

Refugee arrivals and integration policy in Sweden

International Metropolis Conference 2016

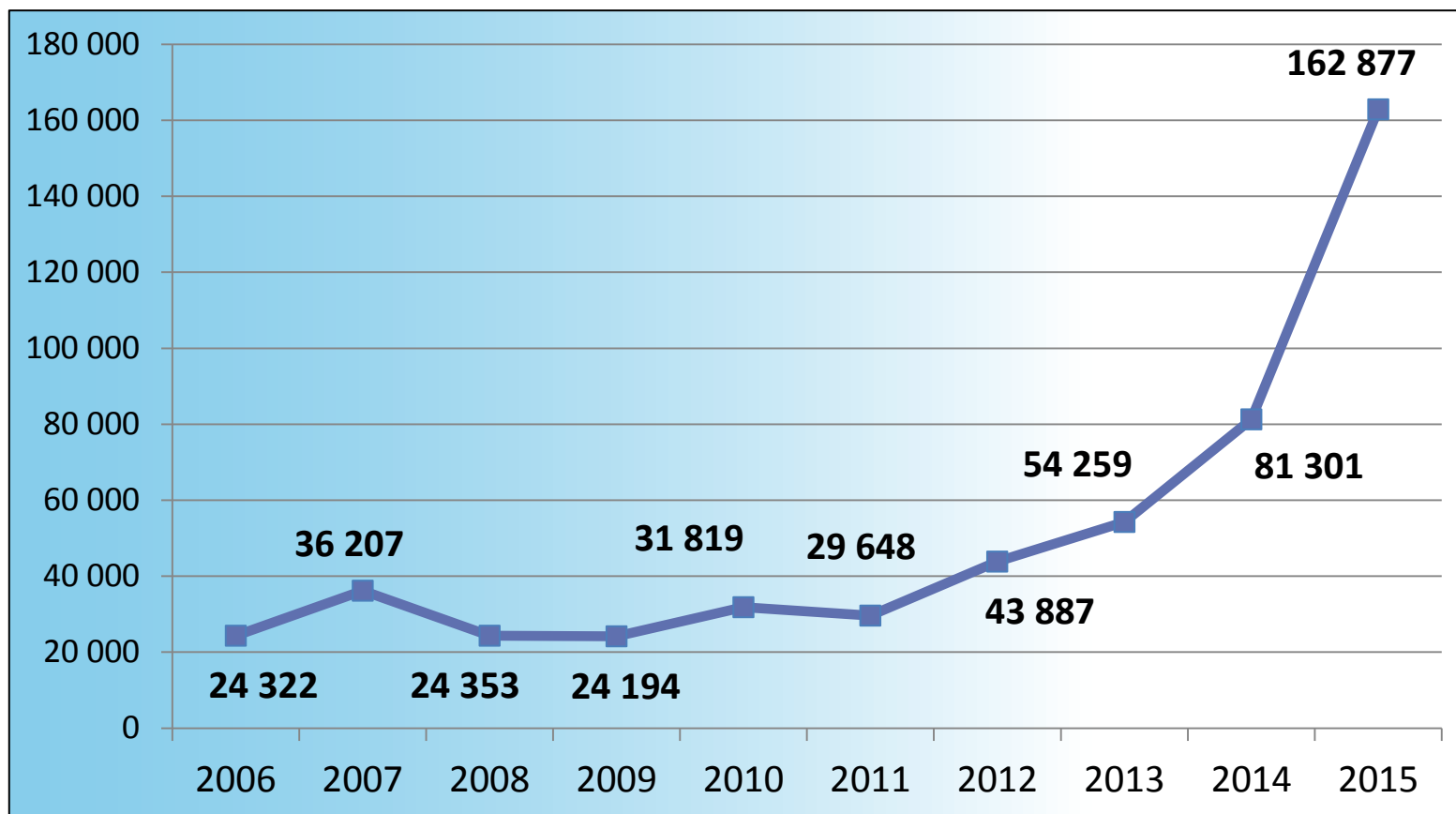
***Workshop C9: Refugee Integration in the EU and Asia: Common Approaches
and Differences***

