MaWIC

INTEGRATION THROUGH WORK

Recommendations to support
the integration of migrants
in the workplace

Integration through Work –
Recommendations to Support the Integration of Migrants in the Workplace

The integration of migrants into society has become the focus of attention, particularly in the context of the migration movements of refugees since 2015. In addition, globalisation, the European integration process, the EU's eastward expansion, and past and current migration processes have lead to ethnic diversity in society and on the labour market (cf. Adenauer and Geiger, 37). At the same time, various sectors are struggling with the lack of skilled workers, which is – among other things – counteracted by recruitment abroad.

Whether migration is driven by globalisation, flight or recruitment, migrants must be integrated into society. Here, work is a cornerstone for the successful integration of migrants. It enables their placement in society. By taking up work, a person is given a position, rights and access to social opportunities (cf. Esser 2001, 9–10), which in turn strengthens other forms of integration such as interaction[1], culturation[2] and identification[3] (cf. Esser 2001, 8–12).

Integration in the workplace is therefore an important part of social integration and needs special attention. It does not end with signing an employment contract. Rather, integration in the workplace is an interactive and continuous process that requires the efforts of all parties involved: the migrants or refugees, the employers and staff, and in some

[1] Interaction: social action between actors, through which mutual orientation is created and relations are formed. This includes mental co-orientation, symbolic interaction, communication and social relations (cf. Esser 2001, 10–11).

[2] Culturation: the process of acquiring knowledge, expertise and linguistic skills that individuals must develop (as a kind of [human] capital) in order to be able to pursue their own interests in a society and to attain respected positions (cf. Esser 2001, 8–9).

[3] Identification: with a social system, i.e., to see oneself as a unit with a social system and to become identical with it; expressed, for example, through national pride or "we feeling" (Esser 2001, 12).

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WHETHER MIGRATION IS DRIVEN BY GLOBALISATION, FLIGHT OR RECRUITMENT, MIGRANTS MUST BE INTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY.

areas of work even the clients of the employer. In addition to very practical and legal aspects, intercultural and social processes must be considered in workplace integration. Workplace integration is a key element for the sustainability of the integration process in society and a challenge for employers, migrants, refugees and colleagues.

Within the framework of the project "MaWIC – Facilitating Migration and Workplace Integration with Qualified Personnel and Concepts", co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, the partner institutions have pursued five different objectives over the three-year project period (2017–2020) to facilitate the integration process at the workplace. A role profile for an integration coach (MaWI Coach) was drawn up for the facilitation of integration in the workplace. In a next step, a training course was developed and conducted in the first round. The MaWI Coach training course focuses on important factors of integration in companies and equips participants with the necessary tools to moderate integration in their company between superiors, colleagues and migrants. The two main focuses of the training are intercultural awareness and the implementation of intercultural learning in the workplace, as well as the basics of coaching and its implementation (for more information, see www.project-mawic.eu).

Two further results of the project are a workplace integration concept, which addresses the employers' side of the integration process with suitable tools, and a migration and integration support concept for the target group of migrants, into which supporting materials are also integrated. A final goal of the project is the development of the recommendations for policy and practice presented here. In several surveys, employers, migrants, colleagues and social partners in their companies in the logistics sector, the automotive industry and the care sector in the five partner countries Germany, Finland, Sweden, Spain and Hungary were questioned about workplace integration. The results of these analyses reveal numerous factors that can influence the integration process at the workplace[4]. From these factors, the following recommendations for action were developed, which are geared to practical application in everyday working life. They are instructive for practitioners as well as for policy makers and social partners.

Two occupational profiles have emerged as examples in the analyses, in which there is a great shortage of skilled workers and in which many migrants work. On the one hand, it is about personnel transport in Finland and, on the other hand, about care for the elderly in Germany. These two occupational profiles will be examined in more detail below.

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[4] The factors were developed mainly on the reference example of care for the elderly in Germany.

3

The bus industry in Finland

The bus is one of the most important public transport means in Finland, as it accounts for 60–85% of the country's public transport, depending on the area. There are 360 million passengers per year throughout the country. The profession of bus driver is a respected one in Finland: the drivers' salary is good and the responsibility is great. Bus drivers wear uniforms with ties and, traditionally, the profession is comparable to that of civil servants.

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DESPITE MANY YEARS OF INTEGRATION EXPERIENCE, THE FIELD OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN BUS AND COACH COMPANIES REVEALS A NEED FOR ACTION.

With the approaching 21st century, a shortage of bus drivers has arisen for various reasons, such as the growing number of highly educated people, economic growth and the spread of information technology (which created an incentive for young people to work in new areas of information technology). As a result, the average age of bus drivers increased, and a shortage of drivers developed, which is still growing today. As a solution to this shortage of skilled workers, migrants living in the Helsinki metropolitan area were employed. Many immigrants who came to Finland had a driving licence and experience in the transport sector from their country of origin and it was attractive for them to apply for vocational training as bus drivers. The first pure training group for immigrants was offered in the early 2000s and similar training is still being offered today. The prestige of the bus industry among immigrants increased and the number of applicants grew. Today, over 50% of the bus industry employees in the Helsinki area have an immigrant background (cf. Mustonen 2012).

Over the long period of more than 20 years, the bus industry in Finland has gained a lot of experience in dealing with integration challenges. For example, dealing with (and the importance of) time is one of the challenges associated with different countries: The handling of punctuality in other countries is often not the same as in Finland. It is therefore important to talk to newly arrived migrants about the great importance of punctuality for a bus driver's work. Being on time means being exactly on time, not five or ten minutes after the time indicated. In response to this challenge, the issue of punctuality is addressed in driver training, with the aim of giving immigrants the Finnish understanding of punctuality.

