



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

2019 Report on the Recognition Act



Resolution of the Federal Cabinet of 11 December 2019

The Federal Government adopts the “Report on the Recognition Act 2019” submitted by the Federal Minister of Education and Research.

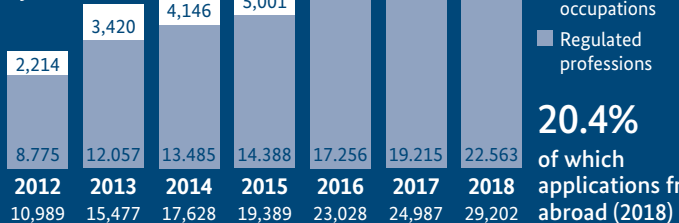
Important results of the Recognition Monitoring Project

Recognition of professions and applications governed by federal law*

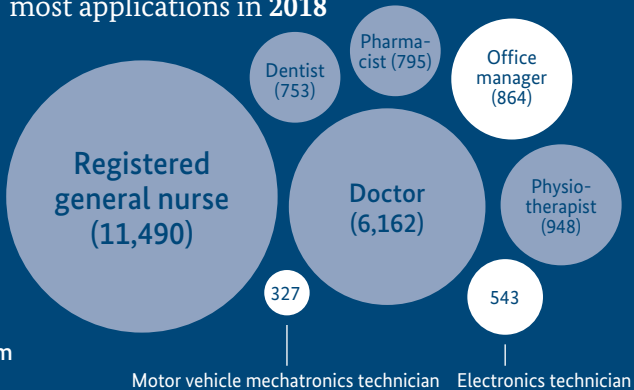
Applications 2012 to 2018

140,700

submitted in the total of around 600 professions and applications governed by federal law

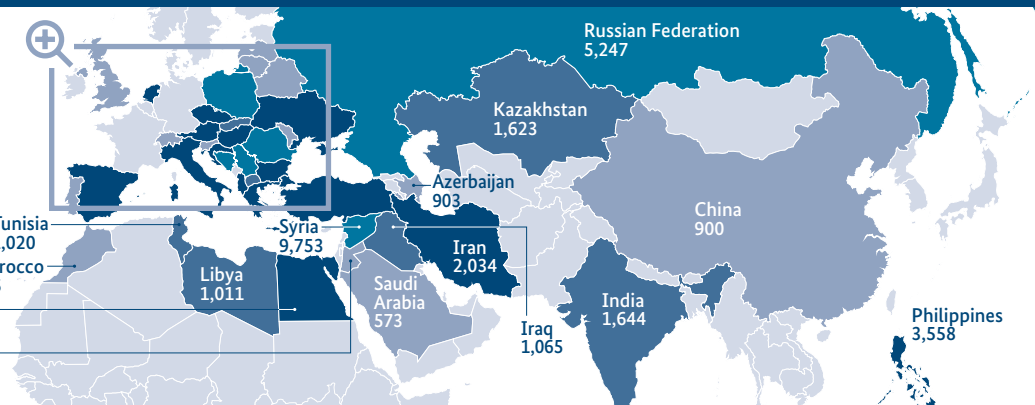
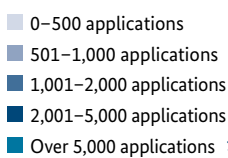


Professions and occupations attracting most applications in 2018



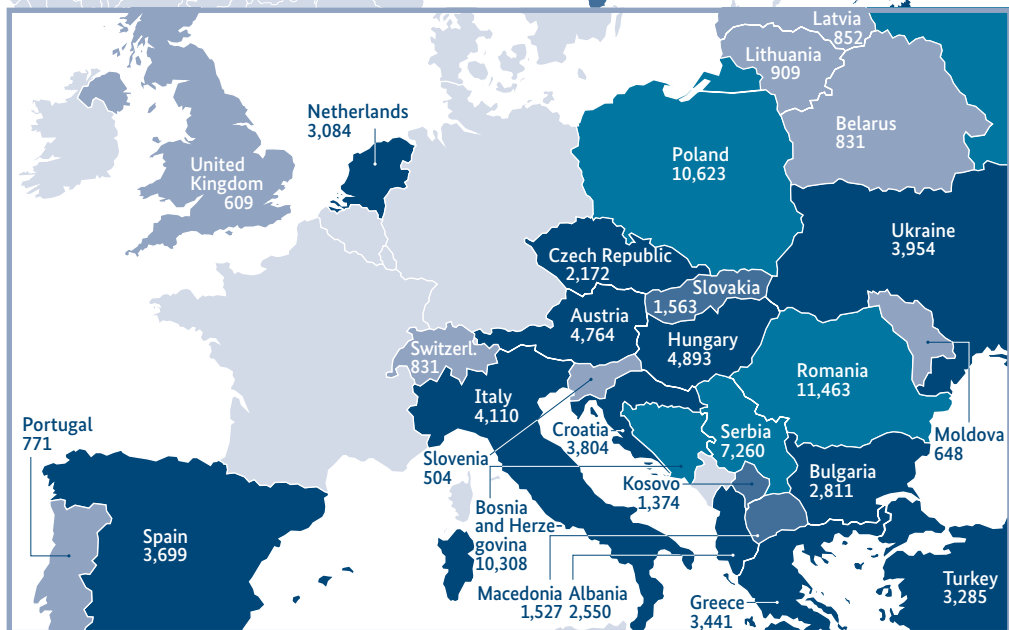
20.4% of which applications from abroad (2018)

Applications by countries of training 2012 to 2018



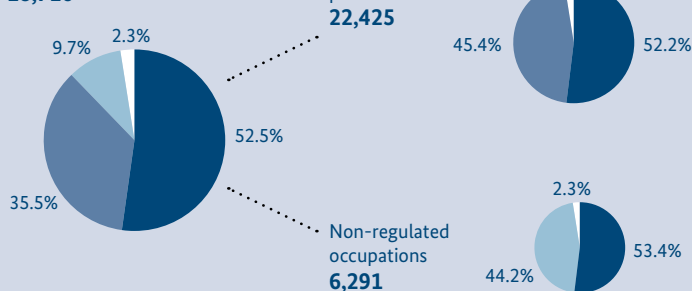
Application figures 2012 to 2018: countries of training by world regions

Europe (continent):	102,345
Asia:	26,982
Africa:	6,846
South America:	2,430
North/Central America/Caribbean:	1,398
Australia and Oceania:	210



Outcome of procedures 2018

All professions and occupations 2018
28,716



More than **82,600** fully recognised qualifications 2012 to 2018

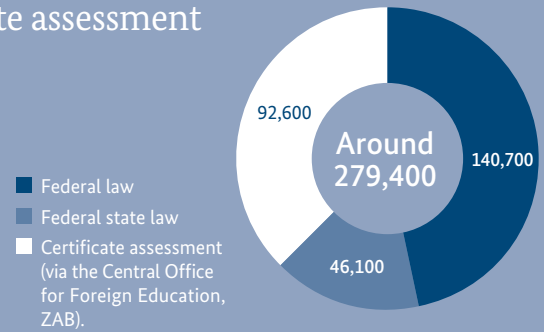


No equivalence in only around **3,800** cases

Recognition under federal/federal state law and certificate assessment

Applications 2012 to 2018

A recognition procedure is conducted in accordance with federal or federal state law depending on the profession or occupation. A ZAB certificate assessment may be carried out for non-regulated higher education qualifications.



Guidance 2012 to 2018

Around 380,200 guidance cases ...

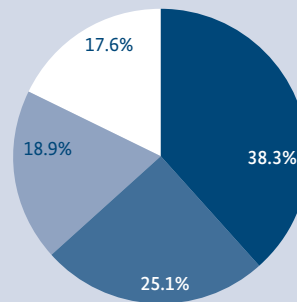
...at IQ Recognition Counselling Centres, via the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline and by the chambers regarding the prerequisites for and the conducting of a recognition procedure



Analysis of IQ recognition counselling 2018

Consultations take place on professions and occupations from all areas of responsibility.

The TOP 3 professions or occupations in which consultations took place are:



Teacher
4,198 qualifications



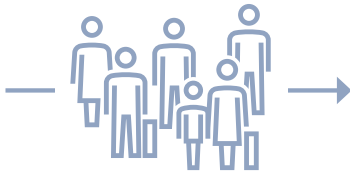
Engineer
3,869 qualifications



Business economist or economic scientist
3,027 qualifications

- Professions and occupations governed by federal law
- Professions and occupations governed by federal state law
- Academic higher education qualifications
- Others

16,400
persons advised in 2017



13,200
persons advised in 2018

Fewer **refugees** in IQ recognition counselling. Numbers are falling after having reached a record level in 2017. By way of contrast, more refugees entered training measures in 2018.

Financing of recognition costs

General funding instruments of the Federal Government

- Employment support funding pursuant to German Social Security Code II and III (SGB II/III) via employment agencies and Job Centres
- Asylum Package I in SGB III – earlier access to employment support funding for all refugees with good prospects of being able to remain in Germany
- Individual education and training financing (e.g. Upgrading Training Assistance Act – Aufstiegs-Bafög, continuing education grant – Bildungsprämie)

Specific funding instruments of the Federal Government

- Recognition grant to cover costs of the procedure
- IQ funding programme – ESF training within the context of the Recognition Act and individual funding
- Financing of skills analyses via the special fund of the “NetQA” project



Costs

Funding instruments of the federal states

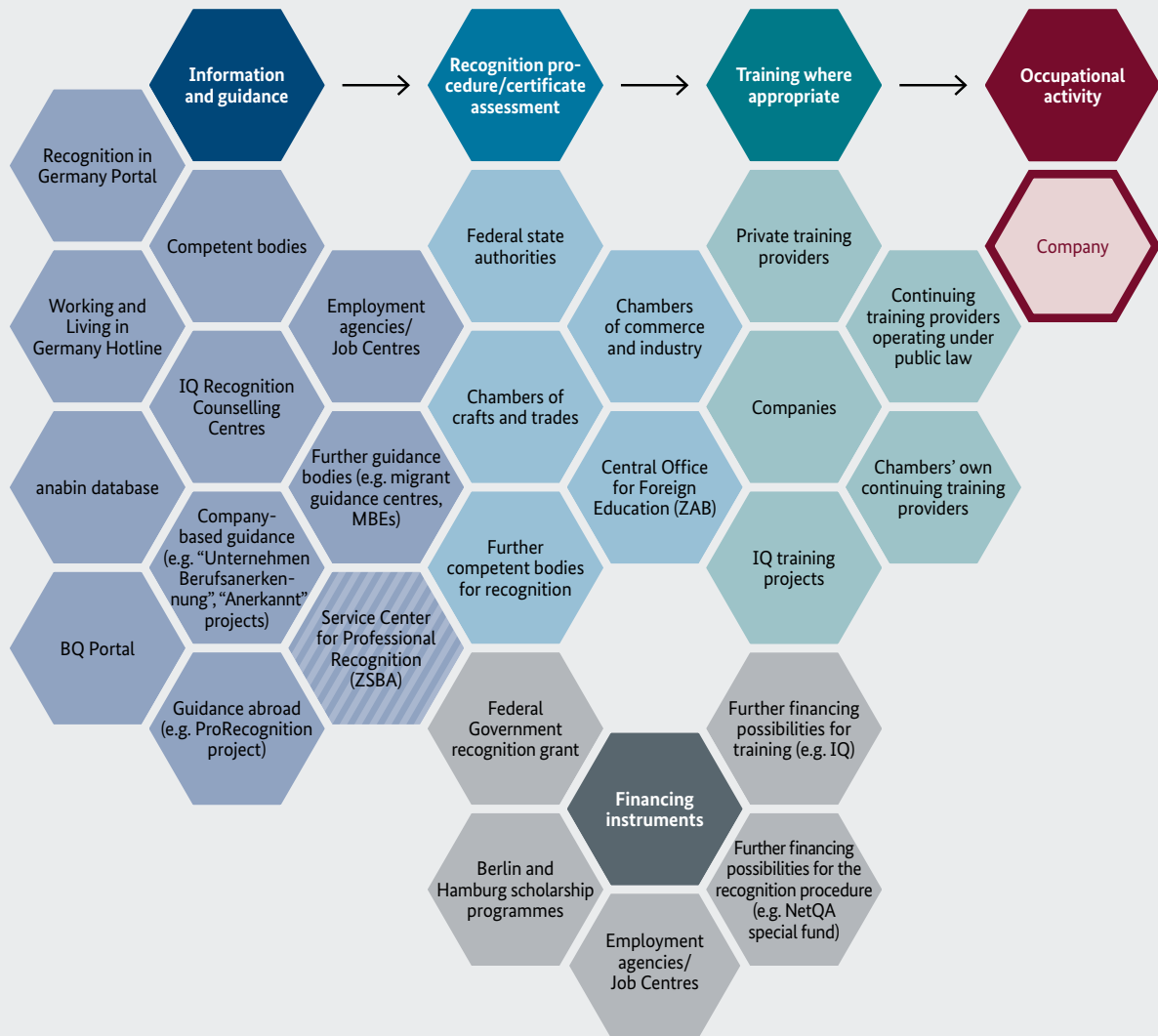
- Berlin: Berlin Hardship Fund for Professional Recognition
- Hamburg: Scholarship programme for the recognition of foreign qualifications

