten experts consider migrants arriving with high skills and another five out of ten consider them bearing some skills.

The overall economic and labour market appreciation of newcomers among social partners is also revealed by another question of our experts’ survey which asked whether respondents considered migrants and refugees primarily an asset or a burden for their countries. Narratives of migration and asylum have abundantly speculated upon the cost of hosting migrants and in

particular refugees, one example being the UK debate which involved consistent tropes regarding “bogus asylum seekers” and “scrounger migrants” which have affected not only British debates and immigration policies (Squire, 2016), but also the country’s most important political decision of the century that is their exiting the European Union (Baglioni et al., 2019). **Error! Reference source not found.** however reveals that overall, social partners across our countries do not subscribe to the anti-migrant rhetoric: almost eight out of ten respondents consider migrants an asset or more an asset than a burden for their countries, and one in every two has the same appreciation for refugees (hence, again, a clear difference appears in appreciation: favouring migrants versus refugees). If we consider cross country variations (data not shown here, cfr. Appendix Table 2), only in the Czech Republic is there a consistent share (one third) of social partners among those who responded to our survey who consider newcomers as only being a burden, while in Denmark, Finland and Switzerland, a similar share of respondents considers refugees to be more of a burden than as asset (respectively 24%, 41%, and 25% of respondents).

Table 4 - Responses to the question: “Are migrants and refugees more of an asset or a burden for our societies?” by type of migrants

	Migrants	Refugees	Difference
Only an asset	25	16	
More of an asset than a burden	54	34	
Subtotal positive view	79	50	+29
Only a burden	6	7	
More of a burden than an asset	5	22	
Subtotal negative view	11	29	-18
Neither an asset nor a burden	10	21	
<i>N</i>	168	165	
<i>Total</i>	100	100	

If we consider how the same question scores across types of social partners (Table 5), our data reveals that overall, trade unions, employers’ organisations, chambers of commerce and other types of organisations have a similar relatively high degree of appreciation of newcomers, and in particular of economic migrants. But employers’ organisations are those presenting the highest scores for responses considering refugees more as a burden than an asset, a finding which seems to suggest that although there are consistent examples of businesses and companies vocal in their support for labour market integration including for the most vulnerable groups of newcomers (cfr. the Italian report later in this integrated document), there is still room for improvement in the private sector for a full understanding of the potential which lies within refugees and asylum seekers that still remains unrealised.

Table 5 - Responses to the question: “Are migrants and refugees more of an asset or a burden for our societies?” By type of social partners

	Unions		Employers		Chamber of Commerce		Other	
	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R
Only an asset	29	18	14	3	29	33	19	16
More of an asset than a burden	51	33	61	28	71	33	52	42
Subtotal positive view	80	51	75	31	100	66	71	58
Only a burden	7	7	6	8	0	0	5	11
More of a burden than an asset	3	25	8	36	0	0	10	5
Subtotal negative view	10	32	14	44	0	0	15	16
Neither an asset nor a burden	10	17	11	25	0	34	14	26
<i>N</i>	94	94	36	36	7	6	21	19
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

1.4 Are newcomers disrupting national labour markets?

Much of the scepticism that social partners, and in particular trade unions, have demonstrated towards migrants is related to the potential disruptive effect that newcomers can have on the labour market of receiving societies. They can be perceived as representing a ‘cheap’ and docile workforce which can be employed at a lower economic and social cost than local or native workers. Hence, there is a fear that they may generate social dumping, reduce the already shrinking employment opportunities of the lower echelons of the local workforce, and contribute towards jeopardizing unions’ leverage in wage negotiation and employment regulation dynamics. In fact, evidence suggests that the potential negative effect of the entry of newcomers in a given labour market might be stronger in the period immediately following their entrance in the country, as they might be tempted or forced by restrictive regulations and inadequate integration opportunities to enter the irregular market/economy, and might be available to work at lower than average salaries, and it is in that period that they might enter in competition with local lower skilled workers (IMF 2016). In the longer term, when newcomers stabilise their position, are more eager and legally entitled to consider the wider range of jobs available, their competition effect towards locals drastically diminishes. Still, in the vulgarised, politically motivated, narrative of migrants’ effect on native workers, the fear of newcomers stealing jobs is strong among political and particularly right-wing populist narratives.

Our experts’ survey asked if the arrival of migrants had created tensions in the labour market of the respondents’ countries. Table 6 shows that social partners’ experts seem to share to a certain extent the idea a tension exists between newcomers and native workers, and in fact almost one in every two of our respondents admit the newcomers’ arrival has created tensions in the labour market (Table 6). Moreover, consistent with the literature, trade unions appear to be the actor most concerned by such tensions between newcomers and the local workforce— (Table not shown here, see appendix). Although experts’ answers to such a question depend also from the type of actor/sector they represent: as shown by the Finnish case unions

representing sectors of the labour market with stronger concentrations of highly skilled workers tend to adopt a more liberal approach to immigration than unions representing blue collars or workers with fewer skills and educational levels. In the former case, in fact, the native workforce is protected by the requirements needed to entering professions (certification of formal education and language proficiency, etc..) while in the latter workers are more exposed to competition (see Finnish country report later in this document). Such a concern is similarly distributed across our countries, with the most concerned respondents being located in the Czech Republic and those least concerned in Switzerland and in the UK. The Czech case seems a particularly interesting one in this regard: the country's social partners' we have interviewed recognise the role that immigrant workers play in an economy blessed by low unemployment rates and in need of foreign workforce, still unions show some concern about tensions they might have brought in the local labour market. Such tensions appear more saliently either for those foreign workers that operate through jobs agencies or those that work in qualified positions in the health sectors such as doctors and nurses from Ukraine (see the Czech national report later in this document) (see Appendix Table 3).

Table 6 - Responses to the question: “has the arrival of migrants or refugees created tensions in the labour market in your country with native workers?”

	Migrants	Refugees
Yes	45	43
No	55	57
<i>N</i>	<i>164</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Among the experts who answered positively to our question about the arrival of newcomers having created tensions in the labour market of their host country, Table 8 shows that the most relevant reasons for such tensions to occur are related with the perceived competition for jobs brought by migrants, and, connected to this aspect, the risk of lowering wages. However, causes of tensions are considered also to be the perceived cultural differences, and related to this aspect, the perceived religious differences—the latter echoing wider narratives on integration of Muslims in Europe and the rising problem of Islamophobia in recent times. However, respondents recognize that tensions on migration issues can also originate outside of the labour market, emanating from those tensions that result from the action of political entrepreneurs seeking to gain political advantage by spreading fears and exploiting social vulnerabilities. In fact, the role of populist parties is recognised as a cause of tensions by one every two respondents (Table 7). While the role of policy makers at various territorial levels is residually mentioned as an origin of tensions related with labour migration.

Table 7 - Causes of tensions (only those who have responded positively to the questions on tensions in the labour market provoked by migrants, N=85)

Perceived competition for jobs	65
Perceived cultural differences	64
Populist parties	51
Perceived lowering wages	44
Perceived religious differences	40
National policy makers	17
EU policy makers	11
Regional policy makers	5
Local policy makers	1
<i>Total N</i>	<i>85</i>

If we adopt a comparative cross-country view of the causes of increased tensions with reference to newcomers and the labour market (Appendix Table 3), we notice a difference between countries in which the perceived competition for jobs is clearly a salient reason to explain the perceived competition among migrants and local workers (Greece, Italy, Switzerland and the UK) and those countries in which job competition is a relevant concern but not as important as perceived cultural differences (the Czech Republic, Denmark and Finland). Concerning the Nordic countries, we should bear in mind their well-established patterns of tripartite agreements that regulate every aspect of the labour market and the employment experience, and the institutional strength of their social partners, and in particular unions, does discourage/contrast effectively social dumping, and therefore it is unsurprising that tensions regarding labour migration are more directed towards cultural and religious differences (and these countries' discourses of how newcomers can fit with their national model of society and citizenship). While in countries with high unemployment rates and large irregular labour markets, such as Greece and Italy, but also countries such as the UK and Switzerland with less powerful unions and, for the latter, a long-standing issue of contested cross-border workers, the concern about jobs competition and salary dumping are dominant.

As vividly summarised by an employers' organisation representative interviewed in Greece: "The role of immigrants in the Greek economy is certainly positive. Many small businesses would have been shut down if they had not immigrant workers willing to work hard and with relatively low wages. Also, many big companies might have left Greece and headed for another country in the Balkans with lower wages. However, we must not forget that the weak negotiating position of immigrants and refugees often leads them to the irregular economy. This is a negative consequence of their presence" (cfr. Greek country national report later in this document).

Finally, it is worth noting that only in the Czech Republic and Denmark—for different reasons—are EU policy makers considered to be stoking tensions on labour migration. In Denmark, perhaps that is due to the country's usually protective stance towards any attempt brought in by the EU to Europeanize social policies, which are perceived as attempts to challenge its welfare state, its tripartite based labour market and industrial relations system, and its wage system. Moreover, in the Czech Republic, perhaps due to the country's reluctance to adhere to the EU system of quota distribution for asylum seekers and relatedly the EU's more open approach towards internal mobility and infra-EU migration.

Furthermore, in our expert survey we have also gathered opinions about tools to be used to mitigate the potential harmful effect of the competition between newcomers and native workers (Table 8). Unsurprisingly, social partners' traditional actions, such as social dialogue or greater union representation, are popular mitigating tools among respondents, but also employment inspections and minimum wages are viable options according to our social partners. In particular, the need to improve the tools and resources to implement job place inspections appear as salient measures in Italy and in Greece. In the former, as presented by the Italian country national report later in this document, further inspections could perhaps contribute reducing the massive use of irregular workers in the agriculture industry of Southern regions and the terrible consequences this has had on the life of the immigrants involved (with several cases of immigrant workers deaths due to the degraded working conditions, or road accidents for being transported at workplaces with inadequate vehicles). As put it by a union representative in Greece: "It is important to increase controls. Arbitrations exist when controls are not intense" (see the Greek national country report, later in this document). While measures that are often invoked by political parties and policy makers, such as entry quotas or entry restrictions are rarely mentioned as being useful (with only 8% of our expert respondents selecting these measures).

Table 8 - Tools to mitigate competition between migrants and natives (this response item applied only to those who responded positively to the question about such a competition), multiple responses allowed

	%
Social dialogue	60
Employment inspections	41
Minimum wages	40
Greater union representation	40
Migrants quotas	16
Entry restrictions	8
Other	8
<i>Total n</i>	<i>134</i>

1.5 Barriers and enablers according to social partners' experts

Statistical data on labour market integration of third country nationals in the EU shows the existence of a longstanding gap between migrants and European citizens' employment rate given that the former score much lower than the latter (cfr. Eurostat data on migration and labour market integration at www.eurostat.eu). And the gap is even sharper when women and young people are at stake (Ibidem). Such a gap speaks to an employment potential which remains largely unrealised for third country nationals. The social partners experts we have engaged with in our survey seem to be aware of the newcomers' employment potential situation and the need to address the employment gap, but they seem to be particularly aware of the work that rest to be done for refugees rather than for economic migrants. Table 9 shows that almost half the respondents consider the potential of economic migrants relatively realized, by contrast only one out of ten considers the labour potential of refugees realized. Six out of ten consider that migrants' employment potential to be only slightly realized, and one third believe that refugees' labour market potential is still completely untapped.

Table 9 - Responses to the question: “Do you think that the employment potential of migrants or refugees is fully realised?”

	Migrants	Refugees
Fully realized	4	1
Somewhat realized	40	8
Slightly realized	42	57
Not realized at all	15	34
<i>N</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Total %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

If asked to indicate what are the most relevant causes preventing the full realisation of migrants or refugees’ employment potential (Table 10), social partners’ point to: language proficiency (as pointed out by a Greek representative of an employers’ organisation: “How can an employer hire an immigrant or a refugee when he or she cannot communicate with him/her?” cfr. Greek country national report later in this document), but also legal and administrative hurdles that make getting into employment a difficult path for newcomers, lack of mechanisms for the recognition of qualifications, lack of services that support integration, skills mismatch, and also discrimination, cultural differences as well as poor knowledge about the labour market of the host country. While only one in ten respondents focused upon economy related issues. Thus, in line with SIRIUS findings from earlier Work packages, and in particular WP 2 (legal frameworks) and WP3 (Policy assessment) according to the social partners it is not the economy that is to be blamed for newcomers’ poorer employment performances, but a mix of individual (language proficiency), policy-legal, and societal issues that are determinant factors.

Table 10 - What are the most important factors that prevent the full realisation of migrants or refugees’ employment capacities? (Please select every option that applies)

Factors	%
Language issues	79
Legal/Administrative issues/Immigration policy	61
Lack of qualifications’ recognition	55
Lack of services to support integration	45
Skills mismatch	44
Discrimination	42
Cultural differences	41
Lack of knowledge regarding the national job market	37
Economy related issues	14
<i>Total N.</i>	<i>159</i>

Consistently with the causes, the remedies (Table 11) point to the need to have more language classes provisions, but also different migration policies, given that, as we have shown elsewhere (cfr. Sirius Work Package 2 Integrated report) current legislation makes it very

difficult for third country nationals, and in particular for asylum seekers, to enter the labour market and gain regular, stable and decent employment. Social partners consider also that better job search support services, along with skills matching and skills profiling, and job mentoring, could improve the employment situation of TCNs. Furthermore, antidiscrimination and anti-exploitation policies (or a more effective implementation of these) would help too. While only a small share of respondents considered volunteering opportunities as something that could help TCNs finding a job (although as reported by one of the UK based interviewees in an earlier Work Package, having gained volunteering experience in the host country can prove to be an important step towards employment and valued more than any other credential or experience gained outside the country).

Table 11 - Most effective in facilitating labour market entry

Factors	<i>n</i>
Increase language services	118
Migration policies	87
Support for job search	77
Skills matching	73
Anti-discrimination policies	62
Job mentoring	59
Skills profiling	57
Anti-exploitation policies	53
CV preparation and interview	50
Volunteering opportunities	27
<i>Total N.</i>	<i>164</i>

The data presented thus far should be discussed while having in mind what social partners think about the policies in place in their countries to address skills shortages. In fact, if the employment potential of newcomers (TCNs) is far from being fully realized, in most countries there are skills shortages which third country nationals could contribute towards mitigating if they could be allowed to work or properly supported/prepared for employment. Table 14 shows responses to the question about the effectiveness of policies to address skills shortages: one third of the social partners we interviewed believe that such policies are not effective at all, and almost one in every two considers such policies slightly effective. Overall only one out of ten considers policies to be effective. Such a result is consistent across countries, apart from Switzerland in which a majority of survey respondents consider the country's policies in this area to be somewhat effective (data not shown here, see Table Appendix 4).

Table 12 - Policies effective in filling skills shortages

	%
Very effective	1
Somewhat effective	15
Slightly effective	43
Not effective at all	33
I am not aware of these policies	8
	148

A configuration of ineffective policies to address skills needs that newcomers might address, an environment which is often legally and socially obstructive, with poor opportunities to have qualifications and skills recognized, can lead to a situation in which newcomers end up working in the irregular economy, taking up jobs that locals are not willing to do, resulting in a large scale waste of talent. In some countries, as explained by the Italian, Greek and Czech cases in this integrated report, third country nationals may end up in precarious, and sometimes irregular, work. Social partners are aware of this scenario and in fact two thirds of them consider newcomers to be exposed more than native workers to health and safety risks often associated with those sections of the labour market (Table 13).

Table 13 - Do you think that the health and safety risks faced by migrants and refugees are higher than, the same as, or lower than the risks faced by the native workforce?

	%
Definitely a higher risk	34
A slightly higher risk	33
The same risk	32
Definitely a lower risk	1
A slightly lower risk	0
Tot	100
N	145

Finally, we have to consider if social dialogue, often thought as the right tool to be used in labour migration regulation (ILO 2014) is purposively used to improve migrants' labour market experience. Slightly less than one in every two respondents say that their organisation has been involved in social dialogue processes in the past five years in the specific field of migration (**Table 14**). On the one hand, such a result can be considered a positive sign given the difficult years trade unions have been experiencing in the past decades due to de-unionization and changes in the labour market. On the other hand, however, given the salient role immigration has played in public and political debates across Europe, the result of less than one in every two respondents having being part of social dialogues processes on the topic tells us something about the real commitment that social and political actors have in solving immigration issues.

Moreover, there are no major differences across countries in these results, apart from Finland, where a lower share of respondents (a third) declare having joined social dialogue processes while two thirds had not (Table 15).

Table 14 - In the last five years has your organization been involved in social dialogue processes on labour migration? (Percentages)

Yes	44
No	56
Tot.	100
N	146

Table 15 - In the last five years has your organization been involved in social dialogue processes on labour migration? (Numbers)

Countries							
	CZ	DK	FI	EL	I	CH	UK
Yes	11	9	11	2	12	14	6
No	14	7	24	10	5	13	9
<i>Total N</i>	25	16	35	12	17	27	15

When we investigate the reasons for the lack of social dialogue engagement on labour migration issues (Table 16), respondents point to either political issues (primarily the lack of political willingness to engage in social dialogue tout-court) or labour migration dialogue issues (policy makers across Europe consider migration a minefield which could threaten their re-election). But reasons for limited social dialogue development are also contingent to the specificities of third country nationals most of which are poorly or not unionized at all and therefore unions do not feel membership pressure to get involved, nor they see an immediate advantage in spending resources to protect categories who are not among their members (Penninx and Roosblad 2000, Romano et al. 2015). As shown in the Finnish and in the Czech cases (cfr. these countries national reports later in this document) foreign workers often come from countries in which unions are not recognized and known as genuine tools of democratic participation and interest representation, on the contrary they are perceived as potentially dangerous bodies. Hence, when unions intervene on migration issues, they often tend to intervene to shelter their members from the potential of social dumping that newcomers represented rather than to advance migrants' rights, as mentioned earlier in this introductory chapter. Moreover, causes of poor social dialogue engagement among social partners are contingent to the labour market segmentation, and the channelling of labour migrants in the irregular economy: it is only when immigrant workers shift from precarious legal and employment status into more stable ones that they eventually recognize the relevance of trade union membership.

Table 16 - Which factors prevent the development of opportunities for social dialogue (negotiation and consultation between organised workers and employers which can often include policymakers: e.g. collective bargaining) on migration and labour migration (if more than one, please select the 3 most important)? Percentages

Lack of political will to strengthen social dialogue	32
Lack of political will to resolve labour migration issues	32
Weak unionization specifically among migrants and refugees	29
Weak unionization generally	20
Large informal/irregular sector/market	20
Lack of will among employers to strengthen social dialogue	16
Lack of will among employers to resolve labour migration issues	12
<i>N</i>	<i>164</i>

1.6 Conclusions

Social partners across Europe are a crucial component in labour market regulation and in the connected social, policy and economic dynamics. In some countries social partners are, along with political actors and institutions, part of well-established systems of bargain and negotiation which cover issues such as wages, working hours, and workers/employers' rights and entitlements applying to the entire country or sector of the economy in that country. By contrast, in other countries, social partners occupy a less central position to the detriment of market and economy or purely political dynamics, but still it is through their organisation that employment takes form: companies and business provide opportunities of employment, and unions try to interject in the employer and employee relationship with results that vary across countries. Hence, regardless of the influence and power they have in their societies, unions, employers' organisations, and cooperatives or social enterprises are the social and economic actors through which third country nationals can gain employment and as such we need to seek their advice when studying the causes that prevent newcomers from gaining access to full and decent employment, and the remedies to them.

We have sought social partners' viewpoint by means of both in-depth interviews with them in each country (which are discussed in the country reports that follow this introductory chapter) and an online experts' survey that we have summarily presented here.

The experts' responses reveal that some of the key issues that had been discussed by extant studies, and in particular the dilemmas faced by unions vis-a'-vis migrants (e.g. if they are to include them among their beneficiaries and members, how to mitigate the potential competitive spirals newcomers bring in the receiving society labour markets, how to avoid social/wage dumping, etc..) are still relevant. Our data also show the social partners' awareness about the higher (than local workers) risks migrants incur for their health and safety due to the poor regulations of migration and asylum which often confine newcomers to employment in the irregular economy, or to jobs requiring lower skills, leading to wasted talent, demotivation, and potential social isolation.

However, our survey also reveals the appreciation that social partners have of newcomers' skills, of their potential for the wellbeing of our societies and economies, a potential which very often remains unrealised. This is due to reasons that are at a time pertinent to our society's regulation of migration (migration and asylum law, recognition of skills and educational attainment levels, services to improve newcomers' capacities to adapt to our labour markets, etc..) and a time connected with the characteristics of the migrants themselves (language proficiency, social capital, personal well-being and health). Such results are fully consistent with the analyses we have carried out in previous work packages, providing us with robust (triangulated) evidence about the further efforts policy makers, but social partners too, should engage in. What we can take from this preliminary analysis of social partners is the need for both policy makers at various levels of government and social partners to commit to create further social dialogue opportunities. Too few cases of social dialogue have occurred across our seven countries in the field of labour migration, but social dialogue seems to us a (if not *the*) fundamental tool to solve problems occurring in such a polarized domain of migration, and in what is even a more contentious one, that of labour migration. Rather than leaving space to single-actor claims and activities, even when these are very positive in problem solving—see our country reports in the following sections for examples about how unions and employers solve problems in labour migration—we should encourage a more coordinated multi-actor effort based on dialogue and mutual understanding, as represented by social dialogue.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1 - What perception do you have of the skills levels of most migrants (M) or refugees (R) arriving in your country? (Numbers are percentages)

	Countries													
	Czech Republic		Denmark		Finland		Greece		Italy		Switzerland		United Kingdom	
	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R
Highly Skilled	0	0	15	5	41	3	7	0	0	0	19	0	63	47
Moderately Skilled	47	24	75	68	54	38	86	57	70	40	59	52	32	53
Low Skilled	53	76	10	26	5	59	7	43	30	60	22	48	5	0
<i>N</i>	30	25	20	19	37	37	14	14	20	20	27	27	19	19
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Appendix Table 2 - Are migrants and refugees more of an asset or a burden for our societies?

	Countries													
	Czech Republic		Denmark		Finland		Greece		Italy		Switzerland		United Kingdom	
	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R
Only an asset	0	0	0	0	27	0	62	46	45	30	21	14	47	50
More of an asset than a burden	31	12	77	57	70	32	23	39	50	55	54	25	53	30
Only a burden	31	35	0	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
More of a burden than an asset	4	31	9	24	3	41	0	8	0	0	7	25	0	5
Neither an asset nor a burden	7	23	14	19	0	19	8	8	5	15	18	38	0	15
<i>N</i>	29	26	22	21	37	37	13	13	20	20	28	28	19	20
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Appendix Table 3 – Migration created tension in the labour market- countries view

	Countries													
	Czech Republic		Denmark		Finland		Greece		Italy		Switzerland		United Kingdom	
	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R	M	R
Yes	64	63	52	43	43	57	15	31	50	45	36	18	37	32
No	35	37	48	57	57	43	84	69	50	55	64	82	63	68
<i>N</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Total %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Appendix Table 4 - Causes of tensions by country, numbers are percentages

Causes	Countries						
	Czech Republic	Denmark	Finland	Greece	Italy	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Perceived competition for jobs	30	46	60	100	91	100	86
Perceived cultural differences	70	73	80	50	36	50	57
Populist parties	20	64	70	25	36	67	71
Perceived lowering wages	40	55	40	100	27	67	57
Perceived religious differences	50	27	65	0	0	33	57
National policy makers	15	36	5	0	27	17	14
EU policy makers	20	27	0	0	9	0	14
Regional policy makers	5	9	0	0	0	17	0
Local policy makers	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
<i>Total N</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>7</i>

Appendix Table 5 - Policies effective in filling skills shortages –numbers

Policies	Countries							
	Total	Czech Republic	Denmark	Finland	Greece	Italy	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Very effective	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Somewhat effective	22	4	5	2	0	0	11	0
Slightly effective	64	13	6	19	6	8	7	5
Not effective at all	49	4	3	12	6	9	6	9
Not aware of these policies	12	1	2	3	0	1	3	2
<i>Total N</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>16</i>

Country reports

2 Czech Republic

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2.1 The environments for social partners in the Czech Republic

The Czech social dialogue is characterized by a high level of institutional bargaining combined with a low level of labour mobilization (Bernaciak and Kahancová, 2017: 16). The social dialogue has developed at national, sectoral and company levels (see Martišková & Sedláková, 2017). Since 2000, the Czech Republic has the highest collective bargaining coverage rates in post-communist central European countries. *“One of the reasons for its relative stability is the extension mechanism for sector-level collective agreements; this is the case in several sectors, including construction, electronics and retail”* (Martišková & Sedláková, 2017: 59). Even though the Czech Republic is far below the numbers of Scandinavian countries, such as Finland or Denmark, the rate slightly exceeds the OECD average (with similar numbers as Switzerland, for example).

At the national and regional levels, the key institutionalised platform that secures the social dialogue is the Council of Economic and Social Agreement of the Czech Republic (RHSD). The Council, commonly referred to as ‘tripartite’, is a voluntary negotiating and initiative body of trade unions, employers and the Government of the Czech Republic. The main goal of the tripartite negotiations is to reach a consensus on major issues of economic and social development. Even though the proposals and agreements concluded at the Council are not binding on the government and parliament, the social partners regard the Council as a useful tool to influence the legislative process (Myant, 2010).

Czech trade unions are associated with the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (ČMKOS) – 29 trade unions are affiliated with approximately 310,000 members, and the Association of Independent Trade Unions (ASO) – 13 trade unions with 85,000 members. On top of these associations, there are other significant trade unions, for example, the SKODA Auto trade unions. On the one hand, according to the OECD (2018), trade unions represent approximately 11.5 % of wage and salary earners – a figure significantly below the average in Western Europe – and the number has been decreasing continuously. On the other hand, in recent years, the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, as the biggest association, had been increasing in terms of absolute numbers (almost 30,000 new members in the last three years) and new unions have emerged in large international companies such as Amazon, Karlovy Vary Mineral Water, H&M, Marks & Spencer or UNI HOBBY (Bittner 2019).

The contemporary position of trade unions in the Czech Republic has to be understood in the context of political and economic developments and, therefore, considering the historical developments in the period of state socialist rule (1948-1989), economic transition after 1989, and harmonisation with EU legislation after 2004 (Myant & Drahekoupil, 2017).

In general, there is a strong tradition of the labour movement, with the first trade unions emergent in the region of the current Czech Republic established in the 1860s. After the Second World War, all trade unions were unified in the general Revolutionary Union Movement (Revoluční odborové hnutí, ROH) with almost universal membership. However, this organisation was closely tied with the ruling communist party and did not challenge its politics (Tomšej, 2018). It was, in fact, the legacy of the communist regime and the Revolutionary Union Movement that contributed to the sharp decline of trade unions after the year 1989 both in the membership of these organisations and in the trust wider society had in them. Moreover, the decline of trade unions was further accelerated by economic transformation; more specifically, by the dissolution of the number of state-owned factories and by the simultaneous emergence of new private entrepreneurship and self-employed people (Drahokoupil & Myant, 2015; Myant, 2010; Tomšej, 2018). Trade unions, however, have remained the key actors of political contention against the gradual development of capitalism after 1989 and in the mobilisation of anti-austerity protests (Císař & Navrátil, 2017).

In the post-communist context, the Czech economy is characterised by the strong presence of foreign direct investments and the manufacturing sector - international companies both invested in the former state-owned plants or used the subsidies provided by the state and established new plants. According to Čaněk (2017) trade unions, in the traditional industrial plants, were able to sustain their position, while in the newly established ones, the power of trade unions was weaker. The strength of trade unions on the level of enterprises can also be influenced by the country of origin of foreign direct investments; in this regard, German companies might transfer employer-union relations as they have been established in Germany (Myant, 2010; Myant & Drahokoupil, 2017).

Unions on the level of enterprises are weak in the Czech Republic; the undertaking of strikes are very rare, and collective bargaining (that is the main action taken by trade unions) is usually “amicable” (Myant, 2010; Tomšej, 2018, Myant & Drahokoupil 2017). On the other hand, trade unions have been able to strengthen their position in influencing labour policies (Myant 2010), especially by protesting and directly negotiating with the government (Čaněk, 2017), mainly in those periods when social democratic parties have formed part of the government.

The marginalisation of trade unions after the so-called Velvet Revolution has progressively been reversed since 2014. The strengthened position of trade unions is related to its new leadership and the new Chair of the Czech and Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (ČMKOS) Josef Středula. ČMKOS initiated a high visibility mass-media campaign titled “The End of Cheap Labour” (Konec levné práce) (for details see Myant & Drahokoupil, 2017). The campaign pointed out that the growth of the Czech economy has been enhanced due to the cost of labour, which is considerably lower compared to EU countries. The campaign had a political impact and resulted in an increase in the minimum wage and strengthened the public platform of trade unions.

There is no data about foreigners organised in Czech trade unions. However, according to the study of Čaněk (2017), it is considerably lower than in the general population. Several reasons cause the low involvement of migrants in trade unions; foreign labourers often work in new industrial plants where trade union density is lower than, for example, in the public sector. Migrant workers are also more likely to work in precarious positions, often having a contract with labour agencies rather than with actual employers. These conditions prevent them from becoming trade union members. Last but not least, foreign workers have very limited knowledge about labour unions and their rights in general (Čaněk, 2017).

Czech employers are associated with two key employers' associations - the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic and the Confederation of Employer and Entrepreneur Associations of the Czech Republic. The former represents 11,000 companies employing approximately 1.3 million employees, while the latter represents eight employer and entrepreneur associations with 22,000 entities and 1.3 million employees (Bittner 2019). Generally, employers' associations represent companies which employ approximately 25 % of Czech employees (OECD 2018). As Pinková (2015) notes, the literature available on Czech business or employer organisations focuses mainly on formal and legal aspects of their existence (see, e.g. Brádel et al., 2010, Bělina, 2012, Mansfeldová, 2005, Hála et al., 2003). The focus of employer organisations on migration is very limited, and the topic of integration is marginalised and seen in strictly economic terms, without addressing any socio-cultural aspects of the integration process (Hoření, 2019).

The only legal representative of employers in the Czech Republic is the Chamber of Commerce, which is not institutionally recognised. Its existence is anchored in Act No. 301/1992 Coll. which regards the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic and the Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic. According to the legislation, the Chamber of Commerce defends the interests of entrepreneurs of all fields except agriculture, food and forestry, which fall within the competence of the Agrarian Chamber. The Chamber of Commerce is the most important representative of the business sphere in the framework of social dialogue. Moreover, the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic holds, according to the Government's Legislative Rules, a mandatory role in articulating matters concerning the regulation of business. The Chamber of Commerce also participates in foreign delegations together with representatives of the Czech state, and it has a role in organizing bilateral meetings of Czech and foreign companies.

2.2 Methods

The study was based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. More specifically, it relied on semi-structured interviews with social partners and on a survey meant to reach a broader sample of respondents from trade unions, associations of employees and other relevant organisations.

The survey sample consisted of 223 contacts of potential respondents. The contacts were mainly collected from member lists of several umbrella organisations. The majority of trade unions are active within ČMKOS. Other contacts were found on member lists of smaller trade union associations (e.g. Asociace samostatných odborů České republiky - "The Association of Independent Trade Unions of Czech Republic"). The contacts to employers' organisations were found either on the member list of Unie zaměstnavatelských svazů České republiky ("The Employers Union of the Czech Republic") or through the Chamber of Commerce (Hospodářská komora České republiky). Contacts for representatives of international chambers of commerce were also added to the sample.

In terms of economic sectors, we looked into those that came up during previous work packages in the SIRIUS project. As a result, organisations from all manufacturing and service sectors were contacted together with associations and trade unions from the field of health and social care. We also added small specialised fields, such as IT or cultural industry, where the total number of foreign labourers is small, but they represent an important share of workers

in the field itself. Only organizations from the field of education and other public services are missing; due to legislative regulations and cultural expectations, there are almost no teachers or public officers with a foreign background. Where possible, representatives were contacted on a local level; this was the case of larger trade unions or employers' organisations such as the Trade Union of Metal Workers or the Czech Association of Social Care.

After several reminders, the response rate came down to around 70 contacts out of the 223 reached contacts. Therefore, the results of the survey analysis have to be viewed as complementary material and interpreted cautiously, considering the low response and completion rates. The collected surveys showed, however, a significantly low completion rate, less than half of the received surveys were almost fully completed. Based on the feedback provided by some of the contacted respondents, both the low response and completion rates are explained by respondents' little experience with migrants and, in particular, with refugees. Others, however, communicated via email their personal aversion towards migrants as a reason for refusing their participation in the survey.

The same sample of respondents was used for the selection of potential participants in the semi-structured interviews. In total, we conducted 15 interviews: 7 interviews with trade union representatives, 4 with employers, two with chambers of commerce members and one with a social entrepreneur.

In the selection process, particular attention was given to the participants' area of expertise, as well as their role within the respective organisation. A total of 80 respondents were selected and contacted via emails. To reach a higher response rate, where possible, the emails referred to the participants' work positions and experience with MRA's LMI and explained how their expertise is relevant for the SIRIUS research project. Umbrella institutions, together with their local representatives in regions with a significant number of MRAs employed, as well as important employers in the industry sector, were contacted via mail and phone calls. Here again, a large part of contacted representatives could not participate, the main stated reason being the lack of experience and knowledge in matters of migrants and refugees' integration on the Czech labour market.

Smaller organizations were usually not interested in participating, insisting that they had almost no foreigners in their institutions or that they made no distinction between Czech and foreign employees. At the same time, however, most of the larger institutions that deal with the topic, for example, at the legislative level, were willing to provide an interview. Due to the relatively low number of foreigners in the Czech labour market and the size of the Czech Republic, we managed to conduct interviews with representatives from almost all areas where foreigners are typically employed.

2.3 The strategies and activities of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in the Czech Republic

In line with the literature review, both the qualitative and quantitative pieces of evidence suggest that the topic of migration in the context of social dialogue is marginalized. The understanding of MRAs among social partners is not homogeneous, and there are differences in their approach towards MRAs' labour market integration not only within, but also across different types of social partners. Because of the structure of membership, there is a strong tendency of key representatives of trade unions to protect the national labour market and

domestic workers. The migrant workers are sometimes blamed for so-called 'social dumping' and the related reproduction of low wages. On the other hand, there are emerging voices in the new generation of trade unions movements, who stress the vulnerability of MRAs and emphasise the need for a stronger organisation and participation of MRAs in trade unions to protect their working rights and to prevent exploitation of vulnerable migrant groups.

Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of approaches among social partners, the tendencies emerging from the survey data suggest that social partners tend to perceive migrants as low or moderately skilled. As regards the perception of migrants, the survey results suggest that 16 out of 30 (53 %) respondents considered migrants³ to be low skilled, 14 (47 %) viewed them as moderately skilled, while no respondents viewed them as highly skilled. In the case of refugees, 19 out of 25 (76 %) believed they were low skilled, while 6 respondents (24 %) considered they possessed moderate skills.

Out of 29 participants, no one viewed migrants as only an asset, 9 (31 %) perceived them as more of an asset than a burden, 4 (14 %) considered the opposite (more of a burden than an asset), 9 participants (31 %) viewed them as only a burden, while 7 (24 %) respondents thought they were neither. For refugees, out of 26 participants, 17 thought they were either only a burden, or more of a burden than an asset, 3 believed they were more of an asset, while 6 thought they were neither.

The perception of migrants and refugees in the Czech labour market is closely related to the already mentioned low unemployment rate. As a trade union representative suggested: "*The integration of migrants in the labour market represents a burning question, especially since employers are complaining about the lack of workforce, especially qualified, [which] they need to look for outside the Czech Republic*".

Health care is one of the sectors affected by the low supply of labour. However, the increased number of medical doctors arriving in the Czech Republic, in particular, from Ukraine is not accompanied by a significant trade union mobilization. As a representative of a health care professionals' union suggested, the trade union organisations are not interested in needs of foreign doctors and trade unions will definitely not be pioneers in the fight for better working conditions in the field: "*For them, the situation here is like a fairytale*". Moreover, according to some interviewees, some Ukrainian doctors view the Czech Republic as a step towards the West. In this vein, Ukrainian doctors would invest less in collective bargaining, considering the desired and often declared temporality⁴ of their stay in the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, the low willingness to integrate migrants in the Czech labour market is also connected with the perception of MRAs and a lack of faith in their capacity to integrate. This is well illustrated by the following commentary: "*Well, if only foreigners without any qualification*

³ The term "migrant" has different connotations among the Czech population and contrary to the term foreigner, being sometimes perceived negatively, and as a consequence the understanding of the term could also differ among social partners.

⁴ The qualitative evidence does not allow us to make a generalisable conclusion. One of the actors active in the field of migration and labour market suggested that the temporality of residence in the Czech Republic is rather desired and declared, rather than actually existing, considering the number of Ukrainian health workers who have been living in the Czech Republic since their arrival, "*without actually ever leaving the country.*"

would come [...] you know, I heard somewhere that during several years that they arrived in Germany, only 30% were employed or probably some similar figure.”

The role of chambers of commerce as well as of employers is primarily economic, i.e. subjugated to the needs of the Czech (labour) market, and affects the social dialogue only indirectly. The instrumental understanding of MRAs is well reflected in the expression “to import people” used by a Chamber of Commerce representative who at the same time acknowledges the need for a broader social integration, lacking in the Czech context, which should complement and facilitate integration in the labour market. As has been pointed out by a representative of one of the bilateral international Chambers of Commerce in the Czech Republic, the chamber is not directly involved in the debates surrounding integration in the labour market. At the same time, he complained about the strong perception of otherness in the Czech context that prevents stronger foreign investments, although he pointed out that this was a specific standpoint towards those other than the “traditional” groups of migrants in the Czech Republic, such as Vietnamese or Ukrainians.

As part of labour market integration, almost no attention is given to specific migrant/refugee groups, such as disabled people, precariously employed, LGBT+, women or young people. Rather than targeting specific vulnerable groups, labour unions tend to focus on specific sectors, such as the manufacturing industry and factories run by transnational corporations or the health and social care sectors.

In terms of integration support to various groups, a small number of respondents considered that extra support for integration into the labour market should definitely be directed towards young people (3 out of 21), women (2 out of 20), the precariously employed (7 out of 21) and disabled people (9 out of 20).⁵ None of the respondents believed that those from the LGBT+ community should definitely receive additional support, 9 out of 15 (12 %) believed they should not receive any support, while 6 considered some additional support. For young people, 14 out of 21 (19 %) respondents considered that some additional support is needed, while 4 believed there should not be any. The survey suggested similar results in the case of women. For the precariously employed, 10 out of 21 (14 %) respondents believed there should be some support, 4 respondents considered they should not receive any additional support for the integration in the labour market.

In the case of young people, some respondents justified the need for support as they believed this particular group showed great potential for integration and could use some assistance in acquiring pertinent work skills (“*beginnings are hard*”, according to one survey respondent from an employers’ association). This support was viewed as an “*investment into the country’s future*”. Others warned that a lack of support now could result in “*dependency on social welfare*” later, as well as marginalisation or even radicalisation. On the opposite, aversion towards support relied on an understanding of support as a disruption of the free market. Among respondents who were against any assistance, this interpretation was prevalent in the case of support for other groups of migrants as well.

In the case of women, additional support was viewed as particularly pertinent for women with children. Some respondents indicated women’s lower wages than men’s as a reason for additional support, or that women are generally more vulnerable in a new environment. For the precariously employed, among stated reasons for support were the need for stable

⁵ It is worth noting that the very low response rate and unwillingness to reply might indicate a low interest of social partners in these topics.

employment, as well as their right to fair treatment and decent work conditions. While in the case of LGBT+ most respondents saw no reasons for assistance, as according to them, their sexual orientation poses little challenge to their integration capacity, in the case of disabled people, the largest proportion of respondents justified additional support by referring to a principle of solidarity.

2.4 Barriers to the Labour Market Integration identified by social partners

The attitudes of social partners explored in our research appear to resonate somewhat with broader public opinion in the Czech Republic (see WP 3). The survey among social partners suggested that 18 out of 28 (64 %) respondents believed that the arrival of migrants created some tensions on the labour markets and 15 out of 24 (62 %) considered this was also the case for refugees.

A more in-depth qualitative insight suggests six barriers hindering the labour market integration as identified by social partners: (1) lack of language skills; (2) cultural differences; (3) lack of qualification; (4) legal and administrative barriers; (5) precarious conditions of work – low wages and agencies recruitment; (6) access to basic needs – affordable childcare, housing and health care.

First, **a lack of language skills** is considered as the most important factor that prevents the full realisation of migrants' potential on the labour market. Language represents a significant barrier, especially for more qualified workers; an example is a situation in the healthcare sector. Language barriers also deepen the vulnerability of migrant workers, especially when they were hired through recruitment agencies and during negotiation about working conditions and for instance, during wage recovery. Furthermore, language barriers prevent them from becoming union members and thus having a direct impact on the state of their working conditions. The trade unions have limited numbers of speakers who can communicate with foreign workers in their native language. The Czech trade unions have yet to develop strategies to tackle foreign workers and address their issues effectively, including direct communication with them. Even though the need for such strategy is not shared by the majority of trade unions representatives in the Czech Republic, there are people within unions, among our respondents, who call for this type of action.

Furthermore, the representatives of employers recognized the lack of language skills as an important barrier for LMI. However, they declared that the language courses should be primarily provided by NGOs or state institutions rather than the employers.

Second, among most respondents, the main barriers perceived were **cultural differences and religious differences**. Some of them co-construct the myth and narrative about the necessity to prioritize the integration of those migrants who are culturally closer, such as Ukrainian workers. Especially in sectors such as social or health care, there is a demand almost exclusively for Ukrainians. However, at the same time, this approach leads to the othering of workers from countries such as India, Mongolia, or from African countries. As some employers suggested, cultural and religious differences could be important due to the fact that some domestic workers have no or very little previous familiarity and experiences with foreigners.

