
Improving the Assessment, Recognition and Validation of Qualifications and Skills of Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine in France

Final Report



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Final report



Foreword

This report was prepared by Tamara Buschek (Migration Policy Analyst, OECD) and Julie Lassébie (Labour Market Economist, OECD) under the direction of Jean-Christophe Dumont (Head of the International Migration Division, OECD) and Thomas Liebig (Principal Administrator, OECD) as part of the project "Improving the assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications and skills of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine in France", carried out at the request of the Directorate-General for Foreign Nationals in France, with the help of funding from the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the OECD in collaboration with the European Commission. This report was able to draw on numerous contributions from and discussions with the French Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, the main beneficiary of the project, as well as the Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity and *France Éducation internationale*, in particular the ENIC-NARIC France centre, the other main beneficiaries of the project. The authors would also like to thank the French authorities and all the administrative departments and bodies that were contacted during the preparation of this report.

Introduction and executive summary

In most European OECD countries, qualified immigrants encounter more obstacles than native-born in finding a job, particularly when they have been educated abroad. In addition, when they do have a job, foreign-educated immigrants are twice as likely to be overqualified for that job as native-born European Union (EU) citizens. France is no exception, as only two out of three third-country foreign-educated immigrants are in employment in France, compared with nine out of ten native-born, and the third-country foreign-educated immigrants who are in employment are more than twice as likely to have a job with a level of qualification lower than their diploma. A large part of the discount observed is due to uncertainty about the equivalence and transferability of qualifications and skills acquired abroad. Indeed, on average in the EU, around one in five third-country nationals who have obtained their highest qualification outside the EU, consider the lack of recognition of their skills to be the main obstacle to finding a job. This figure differs significantly between countries: 8% in Norway and Italy, 20% in France and 35% in Germany. The introduction of appropriate procedures for the assessment and recognition of qualifications and skills is therefore likely to substantially improve the labour market integration prospects of third-country nationals with tertiary attainment obtained abroad.

The issue of accrediting qualifications and skills obtained abroad has long been an issue for migrant integration, but the sudden influx of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine has once again put it at the top of the political agenda. On average, BTP have very high educational qualifications, with around two-thirds of them in possession of the equivalent of a baccalauréat or above. In France, an inter-ministerial crisis unit was set up on 9 March 2022 to address the influx of displaced people from Ukraine. This coordination meant that an immediate operational response was put in place at Prefecture level, with the participation of associations and local authorities, to deal with the first arrivals. In the first three months, more than 80 000 people were taken in. The continuation of the war and the need for more sustainable integration have resulted in many actively seeking employment. However, preliminary figures suggest that the employment rate remains limited, with the number of BTP from Ukraine in employment between March 2022 and December 2023 estimated at fewer than 18 000, or around one-third of the working-age population. Increased support in finding employment and the recognition of qualifications and skills are therefore becoming increasingly important. This is a cross-cutting issue which, in France, is the responsibility of several ministries, namely the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity, and the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport, as well as many other stakeholders.

It is against this backdrop that the French Ministry of the Interior and Overseas requested the support of the European Commission (DG Reform) under the Technical Support Instrument to evaluate the system for assessing and recognising qualifications and competences in France and to formulate improvement proposals. This report brings together the various notes produced in the scope of this project.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the main stakeholders involved in France in the assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications and skills acquired abroad, outlines their role and describes the existing processes. It differentiates between the recognition of formal education diplomas and professional qualifications acquired in a formal setting, which is the responsibility of the ENIC-NARIC France centre, and the recognition of skills acquired in a non-formal or informal way (Validation of Acquired Experience - better known in France as *Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience* - VAE). It also looks at recognition procedures for access to certain regulated professions, particularly in the craft and health sectors. Other schemes which do not involve recognition per se but which aim to facilitate access to employment for newcomers and to leverage their skills are also presented. Specific aspects relating to BTP from Ukraine are explained where appropriate.

Chapter 2 presents the main European tools, frameworks, standards and instruments that exist to support and facilitate national efforts to assess, recognise and validate the qualifications and skills of third-country nationals, as well as the specific measures taken by certain EU and OECD Member countries to recognise the qualifications of BTP from Ukraine and existing digital tools.

Chapter 3 reviews comparisons of existing French and Ukrainian qualifications frameworks, developed by the ENIC-NARIC France centre and other institutions, and identifies key lessons to be learned from these comparisons, in order to facilitate understanding of the Ukrainian education and training system, and to pinpoint areas of alignment and divergence with the French system.

Chapter 4 presents statistics on the recognition procedures initiated by third-country nationals and their success rates, highlights the labour market penalty in terms of employment rates, overqualification and job quality for third-country nationals who obtained their qualifications outside the EU compared with those with host-country diplomas, and analyses the extent to which the recognition of qualifications makes it possible to offset this penalty, in France and in other EU Member States.

Last, Chapter 5 sets out recommendations for improving the assessment, recognition and validation of the qualifications and skills of BTP in France and, more generally, of third-country nationals. The recommendations are based on an in-depth assessment of France's current system for assessing and recognising qualifications and skills acquired abroad, and on in-depth discussions on the issues with the various stakeholders. They also draw on good practices identified within the EU and the OECD.

The main findings of the report are as follows:

- Over the past 15 years, the proportion of individuals initiating a procedure for the recognition of diplomas acquired abroad does not appear to have changed significantly on average in the European countries reviewed. At the same time, individuals who have their qualifications recognised are three times less penalised on the labour market in terms of the probability of having a job that matches their skills than those who have not been able to initiate a recognition procedure because of the complexity, cost, impossibility of doing so, or lack of awareness of the procedures involved. Improving the system for assessing and recognising foreign qualifications could therefore enable a significant number of individuals to find jobs that match their skills.
- This is especially true for BTP from Ukraine, given their high level of educational attainment, the current low proportion of individuals initiating recognition procedures, and the high success rate of those who do so. In addition, while Ukrainian general education qualifications are fairly legible thanks to the alignment of the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework with the European Qualifications Framework, a major challenge concerns vocational education and training, where the Ukrainian framework is not yet fully aligned with the European framework, and where no specific and thorough comparison has been made between the Ukrainian and French systems. This represents a major issue, particularly in terms of facilitating access to regulated professions.
- In France, the approach to recognising qualifications and skills acquired abroad is dominated by the coexistence of a multitude of stakeholders and systems. Access to information on recognition

procedures and processes is limited, as is the quality of that information. This is an issue not only for individuals but also for the people on the ground trying to help them. Existing websites are not always user-friendly, up-to-date, or complete. Access to information on recognition is all the more difficult for BTP from Ukraine, as they are not systematically provided with information on procedures and are not always being registered with the public employment service that could possibly provide this information. Information, guidance and support for the various recognition procedures need to be improved, for BTP and other third-country nationals. Examples of good practice exist in Austria and Germany, particularly with regard to digital information platforms, and could be used as inspiration for the provision of similar tools.

- In France, the main operator in the recognition of qualifications and skills acquired abroad is the ENIC-NARIC France centre. After assessment, it issues a statement certifying the comparability of a foreign diploma with the French education system. It relies, among other things, on various European instruments designed to facilitate assessment and recognition, such as the European Qualifications Framework and the ENIC-NARIC Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications. However, its resources are limited, and it needs to be given the necessary resources and an effective mandate if it is to play its role to the full.
- Measures for the recognition of acquired experience and prior learning, such as the VAE system in France, are a complement to procedures for recognising formal diplomas and qualifications, as they give individuals the opportunity to have their skills assessed and certified regardless of how they were acquired. Skills developed through previous work experience or voluntary activities can therefore be validated on the labour market. The VAE system is also useful for newcomers who do not have copies of their diplomas and are unable to provide other forms of documentary evidence, or who were unable to complete their studies before fleeing war and conflict. An overhaul of the VAE system is currently underway, which should help to remove a number of obstacles preventing newcomers, including BTP from Ukraine, from accessing it, even if this is not the main objective. Nevertheless, to encourage more widespread use of the VAE system by newcomers, certain aspects require particular attention, such as the translation of the VAE platform into other languages, the presence of advisers who can interact with newcomers in their mother tongue or at least in English, better communication about the VAE system among target groups, and additional support for newcomers where necessary. If these additional measures are put in place, substantial participation by newcomers could well be achieved. As a consequence, however, accessibility to services could become a problem but this obstacle could be overcome by reallocating resources or by reserving a specific number of places in the VAE system for newcomers.
- The level of proficiency in the host-country language is also a fundamental issue in terms of leveraging the skills of newcomers and accessing skilled employment. Professional language training is currently underdeveloped in France and should be strengthened. More specifically, it seems essential to strengthen the provision of vocational language training, by offering flexible French courses either remotely or at times in the day that make it possible to reconcile work and language training, and to ensure that the existing platforms centralising all language courses, including those aimed at professional purposes, are accessible, multilingual, user-friendly, complete and up-to-date.
- In France, unlike other OECD countries, partial recognition of diplomas and qualifications is not possible. Individuals who have failed to have their qualifications recognised are often faced with the prospect of having to repeat some or all of their training in the host country's education system in order to be able to work in their field and at their skill level. Developing the possibility of partial recognition and offering relevant and accessible refresher courses could prove extremely cost-effective and efficient, particularly for newcomers trained in regulated professions.

- Finally, social issues must be addressed alongside labour market integration and recognition issues. Integration programmes, including the AGIR programme, should systematically and explicitly address the issues of assessing and recognising qualifications and skills.

Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| AFPA | National Agency for Adult Vocational Training |
| AMIF | Asylum Migration Integration Fund |
| ARS | Regional Health Agency |
| BAC | Baccalauréat |
| BAP | Brevet d'Aptitude Professionnelle (vocational aptitude certificate) |
| BIP | Beneficiary of international protection |
| BTP | Beneficiary of temporary protection |
| CAP | Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (vocational training certificate) |
| CCP | Certificate of Professional Competence |
| CDD | Fixed-term contract |
| CDI | Open-ended contract |
| CEFRL | Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: |
| CIR | Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine (Republican Integration Contract) |
| CMA | Chambres de Métiers et de l'Artisanat (Guild of Trades and Arts) |
| CNOM | Conseil national de l'Ordre des médecins (National Council of the Medical Association) |
| CQP | Certificate of professional qualification |
| DAEI | Organisation of the Delegation for European and International Affairs |
| DCL | Diplôme de compétence en langue (language proficiency diploma) |
| DG REFORM | Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support |
| DGEF | Directorate-General for Foreign Nationals in France |
| DGEFP | General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training |
| DGESCO | Directorate-General for School Education |
| DIAN | Directorate for Integration and Access to Nationality |
| DIHAL | Inter-ministerial delegation for accommodation and access to housing |
| DREES | Directorate for Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics |
| ECAP | Evaluation of professional skills and abilities |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System |
| EDNA | Sustainable Employment for New Arrivals |
| ENIC-NARIC | European Network of Information Centres – National Academic Recognition Information Centres |
| EQF | European Qualifications Framework |
| EQPR | European Qualifications Passport for Refugees |
| ESF | Experience Without Borders |
| EU | European Union |
| EVC | Verification tests of fundamental and practical knowledge |
| FLE | French as a Foreign Language |
| GIPAL | Groupement d'Intérêt Public de l'Académie de Lyon (Lyon Academy Public Interest Group) |
| HOPE | Accommodation, Orientation and Pathway to Employment |
| IGAS | General Inspectorate of Social Affairs |
| IGNAENR | General Inspectorate of National Education and Research Administration |
| IOD | Intervention on Supply and Demand |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OFII | French Office of Immigration and Integration |
| OPCO | Opérateur de Compétences (Skills Operator) |
| PAE | Practice authorisation procedure |
| PIC | Skills Investment Plan |
| POEC | Operational preparation for collective employment. |
| RECTEC | Recognition of cross-disciplinary skills in relation to employability and certifications |
| REVA | Recognise and Validate |
| RNCP | National Directory of Professional Certification |
| RSFP | Recognition of professional skills |
| TP | Professional certificate/title |
| UNAI | Union Nationale des Associations Intermédiaires |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| VAE | Validation of Acquired Experience |

Glossary

Certification framework: a tool for developing and categorising qualifications based on a set of criteria defining the level of education achieved.

Assessment: evaluation of a foreign qualification based on a series of criteria, including the level and type of learning involved. The result may consist of a statement of comparability, the certification of certain skills, or formal recognition of the qualification.

Skills: ability to perform certain tasks required in a particular occupation. Skills may be acquired formally (in the formal education system), non-formally (through training programmes that do not generally lead to a formal qualification) or informally (lifelong learning, in the workplace or elsewhere).

Qualifications: formal certifications of competences or skills required for certain jobs, including, but not limited to, academic degrees.

Recognition: formal acknowledgement that a foreign qualification is equal to a national study or vocational training diploma. Where the recognition process is not regulated by law, the results of a recognition process usually take the form of a non-binding equivalence that generally situates foreign credentials in the context of the national education or training system. If immigrants do not meet all the conditions for full recognition, they may be able to obtain partial recognition, certifying current skills and identifying shortcomings. A partial recognition may recommend that the applicant passes an examination or participates in a bridging course to acquire the missing skills. Partial recognition may also mean that the applicant obtains certification for a lower-level degree.

Validation: the outcome of a process of assessing skills and qualifications by means of formal certification of certain competences. This generally covers a wide range of different competences, including those acquired through non-formal or informal processes.

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1

The assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications and skills acquired abroad: stakeholders and existing initiatives in France

Introduction

This chapter describes the main stakeholders of the assessment, recognition, and validation of diplomas, qualifications and skills acquired abroad (more precisely outside the European Union) in France and details the existing processes. Where necessary, the chapter addresses the specific issues relating to beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the recognition of formal education diplomas and professional qualifications acquired within a formal framework. It begins by highlighting the role of the ENIC-NARIC France centre, whose main tasks are to provide information on the academic and professional recognition of foreign qualifications, and to assess the various types of foreign diploma, including qualifications from secondary education, vocational secondary education, post-secondary education and higher education (including vocational education). This assessment results in the issue of a statement of comparability, which provides a comparative assessment of the foreign diploma in relation to the French education system. For the purpose of further study, the recognition of foreign diplomas can be carried out directly by higher education establishments, which can choose to use the services of the ENIC-NARIC France centre or to carry out assessments themselves. In terms of access to employment, it is the employers who decide whether or not to recognise the qualifications presented. They too can call on the services of ENIC-NARIC France centre and its assessments.

A significant distinction is made between regulated and non-regulated professions. In regulated professions and occupations, where a specific registration, certificate or licence issued by a competent professional body is generally required, a foreign qualification represents a particular obstacle. When this occurs, one or more competent authorities, depending on the professional field, decide whether or not to recognise the foreign qualification.

The second part describes the process of recognising skills acquired through non-formal or informal means, better known in France as VAE (Validation of Acquired Experience). This section outlines the VAE in general, the ongoing VAE reform, the experimentation with reverse VAE, as well as several VAE initiatives aimed at newcomers, such as the VAE without borders programme, the 1000 VAE project, and 'experiences without borders'.

The third part presents other initiatives which do not concern recognition per se, but various programmes and stakeholders involved in implementing public policies aimed at facilitating access to employment for newcomers and leveraging their skills. These initiatives are undertaken at both national and local level by

various players, such as the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Solidarity, local and regional authorities, as well as private partners and associations working in collaboration with them.

The chapter is based on more than twenty semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders in the field of recognition and integration, as well as on thorough documentary research

Table 1.1. Stakeholders in procedures for assessing and recognising skills and qualifications

| | Unregulated professions | Regulated professions |
|---|---|--|
| Qualifications | <u>Assessment and comparison:</u> ENIC-NARIC <u>Recognition:</u> higher education institutions for admission to study, or employers for access to employment | Several competent authorities depending on the professional field. For regulated salaried craft professions: ENIC-NARIC certificate possible. |
| Skills gained through experience | The State through its various ministries: National Education, Employment, Health and Social Affairs, Youth and Sport, Agriculture and the Sea, Culture, Defence. Professional sectors or private organisations that develop their own qualifications registered with the National Directory of Professional Certification (RNCP). | / |

Recognition of diplomas and qualifications in France

The main operator: the ENIC-NARIC France centre

In France, there is no automatic equivalence for diplomas awarded by third countries. Higher education institutions, in collaboration with their teaching committees, act as the de facto competent authorities in this area, and the process of recognising the diplomas is carried out directly by the host university. This procedure is decided by the university principal, on the basis of a proposal from the academic board responsible for the course being applied for. Institutions may choose to work with the ENIC-NARIC France centre or carry out the assessment themselves.

As far as secondary education and vocational training are concerned, there is also no specific system for the automatic recognition of diplomas issued by third countries in France.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre, which is part of a broader network for the recognition of diplomas within *France Éducation Internationale*, offers an expert appraisal and assessment service for foreign diplomas.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre is part of the international ENIC-NARIC network (European Network of Information Centres - National Academic Recognition Information Centres), comprising a total of 57 centres spread across Europe (as defined by UNESCO¹). These centres work together on an international scale to share their practices in terms of student mobility. They are involved in the practical implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention² and its subsidiary texts. The Secretariat of the Committee of the Convention is entrusted jointly to the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

Since 2004, the ENIC-NARIC France centre has been affiliated to *France Éducation Internationale*, which itself works under the umbrella of the French Ministry of Education. The ENIC-NARIC France centre acts as an information centre in France for the academic recognition of foreign diplomas. It assesses and

¹ UNESCO, Definition of regions, <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/region-definition>

² Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, <https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c7>

compares diplomas against French and European qualification frameworks in response to requests from individual, organisations and companies.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre assesses various types of recognised diplomas covering secondary education, vocational secondary education, post-secondary education (including vocational) and higher education (including vocational). These diplomas are assessed on a scale ranging from level 3 to level 8, in accordance with French and European reference frameworks.

After assessing a foreign diploma, the ENIC-NARIC France centre issues a statement of comparability, which provides a comparative assessment of the foreign diploma relative to the French education system.

The assessment of foreign diplomas by the ENIC-NARIC France centre does not automatically confer full equivalence with a French diploma. However, the statement of comparability can prove useful in the process of recognising experience and skills acquired abroad. It can be used for a variety of purposes, such as continuing studies, finding a job or obtaining a reference for a study course taken in French as part of the naturalisation process.

It is important to note that the statements of comparability issued by the ENIC-NARIC France centre are not legally binding. This means that an employer is not legally obliged to recognise them as proof of diploma equivalence. Their purpose is to help clarify the academic background and qualifications of individuals so as to facilitate their career and training plans.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre assesses and compares foreign diplomas with French and European levels of study, at the request of individuals. It is therefore mainly an academic assessment.

It is not a competent authority when it comes to recognising professional diplomas in general. However, in certain specific cases, it can also help assess and compare certain vocational diplomas, provided that they can be classified at a specific level and that they belong to the national (formal) education system of the country concerned (for example, the Ukrainian diploma entitled *Diplom kvalifikovanovo robotnika* (Qualified Worker diploma) positioned at level 3 or 4).

While it can also assess diplomas of three years or less, such as the *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) or the *Brevet d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (BAP), the ENIC-NARIC France centre is not mandated to assess the following types of diploma:

- degrees issued by French institutes;
- qualifications achieved after short-term courses (under 200 hours);
- qualifications or tests confirming a level of language proficiency;
- certain qualifications specialising in a regulated profession (e.g. doctor, midwife, dentist, pharmacists, etc.);
- professional training that does not lead to an academic qualification.

Diploma assessment procedure at the ENIC-NARIC France centre

To establish a reliable and fair comparison of the foreign qualification with the French certification framework, the ENIC-NARIC France centre experts focus on an evaluation grid made up of ten criteria established in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and good practices in the ENIC-NARIC network. Two eligibility criteria and eight assessment criteria are used.

Table 1.2. Criteria grid for assessing foreign qualifications

| Criteria |
|---|
| Eligibility criteria |
| Recognition of the qualification by the national education system to which it belongs |
| Status of the institution in the country in which the qualification is awarded |
| Assessment criteria |
| Bilateral or multilateral agreement |
| Relative position of the qualification in a national or international framework |
| Official duration of studies |
| Credits (ECTS and other) |
| Pre-requisites for admission to the course |
| Components of the qualification (knowledge, skills, learning outcomes) |
| Academic and/or professional opportunities |
| Quality Assurance |
| Existence of an independent and external evaluation of the course or institution |

Source: ENIC-NARIC France centre, <https://www.france-education-international.fr/document/grille-criteres-drd>

The approximate time needed to process applications and produce statements depends on the complexity of the case and the time needed to perform checks with the authorities in the country of origin. The current average is three to four months. Complex cases can take anywhere from a few days to several months to process, particularly if there is no response from the authorities in the country of origin or if the qualifications come from different education systems or less common study programmes. The processing time may also be influenced by other factors such as the resources available, the response times of foreign institutions and the time of year. The simplest applications are those where the necessary documents and information are clear, complete and comply with the requirements. These applications are processed very quickly. Applications for recognition can only be made online.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre processes an average of 900 to 1 000 requests a week, which works out at around 12 to 15 cases a day per member of staff. It is important to note that the staff do not only review cases, but also perform cross-cutting tasks. The lack of sufficient resources for dealing with the influx of requests is a problem for the ENIC-NARIC France centre.

Each applicant can apply for only one diploma at a time. The fees associated with the procedure are EUR 20 when submitting the application to verify eligibility, followed by EUR 70 if the application is deemed eligible for detailed examination. Asylum seekers, refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or temporary protection are exempt from these fees and have access to fast-track processing of their application.

The process for requesting recognition of a qualification is explained on the website in French, English and Spanish. However, the English and Spanish content is quite summary, which could cause problems for applicants.

Recognition of the diplomas of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine

When it comes to processing requests for the recognition of qualifications of people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the ENIC-NARIC France centre applies recommendation 2022/554 of the European

Commission of 5 April 2022.³ It applies a specific procedure for refugees and people in a similar situation in accordance with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Between 2021 and 2022, there was an increase of around 150% in the number of applications for recognition of Ukrainian diplomas. In 2022, Ukraine ranked 4th in terms of the number of refugee requests received, with 1 274 applications (compared with 530 in 2021). However, this figure only takes into account Ukrainian diplomas, not qualifications obtained by Ukrainians in a neighbouring country, as might be the case for students who studied in Russia, Poland, Armenia or under the Soviet regime. In addition, there are many applications from people originally from sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb and the Middle East who have had to flee Ukraine. None of the above are included in the 1 274 applications. Consequently, the total number of requests for recognition of diplomas by BTP from Ukraine is probably higher.

For the period from 1 January to 30 December 2023, a total of 3 071 Ukrainian applications were received, including requests from BTP from Ukraine, an increase of 228% in one year. Between March 2022 and 31 August 2023, a total of 3 324 applications were received for the recognition of Ukrainian qualifications.

BTP who contact the ENIC-NARIC France centre are generally highly qualified. Most of the Ukrainians who call on their services have at least a university degree. Around 80-90% of them are women of working age (20-60) with high educational attainment. It is not uncommon for them to have obtained two, and even as many as four, tertiary qualifications.

Comparing Ukrainian diplomas is relatively straightforward, as the French and Ukrainian frameworks are both based on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). In addition, the Ukrainian authorities have done an excellent job of issuing qualifications and certificates in English, which makes it easier to find a comparison for a specific diploma. All new diplomas are in Ukrainian and English. For refugees, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of subsidiary or temporary protection, sworn translations into French of their diplomas are not compulsory. The ENIC-NARIC France centre has staff with the linguistic and cultural skills to assess these diplomas without a translation. In addition, the procedure for applying for recognition of diplomas is free of charge for BTP from Ukraine, beneficiaries of international protection (BIP) and asylum seekers. On average, the ENIC-NARIC France centre issues recognition statements for BTP from Ukraine within two months.

Assessment and recognition issues

Problems with documentation

One of the obstacles faced by refugees in general and by BTP from Ukraine is that they do not always have the documents to prove their diplomas as they have had to leave quickly and/or their accommodation and personal belongings have been destroyed.

In these cases, the ENIC-NARIC France centre can be flexible for BTP who are missing documents such as the final diploma or grade transcripts. For example, it is possible to submit just one of these two academic documents, whereas both are usually required. If documents are missing, ENIC-NARIC can also submit a request to the Ukrainian database.

The situation is more complicated for earlier diplomas (prior to 1998), which are not digitised in the database, leaving the ENIC-NARIC France centre with limited flexibility. Alumni must submit a request to the original institution. However, there have never been any cases of people turning up without any documents.

³ European Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0554>

An alternative procedure is the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), but this is more complex and requires significant human resources.

Issues with forgeries and conditions for awarding diplomas

Higher education in Ukraine suffers from quality issues and corruption. Some institutions are suspected of awarding diplomas without providing students with an adequate level of knowledge and skills, and even of selling diplomas to people who have never enrolled on a course.

These fraudulent practices undermine the credibility of the Ukrainian education system and jeopardise graduate employment and mobility opportunities. However, the ENIC-NARIC France centre does not have the resources to detect these "real fake" diplomas, nor does it provide any information on the extent of the problem.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre is aware of the existence of sites where it is possible to buy diplomas that are included in the official database. However, it does not have access to statistics enabling it to determine the approximate number of "genuine" fake diplomas in the official Ukrainian database. Moreover, it is still possible to buy a diploma even if it is not included in the database.

It should also be remembered that the ENIC NARIC France centre only provides statements of comparability of diplomas if the higher education institution (HEI) of origin is officially accredited in its native country. This requirement is designed to ensure a degree of reliability in the diploma recognition process. However, false diplomas, commonly referred to as "real fake diplomas", may escape this verification procedure.

"Real fake diplomas" are authentic documents obtained under false pretences. With regard to Ukraine, it is likely that these diplomas were acquired through corruption. When registered in the database, these diplomas can give the appearance of genuine documents. In such circumstances, the only effective measure is to contact each educational establishment individually in order to confirm the authenticity of the diploma. This can be a complex and costly process, often hampered by human resource constraints. However, these situations rarely arise with Ukrainian diplomas in the ENIC-NARIC France centre's experience.

Verification procedures

The ENIC-NARIC France centre adopts a rigorous and transparent approach to checking Ukrainian diplomas. It has an official tool and procedure for verifying the authenticity of Ukrainian diplomas, courtesy of the Ukrainian EDEBO database, which allows a comprehensive verification of each diploma obtained and the accreditation of each higher education establishment.

This online tool from the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science gives access to the database of diplomas awarded by Ukrainian institutions since 2000. The database contains information and data on academic documents obtained since 2000 (it also includes certain diplomas awarded between 1997 and 2000). In 1997, a new uniform format for diplomas was introduced in Ukraine, in the form of a small, laminated diploma. Between 1997 and 2001 (transitional period), two formats were provided: the old paper format and the new plastic format. The database does not contain old paper diplomas issued between 1993 and 2001.

For diplomas that cannot be verified in this database, the ENIC-NARIC France centre relies on its knowledge and on the resources available concerning the Ukrainian education system. If there is any doubt about the authenticity of a diploma, the centre contacts the Ukrainian authorities. The process of contacting the Ukrainian authorities for diplomas that are not in the database and for diplomas that are not verifiable (old diplomas before the year 2000 or diplomas with special options) is often long and cannot be done without the consent of the person concerned. Where necessary, the ENIC-NARIC France centre contacts the ENIC Ukraine centre, which contacts the institution that is reported to have issued the diploma in

Ukraine. This authentication process can sometimes take up to four months, although this is rare. This is the only way of verifying the authenticity of fraudulent diplomas. If the applicant refuses to give authorisation, the procedure ends in a refusal without a statement of comparability.

