

Integration challenges of third-country nationals: frames of policy and measures regarding qualifications and the German labour market

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Abstract. Germany represents a promising opportunity for third-country nationals seeking to join the labour force. The objective of this article is to present a framework of policies and measures that could potentially facilitate the integration of third-country nationals (TCNs) into the German labour market, with a particular focus on the realm of qualifications. It could be argued that although Germany has previously experienced labour immigration, it was based on agreements between states and the integration of foreign labourers was not a topic of contention at the political or societal level. It was only after it became evident that there was a requirement for foreign labour in light of the declining number of domestic workers and the necessity for German economic growth that significant measures were initiated. The considerable influx of non-German nationals after 2015 presented the political level with the prospect of a new source of labour and the challenge of integrating them into the German labour market.

Keyword: third-country nationals (TCNs), migration, integration, German labour market, qualification

Introduction

The concept of integration is employed to delineate the social, political, cultural and economic processes that occur upon the arrival of migrants in a novel societal milieu, but it is also a normative category (Martiniello 2012). National models and integration programmes have frequently been superseded by changing contemporary realities, political and economic priorities and dramatic events (Carrera 2006). There is no legal definition of 'labour market integration' or 'successful labour market integration' in Germany (Tangermann and Grote 2018), but key to integration is social inclusion, and all the measures that have been developed to achieve this (Guild 2006).

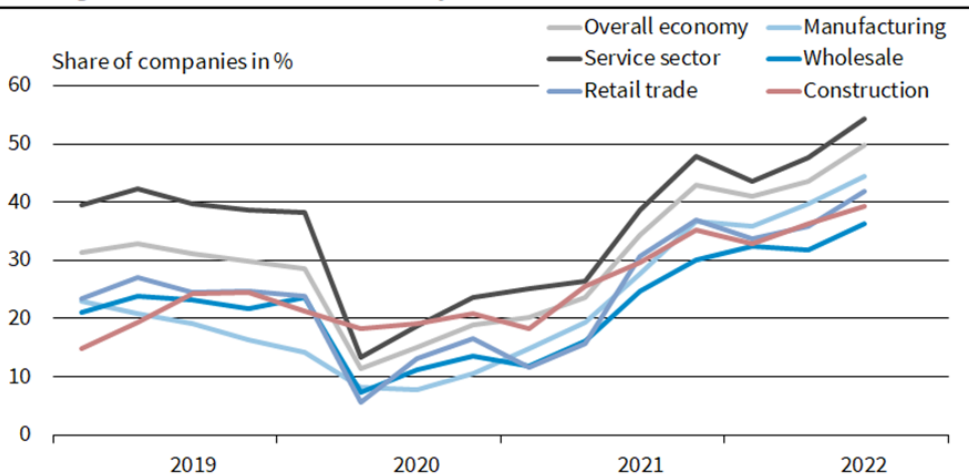
At EU level, the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 (COM(2016) 377 final) was adopted with the objective of fostering social cohesion and the construction of inclusive societies for all. The concept of 'inclusion for all' entails the guarantee that all policies are accessible to and beneficial for all members of society, including migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background. This plan encompasses actions within four sectoral domains, namely education and training, employment and skills, health, and housing. Additionally, it incorporates measures to facilitate effective integration and inclusion across all sectoral domains at the EU, Member State, and regional levels, with a particular focus on young people.¹

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 COM/2020/758 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal->

Integration shall be a central concern for OECD countries, with 141 million immigrants representing over 10% of the population, and 12% of the population in the EU, comprising approximately 54 million foreign-born individuals. As for Germany, it was the largest host country in the EU, with 25% of all foreign-born residents in the Union residing there,² added that two major humanitarian crises – the Syrian conflict in 2015 and more recently the war in Ukraine – have contributed to an increase in the number of refugees since Germany was one of the countries that received a significant number of refugees. Despite the recent substantial influx of individuals into Germany, the country's economy continues to experience challenges related to labour shortages, particularly in the context of high-skilled workers. As illustrated in Table 1, worker shortages have increased significantly across all industries and significant proportion of professions in Germany rely on the contributions of immigrants, with approximately 25% of all employees aged between 15 and 64 having a history of immigration in 2022 (Hanewinkel 2024).