The perceived importance of cultural differences does not only represent an urgent and contemporary issue for the Czech labour market. At the same time, cultural differences are viewed as a risk for the future; representatives of employers and chambers of commerce acknowledged that some employers and foreign investors take these risks into account as part of their investment decisions and recruitment strategies, and, in particular when it comes to workers from countries considered as culturally distant.

Third, **a lack of qualifications** is seen as an important factor in the field of social and medical care. There is a high level of distrust in migrant workers which might result in the use of different criteria of admission for domestic and foreign workers and complicated schemes of recognition of qualifications. According to several respondents, some of the institutions entitled to recognize foreign qualifications (e.g. universities, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport) are reluctant to participate in the process, perceiving this task to be an additional bureaucratic burden. A respondent working in the field of social care mentioned that when it comes to this sector, workers from countries like Ukraine, only qualified nurses were hired as professional caregivers, although there is no official requirement for such qualifications in this type of job according to the Czech law.

Similarly, in the medical field, respondents shared a suspicion that some foreign doctors arrive with fake certificates or from countries where there is an option to buy a diploma. These narratives, regardless of how correct they are, work to reduce the credibility of the Ukrainian education system in particular. Such low credibility then nourishes suspicion and distrust between domestic and foreign medical professionals. In order to avoid the risk of distrust, the Czech medical chamber (ČLK) negotiated a new regulation according to which it became mandatory for foreign practitioners to fulfil a set of specific conditions in order to become registered at ČLK and carry out their practice – including a B2 language level and a level of qualification similar to Czech doctors, verified on the basis of an exam. However, doctors without this certificate can still work as medical doctors, but they must work under the supervision of a doctor with a recognized diploma. The ČLK estimates that there might be around 200 medical professionals operating in this way and they are probably concentrated in particular in the peripheral regions.

Fourth, several interviewees mentioned **legal and administrative barriers**. Employers emphasized that the recruitment of foreign workers is very complicated and administratively demanding in the Czech Republic⁶. They argued that the extensive paperwork needs to be filled in, and there is no central point of registration. Some representatives of employers criticized the rigidity of the administrative process that hampers any MRAs' efforts to change a job position, especially when it comes to foreign workers recruited for low-qualified positions, whose arrival was supported by the Czech state immigration programmes. The recruitment of foreign workers thus represents an additional administrative and financial burden. In order to simplify the administrative process, employers commonly rely on recruitment agencies arguing that they would appreciate stronger support of embassies.

As recalled by chambers of commerce representatives, the administrative barriers are mentioned as another important obstacle to push foreign investors to move their business out of the Czech Republic.

⁶ On the other hand, these circumstances were welcomed by some employees, as they prevent a higher turnover of the migrant labour force.

Similarly, trade unions' representatives also complained about administrative barriers, although from a completely different perspective. According to these social partners, there is a low level of enforcement of state regulation, particularly in relation to the activities of recruitment agencies and the risk that they would exploit the employees' dependence on employers. Trade unions also called for stronger monitoring and regulation of employment programmes. Their main interest lies in limiting the number of countries from which foreign workers are coming to countries with shared culture values and a compatible system of qualifications. In relation to administrative barriers, there is the usual conflict between the neoliberal employers' view and protective discourse of trade unions, as it was described by Hoření (2019) in the SIRIUS WP3 Czech national report.

Furthermore, administrative and legal barriers are linked to the lack of respect for migrants' and refugees' rights. In the quantitative survey, 9 out of 22 (12 %) respondents believed that employment rights of migrants are only slightly respected, 6 (8 %) thought they were somewhat respected, while 5 considered them to be fully respected. For refugees, out of 20 respondents, 8 (11 %) believed the employment rights were somewhat respected.

Fifth, **precarious conditions of work** have been commonly mentioned as another integration barrier. This is related to the fact that the Czech economic model heavily relies on a cheap labour force. As one respondent noted, the current legislative environment is neither able to fight exploitation of labour, nor to prevent social dumping. On their end, foreign workers' vulnerable position prevents them from negotiating higher wages and better conditions – especially when they are hired through recruitment agencies. Workers' capacity to influence their own situation is closely related to the type of employment contract they have. This means that victims of exploitation (living at the same place where they work or working around 12 hours a day) are at the same time people who are the most difficult to be reached by organisations that want to help workers unionise. As one of the emerging trade union organisers commented, foreign workers are more vulnerable compared to domestic workers; and, moreover this vulnerability has not been accompanied with an attempt to organise, mobilise and defend their interests in the workplace. “*There are some migrants who even refuse to talk to us because they know that it could endanger them,*” described a trade union representative in an interview.

Last but not least, **access to basic needs**, such as access to affordable housing or complicated access to health care, represents a significant barrier. This barrier is related to the fact that there is obvious discrimination in the housing market towards foreigners. Under these circumstances, some foreign workers are forced to live in dorms, in very dire conditions. On top of that, the increase in rent costs has become a serious problem, and not only for foreigners. The housing situation further reinforced the dependency of migrants on those employers who provide housing for them. This situation can be multiplied in regions with the lack of housing possibilities and absence of integration centres.

Another barrier lies in workers' access to healthcare. Eight out of 22 (11 %) respondents believed that migrants and refugees face the same health and safety risks as the native workforce, while 9 (12 %) thought the risk was definitely higher. On a similar note, out of 21 respondents, 12 (16 %) believed that public spending on affordable childcare is very important for the integration of migrants or refugees.

Eighteen (25 %) out of 21 respondents considered that public spending in affordable housing as a means towards the labour market integration of migrants is very or somewhat important, similar opinions concerned access to free healthcare – 17 out of 21 (23 %). The importance of affordable public transport was less significant according to the respondents, with 9 out of 18 (12 %) considering it very or somehow important.

2.5 Enablers to labour market integration identified by social partners

The research study identified seven enablers enhancing MRAs integration in the labour market. More specifically, during the qualitative interviews the following enablers were mentioned: (1) increasing employment opportunities in specific sectors; (2) social networking capacities of social partners and MRAs; (3) education (both of MRAs and employers); (4) the strengthened role of transnational associations and the articulation of the integration agenda in the social dialogue; (5) legislative measures; (6) labour inspections as monitoring tools as well as (7) individual motivations and social identification of MRAs with their employment and job positions. First, the qualitative interviews would suggest that the interviewed social partners underscored the importance of the context in which social partners and MRAs operate. In particular, increasing employment opportunities for MRAs in some **specific sectors** can be viewed as one of the structural and contextual factors that, according to social partners, played a dominant role as a mechanism enabling integration. Among these sectors could be listed the following: construction industry, social care, health care or cleaning services. The importance of MRAs in these sectors was well-documented by a statement made by one trade union representative: “*Sectors such as construction would collapse if there was not the foreign workforce according to some employers*”. However, their enabling role cannot be overemphasised. Although these sectors without a doubt provide space for the integration in the labour market, their role for a broader societal integration is only limited; these sectors are viewed as those which are unattractive for Czechs, implicitly, therefore, sectors for others.

Second, the enablers can also be related to **social networking capacities of social partners and MRAs**. In this sense, the brokerage capacity of trade unions, employers’ association or chambers of commerce and their connections with other NGOs played an important role. Some interviewees remembered that successful integration could hardly be achieved without “*good existing informal relations*”. One of the trade union’s representatives in this regard argued: “*Some NGOs and other third-party organisations are behind important initiatives meant to inform foreign workers on their rights and to help them overcome language or administrative barriers. This should be, however, primarily the responsibility of trade unions.*”

Third, available **education and language courses** addressing the linguistic barriers were also highlighted as effective enablers by many social partners, although not necessarily used and implemented. A representative of medical professional bodies has pointed out that they would welcome these language courses in the countries of origin of medical doctors coming to the Czech Republic, in particular from Ukraine, acknowledging, at the same time, that they have no capacities to realise or to coordinate these courses.

Furthermore, not only the education of MRAs but also the education of employers is viewed as an important enabler of integration. In this regard, the trade union representatives pointed out the necessity to increase entrepreneurs’ familiarity with work-related legislative norms and

to develop a stronger integration-driven culture which would avoid a one-off instrumental usage of the labour force for exclusive economic purposes. The Chamber of Commerce is an active actor in the education of employers; the Chamber organises seminars oriented to employers in order to spread the message about how to get in touch with integration centres run either by governmental authorities or NGOs. This perspective is also based on a broader understanding of integration as not only being labour-related.

Fourth, among the enablers were also enlisted recently emerging semi-formalised **transnational associations** that aim at introducing the rather rarely articulated MRA-related agenda to the social dialogue. More specifically, the potential of these associations might be in the opening of the MRAs agenda, in the development of new pathways for migrants into traditional trade union organisations or even, ideally, in facilitating an establishment of until-today non-existing MRA-focused trade unions.

Fifth, **specific legislative measures** such as the increase of the minimum wage could also work as an enabler. As an economic expert of a trade union suggested, one of the main instruments against unfavourable working conditions would be the increase in the minimum wage. The CMKOS reflected this aspect in the previously mentioned campaign ‘The end of cheap labour’, which started a few years ago. This also concerns the fight against social dumping. Other measures would imply an active employment policy, including requalification opportunities. CMKOS regrets the fact that for the state budget, the resources for active employment policies are reduced, under the pretext that employment is already low. This approach, however, fails to recognize the existence of other issues related to working conditions and the need for requalification, partly in the face of digitalisation processes, which may result in the redundancy of certain jobs. A stronger position of the employee within the company can foster better working conditions and the more successful integration of foreign workers.

Sixth, to a certain extent, **state regulation** and **related monitoring tools** can function as further enablers. Regulation and monitoring take the form of regular state inspections, with the purpose of monitoring labour, health and safety standards, including those of foreign workers. The efficiency of this instrument can be, however, undermined by a limited mandate of the inspections and by a weak capacity to cover all relevant areas or sectors. At the same time, the operation of employment programmes such as “Regime Ukraine,” introduced by the Czech Government to facilitate the recruitment processes, relies on some regulation meant to ensure appropriate living conditions for foreign employees participating in the programme. This mainly relates to housing opportunities, access to healthcare and other basic needs.

Again, the lack of constraints towards employers as responsible parties in these agendas points to a lack of accountability mechanisms. In this context, there were efforts to restrict and control the activities of recruitment agencies, which, by extension, may result in fewer cases of exploitation. For example, recruitment agencies were prevented from headhunting foreign workers by “fixating” the worker within the work position officially assigned by the programme for at least half a year. This type of regulation, however, undermined the flexibility of the employee’s work choices and further increased the administrative burden.

Seventh, **individual motivations, long term employment visions and identification with job position** might work as important enablers of integration. This could be well illustrated by a statement made by a trade union “organiser” who suggested: *“There are workers who have*

spent a longer period here and who are interested in remaining in their employment permanently. They took their job as their own, and they identify themselves with their jobs somehow. In these cases, the likelihood that they will participate in trade unions or that they will integrate themselves is higher.

To sum up, our analysis suggests that social partners identified several enablers to labour market integration, referring to the context in which social partners and MRAs operate⁷, to workplace relationships, such as social dialogue or proper representation of migrant employees by trade unions,⁸ and to individual motivations of MRAs. While some enablers were identified as actually existing, other enablers were mentioned rather as desired mechanisms to be ideally implemented.

2.6 Social partners, social dialogue, policymaking and labour market integration

The survey suggests that social partners do not necessarily share the same perspective on MRAs labour market integration and the strategy to be taken. More specifically, 13 out of 26 respondents believed that a strategy to integrate migrants or refugees should be prioritised at the level of the national labour market. In terms of involvement at the organisation level, 14 out of 25 stated having no participating experience in social dialogue on migration policies. Among respondents who did have some experience, the social dialogue has taken place mostly at a national level (according to 7 respondents),

Among the factors which prevented opportunities for social dialogue were most often mentioned a large informal/irregular labour market (12), weak unionisation among migrants or refugees (10), weak unionisation in general (7), lack of political will to strengthen social dialogue (7) or to deal with labour migration issues (6) as well as the lack of will among employers to strengthen social dialogue (6).

The social dialogue involving trade unions focused primarily on improving working conditions for workers in general and the specific situation of migrant workers was not specifically addressed. Strategies regarding the integration of migrants were developed as part of the regulation of employment programmes. As part of the employment programmes, suggestions and demands regarding policymaking reflected various interests of the involved parties. While the Chamber of Commerce representing the interests of employers pushed for an extension

⁷ The conclusions from qualitative interviews can be further complemented with the analysis of survey answers, although with the necessity to consider the low response rate. In terms of policies promoting migrants' integration in the labour market language training services were considered as most effective (14 respondents), followed by skills matching services (12), effective migration policies (10), skills profiling services (10) and support during job search (9). The sectors that presented migrants with best opportunities for employment and labour market integration according to the respondents were the sectors of construction (according to 20 respondents), agriculture, forestry and fishing (17), manufacturing (15), accommodation and food service utilities (13), as well as human health and social work activities (10).

⁸ As regards the workplace relationships, the survey focused on potential mechanisms which could mitigate conflicts between workers who are migrants or refugees and the native workforce. The analysis suggests that respondents attribute the role of conflict mitigating mechanisms to social dialogue, or collective bargaining (9), minimum wages regulations (8), or greater trade union representation in the workforce (7). Twelve respondents believed that national policymakers are the most effective actors in alleviating potential tensions, 9 thought the same of employers' organisations, while 8 believed third sector organisations or social enterprises to be the most effective.

of employment programmes to other countries, trade unions were interested in stricter monitoring and control mechanisms that would fight social dumping as part of these programmes.

Based on some of the conducted interviews, the strategies for labour market integration should be prioritised at the national level, as part of the agenda of specific government bodies, such as the Ministry of Interior (which “holds the executive power within employment programs such as *Režim Ukrajina*”, according to a representative from the Chamber of Commerce) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as within the tripartite.

Moreover, the interviews with social partners suggest that the national focus should be complemented with strategies at a regional level, in order to secure a better understanding of MRAs needs and region-specific LMI barriers. According to some testimonies, particularly from trade unions representatives, communication with local and regional representatives is central to the understanding of these strategies’ impact and efficiency. The regional representatives have the capacity to consider specific opportunities in different fields and identify the key areas in which MRAs can ask advice. This is well-illustrated with the following statement made by a representative of employers, who would welcome more integration centres in regions:

“In our region, it isn’t like in Prague. There is no integration centre, so the employees don’t use it. We try to help them anyway, and this is possible only because we have a low number of foreign employees. We can thus help them with “papers” or with housing issues.”

2.7 Conclusions

Strategies and policies related to migration issues in the Czech Republic are largely determined by the economic situation, particularly by an economic environment strongly affected by a high demand for labour and a shrinking supply of workers.

Approaches and attitudes towards integration strategies vary among social partners, reflecting specific interests, with some representatives projecting hostile discourses on migration. Economic interests, however, represent a common denominator across different partners, with trade unions being concerned with social dumping on the one hand, and chambers of commerce and employers’ associations eager to supply business with (cheap) labour, on the other.

While their function as a work force is of particular interest to a large number of employers, the social integration of migrants remains a marginal issue within the social dialogue. Migrant workers’ labour conditions are viewed only in a larger context of workers’ situation in general, specific migrant groups such as the youth LGBT, or women MRAs represent therefore marginalized topics concerning an already marginalized group.

This situation is also the result of low participation and influence of MRAs in trade unions. Despite these trends, the research registered emerging attempts to stimulate MRAs participation in trade unions and to open the migration topic on their agenda. While some actors called for stricter monitoring and regulations, other stated that this should not result in increased bureaucratization.

Moreover, we identified six types of barriers for MRAs integration on the labour market mentioned by social partners: (1) lack of language skills; (2) cultural differences; (3) lack of qualification; (4) legal and administrative barriers; (5) precarious conditions of work – low wages and agencies recruitment; (6) access to basic needs – affordable childcare, housing and health care.

Furthermore, we identified seven enablers facilitating MRAs integration. In particular, social partners mentioned the following important enablers of the labour market integration: (1) the increasing employment opportunities in specific sectors; (2) social networking capacities of social partners and MRAs; (3) education provided to both MRAs and employers; (4) the strengthened role of transnational associations and the related articulation of the integration agenda in the social dialogue; (5) legislative measures; (6) regulation and monitoring ensuring the labour, safety and health standards as well as (7) individual motivation and social identification of MRAs with their employment and job positions.

Progress in terms of social dialogue concerning the integration of MRAs in the labour market is undermined by insufficient coordination efforts between involved actors, mainly the Chamber of Commerce and other associations of employees, trade unions, NGOs and state institutions. The role of each party in creating an environment conducive to fair working conditions for the migrants while reacting to the needs of employees is only vaguely defined, which as a result leads to a lack of accountability. However, there have recently been several emerging initiatives that cater for the inclusion of migrants' needs in trade unions' agendas, although prioritised only by smaller and less influential independent trade unions. In fact, strengthening of trade union capacities for campaigning among workers who do not speak Czech seems to be among the crucial issues to make foreign workers conditions better.

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Annex I – List of Interviews with Social Partners Representatives

Participant	Date	Role	Social Partner Type
Social Partner 1	24/10/2019	Policy officer	Trade Union
Social Partner 2	20/11/2019	Policy officer	Trade Union
Social Partner 3	28/11/2019	Trade Union Recruiter	Trade Union
Social Partner 4	9/12/2019	The Member of Independent Unions	Trade Union
Social Partner 5	11/12/2019	Chief Executive	Trade Union
Social Partner 6	13/12/2019	Chief Executive	Trade Union
Social Partner 7	12/11/2019	Policy officer	Chamber of Commerce
Social Partner 8	8/11/2019	Chief Executive	Employers' organisation
Social Partner 9	25/11/2019	Chief Executive	Employers' organisation
Social Partner 10	18/12/2019	Policy officer	Employers' organisation
Social Partner 11	17/1/2020	Chief Executive	Employers' organisation
Social Partner 12	13/1/2020	The Head of HR	The Employer
Social Partner 13	16/1/2020	Director	Social Enterprise
Social Partner 14	20/2/2020	Secretary General	Bilateral Chamber of Commerce

3 Denmark

Somdeep Sen & Michelle Pace

3.1 The environment for social partners in Denmark

The Danish labour market is both highly organized and regulated (Hasle and Petersen 2004: 08). This is evident in the presence and active role of social partners like labour unions and employers' organizations – all of whom play a critical role in defining the nature and norms of Danish industrial relations in general and the labour market in particular (Due and Madsen 2008: 516). Historically, this (institutionalised) role of social partners was established through the “September Compromise” of 1899, that followed a “major lockout” and breakdown in industrial relations. The compromise, which was agreed upon by the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Employers' Confederation (DA), provided for a framework for collective-bargaining “for the settling of disputes between the parties” – namely, employers' organizations and labour unions (Due et. al. 2000: 43). Today, the collective-bargaining framework is also used to agree upon the norms of the labour market. DA and LO, as umbrella organizations representing employers and employees respectively, negotiate and agree upon “pattern-setting agreements” on wages, working hours, overtime, holidays, pensions as well as vocational training (Scheuer 2002: 465-481). These agreements are then adopted by the member confederations and unions in accordance to the needs of the specific industry/sector they represent (Ibsen and Keune 2018: 25). Since a majority of Danish employers and employees are members of employer organizations and labour unions, these agreements negotiated under the auspices of the collective bargaining framework foundationally impact the nature of industrial relations in Denmark.

In addition to the above-mentioned role, labour unions and employers' confederations also play a significant role in maintaining two important present-day characteristics of the Danish labour market: a) flexicurity and b) a focus on activation. As a direct outgrowth of the collective-bargaining framework, the flexicurity model aims to secure both “the wage earners' wish for increased real earnings and more social benefits and the employers' interest in keeping costs at a level that secures their competitiveness” (Due and Madsen 2008: 525). Accordingly, Danish employers are able to dismiss employees with relative ease (or flexibility), while employees are protected (or secured) “financially by unemployment benefits for a considerable period” (*Ibid*: 525). To be sure, the flexicurity model persists because of the existence of the above-described “integrative negotiating culture” whereby social partners (employers' confederations and labour unions) do not see themselves in competition but engaged in “a negotiating game in which both sides have their needs taken into account” (*Ibid*: 525). Labour unions and employers' organizations are also involved in the formulation of labour market activation policies that were first implemented to “combat unemployment in the mid-1990s” but are focused on “increasing labour supply” (Kvist and Pedersen 2007: 100). To this end, activation policies facilitated by social partners are meant to ensure that there is a

“very high level of employment” that in turn helps “finance public benefits” offered by the Danish welfare state. Furthermore, employment is seen as a way of ensuring that citizens are active and are not socially excluded (*Ibid*: 100).

Expectedly, the nature of the integration of MRAs⁹ into the labour market is affected by the role of social partners in shaping Danish industrial relations. As we go on to demonstrate below, both labour unions and employers’ confederations are concerned with the “influx” of MRAs into the Danish labour market and the possibility of “social dumping”¹⁰ that would in turn undermine the foundational characteristics of Danish industrial relations, mediated not least by the collective-bargaining framework. However, the consolidation of the role of social partners and dialogue amongst a wide range of actors was facilitated by the Tripartite Agreement signed by the Danish government (with social partners) as a response to the European “migration crisis” (Sen and Pace, 2019: 10). On 6th October 2015, in his inaugural speech as the newly-elected Prime Minister at the time, Lars Løkke Rasmussen declared, “integration efforts have failed”. This, for him, was most evident in the low levels of participation of migrants in the labour market. So, in view of the “influx” of a new cohort of asylum seekers, Rasmussen then proposed an employment-focused integration program that would introduce those who have been granted asylum in Denmark “to a [Danish] workplace as soon as possible” (Statsministeriet 2015)¹¹. The following year the Tripartite Agreement was signed by the Danish government, LO and DA. Additionally, the negotiations involved other social partners in a consultative role: Organizations like Foreningen Nydansker or the Association of New Danes¹², Integrationsnet¹³, LG Insight¹⁴ and Cabi¹⁵. These organizations, alongside their consultative role during the Tripartite Agreement negotiations, are also collaborating members of Sammen om Integration (Together on Integration), an initiative administered by the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) and The Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) which is focused on assisting employers with the recruitment of refugees. While establishing this partnership, Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen declared that all concerned parties had the “shared responsibility to not repeat the mistakes” of past efforts to integrate migrants into the Danish labour market. He added that the arrival of a new cohort of refugees provided a new opportunity for civil society social partners to work together with governmental agencies and Danish employers to facilitate their integration into Danish society (Statsministeriet 2015). An interviewed civil society social

⁹ This abbreviation includes asylum seekers. It is, however, important to note that in Denmark asylum seekers are not permitted to work. Therefore, our findings in this report are largely limited to mainly economic migrants and refugees.

¹⁰ In the context of MRAs’ integration into the Danish labour market, “social dumping” entails Danish employers employing cheaper MRA labour which in turn drives down the wages of Danish workers (Erickson and Kuruvilla 1994; 3F 2019).

¹¹ In this said speech Rasmussen uses the terms “refugees” and “immigrants” interchangeably. And, he cited the low employment rate among “immigrants from non-Western countries” as evidence of the need for a labour market integration policy focus.

¹² Foreningen Nydansker is a civil society organization that focuses on removing barriers to MRAs’ entrance into the Danish labour market.

¹³ Integrationsnet is a consultancy service of the Danish Refugee Council that assists municipalities with the integration of refugees into the Danish labour market.

¹⁴ LG Insight is an analysis and consultancy firm that conducts surveys, studies and policy evaluations for public and private sector clients.

¹⁵ Cabi is a non-profit network, knowledge and consultancy firm that focuses on the development of a socially responsible and inclusive Danish labour market.

partner underlined the value of such a partnership and noted that it allows partners “*to give inspiration*” to each other with regard to facilitating MRAs’ integration into the Danish labour market. Further, with regard to the specific role of civil society social partner members of “Sammen om Integration”, she added that Danish employers can call or write to such organizations to seek advice and guidance (Social Partner, Interview 11).

The purpose of the Tripartite Agreement was two-fold: first, it proposed an increased focus on refugees’ integration into the Danish labour market; second, it aimed to make it easier for Danish employers to hire individuals who have been recently granted asylum in Denmark. The Agreement, as a consequence, has led to an overwhelming focus on employment in the integration efforts of Danish municipality authorities. As a means of assisting Danish employers in hiring refugees, a new so-called basic integration education programme (*Integrationsgrunduddannelsen* or IGU) was established to ensure “better skills assessment, increased “service inspection” of job packages, concrete pathways to employment, better conditions for companies that contribute to the integration of refugees, more transparency in the legislative framework and easier access to self-employment” (The Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing & the Social Partners 2016; Sen, Bjerre and Pace 2019: 7-8). The IGU program was implemented in 2016 for a period of three years. It was renewed in 2019 until 2022 (The Local 2019). This means that, in terms of integration efforts and the role of social partners, the focus on the swift entry of refugees into the Danish labour market has remained a policy focus. In many ways, the IGU program could be considered an outgrowth of the earlier mentioned labour market activation policy whereby labour market integration policies and schemes are both meant to increase the size of the (qualified) labour force available to Danish employers. Further, it ensures that those that have been granted asylum in Denmark swiftly become tax-paying members of the Danish labour force who in turn help finance the services of the welfare state (Ledstrup and Larsen 2018: 14-16). However, in February 2019, the Danish parliament also passed a “paradigm shift” law that marked the change of focus “from integration to future repatriation”. With this law, the government at the time, with support from the right wing, populist Danish People’s Party and the Social Democrats, aimed to “reduce the number of refugees who remain in Denmark permanently” (Ritzau 2019). Social partners like employers’ confederations have expressed serious concern that the “paradigm shift” policy would lead to a shortage of workers as refugees would, as a consequence of this 2019 bill, be deported to their home country (Gadd 2019). An interviewed civil society social partner, similarly critical of the “paradigm shift”, added, “*how many years do you have to live in a country to say that you are part of a country?*”. He further explained that it is unrealistic (and unethical) to “*send people back*” if they have lived in Denmark for a substantial period of time – irrespective of their residency status (Social Partner, Interview 20)¹⁶. On 5th June 2019 a new center-left Danish coalition, led by the Social Democrats, formed the government. It is unclear, at time of writing, as to the policy-implications of the coexistence of a “paradigm shift” law alongside a continued focus on labour market integration as a path towards substantial integration of refugees into Danish society.

¹⁶ At the time of this interview in October 2018 parliamentary debate on the implementation of the “paradigm shift” law was underway.

3.2 Methods

The population data set for this study included 75 organizations¹⁷. These included large confederations of labour unions and confederations of employers' organizations. Furthermore, it consisted of small and medium sized employees and employers' organizations from sectors such as construction, shipping, commercial painting, transportation, media, graphics design, textile industry, landscape construction, cosmetic industry, machine operators, glass fitting, electricians, early-childhood education, engineering, social pedagogues, freelance filmmaking, information technology and pharmacists. This sample of interviews was conducted on the basis of an assessment and analysis of policy discourses and policymaking in relation to the labour market integration of MRAs in Denmark. Accordingly, we included social partners who played an active role in determining the norms and characteristics of the Danish labour market in general as well as in terms of policymaking on the labour market integration of MRAs more specifically. The sample also included smaller employees and employers' organizations, that, while having a lower profile in terms of being actively involved in the formulation and implementation of labour market integration policies, have nonetheless been prominent in the public discourse (Sen, Bjerre and Pace, 2019).

Recruitment of participants began with an invitation email. The text of the email gave an overview of the project and invited the potential participant(s) to take part in an online survey in Danish and/or English as well as to participate in an in-person interview. The first set of emails were sent to participants who had been interviewed earlier and were only asked to participate in the survey. Expectedly, due to the already existent relationship with the participants, there was a high response rate as well as a high acceptance rate. A second set of invitations were sent to potential participants, inviting them to participate in both the online survey and an interview. There was a low response rate to this set of invitations and most declined to participate, saying that they either did not have the time or that matters relating to the labour market integration of MRAs were not a significant focus of their operations. Following this, largely unsuccessful, recruitment stage, a two-pronged strategy for recruiting participants was adopted. Larger, politically active social partners were invited to participate only in an in-person interview, while less prominent social partners were asked to only participate in an online survey. There was a high response and acceptance rate among the former group and in total 21 interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted for between 40 and 60 minutes. At least 24 hours following the interviews, the interviewees were contacted with an email that thanked them for their participation and requested them to further participate in an online survey. This strategy with regard to the online survey resulted in a higher response and acceptance rate. Social partners who did not accept the invitation to participate in the interview were requested to then participate in the online survey instead. Some participants accepted this invitation, although the response/acceptance rate was not particularly high. A maximum of three reminder emails as well as a telephonic reminder were activated with social partners who did not reply to the original email inviting them to only participate in the online survey. The response rate to this approach was relatively low as well and, on some occasions, we discussed the survey extensively over the phone with potential participants before they agreed to participate. In total 33 invited participants completed the survey.

¹⁷ This population includes all the social partner stakeholders considered relevant for the purposes of this report. As we explain further in this section, all the organizations in this list were invited to participate in a survey, while a smaller number of organizations participated in an in-person interview.

While the data collected will be discussed extensively in the sections below, there was, nonetheless, a noteworthy insight that we gathered from the recruitment process. Many potential participants, especially those who did not consider the project to be relevant to their operations, recommended that we contact the larger confederation of employers' organizations and large confederations of labour unions. In doing so, they considered matters related to the labour market integration of MRAs as a *national* issue and not a policy-relevant issue that is relevant at a sectoral level. This, to an extent, indicated that policy discussions regarding MRAs' labour market integration were/are pursued primarily by large confederations. And, not unlike the process of lawmaking with regard to the labour market in general in Denmark, they are then responsible for formulating and implementing broad, pattern-setting agreements on the labour market integration of MRAs in general.

3.3 Strategies and activities of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in Denmark

As shown above in section 3, several initiatives have been implemented in order to improve the labour market integration of MRAs in Denmark. Some directly target MRAs. Others target only refugees and family reunified persons and female immigrants. Other initiatives target all unemployed nationals and MRAs. Yet, what do we know about the effects of these initiatives? Which barriers and enabling factors are mentioned in the existing literature in regard to labour market integration of MRAs? These are the questions that we will answer in this section based on a review of existing analyses and assessments of initiatives for the labour market integration of MRAs in Denmark. Several of the existing analyses included in this section are systematic reviews. When referencing these reviews, the original terminology is used, and terms used to describe the effect of the initiatives such as 'positive', 'negative', 'large' 'significant' are thus not our assessment, but the result of the systematic review.

With a view of their strategies and activities in relation to labour market integration, most survey respondents perceived MRAs entering Denmark to be moderately skilled. Among respondents who considered MRAs to be highly skilled, a large majority considered economic migrants (rather than refugees) to be highly skilled. Among those who considered MRAs to be low skilled, the vast majority considered refugees to be low skilled. None of the respondents considered refugees and non-refugee migrants to be *only* a burden. However, non-refugee migrants were considered more of an asset than a burden compared to refugees, while refugees (more than non-refugee migrants) were considered to be more of a burden than an asset. An almost equal number of respondents claimed to pursue a general form of support for migrants and refugees, on the one hand, and to pursue targeted forms of support, on the other hand. Within the group of migrants and refugees, women were considered to be a demographic that should definitely receive additional support, followed by people with disabilities, young people and the precariously employed. Among the respondents a majority believed that the LGBT+ migrant community should not receive any additional support.

The perception of interviewed social partners – namely labour unions and confederations of employers – on the presence and active participation of MRAs in the labour market was rarely rights-based and interviewees did not refer to the human rights of MRAs or identity-based barriers (such as racism) to their integration into the Danish labour market. Instead, their

perception was shaped by the interests and labour market needs of their membership. Thematically then, their perceptions of MRAs (and their labour market integration) as well as their strategies/activities can be categorized under two headings: 1) Labour market integration as talent/skills mobility and 2) MRAs and the threat of “social dumping”.

3.3.1 Labour market integration as talent/skills mobility

This cohort of social partner participants considered MRAs to be a valuable asset to the Danish economy and the labour force. Accordingly, when asked about their perception of MRAs, a representative of a labour union for engineers and information technology (IT) specialists, said that in the sectors represented by the organizations it was extremely *“important to attract skilled foreign labour”*. He added that there weren’t too many refugee engineers or IT specialists. Nonetheless, he added, *“we need skilled IT specialists and engineers because we have a shortage in Denmark”*. When asked about the specific measures taken by the organization with regard to recruiting foreign employees, he said *“We were very supportive of the Green Card Scheme to attract talented foreign labour into the country. Now the scheme has been stopped but we always try to push for easier access to the Danish labour market”*. Referring to the existent, anti-immigration discourse and the manner in which the organization is able to still pursue (and publicly justify) its efforts to enable the entry of more foreign workers into Denmark, he added, *“I personally do a lot of political work and am in the media. So, sometimes I get calls from unemployed Danish engineers who attack me for saying that we need foreign workers because there are Danish workers who are in need of employment”*. He said that his response to such attacks is that *“many Danish companies exist because of foreign workers”*. If Danish companies, he explained, are unable to recruit a sufficient number of skilled individuals it is very likely that they will move their operations to another country¹⁸. Finally, in terms of the overall strategies of the organisations that are focused on the facilitation of integration of MRAs into the Danish labour market, the interviewee outlined three aspects of the organization’s work to this end. The first, he said, involved political work and required consultations with politicians. He added, however, *“most [politicians] agree that there is a shortage of labour in our sector and we need foreigners”*. He added that while large confederations of unions conducted a majority of the political work his organization makes its *“position clear in the media whenever necessary”*. The second aspect of their work involved support for the union’s (majority) members who *“are not covered by the collective agreement”*¹⁹. *So, we have a big team of lawyers who spend time negotiating*

¹⁸ During the interview, the interviewee noted that Denmark is currently facing a historical low in unemployment rates and that while there are expectedly a few unemployed engineers, this is not a reflection of a broader phenomenon of significant levels of unemployment among qualified engineers in Denmark. According to Statistics Denmark, the central authority on Danish Statistics, the [unemployment rate](#) in November 2019 was 3.7 percent. This number has been steadily decreasing for almost a decade. In terms of [sectoral rates of job availability](#), there is also a significant gap between the number of individuals employed in knowledge-based industries (which includes engineering and IT professions) and the number of available jobs. For instance, the most recent data (for 2018) for computer programming activities shows that there were 20,170 full time employees in this sector, while there were 24,456 available jobs. In terms of consulting engineering activities in construction and production, there were a total of 30,565 available jobs while there 26,391 full time employees in this sector.

¹⁹ The interviewee added that approximately 17 percent of the Danish labour market is not covered by the collective agreement.

contracts for foreign and Danish workers". Third, he outlined networking activities to be a key aspect of the union's activities and said, *"we know that in Denmark to get a job you need to know people. We organize events where foreign engineers can meet people and build professional relationships"*. Finally, with regard to the union's strategies towards refugees, our interviewee added, *"Most of our work is with people who have work permits²⁰. We support refugees entering our sector and now we are part of a pilot project where we provide professional training to refugees with some engineering background so that they are qualified to find a job as engineers in Denmark"* (Social Partner, Interview 1).

In the same vein, the representative of a confederation of employers representing landscape contractors saw MRAs as an asset to the Danish economy. He said that *in Denmark there is a system that has encouraged young people to pursue university education. "The result is" he said, "we have a very highly educated labour force but very few young people want to take up landscaping as a career. So, we have a labour shortage in this sector"*. Then, specifically addressing the "value" that MRAs add to the landscaping sector, our interviewee said that remains a *"moral commitment"* to ensuring that foreigners have access to the Danish labour market. He added that there are immigrants who are able to fill the labour shortages in the landscape sector. He said, *"Many are good workers and some are not good workers. This is normal and has nothing to do with where they come from"*. When asked about the organization's strategies and activities with regard to the integration of MRAs, he explained that his organization does not have any *"big political strategies"*. Like the above-mentioned interviewee (see: Social Partner, Interview 1) he noted that it is the larger confederations of employers' and employees' organizations that *"have an organized political role"*. For his organization, he added, *"In general, I can say that our members are open to hiring foreign workers. As long as you do good work you are welcome"* (Social Partner, Interview 2).

Finally, representatives of both a (self-described) progressive union as well as large confederations of employers' organizations and labour unions – who engaged in the formulation and negotiation of broad, pattern-setting agreements on labour market integration – also deemed MRAs to be a valuable asset as individuals who have the ability to fulfil the labour needs of a wider range of sectors. The representative of the progressive union focused on IT employees said, *"We of course support foreign workers because we are progressive. We think that those that come to this country looking for opportunities should have a good life"*. Then he addressed the specific needs of the IT industry: He added that the organization takes concrete steps to ensure not just that foreign workers come to Denmark but also that they stay and integrate into Danish society. To this end, he said, *"We need these workers. There is a shortage. So, we work with companies to organize cultural understanding events, integration in the work place events to make sure that these workers stay in Denmark"* (Social Partner, Interview 21)

Taking the perspective of employers, the representative of a large confederation of employers said that since the existence of a steady labour force is an important factor that ensures economic growth, a significant concern of the organization is the labour shortage that effects Danish employers. He said, *"the number one concern...among companies, [is] that they have enough labour. Also [we have] to make sure that the companies stay in Denmark [and to]*

²⁰ Refers to economic migrants.

have continued growth we need to have *some sort of labour supply that is higher than the demand*". When asked about the kind of labour needs faced by Danish employers he listed a shortage of electricians, construction sector workers and IT workers. He then added, *"you might have noticed there is a lot of discussion about foreign workers at the moment...we want to have as many specialists as possible because there definitely is a shortage of these. But we also see a shortage in terms of bus drivers, social workers...in retirement homes"*. (Social Partner, Interview 3). A representative of a confederation of labour unions similarly argued, *"We care about Danish workers. That is why we are very involved in the political discussion on the labour market integration of foreigners. If they are not integrated in the right way they will negatively affect the working conditions of Danish workers"*. Then, specifying the "value" that migrants can add to the Danish economy, he said, *"There is a misconception about the qualification of many migrants, especially refugees. Some people say that they are highly educated people and we are not making full use of their qualifications. But in my experience most have minimal education. Even that has value in Denmark. We have a big demand for workers in the cleaning sector, hospitality and restaurants and refugees can fill a gap. That way they contribute to the Danish economy and at the same time they are not a threat to Danish workers"* (Social Partner, Interview 4; also cited in Sen and Pace 2019: 22).

3.3.2 MRAs and the threat of "social dumping"

A significant number of interviewed social partners considered MRAs to be an asset, especially in terms of fulfilling labour shortages in various sectors of the Danish economy. Nonetheless, some feared that the presence of MRAs in general and the "influx" of refugees in particular would lead to social dumping and lower wages and worsen working conditions of Danish workers²¹. This sentiment was, for instance, palpable in the words of the above-mentioned representative of a confederation of labour unions who insisted that foreigners needed to be 'integrated in the right way' in order to protect the rights of Danish workers. Similarly, a representative of a labour union representing several sectors said, *"There is always a worry about social dumping. But because we represent many different kinds of workers, it depends on the sector"*. He then cited the example of building administrators represented by the organization and said that Danish building administrators *"like having immigrants and refugees working with them"*. He added that since building administrators²² usually live in the building they work in, this ensures that they swiftly integrate into the local community. *"The situation,"* he added, *"is very different for hairdressers. To become a hairdresser in Denmark you need a three-and-a-half-year education. But in this sector it is easy for refugees to set up a hairdressing company without any education and do the work"*

²¹ There is strong perception among labour market social partners that the presence of non-Danish workers as well as non-Danish companies in the Danish labour market increases the threat of social dumping. For instance, Fagligt Fælles Forbund (3F), one of the largest labour unions in Denmark, published an article on its webpage that claimed that "it is especially the non-Danish companies and workers non-Danish companies and workers, that are responsible for the VAT and tax evasion". The article (while quoting the deputy director of the Danish tax authorities) cites the "building and construction industry" as the sector that particularly exposed to social dumping as it is "characterized by contracting non-Danish companies" and Danish companies in the sector also employ migrant workers (3F 2018).

²² Here the interviewee is referring to property caretakers, hired by real estate agencies to take care of a property in exchange for financial contribution and/or free housing.

cheaper". He explained however that the organization's hairdresser members do not have a particular problem with refugees or immigrants working in Denmark and that they are just concerned about their business²³. We then asked this interviewee how he, as a representative of their union, mediated between these two vastly different perceptions of MRAs among the organization's members. He replied, "*Our general stance is that we want foreigners to come to Denmark and work. During meetings with the entire union board we don't deal with the problems of individual sectors*". He clarified however that the organization conducted activities that cater to each sector individually. The building administrators, as noted above, saw the presence of refugees and immigrants positively. Their presence increased the number of building administrators and this meant that the union could now afford to send them for additional training²⁴. With regard to hairdressers, he said, "*we deal with the problem on an individual level and try to coordinate with the employers' organizations if there are more serious cases of social dumping*". He added, however, "*It is a difficult problem to solve because it is easy to set up a one-person hairdressing business. But most of these businesses stay within the immigrant communities and don't affect our Danish members*" (Social Partner, Interview 5).

