

FRA Press Release

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Young migrants: Is Europe creating a lost generation?

Delays and serious challenges integrating young refugees who have fled war and persecution risk creating a lost generation, finds a new Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) report. While it identifies some good practices, it urges Member States to learn from each other to give these young people an adequate chance in life.

"The EU and its Member States work hard to address migration across Europe, facing serious challenges to integrate the arrivals, particularly young people. But these challenges are not insurmountable," says FRA Director [Michael O'Flaherty](#). "Diverse examples highlight how smart and thoughtful policy decisions can go a long way towards overcoming obstacles. Policymakers at both national and EU level need to embrace such strategies to allow this generation become full members of our society."

Based on interviews with over 160 refugees and 400 frontline workers, FRA's '[Integration of young refugees in the EU](#)' report identifies serious obstacles in existing migrant integration approaches for young people aged between 16 and 24. It also highlights [good, local policy initiatives](#) from each country. Examples include:

- financial support for individual housing of asylum applicants who are part of the reception system, in Vienna, Austria;
- fast-track integration support to enter the labour market in Sweden;
- a Youth Guarantee financial assistance scheme available for young refugees in France;
- a mobile app in seven languages on life in Germany.

FRA calls on Member States to:

- **speed up asylum procedures:** Up to two years to complete the asylum procedure and get a residence permit underlines the need for sufficient financial and human resources to process claims on time. It would allow applicants with a high chance of approval start their integration as early as possible;
- **limit family reunification bureaucracy:** Family members had to take expensive trips through war-torn regions to reach the nearest embassy in a neighbouring country to apply. Swift and affordable family reunification rules are needed;
- **provide proper housing:** Some people lived on the streets throughout the asylum procedure. Refugee housing policies should cope with peak arrivals, and meet education and employment needs to minimise disruption due to relocations;
- **improve mental healthcare:** Already traumatised refugees are not able to sleep, drink or eat as they wait to be processed. This calls for swift and efficient identification, referral and treatment of mental health issues, including training for frontline workers;
- **enhance education:** Some children have to wait one year to attend compulsory school. Children need to be in mainstream education systems as early as possible. Grant asylum applicants early access to education, vocational training and employment to prevent criminals pushing them into a life of crime.

Background information

From 2015 to 2018, almost 2 million people received international protection in the EU. EU law is clear and EU Member States have a duty to protect refugees. EU funding to support their integration is also available. But the situation on the ground is very uneven across the Member States.

These problems get even worse when young refugees turn 18 and the support networks they previously relied on sometimes disappear overnight.

Notes to editors:

- The report draws on interviews across 15 locations in six EU Member States: Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Sweden.
- Quotes from interviews with [refugees](#) and [frontline workers](#) are available online.
- For more information, contact: media@fra.europa.eu / Tel.: +43 1 580 30 642.