Table 1

Shortage of Skilled Workers in Germany



Source: ifo Business Survey, July 2022.

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<https://www.ifo.de/en/press-release/2022-08-02/shortage-skilled-workers-germany-reaches-all-time-high>

Furthermore, notable disparities in employment persist for individuals born outside the European Union, with a particularly pronounced gender gap observed in the employment rates of non-EU-born women.³ By the end of 2023, approximately 419,000 individuals from outside the

content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758 COM/2020/ 758 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758>

² OECD/European Commission, Composition of immigrant populations and households, in OECD/EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In, Paris, 2023, p. 48. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/052e7ca9-en.pdf?expires=1718461450&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=DA40353638CCDABB65BA0A89CE091C85>

³ European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs Secretariat-General Recovery and Resilience Task Force: 2023 Country Report Germany. European Economy Institutional Papers 229,

European Union (EU) with a temporary residence permit for work purposes were registered in the Central Register of Foreigners in Germany (AZR).⁴ Furthermore, data from the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) indicates a consistent increase in the number of non-EU migrants coming to Germany for employment since 2010 (85,000 at that time).⁵

Milestones during the development of the integration policy

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Germany underwent a significant transformation, becoming a country reliant on a substantial influx of guest workers. These workers were state-organised and recruited in accordance with the German-Italian agreement of 1955, with the largest influx occurring between 1955 and 1973. This resulted in 14 million workers arriving from southern European countries, the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, primarily to work in the industrial and service sectors (Bade 2000). At that time, German politicians held the view that guest workers would not remain permanently in the country but would return to their country of origin. The initial integration measures implemented in 1970 demonstrated that the government was aware of the considerable number of foreign workers in the country and thus addressed the issue specifically in the context of the labour market.⁶ In 1973, the government's objective was twofold. Primarily, it sought to facilitate the integration of these workers into the German society. Secondly, it aimed to reduce the number of foreign workers in the country. Despite the majority of the approximately 11 million migrant workers returning to their country of origin, 4 million remained permanently in Germany (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2011a).

The 1980s are regarded as the 'lost decade' (Bade 1993), as a period of missed opportunities for integration, despite the implementation of several initiatives. The initial, temporary employment of foreign labour had evolved into a pattern of permanent residence following the implementation of the recruitment ban in 1973,⁷ with family members joining them and foreign children born in Germany. This led among others to challenges in housing, healthcare, and education. To deal with the situation, in 1978 the Federal Government appointed a 'Commissioner for the Promotion of the Integration of Foreign Workers and their Family Members' to coordinate integration measures within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.⁸ Commissioner Kühn's published Memorandum 'Stand und Weiterentwicklung der Integration der ausländischen

JUNE 2023 15. https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/0a4f6da6-f64d-4974-a3de-08d409113036_en?filename=ip229_en.pdf

⁴ Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2023 erneut stark gestiegen. Pressemitteilung Nr. 177 vom 2. Mai 2024 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2024/05/PD24_177_125.html

⁵ Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2022 stark gestiegen. Pressemitteilung Nr. 165 vom 27. April 2023 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/04/PD23_165_125.html?nn=639742

⁶ Grundsätze zur Eingliederung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer. Bundesarbeitsblatt Nr. 4/1970, Verlag W. Kohlhammer.

⁷ The recruitment ban (Anwerbestopp), set forth in a directive on November 23, 1973, marked the end of the era of foreign labor recruitment to West Germany. The ban completely blocked the entry of 'guest workers' from lands which were not members of the European Economic Community (EEC). See Migration history in Germany, <https://www.domid.org/angebot/aufsatzes/essay-migrationsgeschichte-in-deutschland>.