Representatives of employers' confederations also noted that the presence of MRAs has increased the number of cases of social dumping. For instance, a representative of a confederation for painting businesses said, that it is very difficult to become a painter in Denmark and requires a completion of a three years' education. He added, "*the quality of work that people expect from us is very high. But in our sector the wages are quite low and it is difficult for us to recruit people. So we need labour*". He added however that there are companies in the painting sector that are using undocumented/untrained foreign labour which in turn increases the chances of social dumping. He explained, "*It is okay to have workers who are a mix of Danes and foreigners. But sometimes there are Danish companies who only hire foreigners and they usually get paid less. In our sector the pay is already low so it is a serious problem for us*". Then elaborating on his approach to the problem of social dumping, our interviewee said that while many of the companies engaging in such practices are not members of the union, few remain "*in business for too long because people expect high quality work. If there is a serious problem we are members of two large confederations who can discuss this at the political level*" (Social Partner, Interview 6). Taking a similar perspective, another confederation of employers in the construction sector spokesperson began by saying, "*Our organization was formed because of a merger of employers' organizations from many different sectors of the industry*". Then, citing the labour shortages in the sector he said that the organization viewed the presence of a migrant labour force as a positive development and added "*In a construction site usually we have groups of people from other countries. Sometimes most of these workers cannot speak English or Danish but they have one representative who speaks for them*". He too raised concerns regarding social dumping and noted that there were companies that hired foreign workers for low wages. He said, "*We don't like this. As an employers' organization we think it gives unfair advantage and if we find out that one of the members are doing this then we have to deal with the issue.*" When asked

²³ And, the effect of the proliferation of unqualified hairdressers and possible occurrence of "social dumping" in their sector.

²⁴ He later explained that a higher number of attendees made the training sessions more cost-effective.

about the organization's strategies regarding social dumping, he said, "*We can talk to individual companies but usually we consult with the labour unions. They are the ones who can put real pressure on companies*" (Social Partner, Interview 7)²⁵.

3.3.3 Concluding Remarks

Evidently, social partners' perceptions of MRAs and the strategies undertaken thereof are very much dependent on the specific needs (and challenges faced) by sectors of the Danish economy. And, as we have discussed in Section 1, smaller, industry specific social partners are concerned with the labour needs of their members, while larger confederations of employers' and employees' organizations engage in national political work and help formulate and implement pattern-setting agreements. To this end, MRAs were portrayed as an asset to the Danish labour force who are a valuable addition to sectors where there is a severe shortage of labour. MRAs' presence, for these interviewees, ensures that such sectors (facing a labour shortage) remain in Denmark. However, some interviewees, feared that the arrival of MRAs also increases the risk of social dumping and can be to the detriment of the rights of Danish workers. In all, we could argue that the role of social partners (in terms of their perceptions and strategies) are therefore sectorally determined. Yet, one could also consider their role as very much driven by the interests of Danish employers and employees (rather than the interests of MRAs). While employers' organizations are driven by an interest in ensuring that member companies have the required labour force available to them, labour unions are concerned with securing the rights of Danish workers. To be sure, such a focus on the interest of their (Danish) members is expected as this is the very premise of the role and operations of employers' and employees' organizations. However, as we go on to note in section 7, in order for such social partners to function as enabling agents of MRAs' labour market integration, such actors would need to (especially, discursively) alter their position wherein the protection of the rights and privileges of Danish employers and employees should also be framed as being in the interest of non-Danish workers. In the section below we will discuss social partners' perceptions of barriers and enabling factors to labour market integration faced by MRAs in Denmark.

3.4 Barriers to labour market integration identified by social partners

In regard to perceptions of the existence of barriers to labour market integration, survey results reveal that there was not a significant difference between those who believed that the arrival of migrants or refugees had created tensions in the labour market and those who believed that migrants or refugees were not a source of tensions. Among those who believed that MRAs were a source of tensions, most considered migrants to be the source of labour market

²⁵ While instinctively, high wages would be considered a detriment to the profit margins of employers, the concerns expressed by interviewed employers' organizations with regard to social dumping reflects the earlier discussed, highly organized nature of the Danish labour market as well as the prominent role of both employers and employees' organizations. The prominent role of employees' organizations with regard to social dumping was mentioned, for instance, by the representative of the confederation of construction sector employers. Similarly, the ability of unions to act as a mechanism of checks and balances (against employers) is also evident, for example, in the protests that occurred in response to a company hiring untrained, low-paid scaffolding workers (see footnote 21).

tensions compared to refugees. Most respondents considered cultural differences (as confirmed below) to be the most significant source of tensions, followed by the perceived competition for jobs as well as the perceived lowering of wages. A majority of respondents considered migrants and refugees having only a slightly higher chance of facing health and safety risks (compared to their “native” counterparts) at the workplace. In terms of the allocation of public finances towards the integration of MRAs into the Danish labour market most considered it to be very important that resources are allocated towards free health care and affordable childcare, followed by affordable housing.

While in the interview data above social partners focused largely on the labour market needs of Danish employers and the rights of Danish workers, some interviewees also recognized that there were significant barriers to MRAs’ integration into the Danish labour market. Accordingly, our interviewees’ argued that MRAs faced two ‘types’ of barriers: 1) Cultural barriers and 2) a stigmatizing political environment.

3.4.1 Cultural Barriers

Our interviewees outline three types of cultural barriers to MRAs’ access to the Danish labour market. First, as Sen, Bjerre and Pace (2019) have demonstrated, the perception of the existence of a cultural barrier is often evident in the way employers consider MRAs to frequently be unable to adapt to the norms of the Danish workplace. To this end, the authors cite a public sector employer who said *“The refugee I have hired did not show up to work one day. When I called her, she said that she didn’t come because she was late. I was confused and said that she should still come to work even though she is late. But then I figured out that the problem was that where she worked back home, if you were even a minute late, someone else would take over your shift. So, she thought it was the same system. I had to explain to her that in the Danish workplace only she has the responsibilities for her tasks and her colleagues are dependent on her. So, she must show up”* (2019: 27). Similarly, a private sector employer said, *“It is of course an issue that time is understood very differently. In Denmark 8am means 8am. Not 8:05 or 7:55. But sometimes it’s just a matter of work culture. One of my refugee employees was ill but he didn’t let us know. I called him and had to explain to him that in Denmark you should notify your employer. That is the norm here”* (Sen, Bjerre and Pace 2019: 27). The representative of a confederation of employers confirmed this perception among employers as well and said, *“We have people here from the Middle East and Africa here. Of course things are different in Europe and when they are in a Danish workplace there are challenges and misunderstandings about norms and culture”* (Social Partner, Interview 12).

Second, social partners also argued that migrant women faced (cultural) barriers to entering the Danish labour market. A representative of a union for early childhood educators began the interview by saying, *“Our work is focused on making sure there is inclusion, equality and diversity in our sector and that our pedagogues represent different parts of Danish society”*. In view of these ideals, we asked our interviewee about the barriers faced by MRAs. He said that it is the organization’s goal to make sure that everyone is equal and that seeing that (according to media reports), many migrant women faced significant barriers to entering the job market

“because of cultural issues” and that the organization needed to make sure that *“everyone has equal access to the labour market”* (Social Partner, Interview 8). Another representative of a union representing highly-skilled workers in the IT sector said, *“We have noticed that immigrant women who follow their husbands to Denmark ... Their husbands have high paying jobs but even though they have the qualifications they don’t find opportunities here”*. Our interviewee then added that the union conducted activities and training [schemes] to make sure that the spouses of foreign workers can also find employment in Denmark. *He added, “From our perspective this will make sure that non-Danish employees can stay in Denmark with their families and have a good work-life balance²⁶”* (Social Partner, Interview 9). Finally, also noting the gendered nature of labour market integration of refugees, a representative of a labour union insisted that any assessment of the success/failure of labour market integration schemes would need to focus on the extent to which refugee women were integrated. Specifically addressing the “successes” of the IGU program he added, that in the early phases of the program, *“it has mainly been a success for men, and not for women refugees. And if you see the group [participating in] IGU in the beginning, it was mostly men. I think nearly 60% were men”*. In subsequent years, he added, the cohort of refugees participating in the IGU program includes an equal distribution of men and women (Social Partner, Interview 15).

Third, some interviewees also mentioned that language barriers are a significant challenge to MRAs’ integration into the Danish workplace. The representative of a union for Danish teachers said that there was a strong focus in the organization on *“immigrants getting a job”*. The interviewee added that while the organization does not have immigrant teacher members, the organization represents a large number of Danish language teachers who *“have a good idea of immigrants’ integration needs”*. Drawing on the insights of these members he said, *“Becoming a member of Danish society is not just about jobs. It is about becoming a member of the society and language is very important. Even if someone has a job, without Danish language it is difficult to understand Danish society and culture”* (Social Partner, Interview 10). Underlining the practical challenges of not speaking Danish in the workplace, the earlier mentioned representative of a confederation of painting businesses said, *“For our work it is difficult if the worker doesn’t speak Danish. If you are working for a corporate client, the boss of the painting company can communicate with the client and the workers don’t have to speak in Danish. But for private clients, you need to be able to communicate in Danish. So that becomes very difficult for foreign workers”* (Social Partner, Interview 6).

That said, some social partners insisted that while cultural differences exist, these should not necessarily be considered an insurmountable barrier to MRAs’ integration into the labour market. A representative of a civil society social partner²⁷ thus said that there are expectedly a significant number of cultural differences between Danes and foreigners. Yet the interviewee did not consider this to be problematic. She said, *“We work with Danish companies and try to help them hire migrants and refugees. But when I talk to some of the managers, they are often very hesitant to hire them. They think it will be too difficult to deal with foreigners. Or that they will cost more to keep in the company. Or that Danish employees will have problems. Instead,*

²⁶ The flexicurity model, as a cornerstone of the Danish labour market, is often considered to be a guarantor of a good work-life model by way of the social benefits and services (i.e. security) that the Danish welfare state provides for the Danish worker (see: Ibsen and Mailand 2009, Ibsen 2011).

²⁷ Refers to civil society organizations that play a consultative role as social partners and that assist labour unions, confederation of employers’ organizations and policymakers with policy formulation and implementation.

we try to convince them that this is not the case. There is no extra cost of having a foreigner. But many are not convinced". Then, elaborating on strategies for countering these barriers in the workplace, she said that the organization often insists (especially in discussions with Danish companies and managers) that *"It is okay to make mistakes"*. Further, she noted, that employers needed to be more tolerant towards foreign workers, allow them to fail and learn from their mistakes and the breaking of Danish norms. She said, *"They should be given the freedom to do this and eventually they will become no different than their Danish colleagues"*. When asked how receptive Danish companies were to this way of thinking, she replied, *"You see this is happening more and more. Strong managers take a leadership role in these matters. Sometimes they take the strategy where they openly discuss the fears of the Danish employees. Other times they take a much firmer position and say, 'Look Samira has travelled across several countries with her children before she came to Denmark. She did it looking for a better life. This was not for fun. And now that she is in Denmark, we have to welcome her'. Most of the time this strategy works"* (Social Partner, Interview 11).

3.4.2 The Stigmatizing Political Environment

While most interviewees considered barriers to be an outcome of MRAs' inability to adopt the norms and values of the Danish workplace, only two of our interviewees also saw barriers inherent in the political environment in which migrants are compelled to navigate while in Denmark – barriers that in turn make it difficult for employers to recruit and retain MRA employees. A representative of a confederation of small/medium-sized businesses said, *"We don't engage in political discussions on migrants"*. He added that larger confederations of employers organizations are *"responsible for all the work at Christiansborg"²⁸. When we talk to politicians, we talk to everyone. But we also recognize that the political climate is not welcoming to migrants and especially recruiting skilled labour is very difficult*". He then added, *"Many people in Denmark think that this is the best place. They think, why wouldn't someone want to come to Denmark. But if we don't treat people respectfully, why would they stay"* (Social Partner, Interview 12). In the same way, a representative of a labour union for industrial workers said, *"They did a study where they asked people if they want to live in Denmark where they will receive healthcare, assistance from the municipality, pension but have the state in your lives forcing you to follow a certain integration path or live in the US where they can do whatever they want but get minimum assistance from the state. Most said they prefer America. This is because we are too involved in the lives of immigrants. So, a lot of my work is about making sure that there are enough hands to work in our sectors to complete orders. Otherwise we will lose business"²⁹* (Social Partner, Interview 13).

²⁸ The seat of the Danish parliament.

²⁹ Here the interviewee is referring to an article published by the Danish daily newspaper *Kristeligt Dagblad* that reported that an American study showed that the American model (of self-reliance) was perceived by migrants to be far more conducive to their integration into the host society (Nyholm). The article in turn was referring to a study by [Capps et. al. \(2015\)](#) published by the Migration Policy Institute (see list of references).

3.4.3 Concluding Remarks

In sum, our interviewees considered cultural barriers and a political environment that stigmatizes the presence of migrants in Denmark as the primary barriers to the labour market integration of MRAs. To this end, a large majority of social partners were concerned with cultural barriers. Some considered MRAs' inability to abide by the norms of a Danish workplace (like punctuality) as a hindrance to their successful labour market integration. Some of our interviewees also cited the limited presence of migrant women in the Danish labour market as a significant cultural barrier. Still others noted that the lack of proficiency in the Danish language can be both a practical barrier – in terms of the extent to which MRAs can contribute to all the tasks at their workplace – as well as a hinderance to their social and cultural integration into Danish society. Here, not unlike their perception of MRAs as a burden/asset to the Danish labour market, a majority of our interviewees conceived the barriers (to labour market integration) in terms of the extent to which MRAs abide by the existent norms and values of Danish society. Meaning, here too, the referent object(s) are *Danish* norms. Nonetheless, two interviewees also recognized that the Danish political environment also stigmatizes MRAs and this (as a barrier) has the potential to discourage MRAs – especially, high-skilled migrants – from staying in Denmark.

3.5 Enabling factors to labour market integration identified by social partners

When asked about the existing enabling factors to the labour market integration of MRAs, social partners responding to the survey identified labour unions, employers' confederations, private companies as well as national policy-makers to be the most effective actors in alleviating tensions. Most respondents identified agriculture, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, water supply, sewerage, waste management, remediation activities, construction, wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, transportation, sewage, accommodation and food service activities, information and communication, human health and social work activities as sectors where MRAs are most likely to find employment. Respondents also considered increasing language training services, skills matching services, support with job search, CV and interview preparation as particularly conducive to facilitating labour market integration. Finally, the survey respondents saw social dialogue (negotiation and consultation between organised workers and employers) as a mechanism that could mitigate the potential conflict between MRAs and "native" workers.

When asked about enabling factors with regard to the labour market integration of MRAs during interviews, only a few social partners were able to specify successful strategies undertaken by their organizations. The representative for the union for teachers cited above said that, as a representative of the organization, he was very proud of the recent political successes of the organization. He said, "*Danish language classes were free to foreigners living legally in Denmark. Last year [2018] they changed this law and you had to pay for Danish classes. For us this meant that there was another hinderance to the integration of migrants in Denmark*". He then added that for the past year the organization has made several public statements and conducted negotiations with politicians to ensure that Danish language classes were free. He said, "*Now, in the new finance law Danish classes are free again. This*

is our biggest achievement” (Social Partner, Interview 10). The representative of the labour union for engineers and IT specialists cited above said, “I think our most successful strategy is our political work where we try to push for strategies that make it easier for migrants to come to Denmark. We create a welcoming environment for foreign workers. We also help our members practically, through networking events where they can build a professional network” (Social Partner, Interview 1).

Nonetheless, when asked about enabling factors, most interviewees criticized the overwhelming political (and policy) focus on labour market integration discussed in Section 1. The representative of the (employers’) confederation of landscape constructors said, *“I think many of our member companies want to take all the responsibility for integrating migrants and refugees. For them the job can become a way for becoming integrated into Denmark. At work they can meet colleagues, make friends and build a network. In the evening maybe their Danish colleagues will take them to a football game. But for this to happen employers expect them to be available at the workplace”*. However, referring to the fact that since refugees receive financial support from the municipality and are in turn committed to attending language classes and consultation meetings with municipality case handlers who assess their progress (in language classes as well as in securing employment), he said, *“But this is really not possible for refugees. They can only come to work few days in the week. They have to go to classes, meetings at municipalities. This doesn’t work for our members³⁰. They think they can do a better job without the municipality” (Social Partner, Interview 2).*

Another representative of a labour union in the IT sector said, *“Today we have a focus on getting a job. And the priority is that if they get a job then everything will work out. I think we should take a much more long term approach and say that it is not just about getting a job that will pay for your salary”*. Our interviewee then added that the focus should rather be on the personal development of the migrant and *“having a family life”*. He said, *“You can just come to Denmark and set up a shop where one or two guys [sic.] stand and work all day. Is this enough? Most people [i.e. migrants] who come here are not happy with this. This is all about economy and we care about the small pennies they make. But we as Denmark should say that if you are allowed to stay then you have the right to our help in the long-run”*. The interviewee went on to insist that integration assistance should function like a family project that is concerned with the long term needs and aspirations of migrants. He concluded, *“You come here and we give a few months to settle. Even look at the family unit and what kind of assistance they need in the long term. Because in a few years we will have a need for highly educated people and I am not sure if you can be happy by just having [any] job” (Social Partner, Interview 14).* Similarly, critiquing Denmark’s labour market integration policies thus far, the earlier mentioned representative of the union of hairdressers and building administrators said, *“In Denmark we are told to have a work-life balance. It is not enough to just be a good worker. You have to have a good relationship with colleagues and be able to enjoy your life. This is what many people who come to Denmark want and not to just have a job. I have an employee here from India. He is very hardworking. But he tells me his wife really likes being here in Denmark because in India it was only about the job. Here she can have a*

³⁰ By” members” our interviewee here is referring to employers that are members of the organization.

much more complete life. This is something we should be encouraging instead” (Social Partner, Interview 5).

That said, some social partners did nonetheless also consider labour market integration policies as enabling factors for MRAs’ integration into Danish society. This is primarily due to the fact that they were concerned with ensuring that MRAs are granted formal access to the Danish labour market in a way that ensures that they are granted the same rights, privileges and working conditions as Danish workers – thus reducing the risk of social dumping. Concerned with protecting the rights of Danish workers, the representative of a large labour union was therefore positive about the introduction of the IGU program. He began the interview by saying, *“Our primary goal is to ensure the protection of Danish workers. This means that we have to be very aware of not just foreigners and refugees coming to Denmark to work but also about how they enter the labour market. This should happen in a way that it does not negatively affect our members. So, the IGU program is very useful because it makes sure that refugees become qualified to integrate in the labour market”*. Then speaking of sectors where refugees find jobs, he said, *“When foreigners, especially refugees began coming to Denmark from Syria in masses in 2012, many people said these were highly educated and skilled. But we have talked to the municipalities, social partners and NGOs and everyone told us that this is a myth. Most have low-levels of education and skills. We represent many of these sectors, so IGU helps refugees get trained to find jobs in these sectors”* (Social Partner, Interview 15).

Similarly, a representative of a confederation of employers’ organization, supportive of the focus on labour market integration of MRAs, argued, *“Our take on this issue is mostly political. And it focuses around when we have a lack of employees. So for us integration [is] mostly about the labour market and [whether] our companies find the workforce they need. We are very open to migrants. We don’t really care where they come from or why they are here. We would like to be able to welcome them into the labour market and the companies we represent”*. She then added that the organization is solely concerned with all those that are able to work in Denmark having a job. For her it was largely unimportant if a worker spoke Danish. Instead, she insisted, that everyone needed to *“be able to have a life in Denmark being employed somewhere”*. She further explained that the organizations and companies that the confederations represented were in need of all kinds (refugee and non-refugee alike) of migrant workers. So, she added, *“we need to integrate all kinds of migrants in the Danish society. And the way that we do it is by providing them jobs or enabling them to find a way into the Danish labour market”*. When asked why (from the perspective of the organization) being employed is a priority, she replied, *“Because that’s what we are here for. We are here to fight for the companies that we represent so they can find the workers - skilled or unskilled, all kinds of people...we have a shortage of labour in all kinds of occupations. We need them to work in our companies for them [the companies] to prosper. We have no political agenda towards migrants from specific countries. We don’t care if they are asylum seekers or migrants³¹. It’s simply a question of can they find work in companies, then we can welcome them”*. Then specifically addressing the value of the IGU program, she added that initially the confederation did not think the IGU program was best suited to facilitate refugees’ integration into the Danish labour market. She said *“My first reaction was that I didn’t think it was going to work [because] There is a lot of administration for the company. But it seems that the companies have adopted the scheme. They are very happy about it”*. Further elaborating why IGU has been readily

³¹ While the interviewee mentions “asylum seekers”, it is important to note that “asylum seekers” do not have the right to work in Denmark. The interviewee meant refugees.

adopted by companies, our interviewee added, “*It consists of education combined with training in a company. The language skills are acquired more quickly...Also it seems that the administration has not been too complicated...we need more programs like the IGU where you combine learning, school, language training, cultural training and education in how to, not adapt to the Danish way of living but find your way into the labour market and civil society combined with working in a company. I would simply extend these programs because it seems to be working. I wouldn’t recommend putting migrants into school for a longer period of time because a lot of integration happens at the workplace*” (Social Partner, Interview 16).

3.5.1 Concluding Remarks

While survey respondents specified institutions and industries that could ease MRAs’ entry into the Danish labour market, interview respondents were keen to highlight schemes and policies that *do not* enable labour market integration before outlining their alternatives. Some recommended that creating a welcoming (discursive) political environment could facilitate the integration of MRAs. Others severely criticized the overt focus on labour market integration, arguing that “softer” approaches to integration that assist MRAs with integrating into Danish society (say, through language education) can ensure a far more substantial integration of MRAs into Danish society. In such a perspective interviewees were far more keen on ensuring that MRAs are socially and culturally integrated, rather than focused on fulfilling bureaucratic requirements of the process of integration. Among this cohort of interviewees, some also recommended assessing MRAs’ future aspirations and adopting integration policies instead of “pushing” MRAs in general and refugees in particular into *any* job. That said, some interviewees nonetheless saw the existing labour market integration policies (and schemes) as enabling factors. Much of this support for such schemes is an outgrowth of the labour market needs of Danish employers. And with many industrial sectors facing a labour shortage, MRAs were considered ideal to fill this “gap”. Furthermore, as was evident in the above-mentioned interview with the representative of the confederation of employers organizations (i.e. interview 16), this support drew on a perception that substantial integration into Danish society in fact happens *through* the workplace.

3.6 Social partners, social dialogue, policymaking and labour market integration

With regard to the nature of the impact of migration policies, most survey respondents considered *national* labour market integration strategies to be most impactful. Most considered that there is an increase in tensions between (native and MRA) workers and considered current migration policies to be undermining solidarity among workers. To this end an equal number of respondents claimed that their organization had been involved in consultations between organised workers and employers and that most of these consultations took place at a national level. Most also reported that this consultation was tripartite (involving labour, employers and policymakers). Finally, in terms of the lack of development of opportunities for social dialogue between workers and employers, most blamed it on the lack of political will in

regard to labour migration issues. A few interviewees considered that weak unionization among migrants and refugees and the lack of political will to strengthen social dialogue were to blame³².

When asked about the dialogue between social partners (labour unions, employers' organizations, civil society social partners) most interviewees demonstrated a clear conception of the division of jurisdictions, when it comes to issues regarding the labour market integration of MRAs. This was evident in responses to our invitation to participate in the interview and/or survey for the purposes of this report. Respondents who declined to participate, among other reasons, explained their non-participation as being due to the fact that labour market integration issues are the concern of larger, national confederations of employers and labour unions who are involved in the formulation and implementation of pattern-setting agreements (see Section 1). As is evident from the response of interviewed social partners in the previous sections, many also underlined that negotiating labour market integration policies and laws were the primary responsibility of national employees and employers organizations, while they were concerned with the effects of national (pattern-setting) agreements on their members. To an extent, as mentioned in Section 1, this reflects the broader restructuring and reorganization of the landscape of social partners in Denmark where the merger of unions and employers' organizations have led to the development of a few large unions (spanning across sectors) who in turn wield significant political capital at the national stage, while smaller, industry-focused organizations remain concerned with local concerns of their members (Ibsen 2012; Due and Madsen 2005: 87-112).

Nonetheless, despite the existence of a "division of labour" among the different social actors, our interviewees largely displayed a commitment to the tripartite negotiating structure and recognized the interests and priorities of all relevant social partners. This was evident during our earlier-mentioned interview with the representative of a large confederation of employers. During the interview, the interviewee argued that the focus of the organization was the interests of their members (i.e. employers) and to ensure that Danish companies had access to a "diverse" labour force. This focus on the interests of their members is expected. Yet during the interview he also recognized the mandate of the other two branches of the tripartite negotiating structure – the labour unions and policymakers. With regard to the latter he insisted that the organization's interest in the labour market integration of MRAs is not a political stance. He argued: "*We are not a political organization. We care about the interests of our members [i.e. employers]. It is up to the government to decide if or when the refugees should be sent home. While they are in Denmark they have to work and be of value to Danish companies*". His regard for the interest of labour unions was evident when asked about some of the complexities and disagreements that arose during the negotiations surrounding the formulation of the IGU program. He recounted, "*During the negotiations there was a lot of*

³² Reflecting the relatively few numbers of survey respondents, few interviewees were concerned with unionization among MRAs. Most were concerned with effects of MRAs' presence on the Danish labour market and Danish workers. However, one interviewee representing a labour union for IT workers noted that they actively strived to recruit non-Danish workers as members. He said, "Being a member of the union is an important part of their life here. By being a member they can take ownership of their life as workers in Denmark". Then, referring to specific measures taken by the organization, he said, "I talk to representatives of a lot of migrant organizations and I tell people there to join unions and become active. We are also trying to have events open to all foreign workers where they learn more about union membership" (Social Partner, Interview 21).

disagreement about the financial support that refugees will receive. There were some interest groups that wanted to have a very low minimum wage. We agreed with the labour unions that this would make refugees just cheap labour that companies use and that would affect Danish workers. This would be against the Danish model³³ (Social Partner, Interview 3).

As mentioned earlier, the representative of the confederation of employers' in the construction sector similarly recognized the importance of the role of labour unions. During the interview, with regard to the problem of social dumping in the construction sector, he noted that the organization consulted labour unions to “*put real pressure on companies [practicing social dumping]*” (Social Partner, Interview 7). Similarly, the representative of the union for teachers underlined the importance of labour unions in the Danish labour market, and referred to an ongoing conflict between a Danish construction company and a trade union for scaffolding workers saying, “*There was a big protest near a construction site recently by scaffolding workers. They are saying that the company was using cheap, unorganized and untrained foreign labour and built an illegal scaffolding. So they are causing a lot of problems there*” (Social Partner, Interview 10)³⁴.

While most of our interviewees paid deference to the tripartite mechanism of social dialogue among the relevant social partners and, during interviews, recognized the “division of labour”, a representative of a large labour union that played a prominent role during the negotiation of the 2016 Tripartite Agreement, was nonetheless critical of the decision-making processes. Specifically referring to the political discourse of key stakeholders (including social partners), he said, “*Before we had implemented the IGU programme, there was a certain agreement in the government that it was a success. How can a two-year programme be declared a success before it was implemented? Even after six months, many political partners and social partners were making public statements declaring that IGU was a success. We know that this is because there was an agreement on a narrow understanding of integration, even though we know that integration has other important factors*” (Social Partner, Interview 17). Similarly, critiquing the labour market integration focus of policymakers, a representative of a civil society social partner that has played an important consultative role during the Tripartite negotiations and is hired by the Danish state to provide integration services said, “*One reason [for the focus on labour market integration] is the broader thinking [in Danish society] of how much employment is a value for most people...[in] people's everyday thinking about their life, and there is a lot of identity value. I think it's a lot of worth you put in having a job*”. Critical of this perspective and the way the IGU has emerged as a marquee initiative of this new conception of integration, she added “*...I think there is the whole way the public opinion is being shaped*

³³ More recently, Denmark and other Nordic countries have been at odds with plans to establish an EU-wide minimum wage. Criticism from Nordic countries stem from the fear that such a step would undermine the collective bargaining model (Boffey 2020, Svanstrom 2020).

³⁴ Media reports on the incident indicate that the protestors' discontent was rooted in the fact that the workers (being unorganized, untrained and underpaid) would undermine the wage levels and working conditions in the sector. Such practices also present health and safety hazards for workers and the general public. For more see: <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/penge/organisation-skyder-mod-byggefirma-i-sag-om-stillads-derfor-var-stilladset-ulovligt>

by politicians. And the story that is being told [is that] immigrants are a burden³⁵. [But] it is a quick fix to think of that [employment] as the main issue and of course for a lot of refugees, a lot of immigrants, employment would also be part of the solution; also, as a pathway to social integration of sorts. But then, from my perspective, you also know that you can easily work as an immigrant and still not be socially integrated. Work places can also be segregated. You could also be employed and maybe not even meet a Danish speaking person all day. So, even though you have a job, it is not necessarily true that having a job would make you socially integrated as well" (Social Partner, Interview 18).

3.6.1 Concluding Remarks

The very organized nature of the Danish labour market alongside the highly institutionalized role of social partners discussed in Section 1 contextualizes the manner in which our respondents in this section maintained their commitment and deference to the nature of the (tripartite) social dialogue that exists among the various stakeholders, operating in the Danish labour market. To this end, our respondents also recognized the “division of labour” that exists among the various social partners as some of the larger employers’ and employees’ organizations were deemed to have a national political role while smaller organizations were focused on the immediate needs of their members. Nonetheless, some interviewees criticized the decision-making process within the tripartite mechanism of dialogue between actors and questioned the extent to which labour market integration policies can indeed be deemed a success and synonymous with the substantial integration of MRAs in Denmark.

3.7 Conclusions

This report focused on the role of social partners and their perceptions of the enabling factors and barriers faced by MRAs in the Danish labour market. The cohort of social partners represented in this study included both employees’ and employers’ organizations as well as civil society social partners who play a consultative role in the formulation and implementation of labour market integration policies. Expectedly, both in terms of the answered online survey and in-person interviews, labour unions and confederations of employers claimed to represent the needs and priorities of their members. That is to say, employers’ organizations were largely concerned with ensuring that Danish employers had the access to the needed labour force, especially since many industrial sectors in Denmark are facing a severe labour shortage. A small cohort of labour unions and employers’ organisations, often operating in high-skilled industrial sectors, also perceived MRAs’ labour market integration as a form of talent/skills mobility and considered the presence of migrant workers as a means of ensuring certain sectors of the economy remained in the country. That said both employers’ as well as employees’ organizations were highly concerned about the threat of social dumping and the extent to which the presence of migrants in the Danish labor market would create the existence of a pool of cheaper and easily exploitable labour force that would in turn lower the wages of Danish workers. Few social partners also questioned the general efficacy of labour market

³⁵ Here the interviewee is referring to the previous Danish government. The current, Social Democrat-led coalition government has thus far reversed some of the restrictive measures of the previous administration.

integration policies and questioned the extent to which employment is able to ensure the substantial integration of MRAs into Danish society.

In view of the above mentioned role of social partners in ensuring the labour market integration of MRAs, it would be unrealistic to recommend a function of social partners (as enabling agents) that does not take into consideration their commitment to pursuing the interests and priorities of their members. Indeed, labour unions would continue to represent the interest of workers while the confederation of employers would represent the needs of employers' organizations. Yet we recommend an (enabling) role of social partners that, while in keeping with the interest of their members, aims to discursively alter their positionality vis-à-vis MRAs. For one thing, as social partners that are concerned with social dumping, such organizations should reconceive their role as being not just in the interest of Danish employers and Danish workers. Instead, one could argue, by actively combating social dumping they can also ensure that MRAs do not become a population that is easily exploited in the Danish labour market. Second, while many employers' organizations are keen to use MRAs to counter the labour shortages faced by several Danish industrial sectors, one should not simply assume that being employed would ensure MRAs' substantial integration into Danish society. Instead, as was recommended by the representative of the employers' organization for landscape constructors, employers hiring MRAs should be given greater responsibility as active facilitators of their integration, not just in the workplace but also into Danish society in general. In keeping with principles of consensus put forth by the September Compromise, this should be done in dialogue with migrant/refugee organisations and representatives in order ensure that MRAs have agency and are equal stakeholders in determining the trajectory of their integration into Danish society.

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Annex I - List of Interviews with Social Partner Representatives

Interview Pseudonym	Date of interview	Function/Role	Type of Institution
Social Partner, Interview 1	20/11/19	Chief Consultant, Labour Market Politics	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 2	25/11/19	Director	Confederation of Employers
Social Partner, Interview 3	22/10/18	Chief Consultant	Confederation of Employers
Social Partner, Interview 4	31/10/18	Spokesperson	Confederation of Labour Unions
Social Partner, Interview 5	04/12/19	President	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 6	06/12/19	Director	Confederation of Employers
Social Partner, Interview 7	20/11/19	Chief Consultant, Employers' Secretariat	Confederation of Employers
Social Partner, Interview 8	02/12/19	Member of Executive Committee and Head of International Relations	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 9	02/12/19	Consultant	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 10	04/12/19	Consultant, Education Politics	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 11	13/12/18	Chief of Communications	Civil Society Social Partner
Social Partner, Interview 12	25/11/19	Chief Consultant	Confederation of Employers
Social Partner, Interview 13	29/11/19	Head of Labour Market Affairs	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 14	04/12/19	Consultant	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 15	13/11/18	Chief Consultant	Labour Union

Social Partner, Interview 16	02/12/19	Consultant	Confederation of Employers
Social Partner, Interview 17	11/12/18	Chief Consultant	Labour Union
Social Partner, Interview 18	13/12/18	Director of Intergration	Civil Society Social Partner
Social Partner, Interview 19	23/05/18	Senior Advisor	Civil Society Social Partner
Social Partner, Interview 20	26/10/18	Director	Civil Society Social Partner
Social Partner, Interview 21	11/12/19	Analyst	Labour Union

4 Finland

Ilona Bontenbal & Nathan Lillie

4.1 Social Partners in Finland

4.1.1 Trade Unions and Employers' Organizations

There are around 90 labour unions which are mostly distributed under three central trade union organizations: *The Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland* (AKAVA), *The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions* (SAK) and *The Finnish Confederation of Professionals* (STTK). Academically educated workers belong mainly to Akava, white collar workers to the STTK and blue collar workers to SAK. The employer side is organized under *The Confederation of Finnish Industries* (EK) and includes c. 25 associations.

Trade union membership in Finland is high in international comparison. Nowadays, around 70 % of employees in Finland belong to a union. Because collective agreements are usually legally extended, around 95% of employees work under a collective labour agreement negotiated by a labour union (The Finnish Confederation of Professionals, 2018). Finland is a Ghent system country, meaning that trade union membership also brings membership in an unemployment insurance fund administered by the union (Böckerman & Uusitalo, 2006; Helander, 2008, pp. 15.) The union membership rates in Finland have however been falling due to e.g. the fact that youngsters who have an insecure labour position and lack of clear professional identity are not joining unions as regularly as before (Alho, 2008, pp. 287). The Finnish trade union movement has not been able compensate for falling membership rates by recruiting migrants because of the small total amount of migrants in Finland (Alho, 2008, pp. 287), and the propensity of migrants not to join unions (Danaj et al. 2018).

Finnish trade unions have in international comparison been considered influential in a similar way as labour unions in other Nordic countries (Bergholm, 2007, 2012). Trade unions have for example influenced national migration policy (Salmenhaara, 2008, pp. 224). Trade unions have an accepted position in the **state's tripartite decision making system** (Alho, 2015a, pp. 19) and the terms and conditions of employment are generally agreed upon in a consensus oriented way, by the employers and employees in a **centralized collective bargaining system**. The universally binding collective agreements, of which there are about 160 in Finland, are also binding in their respective sectors on unaffiliated employers, i.e. employers that do not belong to an employers' organisation (Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland, 2019). Via this system also those individuals that do not belong to labour unions are protected (Ristikari, 2012, pp. 22, 34). The collective agreements lay down the minimum terms of employment and they oblige social partners to observe industrial peace (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2019).

4.1.2 Social Partners and Migrants

Trade union representatives regard immigrants as a group that is flexible and easily taken advantage of, which are characteristics quite opposite of the image of a good or typical trade unionist, who is assertive about his or her rights (Ristikari, 2012, pp. 131–132). A majority (66, 7 %) of Finnish unions do not collect any background information (e.g. native language) from their immigrant members (Ristikari, 2012, pp. 95, 102). Nonetheless, some do and according to estimates by Alho, the number of migrant members in Finnish labour unions grew 71-78 % between 2006 and 2011 (Alho, 2015b, pp. 13.). Alho estimates that for example the unionization density of migrant construction workers is somewhere between 12-14 %, which is far lower than the national average in Finland (Alho, 2013a, pp. 144).

Labour unions have been found to have various **inclusion and exclusion strategies** regarding migrants. As **gate keepers** to the Finnish labour markets influential large unions such as *the Finnish Construction Trade Union* and *the Service Union United* have for example actively advocated for maintaining the current income restrictions for third country nationals to receive work permits (Alho, 2015b, pp. 13). Finnish trade unions also regularly seek to influence the amount of intake into education in their respective fields (Alho, 2015a, pp. 27). As **inclusion strategies**, unions provide information about Finnish labour markets in various languages and some unions have campaigns that target migrants specifically (Alho, 2015b, pp. 13). When migrants are included in trade unions, they in a similar way as other members, strengthen the union's power resources by paying their membership fees (Alho, 2015a, pp. 41). However, as Lillie and Sippola (2011) note, nationally bounded union organizational logic can drive unions to treat migrants as a threat (Lillie & Sippola, 2011, pp. 295).

Salmenhaara (2008) and Ristikari (2010, 2012) have found that although the central trade organizations have supported employment based immigration, their position and rhetoric regarding it has differed. Salmenhaara has found that SAK has had a more restrictive approach on immigration than the STTK. Akava on the other hand has had the most liberal stance. (Salmenhaara, 2008.) Alho (2015) however notes that in fact the more liberal stance of Akava might stem from the fact that in professional occupations, which Akava represents, exclusion strategies towards immigrants into occupations can be applied on a basis of formal criteria, such as education and officially certified language skills. This is more difficult in low skill occupations in the construction or private services. (Alho, 2015a, pp. 27–28.) Furthermore, Ristikari finds that in its rhetoric Akava has focused on the recruitment of highly skilled migrants and the need to develop proper integration programs, whereas SAK and STTK have focused on preventing the growth of the grey sector and segmentation of the labour markets, by lobbying for an increase in control efforts. (Ristikari, 2010; Ristikari, 2012, pp. 90.) All three central trade union organizations highlight that the needs of the native workforce should not be neglected (Ristikari, 2006, pp. 12).

Previous research has found that in Finland **work precarity and a lack of union involvement** usually go hand in hand. When migrants join the labour market, they have little contacts with unions and are suspicious of unions and their motivation. (Danaj et al., 2018, pp. 206, 220.) Similar results have been found by Kyntäjä (2011) who has researched the experience of Estonian and Russian speaking immigrants' experiences as members of trade unions and found that in fact they have little knowledge of Finnish trade unions (Kyntäjä, 2011). As Alho (2015) notes, migrants often move to Finland from countries where the role of trade unions is very different from that in Finland (Alho, 2013b, pp. 86; Alho, 2015a, pp. 38). Due to this, unions can find it difficult to recruit migrants as members (Alho, 2008, pp. 312). In migrants

sending countries, unions are not always genuine democratic interest organizations and getting involved in them may involve risks (Alho, 2012, pp. 86). Estonian and Russian migrants in Finland have often been sceptical about trade unions in their country of origin (Kyntäjä, 2011, pp. 64; Alho, 2010, pp. 111). The decision to join unions is generally a result of individual movement out of precarious and sometimes informal work into secure, formal work relations. Taking up union membership is a step in the integration process. It reflects an adherence to local workplace norms rather than a mobilization experience to gain rights as migrant workers. (Danaj et al., 2018, pp. 205–206, 213.)

Migrants' decision to join unions has also been found to be related to the unions' positive reputation in the Finnish society. Unions are seen as normal and mainstream institutions and as successful representatives of workers' interests. Joining a union is an instrumentalist decision. The Estonians interviewed in the research by Danaj et al., rationalized their decision to join unions on individualistic lines, in particular because Finnish unions provide unemployment benefits. (Danaj et al., 2018, pp. 214, 216.) Kyntäjä (2011) and Ritari (2013) found that joining a union usually happens due to the recommendation of a colleague, friend or family member and not because of union recruitment efforts such as being approached by the workplace steward (Kyntäjä, 2011, pp. 64, 81; Ritari, 2013, pp. 20). The decision is often related to a fear of becoming unemployed or to a fear of problems in working life (Kyntäjä, 2011, pp. 64). Difficulties in recruitment, from the view point of unions, found in previous research include a lack of a common language, sociohistorical aspects, foreign workers working in their own groups and often having a foreign employer and the temporariness of migrants (Alho, 2013a, pp. 143–144). Also the fact that migrants work more often in professions that are less unionized is seen as a factor hindering the recruitment of migrants (Alho, 2008, pp. 312). Alho notes that the reasons for migrants not joining unions are often, by union representatives, found in the migrants themselves and their circumstances, rather than in the unions or their action (Alho, 2008, pp. 321). Reasons described by migrants for not joining unions include language and the fact that unions are seen as inwards oriented and not interested in migrants (Kyntäjä, 2011, pp. 66–67).

Finnish employers are also highly organized into industry and peak confederations, similarly to the workers'. As a result, Finnish labour relations have long been characterized by peak-level corporatist tripartite bargaining setting overall bargaining frameworks for industry level bargaining, where the actual collective agreements are negotiated. This tendency has weakened somewhat in recent years, so that the role of the central employer federation, EK (*Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto* or *Central Confederation of Finnish Industries*), became less bargaining focused, while the industry-level has become more independent. However, the role of both the EK and the many industry level employer federations in influencing Finnish working life politics through tripartite concentration remains central. Together with collective bargaining, social partner consultation is primary way of formulating Finnish labour market regulation. In terms of migration, employer associations have advocated strongly for improved opportunities for international recruitment, maintaining that there are current skill shortages. Furthermore, they believe future demographic trends suggest these will worsen (EK 2018). *Inter alia*, they have influenced the government to back programs such as Talent Boost, which promotes international mobility to Finland, as a way to address this.

