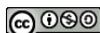




GUIDELINES

Welcome to this Country

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VINCE | Validation for inclusion of new citizens in Europe
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Introduction

These guidelines are aimed at supporting higher education professionals dealing with applications to their institutions by refugees or migrants with a refugee-like situation, who would like to start or continue their higher education.

Questions about living in **this country**, which refugees and migrants frequently ask have been formulated and the answers provided. There are four categories of FAQs:

- **General information about this country**
- **Conditions for refugees during and after asylum seeking**
- **System of schools & education**
- **Systems for transport, working and health**

All the questions are answered with an overview; hyperlinks to websites for more detailed information and sources are provided. The HE professional can use the questions and answers, as appropriate, but may wish to customise the answer to his or her institution.

When appropriate, references are made to other VINCE guidelines.

General information on this country

For newcomers, it is important to quickly gain an understanding of basic aspects of the new country; how do I find my way to make a living in this country, for myself and maybe for my family? Many practical issues have to be handled like getting around in the country, to get started as a new citizen, to find a job or complete education.

To help the newcomer to get an understanding of the country and easy access to general information about the country can be provided in the form of facts and figures.

General information should be available for these topics: Size and population/demography and infrastructure.

The links below are suggested for providing this general information.

Please judge for yourself if the suggested country website is appropriate for your country information or please replace with a website of your choice:

For facts and figures for each country

Denmark: <http://denmark.dk/en/quick-facts/facts/>

Germany: <https://www.german-way.com/history-and-culture/germany/germany-facts-and-figures/>

The Netherlands: <https://www.holland.com/global/tourism/information/facts-and-figures.htm>

Austria: <http://www.austria.org/overview/>

Hungary: <http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Hungary.html>

Hungary: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>

Hungary: <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-country-note-Hungary.pdf>

Slovenia: <https://www.thinkslovenia.com/info-activities/slovenia-facts-figures>

Norway: <https://www.virke.no/en/about-virke/international-trade/facts-figures-norway/>

Greece: <https://borgenproject.org/facts-and-figures-about-greece/>

Q: What are the main cities/universities of this country?

A: A map with main cities, preferably also with the location of universities, should be added to the HE institution's website together with names and type of universities and the educations offered by the university.

Q: What is the political system like in this country?

A: Knowing and understanding the political system of the country is of great interest to new citizens. A description of the political system, explaining the main principles for participation in democracy could be added or linked to at the HE institution website.

Find below the suggested structure for topics for this question:

- The Constitutional Act
- The Parliamentary system
- The separation of powers
- Election and referendum
- Member of EU / with or without exemptions from the EU Treaty

Q: What are the main industries/sources of economic wealth in this country?

A: An overview of the business structure of the country combined with brief information about primary occupations could be provided or linked to from the HE Institution website.

Q: What is the minimum standard of living?

A: As minimum wages normally depend on the labour market regulation of the country, please provide a reference to the national standard, if there is one. Information on minimum wages according to the legal system for labour negotiations and agreements could be provided by a link to national law and regulation.

For Information about unemployment benefit and social services see also the *Q: How can I get into the social system of the country?*

Conditions for refugees during and after seeking asylum

Q: What are the rights & entitlements, responsibilities and obligations of citizens/refugees/ migrants in this country?

Q: What financial support is available to refugees and migrants?

A: As the question cannot be answered in a general way, the answer must be provided by specific references to actual conditions. For citizens without a job, public subsidies are available in accordance with the legal framework for social benefits. Due to laws and regulations for the area concerned, a fixed amount for the maximum ceiling of social benefits will be the situation for some countries.

There might be special regulations for asylum seekers and refugees granted permission of stay – either intermediately or permanently.

As for the rights and entitlements for refugees and immigrants, it is important to note the differences of these two categories according to access to social benefits.

Please insert relevant information.

Q: Where can refugees stay during the formal process of asylum seeking?

A: please insert information according to national, municipal or regional law and regulations.

Please insert relevant information about the formal process of asylum seeking, optionally by a link.

Q: What is the legal status and legal regulations concerning studying/working before and after the recognition or rejection of asylum status?

A: Laws and regulations define the legal status, rights and responsibilities of the asylum seeker, including also the status after receiving asylum. The information about legal status for this topic should also include regulations for the situation of having had the asylum denied. The legal framework of the country clearly indicates whether studying and working is a right.

A link for more information could be added. *Please refer to the [“Welcome to Europe”-Guidelines](#).*

Q: How can a migrant get into the social care system of this country?

A: See the answers above. The answer depends on the specific situation, either as an asylum seeker, or whether asylum has already been granted or denied.

Q: How can a migrant learn the local language?

A: Information for language teaching is highly important for most foreign applicants to HE. The HE organisation can provide more information about language teaching at the levels appropriate for the language access criteria to the HE. Besides, special information on language teaching for refugees and immigrants could also be provided.

Some countries and municipalities provide language teaching for asylum seekers and for immigrants. The specific regulations for language teaching as a right or as a possibility differs among countries. Language teaching could be provided either by public or private organisations.

A link for more information about language teaching providers could be added to the Institutions website.

Q: How can migrants find accommodation?

