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# Welcome Work Starter Kit



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Welcome Work. Inclusion in Construction

[www.welcomeworkproject.eu](http://www.welcomeworkproject.eu)

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# Imprint Page

This document was developed by the Welcome Work Partners





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# HOW TO USE THIS INTERACTIVE STARTER KIT

Navigate effortlessly through the toolkit with our interactive table of contents, designed for fast and intuitive access. Simply click on the chapter or section that interests you most and dive straight into the information you need.

The Welcome Work Starter Kit is a comprehensive and interactive online resource hub. It offers an in-depth, self-paced learning experience, meticulously crafted to support the seamless integration of refugees into the European construction sector. Packed with actionable insights, best practices, and tailored tools, this toolkit equips individuals and organisations with the knowledge and strategies to foster inclusion and success in this vital industry.



# Background and aim of the Starter Kit

Amidst rising forced displacement, marked by an increasingly unstable international landscape, the erosion of multilateral cooperation, and the rise of autocratic regimes, the integration of refugees presents a valuable opportunity to address the chronic labour shortage in construction.

## Who is the Toolkit for?

This Toolkit is designed with a primary focus on VET directors, trainers, educators, and support staff within the European Union, ensuring they have the tools and knowledge needed to make a meaningful impact.

In addition, it serves as a valuable guide for companies in the construction sector, as well as other stakeholders involved in recruitment and human resources processes, including those responsible for accounting. Refugees themselves can also benefit directly from the guidance and resources provided.

Targeting a broad and diverse audience, the Toolkit places particular emphasis on equipping VET educators with the expertise and practical skills required to successfully guide refugees into meaningful and fulfilling employment opportunities within the construction sector. By doing so, it aims to enhance the quality of information available and improve guidance practices in VET centres, ultimately fostering more inclusive and supportive pathways to integration and employment.

## Inside the Starter Kit

The Starter Kit is composed of three chapters.

- **Chapter one** presents an overview of the situation of refugees in the construction sector and the opportunities of the sector, including profiles of roles from general labourers, skilled workers supervisors, project managers, engineers etc. and traditional qualifications and routes to entry. It also showcases the main challenges, pros and cons of the sector for refugees.
- **Chapter two** showcases alternative entry routes equipping educators with information on how to recognize refugees skills and qualification from their home countries and “fast track” refugees to chosen professions.
- **Chapter three** shows how can VET centers provide refugees with a holistic support, including testimonies and case studies that raise their empathy and awareness of how to improve guidance and teaching for students from diverse background overcoming adverse circumstances.

All audio visual and interactive material is included in the [Welcome Work website](#), providing an accessible way to access all the material.



# Objectives

The toolkit aims to provide VET directors, trainers, educators and support staff with the knowledge and skills they need to guide refugees into rewarding work in the construction sector. In doing so, VET staff will learn:

1. Understand the range of professions in the construction ecosystem, corresponding qualifications and skills profiles.

2. Better evaluate existing skills and promote personalised nontraditional paths to further learning and/or employment.

3. Recognise the specific barriers of entry and advancement for non-native workers in the construction industry and how a more holistic approach to education can help refugees overcome them.

01

## Key Opportunities in the Construction Sector: Refugee Integration



# 1.1 Refugees and the construction sector

There are more than **7 million refugees in the EU** (1,6% of the EU population). With more than 4.3 million registrations for temporary protection in the EU, **Ukrainians** fleeing Russia's military invasion conform the **largest group of refugees**.

Refugees in the construction sector come from **diverse countries of origin and many times do not speak the local language**. They are employed in a **diverse range of managerial, qualified and elementary occupations**. In some technical occupations, it is more likely to find migrants from specific nationalities are sometimes associated to countries of origin. As with the sector in general, **female refugee participation** in the sector is minimal. The present section portrays the situation of refugees working in construction in the five participating countries of partnering countries by making use of interviews conducted with construction businesses, VET Centres, NGOs and refugees themselves.

European Commission. (2024). *Migration management: Welcoming refugees from Ukraine*. [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/migration-management-welcoming-refugees-ukraine\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/migration-management-welcoming-refugees-ukraine_en)



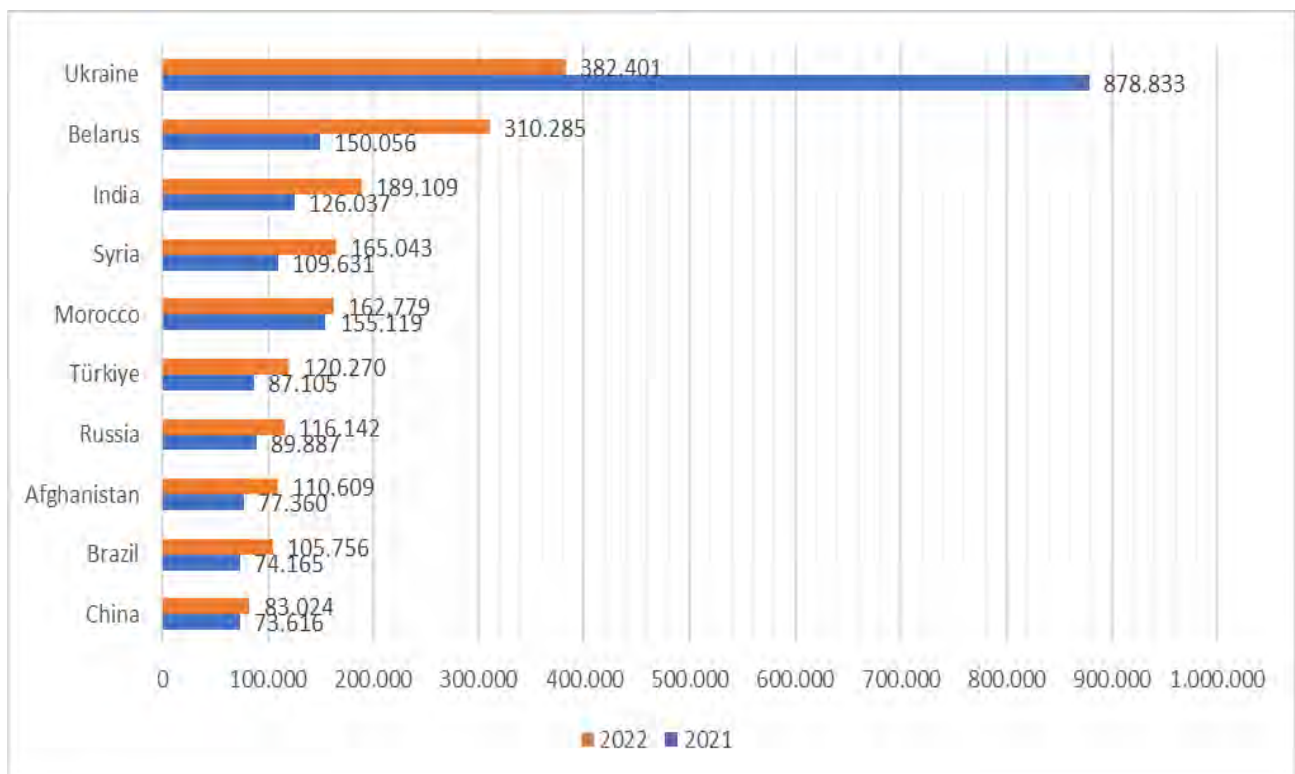
# Overview of Asylum Applications and Residence Permits in the EU



Number of first time asylum applicants by country (total, % of total)

European Union		
-(27)	1.049.950	100
Denmark	2.380	0,2
Ireland	13.220	1,3
Spain	160.470	15,3
France	145.210	13,8
Poland	7.720	0,7

Top 10 nationalities of first residence permits issued in EU Member States in 2022



# The work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the UN agency responsible for protecting and supporting refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless people worldwide. Created in 1950, it operates in more than 130 countries to provide emergency aid, defend fundamental rights and help people find long-term solutions such as voluntary return, integration or resettlement. The UNHCR Help Centre and the Refugee Data Finder are two key resources of interest.

The **UNHCR Help Centre** provides practical information for refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons on how to access protection and assistance in different countries. It offers guidance on asylum procedures, rights and obligations, resettlement, family reunification, and local services such as healthcare and education. The Help Centre is available online at [help.unhcr.org](https://help.unhcr.org), where users can select their country to find relevant information in multiple languages. This platform aims to ensure that people forced to flee have direct access to reliable and up-to-date information to support their protection and integration.

The **Refugee Data Finder** gives a detailed picture of the number of forcibly displaced people across the world, covering refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless individuals. It reports on “persons of concern”, a broad category that encompasses everyone under its protection mandate. The “refugee” category specifically includes people who have crossed international borders and been formally recognised under the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol or regional instruments granting similar protection. Asylum applications, by contrast, refer to those seeking international protection whose claims are still under review. The Data Finder records first-time applications and decisions, allowing the monitoring of flows and trends in protection requests over time. It distinguishes between applicants, recognised refugees, and others granted complementary forms of protection. Overall, the dataset offers a reliable basis to understand the scale and dynamics of forced displacement worldwide and to support evidence-based policymaking. The Refugee Data Finder is available online at [unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/data-summaries](https://unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/data-summaries)

# Refugees in Denmark



Refugees in Denmark face significant challenges when integrating into the labour market, particularly in the construction sector. The industry is an essential area for refugee employment, offering relatively accessible job opportunities even for those with limited formal qualifications. Many refugees in Denmark are employed in lower-skilled or manual roles, often working as unskilled labourers in physically demanding and hazardous sub-industries within construction. While the sector provides employment, refugees' work tends to be low-wage, precarious, and characterised by significant risks, including accidents and safety concerns ([BAT Kartellet](#)).

Language barriers are a key obstacle that prevents many refugees from advancing within the sector. Refugees often lack proficiency in Danish, making it difficult to access higher-skilled positions or training opportunities. This language gap also affects their understanding of health and safety regulations, which can result in higher incidences of accidents. Workplace accidents are underreported among migrant workers, including refugees, due to fears of losing their jobs and insufficient knowledge of their rights. Discrimination and unequal treatment are prevalent, with refugees reporting that they are often treated as disposable labour, expected to work longer hours in more dangerous conditions compared to Danish nationals ([BAT Kartellet](#)) ([BAT Kartellet](#)).

Employment rates for refugees tend to improve over time, but the gap between native Danish workers and refugees remains significant. Data shows that even after 30 years of residency, refugees' employment rates remain about 25% lower

than those of native Danes. This disparity is influenced by various factors, including limited access to skill development programmes, language training, and the nature of dispersal policies that place refugees in areas with fewer economic opportunities ([Joint Data Center](#)).

Several policies aim to improve refugee integration into the labour market, such as subsidised employment schemes and job training programmes. However, these initiatives are not always sufficient. Early job training sometimes comes at the expense of language learning, which can harm long-term employability. There is also evidence that welfare cuts aimed at encouraging refugees to join the workforce have only short-term effects and can lead to negative consequences, such as increased criminal activity due to reduced income ([Joint Data Center](#)).

# Refugees in France



In 2023, France received 142,649 asylum applications, with the majority being men (61.5%) and an average age of 33. Most applicants came from Afghanistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Congo, and Guinea. The Ile-de-France region received the largest share (27.6%), creating housing challenges for applicants. Around 20,000 individuals were granted refugee status, and France hosted 150,000 to 160,000 refugees by the end of 2023. Refugees must sign a Republican Integration Contract (CIR), which includes civic training and up to 600 hours of free French language courses. Only 15-20% of refugees are active in the labor market, with many struggling due to language barriers.

## Opportunities in France's construction sector

With 1.40 million jobs as of 2022, the building and civil engineering sector is one of France's largest employers. While there are no precise figures for refugee employment in the sector, it is reasonable to assume that it is a significant source of jobs for refugees. Refugees often work in roles such as manual labour, unskilled positions, skilled trades (e.g. masonry, plumbing, or electrical work, particularly if they have prior experience), and logistics and support on construction sites.

France offers various programmes to support refugee integration into the labour market, including in the construction industry. For example, the "Passerelle" programme helps refugees acquire skills relevant to the French job market and connects them with potential employers.

Despite government efforts to regulate the sector, many asylum seekers work illegally

in construction. Estimates suggest that between 20% and 30% of workers in the industry may be undocumented, though this figure varies by region and sub-sector.

Since 2015, French law requires employees working on construction sites to hold a professional card. This professional identity card is intended to combat illegal labour and unfair competition. However, not all work supervisors rigorously check these cards on construction sites. Additionally, many migrant workers are employed by foreign subcontracting companies as posted workers, residing and working in France for up to nine months a year, particularly those from Eastern Europe.



Figure 1 - Top 5 countries of origin of asylum seekers in France in 2023 (Source OFPRA)

# Refugees in Ireland



Ireland averaged 360 applications per month between 2008 and 2024, with a notable increase in 2024. Although these numbers are smaller than in larger EU nations, they still present challenges for integration and support, particularly in housing and social services.

Unemployment rates for non-Irish citizens, especially refugees, remain higher than those for Irish citizens. In 2022, non-Irish unemployment stood at 9%, compared to 8% for Irish nationals. Ukrainian refugees, who arrived after the Russian invasion, faced a 36% unemployment rate, while citizens from African countries experienced a 15% rate.

Refugees in Ireland often enter the construction sector through lower-skilled roles, such as carpentry and manual labour, due to challenges in recognizing their foreign qualifications. Certifications in fields like machine operation, plumbing, or electrical work often require re-certification in Ireland, which can be slow and bureaucratic. Organizations like NARIC and QQI assist with this process, but many refugees struggle to secure jobs that match their skills.

## Opportunities in Ireland's Construction Sector

The construction industry in Ireland presents significant employment opportunities for refugees, particularly carpentry, masonry, labouring and semi-skilled positions. Refugees often enter these lower-skilled jobs due to the non-recognition of foreign qualifications, despite having technical experience or credentials in their home countries. Ireland has also introduced programs to support

refugee integration into the labour market, such as Intreo Public Employment Services, which helps match refugees with employers. By June 2024, over 44,000 individuals had attended Intreo employment events, though 58% cited English language barriers as a major obstacle to securing work.

Before entering the construction industry, refugees must complete mandatory training, such as the "Safe Pass" and manual handling certifications, to ensure workplace safety. Once employed, refugees are generally paid the same as local workers, especially under unionised rates, but wage equality depends on the trade and skill level involved. Job stability is relatively secure once refugees obtain certifications, but language limitations often hinder career advancement.

Despite efforts to integrate refugees, language barriers remain a key challenge, impacting safety, communication, and access to more specialized roles. Technical training and certification, particularly in areas such as machine operation, plumbing, and electrical work, are also critical for helping refugees move beyond lower-skilled jobs. Refugees may have the skills for higher-level positions, but they are often stuck in low-paying jobs due to certification and language barriers. Financial pressures also push refugees into immediate, lower-paying work, delaying their ability to achieve employment matching their qualifications.

# Refugees in Poland



The workforce of foreign nationals in 2023 represented individuals originating from over 150 countries. Ukrainian citizens accounted for a significant majority within this group, comprising approximately 69% of the total number of foreigners employed each month throughout the year. (Source of data: Statistics Poland). The largest number of Ukrainians work in Mazovia, Wielkopolska and Lower Silesia - according to data from the Social Insurance Institution. The largest number of people with Ukrainian passports took up employment when they were aged 30-39. They most often choose work in the area of administrative services and support activities, as well as in industrial processing, construction and transport. [Ukraińcy na rynku pracy. Zasilają głównie przemysł, budownictwo i transport - Gospodarka - PR24.PL](#).

## Opportunities in Poland's construction sector

The construction sector in Poland, much like in other European nations, provides opportunities for refugee employment, particularly in manual labour and trades such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, painting, and electrical work. However, refugees often encounter obstacles such as language barriers and non-recognition of their foreign qualifications, which forces many into lower-skilled positions. Despite having prior technical experience, many refugees are employed in simple tasks, such as renovation, finishing work, and demolition. Nevertheless, there is a growing trend of refugees seeking qualifications for roles in high-demand areas like electrical work and heavy machinery operation.

Employment in Poland's construction sector tends to be stable once refugees secure the required certifications. Moreover, proficiency in the Polish language is essential for safety, communication, and accessing better roles within the sector. The employment rate for refugees who speak Polish stands at 82%, significantly higher than the 50% for those without language skills, highlighting the critical role language plays in their job mobility and

progression. [65 % Ukrainian refugees work, but face many challenges in the Polish labour market – Polish Economic Institute](#)

Despite a strong refugee employment rate in Poland the construction sector itself faces uncertainty. Wages have stagnated, and fewer opportunities are emerging as the industry starts to shrink. While this limits advancement for many refugees into more skilled positions, there is still growing demand in specialised trades like electrical work and machine operation, offering some prospects for those seeking to upskill.

Addressing language barriers, ensuring fair treatment during recruitment, and recognising foreign qualifications are vital to enhancing refugees' participation in the sector. With the right support and training, refugees have the potential to make a significant contribution to addressing the labour shortages in Poland's construction industry, particularly in areas where skilled trades are in demand.

# Refugees in Spain



In 2024, Spain saw its highest-ever number of asylum applications, with 167,342 submissions—a 2.54% increase from 2023. This growth continues a trend from 2012, briefly interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, despite persistent access barriers. Additionally, 51,375 new positive decisions referring to recognitions and complementary protections were issued. As of 2024, Spain hosted an estimated 423,004 people under international protection, mainly from Ukraine, Venezuela, Syria, Mali, and Afghanistan. This figure includes individuals granted refugee status (Estatuto de refugiado), subsidiary protection (Estatuto de protección Subsidiaria), temporary protection (Protección Temporal, mostly Ukrainians), and for humanitarian reasons (mainly Venezuelans).

## Opportunities in Spain's construction sector

In the construction sector, Spain presents numerous employment opportunities for refugees. As one of the country's largest industries, construction plays a vital role in the economy, both in building construction, renovation and maintenance, as well as infrastructure projects. Refugees often find work in various roles, including manual labour, plumbing, electrical work, and general construction occupations. However, many face language barriers and recognition of qualifications, which can hinder their ability to secure better positions and integrate fully into the workforce.

The Spanish government supports refugee inclusion in the labour market in the framework of the National Reception System for International Protection (Sistema de Acogida de Protección

Internacional - SAPI). The SAPI provides initial support for refugees and asylum applicants for a maximum of 24 months. The services provided include language and literacy support, basic skills development, job placement assistance and vocational training that can be tailored to the needs of the construction sector. The SAPI is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations and it is run through a [nation-wide network of NGOs as direct service providers](#). Additionally, local governments and NGOs often offer additional language courses and skills training, focusing on essential competencies required for various construction trades. However, the effectiveness of these programmes can vary across regions, and more comprehensive support is needed to address the unique challenges faced by refugees.

Despite the efforts to integrate refugees into the construction sector, many still find themselves in precarious working conditions. Reports indicate that refugees often accept low-wage jobs, primarily due to limited language skills, lack of knowledge of the working culture and the employment legal framework, types of contracts, minimum salary, as well as rights and obligations of the worker. Moreover, there are concerns about unequal treatment and discrimination in the labour market, particularly for female refugees and those from specific national backgrounds. To combat these issues, it is crucial for the Spanish government to implement policies that promote fair wages and equal opportunities for all workers, regardless of their nationality or background.

## 1.2 Construction sector in the EU

The construction sector is fundamental to the lives of Europeans, providing with quality housing and infrastructure key to the operations of all other sectors. The sector represents 5,8% of the Gross Value Added in the entire economy and one in every fifteen workers in the EU works in the construction sector. There are **3,8 million construction companies** in Europe employing **13,6 million workers** and at least 27 million additional jobs depend on the sector's performance. Nonetheless, the future of the industry is jeopardized by a **chronic labour shortage**, with 33,8% of workers in the sector being older than 50 years old. The chronic labour shortage contrasts starkly with the **ambitious decarbonisation targets** set in EU policies. For instance, 35 million energy efficient renovations are aimed by 2030 according to the Renovation Wave.

Non-EU nationals make 9,1% of the construction industry's workforce in Europe, making it one of the sectors with the **highest migrant presence in Europe**.<sup>1</sup> Refugees represent only a fraction of the workforce, leaving a huge talent pool untapped. Consequently, the EU construction sector needs to train and integrate refugees if it is to have a sustainable future.