Another obstacle to integration, which is a challenge for other sectors, is not so important for bus drivers: language skills. For bus drivers, sufficient knowledge of the Finnish language has been defined as compulsory. However, as the tasks at the workplace are usually not so much focused on the language, training as a bus driver often requires much higher language skills than the job itself. As a result, migrants usually master the language level required for the tasks and companies usually do not offer language learning support. If necessary, this support is provided by society.

Despite many years of integration experience, the field of social integration in bus and coach companies reveals a need for action. According to a study on intra- and intercultural employee relations and associations with employee welfare, cooperation with employees belonging to one's own culture was perceived as more positive among immigrants and Finnish-born people than with employees belonging to other cultures. The closest employee was usually from the same culture or country. The quality of immigrants' relations with Finnish-born colleagues depended on their cultural distance to Finnish culture. The greater the distance, the less positive the relationship with Finnish colleagues was felt and the greater the risk of being harassed and discriminated against in the workplace. The more positive the employee relations were perceived, the better the job satisfaction and psychological well-being were felt (cf. Bergbom 2017). These results suggest that social integration and social interaction among employees from different countries and cultures should be structurally strengthened.

Geriatric care in Germany

The shortage of skilled workers in the nursing sector and especially in the care of the elderly has been a reality in Germany for several years[5]. Due to demographic change in Germany, nursing care is becoming increasingly important (cf. Friebe 2006, 8).

Within the past year, an average of some 16,000 vacancies for skilled workers were unfilled in elderly care (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2020). The figures from December 2019 show that there are only an average of 24 registered jobseekers for every 100 registered vacancies (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2019b). With a current vacancy period averaging 206 days per unfilled job (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2019b), the shortage of skilled workers has an aggravating effect on colleagues who have to work overtime during the vacancy periods.

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Ensuring a sufficient number of skilled workers is already a challenge, and forecasts indicate that it will become even greater in the future. Companies must therefore develop strategies to attract and retain skilled workers, on the one hand, and to be and remain competitive on the other (cf. Wolter and Blank 2013, 309). One of these strategies is the recruitment of foreign specialists (cf. Wolter and Blank 2013, 312–14). Employment migration in the care sector and, thus, internationality in work teams has been part of everyday life in many geriatric care institutions for several years now (cf. Diakonie Deutschland 2015, 8; Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2019a, 14; Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 22). Between 2014 and 2019, the number of nursing staff from other EU countries rose from 47,000 to 75,000 individuals. Almost half of them work in geriatric care (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2019a, 8). In addition, in recent years more and

more specialists from third countries have been recruited (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2019a, 8).
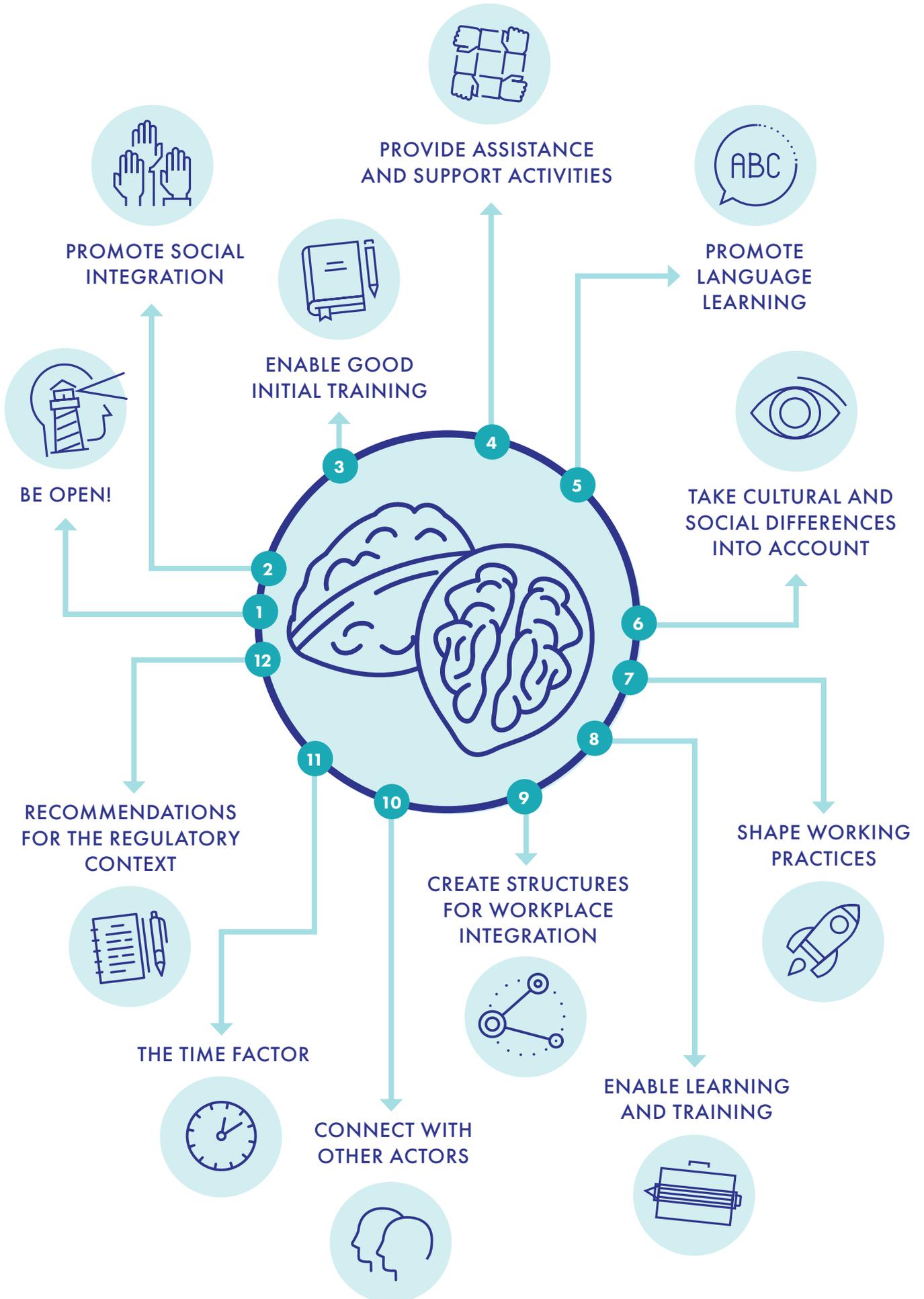
The composition of nursing professionals from different cultures naturally means that different notions of care, culturally influenced behaviour and different expectations and requirements arise in everyday work (cf. Braeseke and Bonin 2016, 252; Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 15; Diakonie Deutschland 2015, 9–10; Rand et al. 2019, 172). A study by the Hans Böckler Foundation on the in-company integration of nursing professionals from abroad shows that different ideas about professionalism and work organisation are the main cause of conflicts and disputes, and that many conflicts are culturalised (cf. Rand et al. 2019, 172–73). Different mother tongues and the level of German language skills as well as discrimination, prejudice and tolerance also play a role in the interaction with colleagues and the persons to be cared for (cf. Friebe 2006, 18; Tummer 2013, 336, 338; Braeseke and Bonin 2016, 47, 253). The integration of foreign specialists is therefore indispensable for cooperation and communication within the team. With the recruitment of migrant workers in the various nursing professions and, especially, in the care of the elderly, new tasks for the institutions are therefore added. For the inclusion or integration of migrants in a company is complex and possibly requires new structures, attitudes and ways of dealing with the people involved (cf. Tummer 2013, 335; Diakonie Deutschland 2015, 21). So far, the sustainable integration of foreign care workers in companies is still a major challenge, as the study by the Hans Böckler Foundation shows (cf. Rand et al. 2019, 193).

