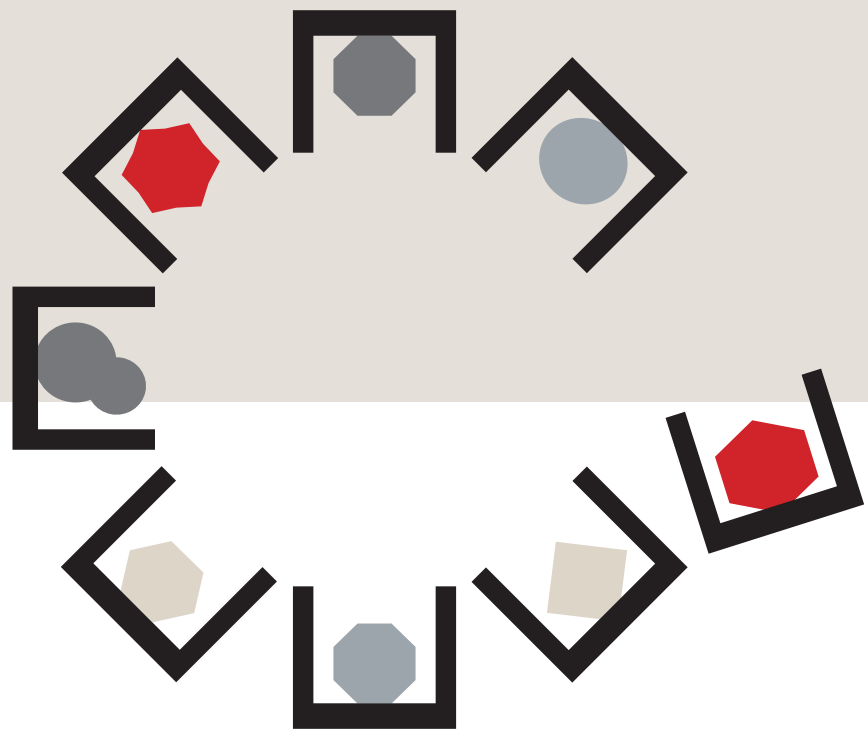


Recognizing opportunities – Enabling integration

Report by the Robert Bosch Expert Commission to Consider a Realignment of Refugee Policy

Chaired by: Armin Laschet

Summary



Crises around the world are becoming increasingly numerous and complex. Many regional conflict hotspots are closely interconnected, not only locally. Today more than ever, the consequences of civil war, failing states and economic difficulties affect the societies of Europe. Globalization has long ceased to be an abstract phenomenon – events that appear to take place in distant regions of the world have a direct effect on our daily lives. Perhaps no other crisis in recent years has highlighted that connection as clearly as the issue of refugees in Europe, which has grown to become a dramatic humanitarian crisis in parts of the continent.

Germany continues to be the refuge sought by a large proportion of the refugees striving to reach Europe, placing it at the centre of the crisis. Over one million asylum seekers came to this country in 2015: many have fled from terror and civil war, others from political or religious persecution. For some it was the mere hope of a better life. Whatever the motives of the asylum seekers in this country were or are: their arrival in such large numbers has had a considerable impact on German society. No other issue dominates political and social debate in the country as much as the question of refugees. In no other political field has such a wealth of new laws been passed in recent months. In the late summer of 2015, many citizens showed an unprecedented and globally respected welcoming culture with respect to refugees. However in the meantime, there are increasing signs that reveal a deep-rooted sense of insecurity in large parts of the population. It is increasingly difficult to use factual arguments in a social climate where debate has become ever more heated.

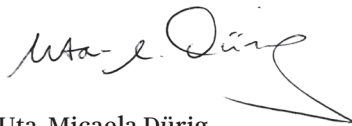
These developments have not made the work of the Robert Bosch Expert Commission to Consider a Realignment of Refugee Policy any easier. Without doubt, even at the time of the commission's inaugural meeting in March 2015, refugee policy was already one of the most important political issues. Since then, the ever more tangible and recognizable dimension of refugee migration to Germany has led to a further significant increase in expectations regarding political action and also the work of the commission. Although not everyone will be able to remain within the country: the challenge of accommodating and integrating hundreds of thousands of people seeking shelter – in such a short time – is unprecedented. This recognition strengthened the commission's conviction that a successful German refugee policy must be based on concepts with a long-term perspective, concepts that also contribute to a new underlying consensus on integration and refugee policy in our society.

To fulfill that requirement, two fundamental premises guided the commission's work: Firstly, this report calls for a holistic approach that takes the entire "cycle" of the German asylum system into account. Secondly, the composition of the commission ensured that high-ranking representatives from all parts of society convened as equal partners.

The commission was characterized by its heterogeneous, cross-party composition. In addition to representatives of state institutions such as the Federal Labor Office and the Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees, the German economy, municipal umbrella organizations, the human rights organization PRO ASYL, politics, the media, and public opinion research all formed part of the commission. Numerous other agents, such as social and welfare associations, trade unions, churches, religious communities, and refugee self-organizations were involved in the commission's work in hearings. Scientific expertise also contributed in the form of reports and continuous support from a scientific secretariat. Without its excellent work, it would have been impossible to produce such a comprehensive report in the environment of an unsettled media and social climate, as well as with respect to the constantly changing political and legal basis of the asylum system.

The commission's proposals refer both to short-term and longer-term challenges. The former especially include accommodation and healthcare for refugees. Overcoming these obstacles requires a political "sprint" that has already begun at the level of state and social agents. The long-term challenges that still lie ahead can be seen as part of a political "marathon", including topics such as the education and supervision of refugee children, language teaching and the imparting of values, as well as integration into the labor market. The asylum processes must also be improved and new ways must be found for those requiring repatriation. The aim must be to enable the successful integration of recognized refugees and achieving social acceptance of a functioning German asylum system. In each of the named fields, we must follow the triple premise of: seeing - recognizing - acting. While doing so, the focus must always lie on the individual human being. That is required by the conception of mankind that German and European law is based upon.