	EU(27)	Spain	Poland	France	Ireland	Denmark
Employment in construction (thousands) Source: Eurostat, 2023	13 633,4	1 387,6	1 285,0	1 791,0	160,3	186,2
% construction in total employment Source: Eurostat, 2023	6,8%	6,7%	7,6%	6,4%	6,2%	6,5%
% female participation in construction Source: Eurostat, 2023	10,5%	8,7%	8,1%	13,1%	8,0%	11,0%
# construction enterprises (thousands) Source: Eurostat, 2022	3 841,9	400,0	413,9	563,1	70,5	36,8
Investments Source: FIEC, 2023	€1,683 billion	€153 billion	N.A	€359 billion	€32 billion	€21 billion
Construction Gross Value Added of % of Total Economy Source: FIEC, 2023	5,8%	5,5%)	NA	5,5%	2,4%	5,5%

*Table 1. Overview of the construction sector across Welcome Work partner countries*

1. European Commission. (n.d.). *Statistics on migration to Europe*. [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en)

## 1.3 Recent developments and future trends

The construction sector has been influenced by the seismic global event the war in Ukraine represents and, the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The EU construction sector is set to experience a 1.5% decline in 2024, driven by revised data and ongoing economic challenges.<sup>1</sup> However, growth is expected to return in 2025, supported by increased building permits and a recovering housing market. Infrastructure investments, particularly in digital and energy transitions, will continue to grow. House prices are also rising again in many EU countries, boosting new residential projects. The sector will see varied regional performances, with Poland and Spain showing strong potential for future growth.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 2. EU construction sector volume (Index January 2020=100, SA, latest data point June 2024)

In recent years, the sector has seen a growing interest in simple, functional, and eco-friendly construction. The most important trends shaping the sector in the coming years are:

Energy-efficient,  
Passive, and Smart  
Buildings

Industrialised  
construction systems

Circular Construction  
and Eco-friendly  
Building Materials

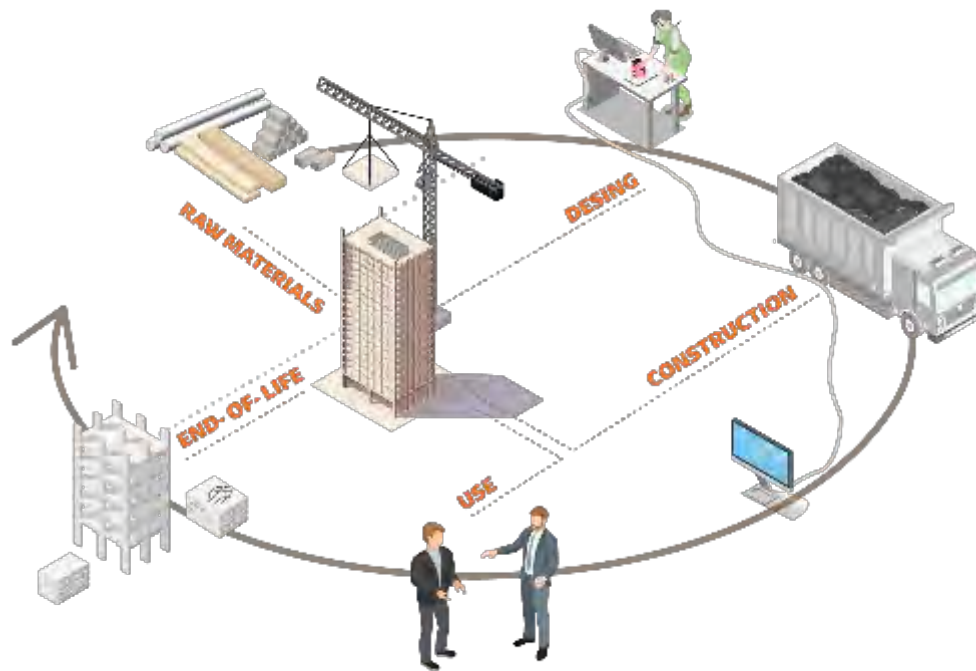
Renewable Energy

Automation and  
Robotisation

Advanced  
Construction  
Technologies

1. ING. (2024). "EU construction outlook: Strong decline this year, but signs of recovery for 2025". ING Think. <https://think.ing.com/articles/eu-construction-outlook-strong-decline-this-year-but-signs-of-recovery-for-2025/>. 2 September 2024.  
2. FIEC (2024). FIEC Statistical Report 2024. 67th Edition.

## 1.4 A Building Lifecycle



*Figure 3. Diagram of a building lifecycle. Source: Green Growth project.*

Figure 3 provides an overview of the building lifecycle, outlining the key stages involved from material sourcing to the end-of-life phase. Each stage is critical to ensuring a sustainable and efficient construction process.

By following these lifecycle stages, stakeholders can contribute to a more efficient, sustainable, and responsible approach to building design, construction, and management.

From a productive and business point of view, the construction sector is made up of four subsectors:

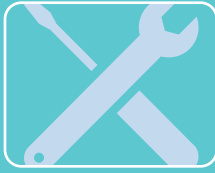
Residential construction, or housing construction

Non-residential construction, construction of commercial, educational, cultural hospital buildings, etc.

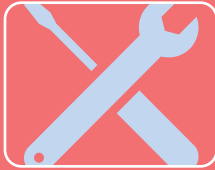
Building rehabilitation and maintenance

Civil works, which include both the construction and maintenance of infrastructures, among which are: roads, railways, dams, canals, airports, ports, etc.

## 1.5 Construction Sector Insights



**Welcoming sector – Opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds, including refugees**



**Strategic sector – Driving growth and innovation infrastructure development**



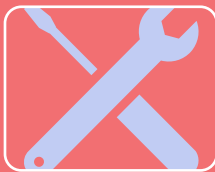
**Prioritising Health and Safety – Ensuring worker protection and well-being**



**Accessible and inclusive – Providing equal opportunities for all**



**Offering equal pay for equal work**



**Technical and innovative – Embracing cutting-edge practices**



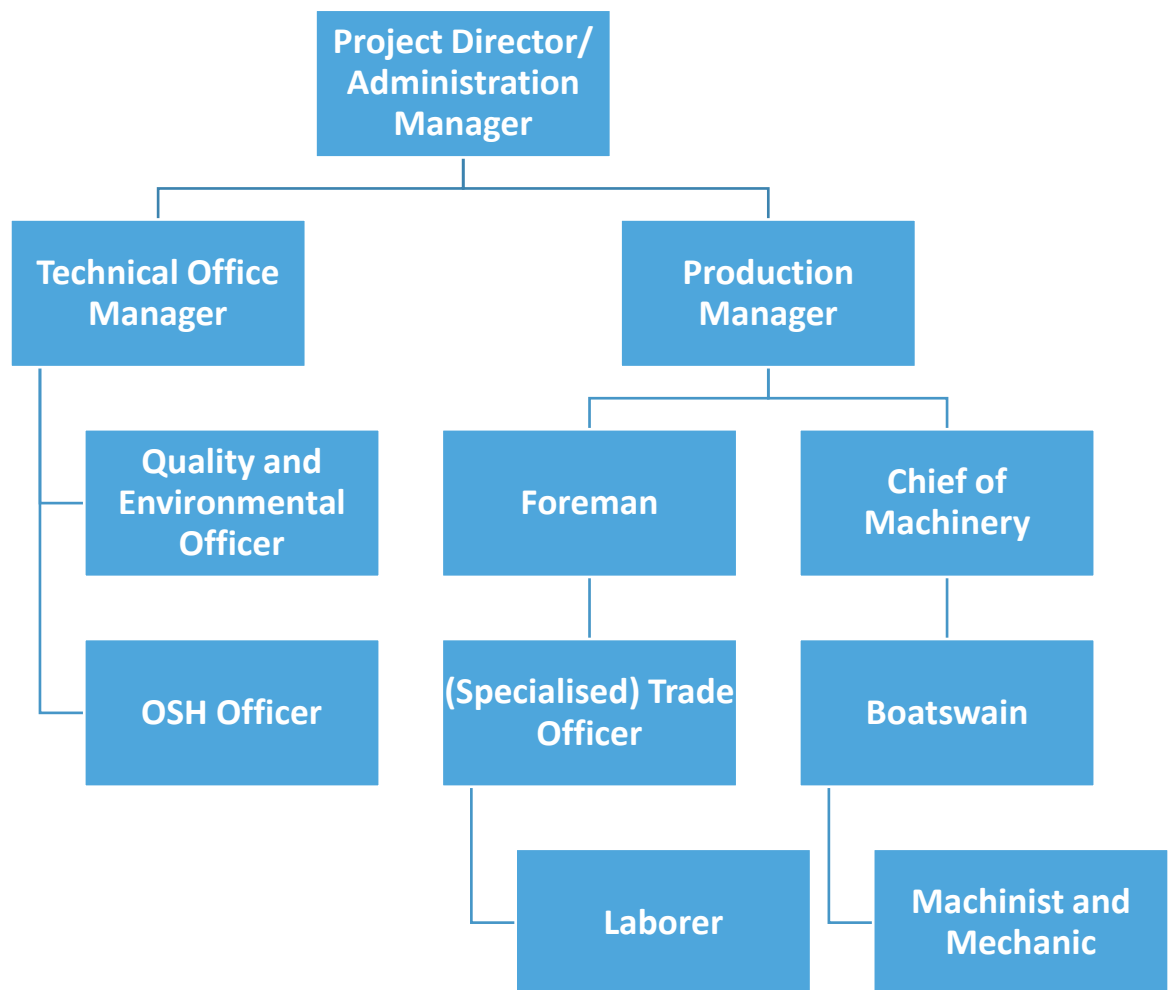
**Career Opportunities - Offering great career paths**

## 1.6 Construction Site Actors

Building or civil engineering projects are drawn up when a (public or private) client or developer commissions the project to an architectural or engineering firm with the authority to develop it. The architectural or engineering firm that develops the project is known as the project manager.

This project is executed by a construction company that, in turn, can subcontract part of the work and activities to smaller companies and independent professionals. Excluding the developer and the project manager, the agents involved in a project can be organised as follows:

The organisation of a construction site, the responsibilities and functions of the jobs on site vary widely in terms of their size and depend on the type of work (civil works/buildings), the work volume, the personnel available and its complexity.



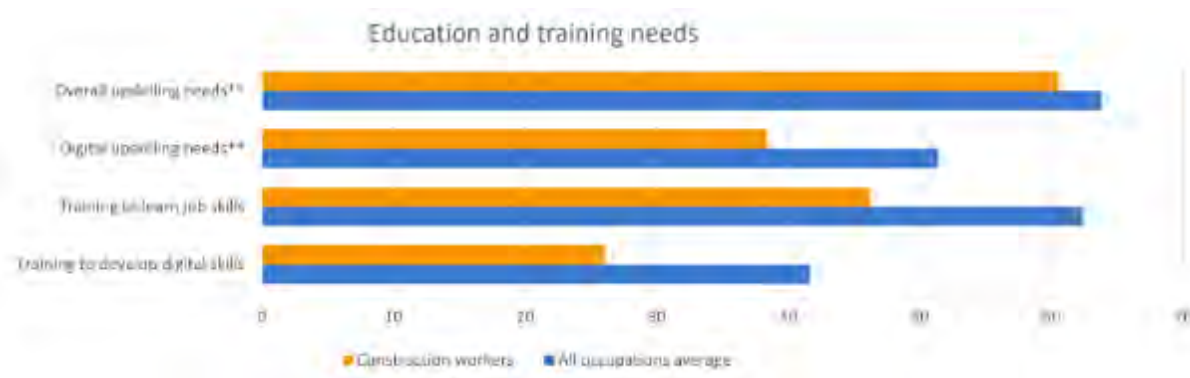
## 1.7 Persistent skills gaps in the sector

In the EU, the construction sector is characterized by a workforce with predominantly vocational training. Approximately 40% of construction workers have post-secondary education, with vocational education and training (VET) programs being critical in countries like Germany and Austria, where 60-70% of workers hold vocational qualifications. Higher education in construction management and civil engineering is less common but increasing, especially in countries like Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Technical skills gaps persist in a wide variety of occupations and there is an industry-wide need for soft skills. Nonetheless green and digital skills are becoming more and more important. For instance, 40% of firms reporting difficulties finding employees proficient in new technologies like Building Information Modeling (BIM).

The take-up of new technologies - including automation and the use of industrialized construction methods such as prefabrication - will drive changes in the skills required of construction workers in the future. As the measures in the European Green Deal increasingly gain traction, this will also affect the skills required of construction workers (e.g. those skills which result from changes in the way buildings are designed and constructed).

European governments and organizations are focusing on reskilling and up-skilling initiatives, such as EU-funded programs in sustainable construction and new technologies. There is also an emphasis on youth engagement through apprenticeship programs and campaigns to attract younger workers to the sector as well as women.



### Skills Gaps:

- 15% of workers have **significant skill gaps**
- 10% of workers have **significant digital skill gaps**

### Training Needs:

- 49% of workers need **technical skills training**
- 43% of workers need **social skills training**

### Worker Qualification:

- 27% of workers are **overqualified**
- 27% of workers are **low-skilled**

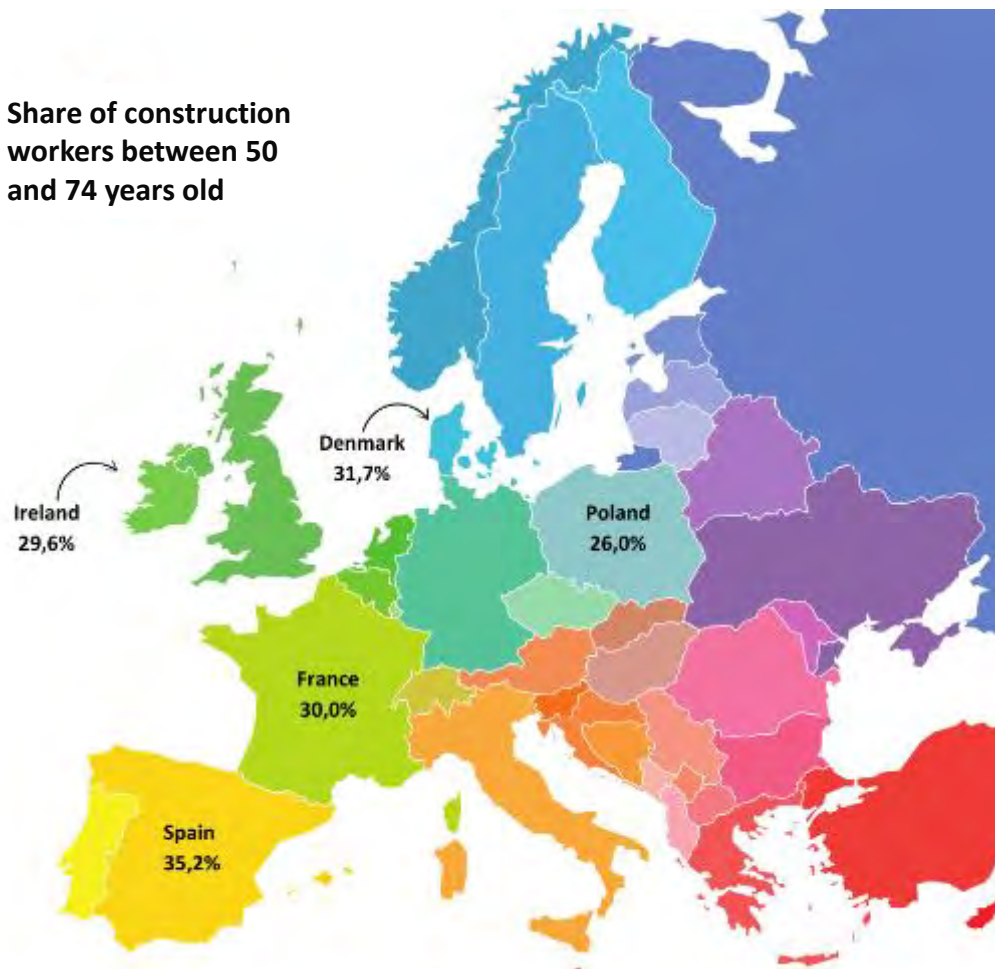
## 1.8 Increased Demand for Workers

Labour shortages in the construction will continue to increase in the coming years due to its ageing workforce. **The map below highlights the share of construction workers aged between 50 and 74 years old** highlights several regional variations within the European Union (EU-27). Overall, 33.8% of construction workers in the EU fall within this age range, suggesting an aging workforce across the industry. Spain (35.2%) slightly exceeds the EU average, indicating a particularly older construction workforce, while Denmark (31.7%) and France (30.0%) have lower but still significant percentages. Ireland (29.6%) and Poland (26.0%) have the lowest proportions of older workers, showing that their construction labor force skews younger in comparison. This variation may reflect differences in labor market dynamics, retirement policies, and the attractiveness of the construction sector for younger workers.

As the industry continues to age, some countries may face challenges related to workforce sustainability, skills transfer, and productivity, potentially leading to a shortage of skilled workers in the near future.

[Cedefop's latest employment projections](#) indicate that employment in the construction sector is expected to decrease by around 1% between 2021-2035. This would translate into employment decline of around 180,000 job positions. In practice, because of the high proportion of retirements, there will still be a substantial **job demand, estimated as at least 7 million job openings over the period.**

Share of construction workers between 50 and 74 years old



## 1.9.1 Mason (Stone, Block and Bricklayer)

### Job Requirements

Masonry specialists construct structures such as facade walls, partitions, and urban infrastructure (i.e. gardens, squares) by layering bricks, cement blocks or stones, often using mortar for bonding and stability. In some cases, dry stone walls are built without mortar. In addition, they can be built to be visible or covered with plaster, render, cladding, etc. These tasks require technical skills to ensure both the structural integrity and, when visible, the visual quality of the work.

### Technical and Soft Skills

Their responsibilities include preparing workspaces and equipment, constructing masonry partitions and enclosures, and installing complementary elements like elastic bands and insulation, all while following safety and technical guidelines. More specialized workers are also proficient in exposed masonry, such as brick, block, or stone. They manage mortar and concrete preparation, erect resistant structures, create specialized finishes, and adhere to health, safety, and environmental standards while following instructions from their supervisors.

Soft skills required include active collaboration with team members and other trades, proposing improvements, and handling minor issues autonomously. Practitioners must show respect, communicate effectively, and apply their training knowledge well.

### Entry requirements and qualifications

The below slides highlight the entry requirements and qualifications necessary to pursue a career as a mason (stone, block, and bricklayer) in several European countries, including **Denmark, France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain**. Each country has specific pathways, ranging from apprenticeships to formal education and work experience, tailored to ensure that individuals acquire the technical and soft skills essential for success in this field.

By understanding these requirements, prospective masons can identify the appropriate steps to enter the profession, build their expertise, and contribute effectively to the construction sector across Europe.

## Masonry: Denmark

In Denmark, becoming a mason involves a structured educational pathway, practical training, and the development of essential technical and physical skills. The following outlines the key components necessary for a successful start in the masonry field:

- **Education:** Aspiring masons typically enroll in the Bricklayer (Murer) vocational education and training (VET) programme, which is part of the Danish EUD (Erhvervsuddannelse) system. This programme combines school-based instruction with apprenticeship training, usually spanning 3.5 to 4 years. The curriculum covers subjects such as construction technology, materials science and building regulations.
- **Apprenticeship:** A significant portion of the training involves hands-on experience through apprenticeships with certified construction companies. This practical training is crucial for developing proficiency in masonry techniques and understanding real-world work environments.
- **Technical Skills:** Trainees acquire skills in reading and interpreting construction drawings, bricklaying, stone setting, and the use of various tools and materials. Emphasis is placed on precision, quality workmanship, and adherence to safety standards.
- **Certifications:** Upon successful completion of the VET programme, individuals receive a journeyman's certificate (Svendeprøve), officially recognising them as qualified masons. Additional certifications may be pursued for specialized areas or advanced techniques within the field.
- **Language Proficiency:** While not always mandatory, proficiency in Danish is highly beneficial, as it facilitates communication on job sites and comprehension of technical documentation.