As these two country examples show, the recruitment of foreign professionals sometimes poses challenges that companies and institutions have to face in order to integrate the new staff well. The present recommendations for action summarise the project's recommendations from theory and practice and provide information on possible and necessary activities. They are based on interviews conducted during different phases of the project as well as scientific theories. There is a short version for those who like an overview and from p. 10 onwards one can find a longer version for those who wish to read more details and background information.

IN RECENT YEARS MORE AND MORE SPECIALISTS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN RECRUITED

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[5] In the skilled worker shortage analysis, the Federal Employment Agency reports every six months on the occupational fields and regions in Germany in which skilled worker shortages can be identified. The analyses of skilled labour shortages can be downloaded from the Federal Employment Agency's website back to April 2011 and can also be accessed (cf. Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2019b).

In a nutshell:

Recommendations for action

MaWIC

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

PROMOTE SOCIAL INTEGRATION

PROMOTE LANGUAGE LEARNING

ENABLE GOOD INITIAL TRAINING

BE OPEN!

3

4

5

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TAKE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES INTO ACCOUNT

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGULATORY CONTEXT

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SHAPE WORKING PRACTICES

CREATE STRUCTURES FOR WORKPLACE INTEGRATION

THE TIME FACTOR

CONNECT WITH OTHER ACTORS

ENABLE LEARNING AND TRAINING

1

BE OPEN!

- An open corporate culture enables diversity and participation.
- Openness for learning and change processes strengthen social interaction within the company.
- Cooperation and dialogue with one another are important and must be encouraged and strengthened by the management level.
- These attitudes should also be lived out "externally" (i.e. towards customers, people in need of care / patients, passengers, buyers, business partners...).

PROMOTE SOCIAL INTEGRATION

- Social integration in the workplace is of particular importance due to the few social contacts in the early stages.
- Social integration needs a framework that allows for arrival, orientation and encounters at eye level.
- Both the migrant and the employees and supervisors must recognise the migrant's affiliation with the workplace.
- Negative integration factors such as discrimination or prejudices must be eliminated.
- The use of an integration coach can promote social integration.

2

ENABLE GOOD INITIAL TRAINING

- The induction period is important for all new employees.
- Migrants have to cope with additional migration tasks (e.g. learning the language, integration into society and culture), which may require a longer induction period.
- The acceptance and support of a longer induction period by the permanent staff is necessary.

3

4

PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- Support services are helpful — especially in the first months!
- The implementation of integration measures requires structures and sufficient resources.
- The management must support the integration activities through its leadership behaviour.
- Support in integration tasks in the private life area is extremely helpful.
- Support for family reunification has a positive effect on job integration.
- The use of an integration coach can promote social integration.

PROMOTE LANGUAGE LEARNING

- Language is essential as a means of communication and for establishing and maintaining relationships in the workplace.
- The need for language skills in the workplace depends on the relevance of communication in the job as well as the language applications required.
- Language learning can be supported by both formal and informal learning processes in the workplace.