Others

- Company support for employee recognition procedures, e.g. financing of training measures
- Possible application for tax relief on the costs of a recognition procedure as part of the tax declaration
- Other vehicles, including financial support from donations made to the “Gewerkschaften helfen” Association by the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) and its member unions

* For data protection reasons, all data (absolute values) is rounded to a multiple of three. The overall value may therefore deviate from the total of the individual values. Percentage figures were calculated on the basis of the non-rounded values. As far as the first reporting year of 2012 was concerned, the competent bodies responsible for recognition were only determined within the course of the reporting year in some cases and had to set up their reporting systems from scratch. For this reason, reports may not have been complete or have not taken place in a timely manner in all cases. In 2013, the reports made by a number of agencies were incomplete and erroneous. To this extent, the federal result should be viewed as a minimum figure. No data is available for Bremen for the year 2015. For this reason, information from 2014 has been used for this particular federal state. In the 2016 reporting year, the area of the medical healthcare professions was under-reported by a figure in the low hundreds for the federal states of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein. The assumption is that foreign applications were under-reported.

Stakeholders in the recognition process



Recognition in a nutshell

The recognition acts of the Federal Government and the federal states allow skilled workers with foreign professional or vocational qualifications to have their qualification assessed for equivalence with the German reference occupation. Various competent bodies are responsible depending on the profession or occupation and the region. Compensation for substantial differences identified in the assessment can be provided by successful participation in a training or adaptation measure. A multitude of information and guidance bodies and financing instruments are available to skilled workers seeking recognition along the route to recognition and employment that is commensurate with their qualifications.

Table of contents

Preface	2
Part I Recognised skilled workers – conclusions and new perspectives	5
Summary – recognition gains even greater significance	6
Developments, measures and challenges	7
Part II Results of the BIBB Recognition Monitoring	15
1 Information and guidance	16
1.1 Provision of information on the Internet	16
1.2 Guidance services for persons interested in seeking recognition	19
1.3 Establishing recognition in companies	25
1.4 Awareness of opportunities for recognition	27
2 Take-up of recognition procedures	28
2.1 Overall picture – applications for recognition procedures and certificate assessments	28
2.2 Results of the official statistics on professions and occupations governed by federal law	28
2.3 Take-up by refugees	35
3 Implementation and execution by occupational areas	38
3.1 Healthcare professions	38
3.2 Non-regulated initial and advanced training occupations	46
3.3 Professions and occupations governed by federal state law	54
4 Training guidance and measures	58
4.1 Major developments and challenges	59
4.2 Demand for IQ advice on job training and training measures	60
4.3 IQ training provision in the most important occupational areas	62

5	Costs and funding	69
5.1	Costs and funding opportunities to provide support	69
5.2	Funding programmes in detail	70
5.3	Programmes in comparative terms	72
6	Recognition and immigration	75
6.1	Applications from abroad	75
6.2	Challenges when submitting an application from abroad	77
6.3	Immigration of skilled workers and recognition (§ 17a Residency Act)	77
6.4	Specific information and guidance provision	78
6.5	Example projects for the acquisition of skilled workers	79
6.6	Immigration of skilled workers – new legal framework	81
7	Effect of recognition on labour market integration	84
7.1	Influence of recognition on the occupational situation	84
7.2	Company perspective	86
7.3	General conditions for the sustainable labour market integration of foreign skilled workers	88

Appendix	93
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Index of figures	94
Index of tables	95
Index of abbreviations	96
Glossary	98
Bibliography	108
Imprint	114

Preface

Germany is a cosmopolitan nation. We export to other countries, we are part of an international scientific network and we interact with different cultures. We live by cooperating with people from many of the regions of the world and from our global links. International contacts and interrelations are a source of considerable enrichment. It is important to us for Germany to be attractive to people from every part of the planet.

The present shortage of skilled workers must not be permitted to act as a brake on future growth. We must take measures to counter this, and the primary emphasis needs to be on training those who already live here to participate in our labour market. Everyone should have the opportunity to choose and pursue the educational and training pathway that is right for them. Equality of opportunity and participation are the guiding principles behind our actions.

The trained domestic workforce is, however, not sufficient in itself to cover the requirement for skilled workers. We also need qualified immigrant labour. Professional recognition has a crucial part to play in this process. Recognition is a quality instrument which generates greater transparency on the labour market and provides a bridge for the immigration of qualified skilled workers. Academic research investigations also show that recognition is the key to finding employment that is commensurate with people's qualifications. It also leads to significant increases in income.

Since the Federal Recognition Act entered into force in 2012, just under 280,000 applications have already been submitted for recognition in professions and occupations governed by federal and federal state law and for certificate assessment relating to academic professions. These figures highlight the huge amount of interest shown in the assessment procedures that have been successfully introduced. We expect demand to grow further.

The Federal Government has significantly improved the general conditions relating to recognition over recent years, and this is a pathway we will continue to follow. We will expand information platforms such as “Recognition in Germany” and the “BQ Portal”. The recognition grant that has been introduced will be extended. We will also raise awareness of the topic on the part of chambers and companies. We have created a new Service Center for Professional Recognition (ZSBA) for persons interested in seeking recognition who still reside abroad. The aim of launching this new agency is to reduce pressure on the competent bodies.

We will also continue to work with the federal states to achieve more pooling of resources and greater standardisation. Many effective approaches such as the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions are already in place. In order to pave the way to recognition at all levels, we need to have sufficient human resources at our disposal. It is also important to create new points of access that enable people to take advantage of the opportunities available to them and to allow the strengths of recognition to bear full fruit.

We will adapt the National Integration Action Plan to take account of current challenges. One aspect that is important to me is the greater involvement of new stakeholders, including from migrant organisations.

The 2019 Report on the Recognition Act provides information on the latest developments within the recognition system in Germany. It reveals the progress that has been made and the challenges we still face. And it documents how the fields of policy making, trade and industry, and society as a whole are pulling together via the mechanisms of guidance, training and recognition.

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those involved at the guidance institutions, at the competent bodies and in the support projects for the work they are doing. They are all making recognition possible. They are part of success stories that will leave a lasting impact. Because they are helping people to find their way in life.

Your Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration

Auftaktveranstaltung des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung
zu den Themen „Berufsanerkennung“ sowie „Bildung und Ausbildung“



On 17 May 2018, Federal Minister of Education Anja Karliczek and State Minister Annette Widmann-Mauz took part in an official event at the BMBF to launch the National Integration Action Plan for the topics of education, training and professional recognition. Over 150 stakeholders from the areas of policy making and practice, people who had successfully achieved recognition and representatives from migrant organisations used the opportunity to network on experiences and new ideas relating to integration in the fields of education, training and professional recognition.

Part I

Recognised skilled workers – conclusions and new perspectives

Summary – recognition gains even greater significance

Education, training and continuing training form the foundations for our competitiveness. They are the crucial prerequisite for career success and for integration into society for every single person. In light of the technological and demographic shift, the training of qualified workers at a domestic level only is no longer sufficient in itself to counter shortages of skilled labour that are becoming ever more apparent. Skilled workers who have been trained abroad are also needed to cover labour needs and to secure a long-term workforce supply. The recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications is becoming increasingly significant against this background. Recognition helps to achieve greater leverage of areas of potential that exist within Germany. However, it also serves to facilitate the immigration of skilled workers from abroad and acts as a quality assurance instrument.

When it entered into force in 2012, the Federal Recognition Act created a legal right to the assessment of qualifications and occupational experience gained abroad regardless of nationality, place of residence or residency status. The equivalence assessment enables skilled workers to make their foreign qualifications transparent, to develop prospects for occupational development and thus also to guard against unequal treatment. For their part, employers are able to arrive at a better evaluation of qualifications acquired abroad and can be certain that they are recruiting a skilled worker.

This 2019 Report on the Recognition Act provides information on the latest developments within the recognition system in Germany. It is a result of the statutory monitoring of the Recognition Act, which is carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The investigations conducted document a considerable demand for professional recognition. During the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2018, competent bodies reported a total of almost 187,000 applications for recognition in professions and occupations governed by federal or federal state law. In addition to this, 93,000 applications were submitted by private

persons to the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) for certificate assessment of a higher education qualification acquired abroad.

This high number of applications, just under 280,000 in less than seven years, shows the high importance of the assessment procedures that have been established. The dynamic nature of the demand is also revealed by the fact that the numbers of annual applications solely in the area of professions and occupations governed by federal law increased to over 29,000 between the entry into force of the Recognition Act and 2018. This is particularly apparent with regard to professions and occupations in healthcare and nursing. In 2018, the numbers of applications in this area rose by more than 30 percent compared to the previous year to reach almost 11,500.

Alongside this quantitatively notable development in demand for professional recognition procedures, the investigations carried out within the scope of the monitoring also show that there was a varying amount of demand for professional recognition amongst various sub-groups. In the years from 2012 to 2015, the initial focus was on applications relating to EU qualifications and most applicants were already living in Germany. Increasing numbers of applications regarding qualifications from third countries have been submitted since 2016. In 2018, these accounted for 70 percent of application volume. Applications from abroad are also becoming more significant and made up a proportion of around 20 percent in 2018. Professional recognition also began to acquire a growing significance for the labour market integration of refugees from 2015 onwards. As a consequence of this, noticeably higher numbers of applications were already being observed by 2016. Since 2017, the country of training to which most applications have related has been Syria. Professional recognition is currently increasingly being used to facilitate the targeted immigration of skilled workers. Third countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the Philippines are the most frequent countries of origin of professional and vocational qualifications.

These trends also reflect the flexibility and scope of the recognition procedure, which is not aimed at certain target groups of specific professions and occupations. Professional recognition strengthens integration into the German labour market, including for refugees, and builds a bridge to Germany for the migration of qualified skilled labour. The results of the statutorily

prescribed evaluation of the Recognition Act that were presented in 2017 confirm the impact of professional recognition by showing significantly measurable effects on employment and incomes.