4.2 Methods

For this research, 19 social partners were **interviewed**. Both labour union representatives (17 number) and employers' confederations representatives (2) were interviewed. Also, representatives of all the central union confederations (SAK, AKAVA, STTK and EK) of Finland were interviewed. A list of interviews can be found in the appendixes. The organizations for the interviews were chosen from sectors in which migrant workers have a significant role or presence. From within the organizations, interviewees were selected based on their expertise in migrant related issues. Most of the contacted organisations have a designated employee whose responsibility migrant related issues are, in which case this person was interviewed. The interviews were mainly conducted in Helsinki, at the main offices of the organizations, but some interviews were also conducted at local side branches. The interviews conducted in Helsinki provided more of a general picture whereas the interviews done at local branch offices provided more of a hands-on overview on how migration issues are approached in the field. The interviews lasted c. 40-60 minutes. The interviews have been transcribed and coded to ensure encompassing analysis.

Besides the interviews, a **survey** was sent by email to 110 social partners. This includes the identified 106 unions (including both those representing employees and employers) of Finland and four central organizations (STTK, SAK, AKAVA & EK). The survey was primarily sent to the person identified as responsible for migration and/or international issues within the organizations. If this person could not be identified based on information provided on the webpages of the organization, the survey was sent to the head or chairman of the organization. Altogether 46 of the organizations responded to the survey which represents a response rate of c. 42 %. Of the respondents 25 identified themselves as representatives of trade unions and 12 of employers' organisation. Others did not specify what group they represent. Of the responses, 22 came from directors, 8 from policy officers, 3 from managers, 2 from organizers and 1 from others. 50% of the respondents were male and 50% female. Most respondents identified that the remit of their role within the organization is national (31). Only a few identified their role as European, global or departmental/regional/subnational.

4.3 The Strategies and Activities of Social Partners in the Labour Market Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Finland

4.3.1 Benefits to Finland of Migrants Entering the Labour Market

All of the interviewees emphasise, that within their organization, migration to Finland is understood primarily as positive and necessary. The interviewees also report that this sentiment is according to their knowledge widely shared in Finland within the union movement among social partners representing both employers and employee representatives. The same result is also represented in the survey results, according to which most respondents find migrants as an asset to the country's economy. However, when considering the role that refugees have on the country's economy, c. 50 % of respondents see them as a burden, whereas only c. 32 % see them as more of an asset than a burden. The rest of the survey

respondents see refugees as neither a burden nor an asset. The results thus indicate that while migration is mainly seen as having a positive effect on the economy, refugees are not universally regarded as contributing. The viewpoints of labour unions and employers' organizations are similar on this, although the employers' side sees migration as having a slightly more positive impact on the economy. One industrial sector unionist told us, "Us Finns will never be sufficiently numerous to fill all the jobs that are on offer, and which will be required in the future."

Most of the interviewees note that migrants are an important asset to the Finnish labour market because of **the demographic situation**. Migrants are seen as an inevitable part of the labour market because of the aging population. The fact that most migrants coming to Finland are of working age is seen as an important, because it is necessary for the continued funding and maintaining of the Finnish welfare state. However, although the potential of migrants is recognized, several interviewees also noted that the employment rate of migrants and especially refugees is still far too low and that to make a contribution, migrants actually need to be employed. Moreover, some also note that the overall volume of migration to Finland is still too small to fix the demographic problem even if all migrants were employed.

Besides the demographic situation, another theme that keeps reoccurring in the interviews related to the benefit that migrants can bring to Finland is that of **labour shortages**. Many of the interviewees report that we need migrants because in many sectors we have or are in the future going to have serious labour shortages. This is however something that is seen by the interviewees as a more controversial issue. Some unions question the rhetoric and presence of labour shortages in their field and instead are worried about labour shortages being used as an excuse to bring in cheaper foreign workers. Some interviewees noted that migrants are an important asset in their sectors, because they are willing to take jobs Finnish people do not want to work in. Thus sectors that are less appealing, for various reasons, are more reliant on migrant workers.

In the discussion, labour shortages are also closely linked to **skills shortages** which are regularly brought up in the interviews. The representatives from sectors employing highly-skilled individuals especially emphasise the need to bring in skills. The interviewees relate this to Finland being a small country dependant on knowledge intensive sectors. Interviewees in these sectors emphasized the importance of being able to recruit the best international talent. According to the survey results, most respondents (94%) consider migrants coming to Finland to be either moderately or highly skilled. On the contrary, refugees are by most (60%) considered mainly low skilled. Although generally the need to bring in skilled migrants is recognized, there are also some exceptions: Representatives from sectors that are not in need of special high skills, such as the building sector, note that although migrants bring the benefit of adding to the labour force, they are not generally needed because of any special skills that they bring to these sectors. A difference in rhetoric between representatives from knowledge intensive sectors and less knowledge intensive sectors can thus be identified.

4.3.2 Services and Activities Targeted at Migrants

The survey indicates that the **engagement of social partners** with issues relating to the needs of migrants and/or refugees is somewhat polarized: about half engage either frequently or sometimes, whereas the other half engages rarely or never. However, based on the interviews, it seems that social partners generally consider that both employer and employee representative organizations can have a role in the labour market integration of migrants. The

role is limited and many of the interviewees emphasize that their organization mainly focuses on offering services to their members, who are generally already employed. The focus and aims of unions are thus not to help unemployed migrants find work.

Based on the interviews, it seems that labour unions, employer representative organizations and union confederations generally do not offer that much in the way of targeted services towards migrants. There however seems to be great variation in this: some unions, in sectors where migrants have been in the labour market for a longer time, more services are offered, whereas in other unions services targeted specifically to migrants are almost non-existent. The most commonly offered services for migrants include offering information and **support in various languages** and offering **information about the Finnish labour market** in general. The websites of most organizations have been translated into English and some unions also have translations in Russian, Estonian and Polish. Some unions have also translated parts of their collective labour agreements into various languages, depending on the need. The language question however seems to be largely an issue of resources. Some unions, such as *the Finnish Construction Trade Union* are very willing to spend money on solving language issues, and others are not as keen. Some of the interviewees also bring up that having personnel that speaks various languages is an asset, which has been focused on more recently in hiring. Others emphasise that their services are mostly in Finnish, because also the labour market functions mostly in Finnish and migrants have to be able to speak Finnish to enter the labour market. Offering services in Finnish is thus seen as helping in learning the language and thus integration.

Besides offering information in various languages, some organizations also offer various types of **mentoring and education** to migrants. Some unions, such as the *Union of Health and Social Care Professionals in Finland*, emphasise that they try to focus on ensuring that the paths to employment are easy and straightforward for migrants. This is related to the advocacy work that unions do regarding trying **to influence permits and skills recognition related bureaucracy**. In some unions, **special sub-organizations or activity groups have been established for migrant members**. *The Finnish Construction Trade Union* for example has its own migrant section which migrants can join and the *Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors* has its own activity-organisation for migrant members, that however does not function as a separate division but rather as an extra activity group that migrants can join. Some organizations have also organized or been part of **information campaigns** which try to decrease racism and discrimination and provide migrants with information about the labour market and self-employment. For example, the Association of Logistic Enterprises in Finland has been running a campaign called "Work and Discrimination". (Interview 5 a 10).

Although most organizations do not offer many targeted services for migrants, almost all the interviewed organizations emphasise that employer and employee representative organizations have a significant role in society through **advocacy and influencing decision making and general opinion**. Several interviewees emphasise that due to the Finnish tripartite decision-making system, unions have a central role when making decisions regarding the labour market, migrants and integration measures in Finland. Through this social partners are thus engaged in issues regarding the integration of migrants into the labour market. Besides wider societal influence, some of the interviewees also bring up that they try to **influence the attitudes of their members** and educate them about the rights of migrants. Several interviewees note that they are aware that they have members with less favourable opinions about migrants and through open discussion and sharing information they try to

decrease racism and discrimination among their members. An official from the a building sector union went so far as to say “in the Union there is zero tolerance for racism”. However, for the most part the approach to combat racism has been unsystematic. Interviewees mostly mentioned only taking personal initiatives against racism and discrimination, rather than having public and official campaigns. This is an area where employers’ organizations and unions could do more.

Most interviewees emphasise that within their organization everyone is treated the same, which also means that all those with a foreign background are treated the same regardless migrant status. Of the survey respondents, more than half (c.55 %) note that their organization neither pursues a general form of support to all, nor a targeted form of support to specific migrants and refugees. A general approach is taken by 26 % of respondents and a targeted form by 19 %. However, the emphasis of the discourse of unions is strongly on labour migrants and their opportunities, instead of, for example, refugees. Moreover, some interviewees note that the emphasise should be in employing people that are already in the country, before bringing in new labour force. Based on the interviews there does not seem to be a strong focus or targeted activities on any specific migrant groups, such as disabled people, LGBT+ or young people. However, according to the survey respondents, especially disabled migrants (according to 72 %), young migrants (according to 68%) and female migrants (according to 57%) should definitely receive additional support in Finland to integrate into the labour market. On the other hand 44% of the respondents find that migrants identified as LGBT+ should not receive any more support than other migrants in labour market integration. In some interviews, migrant women are identified as a group in need of special attention, because of their poor labour market position and tendency to be left outside of integration services.

4.4 Barriers to the Labour Market Integration Identified by Social Partners

4.4.1 Barriers to Labour Market Integration

The survey indicates that most respondents find that the employment potential of migrants, and in particular refugees, living in Finland is not fully realised. Various barriers to labour market integration are noted:

The most common barriers for the labour market integration of migrants identified by the social partners include **lack of local language skills** and **lack of information** about Finnish working life. Most interviewees emphasise that without knowing one of the local languages, Finnish or Swedish, getting a job is very difficult. This is also found in the survey, in which 65 % of respondents find language issues one of the most important factor preventing the full realisation of migrant’s and refugees employment capacities. According to interviewees, some of the existing language requirements might at times be too strict and others bring up that especially in Helsinki more and more service jobs are now available, if you have at least good English language skills. Many however bring up that in several sectors, especially in formally certified professions, such as with nurses and doctors, there is no way to get ahead without learning the language, no matter how good ones’ skills or previous experiences are. Lack of

knowledge regarding the national job market is seen by 35% of the survey respondents as a barrier to labour market integration.

Also, a **lack of education** is by many of the interviewees seen as a barrier. Some interviewees state that since most migrants coming to Finland do not have any education, their labour market integration is difficult. This likely reflects the reality that the interviewees face: those working in sectors that do not demand higher education qualifications meet more migrants with no education. Also, the image portrayed by populist parties and also somewhat adopted by the media, especially after the increase in asylum applicants coming to Finland since 2015, might have generated an idea for many, that migrants mostly are low skilled. This idea is however not shared among all the interviewees and some in fact emphasise that migrants often are highly qualified and that a **lack of recognition of qualifications** is instead a serious barrier to labour market integration. Lack of recognition of migrant qualifications is also according to the survey found by 45 % of respondents as preventing the realisation of migrants' or refugees' employment capacities. Employers' organisations see a lack of recognition slightly more often as a barrier than trade unions.

Other issues that are mentioned in the interviews as barriers to labour market integration include a lack of technological skills, not being motivated to work in manual sectors such as construction, illiteracy, cultural issues such as women staying at home with children, discrimination, missing documents, a lack of work experience, not being able to successfully assert previous experiences, and lack of networks. Lack of networks is seen as especially problematic for those who come to Finland as partners to labour migrants. According to the survey, employers' organizations see cultural differences more likely as a barrier to integration than labour unions. Only 2 % of the survey respondents find that the state of the economy is preventing the realisation of migrants or refugee's employment capacities. This likely reflects that the overall economic situation in Finland has in recent years been advantageous.

Of the survey respondents, 50 % find **legal and administrative issues and immigration policy** as the most important factors preventing labour market integration. Employer representatives especially emphasise the role of **bureaucratic obstacles** which make it difficult for employees to hire migrants and particularly asylum seekers. For example, the fact that employees no longer have an easy way to check whether a person has the right to work in Finland is brought up as a practical barrier to employing migrants. From the employer side, it is also brought up that hiring migrants, the work experience and qualifications of which may be unknown and unfamiliar, always poses a risk to the company. Some companies are more willing to take risks in hiring than others, since failed recruitments are always expensive, as one interviewee brings up. Thus, employers might be more willing to take on safer bets, in other words Finnish individuals, whose education background and previous work experience is more familiar and easier to check.

When asked about **barriers that are indirectly related** to effective labour market integration (e.g. affordable childcare, affordable housing, and adequate public transport), most interviewees did not see these as significantly affecting the labour market integration of migrants in Finland. However, those interviewees that did see these as affecting labour market integration noted that these barriers are mostly the same for migrants and native citizens, and that they do thus not in any way hinder the labour market integration of migrants specifically. Some interviewees however brought up the Finnish system of childcare and parents (often mothers) being able to stay at home for a long with their children as a barrier and "trap" for women. Affordable child care is mentioned by 55% of the survey respondents as very

important in regards to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Another issue is brought up in the interviews, is the high cost of living in the capital area, which might make it difficult for low earning migrants to make sufficient income and also discourage them from taking on low paying jobs out of fear of losing social benefits.

4.4.2 Migrants more Exposed to Risks

Most social partner respondents regard migrants as more exposed to health and safety risks (64 % of survey respondents) compared to the native workforce. Reasons for this include a **lack of knowledge** about the Finnish labour market and collective agreements, which contribute to migrants being more often discriminated against and exploited in the labour market than native Finnish workers. Respondents made much of the fact that migrants come from countries in which labour regulations are different than those in Finland; this means that migrants are often not aware of their rights and do not know how to demand them. Of the survey respondents 82% find that refugees and 79% that migrants would benefit from receiving more education about their employment rights in Finland. Migrants not knowing their rights occurs especially when migrant workers are segregated from other workers or/and work in remote places with no access to information, such as on farms or in the forestry sector, as brought up by one interviewee (Interview 5 a 16). Migrants may also be willing to put up with lower pay and less safe conditions since they often compare their situation to that in their country of origin instead of that of other employees in Finland; this is often a problem in construction, or in forestry and agriculture where there are large numbers of temporary migrants isolated. Another interviewee notes that sometimes migrants' own eagerness to work and a need to please their employer may lead to them being exploited. At the point when migrants face most serious risks, when first arriving in Finland, they are also very unlikely to be labour union members. Some interviewees emphasised that the more dependant the migrants are on their employer, the more at risk they are of being taken advantage of. This can occur if the workers are dependent on the employer for housing, and or organizing transportation, such as can occur in construction and agriculture. Most survey respondents find that currently the employment rights of migrants or refugees are either fully or somewhat respected by employers. However, 30 % of the respondents find that discrimination is a barrier to the labour market integration of migrants.

A lack of knowledge and opportunities also lead to migrants being more at **risk at ending up in the informal labour market**. According to survey results, the respondents find refugees more at being at risk of falling into the informal labour market in Finland than other migrants: 52 % of respondents find refugees being at high risk whereas only 12 % of respondents find other migrants at high risk. One interviewee notes that sometimes migrants do not even know whether they are working legally or illegally. She notes that their organization has come across cases in which migrant employees have thought that everything is legal but after working for a long time they found out that their employers has never paid the legally required taxes or other social payments on their behalf. This puts migrants in a difficult situation, since it can jeopardize the extension of their residence and/or work permits (Interview 5 a 11). The significance of informal labour varies greatly between sectors. In strictly regulated sectors, such as the health care sector, there are few opportunities for migrants to work informally. Several interviewees note that especially in the building sector several successful reforms have been made, such as improving the visibility of employers' tax numbers, to combat informal labour.

Another factor creating labour market risks for migrants has to do with **language skills**. Several interviewees note that inadequate Finnish language skills can lead to safety and health risks. This is especially the case in occupations where induction training in the work place has an important role (such as the health care sector) and in work places where it is important to follow instructions in real time (such as the construction sector). Some interviewees note that they have heard stories about migrants not using safety equipment or safety clothes as rigorously as native employees. This is explained by migrants not having the information and needed training but also by migrants being used to different standards of safety in their country of origin.

Only few of the interviewed social partners note that they have come across serious cases of exploitation such as human trafficking and forced labour. Some note that these seem to be problems in smaller firms, especially ethnic-owned firms. The interviewees note of cases where the passports of migrants have been confiscated or where migrants have been made to sign illegal contracts, or pay penalties when resigning. The interviewees note that in such cases the police is an important cooperation partner to their organization.

When asked about **tensions between native workers and migrants**, many of the interviewees were somewhat circumspect to answer. Most noted that they had not personally come across such issues in their work and none of the interviewees described severe tensions due to competition for working places. According to the survey, most respondents (62 %) report that there has been little competition for jobs between refugees and native workers. However, 38 % of respondents note that there has been competition to some extent between native workers and migrants in general. The respondents report that the arrival of refugees has caused more tension (58 % of respondents) than the arrival of migrants (42 % of respondents) in the labour market. The most significant sources for these tension are, according to the respondents, perceived cultural and religious differences, populist politicians/movements and perceived competition for jobs. Cultural differences are according to 32 % of the respondents a significant barrier to labour market integration. Some noted that their sector is not considered appealing by native workers, which means that migrant workers are more accepted. Others noted that due to their field being very international (for example, research and health care), their employees are used to people from different places and know that skilled people can come from anywhere. Those interviewees who have noted tensions report that these are mostly related to a fear of salaries and benefits being depressed by a workforce that is willing to work for less when entering the labour market. According to the survey however, only 15 % of respondent found a perceived lowering of wages a source of tension between migrants and natives. Employers' organizations (28 % of respondents), trade unions (26 % of respondents) and private companies (26% of respondents) are found most effective actors in alleviating the noted tensions.

Besides tensions between employees, migrants may also be at risk of **tensions and racist attitudes from clients and patients**. Representatives of the health care sector bring up that due to tensions with patients and clients, migrants are at risk of facing more abuse than other employees in the workplace. The most effective mechanisms to mitigate competition between migrants or refugees and native workers, according to the survey responses, are social dialogue (such as negotiations and consultation between organised workers and employers in the form of collective bargaining) according 28 % of the respondents and minimum wages by 26 % of respondents.

4.5 Enablers to Labour Market Integration Identified by Social Partners

4.5.1 Existing Enabling Services to Labour Market Integration

When asked about **most effective services in promoting the labour market integration of migrants** and refugees the interviewees mostly bring up the role of official services offered as part of integration training. This reflects a viewpoint according to which overall integration is mostly seen as an endeavour for which the state and its official institutions, such as the employment office are responsible. Regarding this, some note that the role of labour unions is not to integrate people but to make sure that once they are integrated into the labour market, their rights are realized. As one local official put it when asked about their role in integration, "Our role is just to make sure that the collective agreement is respected." (Interview 5.a.2)

With statements like these, the social partners somewhat distance themselves from the main responsibilities of overall integration. Of the survey respondents, 48 % find that migration policies are effective in migrant labour market integration but on the other hand 37 % find that a lack of services to support integration is preventing the full realisation of migrants or refugee's employment capacities.

As one of the most important services affecting integration, **language training** is mentioned frequently by the interviewees and 63 % of the survey respondent find, that increasing language training services would be most effective in facilitating the entry of migrants or refugees into the labour market. Most interviewees seem to agree that offering migrants proper opportunities to learn Finnish or Swedish is the best integration service. Related to this, some bring up that language courses also need to be of high quality and migrants need to have the possibility to continue their language studies to advanced levels, instead of just learning the basics and how to get along everyday situations. This is however seen as somewhat of a challenge. Several of the social partners note that their organization does not have resources to offer language courses to their members.

The language question is also brought up in relation to **official integration training only being available to unemployed migrants**, which means that employed migrants, whom the unions represent are mostly excluded. This is by some of the interviewees noted as a serious problem. The fact that being employed does not necessarily mean that one learns the language is seen as an issue. Several of the labour union representatives call out for the employers' responsibility in making sure that their employees become integrated and learn the language. Some note that employers should offer language courses and/or the ability of their employees to take part in language learning during working hours. The employer representatives on the other hand emphasise that e.g. responsibilities of organizing language training cannot be put on employers but instead society should take more responsibility in this. Some interviewees note that there should be opportunities for employed persons to take part in official integration training as well. Related to integration training, the fact that it is only available for a limited time period, mostly 3-5 years after migration, is seen as causing some issues. Especially the fact that women, who often stay at home with children, do not attend is seen as a problem and further hindering the employment opportunities of migrant women. The interviewee representing the union of university researchers and teachers emphasised especially that if Finland wants to attract highly skilled migrants the integration of the entire family, including the partner and children, should be considered and taken care of.

Both employer organization staff and unionists brought up the important role of various **employment and pay subsidies**, paid by the state to companies in order for them to hire unemployed individuals, including unemployed migrants, in labour market integration. According to interviewees these subsidies enable migrants to gain access to the labour market through e.g. work trials and internships. The work experience gathered through these experiences can, as stated by one of the interviewees, show employers that migrants are used to working life in Finland. This can make them more popular to hire. On similar lines, support for job search is found effective in labour market integration by 46 % of the survey respondents. Volunteering opportunities on the other hand are found effective by only 4 % of the respondents. The fact that refugees are allowed to work as soon as possible or as soon as there are available opportunities, regardless of their language proficiency and skills is by most respondents (73%) found as having more positive than negative effects on the long term employment outcomes of refugees.

International skill centres that have been set up in the larger cities of Finland are brought up by one interviewee as a successful service in integration. The centres bring together various actors working in the field, such as official employment institutions and education facilities, to ease and expedite the education and employment paths of migrants. According to the survey, 41 % of respondents find skills matching services effective in migrant and refugee labour market integration. Also, offering **intensive training** is seen as a successful service. In intensive training migrants, and other unemployed, are given a short course which enables them to enter certain fields, which do not require long periods of study, quickly and effectively.

Some union representatives also bring up several of their **own services, which they have found useful**. For example, a representative from a professional union representing mainly workers in industry, financial, service, ICT, communications and equivalent fields, brings up that they have an encompassing service package for their members regarding career building, recruitment and becoming employed. According to the interviewee, this package is something that has been a successful service for their members. Part of the package has also been realised in English, which according to the interviewee also makes it a good opportunity for their migrant members. Other interviewees bring up that their organizations have offered migrants services related to network building. Some organizations note that they have offered e.g. opportunities for migrants to network among themselves and other note that through offering mentoring programmes they have brought together migrants and natives working in the field.

A more general part of integration, not strictly related to labour market integration, but still brought up by several of the interviewees is the fact that migrant children can/should be **able to attend state funded day-care extensively**, even if their parents are unemployed and at home. This is seen as a long term investment in the integration of migrant children and second generation migrants. In this, also the fact that migrant children attend Finnish schools is seen as part of successful integration.

4.5.2 Employment Opportunities for Migrants

When asked **which sectors offer the best opportunities for the labour market integration of migrants and refugees**, some sectors come up more frequently than others. Especially sectors that are suffering from labour shortages, that are unappealing for native workers for various reasons, and that do not require strict qualification and language skills requirements are seen as the most prominent opportunities for migrants. Furthermore, the interviewees

consider that certain high-skill professions, especially in the IT-sector, offers migrants many opportunities. Of less highly skilled professions, it is especially the service sector, the cleaning sector, the agricultural sector and the building sector that are brought up in the interviews as having opportunities for migrants. Also, for example the logistics sector and the forest industry are brought up as offering more and more opportunities for migrants. The survey indicates similar results, and according to more than 50 % of the respondents especially agriculture, forestry and fishing; construction; human health and social work activities; accommodation and food service activities; and manufacturing, offer migrants and refugees employment opportunities. The interviewees also bring up that there are more and more opportunities for migrants to work in English, especially in the capital area. This applies both to the service sector as well as to international companies. Some of the interviewees also emphasise that there are more opportunities opening up for migrants outside of big cities and growth centres, in the periphery: in areas where the population is dwindling it is becoming increasingly difficult to find workforce, which is why migrants are becoming more welcome. Although the care sector has in public discussion often been brought up as in need of foreign workers due to labour shortages, representatives of that field note that it is quite difficult for migrants to get employed as nurses and doctors due to the strict language requirements and difficulties in recognition of qualifications. To work in this field, individuals generally need to be licenced professionals, which makes it difficult for many migrants to enter.

Opportunities for migrants and refugees to do part time work, fixed term contracts, agency work and freelance work are regarded by most survey respondents in a more positive than negative light. In the interviews, however, especially the union representatives were critical of these forms of employment and many found them problematic. Many of the interviewees were especially critical of the growth of the gig economy and the opportunities that it could present for the labour market integration of migrants. Particularly from the union side, many regard it as problematic that this field is unregulated, so that it is not possible to ensure collective agreements are maintained. Among other things, with gig economy work, the nature of the employment relationship is contested by the employer. As one trade unionist put it; "It often they are considered to be in an entrepreneurial relationship, even though they are unable to determine their working time or price independently, and the criteria for independent entrepreneurship are not met."

In the survey however, 44 % of respondents found that the gig economy provides good solutions to the employment needs of migrants and refugees whereas only 33 % of respondents saw the gig economy as providing good solutions to the employment needs of native workers. A further 37 % reported that the gig economy offers a stepping stone for migrants and refugees to gain valuable experience about the labour market.

Most of the social partners that were interviewed note that they have none or very few employees with a migrant background currently working in their own organization and 70 % of survey respondents note that their organization does not conduct specifically targeted recruitment towards migrant or refugees. Several interviewees note, that the lack of individuals with a migrant background working in the sector is an issue that might hinder the active participation of migrants in trade unions. Most interviewees noted that their organization should pay more attention to this. Several reasons are however provided for social partners not employing more individuals with a migrant background, including the high information capital regarding the labour market and Finnish union movement needed to succeed in the field. Also the fact that there are still too few (or in some cases none at all) shop stewards in

working places, was found by most interviewees as an issue that needs to be altered in the future. Some interviewees note that native Finnish shop stewards may be difficult to approach for migrants and the shop stewards may also not have the cultural skills to support migrants in joining unions.

4.6 Social Partners, Social Dialogue, Policymaking and Labour Market Integration

4.6.1 Effect of Current Labour Market Integration Policies

Many of the interviewees were cautious to comment on **the impact that current migration policies** have on the labour market integration of migrants. The interviewees noted that this is because migration policies are actually not in their field of expertise and that they not specifically work on issues related to the integration of migrants. This again illustrates that the focus of social partners is in representing their members, who mostly are employed. Several of the interviewees however noted, that if Finland wants to attract labour migrants, emphasis should be put on their overall integration and also the integration of their families. Based on the interviewees many were not completely satisfied with how things are done regarding this currently and of the survey respondents a large majority (85 %) find that current policies in Finland are not effective at all or only slightly effective in filling skills shortages in sectors/roles where these exist. Also, the need for long term integration, to get migrants to stay in Finland, was emphasised by the interviewees. Especially the role that national labour market integration policies and strategies can have is emphasised by the interviewees, compared to for example European or sector level strategies. Of the survey respondents, 65 % found that especially the national labour market strategy should be prioritised, compared to e.g. European labour market integration strategy, which should be prioritised according to only 6 % of respondents.

One current policy, about which the interviews expressed differing opinions, is **the labour market availability test**. This rule requires that employers must first establish that there is not a Finnish or EU/EEA person available to take the job in question, before a residence permit can be granted to a migrant to take a job. This type of labour market testing is seen very differently by different interviewees: The representatives of the employer's side mostly see this type of testing as slow, ineffective, outdated and hindering labour migration, whereas the employee representatives mostly see this as necessary to avoid labour market dumping. Some interviewees from the union side however felt less strongly about this, which is due to the fact that not all fields are affected by migration in the same way. Availability tests generally do not affect labour markets for professions that require highly skilled employees. Those who support of availability testing note that there is already a huge labour reserve in the EU, and there is rarely a need to look further for employees. Furthermore, almost all of the interviewees emphasise that the focus should be on employing those migrants that are already in the country instead of looking for new ones. Employer representatives on the other hand note, that employers would not look further for employees if they were available closer by, but since they are not, availability testing is preventing employers from finding the needed labour force from outside the EU quickly enough for their needs.

4.6.2 Social Dialogue and Cooperation

Most of the interviewed representatives report that their organisation has been **involved in social dialogue processes** on areas relating to labour market integration of migrants and refugees. 67 % of survey respondents report that their organization has been involved in social dialogue processes on migration and labour migration policies in the last five years. Weak unionization of migrants and refugees (24 %) and lack of political will (22%) are seen by some survey respondents as preventing the development of further opportunities for social dialogue on migration issues. The representatives from union head offices and central organizations emphasise that **advocating for the rights** of their members is the most central part of their work. This is seen as closely connected to social dialogue, which offers organizations a centralized way to have their voices heard. In practice, social dialogue happens mainly through cooperation between various different actors and through consultation.

Cooperation between social partners is common and several interviewees emphasised the good relationship that they have with their “opposite” side: in other words, the relationship between the union and the relevant employer’s association. Overall, consensus based cooperation and decision making is seen as a central part of the Finnish social movement by all the interviewees. Besides cooperation with other social partners, the interviewees also report having cooperation with education facilities, integration services and migrant organisations.

Most of the organisations have been **consulted** by various levels of state decision makers regarding the labour market position and integration of migrants. This is because most any form of labour market related legislation which is contemplated in Finland normally goes through a process of social partner consultation, if it is not actually the outcome of social partner initiatives. Consultation requests are often in the form social partner experts visiting government officials to brief them on various topics. The government will request various types of statements and official positions on specific topics are requested of social partners. Several of the interviewees also note that their organization is part of various work groups formed on thematic topics by the government. Consultation by the government are seen as an important channel for social partners to have their voice heard and they are also seen as important in regards to the tripartite decision making process in Finland. For example, the Finnish Construction Workers’ Union and Confederation of Finnish Construction Industries worked together to formulate a policy on identification documents on construction sites, in order to better monitor that migrant workers employed by subcontractors were working legally and were being paid according to the collective agreement. The solution they arrived at was then passed into legislation.

Consultations by the national government are more common than consultation at the EU or municipal level. The interviewees representing local offices have less experience with consultation than those representing national head offices of the social partners. It seems that consultation requests made by the government are mainly concentrated to head offices in the capital area.

4.7 Conclusions

Social partners in Finland mainly see migration as necessary and as having a positive impact on the Finnish labour market. The demographic situation, labour shortages and a need for

skilled employers is emphasised. Migrants are generally seen as having a more positive impact on the labour market than refugees.

Various sectors are identified as offering migrants more employment opportunities than others. Sectors and professions that suffer from labour shortages, and sectors with a low skills threshold, with no strict requirements for official certificates, are seen as offering migrants the best opportunities for labour market integration. Also those sectors that are unappealing for natives are seen to offer migrants opportunities to enter the labour market.

The social partners identify various barriers to the labour market integration of migrants, including a lack of language skills and education, a lack of recognition of qualifications and various bureaucratic obstacles. Migrants are also considered to be more at risk of workplace health and safety problems. Also, the possibility of exploitation in the informal labour market is seen as an issue of particular concern for migrants. The reasons for this is their more vulnerable labour market position, which is in turn due to lack of work permits, lack of language skills and most importantly a lack of knowledge of the local labour markets norms and regulations.

In general, unions recognize that they have a role in tackling these risks and barriers and thus improving the labour market integration of migrants. In practice, however, unions mainly represent their members who are mostly already employed individuals. The social partners seem to consider that their role, first and foremost, is not to integrate people but to make sure that once they are integrated into the labour market, their rights are realized. The integration of migrants into the labour market is therefore mainly seen as the responsibility of the state; the role of official integration services in this emphasised. However, to improve the labour market position of migrants unions offer various services, which are mainly targeted at their own members. The unions' most commonly offered include language services such as providing information about the Finnish labour market and the collective agreements in various languages. Also the websites of most unions are translated into various languages. Since a lack of information about labour rights and responsibilities is seen as significantly hindering the labour market position of migrants, providing this information to migrants is regarded by the unions as an important service and responsibility. Some unions offer labour market and workplace information courses for migrants specifically. Some unions on the other hand focus especially on trying to influence permit related bureaucracy and bureaucracy related to skills recognition. In general, however, the overall emphasises and availability of services targeted at migrants varies greatly between unions. Generally, migrants are included in the same services as other members, and not separated, or offered a great number of targeted services.

The social partners especially emphasise the advocacy role that they have. Through advocacy, social partners can policy making related to the labour market position of migrants, especially in their own sector. In practice, this advocacy occurs through consultation. Social partners are consulted significantly less by the EU, and overall the emphasis on influencing integration policy is on the national level.

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Annex I - List of Interviews with social partners

	Part of which central organization	Organization	Date
5.a.1	AKAVA	Union of Professionals in Natural, Environmental and Forestry Sciences Loimu	13.08.2019
5.a.2	SAK	Finnish Transport Workers' Union (AKT)	09.10.2019
5.a.3	SAK	Service Union United (PAM)	10.10.2019
5.a.4	SAK	Service Union United (PAM)	10.10.2019
5.a.5	STTK	Pro Union	21.10.2019
5.a.6	SAK	Construction Trade Union	21.10.2019
5.a.7	SAK	Finnish Industrial Union	24.10.2019
5.a.8	SAK	The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)	30.10.2019
5.a.9	AKAVA	Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (AKAVA)	30.10.2019
5.a.10	EK	Association of Logistic Enterprises in Finland	31.10.2019
5.a.11	SAK	Construction Trade Union	31.10.2019
5.a.12	STTK	The Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK	31.10.2019
5.a.13	STTK	Tehy Union of Health and Social Care Professionals	14.11.2019
5.a.14	AKAVA	Finnish Medical Association	14.11.2019
5.a.15	EK	Confederation of Finnish Industries EK	14.11.2019
5.a.16	SAK	Finnish Industrial Union	15.11.2019
5.a.17	SAK	Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (JHL)	15.11.2019
5.a.18	SAK	Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (JHL)	15.11.2019
5.a.19	AKAVA	Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers	15.11.2019

5 Greece

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5.1 The environment for social partners in Greece

Social partners' organisations had been created in Greece during the 20th century. Employed persons under private law contracts join primary-level trade-unions that belong (or may belong) to the structure of GSEE, the General Confederation of Greek Labour while those who are employed as civil servants join, primary level trade-unions that belong (or may belong) to the structure of ADEDY, the Supreme Administration of Civil Servants' Trade-Unions (Ioannou 1999). Both unions follow a three-level organisation scheme consisting of primary-level trade-unions (company, regional or craft unions), secondary level organisations such as Federations and Local Labour Centers, and tertiary level organisations such as GSEE and ADEDY. As for employers, there are three different national organisations that play a determinant role in the social dialogue and in the national labour relations system: the Federation of Greek Industry (SEB), representing industry and big enterprises in general; the Hellenic Confederation of Greek Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE), which represents trading concerns; and the General Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Small Manufacturers of Greece (GSEBEE), representing the interests of handicraft professionals and small manufacturing enterprises (Ioannou 1999). The members of SEB are corporations and other companies or employers' unions. ESEE and GSEBEE incorporate federations. Additionally GSEBEE has members of second level, not companies but persons who are self-employed with or without employees (Ioannou 1999).

Social dialogue and collective bargaining in Greece are structured through three main levels: national level, covering the whole economy; industry/occupation level, covering specific industrial sectors or specific occupations; and company level (Worker-Participation 2019). As for the framework of negotiations, 2010 and the subsequent economic recession mark a turning point. Until 2010, this framework was provided by legislation passed in 1990, which introduced free collective bargaining in which conciliation, mediation and arbitration through the official Organisation for Mediation and Arbitration (OMED) played an important role. Austerity measures from 2010 onwards and the subsequent legislative framework have had a very significant impact on the promotion of social dialogue and collective bargaining. According to the legislative framework (Law 3845/2010 and Law 4024/2011) "the clauses of professional and enterprise collective agreements can deviate from the relevant clauses of sectoral and general national agreements, and the clauses of sectoral collective agreements can deviate from the relevant clauses of national general collective agreements" (CEACR 2018). In this respect, several concerns have been expressed (CEACR 2018; ILO 2011 and 2014) regarding the implementation of this legislation, since the high share of small enterprises in the country's labour market carries a risk that is detrimental to the foundations of collective bargaining in Greece. There can be no doubt that the way in which collective bargaining is evolving in Greece is a source of concern. Indeed, whereas in 2009, 85% of employees were covered by collective agreements, the corresponding figure for 2016 was estimated only at 10-20% (ILO 2017). Despite the initiatives of the government elected in January 2015, and the corresponding amendments aiming at safeguarding all the terms of expired collective

agreements (Law 4331/2015), the third loan agreement and the ensuing Law 4336/2015 led to the abolition of these amendments (Koukiadaki and Grimshaw 2016). In practice, austerity measures and structural labour market reforms have led to the absence of union organization at company level and to the low incidence of company level bargaining (Koukiadaki and Grimshaw 2016) which in turn increase the risk of transforming the pre-crisis Greek system of collective bargaining and social dialogue into a kind of model of absent or single-employer bargaining. In addition, these developments in collective bargaining risk further increasing forms of exploitation in employment against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

In practice, there is a lack of a valuable assessment of austerity measures and structural reforms since they have been implemented without any evaluation of their impact on fundamental labour rights (CEACR 2018; Kouzis 2016; Koukiadaki and Grimshaw 2016), in particular for vulnerable groups such as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who are at risk of being more greatly affected by economic recession and the labour market 'reforms' package of the Greek bailout agreements (Maroukis 2016). This absence prevents an effective monitoring of wage differentials between migrants and natives, working migrants at risk of discrimination, as well of practices related to migrant representation in collective bargaining and social dialogue. In addition, it does not allow an assessment that will be a valuable input when addressing the segmented landscape of the Greek labour market, which has become more complex during the economic crisis, as well as the risk of normalizing the trafficking of people for the purposes of labour exploitation (Maroukis 2016) and the transition towards an absent or single-employer bargaining model.

Inevitably, the above-mentioned developments have further limited the role of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees; either because industrial relations and social dialogue take place in a context of a widespread deregularisation of the labour market or because of restricted unionization for all workers or because of the weaker participation of migrants in social partners' organization, participation which has already been of limited importance (Katsoridas, 2015) before 2010.

5.2 Methods

The field research combined online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with key social partners selected among tertiary labour unions, labour federations, labour centers, business federations and employers' organizations. In particular, for the online survey, the 'umbrella approach' was used for ensuring the heterogeneity of social partners and for better identifying those which are most relevant to the sectors with job creation potential for MRAs identified in WP1. Once a relevant social partner has been identified, contact details for the headquarters of the social partner and its branches/member organizations were identified. In a next step, a mapping tool has been created, containing information on the organization name, the type of social partner the location and the link to website, the e-mail address and the telephone which had been used to follow up survey invitations. Particular efforts had been made to find details of a named contact. At that purpose, colleagues who have daily contact with the social partners were contacted by our team in order to recommend us some of the persons of the social partners' staff dealing with migration issues. This approach was also used for the semi-structured interviews. In order to maximise response rates of the potential participants for the online survey, we pursued a three-step strategy: a) email the initial invitation email to respondents, b) send reminder email one week later and c) follow-up phone call one week after the reminder email. We had 26 responses to the online survey covering

trade unions, professional guilds, social enterprises, employers' organizations, commerce chambers and associations of unemployed and precarious workers.

As for the semi-structured interviews, a number of 16 was conducted during the field research: six with representatives of employers' associations (one of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises, two of the General Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Small Manufacturers of Greece, one of the Greek Tourism Confederation and two of the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship), eight with labour unions' representatives (two of the General Confederation of Greek Labour, one of the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Labour, one of the Athens Labour Center, one of the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Food and Tourism Workers, one of the Employee Technicians Association, one of the Federation of Workers in Textile and Clothing Industries and one of the Union of Employees in Delivery Services) and two with representatives of unions of immigrant communities (one of migrants and one of refugees).

There were no particular difficulties in conducting the interviews. One of the weaknesses could be considered the fact that some (three) interviews were conducted in the offices of the interviewees in the presence of their colleagues. This parameter may have been discouraging to talk about certain issues openly. A second difficulty was that many of the representatives we discussed had too much work, so they were pushed to the end of the interview to complete.

A particular personal sense of the interviews led to the fact that the representatives of the agencies, while well aware of the reality and the obstacles to the integration of immigrants and refugees into the Greek labour market, felt that they had extremely limited means of intervention and influence for improvement of existing policies. This is due to the limited powers vested in them by the state for such actions.

5.3 The strategies and activities of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in Greece

Social partners consider that MRA's are mostly moderate skilled and that migrants are higher skilled than refugees and asylum seekers. They also positively value the contribution of immigrants and refugees to the Greek economy. It is noteworthy that, very often, their main references are to the thirty years of immigrant experience in Greece, given that the number of refugees who decided to settle in the Greek state by 2015 was relatively small.

Many points that underline the positive nature of immigration in the Greek economy come from some of the representatives of worker's unions. According to them, the positive nature of immigration in the Greek economy works mainly for the following reasons: first, because of their low labour costs, they increase the competitiveness of the Greek economy, offering a significant comparative advantage to Greek businesses. Secondly, the entry of a young working age population of immigrants and refugees, in a context of an increasing demographic ageing, revitalizes the country's workforce and offers valuable respite to the Greek insurance system. However, there are opposite views as well. Thus, some labour unions representatives consider that those assets for the economy are disadvantages for the working class movement since low labour costs, and tolerance in delayed payments or overwork of MRA's offer increasing benefits to the employers.