This report is not a political program. Instead, it presents recommended measures and is aimed at political and social decision-makers. Furthermore, the commission by no means claims that this report can solve the refugee crisis - nothing would be more presumptuous. Instead, the report should be regarded as a factual impetus at a time when debate is often dominated by emotional and polarizing, even shrill tones. Germany's successful integration policy in the past can and must be supplemented by a new chapter. To do so, we must set the right agenda now. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission to Consider Realignment of Refugee Policy aims to make a contribution in this way.



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Armin Laschet
Commission Chairman

April 2016

Introduction

In convening the Robert Bosch Expert Commission to Consider a Realignment of Refugee Policy in March 2015 under the chairmanship of Armin Laschet, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has brought together ten high-ranking representatives from the fields of politics, the economy and society to develop concrete, solution-oriented courses of action and reform proposals for German refugee policy within a year. In doing so, the commission regarded itself as a cross-party, independent body. Its “mandate” included the task of enabling open, factual discussion, involving different perspectives and developing constructive, politically feasible proposals and concepts.

Between March 12, 2015 and January 21, 2016, the commission convened for five one-day meetings to develop and discuss content-based stances in a constructive, result-oriented way in order to formulate them as manageable proposals.

The commission took upon itself the task of developing concrete measures based on scientific insight and practical experience, especially for the medium and long term integration of refugees. Discussions between commission members were at times by necessity controversial, but always driven by the will to achieve viable compromises that could withstand the test of practical application. Generally, a consensus was achieved in discussions, while majority decisions with the chance of opposing votes were made in cases of disagreement.¹ Even where the report does not document any divergent opinion, it does not necessarily mean that all members of the commission agreed with all of its statements and recommended measures. The main aim was to reach new proposals through discussion between sometimes highly contrasting opinions.

This document summarizes the most important recommended measures and reform proposals of that joint work.

The fields addressed by the commission follow a refugee biography and hence range from arrival over the asylum process to acceptance, or repatriation in case of non-recognition. The focus of recommendations therefore lies on questions that must be answered in Germany. In doing so, the political dimension of integration was stressed. The European and global dimension of refugee movements were only addressed peripherally.

¹ A comprehensive explanation by commission member Günter Burkhardt, Managing Director of PRO ASYL, can be found in the General Report of the Robert Bosch Expert Commission. The General Report has only been published in German.

The commission report addresses the following eight fields of action and themes individually, formulating recommendations for each of them:

1. Admission opportunities for refugees
2. The Asylum process
3. Accommodation and housing
4. Health services and healthcare provision
5. Language teaching and acquisition
6. Access to educational institutions
7. Training and access to employment
8. Return, repatriation and deportation

Furthermore, the Robert Bosch Expert Commission also discussed the themes of regional distribution and financial reorganization of refugee admission and integration, sounding out the potential for reforms. As a result, one report was commissioned at the Cologne Institute for Economic Research and another at the Financial Research Institute of the University of Cologne. They are entitled “Better regional distribution of refugees. Initial situation and approaches to a new distribution mechanism” and “Financing refugee policy. For a balanced financing of refugee measures by the federal government, states and municipalities”. These reports were published separately.²

2 See. Finanzwissenschaftliches Forschungsinstitut an der Universität zu Köln (2016): Finanzierung der Flüchtlingspolitik. Für eine ausgewogene Finanzierung der Flüchtlingsleistungen bei Bund, Ländern und Kommunen, Gutachten im Auftrag der Robert Bosch Stiftung, Köln; sowie Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln (2016): Flüchtlinge regional besser verteilen. Ausgangslage und Ansatzpunkte für einen neuen Verteilungsmechanismus, Gutachten im Auftrag der Robert Bosch Stiftung, Köln.

1. Refugee admissions in Germany and Europe: Redefining admission rules

With respect to refugee admissions, the Robert Bosch Expert Commission advocates the clear distinction between asylum law and other regular migration. Only actually persecuted people should initially receive unconditional protection of life and limb. However, the *admission of refugees* also needs new regulations that relieve the burden on Germany and involve Europe in a better and more responsible way. Although it is not simple, a solution must be found on a European level. Thus the Robert Bosch Expert Commission advocates that in the next two years, admissions programs should be established on a European level for several hundreds of thousands of refugees, enabling fair distribution by an EU resettlement program. In this way, not only would the tasks and burdens be spread in a better way, but also the admission of refugees in Germany and the handling process would be improved. Further recommended measures and reform proposals:

s = short term

m = medium term

l = long term

Resettlement

1. Negotiations on a Europe-wide fair reception of refugees through EU resettlement programs should be continued in an expedient way and a substantial program should be agreed upon. The USA and other states should also participate in the resettlement of Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees. These programs should not replace the individual right to asylum. **l**

Temporary admission programs

2. Temporary admission programs should be established in 2016 and 2017 on a European level. In the years 2016 and 2017, several hundreds of thousands of refugees will be accepted. The quotas can lead both to increasing control over as well as a reduction of refugee movements. Admission criteria should balance national interests and special protection needs. **s**
3. Alternatively, the federal program and state programs should be resumed and continued. In such a case, the federal and state admission programs must be conceived in a uniform way. **s**
4. In addition to relatives, non-related persons, groups or associations should be able to submit a declaration of commitment to sponsor a refugee's admission. The commitment would be limited to one year or until the refugee's employment (*private sponsorship programs*). **m**

Visa granting

5. Humanitarian protective visas that are valid within the current scope of the EU visa code should be fully exploited by employees of the German foreign representations. **S**
6. The possibility of exceptions from visa obligation for refugees should be examined. **m**

Migration for non-humanitarian reasons

7. Opportunities for migration for non-humanitarian reasons, for instance in the form of legal employment migration, are, wherever possible, announced and advertised more strongly in crisis regions. To that end, additional positions for appropriate advice in the foreign representations and other German organizations abroad (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, foreign chambers of commerce, political foundations, German Academic Exchange Service, etc.) should be established. **S**

2. The Asylum process

To make the necessary improvements to the *asylum process*, the Robert Bosch Expert Commission advocates optimizing the capacities of the responsible Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), especially by quickly filling vacant positions and the transfer of employees from other administrative areas. New initiatives and financial investment are required to modernize electronic administration between the federal government, states (“Bundesländer”) and the municipalities, leading to a uniform electronic file. In the external offices of the BAMF, hearing and decision-making processes could be accelerated in future by making a decision immediately after the personal hearing by one and the same person.