## Masonry: France

In France, entering the masonry profession involves a combination of formal education, technical skills, and physical capabilities. The requirements aim to ensure that individuals are well-prepared for the demands of the role, which include working with precision, adhering to safety standards, and mastering various construction techniques.

The following outlines the key components necessary for a successful start in the masonry field in France:

- **Education:** typically, a **CAP (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle – EQF level 3)** in masonry or a related field is required. This is usually obtained after completing a vocational high school program.
- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in bricklaying techniques, including understanding construction plans, mixing and applying mortar, and laying bricks and blocks accurately.
- **Physical Abilities:** Good physical condition and stamina is necessary for handling heavy materials and working in various conditions. Capacity of precision in measurement is required, which hence requires a good vision.
- While specific certifications are not always mandatory, a **Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP)** in masonry or equivalent is highly recommended. Additional certifications may be required for specific tasks or safety regulations.



## Masonry: Ireland

An apprenticeship is the preferred method. The Stonecutter and Stonemason must have the ability to:

- Plan and organise
- Communicate effectively and solve problems
- Work independently and as part of a team
- Show a positive attitude and recognise the need for good customer relations
- Demonstrate good work practices.

Follow these rules to become an apprentice:

- ✓ You must obtain employment as an apprentice in your chosen occupation.
- ✓ The employer must be approved to train apprentices.
- ✓ The employer must register you as an apprentice within two weeks of recruitment.
- ✓ In certain crafts, apprenticeship applicants are required to pass a colour vision test.

The minimum requirements to enter a programme are:

1. Grade D in five subjects in the Department of Education & Skills Junior Certificate Examination or an approved equivalent.
2. The successful completion of an approved Pre-Apprenticeship course.
3. Three years' work experience gained over sixteen years of age in a relevant designated industrial activity as SOLAS shall deem acceptable.

[\\*Source: stonecutting-and-stonemasonry-a4-brochure.pdf \(storyblok.com\)](#)



## Masonry: Poland

Currently (as of 2018), to work as a bricklayer, vocational education is preferred (vocational school, formerly known as a basic vocational school) in fields related to construction.

A person can work as a bricklayer if they:

- have been trained in the profession,
- gained experience while working in the field,
- completed training organized by a company specializing in masonry work or at a specialized training center.

Factors that facilitate entering the bricklaying profession include:

- a diploma confirming professional qualifications in a related school profession, such as bricklayer-plasterer,
- a certificate confirming the qualification BD.14 "Performing masonry and plastering work,"
- a journeyman's certificate or a master's diploma in the bricklayer profession (or a related profession, such as bricklayer-plasterer), awarded within the framework of craft education after passing an exam organized by the Chambers of Crafts.

Additional advantages for hiring a bricklayer include:

- Europass supplements (in Polish and English), issued upon request by the Chambers of Crafts and Regional Examination Boards,
- qualifications for operating masonry machines and equipment,
- a medical certificate stating no contraindications for working at heights\*.

\*Informacja o zawodzie: MURARZ (711202), Rozwijanie, uzupełnianie i aktualizacja informacji o zawodach oraz jej upowszechnianie za pomocą nowoczesnych narzędzi komunikacji – INFODORADCA+, Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 2018, p. 7-8



## Masonry: Spain

Masons are required to meet specific entry standards, particularly in Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), to ensure safe and efficient practices in masonry work and finishings. A strong understanding of mortar preparation, essential for constructing factory elements, is a fundamental requirement for any masonry professional.

Key qualifications include auxiliary masonry operations for factories and roofs (EOC271\_1), as well as specialised skills and knowledge related to masonry factories (EOC052\_2). Core skill units for the profession include constructing building fabrics for cladding (UC0142\_1), working with exposed building fabrics (UC0143\_2), and effectively organising masonry projects (UC0141\_2).

These qualifications and skills are integral to maintaining high standards in masonry work, ensuring safety, precision, and quality.

Source: Generación Cambio <https://generacioncambio.com/inicio/albanileria-y-acabados/>



## 1.9.2 Gardener

### Job Requirements

Gardeners install plant elements and grass in various green spaces, including gardens and parks. They set up drainage and sewage networks, irrigation systems, and urban amenities such as lighting, benches, and fountains, among others. Modern gardening includes green walls and roofs, which offer functional and environmental benefits such as noise reduction, climate comfort, and improved air quality. They also connect urban green areas with surrounding natural spaces, contributing to the development of green infrastructure. Overall, these professionals enhance urban livability and improve quality of life.

### Technical and Soft Skills

Their responsibilities include land preparation through cleaning and debris removal, installing small infrastructure and plants manually or with small machinery. They dig holes and ditches for infrastructure and manage plant material for preservation. More specialised professionals are responsible for advanced land conditioning using various equipment, preparing substrates and containers for gardens, sowing or laying turf, and planting trees, shrubs, and plants.

Soft skills required include teamwork, proposing alternatives to improve work outcomes, and autonomy in resolving minor issues. They should also take care of spaces, facilities, materials, and equipment.

### Entry Requirements and Qualifications

Becoming a professional gardener involves a combination of formal education, practical training, and essential technical skills. Across Europe, different pathways exist, tailored to each country's needs. In the following sections, we will explore the specific requirements for **Denmark, France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain**.

Typically, entry into the profession requires vocational training or apprenticeships in horticulture or landscaping, covering topics like plant care, soil management, and sustainable gardening. Certifications or diplomas in related fields are highly recommended, along with practical experience gained through internships or hands-on projects.

Soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and attention to detail are critical, alongside a strong focus on health and safety. Additional qualifications, such as machinery operation or eco-friendly gardening techniques, are often required for advanced roles.

# Gardener – Denmark



In Denmark, becoming a gardener involves a combination of formal vocational education and practical experience. The profession places significant emphasis on hands-on training, equipping individuals with the skills necessary to work in both public and private green spaces.

## Key Requirements:

- **Vocational Education and Training (VET):** Most aspiring gardeners in Denmark enroll in a structured vocational education programme, such as the Greenkeeper and Gardener Education Programme (Greenkeeper- og Gartneruddannelsen). This typically spans 3.5 years and combines classroom learning with practical apprenticeships in horticultural businesses or public gardens. Topics covered include plant care, landscape design, irrigation systems, and environmental sustainability.
- **Apprenticeships:** A significant component of the training involves on-the-job learning through apprenticeships. This provides exposure to real-world scenarios and helps trainees develop skills in maintaining parks, gardens, and sports grounds while adhering to safety and quality standards.
- **Certifications:** Upon completion of the VET programme, candidates receive formal certification, recognised across the European Union. Additional certifications may be required for specialised roles, such as operating machinery or using eco-friendly landscaping techniques.
- **Soft Skills:** Teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills are crucial, as gardeners often collaborate with landscapers, designers, and urban planners.

## Gardener – France

To become a gardener in France, there are several pathways depending on the level of qualification and the type of gardening work you aim to perform, ranging from ornamental gardening to landscape design.

### **Educational Requirements:**

- **CAP Agricole en Jardinier Paysagiste:** This is a basic professional qualification (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle) designed for those looking to enter the field of gardening and landscaping. The program typically lasts two years and covers fundamental gardening skills like plant care, soil management, and the use of gardening equipment.
- **Bac Pro Aménagements Paysagers:** This is a more advanced qualification that takes three years to complete. It is aimed at those wanting to progress in landscaping, including the design and implementation of green spaces.
- **BTSA Aménagements Paysagers:** A higher education degree (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur Agricole), this two-year post-Baccalaureate program is for those aiming to specialize in landscape design, management of green spaces, and more complex gardening tasks.

### **Apprenticeships and Work Experience:**

- Many gardening jobs in France require hands-on experience, which can be gained through internships, apprenticeships, or working alongside experienced gardeners. Apprenticeships are often part of the CAP or Bac Pro programs and provide practical, on-the-job training.

### **Professional Certification:**

- Some municipalities or companies might require specific certifications related to health and safety, use of chemicals (for pest control), or specialised machinery.

## Gardener - Ireland



In Ireland, while a formal degree is not typically required to pursue a career in gardening, possessing knowledge in groundskeeping, horticulture, and gardening techniques is highly advantageous. Practical experience and vocational training are often valued by employers in the horticultural sector.

Institutions such as Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, offer a range of horticulture courses designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills for the industry. For example, the Level 5 Certificate in Horticulture involves 25 weeks of college work and skills training, combined with an eight-week practical learning period in a Teagasc-approved horticultural unit. This programme covers various aspects of horticulture, including plant care, soil management, and landscape design, providing a comprehensive foundation for aspiring gardeners.

Additionally, the Garden Design Academy of Ireland offers accredited courses in garden design and horticulture, catering to those seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills in the field. Their programmes are designed to be accessible, empowering individuals to pursue their passion for gardening and potentially establish a career in the industry.

Sources - <https://www.teagasc.ie/education/teagasc-colleges/botanic-gardens-college-of-horticulture/courses/level-5-in-horticulture>

<https://www.gardendesignacademy.ie/>

# Gardener - Poland

In Poland, while specific certifications such as OGR.02 are not mandatory for gardening and horticulture, practical skills and experience are essential. Professionals are expected to have expertise in several key areas, including:

## **Crop Cultivation:**

- Growing vegetables, herbs, edible mushrooms, ornamental plants, and fruit crops.
- Managing soil preparation, planting, and pest control to ensure high yields and quality.

## **Harvesting and Post-Harvest Tasks:**

- Performing harvesting operations efficiently and with care to preserve product quality.
- Managing storage techniques to maintain freshness and marketability.
- Handling the sale of horticultural produce in a competitive market.

## **Machinery Operation and Maintenance:**

- Operating and maintaining small tractors and other horticultural equipment.
- Using machinery for planting, irrigation, fertilising, and harvesting tasks.

While formal qualifications are not required, these practical skills are vital for success in the horticulture field. Participation in vocational training programmes can further enhance these capabilities and improve employability.

## Gardener – Spain

In Spain, no specific prior skills are required to begin basic gardening operations. However, essential qualifications for effective work in gardening and green space management include:



- Auxiliary Activities: Performing support tasks in nurseries, gardens, and gardening centres (AGA164\_1).
- Installation and Maintenance: Installing and maintaining gardens and green spaces (AGA168\_2).

Key related skill units (Unidades de Competencias Relacionadas) include:

- Supporting the installation of gardens, parks, and green areas (UC0521\_1).
- Installing interior and exterior gardens and green spaces (UC0531\_2).

These qualifications and skill units provide the foundational knowledge and practical expertise needed for a successful career in gardening and green space management.

Source: Generación Cambio

<https://generacioncambio.com/inicio/albanileria-y-acabados/>

## 1.9.3 Painter

### Job Requirements

Painters prepare surfaces, mix paints for different needs, and apply them with brushes or rollers to fill in cracks or apply colour on walls and other objects around a home, such as furniture pieces or doors.

### Technical and Soft Skills

Painters are responsible for the treatment and painting of different surfaces and the properties of different paints. They need to be proficient in operating personal protective equipment, tools, and machinery. They should be skilled in preparing and storing paint mixtures, varnishes, and coatings according to established quality and safety standards, and applying primers and protective paints using spray techniques, rollers, or brushes.

Required soft skills include attention to detail, crucial for identifying surface treatment needs and ensuring high-quality paint application. Painters must demonstrate a strong commitment to safety protocols and maintaining a safe work environment. Effective collaboration with team members is key, especially when installing protective measures and following instructions. Painters should also possess problem-solving skills to independently address minor issues during the painting process, ensuring smooth and efficient operations.

### Entry Requirements and Qualifications

Becoming a painter generally does not require formal qualifications, but vocational training and hands-on experience are highly recommended. Apprenticeships are a common pathway, combining classroom instruction with practical skills in surface preparation, paint application, and the use of tools like brushes, rollers, and spray equipment.

Health and safety knowledge, particularly in handling paints and chemicals safely, is essential, alongside soft skills such as attention to detail and teamwork. Certifications in advanced techniques, while not mandatory, can enhance job prospects and demonstrate specialised expertise.

In the next sections, we will examine the specific entry requirements and qualifications for painters in **Denmark, France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain**, offering insights into regional differences and opportunities.

## Painter – Denmark

In Denmark, becoming a professional painter involves a structured VET programme that combines theoretical instruction with practical experience.

### Key Requirements:

- **VET:** Aspiring painters typically enroll in the Painter (Maler) programme, which is part of Denmark's VET system. This programme generally lasts around 3.5 to 4 years and includes both school-based education and apprenticeships. Admission to VET usually requires completion of compulsory education and a school leaving certificate with minimum grades in Danish and mathematics.
- **Apprenticeships:** A significant portion of the training involves practical experience through apprenticeships with certified painting companies. This hands-on training is mandatory and essential for developing the skills required in the profession.
- **Certifications:** Upon successful completion of the VET programme, individuals receive a journeyman's certificate, officially recognizing them as qualified painters. This certification is highly valued by employers and is often necessary for employment in the field.
- **Sustainability Focus:** With Denmark's emphasis on eco-friendly practices, painters are often trained in the use of sustainable materials and environmentally conscious techniques, reflecting the country's commitment to green building standards.



## Painter – France

- **Education:** Typically, a CAP (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle – EQF level 3) in painting and decorating or a related field is required. This vocational qualification is obtained after completing a relevant training program.
- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in painting techniques, surface preparation, color mixing, and application of various types of paint and finishes. Ability to achieve high-quality finishes and meticulous preparation of surfaces.
- **Certifications:** While a specific certification is not always mandatory, holding a CAP in painting or decoration is strongly recommended. Additional certifications related to health and safety regulations, such as those for working with certain chemicals or in high places, may also be required depending on the job.

For career advancement, further qualifications such as a BTP (Brevet de Technicien Professionnel – EQF level 4) or specialised training in decorative techniques can be advantageous.



## Painter – Ireland

The minimum age at which the employment of an apprentice may commence is 16 years of age. The minimum educational requirements are:

- Grade D in five subjects in the Department of Education & Skills Junior Certificate Examination or an approved equivalent.
- The successful completion of an approved pre-apprenticeship course.
- Three years' work experience gained over sixteen years of age in a relevant designated industrial activity as SOLAS shall deem acceptable.



## Painter – Poland

As of 2018, vocational education is preferred (vocational school, formerly known as a basic vocational school) in construction-related fields for working as a construction painter.

A person can work as a construction painter if they:

- have been trained in the profession,
- gained experience through work,
- completed training organised by a company specialising in painting work or at a specialised training center.

Factors that facilitate entering the construction painting profession include:

- a diploma confirming professional qualifications in a related school profession, such as installer of building and finishing works or technician of finishing works in construction,
- a certificate confirming the qualification BD.04 "Performing assembly, cladding, and finishing work" in a related school profession, such as installer of building and finishing works or technician of finishing works in construction,
- a journeyman's certificate or master's diploma in a related profession such as painter-wallpaperer or installer of building and finishing works in construction, obtained after meeting formal requirements and passing an exam organized by the Chambers of Crafts.

Additional advantages for hiring a construction painter include:

- Europass supplements (in Polish and English), issued upon request by the Chambers of Crafts and Regional Examination Boards,
- qualifications for operating painting machines and equipment, working at heights above 3 meters, and scaffolding assembly,
- a Category B driving license\*.

\*Source: Informacja o zawodzie: Malarz budowlany (713102) Rozwijanie, uzupełnianie i aktualizacja informacji o zawodach oraz jej upowszechnianie za pomocą nowoczesnych narzędzi komunikacji – INFODORADCA+, Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 2018, p. 7-8



## Painter – Spain

In Spain, painters and particularly decorative painting professionals must know how to prepare the mixtures necessary to achieve the desired finishing or decorative effects. They must also know how to apply primers, base coats and finishes on all types of surfaces. Painters must meet specific entry requirements related to Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) for painting and finishings.

The essential qualification is decorative painting in construction (EOC587\_2). The related skills units (Unidades de Competencias Relacionadas) are the performance of decorative painting finishings in construction (UC1934\_2) and organise painting works in construction (UC1935\_2).

Source: Generación Cambio <https://generacioncambio.com/inicio/albanileria-y-acabados/>



## 1.9.4 Plumber

### Job Requirements

Plumbers install, repair and maintain pipes in apartment residential and commercial buildings. They do so by preparing, cutting, and joining various materials according to diverse installation requirements. They assemble and disassemble sanitary appliances, radiators, and domestic climate control systems while adhering to quality and safety standards. Plumbers interpret technical documentation, prepare materials and equipment, and follow installation instructions for water supply, drainage, and heating systems. They ensure proper maintenance of water conduits, perform safety checks, and comply with hygiene regulations. Additionally, plumbers install radiators, fans, and hot water systems, ensuring proper functioning and adherence to installation norms.

### Technical and Soft Skills

Plumbers must have expertise in pipe installation, including laying out, preparing, manipulating, and assembling different materials for domestic water supply and drainage systems. They should be proficient in reading and interpreting technical documents, preparing materials and equipment, and following installation guidelines. Their responsibilities also include installing and maintaining sanitary appliances, heating, and climate control systems. Knowledge of safety and environmental protection practices is essential for ensuring compliance during installation and maintenance.

Soft Skills required include attention to detail and precision to ensure proper functioning and high-quality work. Problem-solving skills are crucial for handling unexpected challenges during installations. Effective communication is important for collaborating with team members and following instructions from supervisors. A strong sense of responsibility for safety and environmental standards is essential, especially when working with complex systems. Teamwork and adaptability are also necessary in dynamic work environments.

### Entry Requirements

Becoming a plumber typically involves a combination of vocational training, apprenticeships, and practical experience. While the exact requirements vary by country, aspiring plumbers are generally expected to develop technical skills in pipe installation, water and drainage systems, and heating systems. Formal training often includes learning to read technical plans, adhere to safety regulations, and master the use of specialised tools and materials.

In the next sections, we will explore the specific entry requirements for plumbers in **Denmark, France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain**, highlighting the pathways and qualifications necessary to succeed in this essential and skilled trade.

A close-up photograph of a plumber working on a radiator. The plumber is seen from the side, focused on the task. They are using a metal tool, possibly a screwdriver or a similar instrument, to adjust or inspect a component of the radiator. The radiator is white and has several vertical fins. In the background, a window with a white frame is visible, showing a blurred view of the outdoors. The lighting is bright, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light from the window.

## Plumber – Denmark

In Denmark, becoming a plumber is a well-structured process that combines vocational education, apprenticeships, and a focus on practical skills. This ensures that aspiring plumbers develop both the technical expertise and professional experience required for the trade.

### Key Requirements:

- Aspiring plumbers enroll in the Plumbing and Energy Technology (VVS og Energiuddannelsen) programme, part of Denmark's vocational education system (EUD). This programme typically takes 3.5 to 4 years and is divided into school-based education and hands-on training. The school-based curriculum covers core subjects such as plumbing systems, water and drainage installation, energy-efficient heating systems, and technical drawing interpretation. Trainees also study safety regulations and environmental standards critical to the trade.
- A crucial part of the programme involves practical apprenticeships with certified plumbing companies. Apprenticeships allow students to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world tasks, such as installing and maintaining water pipes, heating systems, and climate control units. These placements are also essential for learning problem-solving and time management in dynamic work environments.
- Upon successful completion of the programme, trainees receive the Journeyman's Certificate (Svendeprøve). This certificate is a formal qualification recognised across Denmark and is highly valued by employers. It certifies that the individual has met the required standards for competence and safety in the plumbing profession.



## Plumber – France

**Education and Training:** a CAP (Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle – NQF level 3) in Plumbing or a BEP (Brevet d'Études Professionnelles) in Energy and Climate Systems Installation is usually required. These diplomas can be obtained through vocational schools or apprenticeship programs. Candidates with dual training (plumber-heating engineer, plumber-roofer or plumber-ziner) are particularly popular with employers.

Good health is a prerequisite for this profession. Plumbers can carry heavy parts and work in uncomfortable positions. Plumbers must hold specific certifications, such as the Certificat de Compétence en Installation de Chauffage (CCIH). Additionally, knowledge of current French building codes and standards is crucial.

Essential skills include proficiency in installing, repairing, and maintaining plumbing systems, strong problem-solving abilities, and familiarity with safety regulations. Technical skills in reading blueprints and knowledge of various plumbing materials and tools are also important. Obtaining the driver license is highly recommended, as the job requires to carry heavy tools.

**Experience:** having practical experience through apprenticeships or previous work in the field can be highly advantageous.



