Integration of refugees into the labour market in Sweden

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Basic principles for refugees’ access to the labour market and welfare in Sweden

• There are **work-based** and **residence-based** welfare rights and entitlements.

• Anybody who legally works in Sweden has a right to **work-based benefits** (e.g. unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, pensions).

• Anyone who is legally residing in Sweden is entitled to **residence-based benefits** (e.g. social welfare benefits, child allowance, housing allowance).

• Basic rule for legal residence: Anyone who legally stays in Sweden, or can be expected to stay, **for one year or longer**, is registered in the population registry and thus entitled to residence-based rights/benefits.

• Once an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or a humanitarian status, they are registered in the population registry.

• **Asylum seekers** are normally allowed to **work** during the asylum procedure (no priority examination or waiting time).
Special integration measures for recognised beneficiaries of protection (and family members)

- **Settlement** in one of the 290 Swedish municipalities, according to a new distribution/allocation mechanism (since March 2016) – organised by the Public Employment Service *Arbetsförmedlingen*

- Beneficiaries of protection may also find accommodation by themselves

- **Individual “integration plan”** (normal duration: two years), including:
  - **Language course** “Swedish for Immigrants”: Normally 15-20 hours per week, day-time (there are also evening classes and special courses for persons with specific skills)
  - Shorter **orientation courses**
  - **Internships**, apprenticeships or on-the-job training
Other components of the integration plan

- **Translation** of foreign diplomas
- Guidance regarding the **validation of formal degrees / education**
- New: short, **complementary education programmes** for people with incomplete qualifications
- **Financial allowances (daily):**
  - 231:- to 308:- SEK per day (Monday-Friday), dependent on the degree of participation in the activities foreseen by the integration plan
  - Extra allowances in certain cases for children and housing
  - Reduced allowances when beneficiary starts working or does not fully participate, e.g. 50% work or absence → allowances reduced by 50%
Recent challenges

- Almost 163,000 new asylum seekers in 2015, more than ever
- Lack of affordable housing → Settlement process is delayed
- Over-burdening of responsible authorities and agencies (state and municipalities) → too little time for individual help
- Lack of simple jobs → Takes years until new arrivals find jobs
- Longer waiting times in the asylum system and for family reunification
New measures for improved labour market participation (1)

- **Basic idea**: Beneficiaries of protection have to get closer to the more dynamic regions within Sweden, where there are jobs.
- But: Also in remoter regions, there is a certain need for labour (e.g. in agriculture and forestry).
- Increased focus on internships, on-the-job training, earlier language tuition.
- **Make meaningful use of waiting times** during the asylum procedure.
- „100-Club“ – Special package solutions for bigger companies that commit to employing at least 100 new arrivals, including special placement services and wage subsidies.
New measures for improved labour market participation (2)

- "Fast-tracks" into the labour market for new arrivals with qualifications for shortage occupations, e.g.
  - Cooks (chefs)
  - Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists
  - Butchers
  - School and pre-school teachers
- Government-subsidised jobs in the private economy ("Step-in jobs")
- More funding for civil society initiatives
Thank you!

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