The guiding principle for further recommended measures and reform proposals is the primary aim of accelerating and simplifying the process while maintaining legal certainty:

 = short term


 = medium term


 = long term

Administrative organization

1. The still vacant positions in the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees should be filled immediately with qualified personnel, especially the posts of decision-makers. If there is an insufficient number of external applicants for the vacancies, officers from other federal authorities should be transferred to the BAMF offices on a temporary basis. In doing so, attention should be paid that there is no loss of quality in asylum decisions. 
2. The information technology of all authorities operating on refugee administration in the federal government, states and municipalities should be modernized and synchronized, so that all offices can work with uniform electronic files. The commission therefore welcomes the intentions of the Data Exchange Acceleration Act (“Datenaustauschbeschleunigungsgesetz”) to implement measures to that end. 

Stages of the hearing and decision-making process

3. It should be possible to apply for asylum immediately after entering the country, allowing all the necessary data to be recorded and processed centrally. On this occasion, identity and security checks are to be carried out. 

4. The practice of a waiting period and different personnel in the decision-making process and personal hearing should be changed: Investigation and decision-making should be carried out shortly after the personal hearing, no later than one month afterwards, by the same person, so long as there is no additional necessity to clarify the situation. Exceptions to this rule require an explanation. 

3. Accommodation and housing

The question of refugee accommodation and housing is urgent, not least because bottlenecks must be quickly overcome and municipalities unburdened. The initial reception of refugees must therefore be reorganized. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission recommends, among other measures, converting and expanding the initial reception facilities and the creation of nationally applicable standards for collective accommodation. Above all, it is necessary to considerably expand public social housing measures by means of joint initiatives by the federal government, states and municipalities. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission also sees further leeway in simplifying tax and building regulations. The distribution of refugees to states and municipalities should in future take into account more strongly criteria such as regional demographic development, the condition of municipal finances and the respective local situation on the employment and housing market.

Other recommended measures and reform proposals:

s = short term

m = medium term





l = long term

Accommodation in initial reception facilities



1. Initial reception and registration facilities should be open around the clock and made accessible to asylum seekers. The EASY³ system should also be operated 24 hours a day in shift work. Alternatively, enough short-term accommodation facilities should be provided in the initial reception facilities at the junction points of migration routes. Homelessness, even for a short time, should absolutely be prevented. **s**
2. Collective accommodation should be subject to binding, national legal minimum standards. That includes, among others, facilities for language teaching and childcare, separate sleeping and shower rooms for women (traveling alone) as well as health care centers. **m**
3. The EU reception regulations 2013/33/EU should be endorsed quickly by the German Bundestag to expedite the protective duties agreed upon on a European level with respect to particularly vulnerable persons/groups among the asylum seekers and refugees. **s**


3 IT-system for the distribution of asylum seekers among the federal states in Germany.

Regulations and administration



4. Concerted action should be taken by the federal government, states and municipalities to support public housing construction for all people requiring low-cost living space (including the introduction of functional measures such as building programs, especially in the field of social housing, increasing tax relief for new buildings, reducing the property transfer tax, and publicly subsidized property purchasing for building sites). 
5. Options to extend expiring occupancy terms in social housing should be examined. 
6. Building, environment and procurement law should be examined by an inter-ministerial working group of the federal government to discover further simplification, enabling faster construction work for private and public housing development. 
7. For asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country, refugees and other low-income groups, an opportunity should be created to involve them in all housing-policy instruments and allow them to own housing (subsidizing or saving models, cooperation with building societies, use of federal and state funds). 

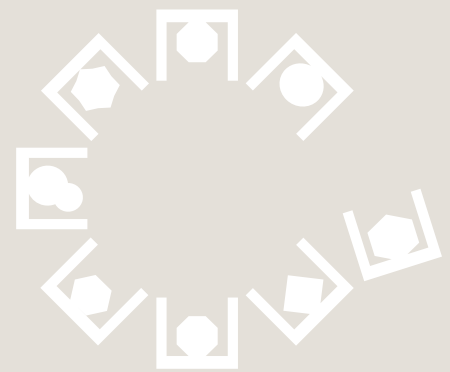
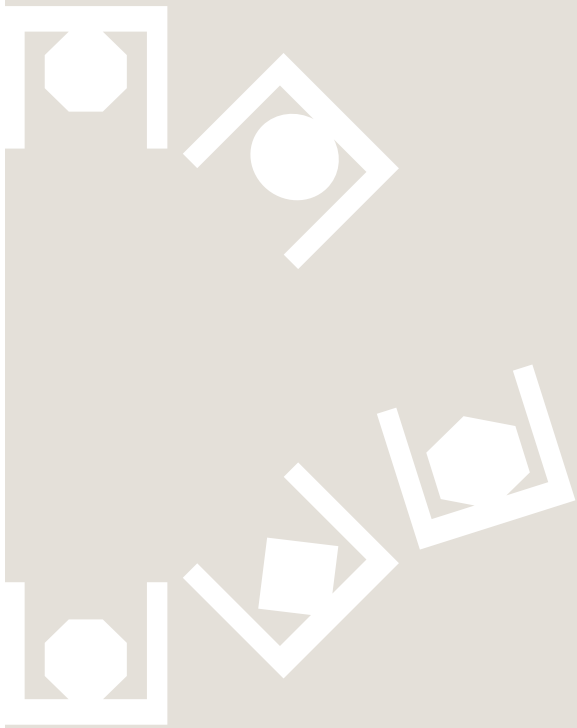
Organizational questions and funding

8. Accommodation in municipalities should be more strongly linked to criteria of capacities (economy / municipal finances, labor market, demographics, housing market), which would lead to the introduction of new state and regionally specific distribution keys. 
9. Especially smaller municipalities and villages should be able to “apply” voluntarily for refugees to thereby stabilize their infrastructure and essential services (daycare center, school, transport connection, shopping facilities, services, culture, societies, etc.). In future, state agreements are conceivable in this respect.
10. Accommodation of refugees is controlled using a competition and incentive-based model: the state’s reimbursement to municipalities for receiving and accommodating asylum seekers should be progressive. The more asylum seekers a municipality receives per 1,000 residents, the higher the reimbursement. 