The clear rise in recognition numbers and the heterogeneity of the foreign professional and vocational qualifications for which recognition is being sought are posing various challenges for the recognition system. Over recent years, the Federal Government, the federal states and local government authorities, the competent bodies for the recognition procedures and indeed many guidance institutions and migrant organisations have already joined forces to initiate and implement numerous activities in order to make professional recognition more transparent and quicker, as well as to raise awareness of recognition.

Many stakeholders, particularly those at a regional and local government level, are making an important contribution in the area of provision of information, such as via the advisory services offered by the chambers or through the counselling centres forming part of the Network “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” funding programme. Central information platforms such as “Recognition in Germany”, which is housed at BIBB, and the “BQ Portal” have also been established. Financial barriers to access to professional recognition have also been lowered. The recognition grant is one of the ways in which this has been achieved. Further networking between stakeholders and a pooling of competencies and areas of responsibility will be of enhanced importance going forwards. Trade and industry, the Federal Government and the federal states have put successful structures in place for this purpose. Examples include the lead chamber system in the craft trades, a competence centre for Foreign Skills Approval of the chambers of commerce and industry (IHK FOSA) and the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions.

The new Skilled Immigration Act will generate an additional dynamic, and this will further increase the importance of demonstrating the equivalence of foreign qualifications. This law will be backed up by the creation of a new central point of contact for skilled workers residing abroad who are interested in migrating to Germany, the Service Centre for Professional Recognition (ZSBA).

Another main focus of the National Integration Action Plan will be to involve new stakeholders such as migrant organisations more closely in the implementation of the Recognition Act. The opportunities and prospects for “recognised skilled workers” must be made clear to companies and to the (potential) skilled workers themselves. Many “facilitators” will be needed in order to ensure that the strengths of professional recognition continue to bear fruit in future. Policy makers, trade and industry, and society as a whole face the joint tasks of creating new points of access and of providing sufficient support.

Developments, measures and challenges

Predominance of third countries – high degree of dynamism in the case of nursing professions

The Federal Government Report on the Recognition Act is based on information and data on the recognition process that has significantly expanded compared to previous years. Alongside new regional studies and more detailed investigations conducted within the scope of individual projects, coordinated federal state statistics on recognition are now available for the first time.

Between 2012 and 2018, the official statistics recorded a total of around 140,700 applications for recognition in professions and occupations governed by federal law. About three quarters of these related to the regulated sector, whilst one quarter concerned non-regulated occupations. In 2018, approximately 29,200 applications were submitted for equivalence assessments in professions and occupations governed by federal law (17 percent more than in the previous year). In addition, 9,900 applications were received for professions and occupations governed by federal state law, such as engineer or teacher (9 percent fewer than in 2017). In overall terms, more than 39,000 applications were submitted last year.

In the case of professions and occupations governed by federal law, the number of applications relating to the occupation of registered general nurse rose by more than 30 percent to almost 11,500 (2017: around 8,800 applications). This occupation attracted the largest number of applications by far. Almost half of the

relevant qualifications were obtained in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia or the Philippines.

In 2018, full equivalence was attested in 52.5 percent of procedures concluded in professions and occupations governed by federal law. No equivalence was the outcome of only 2.3 percent of procedures. Partial equivalence in so-called non-regulated occupations (such as electronics technician or commercial occupations) was awarded in a further proportion of cases (9.7 percent). There were also instances in regulated professions where a compensation measure was imposed which had not been completed by the end of the reporting year (35.5 percent). Examples here include knowledge tests in medical healthcare professions in particular.

More than two thirds (69.4 percent) of applications submitted in 2018 related to a professional or vocational qualification acquired in a third country. The main states here were Syria (3,177 applications), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2,880 applications) and Serbia (2,472 applications). The Philippines was also a leading country of origin in this regard. In this case, application numbers more than doubled from 744 in 2017 to 1,605 in 2018. The legal right to a recognition procedure applies irrespective of the place of residence of the applicant. This means that persons living abroad may also submit an application for recognition. The number of skilled workers availing themselves of this opportunity was significantly higher in 2018 (5,958 as opposed to 3,597 in the previous year), and they accounted for just over 20 percent of all applications.

Raising awareness for recognition via guidance and networking

Experience gained from the monitoring of the Recognition Act shows that the quality of provision of information, guidance and process support plays a major role in the success of recognition procedures. Numerous types of provision have been established and expanded since the recognition laws of the Federal Government and federal states entered into force between 2012 and 2014. The counselling centres offering initial consultations and procedural support within the scope of the Network IQ funding programme and the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline had recorded more than 380,200 guidance cases by the end of 2018.

The “Recognition in Germany” portal was established in 2012. Since this time, it has acted as the Federal

Government’s main information platform for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. It is aimed at persons living in Germany and abroad who are interested in seeking recognition, at staff working at guidance institutions and at other multipliers. The portal and its Recognition Finder tool collate both general and occupationally specific information. The information pages have also been presented in Russian and French since January 2018. This brings the total number of available languages to eleven. A relaunch of the site is being undertaken with a view to creating provision which is even more user friendly.

IQ Recognition Counselling Centres provide initial consultations on the topic of professional recognition right across Germany. Around 41,300 persons availed themselves of this guidance provision in 2018. Over recent years, the 16 federal state networks which are financed within the scope of the IQ Funding Programme have collected numerous examples of “good practice” relating to the topic of recognition in their respective regions with regard to cooperation with ministries and with the competent bodies responsible for recognition. These positive experiences are systematically informing further development and transfer to other federal states with similar requirements.

Projects such as “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung” (UBA) or “Anerkannt”, which is run by the Educational Institute of the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB-Bildungswerk), are raising awareness of the topic of recognition within a company context and providing a higher profile on both the employer and employee sides. The aims of the UBA project, which is being implemented by DIHK Service GmbH and the Central Agency for Continuing Vocational Education and Training in the Skilled Crafts (ZWH), are to illustrate the opportunities afforded by professional recognition to companies and firms and to inform them how they can assist foreign skilled workers along the pathway to full recognition. The main focus of the communication activities is on the establishment of a community platform. Special “pilots” establish regional networks at a local level and are used as direct and personal points of contact and guidance for craft trade companies.

Although existing provision is well received, there is room for the target group to be made more aware of recognition. Particular importance is also attached to the establishment of cooperation structures between

recognition guidance agencies and the labour administration bodies. The support provided via Job Centres and employment agencies to skilled workers interested in recognition during the procedure and with regard to any adaptation measures that may be necessary can still be further expanded at a regional level.

Establishing and strengthening cooperation structures

Standardisation of administrative implementation, the pooling of expertise and the further expansion of knowledge management relating to foreign qualifications and to recognition procedures are crucial prerequisites in terms of increasing the uniformity, efficiency and quality of recognition decisions. Relevant structures can help bring about a considerable reduction in the pressure placed on the competent bodies. This issue began to be addressed by the Federal Government and by the federal states as soon as the recognition laws were launched. Specific implementation stages have been introduced over recent years, especially in the regulated professions sector.

Lead chambers act on behalf of other chambers of crafts and trades to evaluate formal vocational qualifications from certain countries of origin, although responsibility for the final decision continues to rest with the local chamber. The objectives of the BQ Portal include supporting the competent bodies in offering quicker, more standardised and more transparent equivalence assessments for dual initial and advanced training qualifications and providing companies with comprehensive information on the topic of professional recognition. The decision taken by 76 chambers of commerce and industry to form a consortium and to arrange for recognition procedures from all over the country to be conducted centrally by the IHK FOSA in Nuremberg has also proved its worth. By August 2019, the IHK FOSA had already issued its 20,000th recognition notice.

Following an introductory phase after which the continued existence of the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG) was subsequently secured, the pooling of competencies at the ZAB is having a discernible effect with regard to standardisation and in terms of creating greater transparency for the way in which procedures are implemented. An optimisation concept is focusing on the further development of provision, on increasing efficiency and on shortening processing periods.

“Konzertierte Aktion Pflege” is a further scheme in which the Federal Government and the federal states are working together to draw up proposals for standardisation and digitalisation of applications from third countries for recognition of professional nursing qualifications. The GfG has been given the remit of providing reliable information on the equivalence of nursing qualifications from third countries. It is also responsible for identifying the result requirements for adaptation.

The Chiefs of Staff Conference of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs has expressed its support for also making it possible to transfer recognition responsibility to the ZAB for regulated professions governed by federal state law. This has resulted in a resolution adopted by the federal states to use the expertise of the ZAB to draw up a concept for a procedure that will harmonise the recognition process for social occupations.

Procedures relating to competence assessment in the case of missing documents in recognition procedures pursuant to the BQFG should be increasingly integrated into the infrastructure of the chambers. The main aim of the “Netzwerk Qualifikationsanalyse” (NetQA) project is to foster a regionally based expertise and networking structure for questions relating to the implementation and (further) development of skills analyses at a federal level for competent bodies.

The approaches described can strengthen the recognition system further. The expected rise in demand for professional recognition from skilled workers from third countries will pose a particular source of new challenges for the competent bodies. This will make the issue of having sufficient human resources to process applications even more important in future. Questions as to how knowledge can be shared even better and how necessary cooperation agreements and networking can be further deepened within the scope of the recognition procedure will also take on greater significance.

Expanding support for costs and training

New funding opportunities have been created over recent years in a bid to ensure that costs relating to fees, translations and adaptation measures do not constitute too great a barrier for persons interested in seeking recognition. Persons interested in seeking recognition across a broad spectrum of professions and occupations are making use of federal state programmes and of the recognition grant introduced by the Federal Government.

The recognition grant was introduced at the end of 2016 to help with application costs. A new funding phase has now started to increase its scope in terms of both time and content. As of October 2019, around 6,500 applications for funding had already been submitted. The continuation of a pilot project being conducted by the Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) is expected to provide support to an expanded target group. Other aspects, specifically for persons with low incomes, include the reimbursement of costs incurred in respect of a certificate assessment for academic professions.

A considerable need for training is arising within the context of recognition. This is expected to grow further in light of the increasing number of notices being issued which also impose compensation measures and as a result of the Skilled Immigration Act. Since 2015, financing has been available within the scope of the IQ Funding Programme for the establishment of a broad provision of pilot training measures allowing full recognition to be achieved and for the offering of bridging measures. Between 2015 and 2018, as many as 16,200 participants in around 210 training projects benefited from this.

Provision via the IQ Funding Programme cannot, however, cover the complete demand for adaptation measures. The expansion of training services within the context of professional recognition is a joint task for the Federal Government, the federal states, and trade and industry. Trade and industry can help bring about such expansion via provision in their own education and training institutions and by offering company-based measures. Such commitment on the part of individual companies was acknowledged within the scope of the UBA project in 2017 and 2018 via the awarding of a recognition prize entitled “Wir für Anerkennung”.

Further development of adaptation and compensation measures will take place via a screening of existing provision of training measures relating to recognition and of relevant projects to be conducted both within and outside the IQ Funding Programme. The aims are to create transparency, identify gaps and highlight areas where further action is required. From the point of view of the foreign skilled workers, existing provision should be easier to find in future.

Facilitating the immigration of skilled workers via recognition

The acquisition of skilled workers from third countries forms an element of the Federal Government’s Skilled Worker Strategy alongside the leveraging and securing of further areas of domestic potential and of the potential offered by skilled workers from EU states. Germany’s economy continues to be reliant on skilled immigration. Freedom of movement of labour is already enabling skilled workers from other European countries to make an important contribution towards securing the competitiveness of German trade and industry. This is also providing material assistance in terms of easing the skilled worker situation.