A: This depends of the legal status, as referred to above. Having had the permission to stay, the person with a refugee background will normally be responsible by him or herself to find accommodation.

Please insert a text of relevance for the national and local conditions and possibilities.

The school and education system

Q: How does the education system work in this country?

A: To get an overview of how the entire national school and education system is structured, please insert a brief text or a graphic.

Q: What is the national qualification system in this country?

A: The National Qualification Framework (NQF) forms the qualification system of the country. The NQF is an important tool for everyone who seeks education and for the labour market and education institutions. The aim of the Qualification Framework is to demonstrate the qualification level of the education together with the expected learning outcome, to make clear the different pathways through the education system and to increase mutual recognition between the national and the foreign qualifications.

Eight levels

The NQF is a coherent, systematic and levelled description of qualifications, achieved within the national education system. For each level there is a level description, characterizing important aspects of the level. Each level is described with the concepts: knowledge, skills and competences, which altogether characterizes the learning outcome for the level.

For more information, a link to the NQF with explanation could be provided.

Q: Is there any support for migrants who want to enter higher education in this country?

A: Various organisations (universities, governmental bodies, NGOs, etc.) may have already implemented courses, advice or support for migrants who wish to start or complete their higher education in the host country. For example, in the UK, a course called “Aim Higher”, designed to help refugees and asylum seekers get the information and support they need to apply to and enter UK universities is available. The course is run in a partnership between FutureLearn and the University of Cambridge and gives advice and support on the English language skills needed for university level study and includes the insights and experience of students who have gained places at UK universities. More information can be found by this link:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/aim-higher>

The website states that “This course is designed for refugees and asylum seekers looking to continue or start their Higher Education studies in the UK. It would also be useful for anyone who supports or teaches refugees hoping to study at university. The focus of this course is applying for, and preparing for undergraduate study.”

Information on similar offers for newcomers could be provided by the HE Institutions website. *Please refer to the [Welcome to Higher Education Guidelines](#).*

Q: How can competences be recognised? How is the validation of prior learning handled in this country?

A: Each partner inserts information about the Validation system, the rights, division of responsibility, funding and whatever relevant. The text should include the national laws and regulations for validation of prior learning.

An application for access to HE includes formal documents for the approved accession criteria. For applicants with a refugee background or other newcomers the situation might be that the applicant has started the HE in the homeland and not finished this. Official documents are important files as part of the application process.

In case these documents cannot be provided, an alternative path for assessment of the level of qualifications must be arranged.

Each partner inserts information about how this process is carried out and by which authority.

A link should be added for more information about the authority for recognition of foreign education.

Please also refer to the [“Welcome to Validation”-guidelines](#).

Q: What support and / counselling services are available?

A: Please insert a text about text about legal rights and entitlements for VPL, for the VPL providers / type of organisations. The text should include information about guidance and counselling resources, either stated by law as a legal right or with a reference to individual conditions by the HE institution. Information about guidance and counselling could be added to the HE institution website for study counselling. *Please also refer to the [Welcome to Validation Guidelines](#).*

Systems for transport, health and working

Q: What is the public transport system like? How can people travel?

A: A map of or link to the local transport system could be added, optionally with a brief presentation of the transport system according to the suggested topics:

- transportation means in cities – metro, train, bus, tram, city-bikes
- transport routes in the country
- payment systems for transport.

Q: How does the health system work? What are migrants entitled to and how can they register?

A: As the health system with entitlements for immigrants might differ among countries each partner insert a description of - or links to the health system, optionally structured with these topics:

- public or private system
- structure
- admission for citizens
- optionally specific requirements for migrants (and refugees)
- payment
- insurance
- telephone numbers for emergencies.

Relevant links could be added.

Q: How can I find a job in this country?

A: There are several ways and means for finding a job; for instance from the Public Employment Service, which will typically require that the person registers as a job seeker. Jobs are often communicated throughout network, friends and neighbours in the local community. Besides, the personal initiative – simply calling by telephone or visiting an enterprise is often regarded a welcoming initiative to prove interest.

If applicable, a link to the local employment office or recruitment offices could be added.

Please refer to the [“Welcome to Europe”-Guidelines](#).

Links used for the this guidelines

European Commission: About asylum seeking

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en

Suggestions for country-specific facts and figures as a general introduction to the country.

<http://denmark.dk/en/quick-facts/facts/>

<https://www.german-way.com/history-and-culture/germany/germany-facts-and-figures/>

<https://www.holland.com/global/tourism/information/facts-and-figures.htm>

<http://www.austria.org/overview/>

<https://www.factretriever.com/hungary-facts>

<https://www.thinkslovenia.com/info-activities/slovenia-facts-figures>

<https://www.virke.no/en/about-virke/international-trade/facts--figures-norway/>

<https://borgenproject.org/facts-and-figures-about-greece/>

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=858>

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration_en

<https://uvm.dk/uddannelsessystemet/den-danske-kvalifikationsramme>

https://www.nyidanmark.dk/da-dk/Ophold/asyl/asylansoegernes_vilkaar/kontante_ydelser.htm

Wikipedia: about the general NQF system

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Qualifications_Framework

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