11. Municipalities with limited housing capacities that invest in housing for low-income groups in a targeted way – not exclusively for refugees – receive an annual payment per new housing unit from the state. 

Other

12. Both prior to and while receiving refugees, municipalities should develop preventive and accompanying information and communication strategies targeting their residents to maintain and increase the willingness to receive refugees.  - 
13. In future, incentives should be developed for the local population to give up apartments that are too large, e.g. by covering moving and renovating costs.
14. In future, information systems should be established to help recognized refugees to select an appropriate location to live in depending on their needs and situation in life (work, school, community, religion, leisure, etc.).



4. Health services and healthcare provision

There is also a need for reform in the field of *healthcare* for refugees and asylum seekers. First of all, the initial reception facilities for asylum seekers should be better equipped for healthcare provision by maintaining medical and psychological personnel and extending mobile healthcare services. In the opinion of the Robert Bosch Expert Commission, emergency and acute care for asylum seekers should be managed uniformly on a national level using a health card system. The vaccine services for refugees and psychological supervision of traumatized persons should be expanded.

Other recommended measures and reform proposals:

S = short term

m = medium term

L = long term

Healthcare provision in initial reception facilities

1. Initial reception facilities should in future have more doctors and extensive nursing personnel to ensure that asylum seekers receive initial examinations in the first three days after arriving. The aim is the comprehensive establishment of medical care centers in the initial reception facilities. To do so, as yet unexploited resources should be used, e.g. retired doctors and nursing personnel or medical students in their practical year. The commission welcomes the opportunity created by the Asylum Procedures Acceleration Act (“Asylverfahrensbeschleunigungsgesetz”) whereby medically trained people among asylum seekers are permitted to join the initial medical care services for asylum seekers. **S**
2. Where possible and necessary, mobile healthcare centers and mobile doctors’ units should be used at external branches of the initial reception facilities. **S**
3. Fast access to emergency care in initial reception centers for asylum seekers should be ensured to allow medically qualified personnel to ascertain the necessity of treatment for patients in need. **m**

Range of offered medical services

4. Access to vaccine services for asylum seekers should be improved, comprehensively provided and made binding for selected diseases. The aim is comprehensive vaccine protection. **S**
5. As is standard practice and for preventive reasons, emergency and acute treatment for asylum seekers should be replaced by a nationally uniform standard healthcare provision to achieve long-term cost-effectiveness. An independent expert commission should formulate the catalogue of services provided by this standard healthcare provision, which excludes certain treatments covered by health insurance (e.g. dentures). The German Social Welfare Law for Asylum Seekers (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz, § 4) should be modified accordingly. **m**
6. Treatment opportunities for traumatized refugees should be improved by increasing funds for social workers and the number of social workers in initial reception centers. Interculturally trained psychologists should treat traumatized refugees both acutely in the initial reception centers and, if required, in the long term. Financial support and personnel for the appropriate treatment centers should be adapted to meet actual requirements. **S**

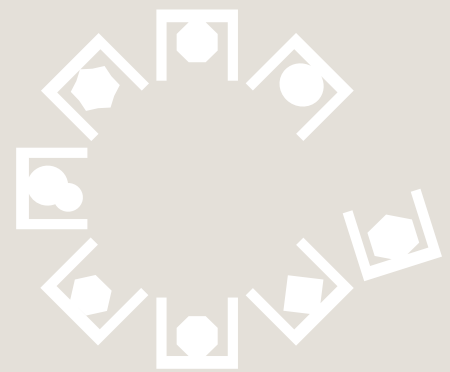
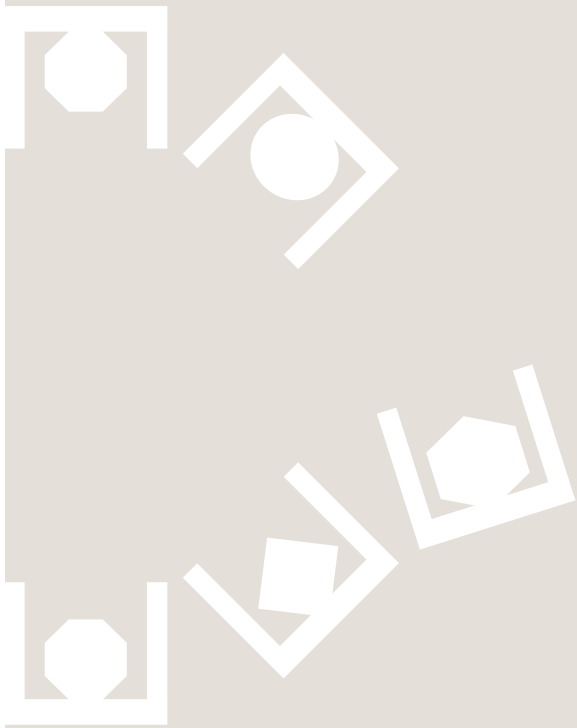
Organizational questions

7. The Asylum Procedures Acceleration Act gives states (“Bundesländer”) the opportunity to introduce a health card for asylum seekers. National standards should apply for this purpose to prevent different systems in different states from causing disincentives. The health card should therefore be introduced as comprehensively as possible to simplify access to healthcare treatment, reduce bureaucracy and thereby lower costs. **S**
8. Traumatized, seriously ill and handicapped refugees should be primarily accommodated in cities rather than in peripheral, rural areas to ensure easier access to doctors, hospitals, therapeutic services and translation services. **S**

Regulations and administration

9. The EU reception directive 2013/33/EU should be endorsed quickly by the German Bundestag to expedite protective duties for asylum seekers and refugees with special protection needs. 