Apostilles are another way of verifying the authenticity of diplomas. If a person has obtained an apostille for their diploma in Ukraine from the Ministry of Education and Science, these diplomas are considered to be completely authentic, as the Ministry contacts the universities and departments directly to confirm their validity. Obtaining an apostille requires a trip to Ukraine and costs money. As a result, many displaced persons from Ukraine in France are unable to follow this procedure. However, there are exceptions, particularly for those who have already gone through the process out of necessity. In this case, the ENIC-NARIC France centre checks the apostille stamp when it appears on the documents submitted by applicants (paper diplomas can be verified using the apostille, provided that the apostille was applied after 18 January 2013).⁴

However, according to the ENIC-NARIC France procedure, there are no countries that insist on apostilles, and they are not a mandatory prerequisite for an application to be accepted by the ENIC-NARIC France centre. It is not possible to change the general procedure or to introduce a specific procedure for Ukrainians, especially in the current context where the ENIC-NARIC France centre receives around 200 - 250 applications per month from displaced persons from Ukraine and where it must, in accordance with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, take a more flexible approach when processing them.

The number of fake Ukrainian diplomas detected by the ENIC-NARIC France centre is very low.

The issue of regulated professions

A regulated activity is one that requires the possession of a specific diploma or qualification. The exercise of these activities is subject to access criteria or conditions of exercise that are governed by regulations established by the State. In France, more than 250 professions are subject to these regulations.⁵

There are two main categories of regulated professions in France:

- the liberal professions and ministerial offices, which include professions such as lawyers, bailiffs, architects, doctors, etc.
- commercial and craft professions, which include trades such as mechanics, hairdressers, etc.

The recognition of foreign qualifications in regulated professions, such as health and craft professions, depends directly on the specific professional sector. Recognition is not automatic and is subject to the regulations and requirements specific to each profession, which may impose additional requirements, such as skills assessments, exams, proficiency tests and internships in order to establish if the foreign diploma meets the required national standards. The Regional Health Agency (*Agence Régionale de Santé* or ARS) and the Guild of Trades and Arts (*Chambres de Métiers et de l'Artisanat* or CMA) are examples of competent authorities for regulated professions. There are several competent authorities depending on the professional field. With regard to access to a particular profession on the basis of a foreign diploma, the ENIC-NARIC France centre, in its capacity as an information centre, explains to holders of foreign diplomas what is possible for them and can redirect them to the competent authorities.

This chapter focuses mainly on professions that are of particular importance to BTP from Ukraine.

⁴ ENIC Ukraine, National Information Centre of Academic Mobility, Verification of apostilles issued by MES, <https://enic.in.ua/index.php/en/aporegen>

⁵ See Annex 1 for the list of regulated professions.

Craft professions

The CMAs support craft professions, some of which are regulated. To practise these activities, it is necessary to have a vocational training certificate, a vocational studies certificate, a diploma or an approved qualification of equal or higher level, or three years' experience in the sector.

A craftsman is an independent professional who carries out an activity in one of the following two areas:

- Production, transformation and/or repair of products: craftspeople make or repair goods, whether one-off items or limited series. Examples of craftspeople include cabinet-makers, pastry chefs, bricklayers and jewellers.
- Provision of craft services: craftspeople sell their manual skills by offering a range of services to their customers. These may include trades such as chimney sweep, pet groomer, ambulance driver, private hire vehicle driver, and many others.

Craft professions may be regulated and unregulated. Regulated craft professions are governed by Law No. 96-603 of 5 July 1996.⁶

When individuals wish to be self-employed, the ENIC-NARIC France centre refers them to the relevant CMAs. However, if they wish to work as salaried employees (hairstylist, beautician, electrician, etc.), the ENIC-NARIC France centre can issue them with a statement. A list of the regulated professions concerned is available on the *France Éducation International* website.⁷

In addition, the ENIC-NARIC centre is authorised to provide its expertise directly to CMAs that so request, in accordance with the decree of 28 October 2009.⁸ In this case, it issues a document containing the following information:

- Recognition of the diploma/qualification/certificate in the country of origin;
- - Opinion on the comparable level of the foreign diploma in France and in relation to Directive 2005/36/EC;⁹
- Regulation of the profession in the country of origin;
- Possibility of practising the profession in the country of origin with the diploma/qualification/certification presented.

The management of cases and issues relating to regulated professions requires in-depth expertise, which the ENIC-NARIC France centre is able to maintain thanks to constant monitoring in collaboration with other national and international bodies.

⁶ Law No. 96-603 of 5 July 1996 on the development and promotion of trade and the craft industry, https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000033613558

⁷ List of regulated professions for which a comparability statement can be issued by the ENIC-NARIC France centre (in French): <https://www.france-education-international.fr/document/reconnaissance-diplomes-liste-professions-reglementees>

⁸ Order of 28 October 2009 relating to the France Éducation international consultation procedure provided for by Decree No. 98-246 of 2 April 1998 and Title I of Decree No. 98-247 of 2 April 1998 <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000021232392/>

⁹ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/36/oj>

Healthcare professions

Conditions of practice in France for healthcare professionals displaced from Ukraine

The ENIC-NARIC France centre is not allowed to issue statements of comparability for medical and paramedical professions, which are liberal professions, with the exception of requests for secondary school diplomas when the statements are needed to pursue studies or take part in a competitive exam.

The Office of Exercise and Ethics in Health Professions (*Bureau de l'exercice et de la déontologie des professions de santé* - RH2) in the Ministry of Health, is responsible for regulations and ethics in healthcare professions, as well as for handling international issues relating to the recognition of practitioners with a European or third-country diploma.

On 22 March 2022, the National Council of the Medical Association (*Conseil national de l'Ordre des médecins* - CNOM) and the Ministry of Health **put in place a specific, fast-track procedure to facilitate the employment in health establishments of medical professionals from Ukraine with temporary protection status**. These professionals are entitled to a simplified agreement allowing them to work without any major restrictive conditions. By virtue of the granting of temporary protection status to medical professionals displaced from Ukraine, the Director General of the Regional Health Agency (ARS) in their place of residence is authorised to temporarily approve their direct recruitment by a health or medico-social establishment, in order to respond rapidly to their needs. Candidates should apply to the ARS in their place of residence.

This scheme covers two types of profession: medical and paramedical.

For medical professions, there are two criteria:

- The candidate must hold a Ukrainian diploma in one of the medical categories.
- They must also have a satisfactory level of French or English (depending on the department employing them).

Wherever possible, the professionals concerned are required to provide documents proving their professional qualifications, such as diplomas and licences. However, if they do not have these documents, the French Medical Council specifies that they can replace them with a written statement.

The ARS helps put BTP in touch with medical establishments that might be able to employ them. A meeting is organised with a head of department to assess their language proficiency. If it is considered good enough, the ARS issues a temporary practice permit, although this is not a free practice licence. Professionals who obtain this authorisation will have the status of associate practitioner, meaning that they must always be accompanied by an experienced professional when working on hospital wards.

As of mid-May 2023, 54 BTP from Ukraine had been granted temporary authorisation to practise. However, 186 applications from Ukrainian doctors had been rejected, often because they were incomplete or because of a lack of language skills.

In order for these professionals to be able to benefit from the licensing procedure (PAE) to practise over the long term, they have to pass the Knowledge Verification Test (EVC). This annual competitive examination consists of two written tests. Individuals concerned register in the speciality corresponding to their diploma and sit the two tests. If they are successful, they must follow a skills consolidation programme lasting at least two years, during which they will be supervised by a doctor. At the end of this period, a committee of specialists delivers a favourable or unfavourable opinion. The process culminates in registration with the French Medical Council (*Conseil National de l'Ordre des Médecins*) and the right to practise fully in France.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the first opportunity for BTP from Ukraine to sit the EVC was in September/October 2023. Once they have completed the programme, they will be able to work in the

private or public sector. The EVC is not based on nationality, but does require a diploma. It is compulsory for graduates from non-EU countries.

When it comes to paramedical professions, the situation is more complex. Training in Ukraine varies considerably in terms of duration and content. For example, training to become a physiotherapist, which is not as common in Ukraine, is shorter than in France (five years in France, less in Ukraine). Nursing training lasts three years in France and one year in Ukraine. Because of these differences, there is a certain reluctance to grant temporary work permits for these professions. In some cases, professionals can work as orderlies or in other unregulated professions in France, such as stretcher-bearers or in hospital agencies.

However, there is no direct equivalence for authorisation to practise paramedical professions. In the absence of an equivalent system, professionals must undergo further training in France if they wish to practise, with the VAE (validation of acquired experience) playing no role in the process. For the time being, the VAE is mainly applicable to nursery assistants and childcare auxiliaries, and not to other professions.

According to the ARS, Ukrainian doctors complete a five-year medical degree before enrolling in a specialist certificate course that lasts one or two years, depending on their speciality. This differs from the system in France, where studies last longer.

Most Ukrainian doctors have a Master's degree (equivalent to BAC+5 in France) and do not have a specialist certificate. However, some Ukrainian medical specialists are finding it difficult to establish an equivalence in France. For example, although Ukrainian dentists have the title of stomatologist in Ukraine, this title is not recognised in France. They can practise as dental surgeons, but not as stomatologists, as this speciality is not included in the basic diplomas in France.

Recognition of skills: Validation of Acquired Experience (VAE)

Validation of acquired experience

Alongside academic education, continuing education and work-study programmes, the validation of professional experience (VAE) is a fourth route to qualification.

The VAE (*Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*) is an individual right enshrined in the Labour Code and the Education Code. Under the terms of Article L. 6111-1 of the Labour Code, "anyone is entitled to the validation of their experience, particularly professional experience". VAE is therefore an individual right, regardless of age, nationality, status or level of education. The only requirement is that you have been engaged in an activity related to the content of the professional qualification in question.¹⁰ All (active) qualifications listed in the National Directory of Professional Certification (RNCP) are accessible under this scheme.

Each competent ministry or certifying body manages the issuance of its own professional VAE certifications. Professional certification may take the form of a State diploma or a qualification issued on behalf of the State, a vocational qualification issued by a training organisation, or a certificate of professional qualification (CQP) issued by a professional sector, certifying the level of qualification acquired in a particular field of activity.

In economic terms, validation of professional experience helps to resolve recruitment tensions in the labour market. It also has an important social dimension, enabling the leveraging of skills acquired across a lifetime and the development of diverse career paths.

¹⁰ Before the VAE reform, applicants had to be able to prove at least one year's professional experience (i.e. 1 607 hours, consecutive or otherwise).

The VAE was introduced by the Social Modernisation Law No. 2022-73 of 17 January 2002¹¹ and marks a major shift in the certification process by dissociating the fields of training and certification.

Nevertheless, the VAE has not been as successful as had been hoped and, although development constraints have been identified, few changes have been made to remove them. They include administrative complexities, the length of courses and the difficulty of mobilising sources of funding.

An initial report by the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs (IGAS) and the General Inspectorate for Administration, National Education and Research (IGAENR) published in October 2016,¹² was followed by a second, commissioned by the Ministry of Solidarity and Health, the then Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration, the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the Secretariat of State for National Education and Youth, in December 2019,¹³ which recommended a comprehensive overhaul of the system and laid the foundations for the reform contained in Law No. 2022-1598 of 21 December 2022 on emergency measures relating to the functioning of the labour market with a view to full employment.¹⁴

REVA (Recognition and Validation)

Initiated in 2021 by the then Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration, the in-depth transformation of the VAE scheme was initially driven by the REVA "Recognise and Validate" trial scheme aimed at simplifying and expediting the certification of professional skills. Following this first phase, the Ministry of Labour extended the trial from September 2022 to June 2023, under REVA 2. REVA and then REVA 2, which were developed by a state-owned start-up, tested the centralisation of applications on a single platform, the absence of a minimum length of experience, support for candidates from professional support staff as of the moment they put together their VAE feasibility file, and the financing of their pathway (support, panel interview). Applicants have the opportunity to obtain an official, recognised qualification, whether a diploma or a professional certificate.

The initial results of REVA 2¹⁵, which covered nineteen qualifications in the health and social services and early childhood sectors, showed that the system helped to reduce waiting times, achieve an eligibility rate of 99.8% for applications, considerably reduce the time taken to obtain eligibility (6.9 days compared with two to four months), reduce the number of drop-outs (8.79% compared with 65%) and reduce the length of the process (six to eight months compared with sixteen months).

On the basis of these results, the decision to maintain certain tools and to continue the transformation process was enshrined in the aforementioned Law of 21 December 2022, so enabling ambitious targets to be set.

¹¹ Law No. 2022-73 of 17 January 2002 on social modernisation, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000000408905>

¹² IGAS/IGAENR, *Rapport Évaluation de la politique publique de validation des acquis de l'expérience*, 2016, <https://www.igas.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2016-013R.pdf>

¹³ Claire Khecha, Yanic Soubien, David Rivoire, *De la VAE 2002 à la REVA 2020 : libérer la VAE. Reconnaître l'expérience tout au long de la vie*, https://www.ressources-de-la-formation.fr/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=74904

¹⁴ Law No. 2022-1598 of 21 December 2022 on emergency measures relating to the functioning of the labour market with a view to full employment, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000046771781>

¹⁵ REVA: bilan intermédiaire, March 2023.

The reform of the VAE

Following the adoption of the Labour Market Law on 21 December 2022, the right to the VAE was consolidated throughout 2023, with the following main changes:

- Improved conditions of access to the VAE;
- Possibility of acquiring one or more fields of competence within a professional qualification;
- Simplification of the validation process;
- Extension of the period of leave granted for the VAE;
- Centralisation of sources of funding for VAE support;
- Setting up a public service dedicated to the VAE and a digital one-stop shop;
- Experimentation with VAE initiatives integrated into vocational training contracts.

The aim of the Law is to simplify, develop and encourage the use of the VAE system. The government has set itself the target of 100 000 VAE pathways per year by 2027, compared with 30 000 at present.

The legislation establishes universal access to the VAE. From now on, anyone, not just those already in work, can take advantage of the scheme.

The eligibility condition, which required at least one year's experience, has also been abolished. Previously, access to the VAE was reserved for candidates who could prove that they had been engaged in an activity directly related to the content of the vocational qualification in question for a minimum period of one year. Now, candidates need only provide evidence of professional experience directly related to the professional qualification they are seeking. It is the candidate's responsibility to demonstrate, through their feasibility file, the consistency of their experience with the skills required to obtain the professional qualification. This makes the VAE process easier for refugees, who often find it difficult to present documents that formally justify their professional experience (pay slips, for example), which they rarely took with them when they left their country of origin, or which they do not have if they worked in the informal sector.

It is now possible to benefit from a partial VAE, meaning that the VAE can relate to a vocational qualification in its entirety, or only to one or more of its fields of competence. The VAE pathway can be supplemented by additional short training courses, such as an educational pathway aimed at achieving a professional objective or periods of work experience. In addition, in order to validate the VAE pathway, the ministry or certifying body may take into account not only activities directly linked to the certification sought, but also internships, periods of initial or continuing on-the-job training and periods of work experience. In this way, the VAE can be accompanied by other vocational training schemes.

The duration of VAE leave has now been doubled. When employees have all or part of their acquired experience validated during their working hours, they are entitled to specific leave, which is counted as actual working time. Under the new Labour Market Law referred to above, candidates can take 48 hours' VAE leave to prepare their validation file or to prepare for their assessment session, instead of the 24 hours previously allowed.

The new regulations simplify a number of procedures and provide better support for candidates involved in the VAE process.

An online public service dedicated to VAE has been set up to inform, guide and support people throughout the VAE process. The purpose of this platform is to promote the VAE system, provide detailed information on the steps to take, and facilitate access to the necessary resources. It also provides a list of Qualiopi-certified support assistants (*Architecte Accompagnateur de Parcours* (AAP) for the VAE who meet precise specifications for each applicant.

This online public service, France VAE, will be set up at national level by a public interest group, also called France VAE, made up of members such as the State, the regions, the French Public Employment Service

(*France Travail*),¹⁶ the National Agency for Adult Vocational Training (AFPA), the skills operators and the regional interprofessional joint committees (CPIR). They will work together to ensure effective coordination and guarantee high-quality support for applicants. The decree of 27 December 2023 on the validation of prior learning¹⁷ sets out the operating procedures for this platform, including the establishment of a one-stop shop to simplify procedures.

The process has been redesigned and begins as of registration on the France VAE digital platform. Previously, the process could only begin once eligibility had been confirmed.

Funding for the VAE will be provided by the France VAE public interest group, which will define the conditions thereof in a decision at its general meeting.

The rules governing the composition of the VAE certification panel will be reviewed. The composition and operating procedures of the panel will be determined by decree.

The reversed VAE

The Labour Market Law introduces major changes to the VAE. As well as simplifying and modernising the procedure, and guaranteeing the stability of career paths, it provides for a new trial scheme called "reversed VAE", which was launched by decree on 26 May 2023¹⁸ for a period of three years (until 28 February 2026).

The reversed VAE is an experiment designed to allow the signing of derogatory contracts for professional training. As a result, anyone over the age of 16 can benefit from these professional training contracts, for a maximum of three years.¹⁹ These contracts can be used for vocational training, theoretical training and VAE activities. The main aim is to facilitate professional integration by filling skills gaps. Unlike the traditional VAE scheme, the reversed VAE offers flexible training focused on the acquisition of specific skills grouped into fields of expertise. Beneficiaries are able to validate diplomas or professional qualification certificates based on skills that are in the process of being acquired.

This trial is based on a call for projects open to companies, training organisations and skills operators. The projects must focus on sectors or professions with recruitment problems. The sectors currently in short supply include health and social care, catering, personal services, logistics and handling, energy, construction and public works, and many others.

Funding for each vocational pathway implemented as part of a project selected by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity is provided by the employer's skills operator (OPCO). This funding, of up to EUR 9 000 per year per pathway, covers teaching costs, costs associated with VAE support, and certain ancillary costs.

¹⁶ Formerly called *Pôle emploi* until 31 December 2023.

¹⁷ Decree No. 2023-1275 of 27 December 2023 on the validation of acquired experience, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000048679270>

¹⁸ Decree No. 2023-408 of 26 May 2023 concerning the experimental scheme allowing professionalisation contracts to be signed that combine validation of prior learning (VAE) activities, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000047596683>

¹⁹ The standard professional training contract cannot be offered to anyone over the age of 25.

VAE initiatives for new arrivals

VAE without borders

From 2016 to 2018, an initiative was conducted in the Lyon region offering people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods the opportunity to obtain a VAE qualification. Building on this experience, a new project was launched in 2020, focusing on supporting newcomers from non-EU countries.

However, this project was limited in scope, targeting only a small number of ten to twenty applicants. Newcomers had problems because most of them were not eligible for the VAE because of the requirement for one year's prior experience (an issue that has now been resolved in the new Law) meaning that around 95% of individuals were unable to take part in the project.

At the same time, the Directorate for Integration and Access to Nationality (DIAN) within the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas expressed a wish to develop this project on a national scale, under the name "VAE without borders", in 11 education authorities or *académies* (Lille, Normandy, Paris, Creteil, Versailles, Dijon, Montpellier, Toulouse, Nice, Nancy-Metz, Reims), where teams were encouraged to innovate and improve the system. Accordingly, the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas set up a partnership with the Directorate-General for School Education (DGESCO) to set up a national VAE scheme specifically tailored to the needs of foreign newcomers. Candidates can benefit from additional support, including courses in French as a foreign language, technical training and periods of immersion in a professional environment. The eligibility criteria are as follows: be a newcomer from a non-EU country who has had their first residence permit for less than five years, and have at least one year's professional experience abroad, regardless of the sector or level. However, this project terminates at the end of 2023, with the *académies* that were implementing the "VAE without borders" project moving on to the "Experience without borders" project.

Simplified VAE procedure for new arrivals - 1000 VAE

The Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity entrusted the National Agency for Adult Vocational Training (AFPA) with implementing a specific VAE scheme, entitled "1 000 validations of professional skills for the employment of new arrivals", as part of the Skills Investment Plan (PIC). The programme's partners include the DIAN within the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII) and *France Travail*.

The aim of the programme is to help 1 000 newcomers with a minimum level of proficiency in French (A1). People eligible to be considered as "newcomers" were third-country nationals who had been legally resident in France for less than five years, had signed the Republican Integration Contract (*Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine* - CIR) and were looking for work, whether or not they were on the jobseekers' list. BTP from Ukraine were also authorised to take part in the programme.

The aim of this initiative is to simplify the recognition and validation of skills by offering personalised support from the outset:

- a shorter procedure, from eligibility to the assessment panel, of a maximum of eight months as opposed to the usual twelve months;
- upstream work to identify skills needs by region and sector of activity;
- a personalised response based on the newcomer's level of French, professional experience and career path, assessed on the basis of a placement test.

The launch of the scheme was more complicated than expected, and its progress was delayed by the health crisis. Despite being extended until June 2023, the scheme did not achieve its quantitative targets.

Under this simplified system, two exemptions have been introduced: an eligibility procedure without supporting documents based on an evaluation of professional skills and abilities (ECAP) and the possibility of acquiring one or more fields of competence through the VAE.

This differs from the traditional VAE scheme (prior to the reform), under which partial validation was not permitted. This derogation from the common law legislative framework, under which only professional certifications registered in the National Directory of Professional Certification (RNCP) could be prepared as part of a VAE initiative, was made possible by Article 9 of the Law of 5 September 2018 for the Freedom to Choose One's Future Occupation.²⁰

The AFPA, as a trusted third party, can confirm the applicant's professional experience and skills through real-life situations, as an alternative to pay slips or work certificates. This service makes it possible to reconstruct the candidate's professional experience and assess their skills. A VAE advisor and a job expert from the AFPA carry out a placement assessment to make the candidate eligible for the programme.

Participation in the programme was free of charge for newcomers.

Depending on applicants' level of language and qualifications, they were placed on one of three pathways to enhance their experience:

- Pathway 1: access to a professional certificate/title (TP) from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration through VAE. Applicants could take a further 200 hours of training to acquire the skills they lacked. They had to have the required prerequisites or acquire as many of the missing skills as possible through additional training modules.
- Pathway 2: validation of one or more skills certificates providing access to a Certificate of Professional Competence (CCP) from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Integration by way of derogation, aimed at jobs accessible by fields of competence. Applicants could follow a 70-hour training course to bring themselves up to the level required by the French system, including adapting to production methods and learning technical language.
- Pathway 3: recognition of professional skills (RSFP), aimed specifically at people who do not have the necessary prerequisites to access a VAE TP or VAE CCP under Level B1.

Candidates were identified and referred to the AFPA by the OFII, *France Travail* and other organisations working with first-time arrivals. One of the main difficulties identified by the AFPA lay in identifying the target population, despite the efforts made by accommodation centres, social workers and other players involved. The intermediaries used proved to be insufficient. In addition, the OFII and *France Travail* had difficulty sourcing applicants, as their respective information systems do not have a straightforward way of directing newcomers to this scheme. In addition, attempts were made to involve the HOPE target groups in a dual qualification.

A priori, the scheme was designed to be compatible with a professional activity, but depending on the job, it can be difficult to reconcile the two. The various sessions and workshops could spread over a maximum period of eight months, from eligibility to the final panel assessment.

The final assessment was made before a panel of professionals who examined the applicant's file and assessed his or her skills. Obtaining certification allows people to apply directly for jobs that were previously inaccessible to them. However, the number of available sessions was limited. People who submitted their applications to the Prefecture therefore had to wait for an appropriate certification session. One of the findings of this trial is the importance of organising regular validation sessions to prevent applicants from finding themselves trapped and sometimes giving up. The VAE reform requires that applicants be offered

²⁰ Law No. 2018-771 of 5 September 2018 for the Freedom to Choose One's Future Occupation (1), <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000037367660>

a date with a certification panel within three months of submitting their validation file on the France VAE platform.

This scheme is beneficial to all participants, because everyone leaves with something: a certificate, a partial diploma or recognition of professional skills that are not listed but are recognised by certain employers.

Around a hundred programmes have been launched, the last of which should be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

Although the quantitative results of the programme have fallen well short of expectations, it has nonetheless made it possible to test two experimental methods: the acquisition of fields of competence through the VAE, and the use of a modified eligibility procedure.

The “Experience without borders” project

In partnership with the Directorate for Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics (DREES), a project was initiated in the Lyon education authority to motivate migrants, help direct them towards employment and guarantee their professional integration in France. The central theme of the project is the validation of skills and sustainable integration, which are no longer limited to new arrivals. The aim is to make the most of their experience, supplement it where necessary, improve their command of French, and help them become accustomed to the world of work in France, by focusing on the specific professional practices of each profession. The project began nationwide in January 2023 and has 11 French education authority in its consortium.

Experience without borders (*Expérience sans frontières* - ESF) also refers certain beneficiaries to the EQPR procedure. As part of this initiative, ESF involves migrants by working with local partners. It provides additional support to beneficiaries, assigning them a dedicated career adviser to help them in their job search. This support ensures continuity for migrants and prevents them from dropping out of the labour market.

ESF has a higher proportion of women, and programmes are entirely personalised, lasting from three months to a year and a half.

The main tool used is RECTEC (Recognition of cross-disciplinary skills in relation to employability and certifications), a practical guide that aims to promote employability by acknowledging cross-disciplinary skills and matching them with professional qualifications. It even works for people with a limited mastery of the French language.

Each beneficiary is allocated a career adviser who provides extra support from the start through to professional integration, including individual and group interviews and drawing up a personalised support plan and a mutual commitment contract with the beneficiary. Once they have been transferred to the national level, the career advisers undergo three months' training to harmonise their skills.

In addition, ESF has set up groups to enable 50 to 60 career advisers to discuss good practice with regard to the obstacles they face.

ESF has also requested a budget to work with a specialist sociologist who can provide qualitative data. Interview questionnaires are being prepared and will focus on the gaps between the feasibility of the project and the initial wishes of the beneficiaries using a panel system.

ESF works in collaboration with the ENIC-NARIC France centre and regularly requests statements of comparability.

According to the forecasts drawn up with the DGESCO and the *Groupement d'Intérêt Public de l'Académie de Lyon* (GIPAL - Lyon Academy Public Interest Group), which is responsible for administering the project, around 700 beneficiaries will receive support over two years, across the 12 educational authorities.

A pilot phase of the project ran for almost two years (from October 2020 to June 2022) in three departments in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region (Ain, Loire and Rhône). This initiative was part of the priorities established by the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas to facilitate access to employment for foreign nationals in support of measure 14 of the Interministerial Committee for Immigration and Integration of 6 November 2019.

A positive exit rate of close to 65% was observed, and a third of the beneficiaries began a VAE process.

50% of beneficiaries found a job, 10% went on to further training and 5% set up their own business.

In total, the programme has benefited 70 people (42 in the Rhône, including 30 in the Lyon area, 15 in the Ain and 13 in the Loire), representing 31 nationalities.

To raise awareness of the scheme, ESF took part in the fourth day of CIR civic training dedicated to helping people find work.

In addition, ESF and DGESCO have worked together on several national webinars to communicate with their partners. ESF is also seeking to contact employer groups, and benefits from the support of the *Union Nationale des Associations Intermédiaires* (UNAI), which disseminates information within its network.

In 2024, the ESF scheme will be rolled out in 12 education authorities, including the 11 that were previously involved in the "VAE without borders" project, as well as the Marseille authority. This project will be implemented in collaboration with the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas.

Other skills development schemes

There are various programmes and players involved in implementing public policies designed to facilitate access to employment and skills development for newcomers. These initiatives exist at both national and local level and are run by various players, such as government departments and local authorities working in collaboration with private and voluntary sector partners. In addition, various projects have been trialled in this area, at both national and local level, to promote the professional integration and skills development of newcomers.