5

TAKE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCES INTO ACCOUNT

- In the arrival society, migrants go through a process of getting to know the new cultural and social conditions.
- Strategies must be developed to deal with and interpret both familiar and new ways of acting.
- Communication about cultural and social ambiguities prevents conflicts and facilitates understanding.

6

7 SHAPE WORKING PRACTICES

- Working practices such as internal company processes or structures are necessary for a functioning system in the workplace and must be learned from new employees.
- In addition to work practices, migrants need to learn about social and cultural practices, which can complicate the integration process.
- Work practices can be conscious or unconscious and are therefore not always apparent to new employees.
- Communication about work practices prevents conflicts and misunderstandings.
- Involvement of migrants in shaping work practices supports diversity and enables participation in the workplace.

8 ENABLE LEARNING AND TRAINING

- In many cases, recruitment from abroad or the employment of migrants is accompanied by the need to acquire additional specialist qualifications.
- Intercultural competences are important for both migrants and non-migrants, as they generate understanding on both sides.
- In order to prevent job insecurity, smooth work processes and generate mutual understanding, both professional and intercultural further training is helpful.

9 CREATE STRUCTURES FOR WORKPLACE INTEGRATION

- Integration must be structurally embedded by the employer.
- Integration is a task for all those involved.
- Equivalence of people in the workplace is an important indicator of integration.
- Hostilities, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination threaten integration and must be structurally rejected.
- Positive experiences of belonging should be made possible for migrants (and all other employees).
- Diversity management offers a comprehensive basis for living diversity in the workplace.

10 CONNECT WITH OTHER ACTORS

- Workplace internal and external networking can be of great advantage.
- Networking with other companies promotes (experience) exchange and the search for new ideas for integration.
- Networking with authorities can simplify and speed up bureaucratic procedures.
- Contact with official contact points makes it easier to comply with current legal provisions on migration and asylum.

11 THE TIME FACTOR

- Integration is a complex process that develops over a period of several months up to several years.
- Development processes take place not only among migrants, but also among superiors and colleagues.
- The integration process has different dimensions, which develop at different speeds. It is therefore important to allow sufficient time for the individual integration tasks.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGULATORY CONTEXT

- The creation of the self-image of the immigration community in society and the implementation of integration policy measures are fundamental to integration.
- Integration policy measures must be well communicated to authorities and employers and must be fast, reliable and easy to implement.

Be open!

Social interaction in the workplace is shaped by the predominant views and actions of the actors in the workplace, i.e. colleagues, superiors, clients and relatives (cf. Mecheril 2003, 169). These attitudes and positions of the actors act as "pre-programming" for actions and interactions at the workplace. Positive workplace integration therefore requires attitudes that recognise (migration-related) diversity as an enrichment and enable participation in the workplace; respectful interaction and mutual recognition are important components in this context (cf. Abou Taam 2017, 218-219), as is being open to learning and change processes and the willingness to enter into intercultural relationships (cf. Heckmann 2015, 281–83) they strengthen the social component in the workplace. The ability to cooperate and engage in dialogue is important for generating understanding in relation to culturally determined differing ways of working and acting (cf. Abou Taam 2017, 214).

Even people who are not employees of the company but who have contact with the foreign professionals, such as people in need of care, relatives, passengers, buyers, business partners and customers, bring attitudes and behaviour into everyday working life which can include prejudices and racist behaviour. Here, too, interaction may be necessary. Negative integration indicators such as ignorance, discriminatory behaviour or prejudices must be rejected and action taken against them (cf. Diakonie Deutschland 2015, 5).

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The example of an elderly home in Germany shows how sceptical attitudes of the workforce are transformed into a positive attitude through open encounters before migrants start work:

"The employees were very sceptical before, here, yes, what are we to do with Serbian employees now, how is this supposed to work? But when they arrived and we slowly got to know them as a team (this was not only the casehere in the home, but also in other homes), […] this negative attitude quickly changed. They have noticed that there is potential there and we have to use it now, that means that every employee has worked to make sure that they were trained as quickly as possible so that we don't have to continue working with any freelancers or temporary workers. They have noticed, well, actually they are like us."

(German Employer)

Promote social integration

Social integration in the workplace is of particular importance for newly arrived migrants. Often they have few contacts outside work, particularly in the initial period of their arrival in the country and in the new culture. Relationships are built up through shared values, trust and familiarity and, over time, represent a social capital or resources for the immigrants that they can use for themselves, e.g., for seeking advice, support, exchange or leisure activities (cf. Heckmann 2015, 181–82). The prerequisites for building relationships are sufficient language skills, equality and opportunities to get to know other people (cf. Rudolf 2017, 13; Heckmann 2015, 182). For social interaction in the work team, a framework must be created that enables arrival, orientation and encounters at eye level (cf. Rand et al. 2019, 194) and excludes negative integration factors such as discrimination and prejudiced behaviour. Recognition of the foreign professionals' affiliation to the team plays an essential role in this context. The professionals have positive and negative experiences of belonging at the workplace, in which the person relates to their social context (cf. Mecheril 2003, 144). What is important for the recognition of affiliation is not only the recognition of the individual foreign skilled worker at the workplace,

but also the recognition of the foreign skilled worker's affiliation to the workplace by the persons in the context (cf. Mecheril 2003, 130).