10. A working group consisting of representatives from the German Medical Association, the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, health insurance funds, the Federal Ministry of Health and the state Ministries of Health should cooperate with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees to develop a strategy on overcoming the current and future challenges of providing health-care for asylum seekers and refugees (*capacity building* for times of crisis). The group should also assess the future demand for intercultural qualification, not exclusively but primarily with respect to healthcare for refugees. In this way, concepts could also be developed to include therapeutic work with traumatized refugees in the training and continuing education of specialist personnel. 



5. Language teaching and acquisition

The Robert Bosch Expert Commission is of the opinion that extracurricular *language teaching and acquisition* for refugees requires a number of innovative measures. Access to language and orientation courses for persons with good prospects of remaining in the country should be provided permanently and not merely as a subordinate measure. Refugees' language qualifications should already be ascertained at the initial reception facilities. The range of BAMF integration courses should be considerably expanded. Furthermore, statutory institutions must be better equipped for the language teaching of refugees, including the expansion of courses to learn German as a second language. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission also sees as yet untapped potential in networking statutory offers and initiatives in civil society for language acquisition.







Further recommended measures and reform proposals:








s = short term

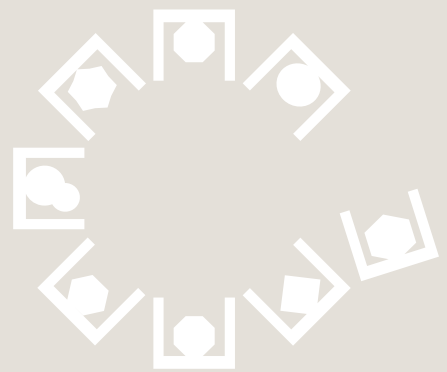
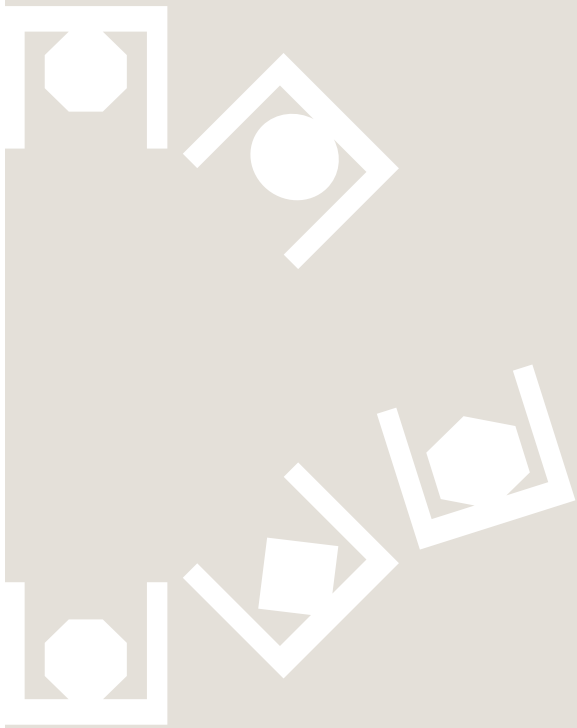
m = medium term

l = long term

1. The language qualifications and educational and professional biographies of asylum seekers should be ascertained at an early stage during the reception and recognition process at the initial reception center (thereby extending the *Early Intervention* program, which is currently only a model project). **s**
2. Access to BAMF integration courses for asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country should be provided on an equal status with recognized asylum seekers. **s**
3. Voluntary language learning offers should be established at initial reception centers, e.g. through voluntary workers, teleteaching and web and smartphone-based access. One starting point could be the program "Lesestart", which was expanded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from March 2016 onwards to include refugees and is now offered at initial reception centers. Suitable web-based offers include the Deutsche Welle language learning service and the app by the *Volkshochschule* ("adult education centre"). Wi-Fi access is useful for all initial reception centers, not only for language learning, since it would allow refugees to use the time there productively. **s**
4. The range of courses offered by the system of fundamental language support (BAMF integration courses) should be expanded and differentiated more strongly. **m**

5. The preparatory courses for vocational language training, which were discontinued in the spring of 2015 on grounds of cost, (hitherto known as “ESF BAMF courses”), should be reintroduced. Vocational language training should also be made available to tolerated persons and asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country. This should be ensured by the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which is empowered in accordance with the Asylum Procedures Acceleration Act (“Asylverfahrensbeschleunigungsgesetz”) to regulate details of vocational German language training, especially with respect to its fundamental structure and target groups by ordinance without requiring the approval of the German Bundesrat, in agreement with the Federal Ministry of the Interior. 
6. The time limit of 2017 for vocational language training co-financed from ESF funds should be lifted and a sufficient long-term financial basis should be established. 
7. A loan system should be established for BAMF integration courses above level B1 to allow funding for higher levels. Loans should be granted on condition of a secured residence status. 
8. At selected German universities, refugees and other persons planning to begin studies should receive preparatory language courses or should have access to existing courses. Alternatively, academic language centers and preparatory colleges should be set up at focal locations in individual states, or the number of places for preparatory colleges be increased to enable preparation to achieve the required language level. 
9. It should be examined whether the BAMF can switch the funding administration for integration courses to a voucher system for course participants. In such a system, course providers and teachers would receive a bonus for successful language course graduates. 
10. BAMF integration courses should regularly receive external monitoring that not only examines organizational questions, but also the aims and successes of the language teaching. Evaluation results would form the basis on which to improve the courses. It should also investigate the question of how the integration courses could be extended to contribute to communicating underlying cultural and fundamental values. 