Professional integration of refugees – the HOPE scheme

Since 2017, the HOPE project (*Hébergement Orientation Parcours vers l'Emploi* or Accommodation, Orientation and Pathway to Employment), a programme co-led by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity and the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, has aimed to improve the social and professional integration of BIP while meeting the labour needs of businesses. It offers comprehensive, personalised and integrated support as well as specialised training focused on sectors facing shortages. It helps to develop the professional skills of people without qualifications.

HOPE has several aspects:

- Operational preparation for collective employment (POEC), a scheme run by *France Travail* (400 hours over a maximum of four months), including vocational training in French at the same time as drawing up a career plan.
- Specialised training in a trade (minimum 450 hours over four months), provided via one of the work-study training schemes (experimental or standard vocational training contract, temporary professional development contract or apprenticeship), focusing on the unmet needs of businesses.
- Accommodation and catering services on the training site.

- Comprehensive support covering administrative, social, professional, medical, civic and other aspects.

The HOPE programme runs for a period of eight months, through partnerships between public and private stakeholders,²¹ and is implemented by the AFPA as a training organisation.

The budget allocated under the Skills Investment Plan is EUR 15 million per year.

The programme mainly targets BIPs who have signed the CIR and who have a language level of A1 (reference to the CEFRL). Priority is given to unaccompanied young people under the age of 25 who fall within the scope of the national reception scheme (DNA) and are housed in reception centres for asylum seekers or emergency accommodation.

The OFII is responsible for identifying potential candidates. Information on the programme is provided to BIP during interviews when the CIR is signed, and during collective information sessions organised by the AFPA, *France Travail*, etc. It has been opened to BTP from Ukraine but their number is de facto limited, mainly because of the specificities of the population in question (mainly women with children). As the HOPE programme also focuses on accommodation, it is not the most suitable solution for families with young children.

The AFPA is also responsible for developing the training, social support and integration programme.

The project has the following benefits:

- it offers support that includes accommodation throughout the programme, thereby removing obstacles to integration into French society and access to employment;
- it provides an opening for companies experiencing recruitment difficulties. Training places are allocated at regional level according to the needs of companies;
- social and administrative support is provided by the AFPA or the temporary work integration companies (ETTI) for the temporary employment sector, enabling companies to concentrate on supervision, monitoring and the professional aspects of the scheme;
- beneficiaries are supported by a *France Travail* adviser, who assists them and helps them to make the most of the skills they have acquired through their previous work experience.

The scheme is funded by the Skills Investment Plan, by skills operators, by *France Travail* and by the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, to the tune of EUR 42 million.

Since 2019, the forecast number of entries into the pathway has been 1 500 per year. Between 2017 and 2022, more than 4 500 BIP entered the programme:

- - 76.17% of BIP obtained a language proficiency diploma (DCL);
- - 83.60% obtained a qualification (Certificate of Professional Competence or full qualification);
- - 74.45% were in employment or training at the end of the programme (4% in training);
- - 89.23% found accommodation;
- - 944 benefited from the programme in 2022.

The 76 AFPA centres throughout mainland France are involved in the project.

HOPE makes it possible to develop the professional skills of people who do not have any qualifications or who have already worked in their country of origin.

²¹ Ministry of the Interior and Overseas, Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarity, the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (DIHAL), *France Travail*, the OFII, the AFPA, and eleven Skills Operators (OPCO) working with more than 500 companies.

Sustainable Employment for New Arrivals - EDNA

The EDNA project (*Emploi durable pour les nouveaux arrivants* or Sustainable Employment for Newcomers) was launched in 2019 and is co-financed by the DGEF and the AMIF. Its main aim is to simplify the recruitment process for newcomers by proposing new methods of finding employment. The programme is run by the association "Transfer", which applies its own Intervention on Supply and Demand (IOD) method.

The IOD method can be summarised in three points:

- Recruitment without a CV;
- Job shadowing in the presence of the IOD advisor;
- Post-hire monitoring for the first six months of the contract.

The first phase of the project ran from 2019 to 2021 and will continue until the end of 2024. The regions involved are Île-de-France, Pays de la Loire, Occitanie and Nouvelle-Aquitaine. For the period 2022-2024, the objectives are as follows: admit a total of 1 995 people over a three-year period, with 60% of non-BIP and 40% BIP.

Individuals must meet the following eligibility criteria apply for the scheme:

- Signed a CIR within the last five years;
- Want to find a long-term job (permanent contract or fixed-term contract of more than six months);
- Have completed training programmes and are available for work;
- Have a good enough level of French to be employable.

BTP from Ukraine are an exception as the CIR requirement does not apply to them.

"Transfer" took on ten people of Ukrainian nationality in 2022-2023, out of the 15 people initially referred. Approximately six more people of other nationalities and coming from Ukraine also need to be taken into consideration. Nouvelle-Aquitaine remains the region with the highest number of incoming Ukrainian professionals. Of the total number of incoming Ukrainian professionals, over 70% are women. 68% of the professionals in the EDNA scheme have no foreign qualifications. However, it should be noted that Ivoirians and Ukrainians tend to be better qualified than others.

Initiatives by France Travail

France Travail is a public employment service that can help BTP and BIP find employment. *France Travail* works with government departments and partners to receive BTP from Ukraine, inform of their rights, and help them with their job search. A number of schemes have been set up to this end. However, there is a limit to their potential, as there is no obligation to register with *France Travail*. It is therefore only possible to offer specific support measures to people who are registered with *France Travail*, in order to facilitate their professional integration.

France Travail has implemented a proactive strategy to make contact with displaced persons from Ukraine by preparing and distributing a questionnaire in French and Ukrainian to identify people interested in a professional activity. *France Travail* has also adapted its assistance scheme by providing a translation tool. In addition, it keeps a close eye on the recruitment proposals submitted by companies on the Ministry of Employment's "*Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine*" (I'm committed to Ukraine) platform.

Since the beginning of the crisis, *France Travail's* action has focused on three main strategic areas. The first is to develop a proactive approach to reaching out to displaced persons from Ukraine, who are unfamiliar with public employment services in France and face other issues. This is why *France Travail* is committed to outreach, through being present alongside other public stakeholders in the Prefectures,

particularly at the one-stop shops specially set up to welcome them, or during the consular days organised by the Ukrainian Embassy in different regions. This active presence has enabled displaced Ukrainians to discover *France Travail's* services and to find out about the offers and support available to them. The consular days organised by the Ukrainian embassy in various locations represent another source of information for Ukrainian citizens. During these events, *France Travail* staff are present to provide information in person, using a range of supporting documents, on the opportunities that *France Travail* can offer in their search for work.²² However, in most cases, particularly in the French regions, BTP from Ukraine obtain information about *France Travail* services from associations, particularly those set up by the Prefecture to deal with displaced persons from Ukraine and register through them. In general, *France Travail* frequently shares its documentation with these associations.

France Travail has also developed and distributed a questionnaire in French and Ukrainian to help identify people seeking work. This questionnaire can be easily completed on smartphones using a QR code, thus simplifying the process. It also includes a field for providing information on qualifications and educational attainment.

The questionnaire was designed to achieve two specific objectives. Firstly, to inform displaced persons about the assistance provided by the public employment service and to emphasise the importance of being registered as early as possible in the process. Secondly, to gather information on the sectors in which these people would like to find employment, and to assess their level of language proficiency.

Over 90% of the displaced individuals were unfamiliar with *France Travail* and had not registered spontaneously. To remedy this, a two-stage reminder approach was put in place to properly contact these individuals. On the one hand, if the questionnaire was incomplete, particularly when the person did not have settled accommodation, they were called back later by someone speaking their mother tongue to help them complete the information required. Secondly, the agencies systematically call back each displaced person contacted to arrange a meeting in the agency and to register them.

These measures guarantee a proactive approach to facilitating the registration and support of displaced persons from Ukraine in their search for employment.

Dedicated liaison officers have been put in place to facilitate collaboration and communication with associations whose immediate objective is not necessarily labour market integration, but rather the urgent resolution of other problems.

The second focus of *France Travail's* action is to put in place tailored support adapted to the specific characteristics of displaced people from Ukraine, who face major obstacles such as the language barrier or significant additional obstacles, particularly with regard to housing.

Unlike the usual online process, the registration appointment takes place face-to-face, in a branch, in order to carry out an in-depth diagnosis of each individual's situation. This is based on the profile data provided by the BTP via the aforementioned questionnaire.

France Travail has developed an instant translation tool specifically designed to help people find work. This tool works in 130 languages and has been extended to include Ukrainian, enabling advisers to discuss and support displaced persons even when interpreters are not available. Thanks to this translation tool, a precise diagnosis of skills can be carried out without the need for an interpreter, thus facilitating the support process.

The third aspect of *France Travail's* work involves taking a proactive approach to employers.

The Ministry of Labour has set up a dedicated platform where companies can inform *France Travail* of their recruitment plans and available job offers.

²² Between February and June 2023, 13 consular days were organised in 6 different regions.

France Travail has undertaken to contact each company that registers on this platform individually, in order to verify the genuine nature of the need and its duration, and to promote other profiles than displaced people from Ukraine, in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination. It is of vital importance to be attentive to the employment conditions offered.

France Travail advisers are responsible for promoting the profiles of people displaced from Ukraine. This means that they propose these profiles to companies, highlighting the qualifications and skills of displaced Ukrainians, in order to increase their chances of recruitment.²³

On 30 September 2023, *France Travail* had 16 509 displaced jobseekers from Ukraine, including:

- 27.9% with five years of tertiary education (Bac+5 level in France);
- 30.4% with an upper secondary diploma and/or four years of tertiary (Bac to Bac+4 level);
- 20% claiming to speak fluent or intermediate French;
- 78.0% who were women;
- 67.2% aged between 26 and 49 years old;
- 37.9% enrolled in training;
- 32.6% learning French as a foreign language.

France Travail also uses a recruitment method based on the simulation recruitment method, whereby recruitment managers assess skills rather than relying on CVs. In this way, a person who does not necessarily have the required diploma can be taken on as long as they can demonstrate the skills required by the company. The exercises proposed by *France Travail* are specific to the business in question, whereas VAE covers a broader field. To develop these exercises, *France Travail* begins by analysing the jobs, then carries out simulations on company employees to adjust the results based on people who do not belong to the company.

The main obstacle, however, is the language barrier. When they register with *France Travail*, the first thing BTP from Ukraine ask for is French courses. Another challenge is the lack of availability of French as a Foreign Language (FFL) courses in certain areas, where demand is high and teaching resources are stretched. At mid-2023, *France Travail* was still managing to guarantee places for everyone, offering free and even paid courses at national level. The courses run for three to four months, from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., with participants paid EUR 712 per month, and are usually attended by between groups of 10 to 15 individuals. However, in the second half of 2023, in some regions there were no more available places and no more available courses. Availability of FFL courses is dependent on the Regional Training Plan defined by the Regional Council in year N-1, the State's offer, and OFII's complementary FFL contract for BTP from Ukraine. *France Travail* is authorised to make use of the regional language training offer, mainly financed by the regional councils, for professional purposes, and even to supplement it. The management of *France Travail* plans to introduce new courses from 2024. Many BTPs from Ukraine have learnt French through associations that provide French classes.

As far as communication and support for the recognition of qualifications and skills is concerned, *France Travail* employees are generally aware of the ENIC-NARIC France centre and can explain how it works, but they do not systematically provide information on it or help individuals with the recognition process due to time constraints. So it is left up to each individual to make their own arrangements. However, in some regions, people are referred to public writers in various associations who can help them with the formalities.

²³ Minutes of the meeting on "Tools for taking into account and recognising the qualifications of Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection" organised by the DGEFP/DAEI, 28 May 2022.

Conclusion

Although temporary protection status gives BTP from Ukraine simpler and faster access to the labour market than other migrants, it is still not easy to find jobs that match their qualifications.

The first hurdle is an insufficient level of French, which makes it difficult to find the right information and consequently to access the labour market. The ENIC-NARIC France centre website explains the diploma evaluation procedure in French, English and Spanish but the explanations in the two latter languages are not particularly detailed, which can cause problems for people interested in the process. In addition, BTP from Ukraine cannot do everything at the same time - learn the language, gain professional experience, and earn some money.

The fact that language skills are often inadequate means that, especially in regulated professions, BTP from Ukraine have to go through a very long process (learning the language, competitive exams, etc.). This situation is particularly prevalent in the healthcare sector, despite its urgent need for manpower.

It is crucial to encourage BTP from Ukraine to make greater use of the services of the ENIC-NARIC France centre to obtain a statement of comparability. Even if the statements have no legal validity, they can be used to enrol in further training or to apply for jobs that match their level of qualification.

The issue in terms of provision of information is that information is not reaching BTP in an organised and comprehensible manner. There is no single, centralised information portal providing guidance and direction for BTP from Ukraine and other third-country nationals wishing to have their skills and qualifications assessed and recognised.

Given that it is not mandatory for BTP from Ukraine to register with *France Travail* or to sign the CIR (that provides civic training during which signatories are informed, among other things, about the support provided by *France Travail*) the public employment service, in conjunction with the DGEF, has taken active steps to organise initiatives to assist BTP from Ukraine. This outreach approach, via a questionnaire, enables BTP who so wish to receive support and guidance in their job search. However, it is difficult to determine whether this approach is adequate. At 1 January 2024, 16 909 BTP from Ukraine had enrolled with *France Travail* since March 2022. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to judge the relevance of these figures, due mainly to problem of determining precisely how many BTP present in France are also part of the working population.

One of the most pressing challenges nevertheless remains the language barrier and the lack of FFL courses available in France. BTP can have access to the language courses offered by the OFII but they often consider them to be unsuited to their level of language proficiency.

All these measures, which were specifically designed to help BTP find work, are now being used to help introduce tools designed to help with professional profiling and simplified, multilingual job searches. As far as the recognition of skills via the VAE is concerned, the recent reform should reduce the difficulties faced by applicants due to the lengthy and cumbersome process.

The system for recognising and validating qualifications and skills acquired abroad still remains relatively complex, despite the progress that has been made and the ongoing efforts of all those involved.

Table 1.3. Stakeholders involved in schemes for recognising and leveraging qualifications and skills

| Stakeholder | Initiatives |
|---|---|
| ENIC-NARIC France centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statements of comparability of foreign diplomas for further study or professional purposes - Statements of recognition of periods of study abroad - Certification of certain professional qualifications - Certification of certain regulated craft professions as a salaried employee |
| Higher education institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of formal education diplomas for access to studies |
| Employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of formal education diplomas and professional qualifications for access to employment |
| Specific professional sectors: Regional Health Agency (<i>Agence Régionale de Santé - ARS</i>) and the Guild of Trades and Arts (<i>Chambres de Métiers et de l'Artisanat - CMA</i>) and others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of diplomas for regulated professions such as health or craft professions |
| The State, through its various ministries responsible for certification: National Education, Youth and Sport, Employment, Health and Social Affairs, Agriculture and the Sea, Culture, Defence. Professional sectors and private organisations that develop their own qualifications registered with the RNCP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VAE for skills acquired through experience |
| Ministry of the Interior and Overseas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of VAE (development of "VAE without borders" on a national scale; partner in the 1000 VAE programme; implementation of the "Experience without borders" project) - Co-lead of the HOPE project - Funding of the EDNA project |
| Ministry of Labour, Health and Solidarities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VAE implementation (reverse VAE; initiation of REVA and REVA2; 1000 VAE) - Co-lead of the HOPE project |
| Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of VAE |
| <i>France Travail</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for professional integration - Information on recognition - Setting up FFL courses |
| Associations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead on some government projects - Information on recognition and the steps to take - Support in obtaining recognition - Setting up language courses |

Annex A. Regulated professions in France

Table 1.4. List of regulated professions in France

| Categories | Regulated professions |
|---------------------------|--|
| Craft professions | Butcher - Baker-pastry chef – Tiler - Panel beater - Pork butcher Heating specialist - Air conditioning engineer - Mobile hairdresser - Hairdresser in a salon - Roofer - Electrician - Beautician - Ice cream maker - Water system installer - Gas installer - Mason - Farrier - Carpenter-joiner - House painter - Plasterer - Plumber - Fishmonger - Chief Pyrotechnician - Chimney sweep - Vehicle repairer Farm and forestry equipment repairer - Construction equipment repairer - Motorcycle repairer |
| Arts & Culture | Tourist guide - Lecturer and university professor - Restorer of cultural heritage - Technical advisor for organs protected as French historic monuments |
| Construction | Architect - Architect (acquired rights) - Building contractor - Building inspector - Home inspector -Land surveyor |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Agricultural occupations | Distributor of plant protection products - Chicken breeder - Agricultural and real estate appraiser - Forestry expert - Inspector of plant protection product spraying equipment - User of plant protection products |
| Animal occupations | Head of equine artificial insemination centre - Conception and conducting of experiments on animals - Conveyor of animals (equine, bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine and poultry species) - Conveyor of animals (except equine, bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine and poultry species) - Attack-dog trainer - Animal experimenter - Identifier of domestic carnivores - Identifier of Equidae - Horse inseminator - Sheep, cattle and goat inseminator - Manager of a livestock-breeding establishment, or of an establishment selling, renting, displaying or serving as a transit centre for live species from the French and foreign faunas - Veterinary surgeon - Equine dentist |
| Aviation sector | Aerodrome flight information service officer - Air traffic controller - Examiner (air traffic controller, pilot) - Instructor (air traffic controller, pilot, civil aviation security) - Cabin crew member - Pilot (aeroplane, helicopter, balloon, airship, glider) - Airport firefighter - Remote pilot - Civil aviation security validator |
| Maritime sector | Master of fishing vessel - Chief engineer on fishing vessels -Boating school operator - Boating instructor -Engineering officer on fishing vessels - Deck officer on fishing vessels - Maritime pilot -Chief mate on fishing vessels - Second engineer on fishing vessels |
| Security | Bodyguard -Private detective -Fire safety and first aid officer -Security guard -Cash-in-transit operator -Gunsmith |
| Road safety | Road safety awareness trainer- Vehicle inspector- Driving instructor - Driving school operator -Operator of a training centre for driving instructors - Operator of a road safety awareness centre - Driving instructor trainer |
| Funeral services | Funeral greeter - Funeral arranger - Funeral home manager - Funeral director - Funeral attendant - Embalmer |
| Social sector | Social worker |
| Transport | Forwarding agent - Taxi driver - LGV driver -Road haulier -Road passenger transport operator -Private hire vehicle driver |

Source: INPI, *Annuaire des activités et professions réglementées*, <https://www.inpi.fr/annuaire-activites-professions-reglementees>

2 European tools and good practices in EU and OECD Member Countries

Introduction

This chapter outlines in its first section the most significant European tools, frameworks, standards, and instruments which exist to support and facilitate national efforts in their assessment, recognition, and validation of qualifications and skills procedures for third-country nationals, including beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine. By doing so, these tools aim to improve individuals' employment prospects by aligning their skills with job opportunities, thereby minimising the risk of overqualification.

The second section presents some specific measures for BPT from Ukraine implemented in some EU and OECD countries, as well as any good practices regarding existing online tools.

Review of selected tools to facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications and skills

Europass

In 2004, the Europass framework was established by Decision 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004.²⁴ The Europass portal is a direct free-of-charge service to citizens regardless of their nationality or country of residence. It has been designed to record acquired skills and experiences, enabling the creation of an online CV and cover letter in accordance with European standards, thereby facilitating mobility between countries or sectors. Europass provides a set of online tools that certify education, personal skills, and professional experience. It is available in 30 languages, including Ukrainian, and operates in 35 countries, guiding users through their studies and careers. Furthermore, Europass offers accurate information about education and employment opportunities across various European countries, ensuring interconnection with relevant European and national sources.²⁵

The Europass portal comprises five documents:

- Europass CV;
- Europass Certificate Supplement, aiming at enhancing the comprehensibility of vocational training certificates;
- Europass Diploma Supplement, providing information on higher education diplomas;
- Europass Language Passport;

²⁴ Decision (EU) 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32004D2241>

²⁵ European Union, Europass Portal, <https://europa.eu/europass/en>

- Europass Mobility Document, designed to describe the skills acquired during a mobility experience in another European country.²⁶

In each participating country, a National Europass Centre is responsible for promoting and coordinating all activities related to Europass. Serving as the primary point of contact, it also welcomes individuals or organisations seeking information about or wishing to use Europass.²⁷

The updated Europass framework, as detailed in Decision (EU) 2018/646 of 18 April 2018 which is repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC, remains committed to improving transparency and understanding through enhanced communication. The revised Decision promotes the establishment of a new framework that incorporates web-based tools and information to align with the evolving approaches to learning and working.²⁸

The European Qualifications Framework

The European Union (EU) has established the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as a means to translate national qualifications into a more comprehensible and comparable format. Serving as a unified European reference system, the EQF interconnects various national qualification systems and frameworks, enhancing the readability of qualifications. It covers a broad spectrum, including general and adult education, vocational education and training, and higher education.

To implement the EQF, participating countries²⁹ have establish connections between their qualification systems or national qualifications frameworks and the EQF. The EQF Advisory Group has defined criteria and procedures to guide the referencing of national qualifications levels to the EQF. Nevertheless, each country's qualifications authorities retain the autonomy to determine the method by which their qualification levels are linked to the EQF.

Initially adopted by the Recommendation of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning,³⁰ an updated and fortified Recommendation on the EQF was adopted on 22 May 2017.³¹ This 2017 revision maintained the objectives of fostering mutual trust and transparency objectives among qualifications in Europe.

²⁶ CEDEFOP, Europass, <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/resources-guidance/handbook-transferability/case-studies/europass>

²⁷ European Union, National Europass centres, <https://europa.eu/europass/en/about-europass/contact-us/national-europass-centres>

²⁸ Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32018D0646>

²⁹ In addition to the EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Türkiye, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Switzerland have referenced their NQF to the EQF.

³⁰ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32008H0506%2801%29>

³¹ Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03), [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01))

The EQF seeks to facilitate cross-border mobility for learners and workers. Additionally, it aims to assist individuals, employers, and education providers in evaluating individual qualifications across diverse countries and education and training systems.

The EQF comprises eight reference levels, ranging from basic qualifications acquired through compulsory education (level one) to the highest level of advanced professional qualifications, such as a doctorate (level eight).³²

The EQF does not intend to standardise qualifications or qualification standards among the participating countries. Instead, it enhances the recognition of qualifications through the promotion of learning outcomes. This approach enables qualification holders to directly evaluate a specific qualification. The EQF works in coordination with various European and international instruments dedicated to facilitating the recognition of qualifications. While these instruments may primarily target regulated and/or academic qualifications, the EQF advocates for the recognition of learning for all types of qualifications.³³

ENIC-NARIC's Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications

From 2016 to 2018, NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education), operating as the Norwegian ENIC-NARIC at the time,³⁴ led an Erasmus+ project titled "Toolkit for Recognition of Higher Education for Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation (Refugees and Recognition)," funded by the European Commission.³⁵ The project aimed to develop practical tools and strategies for recognising the qualifications of refugees, even in cases of missing documentation.

This collaborative initiative engaged national recognition bodies from ENIC-NARIC centres in Norway, Armenia, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Armenia. It successfully identified shared principles, good practices, and practical tools for recognising refugees' qualifications, with the methods tested and integrated into formal recognition processes across various countries.

The resulting "Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications" comprises three components: eight principles forming the foundation for implementing effective recognition systems, ten practical tools for the recognition procedure, and two approaches demonstrating distinct ways of combining tools in actual recognition procedures based on the type of the final statement or background document.

To capitalise on the project's achievements, NOKUT received additional Erasmus+ funding for a subsequent project named "REACT – Refugees and Recognition," which took place from 2018 to 2020. This follow-up project involved ENIC-NARIC offices in Norway, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Ireland.³⁶

³² European Union, The European Qualifications Framework, <https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework>

³³ European Commission, The European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross-border mobility, 10th anniversary, https://www.ehea.info/Upload/TPG_A_QF_RO_MK_1_EQF_Brochure.pdf

³⁴ Since January 2023, the responsibility for recognising foreign qualifications in Norway has shifted from NOKUT to the Norwegian Directorate of Higher Education and Skills.

³⁵ European Commission, Toolkit for recognition of higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation (Refugees and recognition) (2022), https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/toolkit-recognition-higher-education-refugees-displaced-persons-persons-refugee_en

³⁶ NOKUT, Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications, https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit_for_recognition_of_refugees_qualifications.pdf

REACT aimed to enhance the mobility, employability, and educational access of refugees, displaced persons, and those in refugee-like situations, including those without official educational documentation. Building on the groundwork laid by the Erasmus+ project "Refugees and Recognition," which standardised the recognition of refugees' qualifications, REACT refined and implemented this methodology in key refugee-receiving countries. Collaborating closely with higher education institutions, the goal was to establish a more uniform and efficient process for recognising refugees' qualifications across Europe. Following the successful testing of the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications, a comprehensive set of recommendations has been formulated and consolidated into the REACT Q-card for Admission Officers.³⁷

The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)

The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) is an international tool developed by the Council of Europe with partners in 2017. The purpose of the EQPR is to assist European countries in evaluating the qualifications of refugees who lack academic documents, thereby easing their integration into the host country as it can help them to apply for employment, internships, qualification courses and admission to studies. The EQPR strives also to prevent unnecessary and redundant re-evaluations of the same qualifications when the EQPR holder relocates to other European countries.

The EQPR supports the implementation of article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention³⁸ which refers to the recognition of refugees' qualifications in the absence of full documentation and the Recommendation on the Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications³⁹ adopted by the Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2017.

The passport represents a standardised document divided into three sections (assessment, explanation, and future guidance) that assesses the holder's higher education qualifications based on available documentation and a structured interview. It also provides information about the applicant's work experience and language proficiency. However, the EQPR is not a substitute for identification or educational records, does not guarantee access to study programmes or employment, and does not constitute a formal recognition act.

Individuals eligible to apply for the EQPR include beneficiaries of international and temporary protection, and stateless persons aged 16 and above. Candidates are required to complete a comprehensive questionnaire on the EQPR online platform, which undergoes assessment by credential evaluators. Upon approval of the questionnaire, candidates undergo a 45-minute interview conducted by the team of credential evaluators. The evaluators leverage their knowledge of the country's education system to collect information and ask specific questions about any missing details. Additionally, they evaluate the language skills of the refugees during the assessment process. The interview is conducted in either the native language or the language of instruction. Following the interview, a decision is made regarding the issuance

³⁷ NOKUT, REACT – Refugees and Recognition – An Erasmus+ Project, <https://www.nokut.no/en/about-nokut/international-cooperation/erasmus-projects/react--refugees-and-recognition>

³⁸ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165), <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treaty-num=165>

³⁹ Recommendation on the Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications under the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Explanatory Memorandum, https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2017-11/Recommendation_recognition.pdf

of the document. If the decision is favourable, the EQPR is issued and remains valid for a period of five years from the date of issuance.^{40 41}

With regard to the recognition of qualifications of BPT from Ukraine, the European Commission, in its Recommendation 2022/554 of 5 April 2022,⁴² reminds the Member States that if there is no other solution possible in the case of incomplete evidence, the EQPR represents an option and that BPT are eligible.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) resource hub

The European Training Foundation (ETF), established in 1994 with its operational headquarters located in Turin, Italy, is an agency of the EU dedicated to assisting transition and developing nations in maximising the potential of their human capital. The focus lies in fostering reforms within education, training, and labour market systems, in the context of the EU's external relations policy.⁴³ The ETF extends its support for human development in 29 partner countries, spanning from south-eastern Europe and Turkey to central Asia. It aids in formulating, implementing, and assessing policies and programmes with the following objectives:

- Fostering social mobility and social inclusion;
- Revitalising education and training systems;
- Enhancing the alignment of these systems with the demands of the labour market.