Social integration can be actively supported by the use of an integration coach who accompanies the structures of the workplace and the people involved — superiors, colleagues and migrants. They assess the situation at the workplace and initiate preventive and disciplinary measures against discrimination and harassment. At the same time, it is their task to strengthen the affiliation of the person to be integrated into the social fabric of the workplace. This can be done, for example, by shaping the corporate culture, for which the support of the employer is necessary. The following example from a Hungarian company shows a variety of ways in which social integration can be practised in the workplace:

The employer attaches great importance to team building measures and supports the organisation of social activities, get-togethers, informal meetings such as birthday parties (premises are provided for this purpose), national and other (e.g. religious) holidays, weddings or fun activities such as the Super Bowl Friday or film and game nights. Participation in these social activities is voluntary but everyone is invited to participate. There are also hobby groups and social responsibility programs in which employees can get involved. In this way, contacts and community are also created outside the company's own departments.

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"Having friends and a community from the office is a great tool, much better than any HR training we did."

(Migrant working in a company in Hungary)

Enable good initial training

The induction period as a time of getting to know the company's processes and structures, regulations and working practices is important not only for foreign workers but for all newly recruited specialists. A further complicating factor for migrants is that they have to further develop their language skills, get to know the new culture, the society, the new environment and new ways of dealing with each other and deal with possible burdens from their own migration process (cf. Diakonie Deutschland 2015, 21–22). In many cases they have undergone training with a different focus, so they may need to catch up on specialist knowledge and gain new practical experience. As a result, a longer familiarisation period may be necessary. It is helpful here to enlist the support and willingness of the core workforce to allow a longer familiarisation period. A good and individual familiarisation, in which details are explained and language skills are taken into account, is necessary to avoid excessive demands and to ensure the quality of work.

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Investigated examples in the MaWIC project have shown that mentoring programmes are a great help during the familiarisation process.

In the example of an elderly home in Germany, two mentors are provided for a newly arriving skilled worker, who are present in the services of the skilled workers. Their tasks are the constant support and training of the migrant, the introduction to technical equipment, the answering of questions and, last but not least, the personal relationship building.

Provide assistance and support activities

The support of foreign skilled workers in the company is an essential factor for integration in the workplace, especially during the initial period. The implementation of integration measures in the company requires structures as well as sufficient time, financial and material resources (cf. Heckmann 2015, 281–83; Tummer 2013, 333; Dälken, 39). In addition to the structural requirements, the workplace integration of foreign skilled workers must be planned and prepared and the staff must be informed (cf. Adenauer and Geiger 2016, 42). It is important to sensitise the staff and create acceptance in advance (cf. Dälken, 39; Tummer 2013, 333). The integration activities must also be supported by integration and diversity oriented management behaviour on the part of the company management. Management personnel act as a driving force and must therefore also take the lead in this respect (cf. Vedder 2011, 8; Adenauer and Geiger 2016, 42; Tummer 2013, 335).

In addition to areas of support that directly affect the workplace, practical and bureaucratic tasks that migrants face in their private lives often also play a role. These include, for example, finding and furnishing housing, job recognition, insurance, getting to know the living environment or family reunification.

Although these are not formally seen as tasks of the employers, they do influence the arrival and well-being at the workplace and play a major role in the context of support services, also in the work context. Since the employer is often the first and, for the time being, only contact person for migrant workers, the employer is also often the one to whom questions about everyday life are addressed.

The interview results in the MaWIC project show that the family situation of the foreign skilled workers is reflected in their integration into the workplace. It is therefore not only an important component of private life but also extends to other areas of life. Successful integration is therefore only possible with family reunification. The skills and resources of immigrants and their families also determine their ability to participate and compete in social life and determine the opportunities and the integration process of immigrants (cf. Heckmann 2015, 284). Over time, a mental and emotional relationship with the surrounding system develops, i.e., whether and how a person identifies with society or the workplace or feels that they belong to it (cf. Esser 2001, 12). The strength of identification or the feeling of belonging is a factor that influences integration into society and the workplace.

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FROM THE MAWIC PROJECT:

- Welcome of the new employees: Welcome by supervisors, introduction of employees, guided tour.

- Orientation week(s): to get to know the structure of the company, necessary training, opening a bank account, registration of insurance, getting to know the new living environment.

- Integration manager: Individuals in the company who are responsible for organising the integration of the foreign skilled workers; tasks are e.g., mediations and discussions in case of problems, contact with the facility management, involvement in the local integration process, contact person for bureaucratic issues, e.g., bank, health insurance, documents, questions regarding the immigration authorities, support with school and childcare places, support with professional recognition, if necessary.

- Mentor system / buddy system: The foreign expert is assigned one or more employees who are available for his or her induction and for questions.

- Contact person: support with questions regarding the work and life context, openness to explanations, also beyond the official induction period.

- Extensive induction: getting to know the work structures and tasks under continuous supervision, openness to questions, explanations, longer induction period due to language barriers.

- Provision of written information: information leaflets in different languages, a list of practical information about the workplace and living environment, which is constantly being revised as changes occur.

- Areas where assistance is helpful: work permit, residence permit, professional recognition, language training, housing and housing finance, family reunification, insurance, job search for spouses.
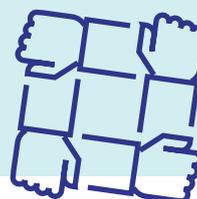
Promote language learning

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In the workplace, language is important as a means of communication between migrants, colleagues and employers and essential for establishing and maintaining relationships. If a person is able to articulate themselves and their thoughts and ideas are noticed by others and, thus, respected, they will receive recognition and become capable of acting (cf. Henkelmann 2012, 62). Language is the key to understanding the country and its people. It is the most important means of communication for interpersonal relations between migrants and natives. Without it, it is not possible, in the long term, to participate equally in the social life of the country (cf. Kühn 2009, 104). Learning the language is therefore indispensable for social interaction in the workplace.