11. Voluntary language teaching for refugees should be systematically combined with state offers by volunteer coordinators and combined with other integration offers. This task should be handled on a municipal level. 
12. Voluntary German teachers should have access to training and further education in the field of German as a foreign or second language. 
13. In the field of voluntary language teaching (but also in the field of further integration offers), especially with respect to refugees from Syria, community organizations such as cultural societies and appropriate religious institutions should be systematically involved and supported with public funds, which should be provided under the condition of quality assurance. Community engagement could be stimulated with a co-funding model, for instance by providing four Euros from public funds for every donated Euro. 
14. In universities, (further) buddy systems should be established. Students should receive credit points relevant to their studies for their commitment to refugee integration in supporting the implementation of language courses. 
15. The states and municipalities should develop networks of voluntary language and integration facilitators for refugees who can support professional language teaching. 
16. Municipalities should reactivate retired German language teachers and lecturers on a voluntary basis to organize language teaching and offer language courses. 
17. Language teaching to refugee families can be complemented by combined school and adult education courses: parents and children could partially learn together. 



6. Access to educational institutions

In the field of *educational institutions*, the Robert Bosch Expert Commission recommends improving access to early childhood education for refugee families in order to commence assertive integration policy as early as possible. One of the most important short-term aims for school attendance of refugee children is above all the continuous expansion of offers provided by comprehensive preparatory classes. Another challenge lies in vocational schools, for which the Robert Bosch Expert Commission recommends that they should be opened to young people who are no longer obliged to attend school, to facilitate integration using the dual system. Current processes for teacher training and further education should be continuously expanded, especially with respect to intercultural skills needed to handle linguistic and cultural heterogeneity, but also in training for German as a second language.

Weitere Handlungsempfehlungen und Reformvorschläge:

s = short term

m = medium term







l = long term

Early childhood education







1. The language level of all four-year-olds should be assessed systematically in all federal states as part of the assessment of school readiness. The federal states should mutually agree on standards for this purpose. **m**
2. Refugee parents should already be systematically informed about access to early childhood education when staying at the initial reception center. **s**

School attendance and organization


3. Compulsory school attendance for refugee children, not only the right to school attendance, should be legally anchored in all federal states. This change affects the federal states of Saxony and Saxony Anhalt. **s**
4. In all federal states, in accordance with the EU reception directive 2013/33, compulsory school attendance for refugee children should begin no later than three months after making an asylum application. **s**

5. In all federal states and all affected schools and school types, refugee children of a school age should receive preparatory classes to learn the German language, if necessary in cooperation with school clusters. Preparatory classes should act as bridges. It should be the explicit aim in all federal states for pupils to be integrated into normal classes as soon as possible. 
6. Preparatory classes for pupils of non-German-speaking origin and additional language courses should also be offered during school holidays when required. Refugee children should also be integrated systematically into other holiday care facilities to encourage their social integration and language skills. 
7. At the initial reception centers, if necessary in cooperation with schools, language training courses for children to cope with everyday life should be offered from the first day onwards, as well as supplementary preparatory language courses for parents of refugee children to enable networked learning as a family where possible. 
8. Schools that establish preparatory classes for refugee children should involve the parents with respect to visiting, accompanying parental work. School parent representatives should involve two advisory parent representatives respectively from refugee families in their meetings. Alternatively, the school administrations of affected schools could set up refugee parents' committees that can provide advice to the school administrations and teachers. Targeted refugee integration should be included in the school development programs. 
9. Clear curricular requirements and competence targets should be developed. Especially in territorial states, the Schleswig-Holstein model can serve as an example. 
10. Vocational schools should generally accept young people no longer legally required to attend school (but under the age of 21, or 25 in exceptional cases), in order to integrate them into the dual system (analogous to the Bavarian system). Privately operated vocational schools should be free of charge for all. 


Teacher training and further education


11. Managing linguistic and cultural heterogeneity should be integrated as a cross-sectional task in teacher training. This requires not only appropriate materials and handouts, but also continuously taking this theme into account during teacher training and further education. 
12. In future, simultaneous German language teaching in the dominant family language and in German should become the rule for refugee children learning the German language. For this purpose, increased employment of teachers with competences in the refugees' languages of origin is required, as well as the development of language-contrasting teaching material. 
13. Teachers for preparatory classes should receive (supplementary) further education on the themes of trauma and psychological needs of refugee children. Appropriate further education possibilities should also be provided for school psychologists and school social workers. 
14. Training for German as a second language should be legally anchored in teacher training. 
15. The federal states' further education facilities for teachers should increase their offer in the field of German as a second language. 
16. A national database should provide all teachers with materials for preparatory groups. That also includes curricular material and suggestions for second alphabet teaching in the Latin alphabet and supporting family language competences. 


Access to universities


17. Universities and federal states should use the existing legal scope to allow asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country and tolerated persons to study and should provide the means to learn the required German skills quickly in advance. A residence permit must be ensured for the entire period of studies. Tolerated people should have access to BAföG⁴ student loans immediately after their tolerated status is determined, not only after 15 months (current status). It should also be examined how to facilitate access to BAföG student loans for asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country, without creating disincentives. On a national level, the falling numbers of places in preparatory colleges for one-year preparation to study at a university should be reversed and increased again significantly. 

Education administration

18. The Conference of Ministers of Education (Kultusministerkonferenz) should establish a taskforce on the theme of school teaching for refugee children, which if required, synchronizes the individual federal states, coordinates the required division of tasks between the states, reaches agreements with the states' Ministries of Education and the Arts on the (temporary) employment of language teachers, and collects, documents and makes available best practice examples. 

19. The recommendations of the Conference of Ministers of Education on “Intercultural education and upbringing in schools” presented in 2013 should be extended to include appropriate passages on the theme of receiving and integrating refugees, as well as language support and German as a second language for refugees. 

20. The program “Bildung und Teilhabe” (“Education and inclusion”), which is part of basic provision from the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS), should be examined with respect to its effectiveness for immigrants and made less bureaucratic. 