Employers' associations point to two negative effects of the presence of immigrants and refugees on the Greek economy, even though they agree on their role in contributing to economic growth. Both of these negative consequences are seen in connection with the limited actions undertaken by the Greek state as regards migrants' labour and social integration. The first relates to the undeclared employment phenomena of migrants and refugees that are sometimes adopted by businesses. These practices create conditions of unfair competition as they make more profits compared to the companies that choose the legal way of recruiting them. The second negative consequence is that the dimension of the informal economy is broadening as many of the migrants and refugees are channeled into gray areas of the economy such as illegal trade. As pointed out by a representative of an employer's organisation: "*The role of immigrants in the Greek economy is certainly positive. Many small businesses would have been shut down if they had not migrant workers willing to work hard and with relatively low wage. Also, many big companies might have left Greece and headed for another country in the Balkans with lower wages. However, we must not forget that the weak negotiating position of immigrants and refugees often leads them to the black economy. This is a negative consequence of their presence*" (Interview N.10).

One additional parameter that emerges is the inability of the Greek state to turn the comparative advantage brought by the skills of immigrants and refugees into accelerating economic growth of the country. Some of the immigrants and refugees are skilled workers with academic backgrounds or high-level expertise in specialized professional fields. The absence of policies by the Greek state to channel this workforce into appropriate sectors of the economy contributes placing newcomers in unskilled jobs. According to a representative of an employers' organization: "*It is at the expense of the Greek economy and of the MRAs as well that the state does not make a full use of their skills and abilities. Many of them are practicing professions that tend to disappear in Greece, such as shoemakers, traditional furniture craftsmen, etc., all of which could have a distinct place in the Greek economy and offer it a comparative advantage*" (Interview N.5). However, it is worth noting that it is not necessarily up to the state to make use of people skills in the economy but rather to the economy (employers) to do that or to contribute doing that.

Strategies and actions developed by the social partners for the integration of immigrants and refugees into the Greek labour market appear to be limited. In addition, it seems that social partners pursue more a general form of support to all migrants and refugees than a targeted form of support to specific migrant or refugee communities. This is due to many factors, such as the fact that they do not have a specific role in shaping the conditions of access of immigrants and refugees to the Greek labour market, or because they do not have the appropriate means of intervention to do so. Therefore, in any of the actions of the social partners, immigrants and refugees are included as part of the broader workforce involved.

Interviews show that employers' associations place their focus on training and enhancing the skills of various groups of unemployed, including immigrants and refugees. On the contrary, trade unions place greater emphasis on information actions on the rights of workers in the Greek labour market and ways to avoid labour exploitation. More specifically, employers' associations periodically organize training sessions for unemployed groups with the aim of providing them with the basic skills they deem necessary to be employable. An illustrative training activity is the learning of basic computer skills. Workers' unions aim more at seminars to inform about the labour rights of immigrants and refugees or to support first-class unions to tackle workplace incidents. Indicative is the testimony of a representative of a trade union:

“The state has not given us expanded powers to integrate immigrants and refugees. Most of all we do is to defend ourselves against their exploitation. We have recently organized a series of seminars on labour rights information and are aimed exclusively at refugee men and women. Also, when there is a complaint of labour exploitation we intervene and help to take appropriate legal action” (Interview N. 8).

Attention has to be paid to strategies and activities of a number of labour unions which form their actions and demands on the fundamental principle of the unity of the working class, considering that the migrants are an integral part of that. Being against national and religious separations and demanding equal rights for both Greek and migrant workers, they often provide language courses, relevant information in various languages and legal assistance relative to cases of uninsured labour, employer’s pressure and lack of safety and health conditions. They are opposed to forms of employment such as internships, apprenticeships and training programs because they consider that those forms of employment do not enhance immigrants' integration in terms of permanent and stable work but are used to reduce the value of the workforce as a whole.

Social partners’ representatives largely recognise the need for extra support to migrants and refugees being part of vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, precariously employed persons, LGBT+, women and young people, in order to integrate into the labour market. According to the results of the online survey, there are several factors lying behind the vulnerability of those groups; lack of experience and difficulties of adaptation for young persons, high unemployment and gender discrimination for women, risk of marginalisation and lack of perspective for precariously employed persons, broader vulnerability for LGBT+ and low employment rate and discrimination practices for disabled people. However, given that the role of the social partners is particularly limited in the development of labour integration activities for migrants and refugees, it is very rare to undertake such activities for vulnerable groups. This deficiency becomes even more significant if we consider that there is evidence of labour exploitation. Typical are the problems mentioned by representatives of immigrants’ association regarding the living conditions of the female migrant workforce: *“It is important to note that there is absolutely no concern for vulnerable social groups of migrants and refugees. And this is happening at the same time that a large part of our country's immigration potential is women working in personal care services. For many years we have often received complaints from our organization that female migrant housewives are victims of labour exploitation. And, indeed, this is a workplace that cannot be controlled, as it relates to the private space of the home. It's no coincidence that many of the immigrants who do this profession then have depression problems”* (Interview N.2).

5.4 Barriers to the labour market integration identified by social partners

The field research on the social partners reveals a number of obstacles that hinder the integration of immigrants and refugees into the Greek labour market. These obstacles concern fundamental issues, such as the legal status of their residence in Greece, and even more pressing issues, such as the lack of actions to support their integration into the labour market.

Due to the relatively large number of obstacles identified, some of them will be briefly mentioned while others will be expanded to a greater extent.

According to the points of view of the representatives of a certain number of social partners, a first set of obstacles concerns the legal stay of economic immigrants and its significance for their formal employability in the Greek labour market. Legal residence is one of the key parameters that regulate the ability of migrants to work. Over the years, Greek immigration policy has had a repressive character, with many of the economic migrants working under undeclared employment. The legal residence parameter is also affected by the fact that permit of legal stay is associated with the presentation of a minimum number of working days per year, a pre-condition which was hardly fulfilled by many immigrants during the period of the economic downturn and the widespread unemployment; thus it is very likely that, due to the adverse economic conditions, a number of immigrants were rooting towards undeclared employment. This situation is well summarised by a representative of a trade union organisation: *“For post-2014 refugees we do not yet have a solid picture of their employment status. In the case of economic immigrants, however, we have a cross-over image for years. The question of their legal residence has for many years determined their integration into the formal labour market. As long as the Greek state held them illegally without giving them the right to legal residence, they subsequently worked in forms of undeclared employment. In times of crisis their barriers to entry into the formal labour market increased as due to unemployment migrants were unable to complete the required working days for renewal of their residence permits. Therefore, the possibility of legal residence was and probably remains a major obstacle to their integration into the workplace. So we see many immigrants who do not have a legal residence have the sole employment prospect of illegal trade, such as the smuggling of clothing and footwear, the smuggling of cigarettes, etc.”* (Interview N.11). Additionally, there is a quite widespread point of view reflected in the responses reported to the online survey that legal and administrative issues along with migration policy are among the most important factors preventing the full realisation of migrants’ or refugees’ employment capacities. However, we should keep in mind that a number of representatives recognise the efforts that have been undertaken over the last years as regards the legalisation of stay of migrant population (see section 6)³⁶ and argue that the real issue is not necessarily the legal residence but the legal employment.

A second set of obstacles relates to the absence of labour integration policies designed by the Greek state. This is mainly reflected in the absence of targeted training and Greek language learning activities provided by the state, which are deterrent both to entry of MRAs into the Greek labour market and to their integration into the Greek society in general. As pointed out by a representative of an employer’s organisation: *“As long as we do not have Greek language courses, we cannot expect a smooth integration of migrant populations. How can an employer hire an immigrant or refugee when he or she cannot communicate with him / her? In such cases it shall be hired only for unskilled manual work”* (Interview N.3). It is also worth noting that, according to the online survey, language issues are reported to be the most

³⁶ This is also suggested by previous Work Packages 2 and 3 for Greece (Bagavos et al. 2018; 2019a), which point out that from 2015 onwards, immigration policy has undoubtedly contributed to simplify and better manage the procedures relative to the residence permits by reducing the risks of irregularity for a significant number of migrants, in particular within the context of the persistent economic recession. Thus, a relatively large number of settled migrants (around 4 out of 10) by now hold long term stay permits (Triandafyllidou and Gemi 2018).

significant barrier to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Indeed, despite the recent initiatives for a greater involvement of public authorities in language learning activities, any opportunity to learn the Greek language has been mainly undertaken at an informal level by civil society initiatives and, more generally, organizations that demonstrate their solidarity with immigrants and refugees (Bagavos et al. 2019b). In reality, the absence of state-run Greek language courses in particular in times of crisis was and probably will be a major problem in their integration into the workplace.

Social partners' representatives confirm that the absence of wider recognition processes for educational qualifications and professional skills is an additional shortcoming which prevents migrants' beneficial presence for both migrants themselves and national economy. In particular, due to the lack of mechanisms to certify qualifications and skills of migrant and refugee populations, it is not possible to combine their skill structure with areas where the Greek economy has gaps. Additionally, the absence of targeted training actions has meant that migrants and refugees are not directed to areas where there is room for employment. A final, but not negligible, issue is the unmet need for cultural activities aiming the familiarization of refugees with the European way of life. The development of such actions is considered important for the smooth adaptation of refugees to the Greek labour market.

The above barriers trap immigrants and refugees into a weak bargaining position in the labour market and result in more frequent occurrences of job insecurity than domestic workers. The condition of job insecurity is reflected in a variety of forms such as the under-employment, the labour exploitation and the violation of labour rights. The large majority of representatives of trade unions reports that many immigrants and refugees are hired as part-time workers while in fact working full-time, at some cases even 14 hours per day. At the same time, several cases of non-payment of all or part of the salary of migrant workers were identified during the interviews. These phenomena seem to be more evident in employee rental agencies where abuse of labour rights is likely frequent. Also, migrants are more likely exposed to dangerous working conditions and at the same time, as additionally suggested by the results of the online survey, they seem to experience higher health and safety risks at work than the native workforce. A certain number of representatives of workers' union in sectors with high concentration of migrant workers report that migrants may work under very hard working conditions (working underground with no ventilation, many of them locked), that there are incidences of fatal accidents since health and safety measures are not respected, and that very often there are recorded migrant beating complaints after they tried to claim their salaries while the corresponding incidents with Greek workers are less frequent.

The phenomenon of job insecurity in the workforce, but especially in the MRAs, is mainly attributed to three reasons: a) to the under-staffing of the mechanisms of the labour inspection body and the subsequent inability to carry out intensive checks, b) to the fact that migrants and refugees themselves do not report cases of circumvention of labour law for fear of being fired and c) to the difficulty of controlling and detecting violations of labour law in sectors where MRAs are mainly employed (rural jobs, housemaids, factory warehouses or restaurant kitchens). On the whole, job insecurity is associated with inadequacy and failure of the state mechanisms for monitoring compliance with labour law.

The difficulties in integrating immigrants and refugees into the Greek labour market are compounded by the lack of adequate and effective assistance from social services infrastructures. Social care services, such as kindergartens, are overcrowding and many

immigrants are not able to leave their children there to go to work. At the same time, the rise in apartment rental prices, partly related to Airbnb, has led many immigrants to live in areas far from their workplace. In this context, their access to work is hampered by the high cost of public transport ticket prices, as well as the poor quality of public transport. All these infrastructures do not facilitate the ability of immigrants and refugees to work. As reported by a representative of a migrant association: *“This issue certainly concerns all workers - immigrants and Greeks. It is difficult for everyone because there are not enough infrastructures to support access to work. The kindergartens are overcrowded. But the Greek workers leave their children to their grandparents. Immigrants do not have such forms of informal support. Many of the Greek workers own their own car. The overwhelming majority of immigrants and refugees will move by bus or train, which have become very expensive. Think of an immigrant being paid 25 or 30 euros a day and the monthly travel card costing 30 or 40 euros. He only needs a day's wages to get to and from work. And for the last I leave the piece of dwelling you asked me. The overwhelming majority of Greek workers own a home. Immigrants don't. They have to cope with rising cost to rent a place to live. Things are getting harder”* (Interview N.2). However, it is worth noting that public spending in social services is not always seen as a very important factor for promoting labour market integration of migrants and services. According to the online survey, several respondents reported that this factor is not so important or it is not important at all.

Notwithstanding the significant deterioration of working and living conditions in times of crisis, no significant friction between domestic and foreign workers is considered to occur according to the views expressed by social partners' representatives. Those views are not fully shared by the respondents of the online survey who very often consider that there are tensions between migrants or refugees and natives in the labour market. This kind of inconsistency is more likely related to a discrepancy between a perceived and a real competition for job.

5.5 Enablers to labour market integration identified by social partners

Most of the time, social partners have a quite holistic view of the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in a sense that they see this integration not only in terms of access to the labour market but also in terms of working conditions and of the existing possibilities for a professional career. In that respect, they report enablers, thought of a limited number, to labour market integration in relation to the quite unfavourable national context for labour market developments. In addition, there is a discrepancy between what they consider as the most effective in facilitating the integration of migrants or refugees into the labour market and what really happens. Lastly, given that there is a limited number of initiatives of public authorities to encourage the integration of immigrants and refugees into the labour market, the representatives of social partners often report on enablers more in terms of their views as regards the need for new initiatives than in terms of an assessment of existing services, initiatives or mechanism in promoting the labour market integration of migrants and refugees.

The introduction of the method of payment and the retention of insurance contributions on the basis of the “ergossimo” is positively assessed by employer's organizations. This measure, seen as a measure against undeclared work of natives and migrants as well, is a kind of a special pay cheque for workers doing non-fixed or casual work (a form of employment in which

the worker is not entitled to the regular provision of work) with one or more employers. The ergossimo does not focus on businesses or individual employers, but on workers, in particular those in specific disciplines, occupations or jobs (such as domestic workers, construction workers and agricultural workers). Consequently, it is a mean of combating undeclared work, in particular tax evasion, and it is as such that it has been classified in the Greek legal order. However, this positive view is not shared by representatives of trade unions who consider that, although this can increase the possibility of legal employment and insurance of workers, it promotes flexible forms of employment.

A key issue on new initiatives highlighted by trade unions which can act as an enabler for the integration of migrants and refugees into the workforce is the need to institutionalise targeted interventions. This could be achieved through a number of interventions, such as the creation of information structures for immigrants and refugees on their labour rights within labour unions, especially for geographical areas with a high concentration of migrants and refugee workers. As it is reported by a representative of a labour union: *“A very important step would be to set up targeted institutions to inform labour rights of migrants and refugees near their workplaces. When I say near their workplaces I mean that a good initiative would be to strengthen information structures in areas we know there is a high presence of migrants and refugee workers. Also, we cannot talk about any improvement in the conditions for joining the labour market unless we ensure that all immigrants and refugees are able to learn the Greek language. Without knowledge of the Greek language there is no prospect of a smooth integration into the workplace. We need programs for what is currently missing”* (Interview N.4).

A second extremely important dimension, which is also highlighted in the previous section, is the need for further strengthening of state control mechanisms for the monitoring of the implementation of labour law. Both in the interviews with the employers' associations and in the interviews with the workers' unions, it was emphasized that the strengthening of the control bodies is necessary to reduce the effects of labour exploitation and then to facilitate the effective integration of migrants and refugees into the labour market. Emphasis should be placed on the intensity of the controls. As reported by a representative of a worker's organization: *“It is important to increase controls. Arbitrations exist when controls are not intense. Particularly in cases of contractors that work with hired workers there is complete abuse of labour rights. That is where the increased scrutiny should start”* (Interview N.13).

There are some other important issues which are considered as (expected) enablers for the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Thus, increasing institutionalised language courses, providing skills profiling and matching services and supporting job search are largely mentioned as factors facilitating the entry of migrants and refugees into the labour market. However, the transition from the entry to the integration has to be associated with concerns as regards working conditions. As it pointed out by a representative of a workers' organization: *“A large part of the employment of immigrants and refugees lies in our sector. The fact that there is high employment of immigrants and refugees does not mean that this is done on good working conditions. This is because immigrants and refugees accept to register as part-time workers and work for eight hours or more. Fluent working relationships do not help immigrants and refugees in particular, gain a smooth professional career. They also do not help them feel safe and integrated into the labor market”* (Interview N.7).

On the whole, although social partners recognise that there is an employment potential for migrants and refugees in sectors such as agriculture, accommodation and food service activities and care services they pay particular attention to the fact that those sectors mainly absorb unskilled labour force. The bulk of immigrants and refugees appear to be rooted towards those sectors which are areas of employment with particularly precarious and low-paying jobs and limited prospects for career development preventing migrants and refugees to design a long-term living plan. It is particularly important that, as it is reported by the respondents, the entry of immigrants and refugees into these sectors of work, coupled with the absence of any state involvement in their labour integration, risks leading to a deregulation of the labour relations of their fellow domestic workers, even in highly developed sectors of the economy, such as food and tourism. In relation to that, minimum wage, employment inspections, social dialogue and greater trade union representation in the workforce are considered as mechanisms that could mitigate the potential competition between migrants or refugees and native workers.

5.6 Social partners, social dialogue, policymaking and labour market integration

Some developments in migration policy³⁷ are seen by representatives of a certain number of social partners as effective measures for facilitating the entry of migrants or refugees into the labour market. This positive view mainly concerns the efforts to maintain immigrants' legal status, in particular over the period of the economic recession, at least for those who had lived in Greece for several years. Thus, some of the representatives of social partners consider that the legislative framework has led to a simplification of the procedure and the extension of the legal residence of third-country nationals and therefore it has contributed to the regularization of a significant number of irregular migrants even on humanitarian or exceptional grounds.

The reduction of the number of insurance stamps, through minimum working days per year, which is a prerequisite for the renewal of a residence permit for employment purposes, is also positively seen by the representatives of social partners. The adoption of a single application procedure for a single permit to stay and to work and the equal treatment of migrant workers, holders of a single permit, and of seasonal workers with EU nationals are additionally considered as positive points. However, they express several concerns about the effective application of this legislation as regards the equal treatment regarding in particular working conditions, working hours, right to strike and take industrial action, education and vocational training, as well as the recognition of diplomas, certificates and other professional qualifications.

Employers' organisations representatives expressed their views also as regards the "metaklissis" procedure, one of the two options (along with seasonal work) for legal migration for employment purposes. This is a procedure which enables a non-EU national to enter and

³⁷ Such as the Immigration and Social Integration Code (Law 4251/2014), the Joint Ministerial Decision (51738/2014) on the number of stamps needed for the renewal of legal residence and the implementation of a single application procedure for a single residence and work permit (Law 4332/2015 and Law 3386/2005).

reside in Greece in order to provide paid work to a specific employer, in a specific field of employment. They consider that there is an ineffective application of these schemes resulting from the fact that, given the long and quite complicate process, it does not fully correspond to the flexibility of labour needs in specific sectors where migrants are employed.

Another relevant aspect is that the representatives of social partners generally highlight that Greece integration policy has been absent and fragmented. In particular, from 2015 onwards, the state has been reacting to the mass immigration flows in an emergency context leaving integration services aside. Even initiatives such as the National Plan for Inclusion (Ministry of Migration Policy, 2019) in which a significant part is devoted to migrants' integration are not sufficiently promoted. In addition, it is seen as a negative aspect that the majority of tasks and activities relevant for migrants' integration, such as language courses, skills mapping, and professional training, are not realized by the state but by other actors.

Lastly, there are also some more "extreme" views, which are expressed by some unions related to left political parties, suggesting that immigration policy is in fact an anti-immigration policy promoted by governments and the European Union based solely on the needs of business groups for low cost workforce. As it is reported by a trade union's representative: *"If there is a need for cheap labour, they open the barricade but in times of crisis, where they cannot manage the reserve army of the unemployed, they close the barricade to avoid further immigration flows"* (Interview N.15).

Both the workers' and employers' associations point out that they are not consulted on the formulation of employment policies for immigrants and refugees by the Greek state. At the same time, responses also reveal that, even when social partners are involved in the overall process of social dialogue, the issues of migration and labour migration policies are absent from that dialogue, despite the fact that some trade unions claim to competent ministries to include migrants into the process of collective and sectoral bargaining. The fact that this absence is also mentioned in response by collectives of immigrant communities can be considered particularly important. The non-inclusion of social partners in the formulation of employment policies for migrants and refugees and the absence of issues related to migration from social dialogue create a significant inadequacy that obviously has a negative impact on the effectiveness of any related action. On the contrary, it is noted that sometimes they have been invited for consultation on issues of discrimination and racism.

There are several factors which are considered to prevent the development of opportunities for social dialogue on migration and labour migration. According to the representatives of social partners, weak unionization is among the most relevant of them. Indeed, due to reasons such as the low employment rate, the low degree of representativeness of workers and of their trust to trade unions, a decreasing participation in trade unions has been observed for long. In addition, economic recession, by increasing instability in employment and flexible forms of employment and by promoting flexibility in labour relations, has further affected the already weak unionization.

The large informal sector prevailing in the Greek economy is also reported as a reason for the weak development of opportunities for social dialogue on migration and labour migration. This has to be connected with low level of unionization specifically among migrants and refugees, which is also considered by respondents as a determinant of the absence of social dialogue as regards migrants and their participation in the labour market. In reality, migrants' representation in trade unions has some common features with that of other vulnerable groups

in the labour market such as women, young persons and persons employed with flexible forms of employment in the private sector who also record weak unionization. It also holds true that the employment opportunities for migrants in the informal economy coupled with their concentration in specific sector and the fragmentation of migrant's organizations are against their participation in trade unions. As for policymaking, most of the respondents prioritise a European labour market integration strategy for migrants and refugees. It seems that the majority of them argue in terms of the refugees recently arrived in Greece from 2015 onward by considering that their residence and integration into the labour market has to be a European and not a strictly national issue. They seem also to consider that several aspects of migration policy in Greece have had very often been a kind of a follow-up of European initiatives and of an obligation to transpose EU directives into national law.

5.7 Conclusions

Social partners can assist labour market integration of migrants and refugees through collective bargaining processes, mitigation of the concerns of workers related to wages and working conditions and support as regards labour rights in the workplace. However, those issues might facilitate migrants' integration in a context of economic growth or even economic stability but they can probably be of limited importance in a framework of economic downturn. Long standing economic recession, as that having occurred in Greece over the last decade, and austerity measures, are usually combined with the weakening of the role of social partners, labour unions in particular. Inevitably, this negatively affects labour market integration of migrants and refugees in terms of accessing formal employment, decent wages and working conditions, and labour rights' respect.

The results of both, the online survey and the semi-structured interviews, reveal that social partners' see the issue of labour market integration through a rather holistic view e.g. in terms of the access to employment, the working conditions and the application of labour rights as well as of the prospects for an upward professional mobility. In addition, although the representatives of social partners are well awarded of the reality and the barriers to the integration of immigrants and refugees into the Greek labour market, they consider that they have extremely limited means of intervention and influence for improvement of existing policies. On the one hand, this is related, to the limited power devoted to them by the state for such actions and, on the other hand, to the overall weaknesses in terms of bargaining power of labour unions in particular resulted from austerity measures.

The uncertainty relative to rules governing the duration of legal stay and the rights of migrants and refugees to access the employment is among the factors mentioned as obstacles to their integration in the labour market. Lack of Greek language knowledge, of skills record and monitoring and of mechanisms relative to the recognition of professional and educational qualifications are also among the most relevant barriers. Those aspects are seen in connection with the absence and the inability of the state to establish institutionalized structures providing language courses and skills and qualifications recognition. It is considered that, the promotion of targeted and institutionalized structures and services provided to migrants and refugees, as regards language skills and recognition of professional skills and qualifications could transform barriers to enablers and alleviate concerns about their (supposed) low productivity.

More than in terms of education and skills, a reinforcement of the role of the state, in particular as regards the control mechanisms relative to working conditions and full application of labour legislation are considered as a core factor facilitating labour market integration of migrants and refugees. This reinforcement is expected also to contribute to the fight against undeclared employment of migrants and refugees which is often seen as practice creating conditions of unfair competition among businesses.

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Annex I - List of interviews with social partners

		Date of interview	Function/Role	Type of Institution
Social partner representative	1	21/10/2019	Policy Officer	Employers' organization
Social partner representative	2	24/10/2019	Organiser	Migrant Community Association
Social partner representative	3	25/10/2019	Manager	Employers' organization
Social partner representative	4	30/10/2019	Policy Officer	Trade union
Social partner representative	5	1/11/2019	Policy Officer	Employers' organization
Social partner representative	6	1/11/2019	Policy Officer	Employers' organization
Social partner representative	7	5/11/2019	Policy officer	Trade union
Social partner representative	8	5/11/2019	Policy officer	Trade union
Social partner representative	9	11/11/2019	Simple Member	Trade union
Social partner representative	10	12/11/2019	Policy Officer	Employers' organization
Social partner representative	11	14/11/2019	Manager	Trade union
Social partner representative	12	19/11/2019	Board Member	Employers' organization
Social partner representative	13	22/11/2019	Manager	Trade union
Social partner representative	14	29/11/2019	Manager	Refugee Community Association
Social partner representative	15	12/11/2019	Director	Trade union
Social partner representative	16	17/11/2019	Board Member	Trade union

6 Italy

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6.1 Introduction

This report critically illustrates the role of Social Partner organizations (SPOs) in the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum applicants into the country's labour market. This will allow us to look more in detail at something that has only been marginally covered in the previous reports.

In the first part, the report describes the general environment for social partners in Italy, beginning with a brief historical perspective followed by the recent developments and current example of social dialogue ongoing in the country, both among social partner and between them and the State. This is followed by a short methodological overview, explaining the methodologies employed, (qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data) and the main issue related to reach the various social partners.

The second part of the report is dedicated to the analysis of the role played by SPs in practice, looking at their activities regarding the integration of MRAs in the labour market and their perspective on the main barriers and enablers. This part specifically makes use of semi-structured interviews and survey data. Finally, we assess if and how we have social dialogue activities in Italy and if and how they influence policymaking towards the labour market integration of MRAs. In conclusion, we propose a comprehensive summary of the role of SPOs in relation to the integration of MRAs in the labour market. To do so, we reassess both the perspectives of SPs' representatives interviewed and the data from our online survey covered in the various paragraphs.

6.2 The environment for social partners in Italy

Traditionally, social partners in Italy are represented by trade unions and business federations/employers' organisations, with the main confederations of cooperative associations also being relevant. It is only in recent years that representatives of the third sector are being formally included in social dialogue activities.

Among the most relevant actors for each sector, we have:

- the three confederal Trade Unions: CGIL, CISL, UIL, which represent the vast majority of unionised workers and pensioners with about 12 million members³⁸. In addition to the main three confederal unions, we can also name the UGL (1.8 million members), and other 'rank and file unions' such as USB (250,000 members) and Cobas, along with other independent trade unions that are mostly sectorial.
- Among The main business federations, there is the General Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria), which is the largest employers' association representing manufacturing and service companies, comprising around 100 different federations, and over 150,000 associates. In the service sector, tourism and commerce we have the General Confederation of Italian Enterprises, Professions, and Autonomous Workers (Confcommercio), which represent over 700,000 associates. In the same sectors, we also have Confesercenti, with around 350,000 associates. Small businesses are mostly represented by Confartigianato and CNA. Finally, the most relevant employers association in the agricultural sector are Confagricoltura (representing mostly large agricultural enterprises), CIA, and Coldiretti (mostly representing small or individual/family agricultural enterprises).
- Finally, we have the Alliance of Italian Cooperatives (AdCI), which regroup the three major cooperative confederations (Legacoop, Confcooperative, AGCI).

In most cases, the origin of the various trade unions, cooperatives and even business federations in Italy, has historical ties with political parties or is rooted along ideological-cultural lines, albeit being independent organisations. For instance, CGIL, Legacoop, Confesercenti, CNA, CIA, were considered close to the centre-left, while CISL and Coldiretti were close to the Christian Democratic Party. However, this closeness to parties has somewhat faded in recent years, particularly on the left of the political spectrum (Ceron and Negri 2017).

Looking more in detail at the trade unions, CGIL is the oldest and largest trade union in Italy, established in 1906 from the union of various chambers of labour and various pre-existing sectoral workers' federations and leagues. Contrary to what happened in other trade unions (i.e. in the UK and Germany), the confederal level and the generalist character tend to prevail over the single federations. After the fall of the fascist regime and the end of WW2, CGIL was reconstituted as large unitary trade union incorporating members from all the main political cultures. However, in 1950 both the Catholic and the secular reformist components, split to form the CISL and UIL respectively, while CGIL retained a strong communist and socialist identity that in some forms is still lasting. UGL on the other hand originated from the merge of several unions with close ties to the social far-right and only in the last twenty years gained a more prominent role in the national policy arena alongside the three main confederations. More radical unions such a USB or COBAS have a strong leftist-libertarian identity, and relatively small membership compared to the other main trade unions, but are also worth mentioning because they are particularly active in some economic sectors and struggle, such as for the rights of gig economy workers (i.e. riders), and against the exploitation of migrant labourers.

In broad terms, social dialogue is defined by ILO as "all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments,

³⁸ More in detail, according to official statistics provided by the trade unions, the memberships in 2017 were the following: CGIL: 5,518,774; CISL: 4,090,681; UIL: 2,256,074.

employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy”.

³⁹The most common forms of social dialogue in Italy are between the government, trade unions and business representatives, and generally deal with collective bargain, employment/welfare reforms and pensions. Consultations beside those policy domains are generally less numerous and depends on the specific policy issues (i.e. when drafting a new legislation on disability, representatives from the third sector active in this field might be involved in formal negotiations, as well as environmentalist associations for environmental policies, beside the other relevant organisations/actors). It is important to stress that collective bargains and contracts are the backbone of the Italian labour market and the employers/employee relationship, with around 80% of workers covered by almost 900 collective contracts (CNEL 2019).

Still, in general, the system of industrial relationship in Italy has been characterised by low level of institutionalisation, having been largely voluntary and reliant on power relationships between the various actors, with minimal direct intervention by the State (Colombo and Regalia 2016). Indeed, after the corporatist experience during the fascist regime, Italy steered away from a neo-corporatist model. Furthermore, the Italian Constitution (art. 39) stipulate a specific status for trade unions, however, in over 60 years it has never been fully applied, with trade unions being closer to private associations lacking a special juridical status, although exercising a social and public function in practice (Ballistreri 2016). Furthermore, social partners have a constitutionally sanctioned consulting role as members of the National Economic and Labour Council (CNEL), which advises the Italian government, Parliament and the regions, and promotes legislative initiatives on economic and social matters, even though its actual relevance in the policy arena has been rather volatile.

In comparative analyses, Italian trade unions, were often considered a prime example of the ‘South European model’, characterised by low membership levels, organisational weakness, strong ideological divisions and an adversarial logic of action (Ebbinghaus 1999; 2003; Sapir 2006; Regalia and Regini 2018). This model results in industrial relationships where trade unions enjoy limited recognition by employers and have a low degree of influence on economic and social policies. However, in practical terms, the Italian case has deviated from this model, and thus has been challenged by more recent literature (see, among the most recent examples, Regalia and Regini 2018).

Such a definition was fitting the Italian case through the 1950s and early 1960s, but it changed over time in the following decades. Between the ‘70s and ‘80s, the most representative general confederations (CGIL, CISL and UIL) had an important role of institutional participation to the management of welfare state, albeit still far from the neo-corporatist model (Giubboni 2019). We also see the relatively formalised and stable involvement of trade unions in the implementation of public policies and their involvement in tripartite consultation on the labour market. This culminated in the ‘90s which were characterised by the cessation of confrontational industrial relations and the formalisation of social pacts and tripartite dialogues between the state, employers’ organisations and trade unions, in a sort of neo-corporatist revival (Crouch 1998; Baccaro 2000; 2002). After the experience of the “Concertazione” and the social pact of the 1990s, we had a backlash in the institutionalisation of social dialogue and a return to confrontational attitudes, if not unilateral in the wake of the economic crisis,

³⁹ Source: <https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>%20%20a

until a new social pact on collective bargaining and representation was reached in 2011 (Giuseppe Fiorani and Annamaria Simonazzi 2018).

Thus, according to more recent classifications, Italy should fall within the category of 'polarised pluralism', where the role of the social partners is 'more irregular and highly politicised', 'presenting a model of industrial relations characterised by a traditionally high degree of central coordination in collective bargaining (Søndergaard Laugesen, Demetriades, and Tassinari 2014, 10–11).

In the last decade, several proposals to strengthen both the role of the trade unions and social dialogue have been put forward, particularly by trade unions (see, for instance AA. VV. 2016). However, the only significant legislative reform that impacted social partner is the 2014 reform of the trade union representation and collective bargaining, known as "Testo Unico sulla Rappresentanza"⁴⁰, signed by the three major confederal trade unions and Confindustria.

6.3 Methods

For the identification and assessment of the role of social partners in labour market integration, we use a mixed method approach combining qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews with Social Partner representatives and quantitative data from an online experts survey targeting a wider range of Social Partner organisations. Through the combination of the findings deriving from our own qualitative and quantitative data and the literature, we investigate the role played by social partners in the integration of MRAs in the Italian labour market, as well as the main barriers and enablers.

To begin with, we created a sample of around 200 subjects, to whom we submitted our online survey. It comprises trade unions, employers' associations, social cooperatives, private companies, chambers of commerce and a few organisations from the third sector. The sample considers both actors at national level and regional level, ensuring a coverage of various socio-economical and civic culture backgrounds (roughly represented by the five macro regions of Italy: North-West, North East, Centre, South, Islands). Particularly, for the major trade unions and employer associations, we included both the national organisation and regional/local branches. For the chambers of commerce, we chose the three larger ones in each region (where applicable).

⁴⁰ This agreement was signed on January 10 2014, between Confindustria e CGIL, CISL e UIL, it is a voluntary agreement between the contracting parties, and covers only the industrial sector (represented by Confindustria). Its main intent was to stop the erosion of the contractual power of trade unions and business federations experienced in the first years of the economic crisis (2009-2011), building upon the social pact of collective bargaining of 2011. It is made of four major points covering the representation of interest, representativeness of the various parties, and the effectiveness of the agreements. More in detail, the first part covers the measurement and certification of the representativeness of the various trade unions in each company associated to Confindustria, in order to define the 'weight' of each trade union in national collective bargaining. The second part regulates the representation of workers at individual company level. The third section is the most relevant as it defines the effectiveness of the collective bargaining at sectorial level and single-company level: national collective contracts are effective if signed by trade unions representing at least 50+1% of the unionised workers in each sector. The fourth part defines procedures on the resolution of controversies.

However, out of such a large sample, we received only 24 fully completed surveys, mostly from trade unions (7), followed by employers' organisations, social cooperatives and the third sector, and two private companies.

For the semi structured interviews, we chose a sub-sample from the one used for the online survey, still trying to have represented different socio-economic contexts. More specifically, we selected organisations active in three different areas. A first one representing the richer and more industrialised part of the country, where we also have a more significant presence of large enterprises (Northern Italy, particularly in the area of Milan and Emilia Romagna). A second characterised by a high civic culture background and a balanced economy with a prevalence of SME and small (mostly family owned) agricultural estates (Central Italy, with our interviewees coming mostly from Tuscany). Finally, a third area in Southern Italy presenting a more difficult socio-economic context, with higher than average unemployment rate, a largely agricultural economy, and known for the exploitation of migrants in the irregular market (the province of Foggia) or without a significant presence of non-EU migrants until recently (the area of Andria). In all cases, we tried to contact the most representative organisations, particularly those representing a few economic sectors where foreign workers are largely employed. For private companies, we selected them first among the Italian partners of the Tent Partnership for Refugees, along with some SMEs that are representative of the main economic sectors at local level.

In this case, we were able to reach 21 interviewees (see Annex 1 for more details), among whom we have representatives of trade unions (7), employers' organisations (4), third sector (4), social cooperatives (3) and private companies (3). In general, such numbers reflect the proportion and types of organisations who also filled the survey.

In general, private companies proven particularly difficult to reach, beside a few large businesses known for their equal access policy, no-discrimination projects or previously been part of project of integration of migrants. In general, small enterprises on one hand, and large companies involved in the gig economy (i.e. food delivery), seems to be the most difficult to reach, with none having accepted to take part in this study. In parallel, we found it difficult to involve in our study some major business associations, particularly at national level. All in all, it seems, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the subjects most open to participate in our research are from the trade unions and the third sector, while private companies and business federation representatives usually responded only after having been referred by trusted or known persons. Nevertheless, taking all the above into account, we still managed to present a broad range of experiences and practices that depicts an informative picture of the role of SPO in Italy.

On the other hand, we had more favourable response rates among associations and third sector, more inclined (for political or cultural reasons) with the topic of our project/migration issues, or specifically integration of migrants in the socio-economic context.

6.4 The strategies and activities of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in Italy

This section draws upon the findings of the online survey and the semi-structured interviews to illustrate the perception social partners have of migrants and refugees on the country's economy, and their strategy and activities to address the integration of MRAs in the labour market.

With regards to the perception of migrants, the results of both the online survey and our interviews are generally concurring in reporting migrants and refugees mostly as an asset rather than a burden. However, in the survey (Q9) we see a slightly higher percentage of respondents defining them "more of a resource than a burden", with most of those answer coming from respondents identified as trade unionists. Respondents also recognise that their organisation would benefit from more education/guidance on the employment rights of migrants or refugees (Q13). On the other hand, while conducting our interviews, not a single interviewee defined them as a burden, neither partially, but rather a resource. Still, from the answers provided to different questions, we might infer that some consider MRAs principally as a cheap reserve of workforce (interviewees 2, 3, 10), or a necessity which is difficult to really integrate (interviewee 10).

Indeed, many interviewees reported them as necessary to fill low skilled job positions, rather than a valuable asset that can enrich our society and workplaces. The opposite was explicitly stated only by few interviewees, most notably one reporting the perspective of a large private company who is actively involved in integration programmes for refugees and diversity inclusion and management (Interviewee 18). This is in line with the perception of migrants, and refugees in particular, as mostly low skilled (Q8). Our previous findings (WP4 report) and general statistics available, reflecting the type of migration Italy is experiencing, also tend to confirm the validity of such perception, at least with regards to new migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Moving on to the various strategies and activities, we can observe ample variation among the different social partners, ranging from very limited or only indirect involvement of MRAs in general programmes to targeted programmes and reflecting the various expertise of each SPO. Beside the traditional activities that benefit either native or MRAs such as the protection of worker's right and collective bargaining, trade unions in recent years have increased the resources devoted to the specific needs of migrant workers. Some, like CISL, created an ad hoc association called (ANOLF) to cater to the needs of the migrants, with dedicated help desk along with the activities of collateral organisations (i.e. patronato INAS). Others (i.e. CGIL) constituted a dedicated directorate but did not create a specific association for MRAs, while providing support within the existing structures (i.e. the patronato), or in cooperation with CSOs. Indeed, the institute of patronato⁴¹, is having a role in providing direct or indirect assistance to MRAs integration in the labour market, and more generally, in the Italian 'system'. In our interviews it emerged that also some business associations (interviewee 2) are providing some (still limited and mostly administrative) support to MRAs through their

⁴¹ In short, the 'patronato' is a social institution promoted by either a trade union or business confederation/association set up to provide a free service to workers, pensioners, and persons in general particularly with regard to welfare and administrative assistance. They are non-profit institutions, whose activities and functions are controlled and partly financed by the Italian government (source: INPS).

patronato. Since the early 2000s, trade unions have been also more active in the production of practical guides and research on migrants and work (interviewees 5, 17).

Strategies and activities are also adapted to the specific needs of the diverse social and economic contexts. In areas, such as Foggia, in Southern Italy, where there is a diffuse exploitation of migrant workforce in agricultural estates and large number of migrant seasonal workers, trade union representatives engage in activities mostly aimed at the enforcement of basic rights, fighting the phenomenon of exploitation and 'caporalato'.⁴² This usually involves approaching migrant workers and informing them about their rights, and enforcing protective actions, without necessarily unionising them (interviewees 11, 12), often in cooperation with other SPOs. Some activities are also promoted jointly with employers' associations, in order to support a culture of legality and safety on the workplaces (interviewee 10). Finally, several trade union members interviewed (interviewee 1, 5, 6) referred to the importance of participating in European projects in order to promote more effectively a successful integration of migrant workers. Specifically, they referred to the role played by ETUC and the participation in projects such as Labour-INT (<http://www.Labour-INT.eu/>), that is focused specifically on the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees in the labour market. Another example is the web portal www.constructionworkers.eu, a joint project of the EFBWW (co-financed by the European Commission) to provide concise information on wages, working conditions and rights of construction workers for all the European Countries in all the European languages.

Employers' associations, on the other hand, are mostly involved in formation programmes, either indirectly as provider of general training, or with ad hoc projects. In some cases, there are also programmes to favour self-entrepreneurship, with the most successful business being in the commerce and food sectors, although this tends to be more diffuse among specific ethnic groups (i.e. MENAs and, Asians).

With regards to private enterprises, from our limited sample we could observe that those more active in engaging or promoting activities aimed at favouring the integration of MRAs in the labour market are large enterprises, mostly operating at international level and thus more exposed to diverse business cultures and open to diversity (interviewees 10, 18, 19) and possessing more resources to devote to such programmes. Still, we have also been told of small-medium businesses that for different reasons are more sensitive towards the issue of the integration of migrants and are actively participating in integration projects providing mentoring, training and internships (interviewees 4, 8, 9). The cooperation of SMEs is extremely relevant in Italy, as they represent the vast majority of businesses, and thus are some of the largest employers of the migrant workforce. HR companies are having an increasingly relevant role in supporting the integration of MRAs in the labour market. Their main activities in this regard are mostly training, counselling and placement of migrant workers, often in cooperation with the third sector. They also act as an intermediary for businesses that do not deal directly with the recruitment and hiring procedures of [migrant] workers (Interviewee 10).