The ETF targets trained and skilled workers making them less prone to social exclusion. Moreover, it supports partner countries in generating trade and investment opportunities. It also enables EU Member States to address skill shortages by giving them the opportunity to recruit qualified workers.⁴⁴

In February 2022, at the request of the European Commission, the ETF created a resource hub to support displaced people from Ukraine to find their way in host countries across Europe. The hub provides user-friendly links to language training, guidance on accessing education and training, and information on recognition of qualifications and skills procedures in the EU Member States. It targets both BTP from Ukraine and individuals such as employers, officials, and other stakeholders engaging with people from Ukraine in the realms of education, training, and employment.⁴⁵

EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals

The EU Skills Profile Tool, developed by the European Commission in 2017, is a multilingual online editor designed for organisations assisting in mapping qualifications, both formal and informal, skills and experiences of third country nationals. Accessible on various devices, including desktops, mobiles, and tablets, the tool facilitates the standardised mapping of individuals' skills, qualifications, and work

⁴⁰ Council of Europe, European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>

⁴¹ Council of Europe, EQPR leaflet, <https://rm.coe.int/eqpr-leaflet-en-web-july-2020/16809ee917>

⁴² European Commission, Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022H0554>

⁴³ European Training Foundation, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en>

⁴⁴ European Union, European Training Foundation (ETF), https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-training-foundation-etf_en

⁴⁵ ETF, ETF Resource Hub, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/education-and-work-information-ukrainians-and-eu-countries>

experiences. This mapped profile helps ensure understanding across the EU and serves as a foundation for providing personalised advice on labour market integration. This advice may include referrals for diploma recognition, language or other training, and employment support. The third country national receives a digital and hard copy summary of their Skills Profile, which, with consent, can be forwarded to relevant agencies offering support for the identified next steps. The information gathered through the EU Skills Profile Tool aids in identifying necessary skills assessments or validations, additional skill requirements, and potential qualifications for formal recognition. However, the tool is not designed for recognition or authentication purposes. Considering that numerous individuals fleeing their home countries might not possess diplomas, the tool assists in showcasing their skills in a way that facilitates the acknowledgment of their prior experiences.^{46 47}

Available in all official EU languages, as well as Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Sorani, Somali, and Tigrinya, the tool can display any two of these languages simultaneously on the screen. The European Commission has introduced a Ukrainian version of the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals with the aim of simplifying the process for displaced people from Ukraine to assess and showcase their skills, thereby facilitating their search for employment.⁴⁸

Tools used in the French context

In the French context the two main tools which are used in practice by the evaluators of the French ENIC-NARIC centre are the EQF and the ENIC-NARIC's Toolkit for Refugees' Qualifications.

The use of the EQF is mandatory for evaluating all recognition requests. The comparability statement issued by the French ENIC-NARIC centre establishes a correspondence between a foreign diploma, regardless of the education system of reference, and the levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and, on this basis, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The comparability statement includes the elements of the diploma and specifies the result of the assessment, i.e., the positioning of the diploma according both to the French qualifications framework and the European qualifications framework.

The Toolkit for Refugees' Qualifications has become a part of the French ENIC-NARIC's practice and its evaluation procedures. It is used for beneficiaries of international protection and as well for BPT.

Regarding the EQPR, its use is not yet part of the recognition process at the French ENIC-NARIC centre, which is based only on the evaluation of original and official academic documentation. If the applicants have no documents to prove their studies, they will be redirected to the EQPR process at the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, significant involvement is seen from the French ENIC-NARIC centre. In November 2019, *France Éducation internationale*, to which the French ENIC-NARIC centre is attached, hosted one of the EQPR assessment sessions. The French ENIC-NARIC centre is a partner in this project alongside the German, Armenian, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch, and Romanian ENIC-NARIC centres, as well as the Canadian, British, and Bosnian ENIC centres. In May 2002, a specific BPT session took place at France Éducation internationale. Subsequently, the French ENIC-NARIC centre sent evaluators to the sessions in Warsaw in September 2022 and Turin in December 2022. Generally, the EQPR is not a necessity for BPT because it is very rare that they lack documents, and even if they do, it is not complex to reconstruct their educational background using the Ukrainian EDEBO database.

⁴⁶ European Commission, EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals, <https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>,

⁴⁷ European Commission, EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals, file:///C:/Users/buschek_t/Downloads/KE-01-20-134-EN-N.pdf

⁴⁸ European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, EU Skills Profile Tool in Ukrainian, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10202&langId=en>

Selected online tools for the recognition of foreign qualifications and skills and special provisions for BPT from Ukraine across EU and OECD Member Countries

The second section presents specific measures for BPT from Ukraine that have been implemented in some EU and OECD countries, as well as any good practices regarding existing online tools. This information has been derived from the conclusions of the International Workshop on the assessment, recognition, and validation of qualifications and skills for BPT from Ukraine, organised by the OECD on 3 November, as part of Activity 1.5. Participating countries in this workshop included Austria, Canada, Quebec, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

During this workshop, country profiles were developed for each participating country, offering an overview of their recognition procedures along with specific measures tailored for BPT from Ukraine. The ten country profiles are available in Annex 1.

Germany

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Germany has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

Good practice regarding existing online tools

The German government is providing the information portal *Anerkennung in Deutschland*, focusing on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. This portal features the *Anerkennungs-Finder* recognition search engine and is available in eleven languages. It serves as a centralised resource for information on recognition procedures across various professions, providing contact details for relevant centres. The *Anerkennungs-Finder* offers an interactive guide through the steps of recognising a foreign qualification, recommending location-specific advisory services for personalised support throughout the process. Additionally, a dedicated helpline provides information on all aspects of working and living in Germany, including the recognition process.

Austria

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Austria has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

However, the scope of the Law on Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications has been expanded to displaced persons from Ukraine. This law only stipulates the right to an assessment, not a right to recognition. Furthermore, in assessment procedures formalities are reduced particularly for displaced persons from Ukraine.

Canada

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Canada has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for the beneficiaries of the Canada-Ukraine authorisation for emergency travel programme (CUAET).

Good practice regarding existing online tools

In March 2022, Job Bank, an employment service website that provides information as well on the foreign credential recognition for regulated professions, launched a Jobs for Ukraine page that helps to connect employers with Ukrainian newcomers and promotes the foreign credential recognition tool. This has helped many BTP from Ukraine to find jobs in Canada.

Quebec

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Organisations in Quebec have not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures for beneficiaries of the Canada-Ukraine authorisation for emergency travel (CUAET) programme. For comparative evaluation of studies conducted outside of Quebec, accelerated procedures are in place when requested by employers, regulatory bodies, or employment centres under the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* (MESS) requires priority processing.

However, in the sector of maritime transport, a reciprocity agreement for the recognition of certifications has been established between Canada and Ukraine.

Denmark

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Denmark has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

Norway

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Norway has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

However, HK-dir has eased documentation requirements for applicants with Ukrainian education and provided non-personalised comparability statements to assist in understanding their qualifications in the Norwegian context. In collaboration with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI), an online information package, including videos and materials for professionals in the Introduction Programme for Refugees, has been created. The "New in Norway" website serves as a single point of entry for official information tailored to Ukrainian refugees, simplifying their integration process.

Good practice regarding existing online tools

In collaboration with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI), an online information package, including videos and materials for professionals in the Introduction Programme for Refugees, has been created. The "New in Norway" website serves as a single point of entry for official information tailored to BPT from Ukraine, simplifying their integration process. This website also encompasses all the required information and links for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Poland

Special provisions for BTP from Ukraine

BTP from Ukraine are not required to submit their original diplomas for recognition. Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland before 24 February 2022, seeking confirmation of their foreign academic qualifications can use the European Passport of Qualifications for Refugees (EQPR). The Act of 12 March 2022, aimed at assisting BTP from Ukraine affected by the conflict in Ukraine, eases the recognition of qualifications and employment for professionals in fields such as psychologists, doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, academic teachers, researchers, miners, and those working in local and government administrations.

Besides easing profession access, the following measures have been taken to support BTP from Ukraine in qualification recognition and securing employment aligned with their qualifications:

- simplified diploma nostrification, either by waiving fees or keeping them minimal, and expediting the process;
- intensive Polish language courses for Ukrainian teachers and educational staff;
- Ukrainian sections on websites, including those of Polish employment services;
- established separate workstations at local labour offices for the registration of BTP from Ukraine, along with Ukrainian-language informational leaflets;
- Polish language courses for Ukrainian medical professionals;
- enabling employers to submit job listings to local employment offices specifically aimed at BTP from Ukraine;
- a dedicated employer hotline for inquiries about job opportunities for BTP from Ukraine;
- employment of Ukrainian-speaking counsellors at the Green Line, the information and consultation centre of the Polish employment services.

Good practice regarding existing online tools

BTP from Ukraine and other third country nationals benefit from various tools facilitating recognition of qualifications, including access to the EQPR or the KWALIFIKATOR online system. The KWALIFIKATOR online system acts as a database for different diplomas from various countries, enabling foreigners and employers to obtain automatic written information on the possibility of recognition of a foreign diploma for professional or academic purposes.

Portugal

Special Cases: applicants facing humanitarian emergencies

In case of emergency situations for humanitarian reasons, there is a provision for exemption from the standard document requirements. If documentary evidence of foreign academic qualifications is unavailable, applicants can seek equivalence by providing:

- A declaration under oath, provided by the individual, their legal guardian, or their legal representative.
- A declaration issued by the competent authority, namely the Immigration and Borders Service, Portuguese Council for Refugees, High Commissioner for Migration, justifying the exceptional situation.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

BPT from Ukraine are eligible to seek student status in cases of emergency due to humanitarian reasons.

Recognition requests for professional qualifications submitted by BPTs from Ukraine are given priority processing.

Exemption from following requirements:

- Formalities for legalisation of documents issued by foreign entities;
- Certification or authentication of translations into Portuguese of documents drafted in a foreign language;
- Certification or authentication of copies of original documents;
- Fees related to registration or of any other nature.

Specific measures aiming to fasten recognition procedures for various regulated professions:

- streamlining standard recognition timelines;
- establishing criteria for implicit recognition;
- implementing procedures to address cases with insufficient documentation.

United Kingdom

Special provisions for BTP from Ukraine

The UK has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

Conclusion

This note emphasises the EU and OECD countries' commitment to implementing tools, frameworks, and standards designed to assist individuals in effectively planning their learning and career development, as well as to facilitate mobility within Europe for work or study purposes. These initiatives are designed to streamline the operations of recognition entities, promote seamless integration into the labour market, and address challenges faced by refugees, such as missing documents and diplomas. The overarching goal is to expedite third-country nationals' integration into society, thereby minimising discrepancies between their qualifications and skills and the employment opportunities available in the host country.

Giving visibility to the valuable skills and experiences of third-country nationals is essential for their successful integration, providing them with optimal chances to actively participate in both society and the professional realm. These tools are designed to, among other objectives, strengthen and harmonise national initiatives focused on improving the assessment and recognition of qualifications and skills. At the same time, they are not intended to replace existing recognition mechanisms but rather to complement and enhance them. The French ENIC-NARIC centre is specifically taking advantage of the EQF and the ENIC-NARIC's Toolkit for Refugees' Qualifications.

Moreover, this chapter provides an overview of recognition procedures, targeted initiatives, and specifically implemented measures or recognition procedures for the qualifications and skills of BTP from Ukraine across nine OECD member countries.⁴⁹ Certain online tools are emphasised in specific countries, serving as noteworthy examples of good practices that could be considered desirable in the French context.

One of the biggest challenges associated with recognition procedures in France, but also in other countries, lies in the difficult access to information due to the multitude of websites. A significant improvement would be to establish a unified and comprehensive website, presenting information in a user-friendly, step-by-step format. Furthermore, having only one single institution dedicated to providing all information would simplify the process of foreign credential recognition.

In this regard, a European good practice that French authorities could draw inspiration from is the German government's *Anerkennung in Deutschland* information portal on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, which includes the *Anerkennungs-Finder* recognition search engine.

Other commendable practices include the Polish "KWALIFIKATOR" online system, serving as a comprehensive database for diplomas from various countries, offering automatic written information on the potential recognition of foreign diplomas for professional or academic purposes.

Additionally, the Norwegian "New in Norway" website stands out as an exemplary online information package, featuring videos and materials tailored for professionals in the Introduction Programme for Refugees. Serving as a centralised source for official information, this website simplifies the access to information for BTP from Ukraine and encompasses all the necessary details and links for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Furthermore, the Canadian Job Bank has proven instrumental for BTP from Ukraine seeking employment in Canada. This employment service website not only provides information on foreign credential recognition for regulated professions but has also launched a dedicated "Jobs for Ukraine" page. This initiative helps connect employers with Ukrainian newcomers and promotes the use of foreign credential recognition tools.

The sudden arrival of BPT from Ukraine has once again brought recognition issues to the forefront of the political agenda. Notably because BPT from Ukraine generally have higher average qualification levels compared to other groups of third-country nationals.

Hence, it is imperative to streamline the national recognition process, ensuring it is efficient, transparent, and user-friendly. This approach will facilitate the timely recognition of qualifications and skills for the BPT from Ukraine, and newcomers in general, promoting their smooth integration into the labour market and host society without undue delays.

⁴⁹ Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Quebec, United Kingdom.

Annex A Country profiles

Austria

Formal recognition procedure

In Austria, there is no standardised set of regulations for the formal recognition of foreign qualifications. The process of recognising qualifications (degrees) obtained abroad varies depending on the specific field in which the qualification is required. There are four distinct forms of recognition:

- Recognition of EU/EEA professional qualifications;
- Nostrification (recognition) of school and secondary school diploma;
- Nostrification (recognition) of academic degrees for professional practice;
- Accreditation of vocational qualifications.

Regulations are enshrined in various state and federal laws. Each federal state has its specific set of regulations and competent authorities, and at the national level, there are numerous recognition bodies.

The Law on Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications (AuBG) obtained abroad has been in effect since July 2016. The objective was to streamline processes, ensure access to information and guidance, and implement specific provisions for beneficiaries of international protection, and displaced persons.

Key points of the Law on Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications

- Right to a recognition or assessment process.
- Implementation of assessment procedures for vocational, school, and university degrees.
- Harmonisation of procedural requirements for qualifications obtained in non-EU countries with EU standards: the law establishes a standardised four-month time limit and guidelines for post-qualification measures.
- Enhanced transparency and services: an online recognition portal offers specific information about the relevant authority, along with direct links to application forms, required documents, translations or certifications, and procedural costs. Additionally, counselling centres were established.
- Introduction of new procedures for international protection beneficiaries: ensuring that individuals can access recognition procedures even if they are unable to provide their educational certificates or proof of education due to circumstances beyond their control resulting from their displacement.
- Uniform statistical documentation of all procedures.

In 2013 contact points were established (*Anlaufstellen für Personen mit im Ausland erworbenen Qualifikationen*, AST) providing multi-lingual, free-of-charge information, and counselling on and throughout the assessment and recognition procedure. The Law on Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications introduced a legal obligation to provide counselling.

Recognition of professional qualifications

Formal recognition of professional qualifications (professional accreditation) is only possible in regulated professions. In non-regulated professions a formal assessment is possible.

Recognition in the labour market is often a consensus between employer and employee and it's possible for recognition to occur informally in the workplace. (Distinguishing between formal and informal recognition).

A formal recognition application can be submitted only once. Formal recognition is only conferred for what has been successfully completed, documented, and can be equated with an Austrian qualification/occupation. This is often referred to as a 'reference occupation'.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Austria has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

However, the scope of the Law on Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications has been expanded to displaced persons from Ukraine. This law only stipulates the right to an assessment, not a right to recognition. Furthermore, in assessment procedures formalities are reduced particularly for displaced persons from Ukraine.

Canada

Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) in Canada

The purpose of foreign credential recognition (FCR) in Canada is to protect the health and safety of Canadians and verify that the knowledge, skills, education and work experience obtained in another country are comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons.

- Non-regulated professions: In Canada, the majority of the working population are in non-regulated occupations (80% of jobs) where the recognition of qualifications is at the discretion of employers. As such, in non-regulated occupations, it is up to the employer to determine when and how to assess an individual's foreign qualifications. Employers may choose to assess qualifications with support from education credential assessment bodies, professional associations, apprenticeship offices, or by the employer themselves, depending on the person's skills to be assessed.
- Regulated professions: About 20% of jobs in Canada are regulated occupations (e.g., doctors, nurses, engineers, plumbers). For these occupations, the law requires that an individual obtain a certificate, licence, and/or register to use the reserved title for the occupation or to obtain the exclusive right to practice the occupation. Outside of a few federally regulated occupations, FCR is a provincial and territorial responsibility. Each jurisdiction establishes education, training and licensing standards and these vary from one jurisdiction to another. In most cases, provinces and territories further delegate this authority in legislation to regulatory authorities. There are about 275 regulated occupations and over 600 regulators across Canada. However, even with the assessment and a license to practice, employers retain the authority to make hiring decisions.

Targeted initiatives

- Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP)
Established in 2003, the federal government program promotes skilled newcomer labour market integration by providing funding to provinces and territories, regulatory authorities and other organisations for projects to make credential recognition processes faster and more efficient, provide loans and support services to help skilled newcomers navigate foreign credential recognition processes, and provide employment supports to help skilled newcomers gain Canadian work experience in their profession or field of study. For instance, 1,888 loans worth over \$17 million were issued between October 2018 and September 2022. During this period, 2,750 newcomers successfully completed the credential recognition process, leading to employment in their field for 3,972 individuals.
- Educational Credential Assessments (ECAs)

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) uses ECAs to verify that a foreign degree, diploma, or certificate is valid and equal to a Canadian one, for immigration purposes. IRCC has designated multipurpose assessment organisations to provide ECAs for credentials across a wide range of regulated and non-regulated occupations. IRCC has also designated professional bodies to validate and determine how foreign educational credentials compare to a Canadian credential needed to practice in their respective regulated occupations. These profession-specific ECAs are also recognised as a step in the licensing process.

- Fairness Commissioner

While there is no legal entitlement for foreign qualification assessment, all provincial governments have laws promoting equitable registration practices and may establish a Fairness Commissioner or Office to ensure transparent, objective, fair, and timely credential recognition processes.

- Settlement Programme

The Government of Canada, through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, funds both pre- and post-arrival services to help newcomers overcome integrate into their communities and navigate entry into the Canadian labour market. Services can include connecting newcomers to information on the FCR process and referring to supports that are available to help with their journey.

- Bilateral or multilateral agreements

There are more than 40 mutual recognition agreements between Canadian national associations of regulatory bodies and their counterparts in other countries.⁵⁰

- Bridging offers for partially or non-recognised qualifications

Bridging training varies across province and territories. In Ontario, for instance, the Ontario Bridge Training Program (OBTP) aims to assist internationally trained immigrants in obtaining employment in their field or a related one, without duplicating their existing skills and education. The program focuses on both regulated and non-regulated high-skill occupations, providing targeted, short-term training to meet licensure or registration requirements for regulated professions, as well as employer demands in non-regulated, high-skill occupations.⁵¹

- Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials (QAF)

The QAF's document requirements specify that in exceptional cases, such as those involving refugees and individuals with valid barriers to documenting their qualifications, sworn statements before a legal authority may serve as an alternative to full documentation.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Canada has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for beneficiaries of the Canada-Ukraine authorisation for emergency travel programme (CUAET).

Good practice regarding existing online tools

In March 2022, Job Bank, an employment service website that provides information as well on the foreign credential recognition for regulated professions, launched a Jobs for Ukraine page that helps to connect employers with Ukrainian newcomers and promotes the foreign credential recognition tool. This has helped many BTP from Ukraine to find jobs in Canada.

⁵⁰ For the inventory of Mutual Recognition Agreements for Professional Qualifications and Licensure, see <https://aasc.knack.com/mra-inventory/>

⁵¹ Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, OBTP, <https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/obtp.html>

Quebec

Formal recognition procedure

The professional orders, some ministries, educational institutions, and other regulatory bodies exclusively manage the different skills recognition options, including the associated processes, required documents, regulations, and fees.

Recognition for academic purposes

Educational institutions acknowledged by the Government of Quebec provide competency recognition services, enabling individuals to attain recognition for studies and experience acquired abroad. The appropriate educational institution to contact for skill recognition depends on the specific diploma one aims to achieve (secondary vocational diploma, college diploma or university diploma).

Recognition of professional qualifications

Numerous trades and professions are subject to regulation, necessitating a licence to practise issued by a regulatory body.

In Québec, there are 46 professional orders that regulate the professions of more than 422 000 members. These orders, constituted in accordance with the Professional Code, must meet the requirements of this framework law. Other regulatory bodies include, among others, the Commission de la construction du Québec (construction industry), the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* (trades outside the construction industry), the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec* (elementary and secondary school teachers), the *Ministère de la Famille* (early childhood educators) and the *Autorité des marchés financiers* (financial professions).

The regulatory body has the authority to acknowledge either partial or complete recognition of one's studies and work experience acquired abroad. Most regulatory bodies maintain a section on their website dedicated to candidates trained outside of Canada, outlining their requirements, the steps for competency recognition, and the potential need for further studies. Candidates typically undergo an equivalence process to assess if their knowledge and skills align with those of a Québec graduate. Additionally, some regulatory bodies may stipulate additional requirements, such as refresher training, internships, or exams.

In cases where a profession or trade is not regulated in Québec, individuals can directly apply to employers. Employers, leveraging their expertise in the specific industry, may assess skills acquired abroad. To enhance their understanding of the applicant's diploma, employers might request a comparative evaluation of studies conducted outside of Quebec, a non-binding opinion on the assessment of foreign school and academic credentials.

The process of obtaining a license to practice can be long and challenging for immigrants delaying their integration into the workforce and causing many to drop out. With the goal of improving and accelerating the recognition of immigrant skills, the Quebec government has implemented a series of inter-ministerial measures, including:

- Prospecting for new recruitment areas;
- Establishment of international agreements facilitating the recognition of professional qualifications;
- Financial support and assistance for professional orders and regulatory bodies;
- Funding for the development and provision of additional training and internships, both abroad and in Quebec;
- Financial support for immigrants in the process of skills recognition;
- Support for employers in the assessment of studies completed outside Quebec.

Targeted initiatives

- Language courses

Francisation Québec serves as a one-stop shop for French language learning services, offering diverse courses and packages customised to address various client needs. This encompasses free French courses available throughout Quebec in both in-person and distance learning formats, accommodating full-time and part-time schedules. Financial support is accessible for both course types, with conditions like course attendance allowances and childcare cost reimbursements.

- Financial Assistance

To qualify for financial assistance under the financial assistance programme for supplementary training in recognition of skills (*Programme d'aide financière pour la formation d'appoint en reconnaissance des compétences* - PAFFARC), individuals must meet specific criteria. This includes having their desired profession or regulated trade listed as eligible and completing the prescribed refresher training in French. Additionally, applicants must have obtained a diploma or training outside Canada leading to the practice of an eligible profession or trade in Quebec and maintain an eligible immigration status.

- Counselling

- *Accompagnement Québec*: is a free and personalised integration service for immigrants with a legal status, which aims to facilitate the integration process into Quebec society, whether they are in Quebec or abroad. Integration assistance agents from the *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration* (MIFI) are available across all regions of Quebec. They evaluate the immediate or future needs of individuals and assist in preparing an individualised action plan. As part of the *Accompagnement Québec* service, immigrants in Quebec also have access to a skills recognition advisor who will assess their needs and provide guidance.

- *Qualifications Québec*: this website provides information on the steps to be taken for skills recognition. Moreover, *Qualifications Québec* is mandated by the government to meet with immigrants and inform them about the entire process of skills recognition. It is for available to individuals regardless of their legal status in Canada.

Special provisions for BTP from Ukraine

Organisations in Quebec have not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures for beneficiaries of the Canada-Ukraine authorisation for emergency travel (CUAET) programme. For comparative evaluation of studies conducted outside of Quebec, accelerated procedures are in place when requested by employers, regulatory bodies, or employment centres under the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* (MESS) requires priority processing.

However, in the sector of maritime transport, a reciprocity agreement for the recognition of certifications has been established between Canada and Ukraine.

Denmark

Procedures and types of recognition

- Recognition of foreign qualifications for education and training purposes

The Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science (the Agency)/Danish ENIC-NARIC provides evaluations of how foreign educational qualifications align with the Danish education system. These evaluations encompass completed programmes at all levels and are offered free of charge, excluding document translation services. There is no legally stipulated processing time. On average, the Agency takes about one month, maximum two months, from the date they receive all required documentation. The individual educational institution decides on the admission of applicants with foreign qualifications. It must

use the Agency's assessment as the basis for determining whether the foreign qualification meets the general entry requirements.

The educational institution may decide to grant a credit transfer for previous studies to replace parts of an education programme. The educational institution may refer to the Agency's assessment as guidance when making credit transfer decisions. In case of disagreement with the institution's credit transfer decision, the applicant has the option to submit a complaint to the Qualifications Board.

- Professional/occupational recognition

It is ultimately the discretion of the specific employer to determine if the qualifications align with the requirements of a particular position in non-regulated professions. Nevertheless, public sector employers are obliged to acknowledge the education's level as indicated in the Agency's assessment.

- Recognition of qualifications in regulated professions

Approximately 120 professions require official authorisation to practice. The specific conditions depend on the relevant authorisation statute. The relevant regulatory body assesses the educational qualifications and the eligibility to practice the profession in the home country when deciding. They may also opt to consider the pertinent professional experience in their evaluation. The outcome of the application from the competent authority can be positive, conditional or negative. If a conditional decision is made, the competent authority may stipulate the need for an aptitude test, an adjustment period, or relevant supplementary training, whether in part or in whole, within Denmark. Furthermore, profession specific language courses are available. The decision must be reasoned and specify the procedure to be followed for lodging an appeal.

- Recognition of foreign qualifications for general employment purposes

Individuals with foreign qualifications have the right to seek evaluation by the Agency for, covering qualifications at all levels. These assessments are legally binding in specific labour market contexts. They determine eligibility for unemployment funds and public authorities' employment decisions. Unemployment funds and public authorities are obliged to treat applications from individuals with foreign qualifications, as assessed by the Agency, on par with those from individuals holding Danish qualifications at the same educational level.

Targeted initiatives

- Counselling to migrants

Procedures are in place to systematically identify and recognise qualifications and skills of newly arrived refugees. These procedures have also been integral in the reception of Ukrainian refugees. Accommodation centres interview refugees about their educational backgrounds and share this information with the municipality if asylum is granted. Refugees with formal qualifications are informed about the possibility of qualification assessment even before their relocation to a municipality. When initiating an integration programme, the responsible local authority informs the refugee about the potential for qualification assessment if such an assessment has not already taken place. Municipal integration services and the Public Employment Service (PES) also offer counselling and information on recognition procedures. The Agency provides materials for migrants and relevant authorities.

- Missing documentation

If sufficient documentation is unavailable, applicants can request a background report. This report outlines the educational background and provides guidance based on the Agency's typical assessment of similar qualifications with complete documentation. It aids applicants in explaining their qualifications for further education or job applications, relying on the applicant's information and the Agency's knowledge of qualifications from the applicant's country.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Denmark has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

Germany

Recognition of professional qualifications

There are no substantial distinctions between the recognition processes for individuals with qualifications from third countries in regulated and non-regulated sectors. The procedure is governed by the Federal Recognition Act (*Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz*, BQFG), which entered into force on 1 April 2012, with additional requirements of the federal states. The BQFG falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), while the Länder oversee the practical implementation of these procedures through the designated competent authorities.