## Plumber – Ireland

The minimum age at which the employment of an apprentice may commence is 16 years of age. The minimum educational requirements are:

- Grade D or "Achieved" in five subjects in the Department of Education & Skills Junior Certificate Examination or an approved equivalent.
- The successful completion of an approved Pre-Apprenticeship course.
- Three years' work experience gained over sixteen years of age in a relevant designated industrial activity as SOLAS shall deem acceptable.

You must obtain a job as an apprentice in your chosen occupation. Your employer must be approved to train apprentices and must register you as an apprentice within 2 weeks of recruitment.

Plumbers are required to pass a colour vision test.

[\\*Source: Plumbing Apprenticeship | Construction, Architecture & Property Sector Apprenticeship | CareersPortal.ie](#)

## Plumber – Poland

As of 2018, vocational education at the level of a basic vocational school (formerly known as a basic vocational school) with a construction profile is preferred for working as a plumber.

### **Professional Titles, Qualifications, and Licenses Required/Preferred for Working as a Plumber:**

- It is possible to employ an unqualified worker as a plumber and train them for the job.

### **Factors that facilitate entering the plumbing profession include:**

- A diploma confirming the acquisition of professional qualifications in a related field, such as a network and sanitary installation installer, after meeting formal requirements and passing an exam organized by the Regional Examination Boards.
- A certificate confirming qualification BD.05 "Performing work related to the construction, assembly, and operation of sanitary networks and installations" in the related profession of network and sanitary installation installer.
- A journeyman's certificate or master's diploma in a related profession, such as installer of sanitary installations and devices or network and sanitary installation installer, awarded as part of craft education after passing an exam organized by the Chambers of Crafts.\*

\*Source: Informacja o zawodzie: Hydraulik (712601) Rozwijanie, uzupełnianie i aktualizacja informacji o zawodach oraz jej upowszechnianie za pomocą nowoczesnych narzędzi komunikacji – INFODORADCA+, Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Departament Rynku Pracy, Warszawa 2018, p. 7-8

## Plumber – Spain

Plumber's helpers must know how to interpret technical documentation, operate manual and electric plumbing tools (i.e. pipe cutters, adjustable wrenches, chipping hammers, etc.) prepare necessary materials, and follow detailed installation instructions for water supply, drainage, and heating systems.

Plumbers must meet specific entry requirements related to Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) for plumbing installations and maintenance. The essential qualifications are auxiliary plumbing operations (IMA367\_1, level 1), and the assembly and maintenance of water supply and evacuation facilities in buildings (IMA753\_2, level 2).

The related skills units (Unidades de Competencias Relacionadas) to the first qualification level are to perform auxiliary operations for the assembly and maintenance of plumbing pipes and fittings (UC1154\_1), perform auxiliary operations for the assembly and maintenance of complementary plumbing equipment and systems (UC2587\_1), and perform auxiliary operations for the assembly and maintenance of sanitary appliances and taps (UC1155\_1).

Source: INCUAL

[https://incual.educacion.gob.es/web/extranet/detallecualificacion?\\_com\\_liferay\\_asset\\_publisher\\_web\\_portlet\\_AssetPublisherPortlet\\_INSTANCE\\_SvMQ3LSCQdRt\\_assetEntryId=11867436&\\_com\\_liferay\\_asset\\_publisher\\_web\\_portlet\\_AssetPublisherPortlet\\_INSTANCE\\_SvMQ3LSCQdRt\\_redirect=%2Fweb%2Fextranet%2Fbusqueda-de-cualificaciones](https://incual.educacion.gob.es/web/extranet/detallecualificacion?_com_liferay_asset_publisher_web_portlet_AssetPublisherPortlet_INSTANCE_SvMQ3LSCQdRt_assetEntryId=11867436&_com_liferay_asset_publisher_web_portlet_AssetPublisherPortlet_INSTANCE_SvMQ3LSCQdRt_redirect=%2Fweb%2Fextranet%2Fbusqueda-de-cualificaciones)

## 1.9.5 Electrician

### Job Requirements

Electricians install, maintain and repair electrical systems and electric meters in buildings and structures. They execute wiring plans, and install fixtures and equipment. Electricians have expertise in various electrical systems, tools, and safety regulations.

### Technical and Soft Skills

Electricians must be skilled in reading and interpreting electrical wiring plans and technical documentation. They use various hand and testing tools to measure electrical characteristics, install and troubleshoot meters, and perform test runs to ensure system functionality. Knowledge of electrical principles, wiring regulations, and the use of protective gear is crucial. Electricians must also be proficient in installing and maintaining utility equipment while adhering to health and safety standards.

Required soft skills include attention to detail and problem-solving abilities are key to effectively diagnose and fix electric issues. Communication skills are essential for advising clients on the proper use of electrical equipment and consumption. Electricians must demonstrate teamwork and adaptability in dynamic environments, along with strong organizational skills to maintain accurate records and track work progress. A commitment to safety is critical in ensuring compliance with regulations and protecting both workers and clients during installations and repairs.

### Entry Requirements

Becoming an electrician typically involves completing a vocational education programme or apprenticeship to gain technical knowledge and practical experience. Aspiring electricians must develop skills in electrical systems, wiring, safety regulations, and the use of specialised tools. While the specific requirements vary by country, most include formal training, on-the-job experience, and certification to ensure compliance with national safety standards.

In the next sections, we will explore the specific entry requirements for electricians in **Denmark, France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain**, highlighting the unique qualifications and pathways in each region.

## Electrician – Denmark

In Denmark, becoming an electrician involves completing a structured vocational education and training (VET) programme that combines theoretical instruction with practical experience.

### Key Requirements:

- Aspiring electricians typically enroll in the **Electrician Training Programme**, which is part of Denmark's VET system. This programme generally lasts between 4 to 5 years and includes both school-based education and apprenticeships.
- A significant portion of the training involves practical experience through apprenticeships with certified companies. This hands-on training is essential for developing the skills required in the profession.
- Upon successful completion of the VET programme, individuals receive a journeyman's certificate, officially recognizing them as qualified electricians. This certification is highly valued by employers and is often necessary for employment in the field.
- The programme offers various tracks, including a 4-year electrician training programme, a 4½-year programme, and a 5-year EUX electrician training programme, which combines vocational training with upper secondary education.



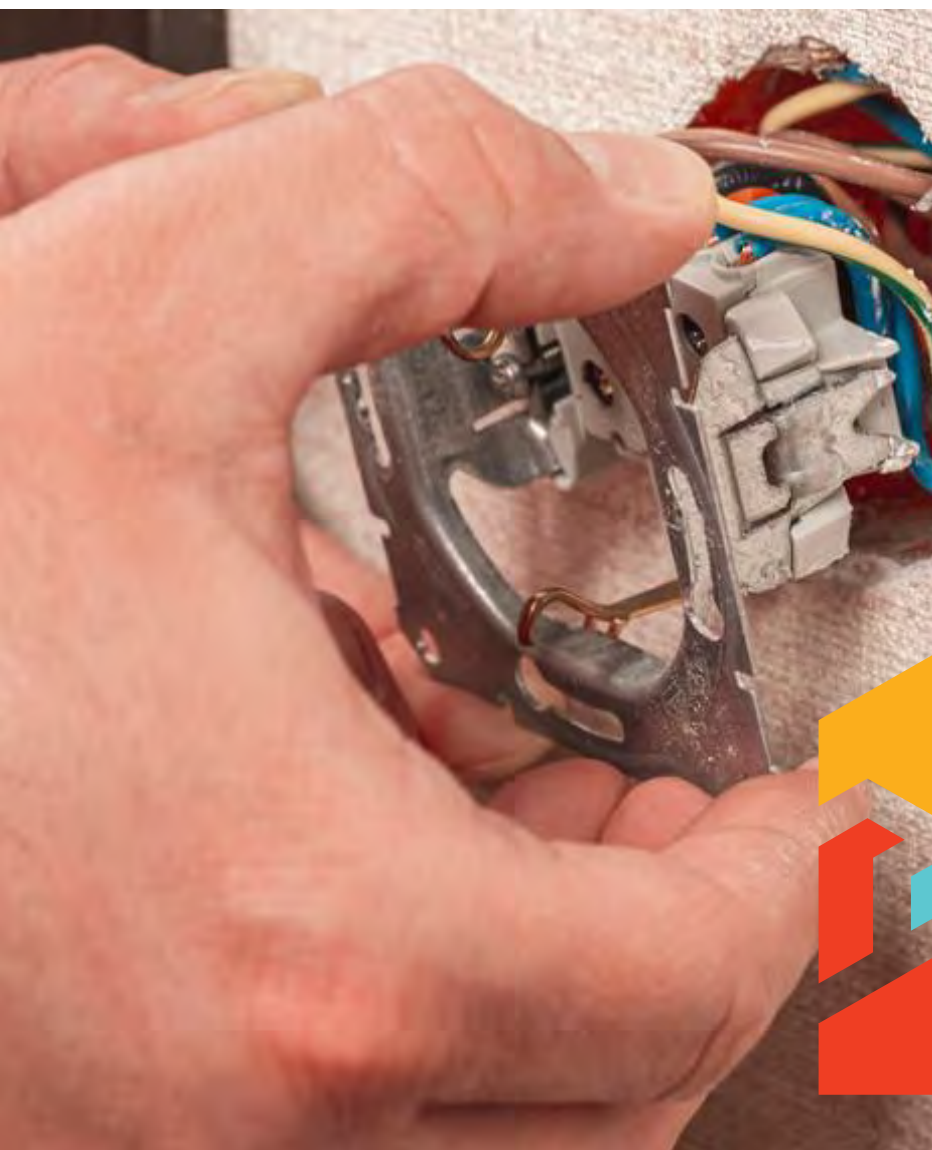
## Electrician – France

As being electrician is a very technical job, a diploma is required in France: CAP (NQF level 3) Electricity or a BEP (Brevet d'Études Professionnelles) Trades in Electricity and Connected Environments. These qualifications can be obtained through vocational schools or apprenticeships.

Habilitation Electrique certification is crucial, as it ensures the electrician is trained to work safely with electrical systems. Electricians must adhere to strict safety standards to prevent electrical hazards and ensure safe working conditions. This includes knowledge of regulations such as NF C 15-100, which governs electrical installations in France.

Key skills include the ability to install, maintain, and repair electrical systems, strong problem-solving skills, and proficiency in reading and interpreting electrical schematics and blueprints. Additionally, familiarity with various electrical tools and equipment is essential.

Practical experience gained through apprenticeships or previous work experience in the field is highly beneficial and sometimes required for more advanced positions. Proficiency in French is necessary for effective communication with clients, understanding safety instructions, and interpreting technical documentation.



## Electrician – Ireland

The minimum age at which the employment of an apprentice may commence is 16 years of age. Requirements for electricians are:

- Grade D or "Achieved" in five subjects in the Department of Education & Skills Junior Certificate Examination or an approved equivalent.
- The successful completion of an approved Pre-Apprenticeship course.
- Three years' work experience gained over sixteen years of age in a relevant designated industrial activity as SOLAS shall deem acceptable.

You must obtain a job as an apprentice in your chosen occupation. Your employer must be approved to train apprentices and must register you as an apprentice within 2 weeks of recruitment.

For this apprenticeship, you are required to pass a colour vision test approved by SOLAS.

\*Source: [Electrical Apprenticeship | Construction, Architecture & Property Sector Apprenticeship | CareersPortal.ie](#)



## Electrician – Poland

To become an electrician, one can study at a vocational school or technical college. An electrician can also complete higher engineering studies, which provide greater competencies and future qualifications. Participation in courses organised by various adult education centers is also permissible, although these courses tend to focus on narrow areas. Therefore, when choosing a course, it is advisable to complete more than one. However, to practice the profession, one must pass an exam before the Central Examination Commission.

### SEP Qualifications:

It is important to know that working with live electrical equipment requires SEP qualifications, which are also necessary for employment as an electrician. SEP qualifications are divided into three main groups:

- G1 – Electrical courses
- G2 – Energy courses
- G3 – Gas courses\*

Source: [Jakie są wymagane uprawnienia zawodowych elektryków? \(buduj-sie.pl\)](http://buduj-sie.pl)



## Electrician – Spain

To perform these tasks effectively, electricians must meet specific entry requirements related to Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) for electrical installations. The essential qualification is assembly and maintenance of low voltage electrical installations (ELE257\_2, level 2).

The related skills units (Unidades de Competencia Relacionadas) include assembling low voltage electrical installations in buildings (UC0820\_2), maintaining low voltage electrical installations in buildings (UC0821\_2), assembling low voltage electrical installations in industrial environments (UC0822\_2), and maintaining low voltage electrical installations in industrial environments (UC0823\_2).

Source: Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones (INCUAL)



## Main challenges for the inclusion of refugees in the construction sector



**Language Barriers**

**Recognition of Foreign Qualifications**

**Financial Pressures**

**Bureaucratic Hurdles and Insufficient Integration Policies**

**Workplace Culture**

**Workers' Rights and Responsibilities, types of contracts, and wage composition**

**Occupational Safety Culture and Compliance Awareness**

## Main drivers for the inclusion of refugees in the construction sector



**Vocational  
Training and  
Mentorship  
programs**

**Government  
Policies and  
Integration  
Programs**

**Employer  
and Union  
involvement**



# Pros and Cons of the Construction Sector for Refugees

Pros	Cons
<p><b>Teamwork:</b> Construction work involves collaboration with other workers, foremen, and production managers, offering an opportunity to build relationships and improve communication skills.</p>	<p><b>Challenging Work Conditions:</b> The physical nature of construction work and vulnerability to weather conditions can be particularly demanding.</p>
<p><b>Diverse Tasks:</b> The sector offers a wide variety of tasks, making it less monotonous and providing opportunities for skill diversification.</p>	<p><b>Changing working placements:</b> The changing workplace implies that workers need to commute, sometimes large distances, to access construction sites.</p>
<p><b>Career Progression:</b> There are multiple opportunities for refugees to specialize in different trades and progress within the sector. Job stability is relatively secure once refugees have the necessary certifications. Demand for construction workers will increase in the coming years, due to the large number of workers retiring and the increased renovation works and lack of housing.</p>	<p><b>Health and Safety Risks:</b> Some tasks come with high health and safety risks, which can be difficult to manage, especially for those unfamiliar with local safety protocols.</p>
<p><b>Rewarding work:</b> Refugees can take pride in contributing to lasting infrastructure projects that benefit society.</p>	<p><b>Precarious Employment:</b> Refugees often face non-standard forms of employment, including part-time or temporary roles, which offer less job security.</p>
	<p><b>Vulnerability to Exploitation:</b> Refugees are more susceptible to forced or exploitative labor conditions, particularly in roles that lack adequate oversight or worker protection.</p>

*"In the long term, I think it's going to be very positive for them... the amount of money being spent in Ireland in the next 20 years catching up in construction." Irish Construction Employer*

# Chapter 1 - Takeaways



The EU construction sector faces a chronic labour shortage, with 33.8% of workers aged over 50, while refugees make up only a fraction of the workforce—leaving a significant talent pool untapped.

Refugees are often employed in physically demanding and hazardous occupations within construction, where roles tend to be low-paid and precarious, with language barriers limiting access to training and advancement.

Female refugee participation remains minimal, highlighting the need for more inclusive approaches that address gender disparities in the sector.

Green and digital skills are becoming increasingly important, with 40% of construction firms reporting difficulties finding workers proficient in new technologies such as Building Information Modelling (BIM).

As the sector aims for 35 million energy-efficient renovations by 2030 under the Renovation Wave, integrating refugees is not only an inclusion strategy but a necessary step for meeting EU climate targets.

Qualification needs differ substantially across occupations and countries. Occupations such as bricklayers or painter's assistants often require basic vocational skills and on-site safety training. In contrast, skilled trades such as electricians and plumbers demand formal vocational education, national certifications, and, in many cases, licensing or compliance with specific safety and technical standards.

This variation means that integration pathways must be tailored not only to the individual's background, but also to the specific skill, certification, and language demands of each occupation.

# 02

## Entry Routes into the Construction Sector





## 2.1 Entry Routes in the Construction Sector

The construction sector offers multiple entry routes for refugees and immigrants seeking employment.

The ideal mode of entry for refugees into the sector involves the **recognition of foreign qualifications and experience**, allowing newcomers to enter the sector more easily. **Language courses and cultural orientation** can assist in adapting to the local work environment and securing employment. Nonetheless, refugees often lack legalized and standardised documentation, making the recognition of qualifications and experience very difficult, even when they are skilled and experienced in the field.

### Vocational and Technical Education

Vocational training or technical schools provide essential skills and certifications for various roles within the industry. For instance, they offer specialised training in fields such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing and electrical work.

### Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training

Apprenticeships, combine classroom instruction with hands-on work experience, allowing individuals to earn while they learn. On the other hand, in On-the-Job Training, employers provide training to new hires, especially for roles that do not require formal qualifications but demand specific skills and experience.

### Higher Education

For those seeking advanced positions or specialised roles within construction, higher education in fields such as civil engineering, architecture, or construction management is beneficial. Degrees in these areas can open doors to roles in project management, design, and consultancy.

### Certification and Licensing

Certain roles within the construction industry require specific certifications or

licenses. Examples include:

- **Construction Certifications:** For specialized areas such as welding, HVAC installation, or project management.
- **Licensing:** Required for electricians, plumbers, and other professionals who must meet regulatory standards.

### Temporary and Seasonal Employment

The construction industry frequently hires temporary or seasonal workers, which can be ideal for individuals looking for short-term employment opportunities. These roles often do not require long-term commitments and can provide valuable experience.

### Industry-Specific Training Programs

Various training programs and workshops focus on specific aspects of construction work, such as safety practices, new technologies, or sustainability measures. These programs can enhance skills and employability.

The construction sector offers diverse entry routes, accommodating a range of educational backgrounds, experience levels, and professional aspirations. Whether through formal education, apprenticeships, higher education, or on-the-job training, there are multiple pathways for individuals to build successful careers in this dynamic industry. For immigrants and refugees, the sector provides an important avenue for integration and employment, often with opportunities for skill development and career advancement.

In the next sections, we will explore the specific entry routes and pathways into the construction sector in Denmark, France, Ireland, Poland and Spain, including skills recognition and accreditation, VET programmes, and career counselling.



# Skills Recognition and Accreditation in Denmark



Denmark offers a structured process for recognising and accrediting foreign qualifications, which is vital for integrating refugees into the construction sector. Below are the key steps and resources available:

## Assessment of Foreign Qualifications

The Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science provides free assessments to compare foreign educational qualifications with Danish standards. This helps employers understand the value and relevance of international qualifications within the Danish context. Refugees and other foreign workers can use this service to demonstrate their skills and education effectively.

## Recognition for Regulated Professions

Some professions in the construction sector are regulated by law and require official recognition before employment. The Danish Working Environment Authority (Arbejdstilsynet) handles approvals for roles such as:

- Asbestos removal workers
- Elevator maintenance personnel
- Welders
- Scaffolders (for scaffolds over 3 metres)
- Crane operators
- Forklift operators
- Refrigeration engineers

Foreign workers or their employers must apply for recognition if the role involves specific legal or safety requirements.

## Steps in the Recognition Process

The recognition process typically includes:

- Candidates must provide documentation on their education, certifications, and relevant work experience.
- Certificates and diplomas are reviewed to ensure authenticity and alignment with Danish standards.
- In some cases, applicants may need to pass practical or theoretical tests to verify their expertise.
- Successful applicants receive a formal recognition letter, enabling them to practise the profession in Denmark.

## Entry-Level Positions

Refugees may need to complete a Safety and Health Training Certificate, often provided by local trade unions or employers. Organisations frequently collaborate with refugee support services to offer tailored training, and municipalities or labour market programmes may fund initial training and placements for unskilled or semi-skilled roles. While fluency in Danish is not always required, basic communication skills are crucial for safe on-site collaboration. Trade unions like 3F (United Federation of Danish Workers) also support refugees through job readiness programmes.

# Skills Recognition and Accreditation in France



## Certifications

All training organizations are listed by the French Ministry of Labor. All training courses eligible for the personal training account are certified. These certifications are listed in the RNCP or RS, two national directories under the responsibility of France Compétences.

