

## Economic Policy Positions of the CCI-Organisation

# INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES INTO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT: Dismantling hurdles, shaping perspectives

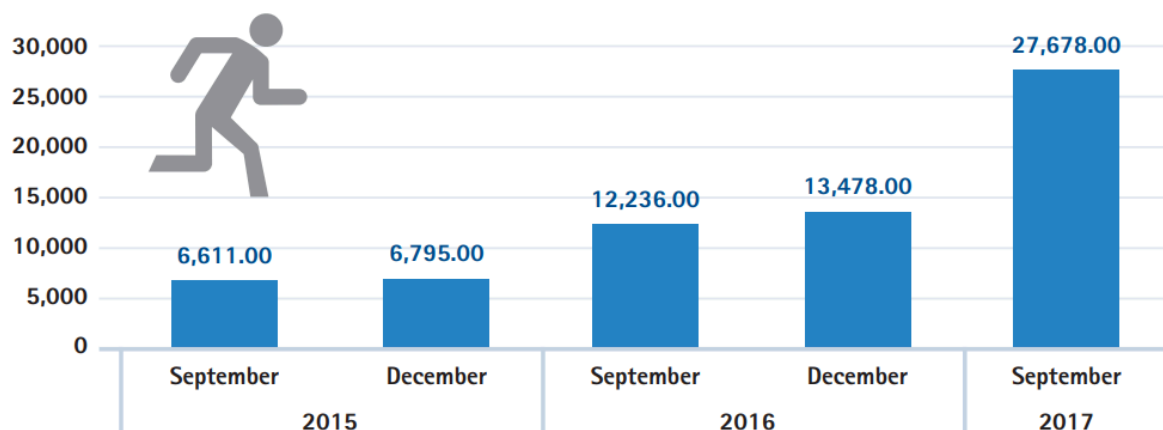
The economic policy positions of the CCI-Organisation (WiPos) show politicians concrete fields of action for good economic policy. The WiPos reflect the coordinated opinion of the CCIs and their members. The DIHK Executive Board adopted this position on November 27, 2018.

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## INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES INTO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT: Dismantling hurdles, shaping perspectives

The integration of refugees into training and employment is a long-term task. The main obstacles in practice are a lack of language skills and qualifications. Integration requires, in particular, rapid access to integration, language and qualification services, early identification of skills and reliable framework conditions for companies. Job-related language courses (e.g. extra-occupational) are also decisive for successful vocational training.

### Number of Training Places for Refugees in Germany



The following guidelines should determine economic policy action:

- Support for labor market integration
- Helping young refugees with placement in training
- Mediation for refugees over 25 years of age in qualification offers
- Early identification of skills and coordination of tools

## Support for labor market integration

**Work as the key to integration:** Since 2015, a total of around 1.5 million refugees have been registered in Germany. Investments in education and language are important for the long-term integration of these people into the labor market. In perspective, this can also contribute to securing skilled workers in companies. Failed integration can lead to higher financial burdens for national budgets in the long-term. Above all, companies need support with legal and practical questions concerning labor market access and company integration. Legal and planning uncertainty with regard to the perspective of a refugee to stay in Germany, as well as bureaucratic hurdles for companies when recruiting new staff, make the path to training and employment more difficult.

**What to do:** The learning of professional qualifications and professional language should go hand in hand. Training, further education and information offers are also necessary – here IHKs can provide support. In addition, companies need the best possible support for the integration of refugees. It is also necessary to further reduce bureaucratic hurdles to access to the labor market – including the nationwide suspension of the priority check.

## Helping young refugees with placement in training

**Integration in education is a challenging task:** Over a quarter of the refugees are of a trainable age. Numerous companies are committed to integrating refugees into education. The basic prerequisite for this is a good knowledge of the German language. In addition, the legal framework must be designed in such a way that the companies have clarity at an early stage as to the prospects of refugees staying. Only then can they contribute to a rapid transition to training and employment. This applies in particular to the implementation of the 3+2 rule. As confirmed by the current coalition agreement, this should be applied uniformly throughout Germany. Nevertheless, integration into training cannot succeed overnight, but requires a major effort on all sides. Refugees come from countries where dual education is unknown. Many therefore initially strive to study or, for financial reasons, to work as helpers.

**What needs to be done:** In the medium and long term, the integration of refugees into training offers companies the opportunity to recruit skilled workers. Young refugees and their parents should therefore be made aware of the advantages of the dual system and possible training occupations, as well as subsequent upgrading training. After the linguistic qualification, entry qualifications (EQ) are particularly well suited to introducing young refugees to training. EQs and training should, where necessary, be combined with parallel language courses. A good knowledge of German is necessary even at the start of an apprenticeship. Language level B1 according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages is the recommended minimum level. For more demanding occupations, B2 is the prerequisite to ensure effective learning in companies and vocational schools right from the start. At the end of the training young refugees need the necessary

language skills to pass their final examination and take up appropriate employment. Schools and vocational schools are responsible for language teaching. Companies can help, especially when it comes to language skills related to training and the labor market. The IHKs advise and support their member companies.

### **Mediation for refugees over 25 years of age in qualification offers**

**Potential for securing skilled labor is also created by young immigrants who have fled to Germany and for whom classical training in a company or vocational school is no longer an option for reasons of age.** Some of these young adults over the age of 25 bring with them a wide range of practical experience and a variety of skills. In order to make this potential usable both individually and for companies, suitable qualification offers for subsequent labor market entrance are important.

**What needs to be done:** Refugees of over 25 years of age as a rule should receive appropriate and practice-oriented offers for qualification. The IHKs can support this with partial qualifications, for example. IHK further training courses may also be considered if the relevant pre-qualifications have been obtained.

### **Early identification of skills and coordination of tools**

**Large differences in skill levels:** Experience in recent years has shown that only a small proportion of the refugees have skills such as vocational training or studies that allow them to integrate quickly into the labor market. In addition, there are sometimes considerable deficits in basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic. This shows that great efforts are needed to qualify a large number of refugees. Early identification of the occupational skills of refugees is an important prerequisite for their integration into the labor market. At present, there are a large number of procedures for recording skills which are difficult for companies to assess.

**What needs to be done:** For all refugees of working age with the prospect of staying in the country, comprehensive offers for the early acquisition of skills are necessary. A skill assessment should already be carried out at the reception centers. The parties involved, such as the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of skilled crafts, should coordinate the existing instruments and their own current skill recording systems, examine them for their suitability for practical use and further develop them. For those who have a formal vocational qualification from abroad, the CCI FOSA will make its contribution as the central body for the recognition of qualifications from the CCI sector. The possibility of recognising existing professional qualifications even without existing documents should be made more widely known.

The CCI-Organisation contributes to this, among other ways, by means of:

- CCI Action Programme "Arriving in Germany - Together we support integration"
- "Companies integrate refugees" NETWORK together with BMWi
- DIHK Guide "Integration of Refugees into Training and Employment"
- "Offering Perspectives - How refugee women can start their careers in your company"  
A practical aid for DIHK and BMFSFJ companies
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