The new Skilled Immigration Act will enter into force on 1 March 2020. This will expand opportunities for skilled workers from third countries to immigrate to Germany. The immigration regulations for skilled workers who have completed qualified vocational education and training will be aligned to the conditions which apply to skilled workers who have undergone academic training. The main new features are as follows. 1. The term “skilled worker” will be used in a standardised way in the Residency Act and will apply both to higher education graduates and to employees who hold a vocational education and training qualification. 2. No priority review (Vorrangprüfung) will be made if a recognised qualification and a contract of employment are in place. 3. The system will be opened up to all professions and occupations, i.e. no consideration of shortage professions and occupations will be made. 4. Skilled workers with vocational qualifications will also be granted entry into Germany in order to search for a job.

The prerequisite for the immigration of skilled workers is recognition of the professional or vocational qualification. Opportunities to enter Germany for the purpose of achieving full equivalence via training

measures will be expanded. Possibilities for employment during and in order to support the compensation measure or refresher training will be extended. The procedure of equivalence assessment must be conducted prior to arrival in Germany. Within the scope of placement arrangements between the Federal Employment Agency and a foreign labour administration body, it will also be possible to instigate the recognition procedure after the person has entered the country.

The implementation of the Skilled Immigration Act and its supporting measures are being coordinated by the Federal Government within the framework of a state secretary steering group called “A coherent approach to the immigration of skilled workers from third countries”. Three working groups have driven forward and harmonised necessary processes which extend beyond adaptation of the legal framework.

The ZSBA forms an integral component of the Skilled Immigration Act and backs up the law. This new point of contact is housed at the Federal Employment Agency. Its tasks are to provide advice and specific guidance on the prospects and prerequisites of a recognition procedure, on authorisation to practise and on issues relating to residency law to persons interested in seeking immigration and recognition who are still living in another EU state or in a third country and to provide support during the recognition until entry to Germany takes place.

It also offers guidance on a possible place of employment, support for the applicant in collating the necessary documentation, forwarding of this documentation to the competent body and arrangement of contacts with domestic employers and training providers. The ZSBA will thus help reduce pressure on the competent bodies in the federal states and on the chamber organisations.

In order to be able to react in the short and medium term to support and implementation requirements that arise in connection with the Skilled Immigration Act, the intention is to make further resources available within the IQ funding Programme. The action focus of “Recognition and training guidance” will include an opportunity to offer additional training courses to stakeholders involved with the immigration of skilled workers (the BA, recognition bodies, visa offices, foreigners authorities) on the new legal position and on the right to professional recognition.

The “ProRecognition” project being run by DIHK Service GmbH, which provides guidance through German chambers of commerce and industry abroad, will be developed further. The entry into force of the Skilled Immigration Act will add new target groups which will need to be tapped into. ProRecognition will collaborate closely with the partners involved both in Germany and abroad in this regard. Alongside German embassies/consulates and Goethe Institutes, these partners also include the ZSBA. This will also be backed up by pilot projects in trade and industry and in the craft trades, in which the aim will be to cooperate with the BA in supporting the Skilled Immigration Act by recruiting and placing skilled workers from third countries in a targeted way.

Turning recognition into employment – integration in the company

The positive situation on the labour market is also directly apparent to persons with foreign professional or vocational qualifications. Unemployment amongst such persons has fallen over recent years, and their rate of employment is approaching that of persons not from a migrant background. Although female participation in employment is below that of men in all groups, it has continuously risen over the past few years. This improved labour market situation was also favoured by take-up of professional recognition.

Both the results of the independent evaluation of the Federal Recognition Act from 2017, which were presented in the last Report on the Recognition Act, and more recent studies confirm the effect of professional recognition on employment, i.e. the direct contribution a successful recognition procedure makes to integration on the labour market. According to the federal evaluation, the employment rate on a before-and-after comparison basis rose massively by more than 50 percent. Almost nine in ten skilled workers with a foreign qualification were able to find work following successful completion of a recognition procedure. Three quarters of those surveyed believed that the employment they were in after recognition was commensurate with their qualifications. Only just under 60 percent stated this prior to recognition.

In overall terms, further general conditions need to be fulfilled alongside recognition in order for sustainable integration at a company or on the labour market to be achieved. It is important to shape the operational integration of skilled workers from abroad in such a

way so as to create diversity at all levels of the company (diversity management). A recognition notice can create specialist and personal equality amongst employees.

Mentoring programmes and other support provision for foreign skilled workers in areas such as dealing with government authorities or pursuing the recognition procedure are also important measures in terms of establishing diversity within the world of work. The advantages offered by a heterogeneous workforce include the bringing of economic benefits for the company and the fostering of creativity and innovation.

Refugees have also been able to benefit from professional recognition. Applications from nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees have been increasing since 2016. This group made just over 2,400 applications in 2016, a figure which already represented more than double the amount recorded in the previous year. In 2017, the number of applications increased to more than 3,800. 2018 saw a further rise to just over 4,100. Calculations conducted by the IAB refugee monitoring project show that the rate of employment amongst refugees was 21 percent in 2017. This was 12 percentage points higher than in the previous year, and the figure is rising constantly as duration of residency increases.

A multitude of recognition-related provision was established with the goal of encouraging labour market integration by refugees. The IQ programme line “Fair Integration” set up counselling centres all over the country to support refugees and other third country nationals with issues related to social and employment law. In the “Willkommenslotsen” project, chamber staff place refugees in internships, observational visits, introductory training measures, training and work.

The question of how opportunities are exploited and rights are asserted is central to both integration and professional recognition. How can the instrument of recognition become more widely known? How can new points of access be developed? Projects such as “Anerkannt”, which was initiated by DGB-Bildungswerk, have therefore set themselves the goals of strengthening the culture of recognition at companies in overall terms and of raising awareness of good role models.

The professional recognition forum of the National Integration Action Plan is also discussing how access points to professional recognition can be further expanded via the use of advocates, advisors and facilitators. Established guidance structures at migrant organisations or welfare associations could play an even larger role in this regard in future.

In overall terms, the monitoring of the Recognition Act shows that recognition of a foreign professional or vocational qualification significantly contributes to improving the occupational situation of skilled workers at various levels. Recognition also leads to persons who have acquired their qualifications and competencies abroad feeling more appreciated by their employers. Nevertheless, in order to ensure sustainable labour market integration, it will also be necessary to embrace heterogeneity in the workforce as an opportunity and to implement measures aimed at implementing diversity.¹

¹ Responsibility for all Federal Government measures presented in the 2019 Report on the Recognition Act rests with the respective departments responsible. The measures are financed by these departments within the scope of relevant budgetary and financial planning approaches. Additional requirements are financed within the respective individual budget.



Unternehmenspreis Wir für Anerkennung Preisträger 2018



The “Wir für Anerkennung” Recognition Prize, which forms part of the “Unternehmen Berufsankennung” project implemented by DIHK Service GmbH and the ZWH, was awarded in 2017 and 2018. The prize rewards exemplary company practice and good ideas in the area of professional recognition. Group photo of the 2018 prize winners and nominees.

Part II

Results of the BIBB Recognition Monitoring

1 Information and guidance

The provision of information on the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications and guidance for persons interested in seeking recognition are crucial to a successful recognition procedure. Numerous types of provision have been established and expanded since the recognition laws of the Federal Government and federal states entered into force in 2012 and between 2012 and 2014 respectively (see Chapter 1.1). The counselling centres offering initial consultations and procedural support within the scope of the Network “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” funding programme, the chambers and the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline recorded more than 380,200 guidance cases by the end of 2018 (see Chapter 1.2).² There is, however, a further focus on raising awareness for the topic within a company context. This is an approach which is, for example, being pursued via the two projects “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung” and “Anerkannt” and by stakeholders in the IQ funding programme (see Chapter 1.3).

1.1 Provision of information on the Internet

The “Recognition in Germany” portal, the “anabin” database and the Information portal for foreign professional and vocational qualifications, referred to in abbreviated form as the BQ Portal, all offer information specific to the topic and support persons interested in seeking recognition and other stakeholders in the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. A “Portals Working Group” synchronises the respective information services in a target group-specific way.

Portal “Anerkennung in Deutschland” – “Recognition in Germany” portal

The “Recognition in Germany” portal was established in 2012. Since this time, it has acted as the Federal Government’s main information platform for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. It is aimed at persons living in Germany and abroad who are interested in seeking recognition, at staff working at guidance institutions and at other

multipliers.³ The portal collates both general and occupationally specific information. Its aims are to explain a complex topic in a user friendly, comprehensible and clear way whilst still offering a depth of information and to assist with the recognition process. Successful use of simple language, provision in eleven languages and field reports from skilled workers whose qualifications have already been recognised all contribute to the achievement of this objective.

A comprehensive analysis of the use of the portal was conducted in 2018.⁴ The outcomes of this are being used to plan a relaunch in order to design the service in an even more user-friendly way. The objectives here include further enhancement of user navigation and better alignment to various target groups.

In 2018, “Recognition in Germany” reached a new record level of more than 3.2 million visits (representing an increase of 37 percent compared to the previous year) (see Figure 1). In overall terms, the portal has recorded almost 11 million visits since its launch in 2012. The average proportion of visits made from abroad was 54 percent.⁵

The essential source of guidance for persons interested in seeking recognition remains the Recognition Finder, a comprehensive tool which is available in both German and English. This includes professions and occupations governed by federal law and federal state law and has also contained non-regulated academic higher education qualifications since 2017.⁶ The Recognition Finder states which competent body is responsible for conducting the recognition procedure in each of these professions and occupations at a regional level. It also provides

² These figures only take account of recognition guidance cases. Statements regarding training guidance are included in Chapter 4.

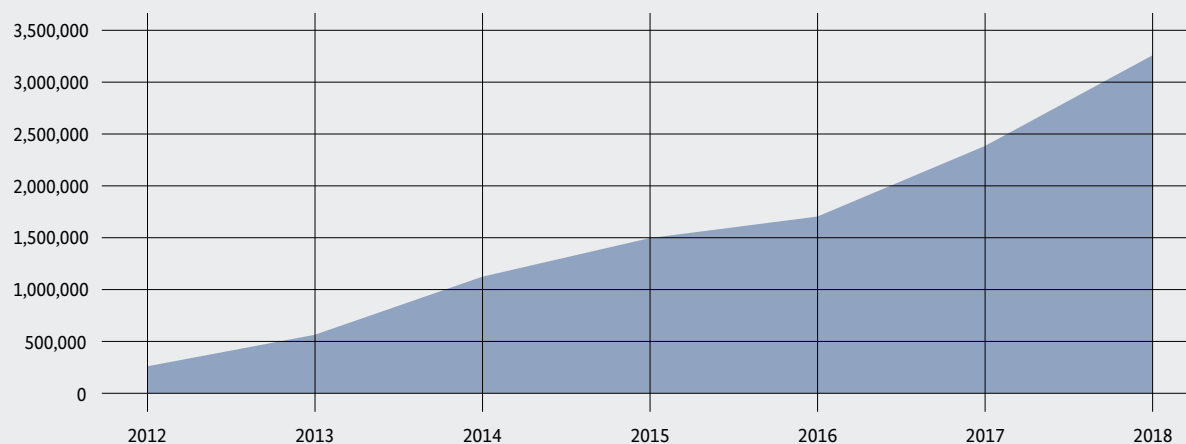
³ See anerkennung-in-deutschland.de. “Recognition in Germany” is operated by BIBB on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF). In its capacity as portal provider and within the context of the implementation of the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EC), BIBB has housed the German assistance centre for questions relating to the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications at an EU level since 2016.

⁴ The analysis mainly concentrated on the carrying out and evaluation of surveys and usability tests.

⁵ Cut-off date for all data stated in this section: 31 December 2018.