⁸ Die Bundesregierung, Heinz Kühn. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/heinz-kuehn-456900>

Arbeitnehmer und ihrer Familien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland' was a pioneering document, advocating for integrative measures in education policy, a right to choose naturalisation for young people born and raised in the Federal Republic, and the introduction of municipal voting rights for foreigners (Das Kühn-Memorandum 1979). The central argument was that Germany is a country of immigration underlined by the significant proportion of guest workers choose to remain in the country for an extended period. This was in stark contrast to the previous German position that Germany is not a country of immigration, based on the assumption that integration only occurs during the period of guest work, and that it does not extend beyond this limited timeframe (Kühn 1979).

Although steps were taken in 1987 to promote labour market integration,⁹ there was continued support for the return of immigrants to their countries of origin. In 1990, following the German reunification, a new law on the residence of foreigners included a number of integration instruments, such as equality before the courts, the right to social security and better coordination of integration.¹⁰

In 2005, Angela Merkel became German Chancellor, and there was a focus on the necessity for a long-term, multi-level dialogue on integration. Furthermore, the concept of a 'Willkommenskultur' (literally, a culture of welcome) gained prominence at the societal level. This term is not legally defined and is associated with immigration and integration policy. (Bade 2014).

In 2005, the Immigration Act¹¹ was introduced that profoundly reformed the status of foreigners, asylum and citizenship law. As one of the Act's key provisions, the Act on the Status of Foreigners was replaced by the Act on Residence, Employment and Integration of Foreigners.¹² The legislation approached integration from a number of different angles, such as with the so-called integration courses, which comprised German as a foreign language and German social and cultural studies for immigrants, with a compulsory examination at the end.

The National Integration Plan was established in 2007 with the objective of promoting education, vocational training, employment, and cultural integration and provisions for integration courses provided by the federal government (Die Bundesregierung 2007). In 2017, a nationwide Integration Programme started to standardise the multitude of co-existing integration measures undertaken by the federal, state, and local governments. The outcome was the implementation of a needs-based orientation programme and enhanced collaboration between integration offers.

In 2012, the National Integration Plan turned into the National Action Plan on Integration that created instruments to facilitate the measurement of the results of the integration policy, with objectives of general nature and timeframes and indicators to verify the attainment of the set goals.

⁹ Maßnahmen zur sozialen und beruflichen Eingliederung.

¹⁰ Gesetz zur Neuregelung des Ausländerrechts aus Nr. 34 vom 14.07.1990, Seite 1354 https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBI&jumpTo=bgbl190s1354.pdf#_bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl190s1354.pdf%27%5D__1718199659484

¹¹ Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz) vom 30. 07. 2004 (BGBl. I 1950), http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBI&start=//%255B@attr_id=%27bgbl104s1950.pdf%27%255D#_bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl104s1950.pdf%27%5D__1468072874715

¹² Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory¹ Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

The National Integration Plan saw the government of Germany commit itself to measuring the progress of social integration within the country. An important element of the plan was the decision to produce an annual integration report. The first report was published in 2009, outlining a novel approach to integration and utilising integration indicators as a foundation for subsequent steps and enhancements (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge, und Integration 2011b). A variety of measures have been implemented at the provincial and local levels across the country with the objective of addressing the needs of young people. These measures have focused on the following areas: education, careers, the prevention of early school leaving, and parental involvement in the school system.

The before-mentioned National Action Plan on Integration, published in 2012, comprised over 100 concrete measures (core projects) designed to promote integration at all levels and in all areas of life. The plan aimed to strengthen social cohesion with the federal government, federal states, local authorities and in recent years, civil society organisations have collaborated to achieve a number of common goals. These included the strengthening of individual initiatives to identify opportunities for children, adolescents and young adults, the promotion of the recognition of foreign qualifications, and the increase in the employment of immigrants in federal and provincial offices (Die Bundesregierung 2021). Moreover, the issue of immigrants in public services and health/social care has emerged as a new topic of interest (Die Bundesregierung 2011).