- Key enhancements introduced by the BQFG:
 - Procedural Entitlement: ensuring the right to a procedure.
 - Timeline: the recognition authority has up to three or four months, depending on the profession, to evaluate the foreign qualification's comparability.
 - Compensatory measures: all candidates in regulated professions are eligible for compensatory measures.
 - Evaluations: assessments should not only identify existing competencies but also describe and substantiate significant disparities.
 - Addressing discrepancies: any notable differences in educational training are addressed through professional experience and additional training.
 - Alternative approaches for refugees without documentation: Diverse occupations and federal states now offer alternative methods, such as work samples, on-the-job training, technical interviews, and expert assessments, to evaluate vocational skills (qualification analysis).
 - International application: the application process is open to candidates from abroad.
 - Equal opportunity: eligibility to apply is extended without regard to residency status or nationality.

The Recognition Act encompasses over 600 occupations within federal jurisdiction, spanning both non-regulated fields like dual training occupations and regulated professions such as medical practitioners, pharmacists, or nurses. The Recognition Act doesn't pertain to professions regulated at the federal state level, such as teachers, nursery school teachers, or engineers; their recognition is determined by the relevant federal state laws. Furthermore, qualifications from higher education in non-regulated fields like biology, physics, or linguistics, as well as foreign-acquired school diploma, and higher education and examination results, remain beyond the scope of the Recognition Act.

Regulated professions

For regulated professions, foreign-acquired professional qualifications must undergo recognition by a competent authority before an individual can secure employment that aligns with the requirements of the profession.

In the higher education sector, there are also the certificate evaluations by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB). The statutory period for a recognition procedure in the regulated sector is three months.

Non-regulated professions

For non-regulated professions, recognition is typically not obligatory but is advisable for individuals seeking to work and receive compensation commensurate with their qualifications. However, in the non-regulated

sector, professional qualification recognition becomes mandatory when visa issuance is contingent upon it. The statutory period for a recognition procedure in the non-regulated sector is four months.

Measures to enhance recognition

- Since 2012, various supplementary frameworks have been developed to improve and streamline recognition processes and have subsequently been expanded:
- The German Ministry of Education and Research has launched *Anerkennung-in-Deutschland*, an information portal for recognition, available in 11 languages.
- The 'Anabin' portal, managed by the German ENIC-NARIC, provides comprehensive information about foreign education systems, degrees, and healthcare professions.
- The Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ) has counselling centres nationwide but staffing shortages have led to long wait times and a lack of centres in some regions.
- The Central Service Point for Professional Recognition, established in 2020 under the Skilled Workers Immigration Act, offers multilingual advisory services to overseas skilled workers seeking professional recognition in Germany.
- In 2016, the Expert Opinion Unit for Healthcare Professions was established by the German ENIC-NARIC to assist healthcare profession recognition authorities. Expert opinions, available in a database, aim to streamline and standardise procedures.
- Many recognition offices now accept digital applications, often allowing the use of simple copies with occasional additional certification requirements. Recent changes have eased document submission, including the elimination of the mandatory requirement for German translations since 2021, accepting alternative translation forms if documents are comprehensible.
- Certain federal states have designated central authorities for specific professions. For instance, starting July 2023, the State Office for Nursing will oversee nursing professionals in Bavaria.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Germany has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

Good practice regarding existing online tools

The German government is providing the information portal *Anerkennung in Deutschland*, focusing on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. This portal features the *Anerkennungs-Finder* recognition search engine and is available in eleven languages. It serves as a centralised resource for information on recognition procedures across various professions, providing contact details for relevant centres. The *Anerkennungs-Finder* offers an interactive guide through the steps of recognising a foreign qualification, recommending location-specific advisory services for personalised support throughout the process. Additionally, a dedicated helpline provides information on all aspects of working and living in Germany, including the recognition process.

Norway

Recognition of foreign education

Recognition of foreign higher education is divided between the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir) and educational institutions. HK-dir offers a general recognition service for foreign higher education (EQF 6-8). This is a system-based recognition of a qualification, based on a comparison of education systems. The foreign qualification is compared to national qualifications based on their placements in the respective education systems. The outcome of the assessment process is a recognition decision stating a general degree or level recognition. Norwegian higher education institutions can give

subject-specific academic recognition and degree equivalency with specific Norwegian degrees. The procedures are free of charge for applicants.

Refugees and applicants with missing documentation with higher education can seek general recognition via the Recognition Procedure for Persons without Verifiable Documentation (UVD-procedure), which consists of an interview based-assessment. This option is exclusive to higher education. The procedures are free of charge for applicants.

Additionally, HK-dir also provides a service for general recognition of higher vocational education (corresponding to EQF levels 5) and programme-based recognition for completed vocational education and training, which aligns with Norwegian craft and journeyman certificates on EQF level 4. Vocational education and training recognition, initially limited to Poland, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, is planned for expansion to additional countries. The procedures are free of charge for applicants.

There is no general recognition service for other forms of upper secondary education on EQF level 4, but entrance requirements for admission to higher education are legally regulated in Higher Education Entrance Qualification (GSU) list.

Professional recognition

Professional recognition applies to individuals who want to work in a regulated profession. There are approximately 172 regulated professions, and HK-dir serves as the national assistance centre for the Professional Qualifications Directive. Furthermore, it is the recognition authority for teachers and kindergarten teachers. Importantly, the right to have professional qualifications assessed is extended to all applicants, including those from outside the EU/EEA. While professional recognition may entail a fee, this may sometimes be partially covered for participants in the Introduction Programme for Refugees.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

There is a legal right to undergo an assessment procedure for RPL. RPL is regulated according to the specific level of education and training. Procedures for the RPL are typically free of charge and available nationwide. Assessments are based on official curricula and learning outcome descriptions. All adults who haven't completed their upper secondary education have the right to pursue RPL, with local authorities responsible. Additionally, RPL can serve as a gateway for admission to higher vocational education and higher education, with educational institutions handling the assessments. Qualifications obtained through RPL are treated equally alongside other qualifications.

Bridging programmes

Bridging courses are offered for various professions, including healthcare, engineering, and teaching. Bridging courses for professional recognition are not offered nationwide; they are exclusively provided by specific higher education institutions. Proficiency in both Norwegian and English is a prerequisite for these programmes.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

Norway has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

However, HK-dir has eased documentation requirements for applicants with Ukrainian education and provided non-personalised comparability statements to assist in understanding their qualifications in the Norwegian context. In collaboration with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI), an online information package, including videos and materials for professionals in the Introduction Programme for

Refugees, has been created. The "New in Norway" website serves as a single point of entry for official information tailored to Ukrainian refugees, simplifying their integration process.

Good practice regarding existing online tools

In collaboration with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI), an online information package, including videos and materials for professionals in the Introduction Programme for Refugees, has been created. The "New in Norway" website serves as a single point of entry for official information tailored to BPT from Ukraine, simplifying their integration process. This website also encompasses all the required information and links for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Poland

Recognition for academic purposes

Recognition of academic qualifications depends on bilateral agreements or a standard recognition procedure (nostrification) and is conducted by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA). NAWA, the Polish ENIC-NARIC centre, offers information on foreign higher education diplomas and provides expert guidance for qualification recognition. It also issues recognition statements for academic and professional purposes.

Recognition statements for foreign diplomas are automatically and for free generated through the KWALIFIKATOR system developed by NAWA. The KWALIFIKATOR database assesses qualification levels, recognition status, and legal entitlements for the diploma holder. The generated statement can be saved as a PDF and is valid with the original diploma. If required, individual statements from NAWA can also be obtained on request. They are issued in Polish within 60 days and are free of charge. As of October 2023, both application and recognition statements are electronic. If NAWA cannot recognise a diploma, it must undergo the official nostrification procedure conducted by higher education institutions.

Recognition for professional purposes

For regulated professions, the same national regulations that apply to Polish citizens govern the rules for third-country nationals. For non-regulated professions, employers make qualification recognition decisions during the recruitment process. If there are uncertainties, NAWA can confirm educational qualifications upon request.

To work in one of the 361 regulated professions, specific diplomas, passing national exams, or registering with professional associations are necessary. Institutions granting practice licenses handle the recognition and validation of qualifications for regulated professions, which may involve aptitude tests or tailored training. Qualifications from third countries require official recognition through the nostrification process to apply for a professional license issued by an authorised association.

Special provisions for BTP from Ukraine

BTP from Ukraine are not required to submit their original diplomas for recognition. Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland before 24 February 2022, seeking confirmation of their foreign academic qualifications can use the European Passport of Qualifications for Refugees (EQPR). The Act of 12 March 2022, aimed at assisting BTP from Ukraine affected by the conflict in Ukraine, eases the recognition of qualifications and employment for professionals in fields such as psychologists, doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives, academic teachers, researchers, miners, and those working in local and government administrations.

Besides easing profession access, the following measures have been taken to support BTP from Ukraine in qualification recognition and securing employment aligned with their qualifications:

- simplified diploma nostrification, either by waiving fees or keeping them minimal, and expediting the process;
- intensive Polish language courses for Ukrainian teachers and educational staff;
- Ukrainian sections on websites, including those of Polish employment services;
- established separate workstations at local labour offices for the registration of BPT from Ukraine, along with Ukrainian-language informational leaflets;
- Polish language courses for Ukrainian medical professionals;
- enabling employers to submit job listings to local employment offices specifically aimed at BTP from Ukraine;
- a dedicated employer hotline for inquiries about job opportunities for BTP from Ukraine;
- employment of Ukrainian-speaking counsellors at the Green Line, the information and consultation centre of the Polish employment services.

Good practice regarding existing online tools

BPT from Ukraine and other third country nationals benefit from various tools facilitating recognition of qualifications, including access to the EQPR or the KWALIFIKATOR online system. The KWALIFIKATOR online system acts as a database for different diplomas from various countries, enabling foreigners and employers to obtain automatic written information on the possibility of recognition of a foreign diploma for professional or academic purposes.

Portugal

General framework

- Recognition of academic degrees and higher education diplomas
 - Automatic recognition: can be initiated either through public higher education institutions in Portugal or directly through the DGES and is processed within a maximum period of 30 days. If requested through the DGES, a fee of EUR 30.20 applies. Currently, people who obtained degrees in 38 countries are eligible for this type of recognition provided they possess one of the 382 degrees or diplomas defined by the Commission for Recognition of Foreign Degrees and Diplomas. Ukrainian nationals can also benefit from this automatic diploma recognition for certain qualifications.
 - Level recognition: this form of recognition involves a case-by-case assessment to determine the equivalence of a foreign qualification to a Portuguese academic degree or diploma. Applications must be submitted through a public university or polytechnic institute in Portugal that offers the specific degree in the relevant field of study. The costs vary depending on the institution, and the decision is made by a jury within a maximum period of 90 days. For instance, at the University of Lisbon, the fee is EUR 550, with additional charges for evaluation exams, if required.
 - Specific recognition: this recognition method involves a case-by-case analysis of the level, duration, and syllabus content in a particular field of study, branch of knowledge, or specialisation. This evaluation is carried out by a public university or polytechnic institute in Portugal that offers the corresponding degree programme. The decision is reached by a jury within a maximum period of 90 days. The fees are identical to those applicable to level recognition.

The three types of recognition can be initiated prior to arrival, with the exception of asylum seekers.

The academic recognition of foreign qualifications does not exempt the holder of meeting all other requirements necessary for the exercise of a concrete professional activity, namely the recognition and registration in the respective professional orders in the case of regulated professions.

- Recognition of professional qualifications

Regulated professions: following the recognition of the degree, individuals must apply for recognition from the relevant authority, which assesses whether additional measures or training are required. The authorisation to practice a regulated profession must be decided within 90 days, with the possibility of an extension of 30 days in specific circumstances.

- Other types of recognitions
 - Recognition/equivalence of qualifications related to primary and secondary education: the authenticated translated foreign documents are submitted to a Portuguese primary or secondary school. The recognition decision must be made within a maximum period of 90 days and there are no fees.
 - Recognition of non-higher-level qualifications and recognition of non-formal learning pertains to qualifications integrated into Portugal's National Qualifications System (SNQ). This system encompasses various educational and vocational training structures and methods. Requests for recognition in this category are under the responsibility of the Qualifica Centres, a network of centres specialised in adult qualification, which is scattered across Portugal. These centres are also in charge of the recognition of non-formal learning.

Special Cases: applicants facing humanitarian emergencies

In case of emergency situations for humanitarian reasons, there is a provision for exemption from the standard document requirements. If documentary evidence of foreign academic qualifications is unavailable, applicants can seek equivalence by providing:

- A declaration under oath, provided by the individual, their legal guardian, or their legal representative.
- A declaration issued by the competent authority, namely the Immigration and Borders Service, Portuguese Council for Refugees, High Commissioner for Migration, justifying the exceptional situation.

Special provisions for BPT from Ukraine

- BPT from Ukraine are eligible to seek student status in cases of emergency due to humanitarian reasons.
- Recognition requests for professional qualifications submitted by BPTs from Ukraine are given priority processing.
- Exemption from following requirements:
 - Formalities for legalisation of documents issued by foreign entities;
 - Certification or authentication of translations into Portuguese of documents drafted in a foreign language;
 - Certification or authentication of copies of original documents;
 - Fees related to registration or of any other nature.
- Specific measures aiming to fasten recognition procedures for various regulated professions:
 - streamlining standard recognition timelines;
 - establishing criteria for implicit recognition;

- implementing procedures to address cases with insufficient documentation.

United Kingdom

Recognition of foreign qualifications for education purposes

For degree recognition, the awarding institution must be on the list of recognised bodies. The UK acknowledges qualifications from specific European countries if they meet UK standards. Visa and ILR applicants since 6 April 2016, must certify their non-British qualifications through UK ENIC to match British standards. Failure to do so may lead to application rejection. Proficiency in English can be established with a degree-level qualification taught in English. If the qualification was obtained abroad, confirmation of its equivalence to a UK bachelor's, master's, or PhD degree can be obtained through UK ENIC.

Professional/occupational recognition

In cases of professional qualifications and occupational skills, employers and other recipients of qualifications ultimately make the decision on their acceptability. To clarify these foreign qualifications, individuals can obtain a Statement of Comparability through UK ENIC. This statement demonstrates the qualification levels, which can be used for employment, academic pursuits, professional registration, or other purposes. The ENIC Statement of Comparability confirms how these overseas qualifications align with the UK qualifications and framework levels, and this requirement applies to individuals in English-speaking countries outside the UK as well.

Since 1 October 2019, applicants must obtain an Industry Skills Statement to provide evidence of their overseas qualifications, particularly in construction, plumbing, electrical, and land-based sectors.

- Regulated professions:
For regulated professions regulators have autonomy over what certification they deem necessary/acceptable for registration. Processing times vary depending on the regulator as they have full autonomy over their recognition processes. Regulators have also full autonomy in determining fees and fee waivers.

UK Centre for Professional Qualifications

The UK Centre for Professional Qualifications serves as a pivotal resource for guidance and support in the recognition of professional qualifications. Collaborating closely with professionals, government departments, competent authorities, and assistance centres both inbound and outbound, it fulfils a vital role in facilitating the recognition process. As a central point of contact, the centre offers comprehensive information and assistance for professional recognition in the UK, contributing to the accessibility and transparency of qualification recognition procedures.

Targeted initiatives

- Bridging offers

Bridging opportunities in the UK vary in availability and are typically offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), subject to the discretion of the admitting body. However, some systematic bridging programmes exist, particularly in fields such as optometry, nursing, and midwifery. These programmes, often in the form of UK-skilling initiatives, consider factors beyond qualifications when admitting immigrants. Immigrants with partial qualifications recognition seeking further studies or employment are informed about the availability of these bridging programmes.

- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

RPL in the UK is request-based and involves various stakeholders, including employers, education providers, and training or awarding bodies, depending on the request.

Typically, a successful RPL process includes providing a statement of comparability and progression options. Once a refugee's prior learning is officially recognised through RPL, education providers may consider it for admissions decisions, while employers, focusing on job-specific competencies, can use RPL to facilitate access to the labour market.

- Missing documentation

For regulated professions, regulators hold full authority with some having established procedures to address such situations. Academic qualifications are assessed through a combination of information, testing, interviews, and questionnaires to recognise prior learning and achievements.

For BTP from Ukraine, UK ENIC may exercise its discretion regarding the documentation required from them.

- Special provisions for BTP from Ukraine

The UK has not introduced any accelerated recognition procedures of academic and professional qualifications for BTP from Ukraine.

3 Existing comparisons of the French and Ukrainian qualifications frameworks: what can be learned?

Introduction

The Member States of the European Union (EU), as well as many non-EU countries, have developed national qualifications frameworks, i.e., all the tools needed for the development and classification of a country's diplomas and qualifications according to a set of criteria defining the level of training achieved. Depending on the country, this set of criteria may be either implicit, i.e. contained in the diplomas and qualifications descriptors themselves, or may be made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. The framework may cover the entire education and training landscape or be confined to a particular sector: initial training, adult education and training or the vocational sector, for example. Some frameworks are more elaborate from a theoretical perspective or have a tighter structure than others; some have a legal basis, while others are based on a common vision shared by education and training stakeholders.⁵²

Comparing national qualifications frameworks between two countries, and more specifically the level of diplomas and qualifications and the processes and conditions for their award is important to facilitate the assessment, recognition, and validation of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad. This helps to develop mutual understanding between employers, workers, students and academic communities in both countries, and thus promotes the international mobility of students and workers. The process of comparing qualifications frameworks involves comprehending their similarities and acknowledging their diversities to draw conclusions regarding points of convergence and divergence, and ultimately determine their comparability.

The comparison of national qualifications frameworks between EU Member States, and more specifically the levels of qualifications and diplomas, and the criteria and processes for their award, is pretty straightforward because they are all aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The comparison is less obvious when it involves a non-EU country whose national framework is not fully aligned with the European framework, which is the case of Ukraine. Specific works have therefore been carried out to make existing Ukrainian diplomas and qualifications more understandable. The purpose of this note is to identify the key lessons learned from these works. It is divided into two parts. The first section presents the key takeaways derived from the comparison between the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the EQF. This analysis provides valuable information regarding the alignment between the Ukrainian NQF and the French NQF, considering the latter is aligned with the EQF. In the absence of a direct comparison of French and Ukrainian NQFs, the second section focuses on comparisons of the

⁵² OECD, The role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning, Report from Thematic Group 1: The development and use of 'Qualifications Frameworks' as a means of reforming and managing qualifications systems, 2004, <https://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/33977045.pdf>

education systems in France and Ukraine, carried out by various institutions, which provide useful information on the processes, awarding conditions and levels of Ukrainian diplomas and qualifications.

Comparison of the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework with the European Qualifications Framework drawn up by the European Commission

The EQF, established in 2008, is a system for categorising and comparing qualifications and diplomas in different countries⁵³, aiming to enhance the comprehension and comparability of qualifications, as well as facilitate student mobility across countries and sectors. The EQF consists of eight levels that delineate learning outcomes. While each level is not directly tied to a specific qualification, certain levels have become associated with particular diplomas since the inception of the Bologna process. For instance, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees are commonly associated with levels 6, 7, and 8, respectively.

Ukraine initiated the implementation of its own NQF in 2010, drawing heavily from the EQF. As a result, the Ukrainian NQF shares notable similarities with the EQF. Both frameworks align in their commitment to transparency, employability, and the use of learning outcome units. However, the Ukrainian NQF distinguishes itself through its comprehensive scope, encompassing all levels of qualifications and all sub-sectors of education and training.

Ukraine has made significant strides towards aligning its NQF with the EQF. Initially, in 2011, the country established ten qualification levels. However, in 2017, a new law was enacted to revise the NQF, which included the addition of an extra level dedicated to pre-university vocational education. Consequently, levels 6 to 10 are now designated for higher education. In 2017, Ukraine implemented an innovative initiative in primary and secondary education following the adoption of the Law on Education. This initiative aimed to transition to a 12-year school system and introduce a pedagogical approach centred on skills development. Further progress was made in 2020 when the levels of the Ukrainian NQF were harmonised with the EQF, resulting in a reduction to eight levels. This adjustment ensures consistency and comparability of qualification levels. This alignment enhances the harmonisation with international qualification standards and facilitates the readability and recognition of Ukrainian qualifications at the European level.

To facilitate the integration of displaced individuals from Ukraine into the labour markets of the EU and ensure their employment in positions commensurate with their professional expertise, the European Commission has prepared a "Report on the comparison between the EQF and the Ukrainian NQF"⁵⁴. This report stems from a pilot project specifically designed to assess the feasibility and advantages of comparing the national qualifications frameworks of third countries, such as Ukraine, with EQF.

The comparison between the Ukrainian NQF and the EQF reveals significant similarities in terms of objectives, scope, levels, and the unit-based learning approach, particularly within higher education. However, there is room for further strengthening the connection between the two frameworks in the context of primary and secondary education, as well as vocational education and training.

The Ukrainian NQF aims to foster lifelong learning, validate formal and non-formal learning, facilitate mobility, and support professional and personal development as well as employability. Both the Ukrainian NQF and EQF emphasise the portability and comparability of qualifications. In terms of scope, the

⁵³ In addition to the EU Member States, the EQF is also implemented by 11 other countries. These are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Albania, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Switzerland are also participating in the implementation of the EQF.

⁵⁴ European Commission, Comparison report of the European Qualifications Frameworks and the Ukrainian National Qualifications Framework, 2023, <https://europa.eu/europass/system/files/2023-02/Comparison%20report%20final%20rev%2023-02-2023%20EN.pdf>

Ukrainian NQF, akin to EQF-aligned NQFs in European countries, encompasses all qualifications within the formal education system.

Both frameworks consist of eight levels. Higher education qualifications and primary and general secondary education qualifications have been positioned relative to these levels through successive reforms. However, the same level alignment has not been achieved for vocational education and training qualifications and professional qualifications. Additionally, the use of units of learning outcomes, although inspired by the EQF, could benefit from stronger integration within the Ukrainian NQF. Currently, the Ukrainian NQF relies on educational and professional standards and profiles, which are not directly linked to the EQF's units of learning outcomes.

Furthermore, while a quality assurance system for general education and vocational education and training is in place, there is a need to strengthen and clarify its connection with the Ukrainian NQF. Challenges in making this comparison may arise from factors such as inadequate teacher and trainer training, outdated technical infrastructure in vocational education and training institutions, a lack of alignment with labour market needs, insufficient practical training opportunities, a shortage of specialised trainers, and outdated approaches and methods in vocational guidance.⁵⁵

A comparison of the French and Ukrainian education systems

The ENIC-NARIC France centre's summary of the Ukrainian education system

The ENIC-NARIC France centre proactively established a comprehensive framework during the war in Ukraine, which effectively presents a concise overview of the Ukrainian education system alongside its corresponding French equivalents.⁵⁶ This table representing this framework is provided below.

Table 3.1. Comparative table drawn up by the ENIC-NARIC France centre

| Diploma | Duration of studies | ECTS credit | Cycle | Level |
|--|--|-------------|-------|-------|
| PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION | | | | |
| Svidotsvo pro bazovu zahal'nu serednyu osvitu Свідоцтво про базову загальну середню освіту (Certificate of basic general secondary education) | 9 years of primary and secondary education | - | - | - |
| Atestat pro povnu zahal'nu serednju osvitu / Svidotsvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahal'noyi seredn'oyi osvity Атестат про повну загальну середню освіту / Свідоцтво про повну загальну середню освіту (Certificate of full general secondary education) | 11 years of primary and secondary education | - | - | 4 |
| VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING | | | | |
| Diplom kvalifikovanovo robitnika Диплом кваліфікованого робітника (Qualified worker diploma) | 1 year of vocational studies after 9 years of compulsory schooling | - | - | 3 |
| Diplom kvalifikovanovo robitnika** (a diploma in robin-making) Диплом кваліфікованого робітника (Qualified worker diploma) | 3 or 4 years, at the end of compulsory schooling / 1 or 1.5 years after obtaining the secondary school leaving certificate | - | - | 4 |

⁵⁵ Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, A short overview on vocational education and training in Ukraine, 2022, https://datapool-bibb.bibb.de/pdfs/Snizhana_Overview_VET_in_Ukraine.pdf

⁵⁶ ENIC-NARIC, Fiche synthétique sur le système éducatif ukrainien établie par le centre ENIC-NARIC France, <https://www.euroguidance-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/enic-naric-france-systeme-educatif-ukrainien.pdf> ,

| | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---------------------------|---|
| Molodshogo Spetsialista*** Diploma Диплом молодшого спеціаліста (Young specialist diploma) | 2 or 3 years of vocational secondary education after 9 years of primary and secondary education | - | - | 4 |
| POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (PRE-SUPERIOR) | | | | |
| Diplom Molodshogo Spetsialista Диплом молодшого спеціаліста (Young specialist diploma) | 2 to 4 years of vocational (secondary and) post- secondary education | - | Short cycle | 5 |
| Diplom Fakhovogo Molodshogo Bakalavra Диплом фахового молодшого бакалавра (Junior professional Bakalavr diploma) | 2 to 4 years of vocational (secondary and) post- secondary education | - | Short cycle | 5 |
| HIGHER EDUCATION | | | | |
| Diplom Molodshogo Bakalavra Диплом молодшого бакалавра (Junior Bakalavr diploma) | 2 years of higher education | 120 | Short cycle | 5 |
| Diplom Bakalavra Диплом бакалавра (Bakalavr diploma) | 3 or 4 years of higher education | 180 / 240 | 1 ^{er} cycle | 6 |
| Diplom Magistra Диплом магістра (Magistr's diploma) | 1 year and a half / 2 years of higher education at 2 ^{ème} cycle | 90 / 120 | 2 ^{ème} cycle | 7 |
| Diplom Spetsialista Диплом спеціаліста (Specialist diploma) | 1 year (and a half) of 2 ^{ème} cycle postgraduate studies | 60 / 90 | 2 ^{ème} cycle | 7 |
| Diplom Magistra (medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science) Диплом магістра (Magistr's diploma) | 5 or 6 years of higher education | 300 / 360 | 2 ^{ème} cycle | 7 |
| Diplom Spetsialista Диплом спеціаліста (Specialist diploma) | 5 years of higher education | 300 | 2 ^{ème} cycle | 7 |
| Diplom Spetsialista (medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science) Диплом спеціаліста (Specialist diploma) | 5 or 6 years of higher education | 300 / 360 | 2 ^{ème} cycle | 7 |
| DOCTORAL STUDIES | | | | |
| Diplom Kandidata Naouk Диплом кандидата наук (Candidate of Science Diploma) | 3 years of doctoral studies | - | 3 ^{ème} cycle | 8 |
| Diplom Doktora Filosifii Диплом доктора філософії (Doctor of Philosophy diploma) | 4 years of doctoral studies | - | 3 ^{ème} cycle | 8 |
| Diplom Doktora Mistetstva Диплом доктора мистецтва (Doctor of Art diploma) | 3 years of doctoral studies | - | 3 ^{ème} cycle | 8 |

Note: The table includes dashes to indicate the absence of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) or specific cycles for certain levels. Identifying credit and cycle equivalents for primary and secondary education, as well as doctoral studies, may pose challenges. The levels presented in the table correspond to the levels defined in the European Qualifications Framework (itself aligned with the European Qualifications Framework)

Source: ENIC-NARIC France

The table of qualifications provided by the ENIC-NARIC France centre is organised into five distinct sections, covering primary and secondary education, secondary vocational education, post-secondary vocational education (pre-university), higher education, and doctoral studies. In this table, the ENIC-NARIC France centre provides a translation of the Ukrainian diploma into French, specifying the length of study required for each diploma, the teaching cycle and the level in relation to the French NQF (itself aligned with the EQF). The level given in this table corresponds to the positioning of the diploma in the French NQF

carried out by the ENIC-NARIC France centre, and may not, in some cases, correspond to the level in relation to the Ukrainian framework. For example, the Ukrainian NQF positions the *Certificat d'études secondaires générales complètes* (comparable to the French baccalauréat) at level 3, whereas this diploma gives access to higher education and is therefore positioned at level 4 in the French NQF. There is also a difference in the positioning of the *Diplôme de jeune spécialiste* (currently called the “Professional Junior Bachelor”): the ENIC-NARIC France centre positions it at either level 4 or level 5 depending on the length of studies and prerequisites (9 years of secondary studies or 11 years of secondary studies), whereas the Ukrainian framework positions them all at level 5 regardless of the level of the diploma previously obtained. Finally, the table incorporates the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), a standardised points system used by universities, the main aim of which is to facilitate improved recognition of qualifications across Europe.