⁶ The recognition laws of the Federal Government and the federal states do not apply to these professions and occupations. In accordance with Article III.1 of the Lisbon Convention, however, certificate assessment by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) is a possible option. Relevant information regarding this procedure has been uploaded to the Recognition Finder.

Figure 1: Annual numbers of visits to the “Recognition in Germany” Portal 2012 to 2018 (absolute terms)



Source and explanations: Numbers of hits received on the “Recognition in Germany” Portal (period from 14 March 2012 to 31 December 2018). Figures relating to the use of the portal were calculated via the web statistics tool Matomo (formerly PIWIK).

information on guidance services and on occupationally specific recognition rules.⁷

The portal’s multilingual provision is aligned to an international audience, and this is crucial in terms of success and awareness. In 2018, around two thirds of visits to the site were made from abroad. More than half of these (56 percent) were from third countries (mainly India, Turkey and Egypt). 44 percent came from

the EU/EEA/Switzerland (particularly from Romania, Italy and Greece). The information pages have been available in Russian and French since January 2018. This brings the total number of available languages to eleven.⁸ Access figures from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria rose after the introduction of the French language version.

BQ Portal

The BQ Portal offers recognition-specific information for competent bodies in the chambers sector and for employers, and also assists with the assessment and evaluation of foreign VET systems and professional and vocational qualifications.⁹ At the end of 2018, users were able to access 89 country and 3,315 occupational profiles. This figure has since risen further.¹⁰ In light of the forthcoming Skilled Immigration Act, the assumption is that the need to research new occupational profiles will increase.

⁷ Since 2013, an “Advanced Filter” has also supported the work of specialist advisory staff by enabling a refined search to be made.

Information Box 1

“Recognition in Germany” on Facebook

“Recognition in Germany” launched its own Facebook profile in February 2018. The profile can also be used to direct enquiries to the portal. Questions posed thus far have mainly related to specific issues regarding a person’s own recognition or job search in Germany. A further aim is for the Facebook presence to serve as an additional platform for the exchange of tips and experiences relating to the topic of professional and occupational recognition in Germany.

⁸ “Recognition in Germany” went online in 2012 in German and English. Italian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish and Turkish were added in 2014. Greece and Arabic followed in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

⁹ See bq-portal.de. The BQ Portal went online in the autumn of 2011. The current project phase runs until 31 March 2022. The Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW) is responsible for the operation and further development of the portal. The BQ Portal is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi). Cut-off date for all data stated in this section: 31 December 2018.

¹⁰ Country profiles for Israel, Thailand, Bolivia, Paraguay and Finland were added in 2018.

Table 1: Top 5 most frequently accessed occupational profiles on the BQ Portal 2018 (absolute terms)

Occupational profile	Country of training	Page views
Motor vehicle electrical technician, motor vehicle electronics technician (initial vocational training) (2005–2006)	Romania	1,026
Nursing (nurse) (2004)	Serbia	461
Nursing (nurse) (2007)	Ukraine	363
Veterinary technician (1991–2000)	Poland	362
Electronics technician (Technical Institute) (2001)	Syria	238

Source and explanations: Numbers of hits received on the BQ Portal (period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018). The year dates given for the occupational profiles relate in each case to the period during which it is definitely known that the relevant training regulations were in force. If only one year date is stated, this indicates that the BQ Portal has knowledge that the regulations in question are still applicable. The purpose of the additional references supplied alongside the occupational profiles (for example “initial vocational training” or “Technical Institute”) is to provide specific information on aspects such as the type of institute delivering the training or the nature of the qualification.

The BQ Portal also acts as a knowledge network and knowledge management system (see Chapter 3.2). The BQ Portal underwent a complete technical overhaul in 2018. A new design and changes to the interface enhanced the user friendliness of the site, and a restructuring of the country and occupational profiles brought about a further improvement.¹¹

The BQ Portal is also experiencing a constant increase in demand. A new peak was reached in 2018, when the site recorded almost 205,500 visits (a growth of 9 percent compared to the previous year). Just over three quarters of these were made from Germany. The total number of visits to the site since 2011 is nearly 890,000.

The country profiles for Syria and Iran were accessed particularly frequently in 2018.¹² This represents a continuation of the trend for a requirement to obtain information on the main countries of origin of refugees,¹³ and is also reflected in the enquiries directed to the BQ Portal by the chambers. In the case of occupational profiles, the information pages most frequently accessed were for initial training in the field of motor vehicle electrics/electronics

in Romania, followed by nursing training programmes in Serbia and Ukraine (see Table 1).

A second evaluation of the BQ Portal carried out by the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA) once again produced a positive outcome.¹⁴ The portal’s main target group, competent bodies in the chamber sector, also confirmed the considerable added value they derive for their day-to-day work from the services available on the site. One of the individual conclusions arrived at in the evaluation report was that use of the portal has made equivalence procedures “more standardised, quicker and more transparent”.¹⁵

“anabin” database

The “anabin” database (a German acronym for “Recognition and assessment of foreign educational qualifications”)¹⁶ is aimed at government authorities, educational establishments (especially institutes of higher education), persons interested in seeking recognition and employers. It offers information for the assessment of foreign higher education, vocational and school qualifications and for the assessment of foreign educational establishments in the higher education sector. The database thus enables qualifications acquired abroad to be more easily categorised

¹¹ All of the portal’s relevant user groups were involved in the update process via surveys and usability tests.

¹² Syria country profile: 19,007 page views. Iran country profile: 4,760 page views. Country profiles are also available for Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Eritrea. See bq-portal.de/Anerkennung-f%C3%BCr-Betriebe/Qualifikationen-von-FI%C3%BChtlingen.

¹³ Brief descriptions on the main countries from which refugees originate have been available in both German and English since February 2019 in order to cover current information requirements.

¹⁴ See BAFA 2018 at bafa.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Bundesamt/evaluation_bq-portal_2018.pdf?__blob=publication-File&v=2.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁶ See anabin.kmk.org. The “anabin” database was launched online in 2000. It is operated by the ZAB and also forms part of the ZAB Internet presence. Funding is provided by the federal states. Cut-off date for all data stated in this section: 31 December 2018.

within the German education system. “anabin” was expanded in 2018 in order to optimise knowledge management between the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG), which is housed at the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB), and the competent bodies in the healthcare sector (see Chapter 3.1).

The database recorded a new peak of more than 2.3 million hits in 2018. This represented a growth of 5 percent compared to the previous year. Almost 9.6 million visits have taken place since 2012. At the end of 2018, information and assessments were available for 180 education systems, 31,400 institutes of higher education and 29,000 higher education qualifications. “anabin” also contains sample assessments of individual educational biographies. These numbered 31,700 by the end of 2018 and may be viewed by recognition bodies in a password-protected area of the site.

1.2 Guidance services for persons interested in seeking recognition

Free multi-lingual guidance services offer persons interested in seeking recognition personal support from the initial orientation phase to the submission of the actual application itself. Assistance during the procedure is also available. Guidance services aligned towards the topic of training within the context of recognition are also highly relevant (see Chapter 4).

Information and initial consultations from the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline

The “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline offers information and advice on aspects such as issues relating to recognition.¹⁷ It has provided almost 88,000 consultations

¹⁷ The hotline commenced operations on 2 April 2012. The hotline existed in the form of the “Recognition Hotline of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees” (BAMF Hotline) until 30 November 2014. With effect from 1 December 2014, it was extended to become the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline. The measure now forms part of the demographic strategy of the Federal Government and is jointly operated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BAMF) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) within the scope of a cross-departmental cooperation agreement between the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI), the BMBF and the BA. Since this time, the hotline has been providing advice on the topics of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, looking for a job, work and occupations, entry and residency, and learning German.

up until now. More than 16,200 of these were provided in 2018 (an increase of 18 percent compared to the previous year). This represents a renewed rise in the number of consultations provided annually following a slight fall in the two preceding years (see Table 2).¹⁸

In 2018, the gender proportions of guidance recipients were 50 percent male and 50 percent female.¹⁹ Just over two thirds of persons seeking advice had completed at

¹⁸ 2015: 16,061 consultations, 2016: 14,667 consultations, 2017 and 2018: see Table 2.

¹⁹ Women: 49.8 percent, men: 50.2 percent.



“Increasing immigration figures, discussions about a shortage of skilled workers in basic occupational sectors and further societal developments are all giving rise to a series of new demands. The competence centre is looking forward to continuing to work in conjunction with other stakeholders in the Network IQ in future to develop tailored provision and to support people with a qualification from abroad in professional and occupational integration!”

Evelin Willems, Project Head of the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants.



Tarek Khouli learned about the possibility of professional recognition for the first time from LerNet Bonn/Rhein-Sieg e. V. in Bonn, one of the advice centres run by the Network IQ in North Rhine-Westphalia. Two months after submitting an application to the IHK FOSA, he received a notice certifying full recognition of his Syrian qualification. He now works as an industrial mechanic in Meckenheim near Bonn.

least one course of higher education study. 34.9 percent had completed at least one training course. Three quarters of guidance recipients were aged between 25 and 44.

The hotline is increasingly being used by persons living abroad. A growth of one third compared to the previous year can be observed in this regard. Those living in Turkey, India or Italy are most likely to contact the hotline (see Table 2).²⁰

As in previous years, Germans formed the largest group of all persons seeking advice. They were followed in second and third place by Turkish and Indian nationals respectively. The latter thus overtook Syrians, who had occupied third position in the rankings in 2017 (see Table 2).

In 2018, consultations on Turkish qualifications once again saw the greatest demand. There was a noticeable decline in the number of consultations on Syrian

qualifications, which was the number three country of training in this regard in 2017. Volume decreased by 180 consultations compared to the previous year. By way of contrast, the number of consultations concerning Indian qualifications rose by about 150. India thus represented the second most popular country of training for which guidance was sought (see Table 2).

40 percent of consultations in 2018 were on occupations governed by federal law. Of these, 27 percent related to the regulated sector and to healthcare and nursing in particular. There was also a strong demand for advice on occupations governed by federal state law, especially regarding the professions of engineer and teacher (see Figure 2).

Recognition guidance via the Network “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” funding programme

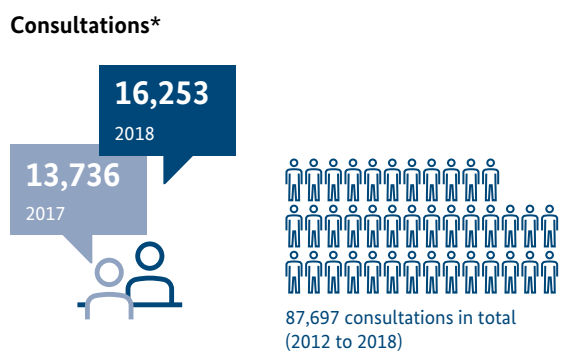
IQ Recognition Counselling Centres provide initial consultations on the topic of professional and occupational recognition right across Germany.²¹ They clarify fundamental questions such as the following: What are the prerequisites for a recognition procedure? What could be a possible German reference occupation? The counselling centres also help with collation of the necessary documentation and refer persons on to the relevant competent body.

20 Turkey: 668, India: 512, Italy: 274 guidance recipients.

21 The IQ Recognition Counselling Centres and the training counselling centres (see Chapter 4) form part of the Network “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” funding programme. The IQ funding programme was initiated by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) in 2005 and featured three main action focuses until the end of 2018 (a fourth new priority area entitled “Regional skilled worker networks – immigration” was added in 2019). One of the principal action areas is recognition and training guidance. The funding for this purpose is provided by the BMAS and the European Social Fund (ESF). The BMBF and the BA act as strategic partners. The stakeholders within the funding programme receive support and assistance from the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants. This competence centre is also responsible for monitoring the guidance system and the training measures that are offered.