Social cooperative representatives, stressed that integration is their historical mission, and had a long experience in doing so since the early '80s particularly with disabled person and people suffering of mental health issues, which in the last thirty years expanded to providing first assistance for migrants. Indeed, many social cooperatives are now involved in reception

⁴² Illegal recruiting and organisation of the workforce by local labour bosses, the so-called 'caporali'.

and assistance services within the CAS and SPRAR framework, which we already covered in the WP4 report. Thus, they mostly provide labour market support for beneficiaries of the SPRAR programme, or rely on a voluntary basis on the cooperation with CSOs and/or other social partners (or fellow cooperatives active in diverse economic sectors) to provide services and activities that can favour it such as language courses, professional training or internships.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have already been extensively covered in the previous national report (WP4), however, it is still relevant to underline their relevance and the wide range of services that third sector social partners can provide and contribute with, such as language courses, cultural mediation, social and cultural activities, orientation to the labour market and many others. Still, the most relevant contribution that can emerge from our research is the ability to promote a network approach, creating a system with other social partner that can contribute to a successful integration of MRAs in the job market. Some examples are provided by the activity of “Rete Migrazione e Lavoro” in Milan, or the project Next the province of Parma, which will be covered more in detail in paragraph 5.

Looking at the scope of the strategies and activities of the various social partners, our findings from our interviews highlight that they are mostly having a generalised approach towards migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, without targeting specific groups, unless part of ad-hoc programmes undertaken by the organisation or, more common, associates (particularly social cooperatives) or partners. This is also confirmed by the results of our online survey, where two thirds of the respondents reported that their organisations are having a general approach (Q37). Still, the same respondents agree that some specific categories (persons with disabilities, women, young people, LGBT+) should receive additional support (Q38).

Interviewees and survey respondents at all levels (Q37) confirmed they have mostly a generalised approach. Trade unions, for instance, support all workers, no matter if they are migrants or natives. In some instances, they have specialised services for migrants, but even in this case they do not target any specific group if not for eventual targeted projects. This is also largely true for employers’ organisations. Enterprises, too, are not targeting specific groups if not in presence of ad hoc programmes, i.e. for the integration of refugees (targeting refugees but not specific vulnerable groups among them) or persons with disabilities as part of the “categorie protette”. In some cases, social cooperatives are also involved in supporting women victims of human trafficking, person with physical or mental disabilities and minors, but it is up to the specific focus and expertise of each associated cooperative, given that they have been established first and foremost to support fragile people. Finally, CSOs and other third sector may see a high variation in their approaches, either based on their expertise, or the involvement in specific projects, with those most active in the reception system focused on refugees and asylum seekers (see WP4).

6.5 Barriers to the labour market integration identified by social partners

Survey data (Q11) show that social partners emphasise migration policies/administrative issues as the most relevant barrier to the labour market integration of MRAs. This is closely followed by language barriers, lack of support to integration and discrimination. These four issues represent over half of the total answers. Other significant issues are recognition of skills, lack of knowledge of the Italian labour market and skill mismatch. Interview data seem to largely confirm the results of the survey. In particular, the current migration policy, which is

based on the so called “Bossi-Fini” law (Law 189/2002) is considered too restrictive by almost all types social partners, as well as the yearly decree that establish the quotas of extra-EU migrant workers who can be recruited for seasonal works (the so called ‘decreto flussi, mostly criticised by employers’ associations), and the recent “Salvini Decrees” (more relevant for trade unions and CSOs). Indeed, the three major drawbacks of the current normative have been identified in the excessive bureaucracy⁴³, which places a heavy burden upon private enterprises, inadequate quotas for seasonal workers, and the impossibility to regularize migrants without a valid residence permit, with the ultimate result of de facto fostering irregular migration.

A solution proposed by many SPs would be a simplification of the procedures, an update of the ‘decreto flussi’ that takes into account the real needs of the labour market, and the possibility to regularise the status of irregular migrants already present in Italy. This last measure would actually be the most significant effort to reduce the very high number of illegal migrants who are forced to resort to the informal/irregular labour market. Indeed, one of the main issues in Italy is the very high number of illegal migrants who are often working in the irregular sector but are not able to legalise their position. Moreover, we do not have the possibility to convert most non-work residence permits to work ones, making it impossible for migrants and asylum seekers to have a job legally. This situation was made even worse after the recent legislative changes made with the Security Decrees (Decreto Salvini)⁴⁴. It should be stressed that, contrary to popular beliefs, only a tiny minority of respondents indicated cultural differences as a relevant barrier for the integration of MRAs in the Italian labour market. This indicates also that social partners tend to have a more pragmatic and knowledgeable view of the problems concerning the integration of migrants in the MRA. Still, cultural barriers, and difficulties to properly integrate in the local work culture were more relevant among our interviewees compared to survey respondents. In this regards, common solutions are being identified in the diffusion of programmes for diversity management in the workplaces, and tailored training and orientation for MRAs who are approaching the Italian labour market for the first time.

When speaking in general terms, there is an almost total consensus among the interviewees that migrants are more exposed than native workers to both health and safety risk and exposure to the illegal labour market. This is largely in line with survey data (Q26), where two thirds of the respondents indicated that MRAs are exposed to much higher or slightly higher risks in terms of health and safety issues, where the remaining third indicated they are facing the same risks as native workers (Q30). In general, we see increased health and safety risks linked to jobs in the irregular market, and, more limitedly, in some ‘gig economy’ jobs according to trade unionists. A relevant share of respondents to our survey also indicate that employment rights of migrants or refugees are not fully respected by employers (Q29). In our interviews, two sectors seem to have foster higher safety risks due to the lack of safety equipment and

⁴³ This moves several companies to resort to the services of intermediaries, such as specialised agencies or HR companies to hire migrant workers.

⁴⁴ Decree 113/2018, on immigration and public security (converted in law no. 132/2018) that on the one hand reduces funds for first-line reception centres and public tenders for integration policies favouring the creation of few very large structures that make effective integration unfavourable, and on the other hand revokes the right to the SPRAR services for asylum seekers and refugees still awaiting the recognition of international protection. Finally, the Salvini decree hinders the possibility of the integration of migrants into the labour market by making many of them illegal migrants due to the abolition of humanitarian protections, making it impossible to convert their temporary residence permit into a work permit.

knowledge of basic safety norms, or to get into the irregular market are agricultural work and constructions. In these sectors is also more common the practice of 'caporalato', which is the illegal recruitment of labour force by local labour bosses, sometimes coming from the same ethnic group of the people they recruit (interviewees 1, 10, 11, 12). From our interviews, it also emerges how these risks are also correlated to the specific local context in which the migrants find themselves, particularly those that can be defined 'social peripheries'. In our research, this has been particularly evident from the interviews conducted in the area of Foggia in Southern Italy⁴⁵ to representatives of the trade unions and the employers (interviewees 10, 11, 12). In such areas, we still have a diffuse underdevelopment of a culture of legality and work ethics, with reported (illegal) behaviours by some employers that are more in line with a pre-modern labour culture, with widespread cases of exploitation that only very recently have begun to decrease. Furthermore, as we have already mentioned before, the risk of getting into the informal labour market is also linked to the legislation, which does not make it possible to legalise migrants who are not having a resident permit, nor to (easily) attract migrants from abroad through legal channels.

Looking at barriers that can be indirectly related to effective labour market integration (e.g. affordable childcare, affordable housing, and adequate public transport), from our interviews it emerges that the relevance of each issue is mostly dependant on the specific context. For instance, the issue with transportation was mentioned as most relevant where migrants do not have access to public transports, or it is very limited. This could be the case of migrants relocated in remote areas or living in slums at the periphery of urban centres, which is more typical for agricultural areas in Southern Italy. Noteworthy, in the area of Foggia, the transportation of migrant workers on the field has been a critical issue, which is also deeply intertwined with the illegal exploitation of migrant through the phenomenon of "caporalato". Local labour bosses (so called "caporali") often bring the workers to their workplace on inadequate vehicles not matching minimal safety standards, which resulted in several fatal accidents in the past years. (Interviewee 11, 12). To fight this phenomenon, a joint initiative financed by the regional government and involving the major trade unions and some migrant's associations provides a shuttle service for agricultural workers from major rally points and slums directly to their workplaces, areas where public transport would not otherwise be available. Still, the problem is also present in different contexts, with private companies from Northern Italy (usually located in peripheral areas) being moved to directly provide shuttle services for migrant workers. With regards to affordable housing, this too is a widely recognised issue, to the point that in some areas it seems easier to find a job rather than a (legal) accommodation. Finally, affordable childcare was not widely mentioned by our interviewees, with some of them (insert interviewee numbers) generally mentioning it as a potential barrier for integrating women into the labour market. Survey data (Q39) does not differ significantly from the answers provided by our interviewees, with the main differences being the higher incidence of affordable childcare and healthcare as very relevant issues, while transportation is regarded slightly less so, which could easily depend on the specific context the various respondents are operating into.

⁴⁵ The phenomenon, despite being more evident in the Southern regions is not absent in other part of the country, including the richer regions of central and Northern Italy.

Concerning tensions between migrant workers and native workers, we have quite different results if we look at data from our online survey and the interviews. In the first case, about half the respondents (Q10) reported tensions in the labour market with native workers caused by the influx of migrants and refugees, with an almost identical incidence for migrants and refugees. The most common problems identified (Q11)⁴⁶ are the first and foremost the perception of migrants and refugees as competitors in the job market (40%), followed distantly by cultural differences and politicians (17.5% each). This seems largely in line with the common perception of the migration presented by the media and opinion surveys on the general population. Still, when asked about the existence of a real competition between migrant/refugee and natives for jobs (Q22), the majority of respondents perceive that there is little or no competition for jobs between natives and refugees, and slightly more between economic migrants and natives.

On the contrary, in almost all cases, the social partners interviewed did not report any relevant tension between native workers. However, a few interviewees reported mistrust – if not tension – towards migrants, particularly in the initial phase. Noteworthy, a trade union representative (interviewee 5) reported that during workplace meetings, most of their (presumably native) members are becoming very vocal expressing their concerns towards the consequences of the recent migration crisis, and the influx of refugees. However, they almost never express concerns towards their migrant/refugee colleagues. Diffidence, prejudices and more generally uneasiness has also been reported by private companies involved in integration projects of refugees, however, they also stress how after a short adaptation period, there were no more issues of this kind. These findings reinforce the hypothesis of a double standard by people, where immigration (or ‘unregulated’ immigration) is regarded as a serious negative issue (with the usual strand of accusations “they are stealing our jobs” “forcing the salaries down” etc., reported by interviewee 5), but the individual migrant(s) working along with native workers are not a source of tensions or problems.

6.6 Enablers to labour market integration identified by social partners

After having assessed the main barriers, we look at the most effective measures that the various social partners have found most effective in promoting the labour market integration of migrants and refugees.

Survey data results (Q20) are almost specular to those on barriers, with [different from the existing] migration policies as the most relevant mechanism that can potentially favour a more successful labour market integration of migrants, on par with increasing Language training services, closely followed by dedicated support for job search for MRAs. Better anti-exploitation and anti-discrimination policies are also considered relevant potential enablers, followed by other very practical services such as support for CV preparation and services for skill profiling and matching.

Interviewees are in line with survey respondents in pointing out the importance of language courses, considering the language barrier the first obstacle that need to be remove in order to favour integration. Particularly, targeted language courses also favour learning the safety

⁴⁶ Measured as the percentage of the respondents who indicated the issue.

requirements on the workplace (interviewee 19). A practical example that we can mention is the creation of a simple handbook tailored on the needs of migrants approaching for the first time the Italian culture and work environment, the product of cooperation between a trade union and a CSO active in providing assistance and language courses for migrants. It combines an Italian language coursebook with an introduction to the local culture and an orientation to the Italian labour market, including the basic duties and right of workers (Interviewee 5). Other measures that are been considered effective are internships and training. Particularly successful, at least according to several pilot programmes, are also mentoring projects and investments on job matching and soft skill recognition. In addition, (large) private companies underlined the importance of having ad hoc teams, dedicated to follow the placement and integration of refugees and asylum seekers (interviewee 19).

In general, the best way seems to be the one that enable the migrant to be autonomous, providing for a person the skills to search for a job. Some interviewees also proposed some other specific measures at a systemic level, such the creation of a mechanism of fiscal incentives, at least for refugees (given their smaller numbers and the fact that have received asylum) similar to the one in place for people with disabilities (the so called '*categorie protette*' established by Law 68/1999). In their opinion, this could favour their employability, and thus favour their integration in the Italian labour market, even though such a move would come with significant political cost, given the current political environment and the general distrust towards migrants.

More generally, the most valuable mechanism that emerges from our research is the network approach, where all social partners can cooperate together, each with its own specialisation, in order to produce an effective path for integration. This is the case of projects like "Rete Migrazioni e Lavoro", "Next" and "Labour-INT", where they realised a virtuous cooperation among different social partners, ranging from CSOs, to trade unions, local government and private companies.

Rete Migrazioni e Lavoro, which was also featured in the previous report, is a paramount example of this spirit of cooperation. It is an association created with the explicit aim of creating a network of all the subjects involved in the integration process, "from the migrants to private companies" (interviewee 7). It is now made up of various organizations, associations, profit and non-profit companies, groups and individual citizens that work together in order to share and promote the best possible practices for a successful integration of migrants in the labour market and the society. "Next" (New Experiment for Training) is a project that was started by the private sector, it provides training and mentoring for young refugees with the objective of achieving successful integration in the work environment and in society more broadly, and has been made possible by the cooperation of several Civil Society Organisations and private companies. "Labour-INT" promotes inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees in the labour market. Building on the interest and capacities of businesses, chambers of industry and commerce, trade unions and migrant associations, Labour-INT promotes multi-layered integration paths, from arrival up to the workplace, passing through education, training and job placement (<http://www.labour-int.eu/>). In Italy it has launched a first pilot program in Milan, while the next phase will see second a second pilot project in Naples. Other positive examples from different realities, reinforcing the relevance of the diverse contexts can be the already mentioned: free shuttle services for migrants working in the fields near Foggia. In the same area, we can also mention the projects "Out of the Ghetto" or "Capo free – Ghetto off that see

the cooperation of trade unions, CSOs and regional authorities to fight the phenomenon of 'caporalato' and to move migrants out of the slums.

Before we look at what economic sectors social partners think offer the best opportunities for the labour market integration of migrants and refugees, we should point out that most of the social partners interviewed, referred mostly to those sectors where migrants have higher employment rates, rather than elaborating on those that can provide the best chances for a successful integration in the local community/socio-economic context. In fact, the two things are not necessarily correlated. For instance, we can several think of jobs that do not guarantee an adequate standard of living, or have economic sectors where is common the phenomenon of ghettoization, where migrant workers (often working in the irregular economy) and native workers do not interact at all, which is more frequent in agriculture and construction, although not exclusively.⁴⁷

Interviewees and survey respondents seem to generally agree in this regard (Q19), pointing out the following sectors (in order of importance): manufacturing, agriculture, food sector, constructions, logistics, personal care and housekeeping. In general, people indicate lower qualified jobs and positions, which is in line with the perception (and data) on the skills of migrants, as well as what said in the previous sections of the report. Among the interviewees, we can also observe a trend to point out those economic sectors where migrants are most employed in their area of activity (both in terms of the economic sector they are involved and, above all, geographically), with national level SPs instead providing more generalised answers. This underlines the fact that the Italian labour market is fragmented and thus presents noticeable differences across the various regions, sometimes also within each region. It also emerges how different contexts see a higher presence of specific ethnicities, often specialised in particular work sectors (i.e. the Filipino community doing housekeeping work in Milan, sub-Saharan in agriculture in Southern Italy etc..).

A separate mention in this case shall be made about the potential impact (positive or negative) 'non-standard' employment (e.g. flexible hours contracts, payment on delivery, gig economy jobs etc.) has in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Survey data (Q24, Q25) in this regard portray non-standard employment as a rather positive step⁴⁸ for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to finding work that supports a decent standard of living, particularly for part time and fixed-term contracts. Our interviewees also presented them as mostly an opportunity to approach the labour market in a (usually) legal way and obtain a source of revenue. Atypical contracts are seen particularly positively by some private companies and HR agencies, which sees them as a good opportunity for both the employers and the worker which is less likely in presence of more rigid contracts, and more in general they evaluate positively any opportunity. However, as it was pointed mostly by trade unionists, such types of 'non-standard' employment can indeed offer a stepping stone to gain valuable experience the labour market as they remain an initial and temporary opportunity. In the long term, they only create a situation of precarity and lack of social protection that ultimately cannot

⁴⁷ In addition, we have the case of entire economic sectors that are run almost exclusively by a single ethnic group (i.e. textile works and the Chinese community in Prato in Italy), which creates closed communities with limited exchanges with the local social context.

⁴⁸ In total, positive opinions are 72% of the total answers versus just 19% expressing a negative evaluation.

be defined a successful integration in the labour market neither for migrants or native workers alike.

To conclude this section, we will look into the policies, mechanisms or initiatives that social partners think could be introduced to foster better integration between migrants or refugees workers and 'native' workers. In parallel with what we have seen in the previous chapter, when first looking at the tensions between migrant and native workers, not much emerges from the interviews, since most of the interviewees did not report particular issues in this regard. Actually, what really emerges in several interviews is that – in the words of one of our interviewees – “placing natives and migrants in the same workplace, working shoulder to shoulder in the same conditions, seems the best way to promote integration” (interviewee 1), however this often require some effective orientation and placement support actions to fully realise. Some other suggestions coming from interviewees are cultural mediation programmes and workshop on diversity management, which is generally lacking in smaller enterprises. Another example comes from interviews with HR companies and large enterprises it emerges the specific need to allow meditation or prayer spaces and dedicated breaks for devoted Muslim workers. When provided, in their experience this tends to favour integration. On the other hand, respondents to the online survey provided a different perspective on the subject. They identify social dialogue as the most effective way to mitigate the potential competition between migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and nationals, followed by more employment inspections/checks on the workplaces and greater trade union representation in the workforce. On the opposite, just one respondent stated that there should be more restrictions for non-nationals in the labour market.

6.7 Social partners, social dialogue, policymaking and labour market integration

When illustrating the main barriers, we already covered in part the perception social partners have of the impact of current migration policies for the labour market integration of MRAs; however, in this section we will try to assess it more in detail, considering also a wider set of answers provided by survey respondents.

As we have seen, all social partners generally convey a critical view of the migration policies, both long-standing and about the recent normative changes. Indeed, it is commonly regarded as one of the main barriers (if not the main one) that hinder the integration of migrants in the Italian labour market. What differs among the various actors are the specific aspect of the legislation they criticise, stressing those that are believed to be most problematic for their particular sector. Employers' organisations and trade union representatives dealing with agricultural jobs or construction mostly stressed the limits of the existing quota system to legally hire extra-EU migrant workers. Others criticised the unclear normative framework and the excessive bureaucracy, which is burdening enterprises. Organisations from the third sector, trade unionists, and social cooperatives interviewed seemed particularly vocal in proposing the abolishment of the Salvini decrees, a view shared also by most of the CSOs interviewed for the previous report (WP4). The recent normative changes have also been vocally criticised by private companies involved in integration projects, where they are now forced to fire migrants who see their residence permit terminated if their asylum demand is denied, since having a contract does not ensure anymore an extension of the residence permit

(interviewee 19). On the other hand, a minority of interviewees from the private sector did not want or could not directly comment on the issue because they do not get involved with the normative part, leaving all the work to intermediaries (Interviewee 18). Survey data on this topic are also quite interesting, and, if on the one hand largely confirm the main critical aspects highlighted by our interviewees (Q27b), they add some elements that did not emerge clearly from the interviews. For instance, many respondents (Q27a) indicates that current migration policies are fostering tensions among workers (31%), undermine solidarity among workers (19%) and tend to reduce the legitimacy and representation of trade unions (16%). In this regards, among our interviewees only one trade union representative (interviewee 5) mentioned that the role and representation of the trade unions is undermined by the challenges of the integration of migrants in the labour market and migration in general. Current migration policies are also believed to be extremely ineffective to address skills shortages in sectors/roles where these exist (Q28), with respondents split in half between considering them either just slightly effective or no effective at all. This is also confirmed by several interviewees that reported how diffuse is the need to resort to the informal labour market to fill in several positions.

Until now, we have examined what social partners identify as the main barriers and enablers for the integration of MRAs in the labour market, as well as their opinion on the current migration policies. In this final part, we cover if and how social partners have been involved in social dialogue processes on areas relating to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees.

Usually issues related to the labour market integration of MRAs are not the subject of regular social dialogue activities at national or regional level. However, such issues are eventually included as one of many items dealt with during regular meetings between the government and social partners on Labour Issue or Migration in general, or of some project-focused meetings involving only the required parties.

In Italy, social partners representing employers and workers have regular bipartite meetings in local bilateral commissions, but they are also regularly invited to participate at all levels of government, including ministerial meetings, parliamentary auditions, and other collateral events. They are also often involved with bodies of the public administration. We can also point out that, when dealing with the migration and labour issues at national level, we see an increasing participation of representatives of the third sectors (which in the past were mostly invited at local level) and even private companies (although they remain the less common social partner, generally delegating to representative associations).

Looking at our data, we can confirm an involvement of social partners in various forms of social dialogue in recent years (Q31, Q33), mostly in the form of tripartite confrontations (Q35). The most common involvement in social dialogue activities among our survey respondents and interviewees is the local one, particularly with local administrations and government representatives on the various territories (i.e. Prefettura). This also reflect the areas of activities of the various subjects. Indeed, social partners underlined how they have been mostly involved in social dialogue with political and administrative actors at the same level of their area of responsibility (i.e. local branches or organisation at city/provincial/territorial level, and national organisations with the national government). At supranational levels, activities have been conducted mostly within the framework of supranational associations such as

ETUC (Interviewees 1, 5, 6), as it was the case for the “European Partnership for Integration”, or the Labour-INT project.

Despite being quite frequent at various levels, and being considered one of the main enablers to promote a successful integration of MRAs, social dialogue activities do not seem to produce relevant results according to several sources. The main cause for the ineffectiveness of social dialogue actions is identified mostly in the lack of political will (both general on migration and specific to labour market integration), followed by a weak unionization among MRAs and relevant presence of an informal/irregular labour market (Q36, confirmed by interview data). Indeed, in some contexts which can be considered more politically sensitive towards the issues of integration, such as Tuscany or Emilia Romagna, social partner organisations have also been more active in formal social dialogue activities on migration policy and economics (i.e. Tavolo politica migratoria ed economia) by the regional governments (Interviewee 3) or for ad-hoc initiatives (i.e. in the Puglia region, as stated by interviewees 10, 11, 12). Going down to the local level we can also recall the involvement of the Municipality of Milan in facilitating integration projects in cooperation with various social partners (third sector, trade unions, social cooperatives, private companies).

However, we also have some examples of legislative actions or social pacts that have been made possible through social dialogue at national level. A relatively recent example of (bipartite) social dialogue involving social cooperatives, resulted in the Charter of Good Reception (Carta della Buona Accoglienza), stipulated in 2016 between the ministry of Interior, the Association of Italian Municipalities and Alliance of Italian Social Cooperatives (representing the three major confederations of social cooperatives). Indeed, most of the public sector-sponsored activities for the labour market integration of MRAs are the result of projects started by the Italian government in 2016, and co-financed by the ESF within the National Programme for Asylum, Migration and Integration (Programma Nazionale Italiano Fondo Asilo Immigrazione e Integrazione). The plan was based on several regional programmes that should have taken into account the specific need of the various territories; however, its implementation remains quite fragmented.

Among other successful projects within social dialogue in the field of labour migration or/and asylum, we can recall a few which were already mentioned in the previous sections. Looking at bipartite actions and social dialogues opportunities, we have a good example from the area of Parma, with the Next project, which has been started on the initiative of a private company with strong tradition of social responsibility. This resulted in a virtuous cooperation with the third sector to promote the integration of refugees and asylum seekers among various networks of private companies involved in various economic sectors. Also, looking at bipartite and tripartite actions, we have a number of targeted initiatives in the area around Foggia in cooperation with SPOs and the regional government helped reduce the number of accidents and deaths related to the transport of migrants to the workplaces. Also, the new legislation against exploitation (which saw the cooperation of social partners and the government) and increased enforcement of work and safety laws in the last couple of years are reportedly reduced the incidence of phenomenon of ‘caporalato’.

As we have seen, social dialogue opportunities in general seem to be present in Italy, but are often perceived as not particularly effective, with the most tangible results usually coming from the regional and local level, or when they involve specific projects. The fact that the some of the most successful programmes and results seems to be coming from local experiences, is

rather in contrast to the perceived level where strategy for labour market integration should be prioritised. Indeed, what we can infer from interviews is that such strategy should be formulated mostly at a national or, less frequently, supranational (EU) level, leaving their eventual application to local level, according to the principle of subsidiarity. This is almost totally in line with survey data (Q18), which generally indicate the national level as the most relevant one (52%), followed by the supranational one (26%), while the sectorial/local level is indicated as the most effective only by a minority of responders (a private company, commerce chambers and a trade union representative).

6.8 Conclusions

As we have seen from the outset of this report, in Italy the 'traditional' social partners are largely represented by the (major) trade unions and employers' associations. Only in recent years the third sector is being officially included in social dialogue activities, albeit mostly on an ad-hoc basis. More generally, all the social dialogue activities in recent times are happening in a context that can be defined 'polarised pluralism' (either in Sartorian terms and industrial relations), where the role of the social partners is variable and often highly politicised. This stands true also in terms of migration and integration issues, where much is left to the political willingness of the policymakers.

Concerning the principal findings that emerged from our research, we can underline the quasi-complete absence of targeted social dialogue activities about the integration of MRAs in the labour market at national or governmental level, while the issue is addressed at lower/bipartite level, or as part of more general policy issues (i.e. 'migration'). Looking at the barriers, a prominent role is played by the normative framework. National migration policy is considered too restrictive by almost all types social partners (representing workers, employers and civil society), and de facto fostering irregular migration and the informal/irregular labour market. Furthermore, national legislation does not leave much leeway to regional or local governments, beside a few projects or some discretionarily interpretation of specific legal provisions. Still, territorial differences play a key role, determining the chances of integration, and the type of work, according to the various socio-economic and civic/political contexts.

Indeed, in line with Italian traditions, much is left to voluntary actions, with little input from the top (national government), which leaves the implementation of programmes mostly to the regional level. Most activities and actions are project based, with several of the projects financed by the EU, the national government or other entities leaving much to (mostly) the third sector to self-organise and coordinate with other social partner and petitioning for resources. This also includes actions taken by/within bodies representing both employers and workers. In general, we can see a context much in line with what emerged in the previous report, covering the role of CSOs.

Another issue that seem to emerge from our research, albeit indirectly, is related to the industrial culture, and business ethics in Italy which, particularly for SMEs (which are the vast majority of businesses in Italy, but this also stands true for several agricultural enterprises) seems to present an additional barrier to a successful integration. Even though they employ a large part of migrant workforce, informal discussions with some employers showed a generally poor consideration of migrant workers, and lack of knowledge on how to tackle the problem of integration and cultural diversity on the workplace. On the other hand, the private sector also

presents numerous positive examples, in particular, from (often) large enterprises who are presenting – and promoting – successful stories (and methods) of integration. Still, the dimension of the enterprise seems to be a factor.

To sum up, we found a strong consensus on the potential value of a successful labour market integration of MRAs among the different social partner organisations, as well as on some key issues – mostly of normative/political nature. This may favour a fertile ground for new policy actions targeted at addressing at least some of the main drawbacks, if the new government⁴⁹ will prove more open to listen to the stances of social partner organisations on migration policies. In conclusion, we would like to highlight the most effective method to promote a successful integration we found: the cooperation among different social partners and the social dialogue practice, as several stakeholders interviewed and surveyed have pointed it out. Most prominently, this cooperation happens among third sector organisations, and the third sector and trade unions; still, the best results are seen when we have a full chain of cooperation, where each social partner - third sector, trade unions, social cooperatives, private companies, - plays a key role in cooperation with the government/local administrations. In this regard, some virtuous examples are represented by the Rete Migrazione e Lavoro (Migration and work network) operating in Milan, or by projects such as Next or Labour-INT. Nevertheless, our research clearly shows how the phenomenon of migration is no more a contingent issue but is becoming systemic. Thus, it necessitates a new approach that can address it as such, stepping up from the project-based approach that we have now, and could only provide some limited benefits (at least if we look at sheer numbers) to the successful integration of MRAs in the Italian labour market.

⁴⁹ A new coalition government, which includes the major centre-left party (PD) has been formed in September 2019 and promised to reform the migration policies in the course of the following year (2020).

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Annex I – List of Interviews with Social Partners

Identifier	Date of the interview	Function/Role	Type of Institution
Interviewee 1	19/11/2019		Trade union
Interviewee 2	19/11/2019		Employers' organisation
Interviewee 3	21/11/2019		Employers' organisation
Interviewee 4	26/11/2019		Other (Third Sector)
Interviewee 5	26/11/2019		Trade union
Interviewee 6	27/11/2019		Trade union
Interviewee 7	27/11/2019		Other (Third Sector)
Interviewee 8	27/11/2019		Other (Third Sector)
Interviewee 9	27/11/2019		Other (Third Sector)
Interviewee 10	28/11/2019		Employers' organisation
Interviewee 11	28/11/2019		Trade union
Interviewee 12	28/11/2019		Trade union
Interviewee 13	29/11/2019		Social Cooperative
Interviewee 14	02/12/2019		Private company
Interviewee 15	05/12/2019		Social Cooperative
Interviewee 16	13/12/2019		Social Cooperative
Interviewee 17	17/12/2019		Trade Union
Interviewee 18	18/12/2019		Private company
Interviewee 19	22/01/2020		Private company
Interviewee 20	22/12/2019		Employers' organisation

7 Switzerland

Paula Moreno Russi, Anik Fischbach and Maria Mexi

7.1 The Environment for Social Partners in Switzerland

Social partnership, driven by the need to reach compromise at various levels (political, sectoral, or company), is often referred to as one of the key pillars of Swiss culture. In particular, the Swiss compromise model is based on integrative negotiations (Bonvin and Cianferoni, 2013). Moreover, the logic of subsidiarity that governs the division of power in the Swiss federalist model also applies to labour market regulation. According to this logic, problems should be solved as far as possible by the actors closest to the field. According to this principle, the state only intervenes in principle when the parties closest to the ground, the social partners, have not managed to reach an agreement (Bonvin and Cianferoni, 2013).

Furthermore, Switzerland was the first country to enshrine the use of collective bargaining agreements (CBA) in its legislation. Today, these agreements, which are the result of negotiations between employers' associations and workers' trade unions, are widely used but by far not present in all sectors. In 2013, only 35% to 40% of workers were covered by a collective labour agreement. Collective bargaining agreements in Switzerland can be agreed for an industry at national or cantonal level or within a company.

Crucially, the search for Swiss consensus gives the social partners a prominent place in political decision-making. As a direct democracy, Switzerland has at its disposal tools such as referendums and initiatives that allow the population and interest groups to question parliamentary decisions. In order to minimise the risks of undermining reforms, an important place is given to the social partners at the pre-parliamentary and parliamentary stages through formal and informal consultations (Afonso, 2014). Coalitions in the parliament involving the main social partners are thus formed depending on the issues.

While the Swiss compromise model was traditionally stable it has been challenged by changes in the economy and was weakened in the 1990s (Mach et al., 2003). Employers sought to decentralise collective bargaining provisions by seeking to transfer bargaining from the sector to the company level in some industries. These dynamics have widened the already existing differences in collective bargaining between sectors and created a reconfiguration of sectoral collective bargaining with standards that are less restrictive for companies but that continued to feature "social peace clauses" (ibid). At the same time, the country has experienced a decrease in unionisation and a reorganization of the trade union environment with mergers and new coalitions. The share of unionised workers in 2017 was estimated to be less than 18%⁵⁰. However, as a result of an increase in offshoring and social plans in companies, the

⁵⁰ According to the USS estimation in : "Évolution des effectifs des syndicats en 2017" pp. 10 (2018) USS. retrieved from: https://www.uss.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Dossier/132f__MP_Evolution_membres2017.pdf

country has experienced an increase in the unionization rate of white-collar workers⁵¹ who were traditionally poorly unionized (Defferrard 2019).

Employers' organizations, for their part, have also reorganized around more diverse interests. Although less cohesive, the interests of employers remain an important force in the country's politics (Mach et al. 2003).

And it is that the organized interests of the social partners are characterized by a strong imbalance between the strength of the organized interests of the companies and the structural weakness of the organized workers (Afonso 2014, Katzenstein 1984). Employers' organizations are highly organized and strong political ties give them a certain power (Humair et al., 2012). Trade union organizations are considered weak and fragmented. Linguistic and religious divisions, the strong dependence in the past on foreign labour of the Swiss economy with a high turnover rate, unstable statutes and a large number of workers without political rights are some of the factors that may explain the organizational weakness of trade unions. However, as full-fledged actors in the organized system of industrial relations and with the power conferred by the veto tools in the above-mentioned reforms, trade union organizations nevertheless remain important actors in the Swiss political scene (Mach, 2006; Oesch, 2011). Additionally, unions have overcome adversity by engaging in organizational and programmatic renewal by developing mergers and new coalitions and by affiliating several white-collar unions (Oesch, 2011).

The most important trade union federations are the *Swiss Federation of Trade Unions* (USS) and *Travail.Suisse*. The first comes initially from a social democratic tradition whereas the second one emerged from a Christian democratic union tradition. Intersectoral and sectoral trade unions active in several cantons or only in a specific region are affiliated to the umbrella federations. The latter take on the task of defending common political interests as the "political arm" of the trade unions. The trade unions, for their part, are responsible for collective bargaining, wage policy in the various sectors and offer different types of services to their members. At the cantonal and local level, the sections of the trade union organizations form the cantonal or local trade union unions, which at their level perform functions similar to those of the umbrella organizations at the federal level. Switzerland also has a large number of independent trade union organizations that are not affiliated to either of the two umbrella organizations. "*Organized labour is fragmented and decentralized. Fragmentation is illustrated by the fact that the largest peak association SGB (USS) comprises only 49 per cent of all union members in Switzerland, to which Travail.Suisse adds another 21 per cent. Moreover, unlike ÖGB in Austria or CGIL, CISL and UIL in Italy, the two peak associations SGB and Travail.Suisse possess only limited authority over their member unions (16 unions within SGB, 12 within Travail.Suisse). In Switzerland, power lies mainly with the individual unions: they are the ones to collect member fees, organize wage bargaining and sign collective agreements. This is reflected in the resources the different organizations have at their disposal: the largest peak association SGB thus employs fewer than 25 people, its largest affiliated union Onia more than 900*" (Oesch, 2011).

⁵¹ USS and Swiss Federal Statistics Office data retrieved from <https://www.rts.ch/info/economie/10400838-les-syndicats-peinent-a-compenser-la-baisse-du-nombre-d-affilies.html>

Employers in Switzerland are organized around business and employers' organizations. The organizations are either active at communal, cantonal, regional or federal level or are organised by economic sector. Among the largest organizations active at the national level are *Economiesuisse*, which traditionally brings together large companies active in the industrial and service sectors and focuses on technical, economic and fiscal issues, the *Swiss Union of Crafts and Skilled Trades* (USAM), which traditionally brings together small and medium-sized enterprises, and the *Swiss Employers' Association* (UPS), which brings together craft and industrial companies. The latter two focus on labour law and social policy issues (Degen, 2016).

The social partners meet in consultative bodies and various bipartite and tripartite commissions at cantonal and federal level. It is important to note that forms of social dialogue and corporatism are also present and important at both the federal and cantonal levels given the federalist and decentralized political system. The dynamics and traditions of social partnership therefore vary from canton to canton.

Another specificity concerning the social partners in Switzerland is their important involvement in the education system and more particularly at the upper secondary level of education in the vocational education and training system (VET). State actors at cantonal and federal level and educational institutions collaborate with companies, employers' organizations and employees' organization's in the development and governance of the VET system (Gonon and Maurer, 2012). Indeed, the VET system with its dual modality of learning at school and in the workplace has required considerable involvement on the part of employers from the very beginning of its development. In this respect, the Swiss example is referred to as an example of collective skill system (Trampusch, 2010; Gonon and Maurer, 2012).

Given that migration has long played an important role in the Swiss labour market (Piguet, 2013), the social partners have always taken a stance on immigration issues. Between the 1930s and 1990s, the Swiss economy relied heavily on seasonal workers from Italy and other European countries. The sectors relying mainly on seasonal workers were catering, construction and agriculture (Piguet, 2013). Unions were strongly linked to immigrant workers. They were for instance in the front line, in welcoming them at the borders or customs and were the first actors to support them, especially during the long queues to pass the medical examination when entering the territory (Steinauer and Von Allmen, 2001). Part of the trade union movement has campaigned for the abolition of seasonal status or for more rights for migrant workers. It is important to note, however, that the trade union community has in certain cases been divided on the issue of seasonal workers. This was reflected, for example, in the division within the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (USS) during the "solidarity initiative" launched by immigrant solidarity movements and some unions, which advocated the abolition of the status of seasonal workers and demanded more rights in terms of more stable status and family reunification (Steinauer and Von Allmen, 2001). The initiative was rejected in 1981. Following this initiative, the law was nevertheless revised with intermediate solutions and seasonal status has been abolished a few years after.

Over the last two decades, the social partners have largely focused on flanking measures, intended to minimize the risks of wage and social dumping, pertaining to agreements regulating the free movement of persons such as the one set in force with the EU in 1999 (Meardi, 2017). Trade unions have been rather proactive, arguing for a reinforcement of these flanking measures (see e.g. UNIA).

Overall, 32%⁵² of workers in Switzerland are of foreign nationality. Migrant workers form, therefore, a significant part of the Swiss labour market landscape. Hence, it is not uncommon for trade unions or trade union umbrella organizations to have set up special migration commissions working exclusively on migration issues, while, as our interviews show, issues related to migrant workers are also present in other policy concerns, cross-cutting various policy agendas.

7.2 Methods

The present report examines the role of social partners in either facilitating or hindering the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (MRAs) in the Swiss labour market. The data was collected through the conduction of an online survey and a 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews with social partners.

The interviews were conducted with representatives of two trade union umbrella organizations that are active at national level, with four trade unions that are active at cantonal and regional levels (in Geneva or French speaking region), and with representatives of two trade unions that are active nationally. Seven out of the eight contacted trade unions are inter- sectoral unions, while one regional union is active in the sector of agriculture. In addition to the trade unions, interviews were conducted with representatives (managers or officers) of five employers' organizations active at cantonal/regional level (some of these organizations also being active at national level). The three of these organizations are active in the sectors of construction and social-health care respectively while other two are mainly cross-industry employer associations.

All the interviewed social partners, especially the trade union representatives, were selected because of the widely acknowledged key role they play at either cantonal or federal level. The employers' organizations were identified on the basis of the significance of the economic sector they represent with high numbers of migrants employed. Sectors such as agriculture, construction, social-health care, cleaning, hotel and catering employ, especially in the canton of Geneva, a high number of migrants and they are more concerned by the issue of the integration of migrants on the labour market. In order to have a brighter overview on the different dimensions of the social dialogue, we conducted an interview with a governmental actor involved in social dialogue on integration topics. It has to be underlined that the interviews expose more the cantonal reality of Geneva, which has its own political context characterised by a high presence of migrants as well as an established unionisation in the majority of the economic sectors. The conducted interviews with partners active on a national level should however provide an overview of initiatives implemented at a national level and examples of some cantonal differences.

The online survey was conducted between October and December 2019. Overall, 33 respondents participated in the survey which was conducted in three languages (Italian, French and German) in order to assess the perspective of social partners coming from different cantons (Geneva, Lausanne Bern, Zurich, Ticino etc.). In terms of respondents' composition, 14 respondents belonged to trade unions, 18 respondents belonged to employers or economic organizations and one respondent represented a private company.

⁵² In 2018 (OFS, 2019)

More than 52% of the organizations work at cantonal or/and regional level, 39% at national level and a minority at the municipality level. The majority of the respondents are the directors of the organizations, followed by project managers and general or central secretaries. The majority of the concerned respondents / persons have a cantonal or regional function (52%), others (41%) are nationally active; only a minority (3%) are active also at European level.

It has to be underlined that in our research of social partners (for the interviews as well as for the online survey) we got a high number of negative responses and refusals, as MRA labour market integration is not a high priority for several of the organizations contacted especially for small unions or professional organizations active only in one sector.

7.3 The Strategies and Activities of Social Partners in the Labour Market Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Switzerland

7.3.1 Social partners' perception of migrants and refugees

In general, the actors interviewed in this study have a positive view about migration. The subject is present in their daily activities, particularly when it comes to migration policy and to issues pertaining to bilateral agreements with Europe regulating the free movement of persons, which have been set in force since 2002, and to the measures accompanying the said agreement. The majority of the interviewed employers' organizations emphasise the need for foreign workers particularly to occupy posts in specific sectors in which there is a shortage of labour forces due to the ageing of the Swiss population. More migrants and refugees are therefore needed to offset population ageing. Generally, talking about immigration, a representative of an employers' organization stated: *"We are in favour as long as there is a match between needs and skills"* (Umbrella employers' representative, social partner 12). According to a minority of the interviewed representatives of employers' organizations, immigration represents a potential burden only when there is an uncontrolled and high influx of migrants. On the side of the trade union actors, immigration is also perceived as a positive development. Several of the interviewed representatives stated that their organization has a very large number of foreign or immigrant members, which places immigration as a cross-cutting theme in the organization's policy agendas. This phenomenon more prominent in the Geneva region. As explained by one of the representatives of a trade union in Geneva: *"I could even say that we are probably the largest migrant association in Switzerland. If I look at our organization in Geneva, 3/4 of our members do not have a Swiss passport. We do not have any particular link with the migrant population. It is that we have a special link with the world of work and since, in our branches, this world is mainly made up of migrant workers, we are also their organization of defending them in the workplace"* (Union representative, social partner 9). Regarding immigration policies, the interviewed representatives of trade unions seem to be in favour of open policies as long as working conditions remain the same as for native workers and that the policies are accompanied by measures to prevent wage dumping. As a trade union representative in Geneva stated: *"Our general philosophy is "Let us protect wages, not the border!"* (Trade union representative, social partner 9).