In 2016, at the Cabinet meeting in Meseberg, the Cabinet adopted the Integration Act and the Meseberg Declaration on Integration that declared several support, training and job opportunities for immigrants, as well as obligations to cooperate on integration measures. The Declaration asserted that integration involves the offer of services, but equally entails an obligation on the part of incomers to make an effort. It was therefore concluded that integration can only work as a two-way process.¹³ Since 2006, the Federal Chancellery has hosted a regular event known as the Integration Summit. At the 10th summit in 2018, the National Action Plan on Integration was extended, as was the migration and integration procedure.

Milestones during the development of measures regarding the labour market

The European Union (EU) has established a set of regulations pertaining to the duration of stays in Schengen member states, including Germany. In Germany, there are three temporary residence permits (Residence permit, EU Blue Card, Visa), and two permanent residence permits (EU permanent residence, Settlement permit). The regulations stipulate the conditions for stays of up to three months, while longer stays exceeding this period are subject to the laws of the respective member state. Such stays are permitted for specific purposes, including reuniting with a spouse or for employment-related reasons. The Residence Act classifies migration based on its purpose, delineating distinct pathways for different types of migrants. The Council Directive 2009/50/EC¹⁴ (EU Blue Card) was first introduced into the Residence Act in 2012, regulating

¹³ The Federal Government: Cabinet meeting comes to a close. Integration Act is a milestone says Chancellor, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/service/archive/archive/integration-act-is-a-milestone-says-chancellor-464382>

¹⁴ Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified

the entry and employment of highly qualified third-country nationals in Germany. The recently introduced provisions pertaining to the EU Blue Card in Germany are set forth in Sections 18g, 18h, and 18i of the Residence Act, which also includes additional facilitations. It is important to note that unskilled or low-skilled workers may only remain in the country on a temporary basis and are not eligible for permanent residence.

The immigration of workers, the legal measures

In Germany, both the federal government and the federal states regulate the recognition of different professional qualifications. The legal basis are the Recognition Act of the Federal Government (the Recognition Act), Recognition Acts of the Federal States, the Law for the Amendment of the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) and sectoral laws of the federal government and federal states.

One of the principal objectives of the National Integration Plan was the implementation of the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act (Anerkennungsgesetz)¹⁵, also known as the Recognition Act which relates only to occupations under federal jurisdiction. The objective of this legislation was to enhance the assessment and recognition of vocational and professional qualifications, as well as vocational education and training qualifications obtained abroad. The Act established a unified national procedure and criteria for the assessment and recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, while simultaneously preserving the right to a recognition procedure and regulating it. The legislation regulated the recognition of foreign qualifications for professions for which the federal government was responsible, thus encompassing almost 600 professions.

In addition, the federal states have enacted recognition laws for professions that are regulated by the federal states, including educators, teachers, engineers, and architects.

It is important to note, that Art. 1 of the Recognition Act contains the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act, (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz, BQFG)¹⁶ which regulates the recognition procedure.

The Skilled Workers' Immigration Act¹⁷ of 2019 sought to establish a legislative framework for the selective and increased immigration of skilled workers from third countries and to enhance the integration of skilled non-European foreigners into the labour market. This

employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC, PE/40/2021/REV/1, OJ L 382, 28.10.2021, p. 1–38.

¹⁵ Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen Vom 6. Dezember 2011 (BGBl I S. 2515), https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&start=//%5b@attr_id=%27bgbl111s2515.pdf%27%5d#__bgbl_%2F%2F%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl111s2515.pdf%27%5D__1720532294694

¹⁶ Gesetz über die Feststellung der Gleichwertigkeit von Berufsqualifikationen (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz – BQFG von 6. dezember 2011, (BGBl I S. 2515), <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bqfg/BQFG.pdf>

¹⁷ Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz vom 15. August 2019, BGBl. I 2019, 1307 https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#__bgbl_%2F%2F%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl119s1307.pdf%27%5D__1718454120656

pertained to foreign citizens who had applied for asylum in Germany and individuals applying for a work visa in a third country (Bathke 2019).