## Skills recognition

The skills assessment is a way of analyzing professional and personal skills, aptitudes and motivations in support of a career development project and, where applicable, training. Eligible for the funding provided by the personal training account, it must be carried out by an external service provider. The French system includes VAE (validation d'acquis d'expérience) schemes. This enables anyone engaged in working life to obtain professional certification by validating their experience acquired through professional and/or extra-professional activities.

## Skills accreditation in the construction sector

In France, skills and qualifications in the construction sector are often accredited by bodies such as **Qualibat**, **Qualifelec**, and **OPQIBI**. These organisations issue certifications and ensure that professionals meet industry standards. Navigating the administrative and bureaucratic processes for certification and recognition can be complex and time-consuming, particularly for those unfamiliar with the system.

Adherence to French building codes and standards, such as **NF C 15-100** for electrical installations, is mandatory. These standards ensure safety, quality, and consistency in construction practices.

For foreign professionals wishing to work in France, there can be challenges in having their qualifications and experience recognized. The process may involve translation, equivalency assessments, and validation by relevant French authorities. The process for evaluating the equivalency of foreign qualifications is managed by various French agencies, such as **ENIC-NARIC** (the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region). These agencies assess whether foreign qualifications meet the standards of French certifications.

## Career counselling

VAE advice centers (Point Relais Conseil) help candidates to analyze the relevance of their VAE project in light of their experience, explain the process, help them choose the certifications that correspond to their experience, redirect them, if necessary, towards other approaches, and inform them of funding possibilities.

Finally, the Conseil en évolution professionnelle (CEP) is a free, universal and personalized public service enabling anyone to take stock of their professional situation. The law of September 5, 2018 has led to a recomposition of the landscape of operators delivering this service offering:

- France Travail, local missions, Cap emploi and Apec continue to be operators of career development advice for the publics that concern them;
- The Avenir Actifs network, commissioned by France Compétences under a public contract, is responsible for providing career development advice for employees and self-employed workers (excluding public-sector employees).



## Skills Recognition and Accreditation in Ireland

Some entry-level roles in construction require no qualifications, while others need candidates to complete a relevant college course, degree, or apprenticeship. Each job has specific requirements and entry routes.

### Ways to Get Started in the Construction Industry in Ireland

#### Register as an Apprentice

Apprenticeships provide on-the-job learning combined with classroom education. They are ideal for earning while learning and can last up to 4 years. Assessments include on-the-job tests and modular classroom exams. Apprenticeships are divided into two categories:

- **Craft Trades:** Carpentry, plumbing, motor mechanics, and electrical apprenticeships.
- **New Apprenticeships:** Introduced in 2016, covering areas such as ICT, finance, hospitality, farming, software development, accounting, commis chef, farm management, and digital marketing.

**Requirements:** Applicants must be at least 16 years old with a minimum grade D in 5 Junior Cycle subjects or equivalent. If these qualifications are not met, candidates can still register if:

- They complete an approved preparatory course and pass an assessment interview.
- They are over 18, with at least 3 years of relevant work experience, and pass an interview.

#### Post-Secondary School Training

Universities, colleges, and technical institutions offer courses in construction, architecture, surveying, and related IT fields. The main route is through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Alternatives include:

- **Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs):** Full-time courses lasting 1–2 years, validated by QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland). These qualifications (Level 5/6) allow progression to Level 7/8 in higher education.
- **Direct Entry Courses:** Applications are made directly to the college, bypassing the CAO. Many universities and private institutions offer this option, which does not rely on competitive CAO points.

#### Entry-Level Positions

For those seeking a quick start, roles such as labourers allow individuals to gain experience and develop skills directly on-site. Certain qualifications are required, but advanced knowledge is not always necessary. Most employers require a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card to demonstrate safety awareness. While not legally mandated, it is the industry standard.

To obtain a CSCS Green Card, you need to pass one of the following courses:

- CITB Site Safety Plus: Health & Safety Awareness (1 day).
- QCF Level 1/SCQF Level 4 Award: Health & Safety in a Construction Environment (1–5 days).
- IOSH Working Safely Course: (1 day).

Additionally, passing the Health & Safety and Environment Test is required to ensure you meet the safety standards for working on construction sites.

# Skills Recognition and Accreditation in Poland



Skills recognition and accreditation in the construction sector in Poland can have various forms. Some of them are described below:

## 1. Formal Education and Vocational Training

- **Vocational Schools (Branżowa Szkoła I stopnia):** For entry-level positions in the construction sector, vocational education plays a critical role in preparing individuals for the workforce. These institutions provide specialized training in construction-related disciplines such as masonry, carpentry, and plumbing, culminating in the acquisition of formally recognized qualifications, which are integral to accessing employment opportunities in the industry.
- **Technical Schools (Technikum):** These institutions offer more advanced educational programs, blending practical skills with theoretical knowledge in fields such as civil engineering and construction management. Graduates from technical schools often occupy supervisory or technical roles within the sector, equipped with a comprehensive understanding of both the operational and managerial aspects of construction.

## 2. Certification and Professional Licensing

- **SEP Certifications (Stowarzyszenie Elektryków Polskich):** Electrical work in Poland requires specific certifications, particularly from the SEP (Polish Association of Electrical Engineers). These certifications authorize workers to handle electrical installations under specified voltage limits and are a prerequisite for employment in electrical roles within the construction sector.
- **Builder's License (Uprawnienia Budowlane):** A professional license awarded to engineers and architects, this credential is essential for those seeking to oversee or design construction projects. The Polish Chamber of Civil Engineers administers the licensing process, which includes both educational requirements and the successful completion of a formal examination.
- **Trade Certifications:** Specific trades within the construction sector, such as welding or crane operation, require workers to obtain recognized certifications issued by accredited educational or industry bodies. These certifications verify a worker's ability to operate specialized machinery or perform specific tasks. A CRANE OPERATOR - Only a person who has obtained the appropriate qualifications, granted by the Office of Technical Inspection as a result of passing a state examination, can become a crane operator. The examination consists of a theoretical and practical part and must be preceded by a training course for a tower crane operator. Specialized training centers have their own training equipment and organize UDT exams. A person who is over 18 years of age and has a medical certificate stating that there are no contraindications to operating close-range transport equipment and a positive opinion from psychological tests can take part in the tower crane operator training. After passing the exam before the UDT Inspector, candidates receive the qualifications to operate category Ż I tower cranes. The tower crane operator training covers such issues as the construction of cranes and their mechanisms, drive and control, reloading equipment, safety devices, operating principles, and the assembly and transport of cranes. There will also be general information on steel load-bearing structures, technical supervision, and crane manufacturing. For this reason, training as a crane operator is especially recommended for graduates of vocational and technical schools ([Czego dotyczy szkolenie na operatora żurawi wieżowych?](#)).

## Skills Recognition and Accreditation in Spain



In Spain, the skills recognition and accreditation system is designed to certify professional competencies gained through work experience or non-formal learning. This process is managed by each **Comunidad Autónoma** and consists of the following steps:

- 1. Application (Solicitud):** Candidates submit a formal request to have their skills evaluated. They must provide documentation proving their experience and training related to the profession.
- 2. Advisory Phase (Asesoramiento):** This is where an advisor, often a professional in the relevant sector, reviews the applicant's dossier, verifies their qualifications, and determines if they meet the required professional competencies. The advisor also helps candidates identify any gaps in their experience that may need further evidence.
- 3. Evaluation (Evaluación):** Candidates may be asked to demonstrate their skills in practice or through additional tests if their documentation does not fully verify the required competencies. This phase is key for applicants who lack formal certification but have developed significant expertise through work or informal training.
- 4. Accreditation (Acreditación):** Successful candidates receive an official certificate, recognised nationally, that validates their skills for employment or further education. This certificate can improve job prospects and allows for professional advancement.
- 5. Training Plan (Plan de Formación):** Candidates who do not meet all the required competencies receive a tailored training plan to help them achieve the full qualification. This training is aimed at filling the gaps identified during the advisory and evaluation phases.

Each *Comunidad Autónoma* (regional government) manages the accreditation process, and candidates can apply through their respective region's educational or vocational institutions.. The skills accreditation in construction is particularly important due to safety regulations and the need for certified professionals in various trades such as electrical work. Many of these workers acquire skills on the job, making this process essential for recognising their expertise without formal education. In practice this means, that the window to certify competences are not available at all times.

### Who Can Apply:

- Individuals who have acquired competencies through work experience or non-formal learning (i.e., apprenticeships, on-the-job training).
- Applicants must typically demonstrate a minimum of 3 years of work experience in the sector, whether in Spain or in countries of origin. There are however some differences between regions.

**Who Conducts the Process:** Accredited educational and vocational institutions, regional training centres, or other authorized entities within each *Comunidad Autónoma* oversee the process, which is continuously open for candidates. These centres have trained advisors and evaluators who assess the candidates.

**Duration:** The time it takes to complete the process can vary depending on the number of applicants, and the complexity of the profession. It typically takes several months, especially for high-demand professions like those in construction.

## VET in Construction Denmark



Denmark's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system provides a structured and flexible pathway for individuals aiming to enter the construction sector. The system is divided into two primary stages: the basic programme and the main programme. The basic programme comprises two courses. The first, Basic Course 1, introduces students to various vocational fields, supporting them in selecting a specific training path. Basic Course 2 then focuses on the chosen vocational area and concludes with an examination that qualifies students to progress to the main programme. The main programme combines school-based education with apprenticeship training in construction companies, ensuring students gain both theoretical knowledge and practical, hands-on experience. The duration of VET programmes typically ranges from two to five years, depending on the chosen specialisation and individual progression.

Entry requirements for VET programmes include the completion of compulsory education and a minimum grade of 02 in Danish and Mathematics from the Lower Secondary School (Folkeskole) Leaving Examination. Proficiency in Danish is essential, as instruction is delivered primarily in Danish. A key feature of the system is its dual approach, integrating classroom learning with workplace apprenticeships. This ensures that graduates are equipped with the skills and experience required to meet the demands of the construction industry.

For adults aged 25 and above, Denmark offers an alternative pathway through Adult Vocational Training (EUV). This programme is tailored to individuals with prior work experience or educational qualifications and often allows for a shorter training duration by recognising existing competencies. VET graduates can either enter the workforce directly or pursue higher education opportunities, such as the Higher Technical Examination Programme (HTX), which facilitates access to advanced technical education.

Support is also available for international students and individuals with foreign qualifications. Prospective participants can consult vocational colleges to assess their eligibility, though Danish language proficiency is generally required. Overall, Denmark's VET system is designed to produce a skilled workforce for the construction sector, balancing theoretical education with practical training while accommodating diverse learner needs and backgrounds.

Source - <https://eng.uvm.dk/upper-secondary-education/vocational-education-and-training-in-denmark?.com>





## VET in Construction France

The building and civil engineering sector comprises over 500,000 companies in France. Faced with changes in regulations, techniques and technology, the building and civil engineering sector must constantly adapt to evolve its trades and qualifications, and meet the employment needs arising from major projects. Professional training is an essential lever for the competitiveness of building and civil engineering companies.

The duration of construction training courses varies according to the level of qualification. A CAP is a diploma that takes 2 years to prepare, generally after the third year of secondary school (EQF level 3), a Bac Professionnel takes 3 years, a BTS takes 2 years after the Bac, a BUT takes 3 years after the Bac, a Licence Professionnelle takes 1 year after a Bac+2, and a Master's degree or engineering diploma takes 2 or 3 years after a Licence.

In France, there are several schemes offering access to training during a professional contract:

- CIF (Congé Individuel de Formation): accessible to private-sector employees on permanent full-time or part-time contracts, with at least 2 years' seniority with the company.
- CPF (Compte Personnel de Formation): for all craftsmen, jobseekers or employees on permanent contracts with at least 1 year's seniority with the company.
- VAE (Validation d'Acquis d'Expérience): open to jobseekers to obtain a professionalization contract for training in a building trade.

### Main actors:

- **The OPCO (skills operators)** : Ce terme a été introduit par la loi sur la réforme de la formation professionnelle du 1er avril 2019. Un opérateur de compétence est un organisme agréé par l'état. Sa mission couvre différentes thématiques liées à l'apprentissage et la formation professionnelle. La première mission d'un OPCO est le financement de la formation professionnelle et de l'apprentissage. Dans le secteur de la construction, Constructys est l'OPCO de référence.
- Training organizations: AFPA, Batys Compétences, Greta, AFTRAL (specialized in the training to operate construction machinery). These organizations provide training leading to qualifications, which can be accessed by students and apprentices alike, as well as during professional career paths to enhance skills (particularly with regard to energy transition issues).
- New training organisations specialized in eco-construction techniques, often involved in social schemes linked with work integration programs: these organizations can include French courses within the training program. Examples: APIJ [Association](#), [Edifice Formation](#).





# VET in Construction in Ireland

## Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Ireland

Ireland's VET system operates primarily within the state sector, with contributions from private providers. It is divided into four sectors: primary, secondary, further education and training (FET), and higher education. Below is an overview of the key components:

### Governance and Funding

- The FET sector is managed by 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) across the country, with oversight by SOLAS, Ireland's Further Education and Training Authority.
- These programmes are publicly funded, with additional support from the European Social Fund.
- In the higher education sector, the responsibility for VET lies with the Higher Education Authority, focusing on universities, institutes of technology, and other higher education providers.

### Entry Routes and Qualifications

Most learners begin VET programmes after completing upper secondary education at NFQ Levels 4/5 (EQF 3/4). A smaller number may enter at lower levels (NFQ Levels 2/3). Key pathways include:

- **Apprenticeship Training**
  - Combines off-the-job training (delivered by ETBs or institutes of technology) with on-the-job learning (with an employer).
  - Leads to qualifications at NFQ Level 5 or 6 (EQF 4 or 5).
  - Primarily concentrated in construction and engineering sectors.
- **Post-Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs)**
  - Delivered in ETB colleges or second-level schools, focused on technical knowledge, core skills, and work experience.
  - Leads to qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 or 6 (EQF 4 or 5).
- **VET at Tertiary Level**
  - Introduced in 2016, these programmes combine online and off-the-job training with employer-based work.
  - Leads to higher qualifications at NFQ Levels 6 to 9 (EQF 5 to 7).

### Additional Programmes

- **Partial Awards**
  - Offered at NFQ Levels 3 to 6 (EQF 2 to 5).
  - Ideal for second-chance learners or those seeking part-time education.
- **Back-to-Education Initiative (BTEI)**
  - Provides flexible, part-time courses combining general and vocational training.
- **Youthreach**
  - Targets early school leavers aged 15–20, delivering education primarily at NFQ Levels 3 to 6.

\*Source: [Vocational education and training system in Ireland \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu)



## VET in construction Poland

Vocational education and training (VET) has three governance levels: national (ministries), regional (school superintendents, mainly in pedagogical supervision) and county (governing schools). The Ministry of Education and Science oversees secondary and higher VET, supported by other ministries responsible for occupations. Social partners advise policy-makers on necessary changes in VET. The ministry is supported by the consultative body, the Vocational School Directors Council, established in 2018.

Since September 2017, the Polish education system has been undergoing substantial restructuring, to be finalised in the 2022/23 school year. VET is provided mainly in school-based upper secondary and post-secondary programmes. Upper secondary programmes combine general and vocational education. Learners can acquire vocational qualifications in:

- 3-year first stage sectoral programmes (*branżowe szkoły I stopnia*, ISCED 353) leading to a vocational qualification diploma for a single-qualification occupation (after passing State vocational examinations). Graduates can enrol in the second year of general upper secondary programmes for adults or in a second stage sectoral programme;
- 2-year second stage sectoral programmes (*branżowe szkoły II stopnia*, ISCED 354), launched in the 2020/21 school year. These further develop the vocational qualifications attained in first stage sectoral programmes. General education is provided in full-time day or evening classes, or extramurally. Graduates can acquire an upper secondary school leaving certificate (*matura*) providing access to tertiary education;
- 5-year vocational upper secondary programmes (*technika*, ISCED 354) leading to a vocational qualification diploma for occupations consisting of two qualifications after passing State vocational examinations. Graduates can acquire an upper secondary school leaving certificate (*matura*) giving access to tertiary education;
- 3-year special job training programmes (*szkoły specjalne przysposabiające do pracy*, ISCED 243) for special education needs (SEN) learners leading to a job training certificate;
- work preparation classes for SEN learners aged 15 and above already in primary school (*oddziały przysposabiające do pracy*).

At the post-secondary non-tertiary level, vocational qualifications are acquired in 1- to 2.5- year school-based programmes (*szkoły policealne*, ISCED 453). College programmes of social work (*kolegium pracowników służb społecznych*, ISCED 554) are part of tertiary education. They combine school-based learning and in-company training leading to a diploma at EQF level 5. Learners should hold a *matura* certificate. Work-based learning (WBL) is compulsory for all VET-oriented programmes. It takes place in school workshops, continuing education centres, vocational training centres or can be organised partially or fully by an employer, including apprenticeships. A distinctive form is on-the-job-training (traineeship) lasting 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the occupation; this is compulsory for vocational upper secondary, post-secondary and second stage sectoral programmes.

Adult learning, continuing and out-of-school VET are available in continuing education centres, practical training centres, further training and professional development centres, and initial VET schools, offering:

- vocational qualification courses based on curricula for a qualification in a given occupation; learners can take the State vocational examination and obtain a vocational qualification certificate;
- vocational skills courses based on the VET core curriculum, including learning outcomes for a qualification or common learning outcomes for all occupations;
- minimum 30-hour general skills courses based on the general education curriculum;
- theoretical courses for juvenile employees;
- as of 2016, curriculum-based qualifications attained in courses offered by training companies and other non-formal education institutions can be included in the Integrated qualifications register.

## VET in Construction in Spain



In Spain, the vocational education and training (VET) system is primarily governed by the [Ministry of Education and Vocational Education and Training](#) (MEFP), which sets the basic framework for content and mechanisms. The [Ministry of Labour and Social Security](#) (MITES) oversees labour-related skills, while Autonomous Communities manage the system's regional adaptation, allowing them to develop up to 45% of the curricula based on local needs. The system is supported by the General Council for Vocational Education and Training, which includes trade unions and business representatives, and the [National Institute for Vocational Qualifications](#) (INCUAL), which maintains the [National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications](#) (NCPQ).

Despite the system's structure, approximately 10.5 million workers lack formal accreditation for their occupational skills. Accreditation can be achieved through formal training or recognition of prior learning and experience. The latter enables individuals to accumulate partial qualifications, fostering lifelong learning and improving professional qualifications. The VET system operates through registered centres, of which most are public, and offers qualifications categorised as basic, intermediate, or higher levels, primarily focused on occupational families such as Building and Civil Works (EOC - Edificación y Obra Civil), Installation and Maintenance (IMA - Instalación y Mantenimiento), Energy and Water (ENA - Energía y Agua) and Electricity and Electronics (ELE – Electricidad y Electrónica).

Basic-level VET is aimed at those without secondary education, offering foundational skills in areas such as building renovation and dwelling maintenance. Intermediate-level VET provides technical training for post-secondary students, with popular qualifications including refrigeration and heat production installations. Higher-level VET prepares individuals for advanced roles, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy technicians, often linked to emerging industry demands. Women remain underrepresented across all levels of VET, with minimal improvement in recent years.

Specialisation courses, introduced to address innovations in the workforce, focus on areas like Building Information Modelling (BIM) and energy auditing, while professional certificates align with the NCPQ and allow modular, flexible training. The recently enacted Law 3/2022 integrates education and employment systems within VET, aiming to streamline training pathways.

Employment-focused VET, overseen by MITES and supported by the State Public Employment Service (SEPE) and the State Foundation for Training at Work (FUNDAE), targets skill enhancement for employed and unemployed workers. Training initiatives include on-demand corporate training, government-subsidised programmes, and dual training combining education with workplace experience. Sectoral joint commissions, such as the Construction Sectoral Joint Commission, identify priority training areas, emphasising energy efficiency, renewable energy, and modern construction techniques.

Although enrolment in VET has increased, graduate numbers in construction-specific qualifications have declined. Public institutions dominate training provision across all levels, with private providers more active in specialised fields like renewable energy. Overall, the VET system in Spain continues to evolve, addressing industry demands and promoting sustainable development through energy and digitalisation-focused qualifications.