21. Professional extra tuition materials should be made available to all free of charge on the Internet. 

4 Federal Training Assistance Act for students at secondary schools and universities in Germany.

7. Training and access to employment

Refugee access to *training opportunities and employment* is one of the most important political and social medium to long-term tasks. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission believes they must be tackled at an early date to quickly learn details on the school and professional qualifications of refugees. The recommendations of the Robert Bosch Expert Commission are aimed at the systematic scientific assessment and analysis of information, but also on the effective exchange of data between participating authorities. The aim is to further facilitate the ability for refugees with good prospects of remaining in the country to be employed. One element of the aim is modifying the existing so-called “priority review” (“Vorrangprüfung”), as well as opening opportunities for temporary work for all asylum seekers and tolerated persons who are entitled to work, regardless of their qualifications. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission sees reform potential in the field of employment administration, e.g. through improved interface management between the employment agencies and Job Centers. Existing labor market policy support instruments should also be used to the full for refugees with good prospects of remaining in the country. The Robert Bosch Expert Commission sees untapped potential in support for business start-ups.

Further recommended measures and reform proposals:

s = short term

m = medium term

l = long term

Gathering and providing information

1. The basis of information on the education and professional qualifications of refugees should be improved to gather comprehensive information on the qualifications, skills and abilities of refugees. This competence assessment and determining process should be carried out in a system with several stages and recorded in a central database. The following concrete steps should be taken: Firstly: As early as possible, a brief assessment of refugee qualifications should be made by the Federal Employment Agency according to the criteria a) work in the country of origin, b) professional qualification/ no professional qualification, c) academic or non-academic qualification, d) language skills (native speaker and foreign languages). Secondly: The Federal Employment Agency produces professional profiles of refugees during the classification process at BAMF integration courses and, in cooperation with the Employment Agency or Job Center, agrees on advice meetings. Thirdly: Skills and abilities can be ascertained in an internship at an appropriate facility or business. **s**



2. The Institute for Labor Market Research and the Federal Employment Agency are currently gathering representative, scientific data on the professional situation (qualification and inclusion) of refugees. In cooperation with the Socio-Economic Panel of the *Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung* (DIW), a separate sample of refugees is being gathered and analyzed. These measures should be continuous and established as long-term studies. **m**
3. The Federal Employment Agency should set up a central call center for refugees, providing mother-tongue information on all aspects of training, further education and employment. A further hotline for businesses wishing to employ refugees should be established. **s**
4. The exchange of data between the participating authorities for receiving and integrating refugees (federal police force, BAMF, immigration offices, local police, Federal Foreign Office) should be achieved. Data processing systems and programs should be standardized. In the field of services, an electronic file should be introduced, which moves with the beneficiary from the asylum seekers' service facility to the basic income office. **s**

Access to training and employment




5. If necessary, the professional qualifications of refugees should be improved and accelerated. The information portal of the federal government entitled "Anerkennung in Deutschland" ("Recognition in Germany") should be revised and updated, and the multilingual offers should be expanded to include the main countries of origin. In professional advice meetings at Job Centers for refugees, the portal should be actively advertised, highlighting advice from the national "IQ Network: Integration through qualification". **m**
6. The abstract priority review ("Vorrangprüfung") should be transformed into a concrete priority review. Refugees including asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country should have access to employment if a preferential candidate cannot be found within a period of e.g. two weeks. **s**
7. Access to the labor market should be ensured to refugees with good prospects of remaining in the country after a period of three months. The legal regulations should be amended accordingly. **s**
8. Temporary work should be permitted to all asylum seekers and tolerated persons with work permits, regardless of their qualifications. **s**

9. A considerably improved interface management between employment agencies (self-administrated, subsidized unemployment insurance) and Job Centers (tax-funded, subordinate state authorities of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs) is required, together with the targeted task or target-group-oriented removal of the double structure, e.g. for employment advice and training mediation for young adults.
10. The possibility of employing refugees according to professional activity, employer, region and location, and the distribution of working periods by the Federal Employment Agency (§ 34 German Employment Regulations, “Beschäftigungsverordnung”) should be dropped without replacement. **S**
11. The maximum age for issuing a resident’s permit for training purposes should be removed. **S**
12. Tolerated persons with work permits and asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country should be provided access to all relevant support during professional training (training grants, assisted training and preparatory vocational training measures) as soon as a training contract has been signed, in order to support the completion of professional training in a targeted way. **S**
13. For the period of training, tolerated persons should receive a resident’s permit instead of the current toleration. In any case, training-friendly handling of the residency regulations (§18a German Residence Act, “Aufenthaltsgesetz”) should be ensured by the respective local immigration authorities. Successful completion of training should lead to the immediate provision of a resident’s permit and free access to the labor market. **S**
14. Charges for the recognition process of professional qualifications in accordance with recognition regulations, in the case of a negative reply while applicants are employed should be carried by the federal government or federal states, while in the case of unemployed refugees, the agency or Job Center should generally pay. The rejection statement should present as clearly as possible what is lacking for recognition, to allow possible additional training to build on existing qualifications. **S**

Institutional reforms

15. A process to validate non-certified and informally acquired competences should be introduced, thereby supporting refugees' integration into the labor market and individual additional qualification processes. 
16. With respect to the question of the minimum wage, refugees should be regarded in the same way as long-term unemployed people. The minimum wage only applies from the seventh month of employment onwards. 

Support measures and networks

17. Refugees with good prospects of remaining in the country should be provided full access to employment policy support instruments. 
18. Business start-up support for refugees should be enhanced to support their independence or enable the continuation of self-employment. The *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (KfW), in cooperation with the *Rationalisierungs- und Innovationszentrum der Deutschen Wirtschaft e. V.*, corporate associations, chambers, the Federal Employment Agency, and Job Centers should develop a concept to support start-ups and establish an advice and support program. 
19. Existing job search portals for the mediation of refugees (worker.de etc.) should be expanded, professionalized and systematically advertised, possibly in cooperation with the major private job search portals (e.g. monster.de, jobboerse.de). 
20. The networks of the ESF federal program “Integration of asylum seekers and refugees” should be involved as experts in all strategies for the labor market integration of refugees.

