

## 2.2. Accessing the labour market

### Labour market rankings

1	SE	Sweden	100
2-	ES	Spain	90
	PT	Portugal	90
4	IT	Italy	85
5	CA	Canada	80
6-	CH	Switzerland	75
	EE	Estonia	75
	BE	Belgium	75
9-	NO	Norway	70
	NL	Netherlands	70
	FI	Finland	70
	EU-15		64
12-	UK	United Kingdom	60
	SI	Slovenia	60
	All 28		58
	EU-25		56
14-	SK	Slovakia	55
	LT	Lithuania	55
16-	DE	Germany	50
	IE	Ireland	50
	FR	France	50
	CZ	Czech Republic	50
	EU-10		45
20-	AT	Austria	45
	LU	Luxembourg	45
22_	HU	Hungary	40
	GR	Greece	40
	DK	Denmark	40
	CY	Cyprus	40
26	MT	Malta	30
27	PL	Poland	25
28	LV	Latvia	20

Poland and Latvia's policies rank 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> respectively on granting a fair and equal access to the labour market for all non-EU residents. These policies are especially determinant for newcomers who are not yet permanent residents and must have visas that must be renewed under certain conditions. The other countries with the same slightly unfavourable score for labour market access policies are Hungary, Denmark, and the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean (Cyprus, Greece, and Malta). Otherwise, policies in the other Central or Eastern European countries are above the halfway mark; indeed Estonia stands out among the top ten countries like Sweden, Italy, Canada, and the Netherlands.

For migrants looking for a job or means to improve their skills, EU Member States score only halfway to best practice on labour market eligibility and integration measures. The first dimension, eligibility, concerns whether the law excludes migrant residents from accepting jobs in certain sectors. The second dimension, integration measures, considers the state's action in helping migrants adjust to the country's labour market and subsequent changes

that tend to have a greater adverse impact on foreigners like other vulnerable groups in the population. Even in the most inclusive of labour markets, a migrant can still face significant obstacles in adjusting to the language and changing occupational needs of the country of residence. Labour market integration measures and equal access to vocational training and study grants may prove crucial for the professional development of all categories of migrant residents, especially family reunion migrants, recognised refugees, or students who may migrate for non-employment purposes.

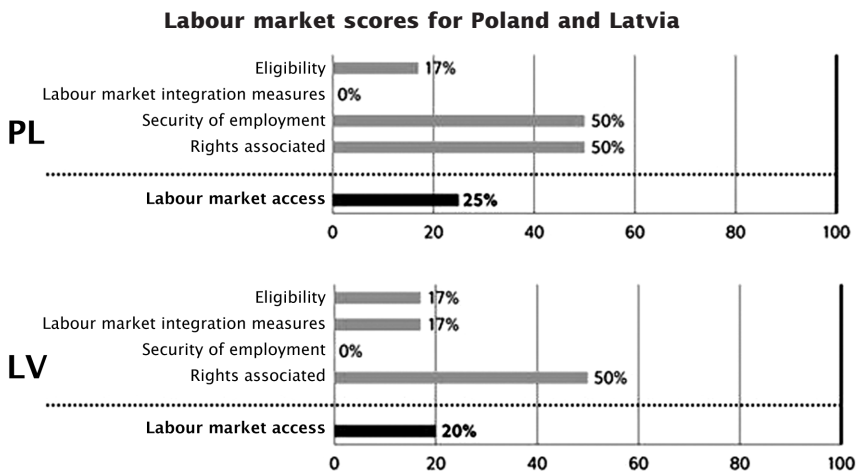
Latvia and Poland have the second lowest score in the 25 EU Member States after France. This arises from the various restrictions placed on a non-EU national's eligibility to work or become self-employed in many sectors. The legal barriers to migrant's eligibility for employment is an area of weakness across Central and Eastern Europe, involving exclusion from a wide range of sectors based on legal status and language requirements. Interestingly such legal barriers are less prominent in the area of self-employment, for instance in the Czech Republic and Lithuania. Provisions for migrant entrepreneurs across the region vary in flexibility.