# Career Counselling and Overview of the Skills Recognition in Denmark



## Career Counselling in Denmark

- **Guidance for Students:**
  - Career counselling in Denmark plays a crucial role in helping students navigate opportunities within the construction sector. Counsellors provide guidance on available vocational programmes, apprenticeships, and career pathways, ensuring students understand their options. By offering tailored advice, they help students align their educational choices with their personal interests and industry needs, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future careers.
- **Support for Job Seekers:**
  - For individuals seeking to enter or advance in the construction sector, career counselling services focus on identifying transferable skills, understanding market demands, and exploring job opportunities. Counsellors also assist with practical tasks such as writing CVs, completing job applications, and preparing for interviews, helping job seekers effectively position themselves in a competitive job market.

## Skills Recognition in the Construction Sector

Skills recognition in Denmark ensures that workers meet the competency standards required for their roles in the construction sector. Key elements of the process include:

- **Vocational Qualifications:**
  - Denmark awards vocational qualifications through structured education and training programmes offered at vocational colleges. These qualifications verify a worker's ability to perform specialised construction tasks such as carpentry, masonry, plumbing, and electrical installations. Certification requires the completion of theoretical coursework and practical training, often through a dual education model.
- **Craftsmanship Certifications:**
  - Titles such as Skilled Craftsman (Faglært) are granted to individuals who complete apprenticeship training and demonstrate their proficiency through formal assessments. These certifications, recognised nationwide, are considered vital for demonstrating expertise and are often required by employers in the construction sector.
- **Professional Licensing:**
  - Certain roles in the construction industry, such as electricians and crane operators, require professional licences to ensure adherence to safety and technical standards. Licences are issued upon completion of accredited training and certification exams, ensuring compliance with Denmark's strict workplace regulations.
- **Recognition of Foreign Qualifications:**
  - Denmark facilitates the recognition of foreign qualifications through the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science. The agency assesses and validates qualifications against Danish standards, enabling skilled migrant workers to enter the construction workforce. This recognition process is essential for integrating refugees and other international workers, helping bridge gaps in qualifications and competencies.
- **Europass Supplement:**
  - The Europass Supplement is widely used in Denmark to standardise and describe vocational and technical qualifications, enhancing transparency and comparability across EU countries. This tool helps employers understand and value qualifications obtained from outside Denmark, supporting the mobility of skilled workers within the EU.

## Career counselling and overview of the skills recognition in France



All training organizations are listed by the French Ministry of Labor. All training courses eligible for the personal training account are certified. These certifications are listed in the RNCP or RS, two national directories under the responsibility of France Compétences.

The skills assessment is a way of analyzing professional and personal skills, aptitudes and motivations in support of a career development project and, where applicable, training. Eligible for the funding provided by the personal training account, it must be carried out by an external service provider.

The French system includes VAE (validation d'acquis d'expérience) schemes. This enables anyone engaged in working life to obtain professional certification by validating their experience acquired through professional and/or extra-professional activities.

VAE advice centers (Point Relais Conseil) help candidates to analyze the relevance of their VAE project in light of their experience, explain the process, help them choose the certifications that correspond to their experience, redirect them, if necessary, towards other approaches, and inform them of funding possibilities.

Finally, the Conseil en évolution professionnelle (CEP) is a free, universal and personalized public service enabling anyone to take stock of their professional situation. The law of September 5, 2018 has led to a recomposition of the landscape of operators delivering this service offering:

- France Travail, local missions, Cap emploi and Apec continue to be operators of career development advice for the publics that concern them;
- The Avenir Actifs network, commissioned by France Compétences under a public contract, is responsible for providing career development advice for employees and self-employed workers (excluding public-sector employees).

# Career Counselling and Overview of the Skills Recognition in Ireland



Ireland has a developed career guidance support system across the education and training system including post-primary education, higher education and further education and training. At a central government level, there are several Divisions within the [Department of Education](#) which have some involvement with career guidance. However, [Indecon Review of Career Guidance](#) (2019) states there is no explicit structural organisational mechanism which exists to co-ordinate the different areas involved in career guidance.

[The Adult Educational Guidance \(and Information\) Service](#), under the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, is a service that is available to everyone over 18 years of age, as well as to those who are over 16 years and are not in full time education. The Service prioritises those who are currently not in employment but is available to all. The Service supports people in exploring their further education and training options while developing a personal progression plan.

The Service offers one-to-one educational guidance; information on local and national courses; help with college applications; and information on funding sources.

[The Education Act, 1998](#) (section 9c) requires that schools 'use its available resources to' provide students with 'access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices'.

[The Higher Education Authority](#) (HEA) is the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education in Ireland, including policy for career guidance within the sector. With support from the HEA, the Universities and the Institutes of Technology directly provide career guidance supports for students.

The framework for adult career guidance is primarily within the remit of the [Adult Educational Guidance Initiative \(AEGI\)](#), which is provided by the 16 [Education and Training Boards](#) (ETBs).

[SOLAS](#) is responsible for funding FET Adult Guidance Services. Career guidance in Post Leaving Certificate colleges is delivered through the post primary guidance allocation model. Some participants in FET will also have had engagement on careers issues and options with [DEASP's Intreo service](#).

Guidance counselling in Ireland is practiced in a holistic and integrative way, and encompasses the areas of social/personal counselling; vocational guidance counselling; and educational guidance counselling.

[The Adult Education Guidance Initiative](#) (AEGI) through local AEGS offices offers impartial one-to-one guidance and group guidance.

[The Local Employment Service](#) (LES) are a part of the public employment service Intreo. LES provides a local gateway, or access point, to the full range of services and facilities that are available to help jobseekers to enter or return to employment. This may include the provision of intensive personalized guidance leading to development of a personal progression plan, and career counselling.

In Ireland, measures to support youth employment involve a mix of initial assessment, career guidance and planning, education and training or work experience, aimed at increasing the capacity of the young people to access employment.

The main users of career guidance and counselling services in Ireland are secondary school students, third level students, and jobseekers.

# Career counselling and overview of the skills recognition in Poland



## Career counselling:

- Students can career counseling and job offers in an academic careers office – this means a unit working for the professional activation of students and graduates of a higher education institution, run by a higher education institution or a student organization, whose tasks include in particular: a) providing students and graduates of a higher education institution with information on the labor market and opportunities to improve their professional qualifications, b) collecting, classifying and making available job offers, internships and work placements, c) maintaining a database of students and graduates of a university interested in finding a job, d) helping employers in acquiring suitable candidates for vacancies and work placements, e) helping in active job searches. [Obwieszczenie Marszałka Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 10 marca 2022 r. w sprawie ogłoszenia jednolitego tekstu ustawy o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy](#). In Szczecin students can use: [Biuro Karier ZUT](#), [Strona główna - Akademickie Biuro Karier](#)
- For individuals who are looking to enter the construction industry, career counseling is offered by the District Labor Office. The District Labor Office is an institution that deals with job search assistance for unemployed people. Other tasks of labor offices include organizing training courses that will help increase qualifications, activating unemployed people to active work. District Labor Offices exist in every city. [Zadania Powiatowego Urzędu Pracy - Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej - Portal Gov.pl](#). For example in Szczecin individuals can use: [Strona główna | WORTAL](#)

## Skills Recognition in the Construction Sector

In Poland, the recognition of skills involves several key aspects:

- **Vocational Qualifications:** In Poland, vocational qualifications are awarded to individuals who complete specific educational programs and pass relevant examinations (finishing Vocational Schools, Technical Schools). These qualifications are essential for validating a worker's ability to perform specific construction tasks.
- **Craftsmanship Certifications:** Titles such as **Journeyman (Czeladnik)** and **Master (Mistrz)** are awarded to skilled tradespeople who have demonstrated proficiency in their respective trades through formal assessments. These certifications, issued by the **Polish Chambers of Crafts** are highly regarded and signify a high level of expertise and experience. The Chambers of Craft operate in a specific area of one province or its part and associate craft guilds and craft cooperatives from a given territory. The Chambers organize and conduct cooperation with partner organizations of craft self-government abroad, implementing projects among others in the field of training and professional development. Supervision over the activities of the examination boards of the craft chambers is carried out by the Polish Craft Association [Strona główna | Związek Rzemiosła Polskiego](#).
- **Professional Licensing:** Certain roles within the construction sector require professional licenses or certifications. For example, electricians need **SEP certifications** to work with electrical installations, and heavy machinery operators require licenses to operate equipment like cranes.
- The **National Accreditation Centre** within the Qualification Certification System ensures professional organization and comprehensive implementation of multi-stage validation (examination) processes and certification (granting) processes of market qualifications and the National Accreditation Centre within the Qualification Certification System ensures organization and comprehensive implementation of multi-stage validation (examination) processes and certification (granting) processes of market qualifications and professional competences, regardless of the methods by which they were acquired by the candidate. Regional Validation, Examination and Certification Centres) are accredited field units - regional representative offices, acting on behalf of the KCA, organizing the processes of granting qualifications, monitoring the correctness and verifying the results of validation processes carried out by Validating Institutions. [Krajowe Centrum Akredytacji \(KCA\) – System Certyfikacji Kwalifikacji KCA](#)

## Career counselling and overview of the skills recognition in Spain



Career counselling in the construction sector is primarily supported by a network of institutions, including public employment services, training centres, and industry-specific organisations like the [Fundación Laboral de la Construcción \(FLC\)](#). These entities work together to guide individuals in entering, advancing and transitioning within the sector. Public employment services provide general orientation on job opportunities, vocational training, and certifications required for specific roles, while the FLC offers specialised advice tailored to the construction industry. FLC plays a significant role given its expertise in addressing the skills demands of the sector, aligning with national and European labour-market needs, and promoting career development through its extensive training offerings.

A distinctive feature of Spain's construction career counselling system is its focus on certification and upskilling, as required by the **Construction Labour Agreement (Convenio General del Sector de la Construcción)**. This agreement mandates training and professional accreditation for workers with regards to Occupational Health and Safety (OSH). Career counselling often emphasises obtaining certifications such as the **Professional Construction Card (TPC)**, which is essential for proving workers' have undergone the mandatory safety trainings. Counsellors also guide workers through continuous professional development to keep pace with advancements like energy-efficient renovations, digitalisation, and new sustainability practices.

Furthermore, the system is supported by regional initiatives and funding from EU programmes to address local needs and green transition priorities. Career counselling integrates tools such as digital job platforms, labour-market observatories, and partnerships with trade unions to ensure alignment with workers' rights and sectoral demands. This holistic approach ensures that workers are not only prepared for current challenges but are also equipped to meet future demands in a rapidly evolving industry.



# Career counselling and overview of the skills recognition in Spain cont.

## Skills recognition

The official accreditation process can be conducted in two ways: through formal training and through official accreditation of occupational skills acquired through work experience or non-formal or informal training.

The second route was regulated in [2009](#) and modified in [2021](#) in order to speed up the process and thus increase the number of people with official accreditation of their occupational skills, as well as to meet the validation needs of the different sectors.

One of the aims of these procedures is to enable people's continuing education and the increase of their professional qualification, offering opportunities to obtain a cumulative partial accreditation, with the aim of completing the training leading to the corresponding vocational training qualification or professional certificate.

It is possible to accredit units of skills that are part of a Vocational Education and Training Qualification or a Professional Certificate and if necessary, the training required indicated by the assessment commission can be undertaken to obtain a full qualification.

This chart shows the Skills accreditation process.

Source: [TodoFP, Ministry of Education and Vocational Education and Training](#).

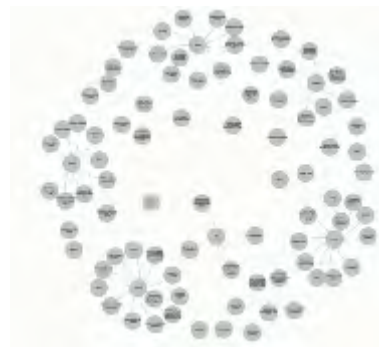


# Refugee Support Service Repository



Mapping of the main organisations providing language, housing, training services to refugees.

Click on the KUMU map to read more on the organisations and the services provided to refugees. <https://embed.kumu.io/d6e3b625dac375d4743f451570eff521>



Organisation	Country	Service
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	All	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   Legal Support   Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment   Family Resource Centres <u>Note: Services available differ across countries.</u>
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	All	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   Legal Support   Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment   Family Resource Centres <u>Note: Services available differ across countries.</u>
Integration Basic Education (IGU) Programme	Denmark	Vocational Training and Employment   Language Training
Fast Track to Employment Programme	Denmark	Vocational Training and Employment
Self-support and Return Programme	Denmark	Vocational Training and Employment   Local Development Support   Housing   Legal Support
Friends Show the Way Programme	Denmark	General Refugee Support   Psychosocial Support   Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   Local Development Support
Halage	France	Local Development Support   Vocational Training and Employment
French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)	France	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   General Refugee Support   Housing   Information   Language Training   Legal Support   Psychosocial Support   Vocational Training and Employment

# Refugee Support Service Repository



Organisation	Country	Service
Pole Emploi – France Travail	France	Vocational Training and Employment   Language Training   Information
QIOZ	France	Language Training
France Terre d’Asile	France	Housing   Legal Support
Fédération Française du Bâtiment	France	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection
Chantier Ecole & GRAFIE	France	Vocational Training and Employment   Information
Refugies.info	France	Vocational Training and Employment   Housing   Language Training   Legal Support
Soliguide	France	Information
Watizat	France	Information
NASC	Ireland	Humanitarian Assistance
Irish Refugee Council	Ireland	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   Legal Support
Doras	Ireland	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection
Immigrant Council of Ireland	Ireland	Advocacy & Human Rights Protection
First Rung Life Skills Ltd	Ireland	Vocational Training and Employment   Vocational Training and Employment
Leitrim Development Company	Ireland	Local Development Support   Advocacy & Human Rights Protection
Leitrim Co Council	Ireland	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
Roscommon Co Council	Ireland	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
Roscommon LEADER Partnership	Ireland	Local Development Support   Vocational Training and Employment   Language Training   Childcare Support   Family Resource Centres
MSLETB (Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim Education and Training Board)	Ireland	Vocational Training and Employment
GRETB (Galway & Roscommon Education and Training Board)	Ireland	Vocational Training and Employment
Polish Red Cross	Poland	Humanitarian Assistance
Fundacja Ocalenie	Poland	Legal Support   Psychosocial Support   Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFH)	Poland	Legal Support

# Refugee Support Service Repository



Organisation	Country	Service
Fundacja dla migrantów Dobry Start	Poland	General Refugee Support
Caritas Polska	Poland	Local Development Support   Vocational Training and Employment   Language Training   Childcare Support   Family Resource Centres   Housing   Legal Support   Psychosocial Support   Humanitarian Assistance   Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   General Refugee Support
Polska Akcja Humanitarna	Poland	Local Development Support   Vocational Training and Employment   Language Training   Childcare Support   Family Resource Centres   Housing   Legal Support   Psychosocial Support   Humanitarian Assistance   Advocacy & Human Rights Protection   General Refugee Support
Solidarni z Ukrainą	Poland	Humanitarian Assistance
Siepomaga.pl	Poland	Humanitarian Assistance
Związek Ukraińców w Polsce Oddział Szczecin	Poland	General Refugee Support   Family Resource Centres
Mi-Gracja	Poland	Legal Support   Psychosocial Support   Language Training   Childcare Support
West Pomeranian Voivodeship Office in Szczecin	Poland	Legal Support
Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Szczecinie	Poland	Vocational Training and Employment   Legal Support
Fundación Laboral de la Construcción (FLC)	Spain	Vocational Training and Employment   Vocational Training and Employment
Comité Español de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)	Spain	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
Fundación CEPAIM	Spain	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
ACCEM	Spain	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
Cruz Roja Española	Spain	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
Fundación Don Bosco	Spain	Language Training   Housing   Vocational Training and Employment
URDA Spain	Spain	Language Training
Madrid For Refugees	Spain	Language Training
Tent España Coalition	Spain	Vocational Training and Employment   Vocational Training and Employment

# Overview of practical programs of training in working conditions (AFEST)

The document titled "A Brief Guide to AFEST" ([accessible here](#)) provides a comprehensive overview of AFEST (Action de Formation en Situation de Travail), which translates to "formal on-the-job training." The guide is framed within the context of European initiatives promoting skill development, particularly in response to evolving labour markets.

The guide originates from the Erasmus+ program, which supports various educational and training initiatives across Europe.

AFEST, a French training scheme formalised by the law of September 2018, is focused on enhancing the skills of employees, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises. It is designed to improve access to professional training for workers with limited opportunities for continuous education.



The guide provides a structured methodology for implementing AFEST programs within organizations. It is intended for business leaders, trainers, and consultants who wish to integrate job-based training with formal pedagogical tools.

Core Features of AFEST:

- **Training Framework:** AFEST is a formal training program that includes structured activities and reflection phases aimed at developing specific skills. It is distinct from informal on-the-job training, which lacks predefined objectives.
- **Right to Make Mistakes:** The methodology emphasizes learning through experience, where learners perform work tasks independently, with the understanding that making mistakes is part of the learning process.
- **Reflection Phases:** After workplace activities, learners engage in reflective sequences with mentors to evaluate their performance and consolidate their learning outcomes.

AFEST provides a tailored learning approach, particularly beneficial for workers with fewer opportunities for traditional training. It fosters quicker skill acquisition, improves workplace organisation, and enhances collaboration between employees and managers.

# Revealing Invisible Skills

## Theoretical context – Bernard Stiegler influence

Bernard Stiegler, a French philosopher, was deeply concerned with the relationship between technology, society, and human capabilities. His work often focused on the ways in which technological development affects human behaviour and thinking, particularly in the context of late capitalism and the digital age. One of Stiegler's key arguments is that for society to develop positively, there is a critical need to reveal and cultivate the "invisible" capabilities or skills within individuals. These capabilities, often unrecognized or underdeveloped, are essential for navigating and shaping the complexities of modern life.

Stiegler argued that in contemporary societies, many human skills and potentials remain latent, overshadowed by the dominance of consumer culture, automated systems, and the commodification of knowledge. This leads to what he described as a form of "proletarianization," where individuals are deprived of their knowledge, creativity, and autonomy, becoming passive consumers or mere functionaries within systems of production. For Stiegler, this is a major problem because it limits the capacity for individuals to contribute meaningfully to societal change.

To address this, Stiegler advocated for a process of "pharmacological" thinking, where technology is seen both as a poison and a remedy. He believed that society must actively engage in a critical relationship with technology, revealing and nurturing the capacities that allow individuals to participate in democratic life and social transformation. These capacities include cognitive skills, emotional intelligence, technical abilities, and collective forms of knowledge.

Central to this idea is the notion of individuation, a process through which individuals not only develop their personal abilities but also contribute to the collective evolution of society. Stiegler emphasized that technologies, especially digital tools, could be harnessed to foster new forms of learning, creativity, and cooperation. However, for this to happen, society must prioritize education, care, and attention over the mere consumption of technological products.

In revealing and supporting these invisible capabilities, Stiegler saw the potential for a new form of political economy—one that values human development over profit maximization. This shift would require rethinking the role of institutions, such as schools and media, in cultivating the kind of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to contribute to the common good. Ultimately, Stiegler believed that only by recognizing and nurturing these hidden capacities could society address the challenges of automation, environmental crisis, and social inequality, leading to a more sustainable and just future.

# Revealing Invisible Skills

## Theoretical context – Bernard Stiegler influence

According to the Institut de Recherche et d'Innovation (IRI) and Bernard Stiegler, technological advancement is outpacing the evolution of social systems, escaping the grasp of political and public powers. Historically, this mismatch between technological progress and social adaptation is characteristic of industrial revolutions. However, what's new in the current age is that regulation, legislation, and knowledge consistently opening, making it difficult for society to catch up with innovations. Automation, for example, will lead to the gradual disappearance of repetitive jobs, while also creating opportunities for the rebirth of work in new forms.

The IRI emphasises the necessity for local, national, and economic authorities to collaborate with higher education institutions to respond effectively to the challenges posed by automation in the labor market. This collaboration should aim at opening new perspectives for employment and work.