ENIC-NARIC France centre’s comparative analysis of the French and Ukrainian education systems is available in both French and Ukrainian on the Euroguidance network website.⁵⁷ However, it is crucial to note that this valuable comparison, designed to assist foreigners, is not currently accessible on the ENIC-NARIC France centre’s website. This lack of accessibility poses challenges for individuals seeking relevant information. To enhance the usefulness of this document for beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine, consideration should be given to making it available online.

Ministry of Education comparison of levels in the Ukrainian education system and their equivalence in France

The Ministry of Education in France has taken steps to establish correspondences between the levels of education in the two countries. On its website, the ministry provides detailed explanations regarding the different levels of the Ukrainian education system and their equivalents in France. For instance, in Ukraine, primary school is structured into four levels which align with the CP, CE1, CE2 and CM1 classes in the French education system. Secondary school in Ukraine encompasses grades 5 to 9, which are equivalent to CM2 to *troisième* in France. Upper secondary education in Ukraine covers years 10 to 11, corresponding to the classes of *seconde* and *première* in France. Additionally, specialised vocational training courses are available in Ukraine after completing year 9.⁵⁸

UNESCO comparison of education systems

According to a UNESCO report comparing education systems using ISCED charts⁵⁹, provides a comparison between different countries, including France and Ukraine. In Ukraine, primary education spans 7 to 10 years, followed by basic secondary education from 11 to 15 years. At the age of 16 and 17, students can choose to enter upper secondary education or vocational/ technical education. The French education system is more complex and diversified, with pre-elementary education from age 3 to 6, primary education from age 6 to 11 and lower secondary education from age 11 to 15. The third cycle of secondary education in France offers various options, including upper secondary education leading to the baccalauréat, vocational secondary education leading to qualifications such as the *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP), and vocational education in medico-social establishments and services.

⁵⁷ Euroguidance network, Comparing French and foreign education systems, <https://www.euroguidance-france.org/espace-professionnel/orienter-les-publics-refugies-ou-en-migration/>

⁵⁸ EDUSCOL, Maintenir la continuité des apprentissages en ukrainien, <https://eduscol.education.fr/3173/maintenir-la-continuite-des-apprentissages-en-ukrainien>

⁵⁹ UNESCO, Utiliser les diagrammes de la CITE pour comparer les systèmes éducatifs, 2021, http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/uis-isced-interior_fr_web-final_0.pdf

Additionally, the French system includes a fourth level for post-secondary vocational education and gateway programs for accessing university.

There are three levels of higher education in Ukraine: a short cycle (level 5), basic higher education (level 6) and complete higher education (level 7). Similarly, in France, higher education is also divided into three levels. There are various options available at each level, including vocational higher education, university cycles, business schools, teacher training, professional diplomas, and specialised higher education in different fields.⁶⁰

Lack of comparison for professional qualifications in non-formal education and for regulated occupations

No comparative study has been carried out on professional qualifications in non-formal education in Ukraine and France. In France, the *Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles* (RNCP) lists all diplomas recognised in France and issued by the state. This includes not only diplomas from national and higher education institutions but also state diplomas and qualifications obtained through specific training courses outside of formal education for various sectors. State diplomas are often required for regulated occupations. Qualifications listed in the RNCP are recognised throughout France and aligned with the European Qualifications Framework.

In Ukraine, there is no equivalent to the RNCP. Diplomas from the formal education system give their holders a professional qualification which is mentioned on the diploma. Engineers, architects, teachers, economists, accountants, lawyers, doctors, etc. hold a *Diplom Spetsialista* or a *Diplom Magistra*. There is no system of professional titles or state diplomas for each profession. Furthermore, the connection between the Ukrainian NQF and the EQF is not explicitly established for vocational education and training, in particular for non-formal education qualifications, and no ad-hoc comparison seems to have been conducted for one or more specific sector or occupation. This would require further work.

Furthermore, France has a list of regulated occupations in accordance with Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications.⁶¹ These regulated occupations require individuals to possess specific diplomas, successfully pass specialized examinations, and obtain licenses or registrations from recognised professional organisation. Notable examples of regulated occupations in France include doctors, lawyers, architects, as well as several craft and building trades. In Ukraine, in many sectors that are regulated in France, such as beauty care, pastry-making, hairdressing, etc., there is no regulatory framework and access to these occupations can be gained simply through short training courses offered by private entities.

Conclusion

The alignment of the French and Ukrainian NQFs with the EQF makes it easier to compare their qualifications, and particularly their diplomas. This is particularly true for general education. In addition, several stakeholders including the ENIC-NARIC France centre, have actively conducted direct comparisons between the French and Ukrainian education systems, which greatly aids in positioning Ukrainian formal education qualifications within the French system. This is particularly true for general education. However, the usefulness of some documents is limited because they are not available online.

⁶⁰CASNAV, Positionnement des élèves allophones nouvellement arrivés, 2016, http://dsden89.ac-dijon.fr/casnav/IMG/pdf/positionnement_eana_syst_sco_casnav_amiens_vd_2016-1.pdf

⁶¹ EU Directive 2005/36/CE of the European Parliament and Council of September 7th 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:fr:PDF>

A significant challenge arises in the realm of vocational education and training, where the Ukrainian NQF is not yet fully harmonised with the EQF, and where the specific comparison of the Ukrainian and French systems has not been carried out exhaustively. This represents an important challenge, particularly to facilitate the access to regulated occupations, but would involve a considerable amount of work.

4 The discount of foreign qualifications and the cost of non-recognition: an exploratory analysis

Introduction

In most European OECD countries, migrants - particularly those born outside the EU – fare worse in the labour market than the native-born. In the EU, for example, the unemployment rate for the population born outside the EU is on average twice that of the native-born population. When they do have a job, migrants are 60% more likely to be overqualified than EU-born nationals, and twice as likely if they have a foreign diploma. France is no exception. Two-thirds of working age foreign-educated third-country migrants have a job in France, compared with nine out of ten native-born. In addition, in France, 46% of foreign-educated third-country migrants are over-qualified for their job, compared with 20% of native-born (OECD/European Commission, 2023^[1]).

A large part of the discount seems to be due to uncertainties about the equivalence of qualifications and skills acquired abroad. Indeed, the difference between migrants and native-born decreases significantly when looking at migrants with a diploma obtained in France: the difference in unemployment rates is divided by three, and disappears completely when looking at overqualification rates (OECD/European Commission, 2023^[1]). This raises the question of the extent to which the formal recognition of qualifications and skills acquired abroad can facilitate their transferability and the labour market integration of migrants. To what extent do migrants attempt to obtain recognition? When they do so, what advantages do they gain on the labour market? Is this enough to eliminate the differences in employment and overqualification rates between migrants with host-country qualifications and those with qualifications from their country of origin? What are the costs associated with a lack of recognition in terms of employment rates, overqualification and job quality? This note aims to shed light on these issues.

These questions are particularly relevant in the case of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine in France, as in many cases they hold a tertiary education diploma. Moreover, as the conflict with Russia shows signs of deepening, an increasing number of BTP are considering settling in their host country, including France, on a longer-term basis. In this context, it is important to reconsider the national integration strategy and reflect on how it could evolve to make a better use of the skills of these individuals.

The first part presents a literature review on the returns to education⁶² for migrants and the recognition of qualifications as a solution to improve it. The second part presents a quantitative analysis of data from the European Union Labour Force Survey⁶³ which, in 2021, included a specific module on the labour market

⁶² Return to education is generally defined as the ratio of the benefits (in terms of employment and income) that an individual derives from his or her education to the direct and indirect costs of this education.

⁶³ Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey [2021].

situation of migrants and contained information on recognition procedures. This quantitative analysis makes it possible to produce statistics on recognition procedures and to highlight the link between the recognition of diplomas and the labour market situation of migrants, in France and in other European countries.

Differences in returns to education between native-born and migrants and the impact of the recognition of qualifications: key findings from the existing literature

In Europe, the employment rate of migrants is on average nine percentage points lower than that of native-born with the same level of education, gender, age bracket, and living in the same country. Migrants also have a rate of overqualification that is 12 percentage points higher on average than that of native-born with the same characteristics in Europe. These differences are mainly due to the fact that some migrants have not obtained a diploma in the host country (Aleksynska and Tritah, 2011^[2]; Damas de Matos and Liebig, 2014^[3]). Furthermore, there are significant differences in wages between migrants and native-born with a similar level of education, particularly for migrants who obtained their diplomas in their country of origin. This observation has been made by numerous authors and documented in several studies of different countries. In Canada, for example, Li (2001^[4]) compares the income of four groups: native-born Canadians with diplomas, migrants with Canadian diplomas, migrants with foreign diplomas, and migrants with one or more Canadian and foreign diplomas, and finds that migrants' diplomas, whether obtained in the origin or in the host country, are financially devalued compared to the diplomas of native-born Canadians. Diplomas from the origin country suffer the greatest discount. In the United States, Bratsberg and Ragan (2002^[5]) highlight an advantage, in terms of wages received, for migrants who obtained their diplomas in the United States compared with migrants with equivalent qualifications acquired abroad, and show that this advantage is the result of both a higher level of attainment and a higher return to education. The differences in returns to education between migrants and native-born are partially explained by the greater incidence of overqualification among foreign-educated migrants: indeed, overqualified workers earn slightly more than their adequately matched counterparts in the same type of job, but less than if they had had access to a job corresponding to their qualifications (Nielsen, 2009^[6]). For a more comprehensive review of the literature on the qualifications and skills of migrants and their use and labour market outcomes, the interested reader can refer to a chapter prepared by the OECD (Damas de Matos, 2014^[7]).

The disadvantage observed for migrants who were trained abroad compared with those with host-country diplomas, at equal levels of qualification, is due to a multitude of factors. For example, a longer stay in the host country for those with a host-country diploma may enable them to better master the language and cultural codes and so increase their employability, as well as favouring the development of a better social network to help them in their job search. The disadvantage may also stem from qualitative differences in education systems and diplomas, resulting in differences between individuals' actual skills. Another explanation could be that diplomas acquired abroad are not valued by employers in the same way as those awarded in the host country because of difficulties in understanding the diploma. In the latter case, any action aimed at making foreign qualifications easier to understand would have the effect of reducing the penalty associated with foreign qualifications on the labour market. This could, for example, take the form of a formal recognition that a foreign diploma or qualification is comparable or equivalent to a national education or vocational training diploma (OECD, 2017^[8]). Recognition of qualifications could also help to match people's skills to the jobs they obtain, as access to certain professions is regulated and requires specific diplomas.

The positive impact of the evaluation and recognition of foreign diplomas on the labour market situation of migrants has been demonstrated in different settings. In Flanders, a positive link has been established between recognition and the probability of finding work for migrants with tertiary attainment: one year after

the start of the non-employment spell, migrants with a recognised diploma had a transition rate into employment which was three percentage points higher compared to migrants with a foreign diploma (OECD, 2023^[9]). An OECD study of OECD EU countries published in 2014, using data from 2008, shows that migrants with foreign diplomas are more likely than native-born to be overqualified for their jobs, but that the disadvantage associated with foreign diplomas is reduced by two-thirds for those who applied to have their diplomas recognised compared with those who did not (Damas de Matos and Liebig, 2014^[3]). More recently, in Switzerland, Pecoraro and Wanner (2019^[10]) have found that migrants with a host-country diploma and those whose diploma has been recognised are the least likely to be overqualified. However, as the authors acknowledge, these studies do not support the conclusion that there is a causal link between diploma recognition and labour market status, as other factors come into play. For example, an individual may initiate a recognition process and obtain a job corresponding to his or her skills because of greater motivation, or because they have better access to information on the integration process.

Other studies have therefore sought to establish a causal effect of recognition on employment and wages (Banerjee et al., 2021^[11]; Brücker et al., 2021^[12]; Tibajev and Hellgren, 2019^[13]). According to these studies, the effect of recognition on the probability of being in employment is estimated at around four percentage points in the short term, rising to 26 percentage points in the medium term (three years after recognition) in one study in particular (Brücker et al., 2021^[12]). The impact on wages is between 14% and 26%. More specifically, Banerjee et al (2021^[11]) have studied the case of Canada, where, since 2015, the Federal Skilled Worker Program has made the formal assessment of diplomas compulsory. They show that the introduction of this new requirement is associated with faster access to employment and higher wages for participants in the programme than for migrants who are not subject to such an obligation. However, the positive effect of the programme is limited to those with no previous work experience in Canada. For Germany, Brücker et al (2021^[12]), used longitudinal data which makes it possible to track individuals over time and observe their labour market situation before and after recognition of their qualifications, thereby making it possible to separate the effect of recognition from other individual factors (such as greater motivation). They highlight a significant and lasting positive impact of recognition, with an employment rate that is 24.5 percentage points higher and an hourly wage that is 19.8 percentage points higher three years after obtaining recognition. They show that recognition allows individuals with the requisite diplomas to work in a regulated profession after a period of non-employment or employment in a non-regulated profession. However, the positive effects are not limited solely to individuals with a diploma corresponding to a regulated profession, but also extend to non-regulated professions. Tibajev and Hellgren (2019^[13]), looked at Sweden and focused on individuals with a diploma corresponding to a non-regulated profession. They found an effect of diploma recognition of 4.4 percentage points on the employment rate and 13.9% on wages. This suggests that, as well as allowing access to regulated professions, the recognition of foreign qualifications also plays a signalling role for employers, by eliminating uncertainty about the skills of immigrant workers.

Box 4.1. Immigrants' lower employment rates and wages, partly due to a lack of recognition of their qualifications, result in significant tax losses

To get an idea of the size of the fiscal losses due to immigrants' lower employment rates, a recent OECD study (OECD, 2021^[14]) proposes the following counterfactual exercise: the employment rates of prime aged immigrants are set equal to those of the native-born of the same gender and educational

attainment, keeping all other factors equal. The underlying assumption is that non-employed immigrants would have the same net fiscal contribution as immigrants of the same gender and education who are in employment. This simple exercise shows that the gains from making better use of immigrants' skills by increasing their employment rates can be very substantial in France: for the highly skilled, they are estimated at EUR 1.9 billion⁶⁴ per year over the period 2006-2018.

The lack of recognition of skills acquired abroad leads not only to lower employment rates for immigrants with foreign qualifications, but also to lower wages for those who manage to find a job, in particular because of the mismatch between the job an individual holds and its skills. This contributes to a further reduction in tax revenues and partly explains the fact that tax revenue per capita for highly skilled immigrants are 12% lower than for natives with the same qualifications.

Source: (OECD, 2021^[14])

The discount of foreign qualifications and recognition procedures: an exploratory analysis of data from the European Union Labour Force Survey

Methodology

This note uses data from the European Union Labour Force Survey (hereinafter EU-LFS), a survey of the labour market participation of individuals aged 15 and over, carried out by sampling, on a quarterly basis, households in EU Member States as well as in four EU candidate countries and three European Free Trade Association countries. These data provide valuable information on people's labour market status, their occupation, their level of educational attainment, the match between the job held and skills, the type of contract (full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary), and job satisfaction, among other things. More specifically, the data collected in 2021 have been selected for the purpose of this study, as they are supplemented by an ad hoc module looking at the labour market situation of migrants and their direct descendants and containing information on the steps taken by the individuals surveyed to have their qualifications recognised. This information is necessary to understand the link between diploma recognition and the labour market situation, and also enables the results in France and other EU countries to be put into perspective.

The sample used for this study is restricted to European countries that are in the OECD, and comprises individuals born outside the European Union (EU), aged 15-64, not in full-time education, and who obtained their highest qualification outside the EU⁶⁵. The country analyses only apply to countries with more than 1 000 cases (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Spain).

⁶⁴ Euros 2014.

⁶⁵ With the exception of analyses that compare labour market outcomes between individuals who obtained their highest qualification outside the EU and those whose highest qualification was obtained in the host country.

Box 4.2. Alternative data for studying the link between recognition of foreign diplomas and the labour market situation in France

The aim of the ELIPA survey (*Enquête Longitudinale sur l'Intégration des Primo-Arrivants* - Longitudinal Survey of the Integration of First-time Arrivals) is to gain a better understanding of the integration pathways of people who receive their first residence permit and who intend to settle in France permanently. These people are surveyed immediately after obtaining their first residence permit, one year later, and three years later. The survey is carried out by the Department of Statistics, Studies and Documentation of the General Directorate for Foreigners in France (DGEF) in the Ministry of the Interior. The first edition of the survey took place between 2010 and 2013. More than 6 000 people were questioned in mainland France in 2010, around 4 700 responded to the survey in 2011, and 3 500 were questioned again in 2013. The second edition took place between 2019 and 2022, with the three waves of the second edition involving over 6 500, 5 000 and 4 000 respondents respectively.

Several studies have used these data to paint a picture of first-time arrivals in France and their labour market situation. In particular, a recent publication (DSED, 2024[15]) shows that around three-quarters of first-time holders of a residence permit have obtained a diploma, either in France or abroad, and one-quarter have graduated from higher education. Of the latter, 41% have started the process of having at least one of their foreign diplomas recognised. 71% of the first-time arrivals who have initiated this procedure have succeeded in obtaining full recognition of their qualifications, 12% have obtained only partial recognition, 10% saw their efforts refused, and 8% are still being processed. Among the first-time arrivals who had not initiated the procedure, 34% felt that their diploma did not need to be recognised in order to carry out their activity in France, 20% stated that they intended to initiate the procedure at a later date and 11% lacked information (did not know that it was possible or did not know how to go about it). However, no study has been carried out using these data to determine the link between recognition of foreign qualifications and labour market status.

Some descriptive statistics

In the selected sample, 44% of individuals obtained their highest qualification in the host country, and 53% of individuals obtained their highest qualification outside the EU. 20% of individuals who obtained their highest qualification outside the EU consider that recognition of their skills is the main obstacle they face when finding a job. In comparison, difficulties with the host country language are cited as the main barrier by 25% of individuals. The percentage of individuals declaring that skills recognition is the main barrier to employment differs significantly between countries, e.g. (Figure 4.1) 8% in Norway and Italy, 20% in France, and 36% in Germany. It is worth remembering, however, that this figure reflects not only the importance of skills recognition as a barrier to employment, but also the importance of other obstacles such as difficulties with the host country language and discrimination. The differences observed between countries may therefore in reality be attributable to a multitude of factors, which may in fact be cumulative.⁶⁶ In the vast majority of countries analysed below, highly qualified individuals (at least ISCED level 5⁶⁷) are more likely to cite skills recognition as the main barrier to employment than those with medium or low

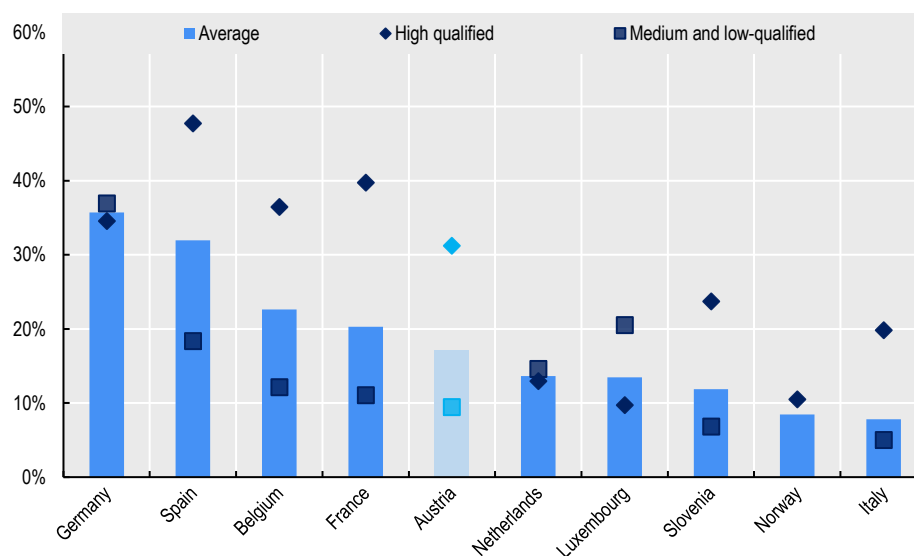
⁶⁶ Although the survey allows each respondent to mention only one main barrier.

⁶⁷ The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is a framework designed to produce comparable statistics on education and training in all countries. It was devised by UNESCO in the 1970s and revised in 1997 and 2011. In France, ISCED level 4 corresponds to post-secondary non-tertiary education (basic legal qualification (*capacité en Droit*), diploma giving access to university studies (*Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires* - DAEU) etc.), and level 5 to short-cycle tertiary education (higher technical certificate (*Brevet de technicien supérieur* - BTS), etc.).

qualifications (maximum ISCED level 4), with the exception of Germany and the Netherlands, where the rates are similar between the two groups, and Luxembourg, where the least qualified seem to cite this obstacle more often.

Figure 4.1. Skills recognition is a major barrier to employment

% stating that skills recognition is the main barrier to employment, by level of educational attainment



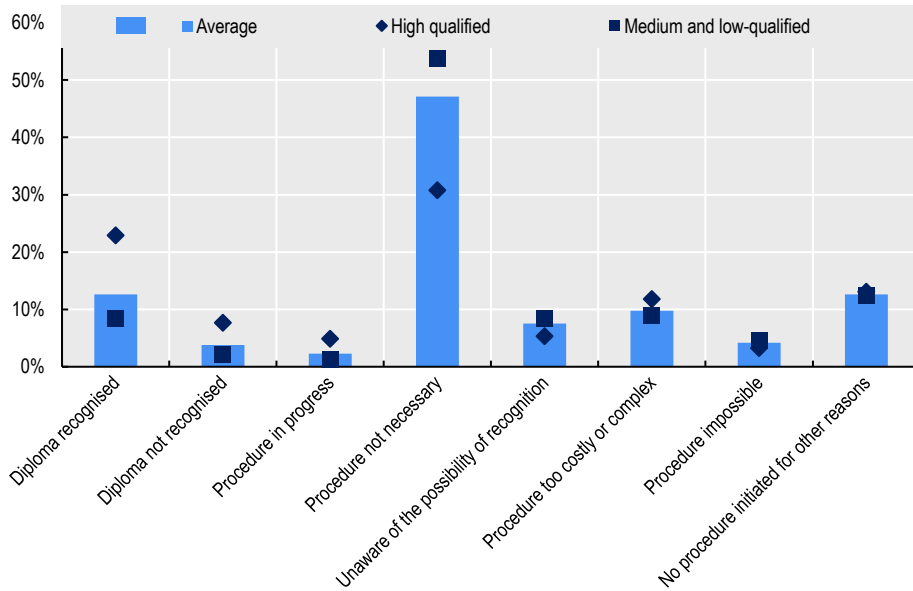
Note: Sample comprising individuals born and having obtained their highest qualification outside the EU, aged 15-64 and not in full-time education. Highly qualified individuals are those with a diploma at ISCED level 5 or above; low and medium qualified individuals have their highest diploma at ISCED level 4 or below.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

Although, on average in the EU, more than one in five people who have obtained a diploma from outside the EU cite skills recognition as the main barrier to employment, a large majority of individuals (81%) do not initiate a skills recognition procedure (Figure 4.2), because either they feel that the recognition procedure is unnecessary (47%), or that it is too costly or complex (10%), or they are not aware that recognition is possible (8%), or because the procedure does not exist in their case (4%), or for other reasons (13%). Of those who have initiated a recognition procedure (21%), 67% receive a positive response (full or partial recognition), 20% have their application rejected, and 12% are still waiting for a response. The most highly qualified individuals are less likely to not initiate a recognition procedure because it is not necessary, and more likely to do so than the least qualified individuals.

Figure 4.2. In the European Union, most people who have a diploma from outside the EU do not initiate the recognition procedure.

% of individuals initiating the recognition procedure, by level of education

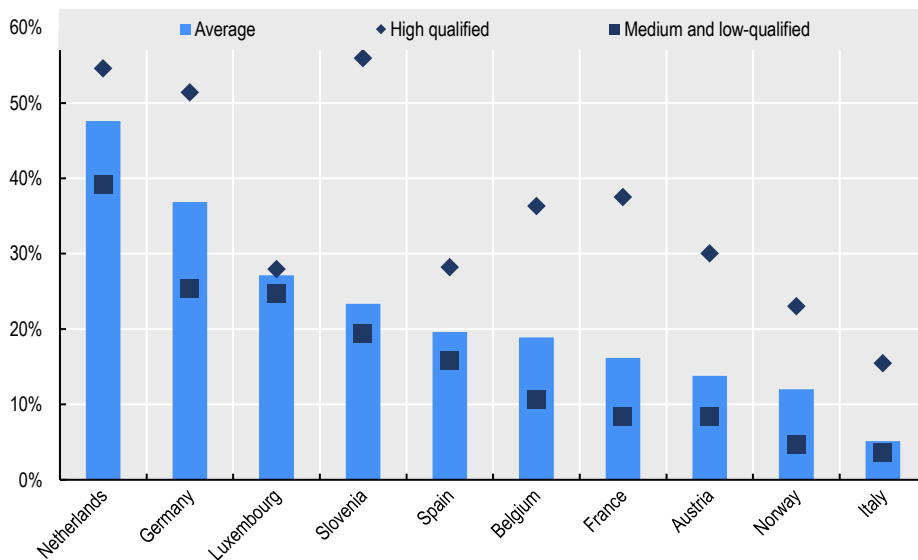


Note: Sample comprising individuals born and having obtained their highest qualification outside the EU, aged 15-64 and not in full-time education. Highly qualified individuals are those with a diploma at ISCED level 5 or above; low and medium qualified individuals have their highest diploma at ISCED level 4 or below.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

Figure 4.3. The proportion of migrants initiating a recognition procedure is low in most of the analysed countries

% of individuals initiating a recognition procedure, by level of educational attainment



Note: Sample comprising individuals born and having obtained their highest qualification outside the EU, aged 15-64 and not in full-time education. Highly qualified individuals are those with a diploma at ISCED level 5 or above; low and medium qualified individuals have their highest diploma at ISCED level 4 or below.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

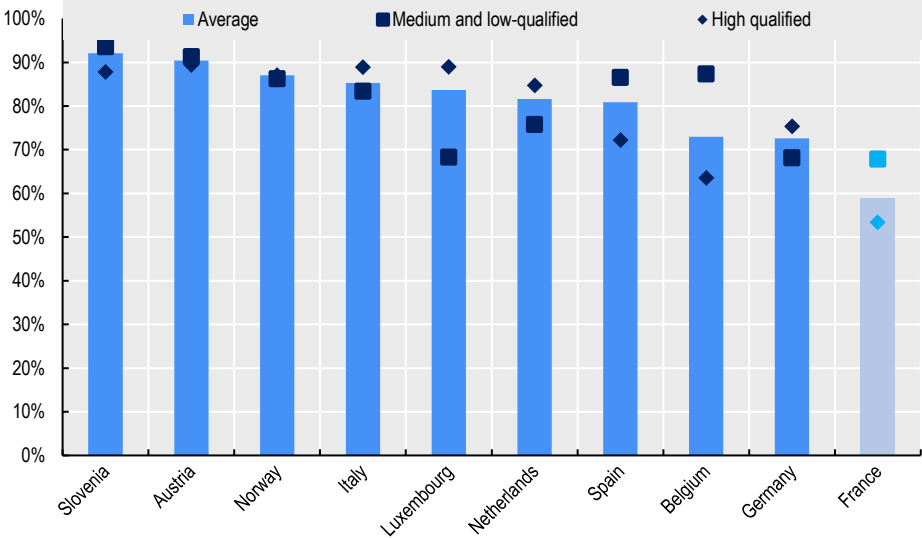
Figure 4.3 presents the percentage of individuals initiating recognition procedures by country, by level of educational attainment, and on average, and reveals a marked difference between countries. The disparity in the average percentage of individuals initiating recognition procedures - from 5% in Italy to 48% in the Netherlands - is not entirely explained by the differences between countries in terms of migrants' levels of education. In fact, a similar observation can be made by considering only the most highly qualified or the medium/low-skilled group. On the other hand, it is important to note that the various countries rank themselves differently according to the statistic under consideration, which also reveals significant divergences between countries in the differences in participation in recognition procedures between the most and least qualified. In France, on average, 16% of individuals who have obtained their highest qualification outside the EU initiate a procedure for recognition of their qualification. There is a marked difference between the most and least qualified, with 38% of the most qualified initiating a procedure compared to only 8% of the least qualified.