The Act was in accordance with the demographic shift and the shortage of skilled labour, which presented a different political dynamic. The general public and most political parties demonstrated support for moderately generous entry rules. Furthermore, Germany occupied a leading position among the Member States with the most liberal immigration rules for the highly skilled (Thym 2019).

For the first time, the term 'skilled worker' was defined by law in Section 18 of the Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (Residence Act)¹⁸. This definition pertains to a skilled worker with vocational training. The term 'skilled worker' is defined by law as an individual who has completed vocational training in Germany or holds a foreign vocational qualification that is equivalent to one acquired in Germany. Alternatively, a skilled worker is defined as an individual who has completed a university degree in Germany, a recognised foreign university degree or a foreign university degree that is comparable to a German one. We shall emphasise that section 18c (3) of the Residence Act sets out a specific category of highly qualified workers, namely those whose residence is of special economic and societal interest to Germany and is the only category that is granted a permanent residence permit upon arrival.

In 2023, the new Skilled Workers Immigration Act¹⁹ amended several existing Acts and also implemented Directive 2021/1883²⁰. Since 2020, the first Skilled Immigration Act has also made it easier for skilled workers with vocational training from non-EU countries to enter and stay in Germany for the purpose of employment. Furthermore, the opportunities to obtain a residence permit with vocational training were also expanded with the new Act.

The objective of the reform was to facilitate the entry of skilled workers from non-EU countries into the German labour market. The amendments introduce a three-pillar system for skilled workers, comprising the following: the first pillar addresses skilled workers in general; the second pillar concerns required professional experience; and the third, entitled 'potential', addresses skilled workers without a concrete job offer (Der Deutscher Bundestag 2023).

The initial stage primarily encompassed facilitation for the 'EU Blue Card' and for recognised skilled workers. The second stage, which commenced in March 2024, encompassed more straightforward access for foreign skilled workers and workers with professional experience, as well as trainees, and enhanced recognition of professional qualifications. The third stage, which

¹⁸ Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory¹ Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

¹⁹ Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Fachkräfteeinwanderung, BGBl. 2023 I Nr. 217 vom 18.08.2023 <https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2023/217/VO>

²⁰ Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC PE/40/2021/REV/1 OJ L 382, 28/10/2021, p. 1–38

will commence in June 2024, will result in the full applicability of all provisions of the Skilled Immigration Act.²¹

The amendments to the Skilled Immigration Act address a number of key issues, including the entitlement of skilled workers with professional or academic training to a residence permit in the event that all requirements are met. This encompasses skilled workers who have obtained a higher education qualification. Furthermore, the possibilities for immigration to Germany from third countries with an EU Blue Card will be expanded. Additionally, skilled workers are permitted to enter Germany to take up employment as part of a recognition partnership, and to complete the recognition procedure of their professional qualification at the same time. We shall mention the so-called Western Balkans regulation which allows nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia to access the labour market for any type of employment in non-regulated occupations. This is overseen by the Federal Employment Agency. Despite the fact that the arrangement was originally planned to expire at the end of 2023, the Regulation on the Further Development of Skilled Immigration will extend the Western Balkans Regulation indefinitely..

According to Section 81a of the Residence Act²², the so-called fast-track or accelerated procedure for skilled workers is intended to provide a solution to reduce the time required for the entry procedure. In the event that the company is duly empowered by the skilled worker in question, the company may initiate the requisite procedure with the responsible immigration authority. This may be done in the case of a concrete job offer for €411. Furthermore, the procedure for the recognition of foreign qualifications may also be accelerated in this way. Besides the accelerated procedure for skilled workers, the standard entry procedure for employment remains an option.