Table 2: “Living and Working in Germany” Hotline and IQ recognition guidance – development of selected characteristics 2017 and 2018

“Working and Living in Germany” Hotline



IQ Recognition Counselling



Top 3 nationalities (persons receiving guidance)

2017	2018
German 1,430	German 1,521
Turkish 732	Turkish 1,019
Syrian 658	Syrian 786

Top 3 countries of training (qualifications)

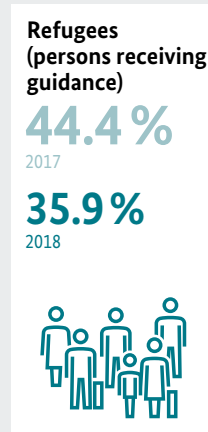
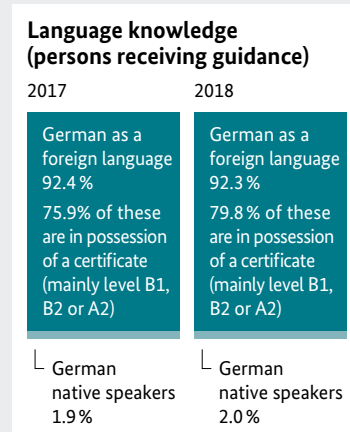
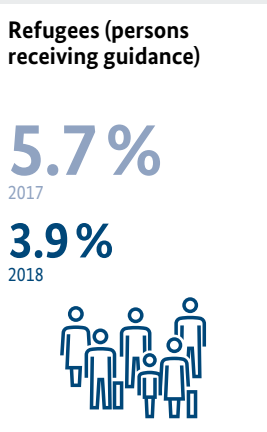
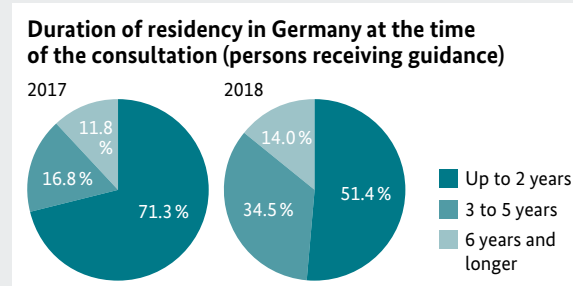
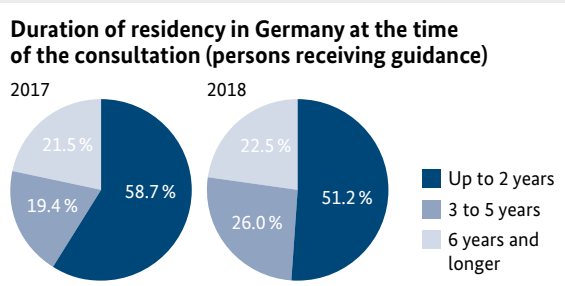
2017	2018
Turkey 812	Turkey 1,129
Poland 718	India 710
Syria 619	Russian Federation 697

Top 3 nationalities (persons receiving guidance)

2017	2018
Syrian 12,499	Syrian 8,409
German 2,358	German 2,655
Iranian 2,261	Iranian 2,477

Top 3 countries of training (qualifications)

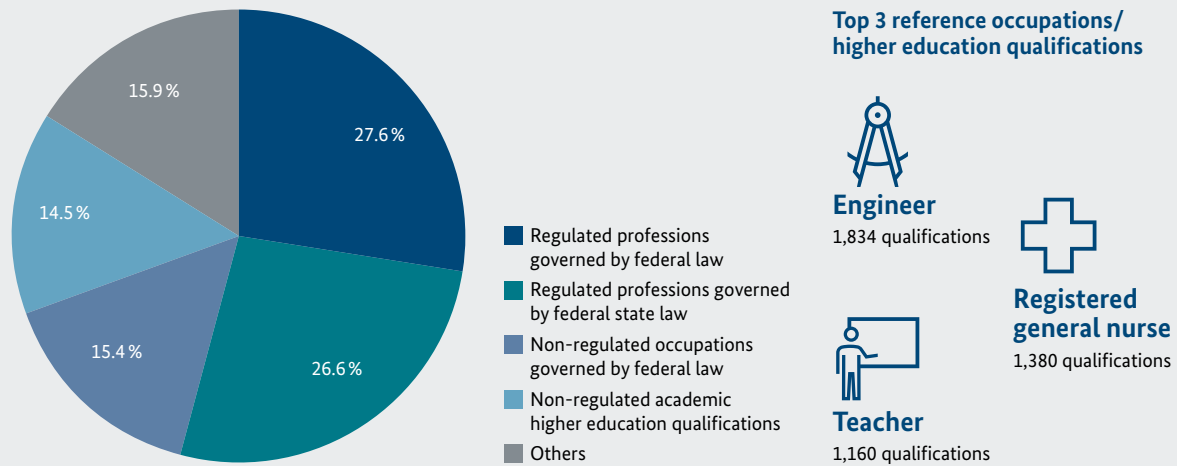
2017	2018
Syria 12,911	Syria 8,742
Russian Federation 2,526	Russian Federation 2,914
Iran 2,514	Iran 2,745



Source and explanations: “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline guidance data (period from 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2018) and IQ recognition guidance data (period from 1 August 2012 to 31 December 2018). Calculations and representation by BIBB. Percentage distribution on the basis of valid values.

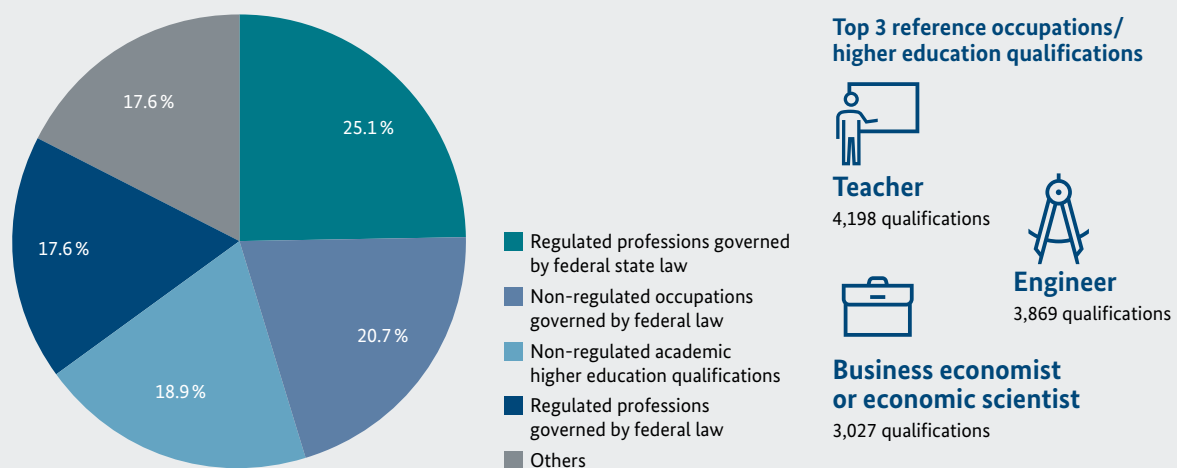
* The guidance statistics of the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline record the number of consultations conducted. Multiple countings can occur because persons interested in seeking recognition may contact the hotline on more than one occasion.

Figure 2: Initial consultations from the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline, distribution by areas of regulation and top 3 reference occupations/higher education qualifications 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source and explanations: “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline guidance data (period from 1 January to 31 December 2018). Calculations and representation by BIBB. The hotline records up to two possible reference occupations per person receiving guidance, N = 16,138 consultations on reference occupations. “Others” includes the remaining category “No alignment to German reference occupation possible”. Percentage distribution on the basis of valid values.

Figure 3: IQ recognition guidance, distribution by regulation areas and TOP 3 reference occupations/higher education qualifications 2018 (in percent and in absolute terms)



Source and explanations: IQ recognition guidance data (period 1 January to 31 December 2018). Calculations and representation by BIBB. The IQ recognition guidance data records up to four possible reference occupations or higher education qualifications per person receiving guidance, N = 42,123 qualifications. “Others” includes the remaining categories of “Non-regulated federal state occupations”, “No alignment to German reference occupation possible” and “Other occupation not included in the list”. Percentage distribution on the basis of valid values.

Around 41,300 persons availed themselves of the guidance provision in 2018 (see Table 2). There was a slight fall in the number of persons receiving guidance compared to the previous year.²² In contrast to the two years before, the majority of those seeking advice (55.1 percent) were women. 79.0 percent of guidance recipients were aged between 25 and 44. 69.7 percent had completed at least one course of higher education study. 33.1 percent had completed at least one training course. As in the previous year, those receiving guidance were almost exclusively resident in Germany (95.2 percent).

There was a sharp decline in consultations for Syrian nationals, even though they have continued to occupy first position amongst the ranking of nationalities since 2015. By way of contrast, the number of Germans seeking an initial consultation rose for the second time in succession to around 300 (see Table 2).²³

As in the previous year, the Russian Federation and Iran were the second and third most common countries of training behind Syria. Consultations on Turkish qualifications recorded a significant growth of 67 percent.²⁴

Occupations governed by federal state law, especially the professions of engineer and teacher, formed the largest group of reference occupations. These were followed in second and third place respectively by non-regulated occupations governed by federal law and non-regulated higher education qualifications. Occupations governed by federal law account for somewhat more than one third (38 percent) of all consultations (see Figure 3).²⁵

Information Box 2

Fewer refugees at the IQ Recognition Counselling Centres

The IQ Recognition Counselling Centres provided guidance to fewer refugees in 2018. The number of persons receiving guidance reached a peak of 16,402 in 2017 before falling back to 13,201 in 2018.^a Half of refugees held Syrian citizenship at the time when the consultation took place. They were followed by Iranians (13.2 percent) and Iraqis (7.6 percent). 65.2 percent of persons receiving guidance were male, and 34.8 percent were female. Just over half (51.8 percent) of refugees who sought advice were aged between 25 and 34. A further 28.4 percent were between 35 and 44 years old. The most frequent reference occupations and higher education qualifications on which guidance was provided were in line with those that were in the greatest demand at the IQ Recognition Counselling Centres in 2018. These were teacher (1,414 consultations), engineer (1,274 consultations) and business economist and academic researcher (834 consultations).

^a This development reflects an overall trend that has been discernible since 2015 in that there is a time delay before refugees participate in the recognition process following their arrival in Germany. Whereas demand for recognition guidance fell, more refugees entered training measures in 2018 (see footnote 22 and Chapter 4.2).

²² According to the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants, the probable reason for the decrease in the number of persons seeking advice in 2018 compared to the previous year is a lower level of demand from refugees. An initial inspection of data for the first half of 2019 suggests that there will be a further proportional decline in the number of persons with a refugee background. At the same time, a slightly rising trend is revealed with regard to the number of persons from third countries and without a refugee background as a proportion of all those seeking guidance. The extent to which this proportion will increase as a result of developments connected with the Skilled Immigration Act remains to be seen.

²³ 2016: 2,003 German nationals received guidance, 2017 and 2018: see Table 2.

²⁴ Turkey: 2017: 1,377 qualifications, 2018: 2,295 qualifications.

²⁵ Further evaluations of consultations provided by the IQ Recognition Counselling Centres and training counselling centres, by the "Working and Living in Germany" Hotline and by the "Recognition in Germany" portal can be found in the assessment reports produced by the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants, see Liedtke and Vockentanz 2019.