Another area of weakness for both countries concerns the provision of labour market integration measures, where in general Central and Eastern Europe lags substantially behind Western Europe. The MIPEX study noted a lack in the region

of comprehensive national-level measures to improve for instance the employability, promote the vocational training, or profession-based language acquisition of migrant residents.

The EU Member States in general score better when it comes to protecting the employment security and rights of those migrants who do find work. Latvia and Poland bunk the trend in most EU Member States. Unlike in most other EU Member States including the other Baltic and Visegrad countries, rigid administrative criteria in Latvia and Poland do not allow migrants who lose their job to remain temporarily in the country and look for work. Migrant workers who are not permanent residents cannot change their job or status, without leaving the country and reapplying for a new work permit leaving them potentially bound to their employer. Poland receives a higher score on security of status, since a migrant resident can in principle renew all but seasonal work permits.

That said, migrant residents have equal access to trade unions and all work-related decision-making bodies once they secure a job in both countries just as in all countries surveyed but France. Of course effective access, trade union outreach, and the ambiguous link with legal restrictions on political participation in certain Member States require further country-specific investigation.



0 – Critically unfavourable; 1–20 – Unfavourable; 21–40 – Slightly unfavourable; 41–59 – Halfway to best practice; 60–79 – Slightly favourable; 80–99 – Favourable; 100 – Best practice.\*

### **Practices:**

- A migrant resident has a favourably fair and equal labour market eligibility in eight of the 28 countries surveyed, including Canada, Estonia, Sweden, and the Western Mediterranean countries. In these countries, a migrant can legally accept a job in all sectors of the labour market, including the

\* This interpretation refers to the data of all diagrams.

public sector, except where he or she would have to exercise public authority. For a migrant entrepreneur, it is the idea that counts; migrants with a financially viable business plan are eligible to be self-employed.

- Once a migrant resident in Sweden obtains a permit of at least one year, regardless of the grounds, and is placed on the national registry, legislation grants them equal access to employment and self-employment. Such access is also guaranteed in Slovenia, so long as no suitable national can be pulled from the unemployment register. Access to self-employment in the Czech Republic is based solely on the issuance of a trade license for migrants as for Czech nationals.
- Non-nationals and newcomers in Estonia benefit from the most favourable eligibility and labour market integration measures in Central and Eastern Europe. The recently concluded state programme on “Integration in Estonian Society” 2000–2007 and the upcoming strategy for 2008–2013 have prioritised the labour market as one of the key domains for improving not only the quality of life of non-nationals, but also the public awareness of non-national’s contribution to society. The programme involves a variety of measures, trainings, and incentives to promote non-national’s competitiveness, mobility, and entrepreneurship in the labour market. It coordinates the initiatives of various ministries, the *Innove* Foundation for Lifelong Learning, Development and Enterprise Estonia, and the county departments of the Labour Market Board.
- The 2005 Strategic Direction on Immigration in Canada supports a number of labour market trainings and measures to ensure that migrants can fully use their potential in Canada. In one area of chronic labour market shortage, live-in care-giving, the government initiated a programme in 2003 providing the incentive of permanent residence after two years for those migrant residents employed as live-in workers for children, the elderly or the handicapped.
- Trade unions in Finland and Estonia operate information centres in both countries with the aim of preventing a segmented labour market and unequal outcomes between migrant workers and nationals. These centres provide information on union services, the employment and tax system, and the protection of workers’ rights. Similar centres are operated across Spain by the Confederacion Sindical de Comisiones Obreras and by the German trade union IG Bau for Polish migrant workers in Berlin and Warsaw.
- Migrant newcomers in Sweden who have worked (including caring for children under 10) for two years in the country have equal access to study grants as Swedes. In addition, the current government has launched a new language instruction system and number of ambitious employment measures targeting outsiders to the labour market including migrant newcomers, such as the “new start jobs” and “home service jobs”.
- The German government initiative *Deutsch am Arbeitsplatz* (German in the Workplace) intends to encourage language learning among migrant work-