### **The Goal: Making Cities Resilient Urban Centers**

Halage, an organisation with extensive experience, believes that experimental projects already underway can generate job-creating solutions in emerging urban sectors on a larger scale. There is a need to formalize innovative training programs, which are currently not funded by professional training frameworks. This effort anticipates the decline of traditional jobs and rethinks how urban life should be organized in terms of local development and environmental sustainability. Three projects illustrate this:

- **SAS Les Alchimistes:** A company co-founded by Halage, transforming organic waste collection and processing into a circular economy model across Île-de-France and beyond.
- **SCIC Cité PHARES:** A collective of associations, cooperatives, and traditional enterprises, employing 700 people, with a budget of €14 million.
- **LII'Ô:** A project to restore biodiversity and develop urban horticulture on a 3.6-hectare industrial site, located in a Natura 2000 zone.

Resilient cities depend on transforming our relationship to knowledge, empowering citizens of today and tomorrow. There is no single knowledge base, nor a singular educational institution serving employment needs. Rather, every individual must be given the opportunity to reveal and mobilize their knowledge and skills within the workplace.

### **Key Challenges: Empowering the Vulnerable**

Often, the most vulnerable are defined by what they lack: job skills, education, housing, health, language proficiency, etc. However, despite their fragile status, they possess knowledge and life skills that are undervalued. IRI argues that empowerment involves developing capacities through work activities, as opposed to merely acquiring skills for employment. While employment-focused competencies may confine individuals to predefined tasks, true empowerment fosters creativity, problem-solving, and innovation within communities.



## Chapter 2 - Takeaways

Recognition of foreign qualifications and experience is key to fast-tracking refugees into their chosen professions, but is often limited and complex to access in practice.

Vocational and technical education programmes provide essential skills and certifications, yet often need to be accompanied by language courses and cultural orientation to be effective for refugees.

Apprenticeships and on-the-job training offer a valuable combination of classroom learning and practical experience, enabling individuals to earn while they learn.

Industry-specific training schemes focusing on areas such as safety, sustainability, and digital construction can enhance employability and help refugees move beyond entry-level positions.

Temporary and seasonal jobs can offer initial access to the labour market, but may also lead to stagnation if not paired with career progression opportunities and skill development.

# 03

## Holistic Support Integrating Refugees





## Providing a holistic support to refugee integration

Successfully integrating refugees into the construction sector requires more than just employment opportunities; it demands a comprehensive, person-centred approach that addresses both professional and social challenges. Many refugees face barriers beyond language and skills recognition, including limited access to housing, social networks, and mental health support, all of which can impact their ability to secure and sustain employment.

This chapter explores how vocational education and training (VET) centres, employers, trade unions, and community organisations can collaborate to provide holistic support for refugees. By combining career guidance, tailored training, mentorship, and social assistance, these initiatives ensure that refugees not only enter the workforce but also thrive within it. Through practical examples, this chapter highlights effective strategies for fostering long-term inclusion, resilience, and professional growth in the construction sector in Denmark, France, Ireland, Poland and Spain.



# Knowledge on Administrative issues that “Refugee” Status and Other Status Encompass in Denmark

Denmark offers several programmes to support the integration of refugees into society and the labour market. One notable initiative is the **Integration Basic Education (IGU) programme**, which aims to facilitate the entry of refugees and their family members into the workforce. Participants in the IGU programme are employed for at least 25 hours per week and engage in 20 weeks of training over a two-year period. This training includes vocational education, Danish language lessons, and other essential skills courses. The programme targets individuals aged 18 to 40 who have been in Denmark for less than five years. ([migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu](http://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu))

In addition to government-led initiatives, non-governmental organisations play a crucial role in supporting refugee integration. The **Danish Red Cross**, for instance, implements various innovative projects to enhance the social inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees. One such project is the 'Fast Track to Employment' programme, which assists asylum seekers in finding jobs or internships. Another initiative is the 'Buddy Programme', where newly arrived refugees are paired with local volunteers who provide practical guidance, cultural orientation, and assistance in building local networks. ([redcross.eu](http://redcross.eu))

Furthermore, the **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** has been aiding refugees and displaced individuals since 1956. The DRC offers a range of services, including legal assistance, counselling, and support in accessing education and employment opportunities. Their efforts are geared towards ensuring that refugees can lead dignified lives and contribute positively to Danish society. ([pro.drc.ngo](http://pro.drc.ngo))



# Knowledge on Administrative Issues that “Refugee” Status and Other Status Encompass in France

## Semantic Confusions Impacting the Labour Market

There is widespread confusion in France between refugees and migrants. A migrant is someone living outside their country for any reason, while a refugee is forced to flee and benefits from international protection due to threats to their life. An asylum seeker, meanwhile, is someone applying for refugee status but not yet recognised as a refugee.

In everyday language, “refugee” is often used broadly to describe anyone fleeing their home country, even though the legal framework distinguishes between asylum seekers, refugees, and rejected asylum applicants. The term “migrant” is frequently used in political discourse and often carries negative connotations, whereas the specific issue of refugees is less commonly highlighted.

## Refugee Reception System in France

The refugee reception system in France is primarily managed by public organisations that determine refugee status, provide social support—including housing—and integrate newcomers into society and the labour market.

The **Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII)** is responsible for integrating recognised refugees and asylum seekers. It also works to combat illegal employment and supports individuals whose asylum applications have been refused. The **French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA)** examines asylum claims and grants refugee status. Although supervised by the Ministry of the Interior, it maintains functional independence. In recent years, there has been a shift towards outsourcing asylum processing to third countries, a controversial practice. The **Cour National du Droit d'Asile (CNDA)** handles appeals for asylum decisions.

Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as **France Terre d'Asile, Emmaüs, and La Cimade**, provide legal, social, and psychological support. At the local level, **municipalities** play a key role in providing housing and integration services, often partnering with NGOs to assist refugees.

## Social Support and Integration Programmes

During their asylum application, asylum seekers have access to social benefits, including healthcare, housing, and education. They may be housed in state-run reception centres or temporary accommodation, though housing shortages—particularly in the Paris region—remain a significant issue.

Once recognised as refugees, individuals gain official access to the labour market and are entitled to government-provided social benefits. These include **financial support (ADA - Aide à la Demande d'Asile)**, healthcare, and language courses. The OFII also runs integration programmes such as **French language courses, cultural orientation, and employment assistance**. Local municipalities and NGOs further support refugees through housing aid, legal assistance, and community-based services.

## Refugees in the Labour Market – Right to Work

Asylum seekers are only permitted to work **six months** after submitting their asylum application. However, securing employment during this period is difficult, as employers are often hesitant due to the uncertainty of asylum outcomes. If granted refugee status, individuals obtain full work rights, like legal residents, allowing them to participate fully in the labour market without restrictions.

## Labour Market Integration and Employment Support

The French government offers various **public sector programmes** to facilitate refugee access to employment. These include **French language courses, job training, and tailored employment services**. NGOs, such as Halage, run **work integration programmes** that do not require hiring from specific locations, providing greater flexibility for refugees. Employers who hire refugees may receive **financial support and tax benefits**, including **exemptions from social security contributions** for the first few months of employment.

# Knowledge on Administrative issues that “Refugee” Status and Other Status Encompass in Ireland

To be recognised as a refugee, you must be a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of:

- Race
- Religion
- Nationality
- Political opinion
- Membership of a particular social group
- is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of his or her country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.

If it is decided that you are not a refugee, you may qualify for subsidiary protection if there are substantial grounds for believing that you would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if returned to your country of origin/country of former habitual residence.

This is a status which is whether that of refugee. It is granted where the person does not qualify as a refugee but where the IPO considers that the person faces a real risk of suffering serious harm in his or her country of origin.

The precise definition is that a person eligible for subsidiary protection is a person

- who is not a national of a Member State of the European Union,
- who does not qualify as a refugee,
- in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that he or she, if returned to his or her country of origin/country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm, and who is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; and
- who is not excluded from eligibility for subsidiary protection for certain reasons

If the International Protection Office recommends that you are not entitled to either refugee status or subsidiary protection, the Minister will then consider whether to give you permission to remain in the State (Ireland) for another reason (for example, because of your family or personal circumstances).

The permission to remain function will also be carried out in the International Protection Office.

\*Source: [International Protection and Permission to Remain - International Protection Office \(ipo.gov.ie\)](http://ipo.gov.ie)

International protection applicants have the right to work after six months of waiting on a decision from the Department of Justice on their case. They must apply for permission to work which is called *Labour Market Access* (LMA) and last a year. It can take up to 120 days for the permission letter to arrive. Renewal of this permission can take 60 days so they need to start the process one month ahead but can continue to work for four weeks after expiration.

[Labour Market Access](#)



# Knowledge on Administrative issues that “Refugee” Status and Other Status Encompass in Poland

A foreign national is granted refugee status if, due to a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin based on race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, or membership in a particular social group, they are unable or unwilling to seek protection from that country.

- Refugee status is also granted to a minor child of a foreign national who has been granted refugee status in the Republic of Poland, if the child was born in that territory.
- The persecution referred to in paragraph 1 must:
- Due to its nature or repetition, constitute a serious violation of human rights, particularly those rights that cannot be derogated from under Article 15(2) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, signed in Rome on November 4, 1950 (Journal of Laws of 1993, item 284, as amended), or
- Be a cumulative result of various actions or omissions, including human rights violations, whose impact is as severe as the persecution mentioned in point 1.

Source: Dz.U.2023.1504 t.j. Wersja od: 1 lipca 2024 r.

A type of residence permit granted to foreigners who, for fear of persecution, e.g. because of race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, cannot or do not want to use the protection of their home country. In Poland, refugee status is granted by the Head of the Office for Foreigners in Warsaw [Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców - Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców - Portal Gov.pl](#).

## Legalising Stay in Poland for Ukrainian Refugees

An individual’s stay in Poland is considered legal until September 30, 2025, if they meet one of the following conditions:

- They are a Ukrainian citizen holding a Polish Card (*Karta Polaka*), who left Ukraine on or after February 24, 2022, legally entered Poland, and intends to remain in the country.
- They are an immediate family member of a Ukrainian citizen holding a Polish Card, who left Ukraine on or after February 24, 2022, legally entered Poland, and intends to remain in the country.

No applications are required to legalise the stay or to obtain refugee status. The legality of the stay is based on the provisions of the law. Protection is granted from the date of arrival in Poland, not from the date of applying for a PESEL number.

## Rights Granted:

- Access to the Labor Market.
- Conducting Business Activity

## Access to Financial and Non-Financial Benefits (with PESEL UKR):

- Child support benefits (500+),
- “Good Start” benefit (Dobry Start),
- A one-time financial allowance of PLN 300 per person for essential needs (e.g., food, clothing, hygiene products, housing costs),
- Family benefits,
- Family care capital (Rodzinny Kapitał Opiekuńczy),
- Subsidies for childcare costs in nurseries, childcare clubs, or with day caregivers,
- Access to Healthcare
- Access to Education and Public Services



# Knowledge on Administrative issues that “Refugee” Status and Other Status Encompass in Spain

Spain’s refugee reception system is managed by the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration, in collaboration with Comunidades Autónomas (regions), and a network of over 20 NGOs. Upon arrival and processing of the request for international protection, the Government may consider refugees require or not support programmes, yet this is not envisioned for all refugees. In fact, many do not form part of support reception programmes. The refugee support programme is divided into three phases:

- **First Reception:** Provides short term emergency accommodation for vulnerable asylum seekers and coverage of basic needs.
- **Second Phase:** Provides accommodation in reception centers and integration support, including language learning and literacy, social and psychological support, training and employment support.
- **Autonomy Phase:** Supports refugees in securing housing, finding employment, and acquire self-sufficiency.

NGOs such as Cruz Roja, CEAR, and ACCEM play a vital role in all three phases by managing local integration projects and providing targeted support services to refugees and migrants. Similarly, the Comunidades Autónomas play a key role in complementing national efforts by managing specific regional programmes for integration and social inclusion. These regions help coordinate services such as education, healthcare, and social services, which are essential for refugees’ integration. The Autonomous Communities also facilitate language learning and employment initiatives through local resources.

VET and employment service providers such as the Fundación Laboral de la Construcción work through strong local networks with NGOs to provide targeted training and job-placement support to refugees and other vulnerable populations. Most activities combine capacity building and information on enterprises looking for workers, helping refugee inclusion.

In Spain, the process for hiring refugees varies based on their legal status:

- Applicants for International Protection can work six months after submitting their application, as indicated in their documentation as applicants.
- Refugees and Subsidiary Protection Holders (Beneficiaries of international protection) can work immediately with a valid foreigner ID card (TIE).
- Temporary Protection Beneficiaries can work during the protection period without restrictions.
- People with residence and work authorisation for humanitarian reasons can work with their TIE, which is valid for one year and renewable for equal periods.

Employment is allowed across all sectors and regions in Spain. For further details, visit the [Ministry of Inclusion's website](#).

Other migrants can regularise their status through mechanisms like "arraigo social" and "arraigo laboral", which grant residency based on social ties or work history. A more recent pathway, "arraigo por formación", allows undocumented migrants to obtain temporary residency by enrolling in professional training. Minimum length of the courses required is not uniform and varies depending on the Comunidad Autónoma (region). Upon completion, migrants can apply for a work permit. This legal route aims to integrate migrants into the workforce while equipping them with necessary skills for the labour market.



# Work Integration Policies – Denmark



Denmark's work integration policies are rooted in the **flexicurity** model, which combines labour market flexibility with social security. This approach allows employers to adjust their workforce as needed while providing employees with a safety net and opportunities for skill development. The model is supported by **active labour market policies (ALMPs)**, which aim to maintain high employment rates and facilitate swift transitions for job seekers.

ALMPs in Denmark encompass various initiatives, including job placement services, vocational training, and educational programmes. These measures are designed to enhance the employability of individuals, particularly those facing challenges in entering or re-entering the labour market. The Danish government invests significantly in these programmes, reflecting a commitment to social mobility and market efficiency.

In recent years, Denmark has implemented reforms to promote faster labour market integration for refugees and migrants. These reforms focus on accelerating employment opportunities and reducing dependency on social benefits. However, some policies have faced criticism for potentially fostering social divisions. For instance, the government's approach to integrating immigrants in certain neighbourhoods has been described as a form of social engineering, aiming to dismantle immigrant enclaves and enforce integration into Danish society. [gzeromedia.com](https://www.gzeromedia.com)





# Work Integration Policies – France

Since the 1980s, the French government has implemented work-integration programs. These programs are developed on professional sectors that require low-skilled workforce such as gardening, cleaning, cooking, logistic and maintenance services. They also have been implemented within the construction sector, particularly for finishing works (painting, partitioning, flooring).

They are implemented by civil society organizations that first obtain official accreditation by the State services. These organisations recruit people based on vulnerability criteria (disability, low level of education, long-term unemployment, beneficiaries of social subsidies).

These employees will benefit from specific short-term contracts that can be renewed up to a maximum period of 2 years. The working contract includes a reduced weekly hourly volume (French standard full-time contract is usually 35 hours per week) that includes dedicated times for social support : languages courses, trainings, social appointments to help with administrative issues (housing, health, preparation for retirement..). The employees on integration programs are supervised by technical advisors who help them mastering the necessary skills on the worksites. The technical advisors work altogether with the social advisors involved and develop the best framework for workers to gain autonomy and empowerment during the work-integration program.

Public procurement procedures have been developed as a mechanism to support the mobilization of work-integration workers, through the social clauses. These clauses require companies responding to a public call for tenders to reserve a minimum amount of working time for people undergoing vocational integration schemes such as work-integration programs. Social clauses are increasingly used in public procurement, but also in large-scale private contracts, as part of good CSR practices.

In 2010, 2.5 per cent of public contracts at the value of EUR 90,000 or above contained social clauses with further increase up to 4.1 per cent in 2011. As of 2011, there were 646 actors out of 5560 using public procurement procedures who declared their use of the social clause in procurement<sup>2</sup>. More recently, the inclusion of social clauses in most of the Olympic Games public procedures has confirmed this progress. The ESS 2024 program, run by the Les Canaux association, was designed to help social economy players gain access to the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games (JOP) contracts. In particular, the aim was to inform SSE structures about the various JOP contracts, whether launched directly or as subcontractors, and to help them respond to them, sometimes by encouraging them to form consortiums to combine their skills. Over and above the obvious positive impact in terms of employment for disadvantaged groups, this has helped to raise the visibility of all the actors involved and raise awareness on these work integration programs ([see videos here](#)).



# Work Integration Policies – Ireland

There are gaps in the labour market integration supports for applicants in Ireland. There is neither a specific policy nor a strategy to support the labour market integration of third-country nationals; neither does it have a strategy tailored to support labour market integration of international protection applicants. The Migrant Integration Strategy that was in operation between 2017 and 2021 targeted EEA and non-EEA nationals, including beneficiaries of international protection, economic migrants and people with a legal status to remain in Ireland (Department Justice and Equality, 2017). International protection applicants generally did not fall within its scope, save where the actions relate to public services that are provided to applicants as a matter of public policy; for example, compulsory education. International protection applicants with labour market access permission can avail of services available through the mainstream Public Employment Services (Intreo). However, due to their residence status, some limitations apply; for example, on measures targeting the long-term unemployed.

According to a study by Michael Polakowski and Emyl Cunniffe, no specific nation-wide governance structures to support the labour market integration of international protection applicants in Ireland were identified in this research. Nonetheless, the key stakeholders involved in supporting this integration more broadly include the government departments and agencies responsible for the labour market, health, education and social protection. Outside of government bodies, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) and most organizations (NGOs) play an important role in supporting labour market integration for international protection applicants, with most NGOs providing small-scale projects specifically targeting international protection applicants seeking to enter the labour market.

While no specific protocols or synergies for supporting the labour market integration of international protection applicants were identified, stakeholders cooperate through various fora to aid this process. The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) plays a key role in local-level integration measures. In 2022, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) introduced new funding for community-based organisations to support this group's integration.

Research and stakeholder interviews highlighted several challenges, including the lack of a coordinated national programme, with most tailored support relying on short-term NGO-led projects. Other challenges include limited local labour market access and underemployment, with applicants often working in low-skilled jobs despite holding higher qualifications.

Source:

[LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION APPLICANTS IN IRELAND \(emn.ie\)](#)

See also;

[Irishimmigration.ie/regularisation-of-long-term-undocumented-migrant-scheme/](#)

[Employing-International-Protection-Applicants-Employer-Guide](#)

[Hiring-refugees-and-asylum](#)

[-seekers-reference-guide-hr-departments](#)

[Joint initiative Programme Learner Support System](#)

[Tus-community-work-placement-initiative/](#)

[IHREC - Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#)



# Work Integration Policies – Poland

Poland has historically lacked a comprehensive migration strategy, largely attributable to its past status as a country with a negative migration balance. However, the current transition towards a sustained positive migration balance has emerged as a significant and enduring phenomenon. This demographic shift is increasingly crucial in addressing the challenges posed by an aging population, making the formulation of a comprehensive migration strategy one of the most urgent priorities for the state.

Between 2015 and 2020, Poland experienced a transformation from an "employer's market" to an "employee's market," providing a critical window to prepare for the rising interest in immigration, particularly from Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, the war in Ukraine has starkly revealed the deficiencies of not having a coherent migration policy in place, as Poland's response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees was largely improvised and reactive. This scenario underscores the missed opportunity to devise comprehensive migration solutions during this pivotal period of labor market transition.

Source: Paweł Strzelecki, Stanisław Kluza, Polska polityka migracyjna Uwarunkowania i rekomendacje, Fundacji Przyjazny Kraj, Warszawa kwiecień 2024, p. 7-9 [Raport Polska-polityka-migracyjna Fundacja-Przyjazny-Kraj QT 16042024.pdf \(przyjaznykraj.pl\)](#)

On October 15, 2024, the Polish Council of Ministers adopted the document "Regain Control. Ensure Safety" (Resolution No. 120), outlining a comprehensive migration strategy for 2025–2030. This strategy redefines Poland's approach to migration management, emphasizing stricter regulations to limit the influx of undesirable individuals amidst increasing migration dynamics, including from Ukraine. The strategy prioritizes control and safety but raises concerns regarding its implementation. Key priorities include:

- **Security:** Detailed migration controls over entry purposes, inflow scale, and countries of origin.
- **Territorial Access:** Transparent visa policies with selective migration rules and enhanced consular autonomy.
- **Protection Access:** Reformed asylum procedures to prevent misuse while maintaining humanitarian considerations and parliamentary oversight for temporary suspensions.
- **Labor Market Access:** Focused on filling labor shortages without creating new market challenges or enabling fraudulent job applications.
- **Educational Migration:** Regulations to prevent misuse of education for residency purposes and ensure transparent internationalization processes.
- **Immigrant Integration:** First-time policies supporting immigrant integration while preserving social cohesion and Polish norms.
- **Citizenship and Repatriation:** Rules for acquiring Polish citizenship and repatriation of those of Polish origin, including references to the Polish Card program.
- **Polish Diaspora:** Strengthened collaboration with the diaspora and initiatives to support returning migrants.