8. Return, repatriation, deportation

Even with respect to the *return and deportation* of non-recognized asylum seekers, the Robert Bosch Expert Commission sees room for reform. The incentives for a voluntary return should be expanded using improved, systematic counseling. Repatriation management must begin at an early date and if necessary operate more strongly with incentives. In the long term, better interconnection between refugee and repatriation policy with development aid policy in the regions of origin would be expedient.

Further recommended measures and reform proposals:

s = short term

m = medium term

l = long term

Legal regulations

1. It should be ensured that asylum seekers receive counseling on voluntary return and support possibilities at an early stage by independent bodies, enabling individual return and repatriation management. **s**

Organization and administration of returns and expulsion

2. The implementation of a deportation process should be centralized in the federal states (e.g. on a middle-tier administration level) to ensure its professionalization. **s**

Incentives and measures for effecting returns

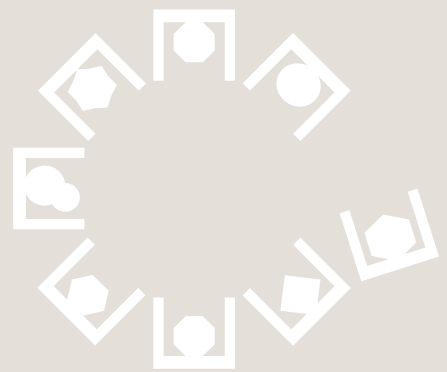
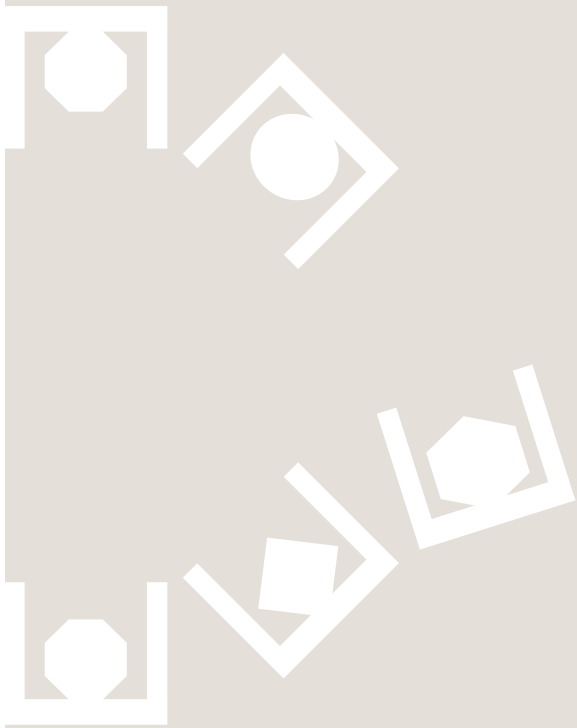
3. Policy should support the opportunity for (rejected) asylum seekers to return voluntarily. Voluntary where possible, compulsory where necessary. **s**
4. In the case of voluntary returns, a one-off, degressive return premium should be paid in future. Those leaving sooner receive a higher premium. **s**

Alternative strategies to support returns

5. Approaches should be established and existing approaches expanded to connect in a targeted way the policy of returns and repatriation with development aid projects, whereby those returning are integrated into the appropriate concrete projects. This requires an expansion of international agreements with the countries of origin. **l**
6. The return of qualified former refugees, equipped with their own capital and skills, should be accompanied by structural support and development aid to generate stabilizing impulses in the countries of origin. **l**

The fields of operation with respect to refugee policy are diverse. To ensure success in this policy, it is therefore necessary to act simultaneously on different levels. It is necessary to interconnect and interweave refugee policy fields to achieve leverage effects. That for instance applies to networking language measures, educational policy approaches and access to the labor market.

As important as every individual measure may be in itself - it can only become a success if structures are created on a political and administrative level and processes are set in motion that fundamentally understand refugee policy as a policy of integration and participation. This is an enormous challenge. Overcoming it is impossible without spending. But it should be regarded as necessary investment with the future in mind.



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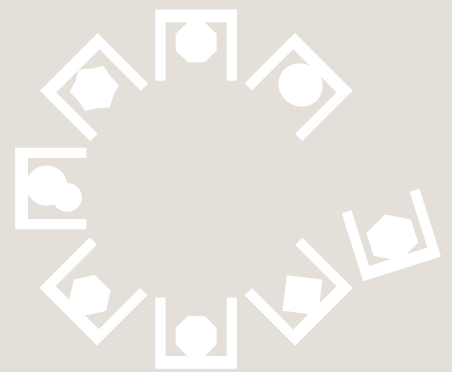
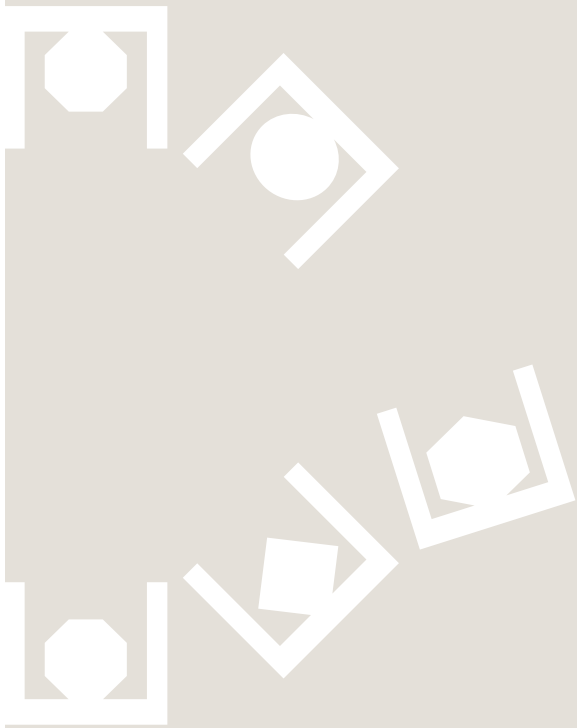
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