Moreover, according to the online survey findings, most of the social partners seem to perceive migrants as moderately skilled. In particular, the qualifications of refugees are perceived as being lower than those of migrants, particularly by the representatives of employers' organizations that took part in the survey. Contrary to migrants (often considered positively)

refugees are also perceived more often as a burden than an asset by employers participating in the survey. According to the interview findings, though migrants and refugees are often considered important in tackling labour shortages by a large majority of employers' organizations, at the same time the same respondents consider that migrant and refugee qualifications are not sufficient to cope with the situation, in particular to fulfil the needs of many professional sectors that require high qualified profiles.

7.3.2 Social partners' strategies and activities to support labour market integration

While the integration of migrants is perceived as a positive and important factor by mostly all the actors interviewed, many of them state that the issue is not part of their strategy as such. Half of the online survey respondents report having a general support approach targeting migrants and refugees versus a third who report having no approach at all, and only a tiny minority which reports having a targeted approach. According to the interviews, several actors state that they – as organizations - have only a small role to play in professional integration, or even no role at all, especially when professional integration is seen as a matter of access to the labour market. According to the responses of the representatives of employers' organizations, their organizations can only support the activities or measures that aim to improve the integration of migrants in the labour market, as they are not the ones in charge of the implementation of the specific integration measures. Also, several respondents from employers' organizations stated that migrant workers are not their only priority; they have to give priority to initiatives aimed at the professional integration of other groups such as "senior citizens" or people over the age of 50, for example. A representative of an employers' organization explained that: *"there are several population groups that need to be integrated. We can do a little but cannot fully invest in the integration of senior citizens, refugees, women, young people and people with disabilities. It is necessary, but as an organization, we cannot do everything. It is rather on the ground that it happens. Employers have to get into the city, by becoming aware of certain problems, by meeting someone; they may be affected by a specific theme and want to get involved"* (Employer representative, social partner 14).

In our study, the representatives of trade unions stated that they are concerned with issues of migrants' integration in general. Access to the labour market for migrants is a concern for trade unions first because they must constantly monitor that such access does not come at the expense of migrants' working conditions and that the mechanisms to enter into the labour market does not create wage dumping.

Whether we refer to trade unions or employers' organizations, many of the activities related to integration concern their involvement in taking positions on legal changes such as amendments to the Federal Act on Foreign Nationals and integration, or responding to consultations and participating in social dialogue processes related to the labour market. Also, the activities of employers' organizations generally involve the development of information materials concerning, for example, permits and migrants' status, employment procedures or legal changes concerning integration.

Several of the interviewed representatives of trade unions and employers' organizations mentioned particularly their participation in a bipartite working group born in 2017 and integrated by intersectoral unions and employers' associations that is active at the regional level in French-speaking cantons, following their positive response to an invitation from

Travail.Suisse, a trade union umbrella organization. Among the activities of the working group, there has been a survey aimed at employers to understand the needs for tools related to migration and integration, the updating of an already existing booklet with legal information, testimonies of employers who have recruited migrants, as well as awareness-raising and good practices information on topics related to migration issues, integration and labour market.

Furthermore, trade unions in particular have specific strategies and activities targeting migrants and tackling specifically the issue of the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Many migrants refer to the trade unions in order to ask questions about how to fill out forms and administrative documents, how to extend their stay, how to benefit from social funds but also in order to understand the labour market and how to integrate themselves professionally. For this reason, several trade unions organize frequently informative sessions for migrants where they provide basic information about labour rights and how to deal with exploitation, abuse of rights etc.

Additionally, the role that the social partners can play in promoting sustainable integration into the labour market was stressed as an important element by the interviewees. Social partners generally provide programmes and services such as training programmes (funded jointly by trade unions and employers' organizations through common funds or by umbrellas organizations), legal advice etc. to workers who are already in the labour market and also members of a union or an employer organization. Though several of these services and programmes do not target specifically MRAs, migrants can benefit from them.

In Geneva, some trade unions mentioned in the interviews their link with the *Université Ouvrière* (Workers' University), a place of education open to all persons, employed or unemployed including migrants and refugees. The Workers' University was founded partly at the instigation of the trade unions and several members of its committee represent different trade unions present in Geneva. This university offers courses and continuing education to low-skilled people, with the aim of promoting their social, cultural, economic and political integration. In particular, the university offers different types of local language courses, mathematics and basic skills courses and professional development training, among others. A trade union in Geneva also mentioned the role of trade unions in some cantons in providing access to labour law by obtaining for example, access to labour courts for persons without legal status and without being reported. Another activity specific to trade unions active in the Canton of Geneva concerns their involvement together with other actors, in the Papyrus operation, a political project that took place in the canton of Geneva in 2018, and obtained the regularization of hundreds of illegal workers. Regarding discrimination, some unions said about offering special workshops for their union representatives, to raise awareness to discrimination issues in the place of work.

The majority of the social partners consider migrants as a heterogeneous group. Regarding specific groups of MRAs such as women, young persons, disabled persons or LGBTI+, no particular activities or policies were mentioned by the online survey respondents or the interviewed representatives, although a large majority of the survey respondents did state that those specific groups should receive additional support. According to two representatives of employers' organizations, targeting specific groups of migrants would be more restraint. To diversify too much the migrants, would imply to target many groups that are too small, this would represent a barrier and a restraint for many organizations. Nevertheless, several organizations informed us that they have activities and discussions sometimes even in their strategies that concern women, youth and senior citizens as well as people with disabilities.

Some unions have activities that target specifically certain groups such as women (including migrant women in certain sectors) who can be considered as more vulnerable. In Switzerland, women are, independently from their origin, already in a weaker position. They have lower salaries, less opportunities of professional career etc. Some union want, through different forms of intervention, stimulate a political consciousness, and give them instruments to fight against their discrimination on the labour market. According to the interviewees, another group that should be more considered is young migrants who could face double discrimination – they are migrants and also young facing the same problems as many young Swiss people. None of the social partners target disabled people and LGBT+.

7.4 Barriers to the Labour Market Integration Identified by Social Partners

According to both the online survey and the interview findings, most of the respondents agree that among the greatest obstacles to the integration of migrants in the labour market are the lack of knowledge of the native language, qualifications and skills mismatch. Almost all trade union representatives and a large number of representatives coming from employers' organizations responding to the survey also agree that administrative and legal barriers are an important obstacle. Some respondents also mention cultural differences and discrimination as important barriers to integration. Political discourses and lack of information are also perceived as factors that may deter employers from hiring migrants.

7.4.1 Knowledge of language

One of the main challenges that companies encounter with migrants is the lack of knowledge of language. Many migrants have a low language level which, considering even the most manual job, is an important problem. Being able to understand the working directives and security instructions on the working field is essential. Implementation of language courses are for this reason one of the more effective activities to promote labour market integration. Offering language courses in the workplace during the working hours was mentioned as an even more effective solution, since it can allow the migrant to learn the language in their everyday life and working time. Also, for the trade unions lack of knowledge of the native language represents an important barrier for migrants and a challenge that has to be tackled from the very beginning.

7.4.2 Qualifications and skills recognition

The online survey and the interviewees also brought forward the issue of qualifications as a recurring element, affecting MRA integration into the labour market. According to the majority of the interviewed representatives, low qualified migrants can easily find basic jobs in sectors such as construction, hotel and restaurant industry, cleaning, agriculture and human-health assistance. These are most accessible economic sectors since they offer positions that do not require high qualifications or skills. However, low qualified migrants will have difficulties to pursue a professional path or to aspire to higher positions. Additionally, in the case of qualified migrants, and more specifically, in the case of third countries migrants, skills are not valued or fully appreciated and the path to having them recognized is often long and perplexing. Some

representatives of trade unions pointed out that migrants without recognised qualifications are often hired with lower wages and conditions thus opening the way to wage dumping.

The issue of the qualifications of migrants and its implication goes hand in hand with the questioning of the existing training options and opportunities that are or are not offered to migrants. According to both unions and professional organizations, the lack of access to training and continuing education programs represents in many cases one of the biggest barriers to migrants' integration. According to a trade union representative active at the national level: *“The 2018 report Education in Switzerland shows that low-skilled workers and migrants have little access to continuing education. We found that the Confederation's national programme Promotion of basic skills in the workplace - which contributes financially to the promotion of languages, computer skills and mathematics - is little used”* (Trade union representative, social partner 10).

Considering the interviews, the lack of training and continuous training represents a main problem in the agricultural sector, which is a sector in which several migrants find a job. According to an interviewed trade union representative, there is a total lack of vocational training and education offers for working adults which could improve the educational level of migrants, who haven't followed an education path in Switzerland. Consequently, migrants have rarely access to continuing specialisation training that could allow them to move to a higher qualified position with a higher salary and better working conditions. However, according to a trade union representative, employers and professional organizations don't feel the need of encouraging vocational training. *“There is a utilitarian mentality according to which low qualified migrants represent a necessary labour force that will accept lower salaries and worse working conditions than Swiss people nor trained workers could ever accept. Moreover, private companies and employers don't want often to invest in training programs for people who potentially will leave after a certain period anyway”* (Union representative, social partner 2). As we will see further, trainings and continuing training programmes have been developed by the social partners in different sectors; however, according to a trade union representative, in many cases, employers prefer not to send their employees to those programmes because they do not see any added value to them or because they do not want the trainings to take place during a working day.

7.4.3 Cultural differences and discrimination

Depending on the economic sector, the cultural background or origin of the worker can also represent a barrier to his/her integration in the labour market, according to the views of some interviewed representatives coming from employers' organizations. Moreover, according to the views of representatives of some unions active at the national level, biased perceptions of cultural differences can lead to workplace discrimination, which in some cases could be unintentional, yet migrants are in most cases not fully aware of their rights. To address this problem, trade unions are implementing workshops to raise awareness on discrimination in the labour market.

7.4.4 Labour market competition between migrants and native workers

The majority of the representatives of employers' organizations responding to the survey, consider that the arrival of migrants has not created particular tensions in the labour market

with indigenous workers. Yet, half of the union representatives interviewed disagree. Perceived competition, perceived lowering of the salaries and populist rhetoric have been identified as the main sources of these tensions. One representative from an employer umbrella organization stressed that: *“The important underlying question is, do the migrant “steal” the work of the local worker? Because this would be the main cause of tensions. There are enough dynamics/structures/political interventions nowadays that prevent the employers to hire migrants that once were prioritised because they represented cheap labour market. The establishment of the minimum salaries in certain cantons or collective bargaining agreements has been in these terms essential. The minimum wage protects the people, local as well as migrant workers”* (Employer representative, social partner 6). The tensions mentioned by the social partners during the interviews most often refer to particular groups such as cross-border workers, or European workers arriving under the free movement of people treaties. The issue of tensions between native and cross-border workers appeared more present in the views of the representatives of trade unions active in Geneva, while many interviewed partners stressed the tensions between migrants of different nationalities. For instance, a representative of an employers' organization mentioned that in the sectors of construction and agriculture private enterprises and employers are conscious that in order to avoid conflict and possible violent confrontation it is important not to “mix” certain nationalities in the workforce, while there are “communitarian” mafias that also need to be considered. Union representatives see the enrolment of workers in unions as an efficient tool to fight those tensions: *“I remember, for example, a factory where the workers mainly belonged to two different countries of origin and had very tense relations. After six days on strike, the division no longer existed”* (Union representative, social partner 9).

7.4.5 Illegal migration, populist politics and legal barriers

Concerns about illegal migration and its labour market effects have been brought forward in the interviews with the social partners. As characteristically emphasized, *“There is a lack of courage by the side of the authorities that should be stricter and ready to expel all migrants that are not really legitimate to work in Switzerland, who are not ready to integrate themselves or that would increase too much the number of migrants that could integrate. With the opening of the borders there has been an influx of migrants that represent a barrier to the professional integration of migrants who are already working in Switzerland”* (Employer organization representative, social partner 5).

This point of view has been on the other hand criticised by the majority of the unions and some employer's organizations whose purpose tend to change the general public discourse. Thirty years ago, the unions at a national level and in many cantons were against migration, they wanted to protect the local workers and saw migrants as dangerous. Now the unions have to show that the problem is not the migration but the structural system, they have to find new solutions and strategies that don't downgrade MRAs. *“The main discussion point should not be the intensification of migration and how to stop it, but how to handle it. Politics has to change the public discourse. An anti-migration discourse has a negative effect, it doesn't help in developing a pro-active atmosphere and have a negative effect on people who work in the administration etc. It doesn't support a positive policy of integration”* (Union representative, social partner 3). Moreover, half of the trade union organizations and two employers' organizations responding to the survey identified populist politicians as one of the barriers to

integration. On this point, according to several interviewed representatives, political campaigning against immigration by certain political parties may influence the perceived competition between local and migrant workers and lead the population to perceive foreigners as a threat. On the other hand, the acceptance of the 2014 initiative against mass immigration has conveyed a political and popular message that many employers perceive as a message of closure. *"The message employers are receiving today is one of closure. You shouldn't hire abroad. This message is being echoed and transformed. There is a belief that the political message is one of indigenous preference, but in which the term indigenous does not include newly arrived migrants"* (Employer organization representative, social partner 12). It is important to point out that, in the context of the implementation of the constitutional article resulting from the acceptance of the initiative against mass immigration, although priority must be given to indigenous workers, the refugee population and persons admitted on a temporary basis have been included in the concept of indigenous workers to be prioritised. *"With the lack of qualified personnel and the changes following the initiative against mass immigration, employers are more sensitive to the fact that refugees are integrated into the category of indigenous workers, but the way of thinking has yet to change. There is an advocacy role to play"* (Employer organization representative, social partner 12).

The main administrative barriers for the integration of MRAs into the labour market concern the status and permits. As stated by a trade union representative responding to the online survey *"Permits of limited duration, refugee and temporary admission status, and undocumented status impact on work opportunities"* (Survey respondent). Several interviewed social partners explain that employers are often afraid to hire people who have no guarantee that they will remain in Switzerland (especially as regards migrants "classified" as *temporarily admitted persons*). This phenomenon is likely to be amplified by recent changes in the legislation on foreigners (concerning e.g. the Federal Act on Foreigners and Integration), which has made residence permits less stable.

7.4.6 Employers' perception and (mis)information

Overall, employers' lack of knowledge of the legal framework and procedures for hiring MRAs, and more particularly people subject to asylum, was mentioned by some interviewed social partners, as an important barrier. Few employers are aware, for example, that the need for a permit for the employment of a refugee or a provisionally admitted person has been abolished and that a simple announcement is now sufficient. Both representatives of trade unions and the employers' organizations mentioned the key role that the social partners can play in raising awareness on topics related to migrants' status and labour law as well as on the skills and potential that the migrant labour force represents.

7.4.7 Informal non-standard forms of employment

Generally, migrants are more exposed to informal work and there are many cases of exploitation, especially in the agriculture and the construction sectors. According to one interviewee there are certain risks and disadvantages:

"Since the moment you start working illegally, you become exploitable. Having a legal work represents a right, there are so many refugees and migrants, who really fought in order to have a permit and to be able to work in legal conditions. Illegality, as well as informal work, imply lower salaries and bad working conditions. And moreover, because of the possibility of

having illegal workers employed, there is a general lowering of salaries of everyone. If you are a migrant and you start to work with a Swiss enterprise, you are more protected, you work for certain conditions that have been decided collectively with the trade unions etc. If you work illegally you don't have these conditions and security" (Employer organization representative, social partner 5).

The issue of the exposure of migrants to informal work was raised also by the interviewed representatives of the different trade unions. Many migrants, especially refugees, who cannot have easy access to the labour market will be tempted to start working illegally.

When asked about non-standard employment and the gig economy sector, some representatives defined it as a potential tool for the integration of MRAs as it could represent a gateway to the labour market. However, several of them consider that it is not yet clear how the gig economy sector will continue to develop. On the other hand, other representatives, mostly from trade unions, but also some employers' organizations, consider that although people can find work in this field more easily, it is a sector that is poorly protected and can only make workers more precarious. Thus, it can represent a short-term integration factor only. When talking about non-standard employment in general including the gig economy sector, a trade union representative defined it as negative, as *"the problem is that it is used to create wage dumping"* (Union representative, social partner 9).

7.4.8 Forms of vulnerability

As we have seen, vulnerability of migrants is a recurring theme mentioned by the interviewed social partners, and more specifically, when talking about their position in the labour market. Lack of knowledge of their rights, difficulties in finding work that can lead them to accept jobs in precarious conditions or non-standard jobs are among the factors that are seen as increasing vulnerability; also, a problem that the social partners can play a certain role in acting upon. Moreover, the risk of exposure to health problems is for the interviewed social partners another important factor more often related to the risks specific to the sectors in which MRA work. According to some social partners, the vulnerability of some migrants may also be linked to economic conditions, psychosocial health problems, difficulty in finding housing or childcare. These are all crucial factors which represent obstacles to accessing employment or to MRAs' sustainable integration in the labour market. *"Let us take the issue of child care. It's a problem for everyone, except that migrants are less likely to have the network to help them"* (Employer organization representative, social partner 12).

7.5 Enablers to Labour Market Integration Identified by Social Partners

The interviewed social partners identify several elements that can be considered as enablers for MRA labour market integration. They mostly refer to initiatives/programmes/services that have been developed either by the social partners directly or by other organizations and they have been judged as effective or potentially efficient.

7.5.1 Language courses, education and skills development programmes

Access to trainings and continuing education programs as well as the provision of support for the validation of previous professional qualifications are considered as important tools to support MRA labour market integration, helping them access new skills as well as better salaries and working conditions. As one interviewee stated: *“Migrants are often underqualified when they arrive to Switzerland. Even the ones who have a diploma or that have followed an education path in their country of origin are not qualified enough, as the training system in Switzerland is in fact much longer and more extensive. The trainings that we offer can help migrants to gain more knowledge or in many cases fulfil the requests for a recognition of prior learning. The possibility to gain a specific diploma, for example in the use of some working machines, can also raise their opportunities to find a job in our companies”* (Employer organization representative, social partner 5).

While the interviewed social partners perceive that they can only have a limited role in helping those who are not yet in the labour market, several of them seem to acknowledge that they can play an important role with regard to facilitating MRAs in accessing courses, vocational training or further training, and more specifically in helping persons, including migrants, that have already entered the labour market. Professional associations, for example, play a role in the development of vocational training opportunities in their sectors. Employers' and trade union organizations are developing vocational or further training opportunities for their members or for employees working in their sectors and some organizations are implementing programmes to facilitate access to professional continuous training. Several training programmes are developed or supported by trade unions and employers' organizations through joint funds. In some cases, those programmes also receive state support. While the majority of these training courses are not necessarily aimed solely at migrants, migrants are nevertheless among the main beneficiaries.

In terms of training primarily for migrants, some unions have developed training in certain sectors to support the development of language skills, basic skills and in some cases to support the achievement of qualifications. Especially in the cleaning, gastronomy and hotel industries there has been an important investment in launching projects to provide training and support the professional integration of migrants. In the canton of Vaud, for example, one union is coordinating a programme for migrant women working in the cleaning and catering sector. The programme includes skills and needs assessment, as well as a training plan to acquire the missing skills and enable them to achieve professional certification.

Several unions and employers' organizations organize or facilitate employee access to local language courses. One of the main trade unions in Switzerland has developed industry-specific local language courses in some cantons for employees who are trade union members. Programmes to support the development of local language skills have also been developed in certain sectors in some cantons, such as the programme *German on the building site* through which employers in the construction sector give access to local language to their workers. Several of these programmes have been set up and are financed by employers' and trade union organizations and they are financed by joint funds. They also often receive state support.

If different opportunities of training have been developed, one of the challenges mentioned by some interviewed representatives of trade unions remain the possibility for the worker to take

up such opportunities. Some programmes for example foresee, with the agreement of employers, that part of the courses take place during working hours, while others must take place outside working hours. "Companies must set targets that promote equal opportunities for their employees in terms of access to training and internal promotion" (Union representative, social partner 10)

The question of having trainers with a migration background has been mentioned as an enabler for the positive achievement of the outcomes of the training. According to one interviewee active in the social-health care sector, persons with a migrant background who are in charge of the internships and formation programs in the sector are able as migrants themselves to better support interns or students with a migrant background: "*They are people who did have similar experiences, they are more able to mobilise some empathy. They have more instruments that enable them to tackle problems and difficulties and to deal with specific problems and human situations that can play an important role in the labour market integration process*" (Employer representative, social partner 1)

7.5.2 Information and raising awareness

Lack of migrants' knowledge of their rights on the one hand and lack of employers' information about administrative possibilities or the potential of hiring a migrant on the other hand are seen by the interviewed social partners as important obstacles to the integration of MRAs. In this regard, most of the interviewed social partners said that they play an important awareness raising role while many think that more could be done in this area.

Trade unions inform and raise awareness among migrant workers about their labour market rights. With the spread of information, the purpose is to prevent cases of discrimination and to overcome one of the biggest underlying problems in the integration policies, namely the general lack of information regarding rights, procedures, administration etc. Some trade unions implement more general oriented information projects related to integration, changes in the law on foreigners and/or conditions for naturalization. This is the case, for example, of an umbrella trade union organization active at the national level which is working on producing a brochure with information provided by canton on the conditions for applying for naturalisation. Employers' organizations, on their part, often develop information material for employers on the rules and procedures necessary for hiring migrants. Some also offer more active support in implementing these procedures.

As already mentioned, different representatives interviewed mentioned their participation in a working group aimed at developing a project on integration of migrants in general. The working group, active at the level of French-speaking Switzerland, organized a survey for employers who are members of the participating employers' organizations, with the aim of finding out the interests and needs of employers in relation to integration. "*The survey revealed that employers were interested and wanted information tools*" (Union representative, social partner 10). The working group therefore decided to update an already existing brochure and to supplement it with information on the possibilities of employing migrants. In addition to practical information, the brochure, which is currently being produced, aims to present examples of good practices and success stories with testimonials from employers who are satisfied with hiring migrants. "*Awareness-raising work needs to be done for employers. We should give them more information and provide them with examples of success stories that can motivate them to hire migrants*" (Employer representative, social partner 14). The

willingness to hire migrants, but more specifically refugees, is a subject that was raised by several interviewed social partners. Employers often don't know how to deal with migrants' employees and with administrative procedures. Another important service is providing information and consultation to the employers. Some unions and employers' organization mentioned that activities to inform and offer support to companies in order to facilitate hiring of MRAs should be implemented. Activities could include producing booklets, information sheets, and articles in the journals or magazines. Magazines edited by employers' organizations for employers were mentioned as a very useful tool, not only to inform employers about labour law issues or administrative changes to hire MRAs, but also to raise employers' awareness of integration issues (e.g. interviewees from two employers' organizations mentioned that their newspapers sometimes published articles about the Swiss Integration Act, and also examples of good integration practices, topics such as cultural diversity, disseminating interesting research results related to the benefits of professional integration or advertising information about associations working in the field of labour market integration of MRAs).

7.5.3 Economic sectors and opportunities

Most of the survey respondents and the interviewed representatives said that there are specific economic sectors that offer more opportunities to migrants, namely the sectors of hotel and gastronomy, human and social-health care, construction, agriculture and cleaning. These are sectors currently in need of extra labour force and also more easily accessible by MRAs because they provide job openings that require low qualifications and skills. Also, the construction industry is one that has a long history related to employing seasonal migrant workers.

Technological development, economic changes, decentralisation and other factors have to be considered as well. As underlined by some of the interviewees, with the introduction of new technologies, there is an increasing demand of coders and high qualified specialists with specific qualifications in informatics and technology. This implies however, that only MRAs from a certain social and professional position can access these jobs, migrant workers who in general have already less difficulties to find a job in Switzerland (e.g. workers who have degrees that are recognised, workers who had leading positions before, etc.). According to some union representatives, the need for workforce in the services sector is also increasing. With the digitalisation of the retail sector (e.g. Amazon) there are more job offers in the delivery, in the processing of online orders etc. On the other hand, the labour supply of the tertiary sector in Switzerland, where MRAs with a low educational level could have had access to, is on the decrease. The tertiary sectors are "exporting labour force" in countries where labour costs are lower than Switzerland. This can represent an obstacle to employing low qualified workers that have migrated to Switzerland.

7.5.4 Policy enablers

Most interviewees referred to the role of the State and the public integration programmes as (potentially) effective policy enablers. In this context, interviewees mentioned the Cantonal Integration Programmes and the new Swiss Integration Agenda,⁵³ as positive policies for

⁵³ In 2018, the Confederation and the cantons agreed on a new policy framework, the Swiss Integration Agenda, which was launched in 2019. As a complement of the PICs (*Programmes cantonaux*

facilitating integration. Another positive development mentioned is the Foreigners' legislation that implements art. 121a Cst. and places refugees and temporarily admitted persons into the category of 'native workers' that ought, from a legal point of view, to be considered as having priority access to the labour market. Several interviewees referred also to the merits of the pre-apprenticeship programmes initially intended for refugees and provisionally admitted persons. These programmes aim to enable refugees and temporarily admitted persons to obtain the basic skills required in order to participate in vocational training. This is achieved through a ten-month apprenticeship that combines theory at school, practice in a work place and local language courses. Both trade unions and employers' organization have provided information to their members on the pre-apprenticeship programmes. Moreover, pilot programmes have been implemented in certain sectors in which the social partners have been highly involved. Interviewees from an employer umbrella association and individual employers' organizations mentioned their support to those programmes stressed: *"The pilot programmes have been so successful that they are being institutionalized. We have also been informed that an extension of pre-apprenticeships to other migrant populations from Europe and third countries is planned"* (Employer organization representative, social partner 12).

In addition to existing integration policies and programmes, several partners mentioned the importance of changing political discourses that should not generate the fear towards foreigners: *"Policies should be more focused on debate to reduce the indigenous population's sense of insecurity about immigration"* (Survey respondent).

With regard to recent changes in legislation, the representative of an umbrella trade union organization stressed that positive changes in terms of promoting MRA integration have actually taken place, e.g. support for the integration of foreigners has been strengthened in the law. Moreover, the interviewed representative said that there should be a legal amendment ensuring a specific role for the employers as important actors in the integration of migrants (such a legal provision previously existed but it was later amended). As the representative explains: *"At a certain point, the introduced amendments of the Federal Act on Foreign National and Integration provided a paragraph on the role of employers in facilitating integration that was however deleted. It would be good to reinsert that paragraph in one way or another.. we are actually thinking about how to do it"* (Union representative, social partner 8).

7.6 Social Partners, Social Dialogue, Policymaking and Labour Market Integration

Generally speaking, the social partners that participated in the study consider that social dialogue represents an opportunity for the integration of MRA into the labour market. Even if the latter has not been one of the primary aims of the social dialogues initiatives, the agreements reached make it possible to combat wage dumping and to establish equal working conditions for both migrant and native workers. Training and education programmes are in

d'intégration), the purpose of the Integration Agenda is to develop actions to promote the integration of refugees and temporarily admitted persons, foreseeing faster implementation of measures and strengthening individual support and case management.

fact concrete instruments to integrate migrants and their development and establishment in collaboration with the social partners are seen as an essential part of the social dialogue.

Moreover, it has to be underlined, that the sectors where there is high unionisation are the ones that, according to the interviewees, can offer better opportunities to migrants. On the contrary, the sectors where there isn't any form of social dialogue are the ones with more cases of exploitation for the MRAs. The social partner involved in supporting agricultural migrant workers discussed this point extensively. According to the interviewee, weak legal protection in the agricultural sector can also represent a barrier because it implies weaker regulation of salary and everyday working conditions. As many laws and regulations in Switzerland are decided and/or implemented at a cantonal level, trade union activism needs to be local. Improvements in workers' conditions depend on political pressure exercised at local level and also on the specific sector a person works:

“In general, in other economic sectors, thanks to social partnerships, there is the possibility to improve the working conditions (for example in the sector of construction). In other economic sectors industrial paternalism has been replaced with the time by a social dialogue that brought improvements as better work conditions and an equality that can beneficiary also for migrants. These improvements implied a recognition of holidays, higher salary, and early retirement. These improvements are the result of union struggles. The agriculture has not experienced similar struggles” (Union representative, social partner 2).

The interviewees also mentioned the food (restaurants) and catering sectors as sectors in which workers, especially migrant and refugee workers, have little organization and thereby ability to defend their interests. Lack of knowledge of their rights, the fact that they often do not speak the language, fear of firing, and the fact that it is more difficult for trade unions to visit kitchens in restaurants than, for example, construction sites, are some of the reasons mentioned.

Though social dialogue was stressed by the interviewees as essential for improving the integration of MRAs into the labour market, few examples of social dialogue specifically related to issues of professional integration of MRAs were given. One example repeatedly cited by different representatives at national and cantonal level was the Swiss Integration Agenda (set in force in 2009 and involving a set of measures aiming to facilitate the integration of refugees and temporarily admitted persons into the labour market). According to the representative of one of the umbrella organizations interviewed, the umbrella organizations at the national level were first of all brought together to discuss a possible employment programme in the framework of the Swiss Integration Agenda, that could facilitate the entry of refugees into the labour market, with special wage conditions that could encourage employers to hire refugees. The aim of the social dialogue was to reach an agreement on cases and conditions inspired for instance on the model in force in the canton of Graubünden, where a form of partial wage⁵⁴ has been established to enable refugees to enter the labour market. As no agreement could be reached, the discussion was referred back to the cantonal level. Some cantons reached agreements and others not yet. The main challenge was the difficulty of finding solutions that do not create wage dumping. In Geneva, the social partners agreed on a solution for internship cases where the participants are also trained. *“We are trying to make the authorities*

⁵⁴ In the Graubünden canton, refugees participating in the canton's integration programme can gain work experience in a company 18 months. During that period, the employer pays them only part of their salary, which is supplemented by social assistance. The salary can increase gradually.

understand that this is the same discussion as with the free movement of persons. Yes, it is necessary to facilitate access, but it is also necessary to guarantee the conditions. It is not because a person is a refugee that he or she deserves less. We can agree on lower salaries as long as there is a real apprenticeship in the workplace and we can make exceptions as regards internships as long as there is an equivalent of training, but only when the work performed is the same as the one performed by a regular worker... In a construction site for example, there is not really a difference” (Union representative, social partner 9)

In Geneva, the social partners are part of the steering committee of the Swiss Integration Agenda, and the body responsible for implementing the policy has met with the various bipartite commissions to discuss concerns and framework conditions, among other things.

Another important social dialogue initiative that took place between 2012 and 2017 was the so-called "Integration Dialogue". The Confederation, cantons, cities and municipalities invited the various institutional and private actors to engage in dialogue in order to develop common objectives, to formulate recommendations and initiate projects. Thanks to the discussions and the national conferences on integration that took place in the framework of the dialogue, the social partners developed language training courses for employees. Some professional and employers' organizations also implemented awareness-raising programmes aimed at informing their members more intensely about the role of employers in facilitating the integration of migrants. Employers' associations active in the hotel and the catering sectors, moreover, implemented programmes aiming to raise awareness on the topics of integration, intercultural communication, and refugee employment targeting company executives.

According to a survey respondent representing a union organization at the national level, the strengthening of tripartite commissions and cooperation models also in the field of migration and refugees as well as a stronger role for trade unions as negotiating partners would be necessary for facilitating MRA labour market integration in the end.

7.7 Conclusions

Several organizations think that they have little connection with the subject of labour market integration of migrants apart from large organizations already sensitive to the issue such as the trade union and employer umbrella organizations that have a representative on the Federal Migration Commission. However, given the important place that migrants occupy in the Swiss labour market and more specifically in sectors with a strong trade union presence, migration is a cross-cutting theme that is often not named but strongly present. As a result, partners are often unaware of the role they play and could play in the integration of migrants into the labour market.

While many social partners play only a limited role in facilitating MRA access to the labour market, the impact of their activities on sustainable integration once the migrant has set foot in the labour market is not to be neglected. When the major obstacles are the lack of qualifications and the recognition of qualifications and knowledge of the native language, training and programmes facilitating access to skills enhancement and the synergies created between the different partners through tripartite and bipartite commissions are important enablers that are already being put in place in several sectors.

In addition, most large organizations, whether they are umbrella organizations or cross-sectoral trade union or employer organizations, are becoming more involved in activities that can have an impact on MRA labour market integration. Many of these activities involve information and awareness raising activities

As actors who are heavily consulted, the social partners also play an important role in policy development. Whether at the level of parliament or at the level of the actors in charge of implementing policies, trade unions and employers seem to be regularly consulted at the federal and cantonal levels. However, differences between the cantons seem to persist. As shown by the example of the implementation of the Integration Agenda, Geneva has strongly integrated the partners throughout the reflection on the implementation of the policy. According to the cantonal official in charge of implementation, the level of inclusion of partners has not necessarily been the same in all cantons. The role of companies and employers appeared to be central from both a trade union and an employers' perspective, as it is they who will ultimately provide the opportunities for accessing the labour market and also facilitating access to training, professional courses, language courses or further training to enable migrants to integrate on a more sustainable basis. Although, as mentioned by a representative of an employers' organization, migrants are not the only population group that needs to be integrated, changing perceptions and the vision of employers and politicians on migrants and on the practical implications of hiring a migrant worker can have an important impact on the actual integration of migrants. Strengthening awareness-raising activities to target both employers (often misinformed) and MRAs themselves (often lacking essential information about their rights) is also important as well as fighting wage dumping. Raising awareness by disseminating examples and good practices was identified by several stakeholders as a good tool to change this vision of the employers and political actors on the potential of migrants.

Fighting wage dumping was mentioned by various trade unions as an important enabler for the professional integration of migrants, as it can facilitate sustainable integration and remove barriers such as competition and tensions between native and migrant workers. *"Wage dumping is a good instrument against segregation, it is one less reason to be afraid of being replaced"* (Union representative, social partner 9). Overall, the fight against wage dumping and decent work appears to be a key and divisive element in current social dialogue processes in Switzerland and an area where the social partners have a consequential role to play in the future.

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Annex I - List of interviews with social partners

	Date of interview	Function/Role	Type of Institution * (PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE ORIGINAL NAMES HERE)
Social partner 1	24.09.2019	Communication officer	Employers' organization active at cantonal level and in the social and health care sector.
Social partner 2	26.09.2019	Officer responsible for migration	Interprofessional union advocating the interests and rights of agricultural employees. Active at regional level.
Social partner 3	15.11.2018	Person in charge of the migration commission at cantonal and federal levels	Interprofessional union active at a federal level.
Social partner 4	22.10.2019	General secretary	Federation of construction trades: umbrella employer organization active in the construction industry, and at cantonal level.
Social partner 5	04.11.2019	General secretary	Employer organization that represents skilled trade and crafts (e.g. carpentry, woodworking, marquetry, stone masonry). Active at cantonal level.
Social partner 6	08.11.2019	General secretary	Umbrella employers' organization, active at federal and cantonal levels.
Social partner 7	12.06.2019	General secretary	Interprofessional union.
Social partner 8	07.10.2019	Person in charge of migration policy and legal issues	Umbrella trade union organization active at national level.
Social partner 9	11.12.2019	Regional secretary	Interprofessional union active at national level.
Social partner 10	05.11.2019	Person in charge of migration issues at national level	Interprofessional union active at national level.
Social partner 11	12.12.2019	Trade union secretary	Interprofessional union active at a regional level:

Social partner 12	08.10.2019	Regional manager	Intersectoral employers' organization active at national level.
Social partner 13	17.12.2019	Manager of the legal service	Regional employers' organization.
Social partner 14	11.10.2019	Communication and information officer	Employers' umbrella organization, active at Cantonal level.
State representative 15	01.11.2019	Project officer	Office in charge of the integration of migrants.

8 United Kingdom

Tom Montgomery, Simone Baglioni and Francesca Caló

8.1 The environment for social partners in the UK

Understanding the issues of labour market integration in the UK through the prism of social partner organisations requires an appreciation of the points of consensus and contention regarding the broader context of employment in which these issues take place. In terms of headline figures there is a clear message from government that the labour market in the UK is robust by pointing towards the record numbers of people in employment (Office for National Statistics, 2019). Such optimism however is somewhat counterbalanced by voices, including those from the trade union movement regarding the quality of employment available to workers not only in terms of pay but also the security and sustainability of jobs (Goos and Manning, 2003; Pollert and Charwood, 2009; Shildrick et al, 2012; Gallie et al, 2017). This is a concern echoed by research conducted in the UK across the past decade which highlights the growth of non-standard employment such as zero hours contracts and working in the so-called 'gig economy' (Pyper and McGuinness, 2018; MacDonald and Giazitzoglu, 2019; Crouch, 2019).

This contention regarding the reality of the experiences of workers in the UK labour market also needs to be contextualised in terms of the background in which social partners are operating. First of all, we should clarify that when speaking of social partnership or social dialogue it is important to highlight that the UK has for some time been recognised as somewhat distinct from other European contexts with it being best understood as a liberal market economy (where bargaining takes place at the firm level) as opposed to a coordinate market economy (where bargaining takes place at the sector or national level) (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Moreover, trade unions in the UK have, in line with a number of other contexts, experience a steady decline in membership, particularly since the 1980s (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2018) and have been experiencing tighter regulation of industrial action, solidified by legislation enacted by the Conservative Government via the Trade Union Act 2016 (Bogg, 2016; Ewing and Hendy, 2016). Moreover, despite their being an ostensibly pro-business government being in place in the UK for the past decade, the relationship between these policymakers and industry has been placed under strain since the referendum to leave the European Union, with many employers being vocal in their opposition both to the decision to leave the EU and the process undertaken to negotiate Britain's exit with particular warnings issued about the potential threat posed to jobs in the UK. Although this provides a brief snapshot of a more complex picture, at this point we can begin to understand that the development of social partnership in the UK around issues of migrant and refugee labour market integration is taking place at a time of political polarisation.

Before we turn to understanding social partners broad policy positions towards labour market integration for migrants and refugees, we should first of all recognise that some social partners have dedicated campaigns, groups and personnel who focus on issues affecting these groups. Moreover, when we discuss labour market integration in the UK we must also consider those social partners stemming from civil society, such as those social enterprises which are dedicated to integration with a particular focus on employment (or entrepreneurship) and are either self-organised by or for migrants and refugees. In terms of other social partners in the

UK we find that employer representative organisations such as the Confederation of Business and Industry (CBI) have dedicated campaigns and advisory services to employers assist in building more diverse workplaces across the UK which encompasses the issue of ethnic diversity⁵⁵. Similar emphasis on the importance of diversity has also been expressed by other employer representative organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses who most recently have been heralding the contribution of migrant entrepreneurs to the economy and jobs growth⁵⁶. In terms of the trade union movement there are also examples where the representation of migrant workers is encompassed within the campaigns and office holders within trade union organisations. This is exemplified to some extent by the Trades Union Congress which has dedicated officers working in the area of migration, an annual TUC Black Workers' Conference that in recent years has focused on tackling the hostile environment for migrants, as well as specific campaigns focused on tackling discrimination such as their recent initiative to tackle the rise of the far right in the UK and the scapegoating of migrants and those from the Muslim community⁵⁷. Similar efforts have been taken by counterparts in the constituent nations of the UK such as the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) which holds annual rallies and marches against racism and which also holds an annual STUC Black Workers' Conference and dedicated STUC Black Worker's Committee that works to tackle racial discrimination, promote race equality and give voice to workers from a migrant and ethnic minority background⁵⁸.

When we turn to the specific positions taken by social partners in recent years regarding the UK context for labour market integration we find that there despite the contention that can often occur in terms of disputes over pay, conditions and regulations what we find is that there has been something of a consensus emerging regarding the government policies and discourses that have led to the UK being a hostile environment for migrants and refugees. One key example in the context of asylum in recent years has brought together more than two hundred organisations such as trade unions, employer organisations and civil society partners in a coalition to call on the UK Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work⁵⁹. Such efforts to influence the migration and asylum policy environment in the UK are not made in isolation with the CBI for example more recently calling for policymakers to 'shift the tone of the debate around immigration to focus on the positive benefits and send a signal that the UK is open for business and an attractive place to study, work and build a career' (CBI, 2018: 5). A similar sense of concern has been expressed by other industry representative organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses who have been critical of plans by the UK government for a post-Brexit immigration system with particular concerns focused on the introduction of salary caps for migrants⁶⁰. Moreover, some business representative organisations such as the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) have explicitly stated that the UK Government policy architecture has made the employment of migrants more difficult for employers in one of the main hubs of commerce in the country (LCCI, 2017). From the perspective of workers, the trade union movement has been similarly if not more vocally critical of the Conservative Government's approach to the labour market integration of

⁵⁵ <https://www.cbi.org.uk/our-campaigns/building-diverse-and-inclusive-workplaces/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/starting-over-migrant-entrepreneurship-in-scotland.html>

⁵⁷ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/campaigns/tackling-far-right>

⁵⁸ <http://www.stuc.org.uk/equalities/black-workers-committee>

⁵⁹ <http://lifttheban.co.uk/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/migration-advisory-committee-silent-on-the-concerns-of-small-businesses.html>

migrants and refugees. One example of their response to the UK policy context comes from the TUC in its call for the government to recognise that employment rights should be understood as human rights and that all workers regardless of migrant status not only hold such rights but should also be able to enforce them⁶¹. Moreover, more recently the TUC has issued its own strategy for managing migration in a way that protects migrant workers and promotes cohesion between workers from all backgrounds in the UK, with recommendations including greater enforcement against exploitative employers, tackling insecure work and focusing on creating better conditions for all workers, including migrants⁶².