This strategy addresses gaps in past migration policies, providing clear objectives for implementation in two phases: 2025–2027 and 2028–2030. ["Odzyskać kontrolę. Zapewnić bezpieczeństwo" - strategia migracyjna na lata 2025 - 2030 - Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów - Portal Gov.pl](#)

# Work Integration Policies – Spain



- **Training in construction through the National Reception System:** The Ministry of Inclusion offers training in key construction skills, such as bricklaying and electrical work, to improve refugees' employability.
- **Fundación Laboral de la Construcción (FLC):** It collaborates with NGOs and runs training programmes on occupational safety and certifications, facilitating refugees' integration into the construction sector.
- **Labour Integration Programmes from NGOs taking part in the National Reception System for International Protection:** They provide technical training and employment guidance in construction, along with work placements and support in job searching.
- **Recognition of skills and certifications:** The regional governments and the FLC facilitate the recognition of skills acquired by refugees in their home countries, enabling them to obtain essential professional certifications in the sector.





## Chapter 3 - Takeaways

VET centers play a crucial role in supporting refugee integration by offering tailored training courses. Nonetheless, stand-alone courses are not enough. Integration requires a broader approach combining skills training with personal and professional guidance.

Career and entrepreneurship support is key: help with CVs, job search, understanding recruitment processes, and exploring self-employment options.

Cultural and workplace awareness training helps refugees navigate local norms, expectations, and communication styles.

Legal, psychosocial, and housing support are often necessary to remove barriers that prevent participation in training or work. Refugees often lack Access to legalised or standard documents needed for skills recognition, often a recurrent barrier across the EU.

Refugees often face intersecting challenges—including discrimination, insecure housing, and mental health issues—which impact their ability to learn and work, yet these are frequently overlooked.

A joined-up approach involving VET providers, NGOs, employers and public services ensures more inclusive and sustainable pathways into the construction sector.

Understanding rights and obligations is critical. Labour law and occupational safety norms vary between countries, so targeted information must be provided by social workers and orienteers.

# 04

## Case studies of Socially Inclusive Construction Projects



The construction sector is a vital engine for economic growth and job creation across Europe, yet it remains a sector where social inclusion of refugees remains a challenge. Refugees continue to be underrepresented or face precarious working conditions. However, in response to these challenges, various initiatives across Europe have sought to promote social inclusion by integrating them, improving working conditions, and ensuring that construction projects contribute to broader social equity.

This chapter includes various case studies that highlight innovative approaches to social inclusion in the construction sector across different European countries. In Ireland, initiatives have focused on integrating Ukrainian refugees into the workforce through modular housing projects, tackling language barriers, qualification recognition, and systemic employment hurdles. Poland's approach has involved skills recognition and vocational training to help refugees, including individuals like Roman, a former Ukrainian border guard, transition into stable construction jobs. France's PHARES project has showcased a cooperative model combining social integration with sustainable construction, while Denmark's flexicurity model and active labour market policies have played a key role in enabling refugees to enter the workforce. Spain has leveraged both government-led and NGO-supported training initiatives, such as those by Fundación Laboral de la Construcción, to facilitate refugee employment despite persisting challenges related to precarious work conditions. Across all case studies, a common theme emerges: the necessity of multi-stakeholder collaboration, tailored training, and supportive policies to ensure the successful inclusion of refugees in the construction sector



*Renovation project, France, at l'Ile-Saint-Denis.  
Photo credits: Victoria Tanto*

# PHARES Construction Project

The Pôle d'Hospitalité des Activités à Rayonnement Ecologique et Solidaire (P.H.A.R.E.S) is located in the heart of Ile-Saint-Denis. It was founded in 2001 by the Halage association, with the idea of creating a crossroads for economic initiatives and associations sharing the same values of solidarity, citizen innovation and ecology. Today, the site represents 1350m<sup>2</sup> dedicated to the SSE, welcoming nearly 150 users working daily on the site within a dozen associative, cooperative and entrepreneurial structures, which enable the employment of over 400 employees on integration paths throughout the Ile de France region.

In 2014, this collective project was structured in the form of a SCIC, which today brings together 21 members in a single college, and co-management by three volunteer members.

In 2021, Halage association launched a major project to renovate and raise the height of the building. This project arose from the realization that PHARES today has to deal with an aging building built in the 1970s, with outdated equipment (oil-fired heating, very poor insulation, lack of natural light), and not enough space to accommodate the needs of local associations, for whom access to land is a major requirement.

Halage (owner of the building) and the SCIC have joined forces with the Bellevilles real estate company to support this project on a joint ownership basis. The expansion of the site, partly financed by the Programme d'Investissement Avenir (PIA) of the Agence Nationale de Rénovation Urbaine (ANRU), is intended to help meet the development challenges facing SSE structures.

The work envisaged for PHARES was initially based on a consultation phase, to propose a demonstrator worksite, promoting and valorizing players involved in professional integration, the circular economy and sustainable construction. This "100% SSE" approach aims to support local employment, which will contribute, among other things, to the integration of refugees into the job market thanks to local associations employing this type of public.



*Picture of existing building (Halage)*

# PHARES Construction Project

## Next steps of the PHARES Project

- Winter 2024 - designation of all companies working on the site, and establishment of partnerships between traditional companies and ETTIs, to optimize training plans and employee career paths.
- Development, before the start of the works, of on-the-job training (FEST) schemes. Training sessions dedicated to this project are planned thanks to a partnership with the Chantier Ecole network.
- March 2025 - launch of works, for 18 months. The inauguration of the site is planned for autumn 2026.

## During construction

- Coordination of site monitoring meetings, with a specific focus on the career paths of the employees involved, in conjunction with all the social partners, to give best changes for their professional evolution
- Setting up a technical platform to enable the site to benefit trainees on qualifying and pre-qualifying courses in sustainable construction.
- Setting up participative worksites for certain development projects, helping to disseminate know-how in the sustainable construction sector: earth plastering, sowing on green roofs, construction of interior and exterior furniture, etc.



*Perspective of the renovation project (Halage)*

# Ireland – Ukrainian Refugees Working in the Construction Of Modular Houses

This case study highlights the challenges, successes, and opportunities involved in integrating refugees into Ireland's construction sector, addressing labor shortages while supporting vulnerable populations.

## Key Challenges

- Language Barriers: Basic English proficiency is essential for ensuring safety and productivity.
- Recognition of Qualifications: Many refugees' skills remain unrecognized, leading to underemployment.
- Training Access: The process of obtaining mandatory certifications is hindered by the lack of tailored courses and interpreters.
- Systemic Barriers: Complex procedures and limited awareness slow the integration process.
- Success Strategies
- Employer Support: Mentoring programs help bridge communication gaps.
- Training Programs: Local organizations provide technical courses and English language classes.
- Fair Treatment: Equal pay fosters trust and loyalty among refugee employees.
- Community Engagement: Participation in local schools and sports facilitates integration.

## Opportunities

- Fast-Track Recognition: Tailored "bridge" courses for foreign qualifications.
- Expanded Language Training: Evening and online classes designed for the construction sector.
- Government Investment: Increased funding for interpreters and training programs.
- Awareness Campaigns: Clear information on support programs for refugees and employers.

## Conclusion

Integrating refugees into Ireland's construction sector can address labor shortages and foster a more inclusive workforce. Collaboration among employers, government, and community organizations is essential for long-term success.



# Refugee Introduction Programme, Norway

The Introduction Programme is a comprehensive training initiative in Norway designed to equip refugees aged 18 to 55 with the necessary skills and knowledge for active participation in the workforce or educational pursuits. This programme is particularly tailored for those granted temporary collective protection and residing in municipalities that have agreements with the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). Participation is voluntary; however, if a participant secures full-time employment (30 to 40 hours per week), they are expected to prioritise the job over the programme. Part-time employment can be integrated into the programme's structure.

## Programme Structure and Content

The Introduction Programme is a full-time commitment, mirroring a standard working week, and can last up to two years, with possible extensions in specific circumstances. The core components of the programme include:

- **Norwegian Language Training:** Participants receive instruction aimed at achieving proficiency in the Norwegian language, facilitating effective communication in daily life and professional settings.
- **Civic Education:** This component provides insights into Norwegian society, covering topics such as cultural norms, legal rights and obligations, and the welfare system, thereby aiding participants in navigating their new environment confidently.
- **Career Guidance and Work Experience:** Tailored to individual backgrounds and aspirations, this includes career counselling, job search assistance, and opportunities for work placements or internships to gain practical experience in the Norwegian labour market.
- **Educational Support:** For those lacking formal education or needing credential recognition, the programme offers pathways to further education, including courses to complete secondary education or prepare for higher studies.

## Individualised Planning

Each participant collaborates with a programme advisor to develop a personalised plan that outlines specific goals, and the steps needed to achieve them. This plan considers the individual's prior education, work experience, and personal aspirations, ensuring that the programme is relevant and effective for each participant.

## Financial Support

Participants are entitled to an introduction benefit, which provides financial support during the programme. As of the latest guidelines, the annual benefit equals twice the National Insurance basic amount, with participants under 25 years of age receiving two-thirds of this amount. This benefit is taxable and is intended to cover living expenses, allowing participants to focus on their integration journey without financial strain.

## Rights and Obligations

While participation is voluntary, those who choose to engage in the programme are expected to adhere to its requirements, including attendance and active participation in scheduled activities. Absences without valid reasons can lead to deductions in the introduction benefit. Participants are also entitled to holidays and leaves of absence for valid reasons, such as illness or family responsibilities, in line with the programme's regulations.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/immigration-and-integration/asd/Verkemiddel-i-integreringsarbeidet/introduksjonsprogram/id2343472/>



# Roman's Path into the Polish Construction Sector

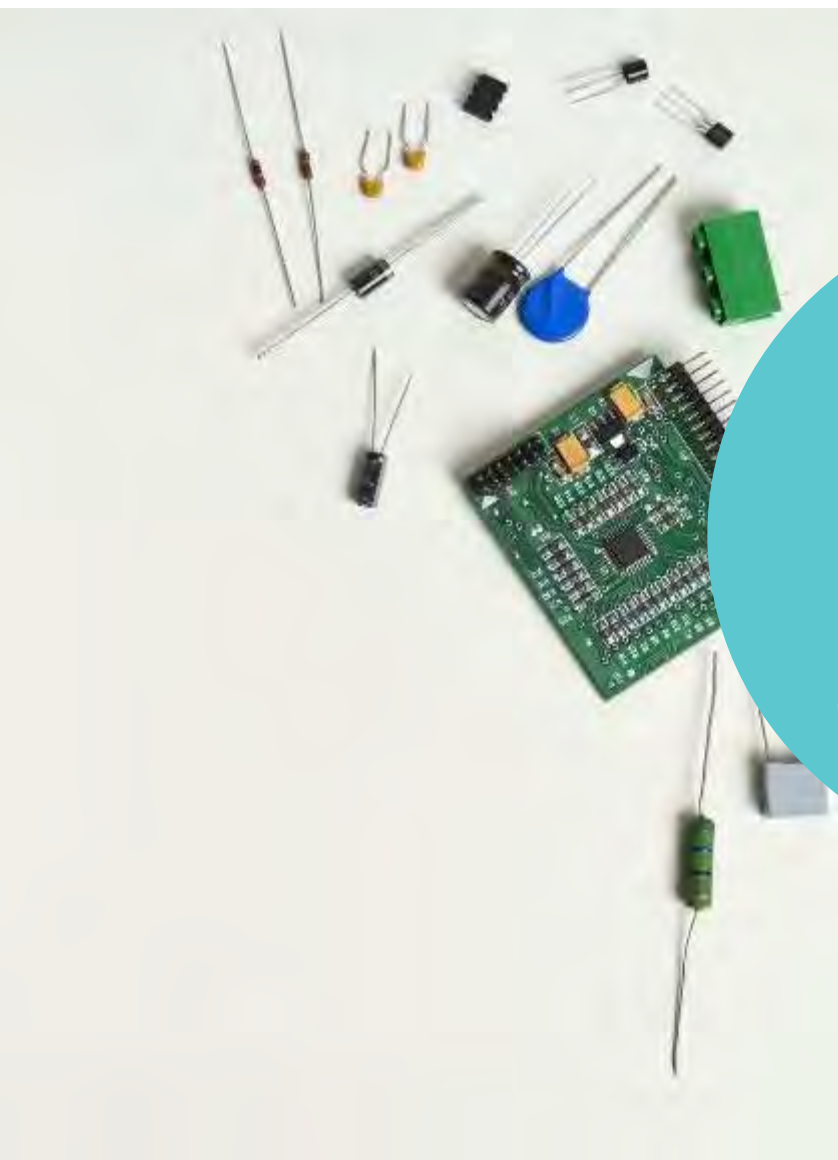
Roman, a 49-year-old from Kharkiv, Ukraine, dedicated 25 years of his life to serving in the Border Guard of Ukraine. At the age of 45, he retired and decided to relocate to Poland.

Seeking to improve his financial situation and expand his career prospects, Roman pursued additional education as an electrician. For the past four years, he has been working in this profession in Poland.

His first employer in Poland, Kariera na Plus Ltd., played a pivotal role in his transition. The company provided him with the opportunity to acquire a new profession and secure stable, legal employment. Additionally, they supported him in legalizing his stay, finding accommodation, and integrating into the local labor market. Roman now works alongside both Polish colleagues and fellow Ukrainians. Over time, he has achieved proficiency in the Polish language, including professional terminology specific to his job.

Legal employment has also afforded him benefits such as paid vacation days, enabling him to travel and further explore Polish culture.

Looking ahead, Roman plans to purchase an apartment and eventually settle permanently in Poland.



*My first employer (and current one) played a pivotal role in my integration into Polish construction labour market. The company provided me with the opportunity to acquire a new profession and secure stable, legal employment. I'm planning to purchase an apartment and eventually settle permanently in Poland."*



# Yunior's Travel Path into the Spanish Construction Sector

Yunior's journey in the construction sector started early in Venezuela, where at 16, he began working to support his family amidst the country's economic downturn. Initially a labourer helping masons, Yunior learned the basics of construction by mixing concrete and laying foundations. As his responsibilities grew, so did his skills, though his work primarily focused on residential buildings, common in his region.

Despite his growing experience in construction, Yunior eventually shifted his focus to electronics and telecommunications. Influenced by his brother-in-law, an electrical engineer, he pursued studies in electronic engineering, specialising in power and automation systems. After graduating, he worked in telecommunications, gaining valuable experience in electrical systems. However, as Venezuela's economic crisis deepened, the instability prompted Yunior to seek opportunities abroad. At the age of 22, he made the difficult decision to leave his home country for Colombia.

In Colombia, Yunior's situation remained difficult. He arrived in Medellín hoping to build a stable life, but the realities of being a migrant in a struggling economy soon set in. At first, Yunior found himself homeless, sleeping in parks and struggling to find work. For 18 days, he lived on the streets, experiencing hunger and uncertainty. Eventually, with the help of a friend, Yunior secured a job in a restaurant, working long shifts for minimal pay. The job provided some stability, but it was far from his expertise in telecommunications and construction.

After several months in the restaurant industry, Yunior re-entered the construction sector. His first job involved heavy labour, unloading trucks filled with 50-kilogram cement bags and performing other physically demanding tasks. While the work was far from ideal, it provided a more consistent income than his previous job. Over time, Yunior transitioned back to his field of expertise, working as an assistant electrician. Though he lacked formal recognition of his skills, he began to gain practical experience in electrical systems, including medium, low, and high-voltage installations. However, Yunior often faced discrimination as a Venezuelan migrant, with some Colombian colleagues reluctant to teach him more advanced skills, fearing he might take their jobs.

Despite these challenges, Yunior's perseverance paid off. He eventually found work with an electrical company in Colombia, where he further specialised in structured cabling and telecommunications installations. This role allowed him to solidify his expertise, but as Colombia's political and economic situation worsened, Yunior began to consider leaving once again. With the help of friends, he saved enough money to make the move to Spain in 2021, a long-time goal influenced by his family's Spanish roots.



*"I had to sleep 18 days on the street in Medellín. My pillow was a suitcase, my mattress was cardboard, and my blanket was the night." - Yunior, Venezuelan refugee and construction worker*



# Yunior's Travel Path into the Spanish Construction Sector

In Spain, Yunior faced familiar challenges as a migrant. Despite his years of experience in Venezuela and Colombia, he had to start from scratch in a foreign system. His first job came through a chance encounter via a social app, where he was hired as an electrician's assistant. The pay was low, and the tools and methods were different from what he had used in South America. However, Yunior quickly adapted, determined to re-establish himself in the Spanish construction sector.

Spain's construction industry provided Yunior with opportunities to work, but like many migrants, he faced lower wages and fewer protections compared to local workers. Recognising the need to formalise his qualifications, Yunior enrolled in courses offered by Fundación Laboral de la Construcción. He completed certifications in low-voltage electricity, External Thermal Insulation Composite Systems, forklift operation, and other specialised areas, which helped him align his skills with Spanish standards and increase his employability.

Yunior also had to navigate the slow bureaucratic process of securing legal status in Spain. While waiting for his asylum application to be processed, he worked in precarious conditions. Even after receiving his residency permit, he continued to face hurdles related to his migrant status. However, Yunior remained focused on advancing his career, working various jobs in construction while pursuing further training.

Yunior has now resettled to Cáceres, a small town in in South-West Spain with his family. The first thing he did was contact the local Fundación Laboral de la Construcción to find a job, as the organisation provides employment services.

Yunior's experience across three countries—Venezuela, Colombia, and Spain—highlights the challenges faced by many migrants and refugees. His story reflects the realities of starting over multiple times, often in environments where his skills were undervalued or unrecognised. Yet, through persistence and continuous learning, Yunior was able to rebuild his career in Spain's construction sector. His journey is a testament to the resilience of migrants, who despite facing discrimination, legal barriers, and economic hardship, continue to contribute to the communities they join.



*"It was my first day of work in Spain, He left me all the electrical tools and said he'd come back in the afternoon... I finished in four hours." Yunior, refugee and Venezuelan construction worker.*



**Yunior and his classmates at an External Thermal Insulation Composite Systems course at the Fundación Laboral de la Construcción, Madrid - March 2024.**

## Chapter 4 - Takeaways



Successful inclusive construction projects involve cooperation between municipalities, training centres, employers, and civil society organisations to create accessible, supported employment pathways.

These initiatives focus not only on access to jobs, but on long-term inclusion through mentoring, coaching, language support, and recognition of existing skills.

Peer support networks and role models with shared backgrounds help build trust, motivation, and a sense of belonging among refugee workers.

Some projects are using digital tools to track skills and learning outcomes, helping refugees document their experience and avoid repeating training after relocating across EU countries.

# Did You Know...

In 2022, 9.93 million non-EU citizens were employed in the EU labour market, out of 193.5 million persons aged from 20 to 64, corresponding to 5.1% of the total.

42,4 million people were born outside the EU (9% of all EU inhabitants)

Irregular migration in the EU, totaling 326,217 individuals, constitutes a relatively small fraction compared to legal migration, which stands at 3,454,684 individuals.

27,3 million are non-EU citizens (6% of EU's total population)

At the end of 2021, less than 10% of all the world's refugees and only a fraction of internally displaced persons were living in the EU. By the end of 2022, as a result of the war in Ukraine, the share of refugees living in the EU increased to more than 20%.

20% of all residents permits in the EU are due to work(2022).

15% of residence permits are due to asylum (2022).

The employment rate in the EU in the working-age population is higher for EU citizens (77.1%), than for non-EU citizens (61.9%) in 2022.

Non-EU nationals make 9,1% of the construction industry's workforce

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