The probability of initiating a recognition procedure varies not only between countries and individuals' levels of qualification but also according to other personal characteristics such as age, length of stay in the host country, level of proficiency in the host country language, and the reasons for migrating. For example, older people are less likely to have initiated a recognition procedure. In addition, people who have migrated for study purposes and refugees are more likely to apply for recognition of their foreign qualifications. Finally, the better an individual's command of the host country language, the more likely it is that they will initiate a recognition procedure (cf. table in the Annex).

It is interesting to compare the figures in Figure 4.3 with those from the 2008 EU-LFS, which also included an ad hoc module on the labour market situation of migrants and their direct descendants. Although analysis of the 2008 micro-data is outside the scope of this study, figures on the proportion of individuals applying for recognition of their qualifications and the success rates of these applications are given in a report published by the OECD in 2017 (OECD, 2017^[8]). At the time, it was found that few individuals made use of existing recognition mechanisms. In fact, only 38% of migrants with tertiary attainment in the fourteen European countries analysed had applied for recognition of their qualifications. And the figures are similar at present, with, on average in the ten countries included in Figure 4.3, 36% of high-qualified individuals who obtained their qualifications outside the EU seeking recognition. Further analysis is needed to determine exactly how this figure has evolved over the last decade in the different countries, but all the indications are that, in general, little progress has been made.

Figure 4.4. The recognition rate for those who have initiated the recognition procedure is lower in France than in the other countries in the sample.

% of individuals who received a positive response out of those who initiated a procedure and received a response



Note: Sample comprising individuals born and having obtained their highest qualification outside the EU, aged 15-64 and not in full-time education.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

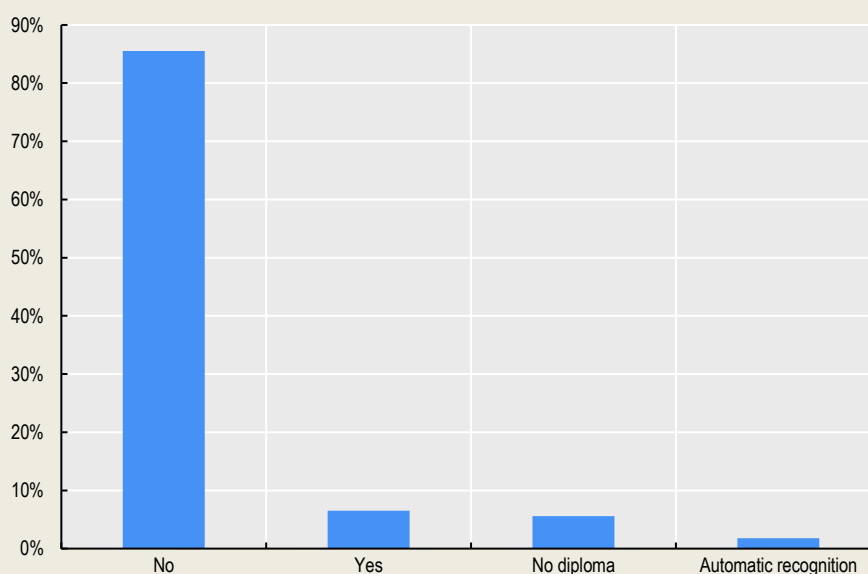
The average success rate for individuals who initiated a procedure for recognition of their qualifications is 60% in France, 70% in Germany and Belgium, and over 90% in Austria and Slovenia (Figure 4.4). Recognition may be either total or partial, but the data available do not allow us to distinguish between the two. The lower success rate in France cannot be attributed to the fact that more people are seeking recognition, as Figure 4.3 shows that France is also one of the countries where the proportion of people seeking recognition is relatively low. In Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Germany, higher education graduates are more likely to have their qualifications recognised when they initiate the demand than medium or low qualified individuals. In Austria and Norway, the total and partial success rates are similar for these two groups, whereas in Belgium, Spain, France and, to a lesser extent, Slovenia, it is the low-qualified who have higher success rates.

Box 4.3. The recognition procedures for BTP from Ukraine

It is not possible to understand from the Figures above whether and why beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine do or do not initiate procedures to have their qualifications recognised. To overcome the limitations of the existing data, at the request of the OECD for the purpose of this project, IMPACT Initiatives included a set of questions on recognition procedures and their results in the 15th round of their longitudinal survey of refugees from Ukraine, which is designed to provide a clearer picture of their mobility patterns, needs, integration trajectories and intentions to return (IMPACT Initiatives, Ukraine Longitudinal Survey, Round 15 results, July 2023). The Figures in this box use the data collected in this way, which covers around 3 000 individuals.

With regard to initiating procedures, over 85% of the Ukrainian BTP questioned on the subject stated that they had not yet initiated any recognition procedures, only 7% had applied for recognition of their diplomas, 6% had no diploma, and 2% had benefitted from automatic recognition (Figure 4.5.). For the majority of those who had initiated a recognition procedure, the procedure was still underway at the time of the survey (46%). 43% had obtained full recognition, 4% partial recognition, 2% recognition at a lower level, and 6% had not received recognition (Figure 4.6). It is interesting to note that individuals who say they intend to stay in the host country are three times more likely to have initiated the recognition process than those who say they do not want to stay. However, the limited size of the sample on which Figure 4.6 is based means that the figures obtained cannot be extrapolated.

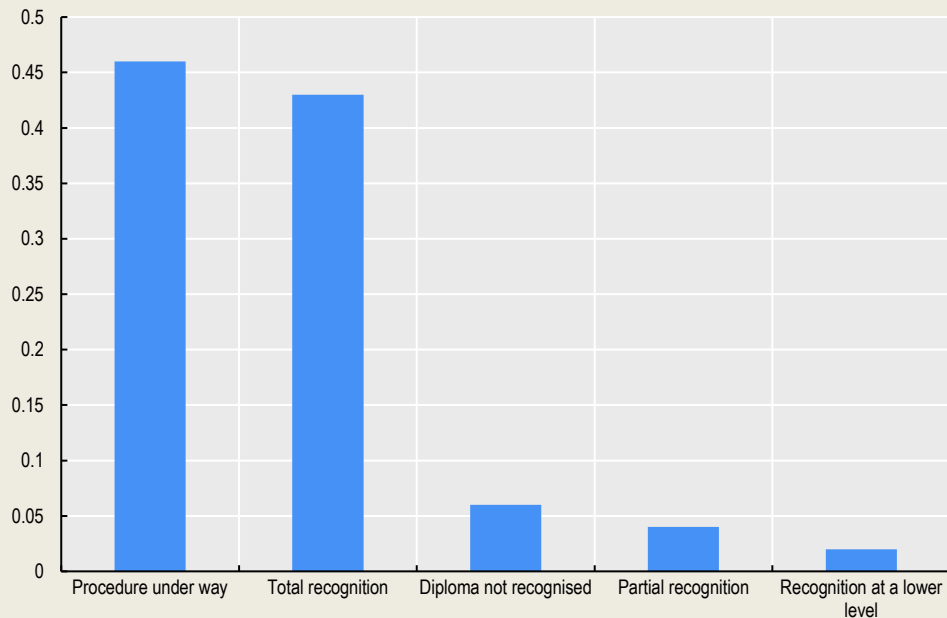
Figure 4.5. The vast majority of BTP from Ukraine have not initiated recognition procedures



Note: n= 3060 observations

Source: IMPACT Initiatives, Ukraine Longitudinal Survey, Round 15 results, July 2023.

Figure 4.6. Recognition rates are particularly high for BTP from Ukraine



Note: n=200 observations

Source : IMPACT Initiatives, Ukraine Longitudinal Survey, Round 15 results, July 2023.

The relationship between recognition procedures and labour market outcomes

The discount associated with qualifications obtained outside the EU is estimated here for individuals aged 15-64 born outside the EU and highly qualified (higher education graduates) in terms of employment rate, incidences of overqualification, and quality of employment, by comparing two groups: those whose highest qualification was obtained in the host country and those whose highest qualification was obtained outside the EU. This discount is then broken down on the basis of the recognition process initiated by the individuals and its outcome. Four distinct groups are compared: those who do not initiate recognition procedures because they feel it is not necessary, those who have not initiated a recognition procedure because it is impossible, too costly or complex, unknown to them or for some other reason, those whose recognition procedure has not been successful (the qualification has not been recognised or the procedure is still underway), and those whose highest qualification obtained outside the EU has been fully or partially recognised.

Table 4.1. Average employment rate, overqualification and job quality for non-EU native born, tertiary-educated individuals aged 15-64

| | Average (1) | Host-country diploma (2) | Non-EU diploma – Procedure not necessary (3) | Non-EU diploma – Procedure impossible (4) | Non-EU diploma – not recognised (5) | Non-EU diploma – recognised (6) |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Employment rate | 75% (N=12,148) | 81% (N=6,178) | 74% (N=2,172) | 60% (N=1,681) | 63% (N=631) | 75% (N=1,486) |
| Proportion of overqualified individuals among the employed (definition 1) | 29% (N=4,042) | 19% (N=1,087) | 17% (N=1,163) | 49% (N=716) | 54% (N=273) | 26% (N=803) |
| Proportion of overqualified individuals among the employed (definition 2) | 35% (N=8,179) | 25% (N=4,522) | 34% (N=1,385) | 75% (N=913) | 61% (N=365) | 34% (N=994) |
| Proportion of temporary contracts among the employed | 19% (N=8,133) | 17% (N=4,504) | 13% (N=1,377) | 27% (N=907) | 23% (N=358) | 23% (N=987) |
| Proportion of part-time contracts among the employed | 21% (N=9,350) | 19% (N=5,146) | 15% (N=1,648) | 30% (N=1,037) | 29% (N=398) | 24% (N=1,121) |
| Proportion of individuals satisfied with their job among the employed | 89% (N=9,006) | 90% (N=4,849) | 93% (N=1,634) | 85% (N=1,021) | 82% (N=395) | 89% (N=1,107) |

Note: Sample comprising individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64. The first definition of overqualification measures the equivalence of skills between the job held in the country of origin and the new job in the host country, as declared by the individual. The second definition compares the individual's level of education and their occupation: they will be declared overqualified if they have a tertiary education qualification and are employed in a low-skilled occupation (ISCO-08>=40). This second indicator is only calculated for individuals with a tertiary education qualification, and excludes the self-employed.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data

The average employment rate in the sample is 75% (Table 4.1). Around one in three individuals in this group is overqualified for the job. Overqualification is measured here in two ways. The first method assesses the equivalence of skills between the job held in the country of origin and the new job in the host country, as declared by the individual. Although subjective, this approach has the advantage of avoiding the assumption that all jobs in a given occupation require the same skills. The second method compares the individual's level of educational attainment with their occupation. They will be declared overqualified if they have a diploma from tertiary education and are employed in a low-skilled occupation (office workers, service and sales workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, handicraft workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, elementary occupations). This second approach has the merit of being more objective. In terms of job quality, 19% of employees have a temporary contract, 21% work part-time, and 89% say they are satisfied with their job.

Table 4.1 also compares the labour market outcomes for the five groups in question and shows that, on average in the sample selected, the employment rate for higher education graduates with a diploma from the host country is 81% (column 2). The employment rate for higher education graduates who obtained their qualifications outside the EU is lower and varies according to whether or not they have initiated procedures to have their qualifications recognised and the outcome of these procedures. The lowest employment rates, equal to 60% and 63% respectively, concern individuals who did not initiate the procedure because it was too complex, too costly or impossible (column 4) and those whose diplomas were not recognised (column 5). Individuals who did not apply for recognition because they did not consider it necessary had an employment rate of 74% (column 3), and those whose diploma had been recognised had an employment rate of 75% (column 6). Individuals who did not apply for recognition because it was too complex, too costly or impossible (column 4) and those whose diplomas were not recognised (column

5) are also more likely to be overqualified for their job, to hold a part-time or temporary job, and are less likely to be satisfied with their job.

Although these comparisons shed some light on the discount associated with qualifications obtained outside the EU in terms of employment rates, overqualification and job quality, and on the usefulness of the recognition of diplomas obtained abroad in reducing the discount, it is possible that the differences observed are due to other individual characteristics, such as age, gender, number of years of residence in the host country, reason for migration, level of education or command of the host country language. The analyses below first compare the labour market outcomes of migrants who obtained their highest qualification outside the EU with those of migrants who obtained their highest qualification in the host country, on a constant individual characteristics basis, making it possible to estimate the discount for diplomas obtained abroad. The analyses then show how this discount varies according to whether or not the qualifications obtained abroad are recognised.

Table 4.2 shows the differences in terms of employment, overqualification and job quality between individuals whose highest qualification was obtained in the host country and those who obtained their highest qualification outside the EU. In the absence of control variables (1st column), individuals whose highest qualification was obtained outside the EU are 13 percentage points less likely to be in employment. If we include the control variables (age, number of years of residence, gender, reason for migration, level of education, proficiency in the host country language, and country of residence) which make it possible to reason on the basis of constant individual characteristics, the difference is reduced to 7 percentage points (column 2). In addition, the incidence of overqualification is between 10 and 19 percentage points higher, depending on the definition chosen (columns 4 and 6, which include the control variables). Individuals with a foreign diploma do not appear to be more likely to have a temporary job, but they are more likely to have a part-time job and declare themselves to be less satisfied with their job than their counterparts who obtained their highest diploma in the host country (columns 8, 10 and 12).

Table 4.2. Relationship between diploma origin and employment rates, overqualification and job quality

| | P(employment) | | P(overqualification I) | | P(overqualification II) | | P(temporary job) | | P(part-time job) | | P(job satisfaction) | |
|---|---------------|----------|------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) |
| <i>Reference category: host country diploma</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Diploma outside EU | -0.13*** | -0.07*** | 0.14*** | 0.099** | 0.25*** | 0.19*** | 0.043** | 0.029 | 0.044* | 0.06*** | -0.017* | -0.024* |
| | (0.015) | (0.011) | (0.036) | (0.037) | (0.034) | (0.024) | (0.017) | (0.026) | (0.024) | (0.012) | (0.0088) | (0.013) |
| Control variables | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes i | No | Yes i | No | Yes |
| Obs. | 12,105 | 11,049 | 4,041 | 3,881 | 8,146 | 7,381 | 8,101 | 7,341 | 9,316 | 8,463 | 9,005 | 8,359 |

Note: Sample comprising individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64, not in full-time education, and with a tertiary education diploma. Control variables include: age, number of years of residence, gender, reason for migration, proficiency in host country language, country of residence. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 (robust standard errors). Constant included in the regression but not reported here.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

Table 4.3 shows that the disadvantage associated with non-EU diplomas varies according to the recognition procedure. Migrants who have not initiated the recognition procedure because they consider it unnecessary are almost 3 percentage points less likely to be in employment than those with a host country diploma (second column making it possible to reason on the basis of constant individual characteristics).

The disadvantage associated with non-EU diplomas is greater for tertiary education graduates who were unable to initiate the recognition procedure because it was impossible, too costly or complex, or because they were unaware that it was possible to do so, and for those whose qualifications were not recognised. These individuals have employment rates that are 12 and 10 percentage points lower respectively than those of tertiary education graduates from the host country (column 2). Full or partial recognition reduces the gap in employment rates to just 4 percentage points.

Table 4.3. Recognition procedures and employment rate

| | P (being employed) | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | (1) | (2) |
| <i>Reference category: host country diploma</i> | | |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not necessary | -0.070^{***} (0.013) | -0.026* (0.015) |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not possible, too expensive or complex, or unknown | -0.22^{***} (0.037) | -0.12^{***} (0.018) |
| Non-EU diploma - not recognised | -0.18^{***} (0.021) | -0.10^{***} (0.025) |
| Non-EU diploma - recognised | -0.066^{***} (0.022) | -0.040^{**} (0.017) |
| Control variables | No | Yes |
| Observations | 12,105 | 11,049 |

Note: Sample comprising individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64, not in full-time education, and with a tertiary education diploma. Control variables include: age, number of years of residence, gender, reason for migration, proficiency in host country language, country of residence. ^{***} p<0.01, ^{**} p<0.05, ^{*} p<0.1 (robust standard errors). Constant included in the regression but not reported here.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

Table 4.4 focuses on individuals who have found a job and shows the differences in the probability of being overqualified between individuals whose highest qualification was obtained in the host country and the other four categories. The first two columns use the first variable to measure overqualification: an individual is considered overqualified if they declare that the job they had in their country of origin required higher skills than their current job. Based on constant characteristics (column 2), individuals who have not initiated a recognition procedure as they consider it unnecessary do not appear to be more likely to be overqualified than their counterparts with host country diplomas, regardless of the definition used to measure overqualification. This result may seem surprising, but it is perfectly possible that these individuals do not consider the recognition process necessary because they have not encountered any major difficulties in finding a job corresponding to their skills. The incidence of overqualification appears to be slightly higher (8 percentage points) for those whose qualifications have been recognised than for host country graduates (according to the second definition of overqualification, column 4). According to the first definition, recognition of the diploma even makes it possible to eliminate the disadvantage associated with foreign diplomas (column 2). On the other hand, those who do not initiate the procedure because they find it too complex, costly, impossible, or are unaware it exists, are between 21 and 36 percentage points more likely to be overqualified for their job, and those whose recognition was rejected are between 28 and 31 percentage points more likely to be overqualified, depending on the definition chosen.

Table 4.4. Recognition procedures and overqualification

| | P (overqualification 1) | | P (overqualification 2) | |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| <i>Reference category: host country diploma</i> | | | | |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not necessary | -0.017 (0.045) | -0.019 (0.046) | 0.090 (0.057) | 0.068 (0.052) |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not possible, too expensive or complex, or unknown | 0.30*** (0.044) | 0.21*** (0.041) | 0.50*** (0.035) | 0.36*** (0.025) |
| Non-EU diploma - not recognised | 0.35*** (0.058) | 0.28*** (0.058) | 0.37*** (0.032) | 0.31*** (0.029) |
| Non-EU diploma - recognised | 0.074 (0.044) | 0.056 (0.045) | 0.096*** (0.028) | 0.082*** (0.029) |
| Control variables | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Observations | 4,041 | 3,881 | 8,146 | 7,381 |

Note: Sample comprising individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64, not in full-time education, and with a tertiary education diploma. Control variables include: age, number of years of residence, gender, reason for migration, proficiency in host country language, country of residence. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 (robust standard errors). Constant included in the regression but not reported here.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

In terms of job quality, the results are qualitatively similar. Table 4.5 shows the differences in three aspects of job quality (probability of being in a temporary job, a part-time job and probability of declaring job satisfaction) between individuals whose highest qualification was obtained in the host country and the other four categories. For the three variables analysed, based on constant individual characteristics, individuals who have not initiated recognition procedures because they consider them unnecessary do not appear to be at a disadvantage compared with those who obtained their highest qualification in the host country. The two most disadvantaged groups are those who do not initiate the procedure because it is too complex, and those whose recognition has been rejected. Recognition of diplomas therefore makes it possible to reduce the discount observed in terms of job quality, but not to eliminate it completely.

Table 4.5. Recognition procedures and job quality

| | P (temporary job) | | P (part-time job) | | P (job satisfaction) | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| <i>Reference category: host country diploma</i> | | | | | | |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not necessary | -0.033* (0.019) | -0.032 (0.025) | -0.041* (0.021) | -0.0060 (0.022) | 0.031** (0.011) | 0.020 (0.017) |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not possible, too expensive or complex, or unknown | 0.11*** (0.026) | 0.063* (0.033) | 0.11** (0.044) | 0.11*** (0.020) | -0.050*** (0.018) | -0.058*** (0.015) |
| Non-EU diploma - not recognised | 0.057 (0.038) | 0.024 (0.052) | 0.10** (0.050) | 0.080** (0.034) | -0.083** (0.039) | -0.078* (0.041) |
| Non-EU diploma - recognised | 0.059*** (0.018) | 0.060*** (0.017) | 0.053*** (0.018) | 0.055*** (0.016) | -0.011 (0.016) | -0.015 (0.022) |
| Control variables | Non | Yes | Non | Yes | Non | Yes |
| Observations | 8,101 | 7,341 | 9,316 | 8,463 | 9,005 | 8,359 |

Note: Sample comprising individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64, not in full-time education, and with a tertiary education diploma. Control variables include: age, number of years of residence, gender, reason for migration, proficiency in host country language, country of residence. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 (robust standard errors). Constant included in the regression but not reported here.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

Table 4.6 shows the cumulative effect on employment and overqualification. The dependent variable is a binary variable equal to 1 if the individual is in employment and if the job corresponds to their skills (they have a tertiary education qualification and are employed in a highly skilled occupation), and 0 if they are not in employment or if they are employed in a low-skilled occupation (office workers, service and sales workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers, handicraft workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, elementary occupations). The discount for holding a foreign qualification is 18 percentage points (column 2). This discount is highest for those who do not initiate a recognition procedure because it is impossible, too complex or too costly, and for those whose recognition was rejected. For these two groups, the discount is 30 and 26 percentage points respectively. The discount is reduced to 9 percentage points for those whose diploma has been recognised, and is also lower for those who state that the procedure is not necessary in their case. The results for France are generally similar to those presented here, but the size of the sample available does not allow any definitive conclusions to be drawn.

Table 4.6. Discount of foreign qualifications, recognition procedures and cumulative effect on employment and overqualification

| | P (employment matching skills) | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| <i>Reference category: host country diploma</i> | | | | |
| Non-EU diploma | -0.27*** (0.022) | -0.18*** (0.017) | | |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not necessary | | | -0.13*** (0.042) | -0.079** (0.037) |
| Non-EU diploma - procedure not possible, too expensive or complex, or unknown | | | -0.45*** (0.024) | -0.30*** (0.018) |
| Non-EU diploma - not recognised | | | -0.36*** (0.021) | -0.26*** (0.021) |
| Non-EU diploma - recognised | | | -0.12*** (0.037) | -0.093*** (0.029) |
| Control variables | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| | 10,926 | 9,960 | 10,926 | 9,960 |

Note: Sample comprising individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64, not in full-time education, and with a tertiary education diploma. Control variables include: age, number of years of residence, gender, reason for migration, proficiency in host country language, country of residence. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 (robust standard errors). Constant included in the regression but not reported here.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data

According to the estimates presented in Table 4.6, more than a million individuals in Europe do not seek recognition of their foreign qualifications because it is impossible, too costly, too complex or because they are unaware that a procedure for doing so exists. Assuming a success rate of 77% (the average success rate in EU countries), this means that more than 800 000 additional individuals could have their foreign diplomas recognised in their host country. If we extrapolate the figures obtained in this note, it would mean that up to over 130 000 individuals could find a job corresponding to their skills. For a quarter of them, this would mean moving into a skilled job, and for three-quarters it would mean moving from a low-skilled to a high-skilled job. However, it is important to note that these figures are based on a back-of-the-envelope calculation that require strong assumptions to be made (such as, for example, the fact that the average success rate observed in EU countries can be used to approximate the success rate of individuals who do not initiate the recognition process because it is impossible, too complex or too costly).

Conclusion

This exploratory analysis sheds light on a number of important facts that should inform the discussions held in the context of the project on "Improving the assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications skills of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine in France", carried out under the Technical Support Instrument of the DG Reform of the European Commission.

Firstly, the proportion of individuals initiating a diploma recognition procedure has not changed significantly over the past 15 years. Indeed, if we compare figures obtained in 2021 for tertiary education graduates and similar figures in 2008 (OECD, 2017^[8]), it seems that this proportion peaks at less than 40% on average in EU countries. However, the samples used for the two studies are not exactly the same, so further analysis would be needed to determine whether this finding holds true across different countries. This finding does not indicate that the policies implemented by various governments have failed, but it does suggest that further efforts may be useful. Moreover, the success rates for recognition procedures are significantly lower in France than in the other nine countries analysed. It is therefore worth asking what factors might explain this gap, and whether and how it could be reduced. The analyses presented above also show that individuals who have their qualifications recognised are three times less penalised on the labour market in terms of the probability of having a job corresponding to their skills than those who have not been able to initiate a recognition procedure because it is impossible, too costly or complex, or because they were unaware the possibility existed. Back-of-the-envelope calculations presented at the end of this note suggest that improving the procedures for assessing and recognising diplomas obtained abroad could enable up to 130 000 individuals to gain access to a job corresponding to their skills. These figures do not include beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine, but data collected by IMPACT at the request of the OECD for this project show that the impact could be even greater for this group, given their high average educational attainment, their current limited efforts to seek recognition but their high success rates.

However, it is important to treat the results presented in this note with caution. In particular, they do not demonstrate a causal link between diploma recognition and employment. For example, it is entirely possible that individuals who initiate a recognition procedure are more motivated to enter the labour market, that they have received better support in their integration process, or that they have better diplomas and therefore better actual skills, and that it is these factors that enable them to obtain a better job rather than the fact that their diploma has been recognised.

Further work would shed light on these phenomena. For example, using the PIAAC data collected in 2022-2023, it would be possible to compare the labour market situation of migrants whose highest qualification was acquired abroad with that of migrants with a host country diploma with the same socio-demographic characteristics and skills. These data can also be used to analyse individuals' wages, making it possible to calculate the wage penalty associated with foreign diplomas. Another interesting line of research would be to study whether the disadvantage associated with foreign qualifications is the same for foreign diplomas acquired within the EU and those acquired outside the EU. This analysis would provide relevant information to help better understand the functioning of the single market, to highlight possible shortcomings in the recognition of diplomas between Member States, and to discuss public policies that could be put in place to improve its functioning.