Aichi-Nagoya, 24-28 October 2016



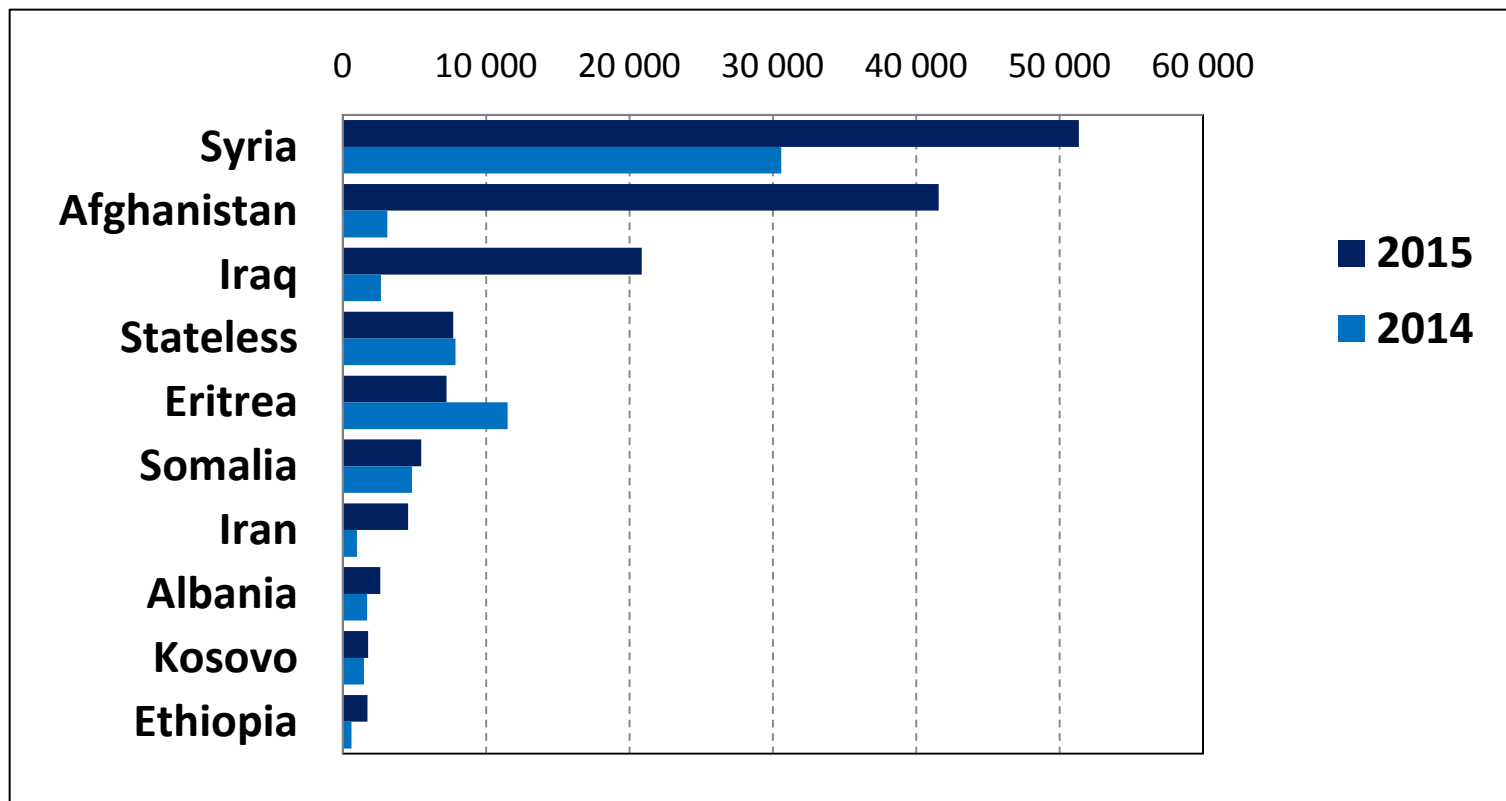
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Asylum applications in Sweden, 2006-2015