However, language not only makes it possible to communicate with other people as such, but also enables the disclosure of non-linguistic (cultural) capital such as education or, in particular, specialist knowledge for a job (cf. Esser 2006, 403). These two aspects of language are influenced by contextual environmental factors. For activities in which communicative coordination plays a lesser role, the effects of reduced language skills are less serious than for activities that require a high level of good communication, such as consultancy work or journalism — relevance of the task (cf. Esser 2006, 404). At the same time, it is important whether the activity requires only oral communication or also written communication. At least in functionally differentiated societies, knowledge of the written language often plays a higher role than mere comprehension and speaking. They are often indispensable for hiring (cf. Esser 2006, 404). For example, learning the national language in geriatric care is indispensable for a smooth workflow due to the social orientation of the profession and the necessity of professional and everyday oral and written communication with colleagues, doctors, patients and relatives. In contrast, communication plays a subordinate role in the bus driver's job compared to nursing care for the elderly.

Depending on the activities and structures in the workplace, support for language learning is therefore of great importance. This can take place both through formal learning, such as in a language course, and through informal learning processes on the spot at the workplace by colleagues or superiors who explain terms and linguistic ambiguities in everyday working life and also take into account the migrants' language learning. Simple, self-designed materials such as a picture lexicon with necessary terms or sticky notes with descriptions on the relevant objects can also be very helpful. There are no limits to creativity here.

Take cultural and social differences into account

After migration to another country or a new culture, foreign professionals go through a (socialisation) process in which knowledge and understanding of a culture as well as linguistic skills are newly acquired (cf. Esser 2001, 8–9): so-called culturalisation. This process enables migrants to fill roles and positions in society and especially in the workplace and involves a change in values, norms and behaviour that are important for the performance at work (cf. Heckmann 2015, S. 159, 163-168). Areas in which such processes of change occur can be both obvious, such as learning the language, but can also take place behind the scenes and rather unnoticed, e.g. in dealing with values, which can lead to misunderstandings and cooperation difficulties in everyday work (cf. Karl-Trummer/ Novak-Zezula 2009, S. 4 in: Vedder 2013, 415).

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Old and new ways of acting overlap, which must be interpreted by the person. Their own actions and reactions may no longer be able to be clearly determined, because their own interpretation patterns no longer fit (cf. Reckwitz 2001, 191). Therefore, strategies must be developed to form new patterns of interpretation. Intercultural training and intercultural coaching, help to analyse work processes and to identify cultural differences, address them with the actors involved, sensitise them to this and prevent conflicts.

It should be noted here that the influence of cultural differences depends on the activity carried out and the culture or society of origin of the foreign worker. Nor are all differences attributable to differences between cultures, but rather to personality traits, for example, or the behaviour of individuals that cannot be regarded as representative of a culture. With regard to the culture of origin, the cultures of the country of origin and the host country are more or less similar in terms of different parameters, e.g., distance of power, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, factual orientation or time planning (cf. Schroll-Machl 2003, 74–77; Hofstede insights o.A.), which gives different degrees of importance to dealing with cultures in everyday working life. (For further information on cultural parameters see (cf. Schroll-Machl 2003; Hofstede insights o.A.; Thomas and Utler 2013)). Integration coaches or interculturally trained staff can help to identify cultural and also social differences, communicate about them and provide explanations. The clarification of ambiguities helps to prevent conflicts and creates understanding.

As an example, from geriatric care, the administration of medication by a foreign nursing professional is reported:

Nurses are responsible to the residents that they are well looked after. The example reports about a resident who refused to take medication. Out of respect for age, the specialist bowed to the person's wishes and, thus, violated his or her duty and responsibility towards the person.

Shape working practices

Work practices are work procedures, organisational and management structures, the drafting of employment contracts or leave requests — practices that are necessary in the workplace to make the system work. They arise as everyday social practices and are shaped by people in the workplace and influenced by culture, society and employer structures, among other things. Such practices can be found in every company. They arise in cooperation and are deposited in routines (cf. Reckwitz 2003, 289). These structures must always be recognised and learned by new employees. For migrants, additional cultural and social practices and structures unknown to them are added at this point. The new employees have to learn these, e.g. how to recognise hierarchical structures and how to deal with them: How to deal with higher-ranking persons? Does distance have to be maintained or can one meet them for a chat in the coffee kitchen?

It is important to get to know and understand the existing structures and practices. They can take place routinely, i.e., also unconsciously, among colleagues, which can lead to irritation, disorientation and insecurity and make learning more difficult for migrants. Here communication about ambiguities (e.g., why something is done when and how) is good and necessary. Training and communication about practices can be helpful to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. At the same time, it requires the openness of colleagues to explain practices and structures and to question them if necessary. There should be the possibility that ideas of new employees are taken into account in the design of work practices, because new ideas and approaches can strengthen cooperation and bring about innovation. Moreover, involvement in the design process enables people to participate in the workplace and thus also in society (cf. Rudolf 2017, 13). This participation in turn intensifies the person's sense of belonging to the workplace and thus also to society.