Finally, there are many other benefits associated with the recognition of one's skills but their analysis was beyond the scope of this study. Firstly, one of the benefits of improving recognition procedures - a benefit that cannot be quantified in the context of this study but is likely to be significant - is that individuals will not have to repeat their studies in the host country. This represents an important cost, not only to individuals but also to the society as a whole. Today, however, because of the complexity and burden of recognition procedures, it is sometimes easier to repeat a diploma in the host country than to seek recognition of a diploma obtained abroad. The recognition of foreign qualifications also has other benefits for the society. For example, individuals whose qualifications are recognised participate more fully in the productive

system. This seems fundamental at a time when many countries, including France, are facing major labour shortages. Recognition of foreign qualifications could therefore help to reduce the number of unfilled jobs in key sectors such as health and education. Recognition of the qualifications of beneficiaries of temporary protection would also be beneficial for Ukraine when (and if) they decide to return to settle in their country of origin. By facilitating their access to a job matching their qualifications in the host country, this would allow them to continue to gain professional experience in their field of activity and prevent a gradual deterioration of their skills. The professional experience acquired in the host country will be of great value when they return to Ukraine. Improving recognition systems could therefore serve a dual purpose: promoting the integration of BTPs in their host country during their stay, but also facilitating reconstruction efforts in Ukraine in due course.

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Annex A. Additional analyses

Table A.1. Recognition procedure and individual characteristics

| Variable | Value | P (recognition procedure) | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Age | 15-19 years old | omitted | |
| | 20-24 years old | -0.065* (0.035) | |
| | 25-29 years old | -0.15*** (0.042) | |
| | 30-34 years old | -0.15*** (0.040) | |
| | 35-39 years old | -0.18*** (0.039) | |
| | 40-44 years old | -0.19*** (0.036) | |
| | 45-49 years old | -0.21*** (0.043) | |
| | 50-54 years old | -0.21*** (0.043) | |
| | 55-59 years old | -0.19*** (0.043) | |
| | 60-64 years old | -0.23*** (0.054) | |
| | Length of stay in the host country | 0-5 years old | omitted |
| | | 5-9 years old | 0.038 (0.032) |
| | | 10 years old or more | 0.045* (0.022) |
| Gender | F | 0.014* (0.0072) | |
| Reason for migration | Employment (found before migrating) | omitted | |
| | Employment (not found before migrating) | -0.033* (0.017) | |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Family | 0.0047 (0.011) |
| | Education or training | 0.15*** (0.041) |
| | Retirement | -0.11*** (0.023) |
| | International protection or asylum | 0.056* (0.032) |
| | Other | 0.00067 (0.027) |
| Level of proficiency in host country language | <i>Mother tongue</i> | <i>omitted</i> |
| | Advanced | -0.052** (0.023) |
| | Intermediate | -0.10*** (0.021) |
| | Beginner | -0.14*** (0.023) |
| | Complete beginner | -0.18*** (0.031) |
| Level of educational attainment | <i>Low</i> | <i>omitted</i> |
| | Intermediate | 0.094*** (0.024) |
| | High | 0.23*** (0.038) |
| | Constant | 0.28*** (0.041) |
| Country controls | | Yes |
| Observations | | 19,547 |
| R-squared | | 0.175 |

Note: Robust standard errors in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Sample comprised of individuals born outside the EU and aged 15-64.
Source: OECD calculations based on EU-LFS 2021 data.

5 Main recommendations for France

Introduction

This chapter presents the recommendations developed by the OECD as part of the project to improve the assessment, recognition and validation of diplomas, qualifications and skills acquired abroad (and more specifically outside the European Union) in France. They were developed after an in-depth evaluation of the system in force in France and in-depth discussions on the subject with the various stakeholders. The project has focused mainly on the experience of beneficiaries of temporary protection (BTP) from Ukraine, but the analysis provided and the recommendations made in this chapter should also enable changes to be made to the arrangements for other third-country nationals. The proposals also draw on good practices identified within the EU and the OECD to improve the assessment and recognition of qualifications and skills obtained abroad. Although few of the initiatives are specifically aimed at BTP from Ukraine, some could be implemented in France for BTP from Ukraine or more broadly for all third-country nationals. Some of these European good practices (detailed in chapter 2) are explicitly mentioned in the document.

Box 5.1 lists the main recommendations, while the rest of the document provides more details on the problems identified and the solutions proposed.

Box 5.1. Summary of main recommendations

Improve the quality and access to information on recognition procedures and support newcomers throughout the process.

- Centralise information on the various recognition procedures, including for regulated professions, on a dedicated website, similar to those that already exist in other European countries. This could be done by improving the [réfugiés.info](https://refugies.info) website⁶⁸ or creating a dedicated platform.
- Communicate widely about this site to target groups and operators involved in integration and access to employment. Include information on the recognition process and the information portal in the welcome booklet for BTP from Ukraine and distribute it as soon as possible, ideally as soon as the BTP from Ukraine arrive in France.
- Provide more training on recognition procedures for those involved in socio-economic integration, particularly public service employment staff.
- Providing personalised, territorialised assistance and support with specialised agents within the public employment service or another structure to guide individuals through the recognition processes and pathways, particularly regarding the regulated professions.
- Ensure smooth and efficient information sharing between the various stakeholders involved in the personalised support process.

⁶⁸ The French Government, <https://refugies.info/fr>

- Improve the clarity of the professional integration landscape for newcomers by maintaining an up-to-date map of existing integration schemes by territory, including schemes for the recognition of qualifications and skills, for use by those working in the field.

Increase resources for the ENIC-NARIC France centre and strengthen its mandate.

- Significantly increase human resources for the ENIC-NARIC France centre. To this end, a one-off derogation from employment ceilings could be a solution.
- In the longer term, consider entrusting additional tasks such as recognising regulated professions, providing orientation towards the VAE (*Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience*-Validation of Acquired Experience) and recognising micro-certifications.
- Strengthen the telephone hotline services of the ENIC-NARIC France centre.
- More generally, the coordination between the actions of the ENIC-NARIC France centre and other structures should be strengthened.
- Involve employers more closely in the system, by encouraging them to request an assessment of the qualifications of individuals they would like to take on, and by developing fast-track procedures.

Facilitate access to the new version of the VAE for all newcomers.

- Translate the new VAE platform into Ukrainian and into the languages of the main countries of origin of immigrants in France and provide advisers who speak these languages or at least English.
- Systematically provide information on the VAE to BTP from Ukraine and newcomers.
- Offer more intensive support for newcomers where necessary.
- Redirect individuals to the VAE if their qualifications are not recognised by the ENIC-NARIC France centre or other competent authorities.
- Adjust the resources allocated to the system to avoid overload. Pay particular attention to the organisation of a sufficient number of juries.

Offer a global approach to skills.

- Strengthen the provision of professional language training, by offering French courses in a flexible way, at times that make it possible to reconcile work and language training and/or virtually.
- Ensure that platforms centralising all existing language training, including professional training, are accessible, multilingual, easy to use, complete and up to date.
- Develop the possibility of partial recognition, identify additional training needs and develop a range of relevant and accessible refresher courses for those who have not obtained full recognition.
- Entrust partial recognition and the identification of additional training needs and referral to refresher courses to an existing institution or a new structure.
- Systematically and explicitly integrate actions for the assessment and recognition of qualifications and skills into comprehensive and individualised integration support programmes, in particular the AGIR programme.
- Consider opening up the AGIR programme to BTP from Ukraine or offer them a specific comprehensive, individualised support programme.

It is essential to ensure the quality and access to information and to support individuals throughout the recognition procedures.

Access to information on recognition procedures is very limited for beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine.

As BTP from Ukraine are not required to sign the Republican Integration Contract (CIR) or register with *France Travail*⁶⁹ (French Public Employment Service), two steps at which information on recognition procedures can be provided to newcomers, access to this information is not systematic for BTP from Ukraine, especially as the welcome booklet for them provided by the government does not include any information on recognition procedures.

Although the public employment service, in conjunction with the Directorate-General for Foreign Nationals in France (DGEF), is committed to setting up initiatives to reach out to BTP from Ukraine, for example via a questionnaire for those who apply to *France Travail* and through consular days organised by the Ukrainian Embassy, in particular to inform them about support in their job search, among other things, the number of registrations with *France Travail* is relatively low. In fact, between March 2022 and 1 January 2024, only 16 909 BTP from Ukraine registered with *France Travail*.

This problem does not only affect BTP from Ukraine. Access to information is also complex for other groups of newcomers. Although *France Travail* agents generally have information on the ENIC-NARIC France centre's certificate of comparability and can pass it on, this is not systematic. Information on the procedures for recognising diplomas is normally provided when the CIR is signed, but in both cases there is no provision for personalised assistance with the procedures, as it is the case in many other countries. Information on access to regulated professions is also scarce.

With regard to the quality of information available on the possibilities and different procedures for recognising qualifications and skills of third-country nationals, there is a lack of centralised, user-friendly and comprehensive information. This is a major challenge, not only for BTP in Ukraine but also for integration workers and other groups of newcomers. Although the *réfugiés.info* government website covers topics such as the function of the ENIC-NARIC France centre, with a link to their website, as well as information on the *Expérience sans Frontières* scheme and procedures for recognising qualifications for various regulated professions, this information is not presented concisely, which is essential given the existence of many fragmented and scattered schemes. As far as the ENIC-NARIC France centre's website is concerned, information on the procedure for recognising diplomas is available in French, English and, to a lesser extent, Spanish. In general, the website's ease of use and clarity are limited, and it does not offer any links to the authorities responsible for recognising regulated professions, or to the VAE platform.

Information, guidance and support for the various procedures need to be improved.

It is essential to improve the dissemination of targeted information about the activities of the ENIC-NARIC France centre and all recognition procedures, both to BTP from Ukraine and to employers, public employment services and associations working with BTP from Ukraine and newcomers in general.

To this end, it would be relevant to set up a centralised system with an easy-to-use, plain-language, multilingual online portal providing information on recognition procedures, including for regulated professions, according to individual needs (individual, employer, integration actor), with a link to the competent authorities, as well as a brief presentation of the VAE accompanied by a link to its platform. It would also be beneficial to provide information on the level of language proficiency required to practice the intended profession. Ideally, the site should enable newcomers to start their recognition process online.

⁶⁹ Formerly *Pôle emploi* until 31 December 2023.

The creation of such a portal could take the form of a major overhaul of existing sites such as the réfugiés.info site. The existence of this information portal should be referenced in the welcome booklet for displaced persons from Ukraine in France and communicated as soon as possible after the arrival of the BTP from Ukraine in France.

The German government's Anerkennung in Deutschland information portal on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, which includes the Anerkennungs-Finder recognition search engine, is an example of European good practice that the French authorities could learn from. This portal is translated into 11 languages and provides centralised information on recognition procedures for the various professions and contact details for the relevant centres. The Anerkennungs-Finder provides an interactive presentation of the steps involved in following a procedure for the recognition of a foreign qualification. Depending on where you are staying, it recommends specific advisory services, providing personalised support throughout the recognition process. In addition, there is a dedicated helpline providing information on all aspects of working and living in Germany, including the recognition process.

To further improve the dissemination of information, all those involved in socio-economic integration, particularly public employment service staff, should receive training on recognition procedures and pathways, including for regulated professions. This would ensure the systematic dissemination of information on this subject.

However, even clear, centralised information can only provide initial guidance on recognition procedures. Given the complexity of the steps to be taken, particularly for access to regulated professions, personalised support, and the provision of contextualised information should be put in place to guide individuals through the recognition process taking into account the situation and requests of the displaced person. At present, there is no such support service in France, unlike in other countries. Although the various stakeholders in contact with BTP from Ukraine and, in general, with newcomers looking for work are generally aware of the ENIC-NARIC France centre and how it works, they are not officially responsible for supporting individuals in their recognition procedures, particularly in compiling and monitoring their file. There is a need to ensure that information is disseminated smoothly and effectively between the various stakeholders involved in the personalised support process.

The creation of a specific body, responsible for assisting BTP from Ukraine and newcomers throughout the recognition process would be extremely beneficial. This would facilitate the recognition process, make the system more accessible and transparent, and increase the number of applications for recognition. The information provided would aim to guide third-country nationals by enabling them to understand the possible recognition procedures to be undertaken, and to direct them towards the competent body or authorities.

The question arises as to which authority is best placed to provide this personalised support. *France Travail* could potentially fulfil this role, but it is important to note that the support should not only be offered to jobseekers but should also be able to cover individuals in employment, in order to facilitate their transition to jobs corresponding to their skills. Furthermore, although advice and support should be the responsibility of the State, regional and/or local institutions, or even associations, could also play this key role through a public service delegation. Alternatively, the creation of a new structure dedicated to this task could also be envisaged. Ideally, information and support on recognition should be provided by a one-stop shop.

Since January 2013, four contact points (Anlaufstellen - AST) have been offering advice on the recognition and assessment of foreign qualifications in Austria's four largest cities. In the other departments, weekly consultation days are organised. The AST are advice centres set up under the law on recognition and assessment. They offer a free multilingual recognition advice service and determine whether formal recognition is necessary or possible. To facilitate this process, the centres cover the costs of certified translations of diplomas and certificates. In addition, full assistance is offered throughout the recognition process (preparation of documents, transmission of diplomas to assessment bodies or help with submitting applications to the competent authorities). Finally, the centres play an essential role in informing individuals about the various possibilities for further training, appropriate funding and further guidance available.

More generally, the employment integration landscape for newcomers is characterised by the coexistence of a multitude of stakeholders and schemes...

The implementation of public policies aimed at facilitating access to employment and developing the skills of newcomers involves many stakeholders at local and national level, such as government departments, decentralised government departments, local authorities, as well as private partners and associations working in collaboration with public players. Similarly, various programmes and schemes, including pilot experiments, have been or are being deployed in this area, at both national and local level, with the aim of promoting the professional integration and skills development of newcomers. While this is a strength, the multiplicity of these initiatives and the stakeholders involved is also a weakness, as it makes the landscape less clear and transparent.

... and clarification is needed.

It is essential to improve the clarity of the professional integration landscape for newcomers. To achieve this, an up-to-date map of existing integration schemes by territory needs to be maintained. This mapping should make it possible to identify the programmes available depending on the area and the legal situation of the individuals. It would be aimed primarily at those working in the field and therefore aim to be as operational as possible. It would also make it possible to identify which groups are not currently covered by any schemes in specific areas, and for which appropriate programmes should therefore be set up. Schemes for the recognition of qualifications and skills would also be included, thereby having a complete view of initiatives. This map should be updated regularly.

As the main operator, the ENIC-NARIC France centre must have the necessary resources and an effective mandate to be able to play its role to the full.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre is the main player, but its resources are limited ...

In France, the ENIC-NARIC France centre, part of *France Éducation internationale*, is the information and expertise centre for the evaluation and academic recognition of foreign qualifications. It is responsible for evaluating and comparing diplomas against French and European certification standards, in response to requests from individuals, organisations or employers. Following the evaluation of a foreign qualification, the ENIC-NARIC France centre issues a certificate of comparability of the qualification with the French education system. Certificates of comparability can be used for a variety of purposes, such as continuing studies, finding a job or obtaining a reference to a course taken in French as part of an application for naturalisation, but they have no legal value.

Furthermore, the ENIC-NARIC France centre does not have extensive authority over the recognition of professional qualifications in general⁷⁰. It may intervene in certain specific cases to assess and compare professional qualifications, provided that they can be classified at a specific level and that they form part of the national (formal) education system of the country in question. But even in this case, the recognition does not constitute authorisation to practice a regulated profession whose access and practice require a specific professional qualification and/or registration with a professional body.

⁷⁰ The French system distinguishes between academic qualification/certification and non-degree qualifying training, which in some countries can lead to a professional qualification. In line with this system, the ENIC-NARIC France centre only assesses foreign diplomas that correspond to an academic level in the country of origin. If the foreign diploma simultaneously attests to a professional qualification, it will be assessed and recognised by the ENIC-NARIC France centre. However, this recognition is first and foremost an academic recognition.

Since the invasion of Ukraine, the number of applications for recognition of diplomas has risen considerably, in particular due to the influx of applications from BTP from Ukraine. Between 2021 and 2022, there was an increase of 150% in applications, attributable to the start of the war. The number of applications more than doubled between 2022 and 2023 (3 071 applications received in 2023). In total, between March 2022 and 31 December 2023, a total of 3 543 applications were received for recognition of Ukrainian qualifications. This high volume of applications represents a major challenge because it requires sufficient human resources, which the ENIC-NARIC France centre does not have. Currently, the team has only 20 assessors responsible for processing 63 000 applications a year (+21% compared with 2022). Their workforce is two to three times smaller than other ENIC-NARIC centres. Furthermore, although the ENIC-NARIC France centre has set up a hotline to address inquiries regarding recognition, the current low staffing level allows for only 5% of incoming calls to be answered.

...and its central position in the process needs to be further strengthened.

Given that no other institution in France is authorised to evaluate diplomas and provide expertise on their positioning in the French education system and considering the effectiveness of entrusting this responsibility to a single entity, it is clear that the role and functions of the ENIC-NARIC France centre should be strengthened, both in terms of its missions and in legal and financial terms. In the short term, additional human resources are essential. This will enable each case to be assessed more thoroughly and quickly. This could also help to better address calls received by the hotline, thus improving information on recognition procedures. To this end, a one-off and/or temporary derogation initially concerning the employment ceiling of *France Éducation internationale* - of which the ENIC-NARIC France centre is part - could be a quick solution to implement, bearing in mind that the ENIC-NARIC France centre is self-financing thanks to the income from certificates of comparability. It needs flexibility in recruitment but does not require financial resources for additional posts created.

In the longer term, the ENIC-NARIC France centre could be entrusted with additional tasks: recognition of regulated professions, recognition of micro-certifications or partial recognition of qualifications, and orientation towards the VAE. More generally, the coordination between the actions of the ENIC-NARIC France centre and other mechanisms (recognition pathways for regulated professions, VAE, and potentially partial recognition and the provision of additional training described below, if applicable) deserves to be strengthened.

In Germany, the IHK Foreign Skills Approval (IHK FOSA) is the competent body of the German Chambers of Industry and Commerce for the verification and recognition of foreign professional diplomas that correspond to CIC professions. These include around 350 initial and further training qualifications in the fields of industry, commerce, gastronomy and services.

Following the certificate of equivalence, applicants are issued with an official and legally reliable document certifying the equivalence of the foreign qualification with the corresponding reference qualification in Germany. In the event of full equivalence, applicants benefit from legal equality with holders of the corresponding German reference qualification. In the case of partial equivalence, the recognised qualifications are explicitly detailed, as are the missing skills. This approach encourages further training and the targeted acquisition of additional skills, offering the possibility, if necessary, of submitting a new application at a later date.

Finally, the involvement of employers in the process could be strengthened, by encouraging them to request an assessment of the qualifications of individuals they wish to hire, and by offering accelerated procedures for this.

In Denmark, private and public sector employers can request a 'turbo' (fast-track) assessment of foreign qualifications from the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, for use in specific recruitment processes. This rapid assessment is particularly useful once suitable candidates for a post have been shortlisted. It can also be used for the salary placement of a new employee. This assessment service is provided free of charge and is generally completed within a maximum of five working days. The Agency does

not take into account work experience, periods of study or short courses as part of its assessment process, but only formal diplomas and qualifications. Nor is an assessment appropriate for situations relating to access to the practice of a regulated profession. In such cases, the Agency refers applicants to the competent authority.

In Norway, the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills offers a fast-track or 'turbo assessment' procedure to help employers understand foreign higher education documents submitted by current or potential employees. This service provides a brief assessment of the scope and level of the foreign qualification and whether it can be equated with a Norwegian qualification. Unlike the outcome of a normal procedure, the turbo assessment is not a legally binding decision. In addition, the service does not include recognition of regulated professions, which are subject to authorisation by the competent authority. Requests for a turbo assessment must be submitted via a dedicated portal. If no additional documents are required, a reply will be given within five working days.

The systems for recognising qualifications must be supplemented by the possibility of recognising acquired experience

Recognition of acquired experience is a key way to enhance the skills of newcomers.

Measures for the recognition of acquired experience, such as the Validation of Acquired Experience (VAE) in France, are complementary to procedures for the recognition of formal qualifications, as they give individuals the opportunity to have their skills assessed and certified, whatever the level of the qualification (in France, the VAE concerns all professional diplomas classified in the European nomenclature of training levels from level 3 – Certificate of Vocational Aptitude (CAP) - to level 8 - doctorate), and regardless of how they were acquired. This means that skills acquired in a non-formal and informal way, for example through previous work experience or voluntary activities, can be valued on the labour market, whereas procedures for recognising formal qualifications only concern diplomas and qualifications obtained in formal education. Furthermore, although the VAE focuses on non-formal and informal learning, it is also useful for newcomers who do not have copies of their diplomas and are unable to provide other forms of documentary evidence, or who were unable to complete their studies before fleeing war and conflict. In addition, the recognition of prior experience can also be used to identify individual needs in terms of further training for newcomers whose qualifications have not been recognised.

The current reform should be strengthened to remove all obstacles currently preventing newcomers from benefiting from the VAE.

An overhaul of the VAE system is currently underway, and although this is not its main objective, it should help to remove a number of obstacles faced by newcomers, including BTP from Ukraine, to benefit from the VAE. A platform dedicated to the VAE is already online for more than 200 qualifications, prefiguring changes that will be gradually introduced over the course of 2024 for all qualifications. This platform will provide access to the VAE via a one-stop shop and will direct candidates to a personal adviser who will follow them throughout the process. No proof of professional experience linked to the qualification in question will be required, as the experience will be assessed by the advisor. The advisor may also recommend additional training modules required to obtain the qualification. These actions, including additional short training courses suggested by the advisor, will be fully covered from a financial point of view. Indeed, it is important to ensure that the financial aspects do not constitute an obstacle for BTP from Ukraine or other newcomers.

Furthermore, to encourage the participation of newcomers in the VAE, including BTP from Ukraine, certain points should be given particular attention. Firstly, there are the issues of translating the platform into other languages and the availability of advisors who can interact with newcomers in their mother tongue or at least in English. In addition, particular attention will also need to be paid to communicating these procedures and their importance for accessing employment corresponding to the skills among the target

groups. Information should be systematically provided to individuals. It could be provided by the public employment services, especially during the in-depth career guidance interview for the CIR signatories.

In Canada, settlement and job search agencies inform newcomers about the possibilities for prior learning assessment and recognition and direct them to the relevant services and can also carry out a prior learning assessment themselves if necessary.

It would also seem worthwhile redirecting individuals to the VAE in the event of non-recognition of qualifications during a procedure with the ENIC-NARIC France centre or other competent authorities, to allow recognition of skills acquired non-formally and informally, but also to take advantage of the possibility offered by the new version of the VAE to identify individual needs in terms of further training.

If these additional measures are put in place, it is very likely that newcomers will participate substantially in the VAE scheme. The issue of accessibility to the VAE services (given the resources deployed) could then emerge as a difficulty. This obstacle could be overcome by rebalancing the resources allocated or by reserving a number of places in the VAE system for newcomers. In addition, particular attention needs to be paid to organising a sufficient number of jury panels. An additional difficulty lies in the fact that the support required for BTP from Ukraine and possible newcomers will in many cases be onerous, more complex and longer than for other individuals. Additional support should therefore be offered to this group where necessary.

A global approach to skills is essential.

Professional language training is currently underdeveloped in France...

The language issue is key to integration, particularly in the context of skilled employment, which is of particular concern to BTP from Ukraine, who have a highly skilled profile. However, participation by BTP from Ukraine in French language courses offered by the authorities is rather limited. Only a fraction of them attended the language courses offered by the OFII. The format and content of these courses, and in particular the level and pace of progress, do not seem to suit them. Furthermore, the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) courses offered by *France Travail* are no longer available in all regions and are facing high demand and saturated resources.

...and should be strengthened.

The range of vocational language training courses needs to be expanded and consolidated. It is therefore important to develop a flexible range of courses, delivered at times that make it possible to combine work and language training and/or virtually. It might also be worth looking into funding possibilities for individuals for whom the opportunity cost represents a major obstacle to their participation in language courses (childcare costs, for example).

Quebec has a Foreign Credential Recognition Loan Program (PRTCE). This initiative involves providing financial support to a designated organisation to facilitate the granting of low-interest loans by a financial institution. These loans are intended for individuals trained or qualified abroad who face financial difficulties while their diplomas and professional qualifications are being recognised in Quebec. The main objective of this measure is to provide financial support to people involved in the process of having their qualifications recognised in Quebec.

In addition, it is important, both for individuals and for those involved in integration, to ensure that the platforms that currently exist to centralise all language training, including vocational training, are accessible, multilingual, easy to use, exhaustive and up to date.

In Quebec, the Francisation Québec platform is the "one-stop shop" for all French language learning services. Francisation Québec harmonises all government services for learning French. This platform offers a wide range of free French courses in every region of Quebec, in class and by distance learning, full time and part time. In addition, an allowance for course participation and reimbursement of childcare costs is available under certain conditions. Recipients of the Specific Aid Program for Ukrainians (Programme spécifique d'aide aux Ukrainiens-PSAU) are eligible for courses but are not eligible for financial assistance.

Individuals who do not obtain recognition of their qualifications are often forced to start their training all over again

In France, unlike other OECD countries, partial recognition of diplomas and qualifications is not possible. Individuals whose qualifications have not been recognised are often obliged to repeat some or all of their training in the education system of the host country in order to be able to work in their field and at their level of competence, entailing substantial costs in terms of time and money and delaying their integration into the labour market.

The possibility of partial recognition and the development of a wider range of bridging courses would seem to be particularly cost-effective

The lack of any possibility of partial recognition is a major gap in the French recognition landscape and should be filled. Partial recognition and the identification of additional training needs could be entrusted to an existing institution by extending its mandate, or to a structure newly created for this purpose.

At the same time, appropriate additional training needs to be developed or made available. Since individual needs are very heterogeneous, bridging courses should be designed on a modular basis so that they can be adapted to each situation. The availability of flexible courses, accessible remotely and outside working hours, is crucial to ensure that time constraints do not hinder participation in the programmes and that individuals who are in employment but overqualified for it can also take the courses.

Bridging courses of this kind are particularly important for newcomers trained in regulated professions, as eligibility to practice these professions depends on obtaining formal recognition. Furthermore, if they were well informed about these bridging courses and their advantages, more newcomers could be encouraged to start a procedure for recognition of their qualifications, since non-recognition and partial recognition could then direct them towards such bridging courses.

In Germany, the regulated professions work with the recognition authorities and education and training establishments to divide courses into a number of modules. These modules can then be used as guidance by the recognition authorities, which are able to require candidates to take only those modules corresponding to the skills they lack. The flexibility inherent in this modularisation means that bridging courses can be offered on a more individual basis, avoiding unnecessary and costly repetition of training.

The AGIR programme looks promising and could be expanded.

With the development of the AGIR programme, the French government recognises the importance of a comprehensive approach to tackling social and integration issues. The programme provides comprehensive, individualised support in finding employment and housing for a maximum of 24 months. It aims to facilitate access to residence rights, social and family benefits, the healthcare system, housing adapted to the individual's personal and family situation, and sustainable employment. To achieve this, individuals receive close support in all the necessary steps, with individual interviews at least every two months and group meetings.

The AGIR programme therefore seems promising, but to date it has only been open to signatories of the CIR who have been granted international protection status for less than two years and the people joining them, thus excluding BTP from Ukraine. As part of an evaluation of this programme, it would be worth

considering opening it up to them. Furthermore, for the programme to have positive results in terms of integration into sustainable, quality jobs that match the skills of individuals, it is essential to focus on the issues of recognition and professional training. As a general rule, the links between integration programmes and processes for assessing and recognising qualifications and skills should be strengthened. Finally, in the AGIR programme, support ends when the household has permanent accommodation, and when the individual wishing to work has entered a training course leading to a qualification or certificate, a work-linked training contract or a permanent job (permanent contract or fixed-term contract of more than six months). It would be interesting to continue the support if the job held, although permanent, does not correspond to the individual's skills and if the individual wishes to move on to a more qualified job. This would make it possible to take full advantage of people's qualifications.