Initial guidance provided by chambers of crafts and trades and chambers of commerce and industry

The chambers of crafts and trades and chambers of commerce and industry offer individual initial consultations at a local level for their respective area of responsibility. They prepare applicants for the recognition procedure by presenting the statutory foundations and procedural process and by determining the reference occupation and documentation that needs to be submitted. If appropriate, they also address alternatives to the recognition procedure such as an external examination or retraining measures. Local chambers of commerce and industry take responsibility for providing initial consultations for applications which fall within the remit of the Foreign Skills Approval Competence Centre of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHK FOSA).²⁶

The two chamber areas together have carried out almost 104,000 initial consultations since the entry into force of the Federal Recognition Act in 2012. The chambers of crafts and trades reported 12,124 consultations for the year 2018 alone. The corresponding figure for the chambers of commerce and industry was 3,406.²⁷ Information should be viewed as minimum figures because not all chambers of commerce and industry report their consultation data to the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). There is also no binding definition of initial consultation, meaning that the various chamber areas may not deploy the term congruently.

Information and guidance via the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)

About 60 percent of enquiries received by the ZAB relate to certificate assessment. Questions regarding recognition legislation including the relevant types of

procedures and other issues account for most of the remaining 40 percent.²⁸ Within these thematic areas, there is a particular requirement for information on specific questions which relate to individual and complex educational pathways in which more than one education system is frequently involved. This type of enquiry is becoming ever more prevalent because of increasing international networking in the academic sector. In 2018, responses were provided to a total of over 100,000 enquiries. 10 percent of these were submitted from abroad.

Other advisory stakeholders

Alongside the “Living and Working in Germany” Hotline, the IQ Recognition Counselling Centres and the chambers, migrant organisations also offer information and advice as part of their adult migrant guidance services (MBE). Other programmes, including the ESF funding programme “Stark im Beruf”, and regional stakeholders such as the Advanced Training Centres of Bavarian Trade and Industry (bfz) or the Continuing Training Guidance Agencies in North Rhine-Westphalia, provide differing degrees of guidance on recognition too. Recognition guidance is available abroad via the “ProRecognition” project, for example (see Chapter 6.4). The work performed by the advisors enables them to act as multipliers and helps to raise even greater awareness of the opportunities to obtain recognition for foreign professional and vocational qualifications. The scientific monitoring of the recognition grant shows that 17 percent of applications were submitted by referring agencies which were neither IQ Counselling Centres nor competent bodies.²⁹ The referring agencies in question were educational establishments (such as adult education centres), adult migrant advice centres (MBEs), government authorities, welfare associations, regional development and integration organisations, and institutions operated by religious communities.

²⁶ They also conduct referral consultations.

²⁷ Guidance figures from the chambers of crafts and trades are collected by BIBB in close conjunction with the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH). All 53 chambers of crafts and trades provided feedback on initial guidance. In the trade and industry sector, guidance volume is recorded using the data management tool of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). This tool encompasses initial consultations as well as further guidance services. The DIHK estimates that around 80 percent of cases relate to initial guidance. These have been taken into account for the present purpose. For this reason, the total number of consultations recorded in the data management tool is above the figure stated here. Survey period for the chamber of crafts and trades and chamber of commerce and industry data: 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

²⁸ Other issues included access to higher education in Germany, recognition of foreign school certificates and the right to use foreign academic titles and degrees.

²⁹ Cut-off date: 16 November 2018.

Information Box 3

Recognition guidance and work placement go hand in hand

Last year, an average of two thirds of persons who received guidance from the IQ Recognition Counselling Centres were not in work. Recognition of a professional or vocational qualification acquired abroad may be an instrument which can pave the way onto the labour market and into employment which is commensurate with a person's qualifications (see Chapter 7). For this reason, the Job Centres and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) are relevant stakeholders in the recognition process. Good cooperation and networking with the guidance providers is important.^a During the past IQ funding round, various projects emerged all over the country which allowed intercommunication to be improved, processes to be simplified and cooperation to be structured more efficiently in overall terms. In Brandenburg, Hesse and the Saarland, for example, IQ guidance is offered directly on the premises of the labour administration bodies.^b In other regions, the IQ Recognition Counselling Centres prepare guidance forms or protocols which collate important recognition guidance information for the labour administration bodies. "Round Tables", such as those which operate in southern Brandenburg, Berlin, Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein, also help to encourage networking.

a See for example the new Instruction 201903006 issued on 12 March 2019: "Training measures within the context of the Recognition Act – main action focus in the 'Integration through training' (IQ)" funding project, which updates Recommendation/Instruction (HEGA) 09/15 – 1 from the Federal Employment Agency, see con.arbeitsagentur.de/prod/apok/ct/dam/download/documents/Weisung-201903006_ba042362.pdf.

b See netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/IQ_Publikationen/Good_Practice/IQ_GP_2018_Strat._Ansatz_AuQ-Beratung_in_und_mit_AV.pdf.

1.3 Establishing recognition in companies

The profile of the topic of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications within the company context is being driven on the employers' side via the "Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung [Company recognition]" project, whilst the "Anerkannt [Recognised]" project aims to raise awareness amongst employees and their representative bodies.

"Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung" project

The "Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung" is funded by the BMBF and is being implemented by DIHK Service GmbH and the Central Agency for Continuing Vocational Education and Training in the Skilled Crafts (ZWH) in conjunction with several chambers. The partners and initiators of the project are the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH) and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK).

Direct nationwide contact was achieved during the project's initial term from 2016 to 2018. Over 10,000 companies from the trade and industry and craft trade sectors were notified by telephone about the opportunities of professional and vocational recognition.³⁰ This campaign was backed up by various information and communication services. In 2017 and 2018, the BMBF, DIHK and ZDH also offered the "Wir für Anerkennung" Prize to recognise company commitment in the area of professional and vocational recognition.³¹ This was followed in June 2017 by the launch of a travelling exhibition, which had already been shown at 34 locations by the end of 2018 and attracted demand from beyond the chambers sector.³²

"Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung" entered a further and three-year project stage at the start of 2019. Previous activities will serve as a building block for the continuation of tried and tested activities such as the travelling exhibition, and communication and networking services underwent further development.

30 Discussions were conducted with 17,057 companies. 10,287 of these accepted the offer to receive information about the topic of recognition.

31 See anerkennungspreis.de/unternehmenspreis/.

32 See anerkennungspreis.de/wanderausstellung.

The group of target stakeholders is also being expanded to encompass bodies such as guilds and district craft trade associations. Specific support provision aligned towards needs are being developed, too. Each of the project partners executes target group-specific individual projects for this purpose.³³ A new contact and guidance concept is being drawn up in the craft trades sector in order to provide improved support. This will then be tested out together with partner chambers using special “pilots”. A further focus is being placed on the topic of “refresher training” (see Chapter 4). The establishment of an “Open Network for the Craft Trades” includes the ongoing development of freely accessible materials, training programmes etc. for all relevant stakeholders in the sector. A recognition community is being created in the trade and industry sector. This brings companies and experts together on a digital knowledge and networking platform and is helping to strengthen collaboration between all parties involved. In content terms, the focus is on areas such as the interplay between recognition and immigration.

The “Anerkannt” project

The “Anerkannt” project, which is funded by the BMBF and is being delivered by the Education and Training Institute of the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB), was launched in 2014. Its aim is to provide employee representative bodies and workforces with information on recognition and thus raise awareness of the topic. A further objective is to establish a sustainable culture of recognition within company structures. Information events, comprehensive public relations work and extensive trade union networking have all been used to drive forward the project recently. This approach has enabled individual trade unions in sectors such as the chemical industry, construction and teaching to be brought on board. The project has also developed an advanced training programme leading to the qualification of “company-based recognition specialist” in order to raise direct awareness for the issue in everyday working life.

“Anerkannt” began a new two-year project phase in 2019 and will use this to pursue the further consolidation of project structures and networking. There are plans to foster a culture of recognition within



Cornelia Swillus-Knöchel is a member of the staff council at Essen University Hospital who underwent training to become a company recognition specialist within the scope of the “Anerkannt” project delivered by the Education and Training Institute of the German Confederation of Trade Unions. At the event to launch the National Integration Action Plan, she reported on her own experiences with the topic of recognition.

companies by involving persons who are able to contribute expertise by dint of the fact that they have already had the experience of completing a recognition procedure. In order to move beyond a mere information and awareness campaign and to pave actual routes to recognition, further intentions include the creation of company-based interfaces to external guidance provision and to competent bodies. New topics are also being systematically addressed within the scope of the project. Examples here are the role and relevance of informal networks, informal/non-formal competencies and general company conditions which are conducive to the immigration of skilled workers.

³³ The project name “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung” will remain the same, but the two target group-specific projects will be labelled with the addition of “IHK” (for trade and industry) and “HWK” (for the craft trades).

1.4 Awareness of opportunities for recognition

The data portrayed shows who has already successfully accessed the route to information and guidance provision (see Chapters 1.1 and 1.2). This allows only limited conclusions to be drawn as to how well the whole (potential) target group has been tapped into hitherto, both nationally and internationally. No comprehensive analyses are available, although questions relating to awareness and support needs have been addressed on an individual basis in various surveys and studies. These indicate that awareness of opportunities for recognition could be expanded further. A study on family reunification conducted by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in 2018 shows, for example, that only just over a quarter (28 percent) of husbands, wives or parents in possession of professional or vocational qualifications who had followed a spouse or children to Germany had applied for recognition of their qualification acquired abroad despite having the certificates to support such an application. The most frequent reason given by respondents as to why they had not sought to pursue a recognition procedure was uncertainty regarding how and where the application needed to be submitted.³⁴

The results of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees published in 2019 indicate that some respondents did not have access to sufficient assistance for the recognition process, although they would have required such support. This applied in the case of one fifth of persons who had already applied for recognition of their foreign qualification and to one third of those who had not submitted an application at the time when the survey took place.³⁵

Although company surveys arrive at different outcomes, it is clear in overall terms that the level of awareness is rising but still capable of improvement.

In a representative survey of 5,286 companies carried out in 2014 as part of the Recognition Monitoring Project, 35 percent of respondents stated that they had heard of the recognition acts passed by the Federal Government and the federal states. However, only 3 percent in each case had taken specific steps in this regard or had gained their own staff recruitment experience.³⁶

The Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) regularly conducts an initial and continuing training survey involving around 11,000 companies. In 2015, about a quarter of firms participating stated that they were familiar with the Recognition Act. This proportion had doubled to 52 percent by the following year and reached 55 percent in 2017.³⁷

► In future, the focus needs to be on continuing to keep an eye on reaching out to the target group of persons interested in seeking recognition and on the degree of awareness of opportunities for recognition within the company context with a view to initiating further measures where necessary. Projects such as “Anerkannt” and “Unternehmen Berufsankennung” are already helping to increase the degree of awareness at companies. The evaluation of the Recognition Act carried out by the Federal Government recommended that information activities should also be expanded onto social media.³⁸ This has been taken into account in the form of the Facebook presence of the “Recognition in Germany” portal. Nevertheless, it is obvious in overall terms that the information and guidance structures that have now been established provide persons interested in seeking recognition and further stakeholders with targeted orientation and support, and demand continues to be high.

34 See Wälde and Evers 2018. It is not possible to discern for what proportion of persons responding to this question the topic of recognition could be of serious relevance. This would mainly concern respondents who are working or who aspire to enter employment. The analyses do not differentiate any further in this regard by (aspiring) workers and those who have made a conscious decision not to seek employment.

35 See Brücker et al. 2018. It is not apparent which type of assistance would have been required precisely (i.e. provision of basic information or advice, more detailed guidance, process support etc.).