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Enable learning and further education

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Further training in the company is of great importance in the rapidly changing society. Megatrends such as the spread of information and communication technologies and increasing knowledge intensity, globalisation, the development towards a service or knowledge society, changes in the organisation of business and work, individualisation/changes in values and demographic trends (cf. Schiersmann 2007) require skills from employees that they have not learned in many cases during their training. These include, for example, technical and social communication skills, self-management, independence, the coordination of work and private life, helping to shape social development, the ability to orientate and act on the labour market, mobility and dealing with insecurity (cf. Baethge u.a. 2003, S. 29 in: Schiersmann 2007). Further training in these areas does not exclusively concern migrants, but all employees in a company. Often regular further training is also required by law. The results of the MaWIC project show that further training for migrants should, in particular, include basic qualifications and language. In many cases, recruitment from abroad or the hiring of migrants is accompanied by the need for further training. In the case of geriatric care, the vocational training, fields of activity and understanding of care in other countries often differ from those prevailing in Germany (cf. Braeseke and Bonin 2016, 252;

Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 15; Diakonie Deutschland 2015, 9). This is also reported by the surveyed employers, social partners and foreign skilled workers. If specialist post-qualification is necessary, this should also be granted to the employees, as otherwise uncertainty and friction can arise in the work processes. In addition to professional qualifications, intercultural skills are also important for local employees. The aim of integration work is to exchange, learn about different cultural practices on both sides and to promote mutual understanding. To achieve this goal, patterns of interpretation, cultural standards and working practices of the different cultures must be understood and learned through educational processes (cf. Robak 2012). This can be done through formal learning[6], non-formal learning[7] and informal learning[8]. Integration coaches can provide support at this point. They are familiar with the theoretical foundations of intercultural communication and cooperation and can use them to promote the learning of social and cultural patterns of interpretation, cultural standards and working practices both among migrants and among colleagues and superiors. The coach can also be available for questions of further education, work out the migrant's goals together, look at the individual possibilities with him or her and discuss the necessary steps to achieve the goals.

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[6] Learning in education and training institutions leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications.

[7] Learning outside the mainstream VET and education systems, e.g., in the workplace or in educational institutions.

[8] Learning as an accompanying phenomenon in everyday life, unintentional (cf. Europäische Kommission 2000).

Create structures for workplace integration

The structural requirements include basic structures at the workplace that can be created by the employer for integration. Are there, for example, integration programmes, mentoring concepts or the anchoring of integration in the company's principles? Is there a working atmosphere that promotes diversity and integration, e.g., through openness, tolerance and the appreciation of diversity? It is important to promote equal rights and to regard integration as the task of all those involved (cf. Heckmann 2015, 82). For the equality of individuals in a democratic society or in the workplace is a sign of integration or disintegration, recognition or disregard (cf. Zick and Klein 2014b, 12). Prejudices, negative emotions and hate speech or deeds, but also stereotypes and discrimination can indicate the phenomenon of group-focused inhumanity, after which hostility towards groups that are considered weak, inferior or deviant is expressed (cf. Zick and Klein 2014b, 18, 61). These beliefs endanger integration. If they are tolerated, inequality between employees is legitimized at the same time (cf. Zick and Klein 2014a, 154). For this reason, managers in particular, but also colleagues, are called upon to be vigilant and take responsibility for taking action against the signs of inequality ideologies (cf. Zick and Klein 2014a, 152–55).

The willingness to adapt to each other's cultures and to participate constructively is of great importance (cf. Abou Taam 2017, 214, 223). In order for migrants to experience positive experiences of belonging, their recognition in the workplace by themselves, their colleagues and the employer is necessary (cf. Mecheril 2003, 130). The diversity management approach (cf. Vedder 2011, 3) offers a comprehensive basis for living diversity at the workplace. However, not every company needs a comprehensive concept. Small changes can often make a big difference and change takes time.

The practice example "geriatric care" shows a number of structural preconditions for job integration. Even before the arrival of the foreign specialists, the employee team is openly informed about the new employment. Concerns of the workforce — which arose during the first recruitment from abroad — were taken into account and questions were answered. After their arrival in Germany, the migrants are introduced to the structures and contents of nursing care in an introductory week. In addition, they receive support from integration managers, who assist them both in technical matters and, in particular, in questions relating to their private lives. The new specialists are provided with two mentors to help them get acquainted with the work process on site.

Connect with other actors

Since the recruitment of foreign specialists is relatively costly and not always available on demand, the establishment and use of networks can be of great advantage, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (cf. Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 68). The networking of different actors involved in workplace integration promotes the (experience) exchange between companies and other stakeholders, e.g., (regional) associations, chambers, trade unions, municipalities, clubs or churches. At European level, for example, the European Migration Network is working on reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum[9]. Projects such as the MaWIC project, cooperation projects, and events such as conferences, congresses, theme events or exchange meetings promote cooperation on integration and thus open up opportunities for workplace design. Networking helps those responsible and involved at all stages of the integration process. It is helpful during the first steps up to the hiring of immigrants in the company as well as during the induction process and the regular working day.