Therefore, although social partners will perhaps approach the issue of employment more broadly from a position that advances the interests of their members (e.g. employers for industry representatives, workers for trade unions, employees and service users for social enterprises) we can begin to comprehend something of a consensus regarding the status quo of migration policy and approaches to integration thus far and the direction of travel by the UK Government.

8.2 Methods

The findings elaborated in this report are underpinned by a mixed methods approach through the analysis of responses from the UK to our online survey and analysis of interviews with key social partners from across the UK. Our findings explore the strategies and activities of social partners in the sphere of migration and asylum; highlight both the barriers and the enablers to labour market integration for migrants and refugees through the prism of social partners and explore the existence and potential for an effective social dialogue that can meet the needs of migrant and refugee workers in the UK.

We began the process of constructing our sample from the membership organisations of large umbrella bodies of social partners from across the UK. For example, trade unions which were part of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), chambers of commerce that are part of the UK network of chambers as well as head offices and constituent national (e.g. Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland) offices of business federations which represent employers from across a variety of sectors. Also included in our analysis are interviews with social enterprise organisations whose work places them at the centre of social dialogue in terms of the labour market integration of migrants and refugees. Once our sample was constructed we set out to contact – via an email invitation - key individuals within social partner organisations who could speak to the issues of labour market integration (e.g. equality officers, those with a remit for diversity in the workforce and in business) and then, as the recruitment process became more difficult we then began to contact those within these organisations with a more general remit. In sum, we contacted over 500 individuals located within social partner organisations in the UK, initially and primarily by email but in a number of cases followed up non-responses to email with phone calls. In total we collected thirty responses to our survey, although some respondents did not answer all of our questions. What the experience of sampling in the UK thus revealed to us was an unwillingness among a range of social partners across various

⁶¹ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/ensuring-migrants%E2%80%99-rights-are-respected-helps-ensure-fair-deal-all-workers>

⁶² <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/ManagingmigrationbetterforBritain.pdf>

sectors to engage in discussions relating to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees.

In the course of recruiting respondents, those declining to participate sometimes explained this in terms that researchers often encounter, i.e. a lack of time and availability. However, a frequent response by those we invited was that they had very little contact with migrants or refugees as part of their work and relatedly, they did not feel well positioned to answer questions on the issues confronting these groups in the labour market. The framing of this refusal to participate cut across organisation type, size and geographical location. What is interesting is that when we considered the findings from our survey, of those social partners who responded to the question: *'To what extent do you think your organisation would benefit from more education/guidance on the employment rights of migrants or refugees in your country?'* Social partners were consistent in their responses that they would indeed benefit from such education and guidance, for example in terms of migrants' rights half (50%) stated they 'would definitely benefit' while among the remaining respondents over a quarter (28%) answered that they would 'benefit somewhat' with the remaining fifth (22%) stating that they would 'benefit slightly'. Similarly, in terms of the rights of refugees, over half (56%) of the social partners we surveyed stated they 'would definitely benefit' while among the remaining respondents over a quarter (28%) answered that they would 'benefit somewhat' with under a fifth (16%) stating that they would 'benefit slightly'. What this suggests is that the difficulties we encountered in the recruitment of participants may speak to a lack of understanding among social partners about the protections available to migrants and refugees in the labour market and indeed this gap in knowledge emerges also in some of our interviews, with some participants recognising that there is perhaps an yet to be realised opportunity for social partners to encompass the issues of labour market integration into their strategies and activities.

Our survey findings are complemented by seventeen semi-structured interviews with social partners, some of whom were drawn from the same sample constructed via umbrella organisations as outlined above as well as some from referrals from other interviewees. The findings from our analysis stems from interviews with trade unionists active across different sectors (e.g. logistics, public sector, cross-sector), employer and sector representatives (e.g. chambers of commerce, representatives from the food and agricultural sector or care sector) and civil society social partners such as social enterprises (including those providing training and employment support to migrants and refugees and start-up support for establishing new businesses). Our analysis of the interviews involved eliciting key themes and issues that helped illuminate the challenges existing in the UK to build a functioning social dialogue that can help address the pressing concerns relating to the labour market integration of migrants and refugees.

8.3 The strategies and activities of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in the UK

In recent years the UK political context has been one frequently characterised as being a hostile environment for migrants and refugees (Squire, 2016). One aspect of that environment has been discourses and policies that have framed migrants and refugees as being a net cost to the economy and society in the UK. As a consequence, it was useful for us to explore with

our interviewees the extent to which such views may be present among social partner organisations given their specialist understanding of the realities of integration from the perspective of the labour market.

In terms of our survey findings in the UK, on the broader question of whether migrants and refugees were considered by our social partner respondents to be an asset or a burden to the country, we found generally favourable views towards both groups. In terms of migrants, almost half of respondents (47%) perceived this group to only be an asset to the country, with the majority (53%) describing migrants as more of an asset than a burden and none of the respondents regarding migrants as a burden. As for refugees, half (50%) of our social partner survey respondents perceived those from within this group to be only an asset to the UK, while almost a third (30%) viewed refugees as more of an asset than a burden. A small proportion (15%) of respondents considered refugees to be neither a burden nor an asset while a small minority (5%) considered those from within this group to be a burden. Moving from this broader question, we also elicited responses regarding the more specific issue of the skills levels of new arrivals to the UK. Among our social partner survey respondents there was a clear majority view among those who responded that migrants are perceived to bring skills with them to the country, with almost two thirds (62%) regarding migrants as being highly skilled, almost a third viewing migrants as being moderately skilled (32%) and a small minority who consider migrants to be low skilled (5%). Interestingly, the UK survey respondents held a similarly positive view of the skill levels of refugees, with almost half (47%) regarding those within this group to be highly skilled, with the remainder of respondents (53%) viewing refugees as moderately skilled and none viewing people from this group as being low skilled.

The survey responses outlined above overlapped somewhat from our analysis of interviews with social partners. Across each of our interviewees there was no indication that migrants and refugees were viewed by such organisations as a cost, in fact on the contrary, the view that migrants and refugees were an asset to the UK was a consistent theme elicited from across our interviews. This view was built upon first-hand experiences and a range of different strategies which reflected the scale and the key mission of the organisation. For example, in terms of those social partners stemming from civil society, i.e. social enterprises, it became clear that personal connections were the primary conduit for being able to target their activities at migrants and refugees. For one Scottish based social enterprise, our interviewee relied upon networking events as well as her connections with the refugee support ecosystem in the third sector to locate, in her words, people from a variety of diverse backgrounds. Another interviewee who was a director of a social enterprise engaged in offering bespoke support to professionals from a refugee background, explained that similar to the aforementioned organisation, referrals from refugee groups in the third sector was a key source for reaching her target group but that interestingly, word of mouth via previous refugees who had completed her programme of integration support was equally important. This emphasis on peer to peer networking to effectively channel resources and initiatives aimed at labour market integration to target groups was thus a common theme among these civil society social partners, including those whose mission was aimed not only at integration into employment but integration into the community of entrepreneurs, such as one social enterprise which provided support not only with (re-)entering the labour market but also with establishing start-up companies:

'In most cases its word of mouth. We try to do leaflets, we try to do use different avenues, such as social media and all that, a few of them will do, but the majority is word of mouth. Its

word of mouth they'll just come and recommend whatever we're doing to their friends' (Social Partner 17).

The intersection of labour market integration for migrants and refugees and business was one that provided different responses from that minority of our interviewees who were drawn from industry. For example, one interviewee from a business chamber in the south of England explained that his organisation and the businesses which comprised its membership had very little engagement with the issue of labour market integration and indicated that there were scarce strategies among regional level actors to devote resources to the issue of labour market integration, somewhat reflecting the difficulties we had in recruiting interviewees from similar multi-sector business representative organisations more broadly. Despite this, we did find that some actors representing sectors and employers were either already active on such issues or were keen to do more.

For example, one interviewee who was a sector representative organisation in the social care sector explained that her organisation had been involved in a number of initiatives aimed at attracting 'non-traditional' groups including migrants to the social care sector. She added that there was a recognition across the sector of the value that migrant workers bring and that she saw a lot of potential in working closely also with refugee support organisations who were experts in their client group to create pathways into the sector via strategies such as work placements. She added though that such programmes required investment and support from government and that although there had been efforts from government to offer some forms of support there were unrealistic expectations about what could be achieved in very short time frames. She added that there should also be a recognition from government that such support programmes need to include an element of pastoral care for newly arrived workers to properly integrate rather than simply focusing upon skills and qualifications. This perception of migrants and refugees being an important component of the labour market resonated with other interviewees from industry including one interviewee from a large business representative organisation who stressed the benefits of welcoming refugees and migrants to the UK and emphasising the contribution that these new arrivals can bring not only in terms of their youth and high level of skills, which he identified as being characteristic of these groups, but also the potential that they can bring culturally as well as economically by assisting growth through the establishment of new businesses, adding that he viewed the contribution of migrants as 'enormous'

'so whether its making sure we have population growth. If you're just looking at it analytically, they are younger, they are typically more qualified and they are more likely to start a business...they're providing new labour and often doing different things that provide different ideas, different cultures, which helps, there are numerous spill-over effects, whether that's societally or economically' (Social Partner 11)

Of course, these perceptions stand somewhat in contrast of a context of policies and discourses that have been shaping the political environment in the UK for migrants and refugees. Challenging the consequences of such an environment was one of the aspects that we could elicit from interviews with interviewees from the trade union movement. For example, some interviewees made reference to the broad coalition built around Lift the Ban and the efforts made to challenge asylum policy in the UK. Others, such as one London based interviewee from a public sector trade union organisation were keen to frame their integration strategies within the context of broader issues of anti-racism and xenophobia. This interviewee elaborated the dedicated initiatives that her union had been involved in to challenge what she

described as pre-conceived ideas of migrants and refugees among employers, adding that there was a need for greater enforcement of existing legislation and a move away from treating race relations legislation as a tick box exercise. This approach was mirrored by another trade union interviewee who held a dedicated brief for equality and who was also keen to emphasise the work of his union, in the logistics sector to provide support to refugees including at the point of need in places such as Calais but who also wanted to emphasise that this same group could play a key role in the British economy as many of the people within this category were highly skilled.

‘These people have got vital skills and could play a real key part and added value into society. There are so many gaping holes in our resourcing, whether it’s teaching, education and health and a lot of these people are really well skilled in a lot of areas that we’re crying out for resource’ (Social Partner 2)

Despite a recognition among trade union interviewees that migrants and refugees could be well qualified and have much to offer, most of these social partner organisations we interviewed expressed concern, such as one interviewee from a trade union organisation in the Greater London area, that most were to be found working in those sectors of the economy that were low paid and offering low skilled jobs. What this then led to was a number of trade union interviewees explaining that although migrants were joining trade unions, more could be done. This was reflected in an interviewee, a policy officer from a public sector based trade union, who explained that most migrants his trade union recruited tended to be in positions with minimal worker protections and were often in occupations that were not the key locus of their recruitment strategies. Another trade union representative also a policy officer but working across various sectors, explained that migrant workers aren’t joining unions, or more specifically, migrants and refugees are perhaps unaware of the benefits of joining a trade union and are perhaps missing out on the protections that they can offer. This is not to say that there were not trade union interviewees who felt it was possible to successfully recruit and organise migrants, with some interviewees, such as one official from a trade union organisation in the south west of England who was keen to point out the success that had been made by trade unionists in his area to recruit both migrants from within the EU and from Africa.

8.4 Barriers to the labour market integration identified by social partners

Part of understanding how social partners organisations in the UK engage with issues of labour market integration is to comprehend their perceptions of the barriers that migrants and refugees encounter. At earlier stages of the SIRIUS project we encountered some of these barriers, one for example being the availability of English language provision and this was a concern expressed by some of our social partner interviewees, including one trade union officer based in Wales who explained that his organisation has been involved in the delivery of ESOL courses in the workplace but that he was concerned they had been simply *‘plugging the gap’* in addressing a barrier through a programme that he felt was poorly engaged with by employers. The concern regarding language as a barrier, particularly for refugees was highlighted by another of our social partner respondents, this time from a sector body who explained that in recent years one of the pilot programmes that her organisation had been

involved in which targeted the integration of refugees into the social care sector had failed to get off the ground because of a lack of language provision.

Although language courses can prove a crucial form of support for some migrants and refugees, our findings earlier highlighted that social partners in the UK perceive those arriving to be skilled. Therefore, an equally important question is the extent to which these skills translate into the full realisation of the employment potential of these groups. According to the survey respondents, there is some cause for concern regarding this issue with no social partners perceiving this potential to be fully realised among migrants, over a third (37%) describing this potential as somewhat realised, over two fifths (42%) perceiving this potential as slightly realised and a fifth (21%) regarding this potential as not being realised at all. As for refugees, the picture painted by our respondents is even more pessimistic with respondents split between this group's potential being only slightly realised (58%) and not realised at all (42%).

Another barrier that emerged from our interviewees has been that of ensuring a match between the skills of the new arrivals, whether they be migrants or refugees and the sectoral pathways through which they gain employment. This was raised by interviewees from the trade union movement as well as civil society based social partners such as social enterprises who emphasised the skills and qualifications that these groups bring to the UK but are unable to convert these educational and vocational assets into appropriately skilled employment. One solution to this issue was identified by some social partners as being that of entrepreneurship with one interviewee from a social enterprise explaining that this had been a focus of their organisation when migrants were experiencing a mismatch between their skills and qualifications on the one hand and accessing suitable employment on the other hand. Another interviewee, from a business representative organisation described the barrier of skills recognition as a 'huge issue' and that as a result migrants and refugees had set up businesses as a way of gaining access to employment. Despite this being a consequence of a clear barrier, this same interviewee was nonetheless enthusiastic about the contribution that such new businesses could bring to the UK and particularly to those geographies where the rates of business start-ups has been traditionally very low.

Nevertheless, other barriers also came to the fore and our interviewee from the trade union organisation based in wales offered further elaboration as to why it had been difficult for migrants to become organised through trade union membership. He explained that there had been a great deal of frustration among trade union organisers in the area to gain access to workers in an Amazon warehouse where many migrants workers have been employed in what he described as insecure positions, adding that dedicating already scarce resources to such endeavours was more in the gift of larger trade unions as opposed to their smaller counterparts and that there was in his experience a real willingness to recruit migrants to the trade union movement. This issue resurfaced in another interview, this time with an official from a logistics sector trade union explained that his union doesn't get heavily involved in precarious work environments but when they have done so many migrants find themselves in casual labour situations and the union activism has often centred upon issuing guidance on dealing with racism in the workplace and cultivating an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

Concerns regarding the experience of migrants and refugees in non-standard forms of employment also emerged in our responses from social partners. For example, when we explored the specific issue of agency work and whether or not this could prove to be a positive or negative step towards a decent standard of living, almost half of our respondents in the UK

described this form of employment in negative terms (47%) with a third (33%) indicating that such experiences could be positive and the remainder perceiving such experiences as neither positive or negative.

In fact, among our trade union interviewees there was a consistent concern echoed about the prevalence of migrants working in sectors and occupations which are often labelled the 'gig economy' or are marked by frequent use of zero hour contracts (where workers are given no minimum number of working hours but are considered employed). As such, some trade unionists we interviewed explained that their campaign activity had in recent years focused on the insecurity that such arrangements created, with one interviewee explaining that it was particularly prevalent among migrant workers, a point echoed by another interviewee who described the short term nature of the work as a barrier to joining a union and another trade union interviewee adding that in his view the extent to which migrant and BAME workers more broadly were exposed to the insecurity created by zero hour contracts was underreported.

Despite efforts to capture and to challenge the insecurity that these interviewees viewed as a barrier to integration, others felt that more could be done to address the issue in a way that also brought migrant and native workers together. For example, one trade unionist interviewee who was otherwise positive about the efforts that have been made to ensure a strong degree of cohesion in his region between migrant and non-migrant workers he felt that not enough progress had been made. One issue that he viewed as crucial was that some migrant workers had not been on the receiving end of active recruitment strategies by the unions. He added that there was a real awareness of these issues at a regional level but it was not easy to address this at a more local level as the democratic structures of the union meant that branches would have to take up this issue more actively. The interviewee explained that he would like to see more migrants holding positions as shop stewards in workplaces and more delegates to trades councils and that in his view:

'there hasn't been enough progress in terms of the traditional leadership of some of the unions in being more pro-active to understand that having a majority of your agency workers or contract workers in a warehouse or a factory that are migrants and a majority of the permanent workers who have better pay and conditions are local is a long term problem' (Social Partner 4)

The view of our trade union interviewees was somewhat complemented by other social partners we interviewed, for example one of the interviewees from a business representative organisation whose work involved supporting the development of migrant entrepreneurship rejected the notion that the gig economy could be considered entrepreneurship and expressed concern that it had actually tarnished the image of becoming self-employed. Other interviewees such as one social partner from the social care sector expressed concern that the proliferation of zero hour contracts in the sector had acted perhaps as a deterrent for migrants who would otherwise consider it as an option. Indeed, she went further by explaining that when arranged appropriately work via zero hour contracts can be suitable for a worker as well as the employer. A more nuanced perspective of temporary and even seasonal work was also adopted by another interviewee representing employers in the food and agricultural sector who was keen to emphasise the potential opportunities that such arrangements can bring for migrants. This interviewee pointed towards the work of regulatory bodies ensuring standards for workers in the sectors where employers he represented were operating and added that temporary work was often a pathway for many of the migrants in his sectors that leads to

permanent employment. He explained that when migrants arrive they often have little savings and temporary work provides an immediate source of income to help them become established in the UK:

'The temp to perm [temporary to permanent] route is most commonly used. The temporary work kind of enables the migrant to come and pretty much access work straight away. So it provides a channel which isn't available. Many, we find, come to the UK virtually penniless or with very little money and cannot afford to spend three months looking for that permanent job and also they don't tend to have the English language levels that are often demanded. So temporary work and seasonal work provides a route in and an ability to demonstrate through their attitudes and their reliability and their performance in the role that they are good workers and route into permanent employment' (Social Partner 10)

Of course the issue of employment insecurity was not the only issue regarding integration to be discussed by our social partner interviewees. Another aspect which we elicited from the interviews was that of childcare, and in particular the affordability of formal childcare. This was a point elaborated in detail by some of our interviewees from the trade union movement. One interviewee, from a labour movement organisation that focuses on gender issues in employment explained that one of the barriers to using formal childcare for some migrant women had been that childcare provision was often not culturally sensitive and as such there was a need for more work to be done to ensure that the workforce involved in early years childcare provision was more diverse, indeed, in the extant literature on industrial relations in the UK, there is already some awareness that those organising workers can sometimes find issues that emerge through the intersectionality of race and gender to be challenging for trade unions when in fact it can offer opportunities for new organising strategies (Alberti, 2016). A related barrier that emerged was the expense created by formal childcare provision and this issue was reflected upon by one interviewee who highlighted some of the specific problems this had created for refugees who were seeking sustainable employment in the UK. She explained that a number of those workers who had been refugees were also single parents and thus the role of childcare was fundamental to their employment. She emphasised the importance of informal childcare in a context where more formal arrangements (through, for example, private provision) was expensive can be essential. She explained that there was a real gap in opportunities between those who had a familial network to help with childcare and those who did not, adding that in terms of refugees the policy to disperse this group across the UK had meant disruption for those social networks that may be able to offer that type of support and therefore part of her work has been to help establish networks of support for those newly arriving.

'if you're established in the UK or you've got several generations of family in the UK, you're more likely to have a network for childcare. If you're a migrant to the UK, even if you've been here for twenty or thirty years, you're not going to have the same network. Your network is more likely to be a network of friends than it is relatives. If you're going to get formal childcare, it's very, very costly, it's set hours; registered childminders aren't available to do shift work or start earlier in the morning or late at night. They tend to have their own families and have a routine and you won't be able to just call on them from one day to another so therefore you're forced to use a network of informal childcare...if you're a recent migrant or you've come as an asylum seeker for example then you're not going to have those networks at all' (Social Partner 1)

The issue of childcare provision was not alone among the barriers we explored with our interviewees and it became clear that the adequacy and affordability of transport and housing were viewed by interviewees as problematic for migrant and refugee workers in the UK. Some interviewees from the trade union movement were concerned that migrant workers involved in shift work were often experiencing much lengthier travel time due to reliance on poor public transport systems. This included one trade union official based in Greater London who that although there were a sizeable number of migrants working in the social care sector many of the care homes and retirement areas are based in the outlying areas and this is made difficult for these workers as in his view public transport provision outside of the central urban areas is very poor and unreliable. This was somewhat echoed by another interviewee from a business chamber in the south of England who explained that outside of the urban centres the issue of effective public transport was very real and one that affected migrant and non-migrant workers:

'It's difficult because I'm trying to promote the place as a great place to do business and I'm saying that connectivity down here is poor. Infrastructure, especially physical infrastructure is poor' (Social Partner 9)

This was somewhat corroborated by interviewees with those representatives from industry including one interviewee who explained that the employers he represented have had to provide transport to work because of the lack of effective public transport, particularly to meet the needs of shift workers. Meeting basic needs effectively was thus a consistent barrier raised by our social partner interviewees and this also extended to the issue of affordable housing, with interviewees from industry and the trade union movement raising concerns that this was an issue that required action if effective integration of migrants and refugees is to be achieved. Some social partners expressed deep concerns regarding the issue of housing by highlighting not only at the affordability of housing but also the resurgence of 'rogue landlords' and relatedly, interviewees, including one from a trade union organisation based in the south west of England drew attention to the rising number of homelessness in the region with examples extending to the extreme including cases where migrant workers had been found to be living in tents.

8.5 Enablers to labour market integration identified by social partners

In terms of those factors which act as enablers for the labour market integration of migrants and refugees it was clear that resolving some of the barriers explored in the previous section through not only new policies of investment (e.g. in public transport and affordable housing) but also in terms of pay levels and conditions for workers (as well as their enforcement) were the key priorities among trade union interviewees. Indeed, among this same cohort of our participants there was a consistent response that such approaches would benefit not only migrants and refugees in the labour market but also native workers and that such a strategy could only serve to foster better integration between these groups.

In terms of other social partner responses to overcoming barriers to integration there were some examples – such as one social enterprise – that provided childcare to those undertaking training as one way to mitigate the problems caused by the lack of affordable formal provision. Another interviewee from an employer representative organisation explained that to overcome

the problem of a lack of affordable housing, their member organisations had offered employees accommodation as part of their employment package. This same interviewee explained this development as part of the broader objectives of his organisation in attracting workers to the UK and he emphasised the crucial role migrant workers played in sustaining the food and agricultural sector in the UK, adding that there was high demand for such workers and elaborating upon efforts made by some member organisations who were employers that had been engaged in a pilot scheme to extend visas agricultural workers from Ukraine and Moldova. He added that his organisation played a central role in these sectors to ensure responsible recruitment practices and had been working in partnership with the IOM as well as producing a toolkit for employers, in coordination with major UK supermarkets. Intense effort to attract migrant workers was also elicited from another interviewee, this time a representative from the social care sector explained that the social care sector was one where there were enormous opportunities for migrants and refugees. She added that there was already a sizeable proportion of the social care workforce that is from a migrant background and that there are approximately over 100,000 vacancies in the social care sector in any given day. The interviewee was keen to emphasise that employers were very open to welcoming migrants and refugees into the workforce, and although she recognised that opportunities for advancement in the sector were low, there were other potential routes for more skilled migrants given that there is, what she described as a crisis, in the supply of qualified nurses working in a social care setting in the UK.

Before proceeding we should also reflect upon the fact that among the respondents to our survey, there were concerns identified regarding the policy architecture that can assist in matching migrants and refugees to available roles. Among those who responded to the question of whether current policies are effective in filling skills shortages in some sectors, none indicated that these policies are effective, with more than half (56%) describing these as not effective at all, almost a third (31%) regarding policies as only slightly effective and the remaining respondents (13%) indicating that they were not aware of such policies.

Gaining a foothold in the UK labour market via certain sectors which are experiencing consistent demand for workers obviously presents an opportunity for migrants and refugees to become engaged and familiar with the procedures and process of the employment landscape and to some extent this enables labour market integration. However, for some of our other interviewees, integration was also characterised by the types of protections available through collective organisation in the workplace and so for most of our trade union interviewees the issue of recruitment was focused upon diversifying not only workplaces but also the trade union membership. This issue is one which connects both with our own findings in previous Work Packages in the SIRIUS project and with existing research on the need for trade unions to be more inclusive with some suggesting that success will involve the need to: 'acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities emerging from the interlocking of the contractual and migrant status; improve the existing educational tools to promote the self-determination of their migrant constituencies; and to expand the range of coalitions in the community beyond a persisting workplace focus' (Alberti et al, 2013: 89)

In our interviews, one trade union official, echoing views expressed from other trade unions we interviewed, expressed concerns over the levels of trade union membership in some of the very sectors identified above. He explained that many migrants in his region in the south west of England had found work in the distribution centres of large stores and supermarket chains, adding that the NHS and the social care sector (particularly private care homes for the elderly)

had large migrant workforces although the latter sector (social care) had a reputation for poor working practices and was very poorly organised in terms of the trade union movement. Nevertheless, this same interviewee indicated a degree of optimism about what he regarded as the 'success story' in his local area, adding that there had been a real effort by various stakeholders in the region in partnership with the trade union movement to welcome migrants including through a festival that focused around food, music and politics. Such approaches were in his view conducive to building good relations between migrant and non-migrant workers and that this was all the more important given that up until recently the area had low levels of diversity. The aspect of building cohesion between workers who were migrants and those who were not emerged in a number of our interviews and offered interviewees the opportunity to highlight initiatives that had been taken to combat discrimination and xenophobia. This included an example from one trade union interviewee based in Wales who described what is perhaps the frontline of combatting discrimination and fostering integration in the workplace:

'we've been running a campaign over the last six months or so on tackling the rise of the far right in the workplace and putting together toolkits and educational materials for reps in those workplaces to be able to engage in difficult conversations about what might be happening, but also to recognise the symbolism that's employed, the talking points that people would employ if they are trying to wake these things up in the workplace. That's at a fairly early stage but this the latest of a long history of anti-racism stuff that we've done over the years...when we hold workshops with reps or we do events where reps come along, because we're drawing from such a wide pool from hugely different workplaces you can definitely get the sense from some of the reps in the manufacturing sector and the logistics sector, when these sessions are happening at our workshops, they recognise the issues that are being spoken about there in a way that someone from the senior civil service doesn't have as many explicit workplace examples' (Social Partner 5)

Examples of integration through trade unions was also raised by other interviewees including one official who highlighted that even if migrants were working in more precarious positions strategies such as those undertaken by her union to focus a recruitment drive on those working in services outsourced by the public sector which had yielded results including the improvement of conditions as well as the return of some roles to being directly employed by the public sector. This perspective of employment in the public sector offering better opportunities for migrant workers was elaborated by another interviewee, a trade union policy official in the public sector who explained that work in the sector offered good protections (providing an example of free immigration advice for her members) but she ascribed this to the union density in the sector and in her view that can generate a 'virtuous circle' for migrant workers to be attracted to a sector with good conditions, become union members which have networks they can join and advance the rights and protections for migrant and non-migrant workers alike. This interviewee was keen to stress the role of her union in improving conditions for migrants and refugees through educating their membership made up of mainly front line public sector workers about the law given that some staff had felt that they had become indirectly entangled with moves by central government towards limiting access for migrants and refugees to vital public services.

'We provide advice to our branches around some of these difficult issues brought up by the hostile environment. We've issued advice to health branches around charging and I.D.

checks...our conference for several years now has voted to condemn the hostile environment and asked for it to be completely dismantled. Because it's inappropriate for public service workers to be asked to do this...and it destroys the bond of trust' (Social Partner 6)

Related to union membership are also the initiatives that migrant workers can access and the same trade union officer explained that her union were committed to providing training opportunities that also extended to initiatives such as re-entering education to gain further qualifications. Indeed, this focus on learning was extolled by most trade union interviewees whose organisations were connected through union learning programmes that offered a range of training opportunities that migrant workers could access, a point explored by one interviewee who explained that his union also focused training on workplace representatives and the organisation were keen to expand the number of migrant workers engaged in such programmes, which in turn would benefit not only the individual but also would ensure that union representatives reflect the diversity of workforces across different sub-sectors of the economy. The issue of improving integration by ensuring diversity in different parts of the economy was not confined to trade union interviewees. For example, social enterprise interviewees were keen to highlight the role that they played in helping companies to diversify their workforces and understand the benefits that can be reaped by creating an environment which recognises the value that having people from different cultural backgrounds can bring. For example, one social enterprise explained that part of their role was to challenge the discourse around refugees in the UK, to extend this to the corporate world and to communicate the contribution that refugees whom they supported that were starting new business brought to their communities as well as the economy. This was echoed by another interviewee from a business representative organisation that worked across different sectors who described part of his main activities in enabling the integration of migrants and refugees was to work more closely in recent years with policymakers and the business community to find ways to increase the diversity of the ecosystem of support for entrepreneurship.

8.6 Social partners, social dialogue, policymaking and labour market integration

Before embarking on any firm conclusions on the extent of social partnership in the UK in the field of labour market integration, a first step is to comprehend the relationships between different actors and points of collective action or partnership as they engage in issues affecting migrants and refugees. It became clear during the course of our interviews that working alongside or in tandem with other organisations was a common experience with trade unions obviously part of a broader labour movement that involves various alliances but also is brought together through more formal structures such as the Trades Union Congress at the UK level as well as similar structures in the constituent nations of the UK such as the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Welsh Trades Union Congress. Such structures are mirrored to some extent in the private employer sector with organisations such as the Confederation of Business and Industry and the Federation of Small Businesses. Again such entities are replicated for our civil society social partners with membership of Social Enterprise UK⁶³ or organisations operating within the specific context of a constituent nation such as Senscot⁶⁴ in Scotland. These organisations provide an important component for social dialogue but a key interest for

⁶³ <https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/>

⁶⁴ <https://senscot.net/>

us was the extent to which there was dialogue and working relationships that cut across the organisational types of social partners.

What our interviews uncovered was that there was indeed evidence that social partners did collaborate with others external to their particular organisational umbrellas, this sometimes involved working with policymakers as we shall explore in more detail below, but also building bilateral relationships around issues of integration as well as becoming involved in broader coalitions that could impact upon the direction of migration policy. Examples of these included trade unions working with anti-racism organisations such as Hope Not Hate⁶⁵ in order to combat discrimination against migrants and refugees as well as with community activists engaged in supporting migrant communities. Some trade union interviewees indicated that although some progress had been made they were keen to develop better relationships with migrant and refugee organisations and a potential gap was somewhat alluded to by one interviewee from a social enterprise who explained that she had no really existing relationships with the trade union movement and indicated that she was unsure which benefits could be gained from working in partnership with them.

Other interviewees, such as one policy officer from a social care sector body advised us that she did have a working relationship with unions, pointing to her advocacy work in recent years had been via a coalition of organisations that had come together (including NHS employers and unions) that aims to protect working conditions for staff as well as ensuring the best quality of services for patients and service users and which had been active in raising alarm about potential migration policies post-Brexit which could impact upon service delivery in the area of social care:

‘within the sector we are heavily reliant upon migrant workers and of course at the moment all the implications from Brexit and potential changes in migration...our fear and concern is anything that would impact upon workforce numbers because the demand is constantly rising and projected figures up until 2035 if services stayed at the same level, we’re expecting to recruit another 580,000 job roles and so obviously anything that impacts the taking away of the services of migrant workers is going to have a catastrophic effect on the way social care is provided in England’. (Social Partner 13)

This type of approach is somewhat reflective of the unique context of the public sector, as we explored earlier in this report. Nevertheless, this same interviewee felt that there were gaps in knowledge and expertise that could be bridged by closer working relationships with migrant and refugee specific organisations that could foster better integration strategies. Others too indicated that in terms of building alliances across organisations such as employers and trade unions they were having some success such as one interviewee who indicated that the issues created by Brexit had actually brought together some of these different voices to express concerns regarding the impact on employers and workers.

Across our interviews with social partners in the UK, regardless of their mission or the members they represented, most voiced concerns regarding the migration policies and discourses pursued at the UK Government level in recent years. This ranged from social enterprises perceiving the context to be obstructive and one which they had to dedicate resources to help people navigate, to those in employer organisations that voiced discontent with both the current migration policy architecture and an uncertainty surrounding the potential

⁶⁵ <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/>

future policies post-Brexit as well as trade unions who were highly critical of a system which most referred to as a hostile environment for migrants and refugees alike and therefore our findings in this case somewhat resonates with the public statements made by social partners in the UK in their criticism of migration policy.

Somewhat relatedly, when we turn to the more specific labour market impact of a hostile environment for migrants and refugees, we can first consider responses to the question in our survey regarding the extent to which the employment rights of migrants and refugees are respected by employers where we detect some difference in the perceived treatment of either group with social partners regarding the rights of migrants being mainly somewhat (44%) or slightly (44%) respected with the remainder (12%) viewing the employment rights of migrants not being respected at all. However, more than a third (38%) of the same respondents indicated that the employment rights of refugees are not respected at all, with the remaining responses split between around a third (31%) perceiving these rights to be somewhat respected and around another third (31%) stating these rights to be only slightly respected.

When we turn to the subject of opportunities for social dialogue to make an impact on policymaking in the field of labour market integration that includes the enactment and the enforcement of employment rights, our findings suggest we must also consider other dimensions beyond purely the discourse and legislation stemming from Westminster. In fact, when we again consider responses to our survey, we find that social partners are split about which levels of governance strategies for labour market integration of migrants and refugees should be focused, with most (45%) indicating that such strategies should be prioritised at national level, while a third (33%) regarding the European level as the most important and just over a fifth (22%) prioritising a sector level strategy.

Furthermore, a number of our interviewees made reference to their activities at both the sub-national and the international levels which indicate that while having to consider the scarcity of resources, when there are potential opportunities to make an impact there is evidence of a real willingness to engage on integration issues. For example, one interviewee from a business representative organisation described there being numerous problems being caused because of the rhetoric stemming from UK government with political discourse affecting both employees and business owners. He added that his organisation frequently responded to calls for evidence from policymakers but explained that in his view there were greater similarities between the context of Scotland and Wales in comparison to England and policymakers at Westminster where the political culture is different. This view was echoed by another interviewee, this time a trade union policy officer based in Wales who highlighted the Scottish context as one that was in his view at a somewhat more advanced stage of integration approaches in comparison to Wales. He explained that his organisation was supportive of efforts by the Welsh Government to designate Wales as a 'nation of sanctuary' for refugees⁶⁶ although despite welcoming the different discourse he expressed scepticism that policymakers were following up their rhetoric by implementing policies that would have a tangible impact on the everyday lives of refugees.

The recognition of divergence and opportunities across devolved government in the UK was recognised by another interviewee, a trade union policy officer based in London who also indicated that her union was fully aware of the differences across the landscape on the issue of integration and pointed to the fact that her union in Scotland is devolved but that there is

⁶⁶ <https://gov.wales/refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan-nation-sanctuary>

coordination across the different levels and that successful initiatives at the devolved level have been used to inform strategies taken by her and her colleagues at the UK level. This differentiation along different levels of governance was not limited to the devolved administrations of the UK with some interviewees pointing to their relationships with local authorities. In fact one interviewee, trade union official with a logistics sector trade union viewed efforts to challenge migration policy at the UK level as a thankless task and instead indicated that resources were better allocated to those policymakers who were more receptive and in the case of his union pointed towards a positive working relationship with the office of the Mayor of London⁶⁷. Other interviewees from the trade union movement who operated at a regional level also indicated that, while their efforts were not always successful, they too had good working relationships with local authorities and local policymakers. In fact in some cases the ability of social partners to engage in influencing and working in partnership with different departments of government became apparent with examples of employer organisations working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions⁶⁸, DEFRA⁶⁹ as well as regulatory agencies which combat labour exploitation. Therefore, in terms of collaborations and partnerships there does exist an ecosystem in which issues of labour market integration that can bring different social partners together, however this is sometimes limited to particular opportunities initiatives or sector specific issues.

Despite eliciting from our interviews a degree of consensus regarding the problematic nature of migration and asylum policies for labour market integration, what we cannot do is point to a comprehensive and coordinated response that consistently cuts across social partner organisational types and sectors. This is perhaps unsurprising if we reconsider the introduction to this report and the literature on social partnership which identified the UK context as one which indeed lacks coordination (Hall and Soskice, 2001), particularly in comparison to other labour market configurations across Europe and to some extent mirrors concerns noted elsewhere in the industrial relations literature in the UK that despite trade unions being well placed to represent workers and provide crucial support, links between the trade union movement and community based organisations that support migrants and refugees are weak (Holgate et al, 2012). Moreover, our findings also connect with those findings in the literature which suggests that the industrial relations regime can explain the gap in unionisation between migrant and non-migrant workers (Kranendonk et al, 2016). Nevertheless, despite being unsurprising, what our findings indicate is something of a hidden cost of the absence of a culture of coordination and social dialogue: namely a missed opportunity to provide a multi-actor and cross-sectoral response to policy failure in the field of labour market integration of migrants and refugees.

8.7 Conclusions

To draw conclusions from our findings involves reminding ourselves of the context set out earlier in this report. Namely, that when we discuss issues at the intersection of migration and asylum on the one hand and employment on the other in the UK requires an appreciation of the broader currents which shape the environment. Firstly, the labour market in the UK has,

⁶⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/mayor-london>

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

⁶⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

alongside similar economies in recent years undergone transformation towards polarisation in terms of the quality of employment opportunities (Goos and Manning, 2003; Pollert and Charlwood, 2009; Shildrick et al, 2012; Gallie et al, 2017). Secondly, the political context in the UK for both migrants and refugees has been driven by a policy architecture that extant research has revealed to be a hostile environment (Stewart and Mulvey, 2014; Squire, 2016). Thirdly, in terms of understanding social dialogue we need to appreciate that this has for some time been understood in the UK through the prism of a liberal market economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001) and one where the types of norms and institutions we may observe in other European countries where such dialogue is coordinated, is somewhat scarce if not absent across sectors of the economy.

The context set out above may give the impression that the impact of social partners in the labour market integration of migrants and refugees in the UK is minimal, both in the functions they currently perform and the potential role they may play in the future. Instead, our findings present a more nuanced perspective and one that highlights an opportunity for new dialogue to emerge from organisations that are strategically well positioned in the UK economy. For example, contrary to the discourses and policies that have come to construct the hostile environment for migrants and refugees in the UK, social partners indicated to us that they perceive those arriving in the country to be assets rather than burdens and possessing skills that can contribute to the vibrancy of the economy and society. What is striking however is that our findings from both survey respondents and interviewees indicate that despite migrants and refugees offering clear potential, the opportunities for them to do so are perceived as being limited, with most of the social partners who participated in our study pointing towards the failure of existing policies as one of the key factors inhibiting the realisation of this potential.

Of course our focus as well was on the role that social partners themselves can play in assisting with the integration of migrants and refugees into the UK labour market. We found that the social partners we interviewed were engaged in initiatives that can have clear benefits for those newly arriving in the country, with efforts from trade unions to combat xenophobia in the workplace and the community, dedicated initiatives from some employer representative organisations and social partners to help migrants and refugees either find employment in sectors where there are shortages or embark on entrepreneurship which was often accompanied by a recognition of the need for a holistic approach to integration that understood the importance of addressing issues that can be crucial determining factors for successful integration such as affordable housing, childcare and public transport. Despite some consensus evident around such issues among our participants, there was also some discord including around the impact of temporary employment, with some social partners indicating that non-standard forms of employment were creating potential issues for integration while others suggesting that such roles offered a pathway to more sustainable work.

The building of consensus of any kind does of course involve dialogue and although there were indications from our findings that social partners in the UK do engage in dialogue with other organisations and with policymakers, these efforts often lack cross-sectoral initiatives that act in coordination to directly address the needs of migrant and refugee workers in the UK. What this represents is a gap in the architecture of labour market integration for migrants and asylum seekers in the UK and perhaps an opportunity for social partners to recognise on the specific issue of labour market integration they are well positioned to build upon their

existing knowledge in this area to act in concert and engage policymakers at different levels of governance in the UK to help realise the potential that migrants and refugees can offer.

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Annex I - List of interviewees with social partners

Participant	Date	Role	Social Partner Type
Social Partner 1	08/11/19	Senior Official	Trade union
Social Partner 2	19/11/19	Equality Official	Trade union
Social Partner 3	10/12/19	Regional Official	Trade union
Social Partner 4	10/12/19	Regional Official	Trade union
Social Partner 5	17/12/19	Policy Officer	Trade union
Social Partner 6	09/01/20	Policy Officer	Trade union
Social Partner 7	01/11/18	Policy Officer	Trade union
Social Partner 8	18/12/18	Policy Officer	Trade union
Social Partner 9	21/10/19	Chief Executive	Employers' organisation
Social Partner 10	19/12/19	Chief Executive	Employers' organisation
Social Partner 11	20/11/19	Senior Policy Advisor	Business Federation
Social Partner 12	17/12/18	Policy Officer	Labour NGO
Social Partner 13	16/12/19	Programme Manager	Sector Representative
Social Partner 14	08/05/19	Founder	Social Enterprise
Social Partner 15	24/05/19	Director	Social Enterprise
Social Partner 16	08/04/19	Director	Social Enterprise
Social Partner 17	17/04/19	Director	Social Enterprise