A beginning of a new direction? The Chance Residence Permit and the Chance Card

In 2022, two migration packages announced introduced the right of opportunity to stay and the residence permit with the opportunity card. The so-called right of residence with opportunities is regulated in Section 104c of the Residence Act, and the primary objective was to provide foreign nationals who are permitted to reside in the country with the opportunity to obtain legal residence status and to enable them to access the labour market. The conditions for obtaining a residence permit are set out in Sections 25a and 25b of the Residence Act and these include demonstrating sufficient oral proficiency in the German language at the A2 level, providing evidence of financial independence, presenting proof of identity, and demonstrating a commitment to the principles of the free democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Chance Residence Permit is granted to all foreign nationals residing in Germany for a minimum of five years as of the cut-off date of 31 October 2022. These individuals are subject to deportation due to the absence of a residence permit, yet are unable to be deported and are therefore considered tolerated. Foreign individuals who have been residing in Germany for a

²¹ Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, Modernes Einwanderungsrecht für ausländische Arbeitskräfte, <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/schwerpunkte/DE/einwanderungsland/fachkraefteeinwanderung-artikel.html>

²² Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory¹ Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

minimum of five years as of 31 October 2022, with a tolerated or permitted status or with a residence permit, and who fulfil certain criteria, will be granted a 'right of residence opportunity' in Germany for a period of 18 months.

The objective of this period is to enable individuals to fulfil the requirements for a right of residence. These requirements include demonstrating the ability to secure a livelihood, knowledge of the German language, and proof of identity. It should be noted that criminals and individuals who pose a risk are generally excluded from the right of residence. The right of residence with opportunities is intended to prevent the perpetuation of chain tolerations and to reduce the number of long-term tolerated persons. With regard to well-integrated young people, the opportunity to obtain a right of residence will be extended from four to three years of residence in Germany, up to the age of 27. Furthermore, the integration achievements of tolerated persons will be recognised by granting them a right of residence after six years or after just four years if they are living with minor children. Consequently, the periods of prior residence required for a right of residence will be reduced by two years in each case.

The process of family reunification with skilled workers from third countries will be facilitated by the removal of the requirement for family members to provide proof of language skills. In the future, all asylum seekers will have access to integration courses and vocational language courses, subject to availability. The federal government is making an important contribution to participation and social cohesion through early language support programmes. The right of opportunity to stay is a one-time special regulation. If the open requirements are not fulfilled within 18 months, the persons concerned revert to tolerated persons. However, it should be noted that the right of opportunity to stay must be distinguished from the opportunity card.

According to Section 20 a, b of the Residence Act, the Chance or Opportunity Card, which the Bundestag passed on 23 June 2023, is a temporary residence permit, and enables third-country nationals to seek employment in Germany. The permit is intended for individuals who do not have a specific job offer but demonstrate potential in the labour market due to their specific skills and are seeking employment or opportunities to have their foreign vocational qualifications recognised as equivalent. The procedure is based on a points system that evaluates the following criteria in particular: professional qualification, German language skills, previous work experience and age. The opportunity card allows the holder to enter Germany to look for a job. During the opportunity card residence permit period, one may take up a part-time or trial job. If someone has already found a permanent position, they can easily apply for a corresponding residence permit for employment purposes.

Final remarks

The admission of foreign workers to the German labour market represents a fundamental tenet of the country's immigration policy. A pivotal element in the evolution of German integration policy was the realisation by the German social and political elite that a significant number of immigrants would not be departing in the immediate future, but would instead be remaining in the country for an extended period and even establishing permanent residences. It was necessary for them to acknowledge that Germany had become a country with a significant immigrant population and to develop an integration policy that reflected this reality. Accordingly, an effort was made to construct an integration policy by convening all relevant parties involved in the issue of integration.

However, the integration process previously involved migrant workers who had resided in Germany for an extended period and their subsequent relatives. The events of 2015, however, presented a wholly novel situation. New, effective measures were and are still required to integrate the considerable number of migrants arriving in a relatively short period of time as rapidly as possible. However, the long-term integration policy is still being formulated. While skilled immigration can assist in addressing shortages of skilled labour, it is vital to implement measures that facilitate labour market integration and social cohesion, with particular consideration for their implications for educational institutions and social services. This will enable a more effective utilisation of this potential.

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