Source: Swedish Migration Agency

Asylum seekers' main countries of origin, 2014-2015



Source: Swedish Migration Agency

Asylum decisions, 2015

Citizenship	Total number of decisions	Positive	Proportion positive decisions of all decisions
Syria	20 677	18 523	90%
Eritrea	7 450	6 542	88%
Stateless	3 954	3 142	79%
Afghanistan	3 071	1 088	35%
Somalia	2 907	958	33%
Iraq	2 797	546	20%
Albania	2 628	27	1%
Kosovo	2 170	60	3%
Serbia	1 451	13	1%
Ukraine	897	29	3%
<i>Other</i>	<i>10 800</i>	<i>1 703</i>	<i>16%</i>
Total	58 802	32 631	55%

Source: Swedish Migration Agency

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)

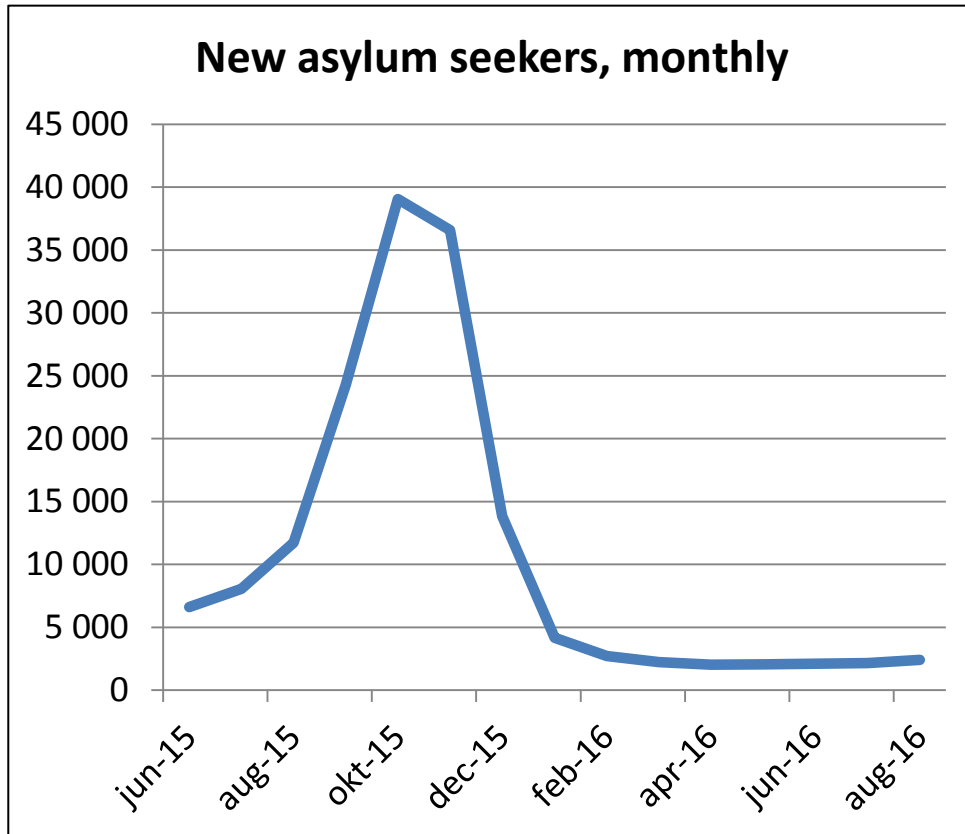
Special integration measures for recognised beneficiaries of protection (and their family members)

- **Settlement** in one of the 290 Swedish municipalities, according to a new distribution/allocation mechanism (since March 2016) – currently **organised by the Public Employment Service *Arbetsförmedlingen***, to be taken over by the **Swedish Migration Agency *Migrationsverket*** from January 2017
- 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, forestry, and tourism)
- 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
- **But:** More restrictive approach to asylum and family reunification since autumn 2015 – clashes with ambition to facilitate and promote integration!

Thank you!

Further reading:

- Parusel, Bernd (2016): Policies for labour market integration of refugees in Sweden, in: Migration Policy Practice, VI/2, S. 11-16.
[<http://publications.iom.int/books/migration-policy-practice-vol-vi-number-2-april-may-2016>]
- OECD (2016): Working Together: Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and Their Children in Sweden. OECD Publishing, Paris.



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