Personal contacts with people in public authorities can, for example, simplify bureaucratic matters, e.g., by better understanding the processes instead of having to find it out. In addition, there are frequent changes in the law which must be observed anew in each case. Keeping these changes up to date is often difficult for employers, which is why contacts with contact points for specialist information are useful. An exchange of experience with other (experienced) companies in the recruitment of foreign skilled workers can also be very helpful. Networking can take place at regional, national or international level.
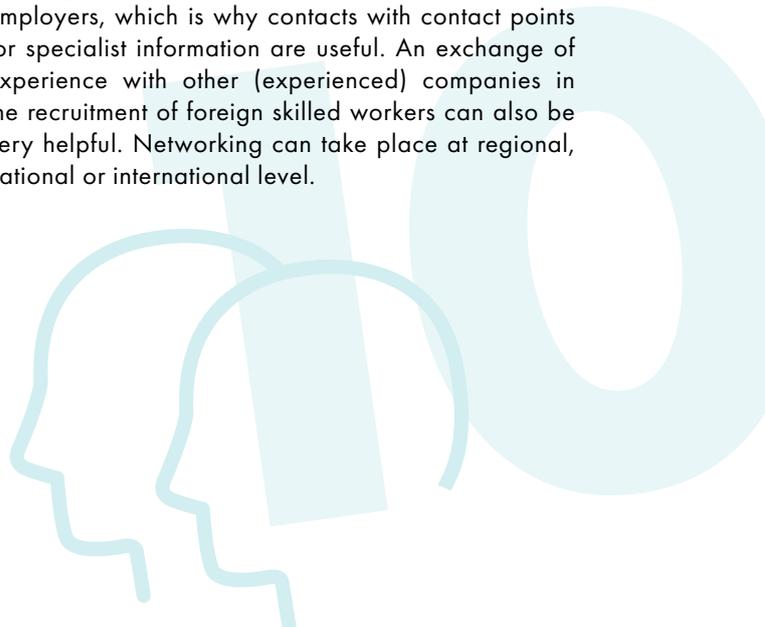

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[9] For the national websites of the European Migration Network see: www.emnsweden.se, www.emn-germany.de, http://emnhungary.hu, www.emn.fi, http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/redeuropeamigracion/index.html

The time factor

Integration is a complex process that develops over a period of several months up to several years. Settling into a society or a workplace can also be described by a new socialisation and learning process that takes time and is influenced by many factors that are also mutually dependent (cf. Heckmann 2015, 286). The development processes take place not only among migrants but also among other actors such as colleagues and superiors. In the same way, political, social, economic and legal changes such as changes in policy, shortages of skilled workers, the formation of opinion in society and the influence of the media have both positive and negative effects on the integration process, depending on the form they take.

The integration process is asynchronous, i.e., integration does not proceed at the same speed in all dimensions, but the dimensions develop their own pace in parallel (cf. Heckmann 2015, 81). In terms of the workplace, this means that changes occur faster in some areas than in others. As an initial process, induction training will be completed more quickly than the formation of friendships or participation in continuing training. In particular, areas such as changing attitudes and behaviour or introducing diversity concepts take time. It is important to allow sufficient time for language learning and adaptation to work practices and the work environment, taking into account integration activities outside the workplace, such as finding and settling into a flat or family reunification. It is only with the course of time that the positive or negative forms of the factors and the individually formed understandings of belonging become clear (cf. Mecheril 2003, 132) and the determination of a positive or negative tendency of workplace integration becomes possible.
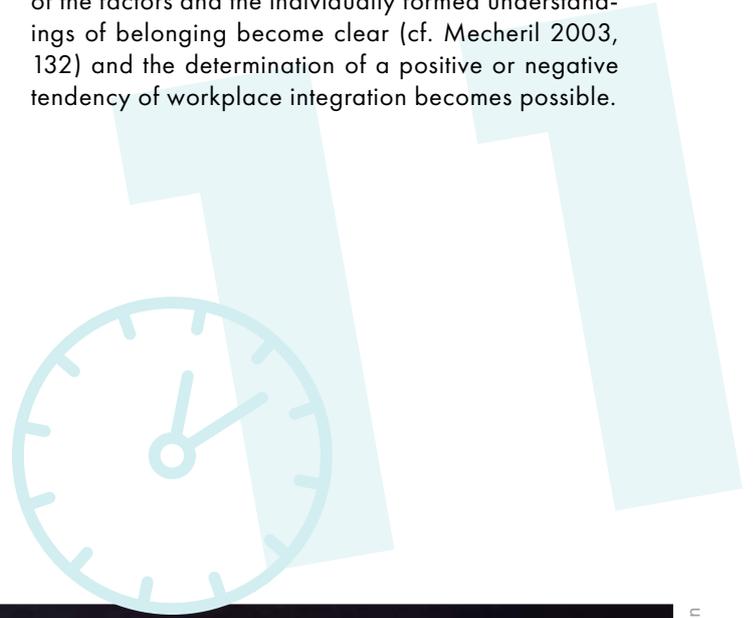
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Recommendations for the regulatory context

A well-developed social policy and the willingness to develop the self-image of an open and inclusive society and to implement it within the framework of integration policy measures are fundamental for the integration of migrants into society (cf. Heckmann 2015, 109, 282). With regard to job integration, examples of this include the offer of general and vocational language courses (cf. Heckmann 2015, 109–12; Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 66), the recognition of foreign qualifications (cf. Heckmann 2015, 109–12; Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 31) or national integration plans (cf. Die Bundesregierung 2020). These integration policy measures are viewed by employers and foreign skilled workers from the user side. For them, dealing with authorities and laws must be communicated as well and comprehensibly as

possible, quickly and reliably. Delays in recognition processes or in the granting of residence permits can delay settling in or make short-term action necessary. This can lead to interim solutions, e.g., in the search for accommodation, which in turn can have a negative impact on the process of arrival. This results in the following demands: The administrative burden must be reduced, uniform procedures for the recognition of occupations must be introduced, the welcome culture of the authorities must be improved and companies must be given more support in recruiting and hiring migrants abroad (cf. Bonin, Braeseke, and Ganserer 2015, 65–67).

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