36 See BMBF 2015.

37 See Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry 2017.

38 See Ekert et al. 2017.

2 Take-up of recognition procedures

This report is the first to collate data from three sets of statistics to form an overall picture. The data from the official statistics on occupations governed by federal and federal state law forms the most important factual basis in terms of observation of the recognition system and identification of possible adaptation requirements for the implementation of statutory regulations relating to professional recognition. This is supplemented by the statistics on certificate assessments, which are managed by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) (see Chapter 2.1). Important trends relating to federal occupations are also presented, for example the level of development in countries of training (see Chapter 2.2). Finally, the level of development in the main countries of origin of refugees is also considered (see Chapter 2.3). Focused evaluations of certain occupational areas may be found in Chapter 3.

Information Box 4

Occupations governed by federal state law – collation of federal state data to create coordinated statistics

Statistics relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law have been pooled by the Federal Statistical Office (StBA) ever since the law entered into force in 2012. With the aim of facilitating an overall presentation of the recognition system, the Working Group of the Coordinating Departments of the federal states and the BMBF have also followed this approach for occupations governed by state law. In 2017, the Federal Statistical Office was commissioned with the task of realising coordinated federal state statistics. The BMBF is supporting this project by providing three-year start-up financing. In September 2018, the Federal Statistical Office published its first results for the coordinated federal state statistics for the reporting years of 2016 and 2017. The Federal Statistical Office carried out extensive evaluations of the data in order to allow for the assessment of the Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts of the federal states. The piloting phase ends in 2020. The federal states have already affirmed that they will use their own funds to finance the coordinated statistics after this date.

2.1 Overall picture – applications for recognition procedures and certificate assessments

Implementation of the recognition laws of the Federal Government and the federal states has been supported via the collection of official data since the acts entered into effect.³⁹

During the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2018, competent bodies reported a total of around 140,700 applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law. Around 29,200 of these were submitted in 2018. There were over 46,100 applications regarding professions and occupations governed by federal state law, almost 10,000 of which were made last year. Numbers of applications have been rising in overall terms since the recognition acts passed by the Federal Government and federal states entered into force.⁴⁰ In 2018, however, the competent bodies reported fewer applications concerning professions and occupations governed by federal state law than in the previous year. All in all, the official statistics have recorded almost 187,000 applications for recognition up until now. In addition to this, there were nearly 92,600 applications made by private persons to the ZAB for a certificate assessment of a higher education qualification acquired abroad. Just over 23,200 of these were submitted in 2018. Application numbers in this area have also been rising since 2012 (see Figure 4).

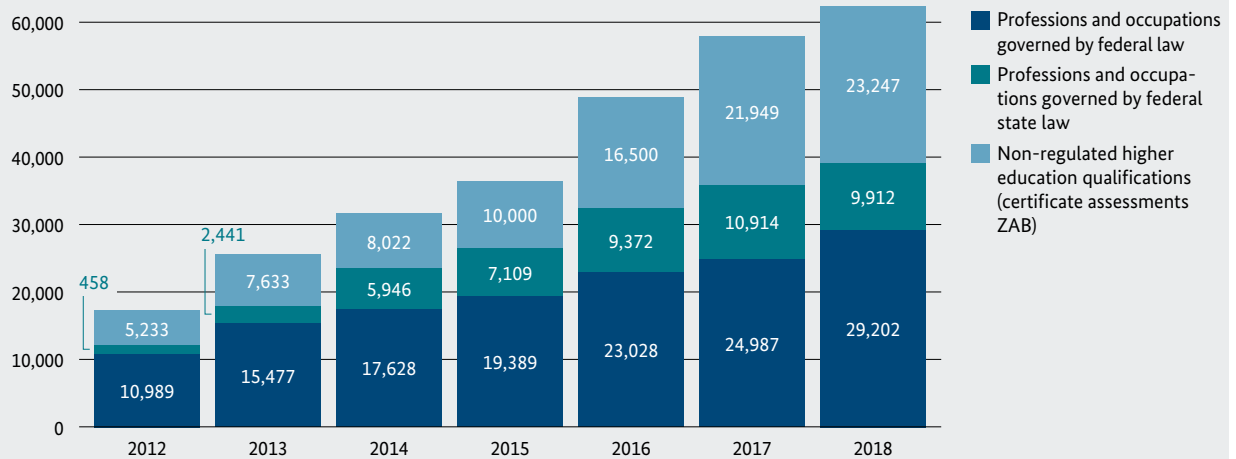
2.2 Results of the official statistics on professions and occupations governed by federal law

The regulated sector accounted for just over three quarters of around 140,700 applications made since April

³⁹ In the case of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG), statistics have their basis in § 17 BQFG or in relevant sections contained within specific legislation governing the professions in question. The foundations for statistics in accordance with the Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts of the federal states are provided by the respective laws of the federal states.

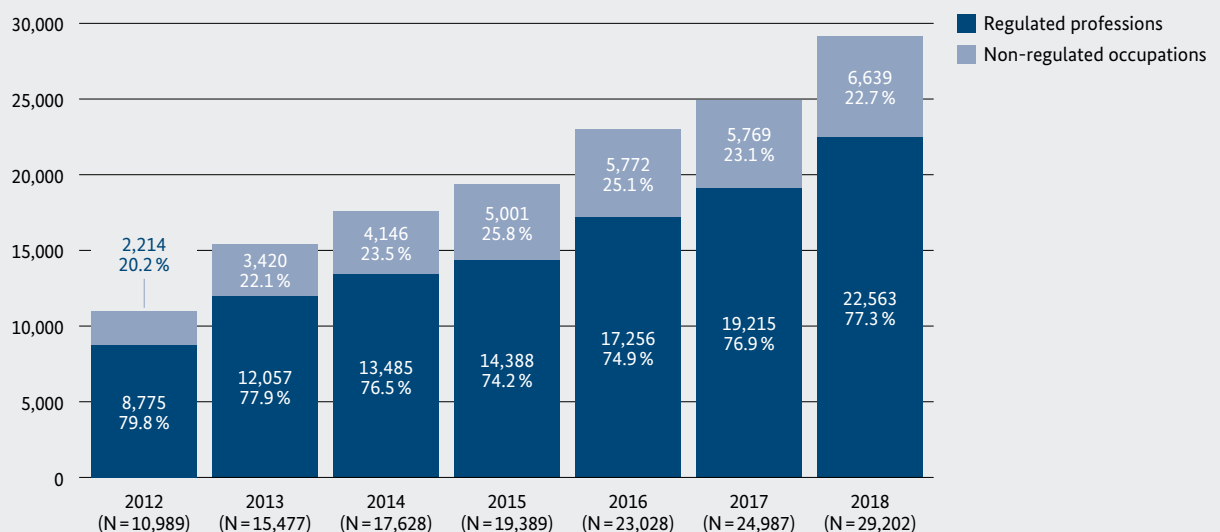
⁴⁰ When considering the development in the numbers of applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal state law, we need to bear in mind that the Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts of the federal states entered into effect successively between August 2012 and July 2014 rather than at all the same time.

Figure 4: Applications for recognition in professions and occupations governed by federal law and federal state law and applications to the ZAB for certificate assessment of non-regulated higher education qualifications
2012 to 2018 (absolute terms)



Source and explanations: Professions and occupations governed by federal law and federal state law: Official statistics in accordance with the Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts of the federal states and pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting period 2012 to 2018. Collected by the Federal Statistical Office and the statistical offices of the federal states. Calculations by the statistical offices and BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2. In order to identify the numbers of applications for 2012 to 2015 made in professions and occupations governed by federal state law, the statistical offices of the federal states were asked to provide relevant evaluations. Some provided rounded figures whilst others delivered unrounded values. When the individual data is added up, the annual total number of applications may therefore deviate from the real total by a small single-digit figure. No data is available for professions and occupations governed by federal state law in Bremen for the year 2015. Evaluations from the coordinated federal state statistics have been requested for the years from 2016 to 2018. Non-regulated higher education qualifications: ZAB statistics 2012–2018. Calculation by the ZAB.

Figure 5: Applications relating to regulated professions and non-regulated occupations governed by federal law
2012 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2012 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Table 3: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – Top 5 reference occupations in the regulated and non-regulated sector 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)

Regulated professions				Non-regulated occupations			
	Applications (absolute terms)	Proportion (percent)	Changes to 2017 (in percent)		Applications (absolute terms)	Proportion (percent)	Changes to 2017 (in percent)
Registered general nurse	11,490	50.9	+30.1	Office manager	864	13.0	+20.0
Doctor	6,162	27.3	+0.3	Electronics technician (no info sp.*)	543	8.2	+23.4
Physiotherapist	948	4.2	+8.0	Motor vehicle mechatronics technician	327	4.9	+18.1
Pharmacist	795	3.5	+43.2	Electrical fitter	297	4.5	+17.5
Dentist	753	3.3	+5.9	Electronics technician for industrial engineering	276	4.1	+23.9
Others	2,418	10.7		Others	4,334	65.3	
Total	22,563	100.0		Total	6,639	100.0	

Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2017 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

*No info sp. = no information regarding specialism

2012 regarding professions and occupations governed by federal law. The absolute figures in particular reveal a significant annual growth with regard to regulated professions over recent years. In 2018, the volume of such applications was around 3,350 higher than in the previous year. Increases of around 2,900 and almost 2,000 applications had already been recorded in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Applications relating to non-regulated occupations have made up an average of around one quarter of the volume since 2012. This volume rose by 870 applications in 2018 compared to the previous year (see Figure 5).

In 2018, the German reference occupations (simply referred to below as occupations) most in demand were once again those in the medical and healthcare sector, especially registered general nurse and doctor (see Chapter 3.1). They accounted for just over 78 percent of almost 22,570 applications regarding regulated professions (see Table 3). The occupational profile of registered general nurse was top of the ranking list for the fourth year in succession. An increase of almost 2,660 applications was recorded compared to the previous year, the

highest total growth in absolute terms for any occupation. Applications in the profession of doctor remained comparatively stable.⁴¹

The occupation of office manager accounted for 13 percent of around 6,640 applications submitted in the non-regulated sector. This occupation⁴² has held first place in this area since 2012 (see Chapter 3.2). As far as the occupational groups were concerned,⁴³ mechatronics, energy-related and electrical occupations recorded the most applications. In this case, almost 29 percent of applications related to non-regulated occupations. Examples here include electronics technician and electrical fitter, both of which attracted a large number of applications (see Table 3).

⁴¹ The composition of the five most frequent reference occupations in the regulated sector has remained the same since 2012. Only the order has varied over the years.

⁴² Or one of its predecessor occupations, office management clerk.

⁴³ Reference here is to the relevant main occupational group of “Mechatronics, energy and electrical occupations” as defined in the 2010 Classification of Occupations (KldB 2010).

Information Box 5

Official statistics pursuant to § 17 BQFG – methodological remarks

The Federal Statistical Office and the statistical offices of the federal states are responsible for the collection of data. Unlike in the case of the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), for example, the data is process generated rather than being the result of a survey. Statistical reporting takes place via the competent bodies responsible for recognition. Reporting is mandatory. All results are accordingly based on the reports submitted by the individual competent bodies responsible for the recognition procedure.^a

According to the official statistics, an application does not need to be reported until supporting documentation is complete. This means that the deadline for the recognition procedure is then in effect.

For the purpose of anonymisation, the absolute values referred to in this report are in each case rounded to a multiple of three. Overall values may deviate from the total of the individual values by dint of the fact that totals are formed on the basis of real values prior to being anonymised. Percentage values have been calculated on the basis of real values.

As far as the first reporting year of 2012 was concerned, the competent bodies responsible for recognition were only determined within the course of the reporting

year in some cases and had to set up their reporting systems from scratch. For this reason, reporting was possibly not complete in all instances. In 2013, the reports made by a number of agencies were incomplete and erroneous. No data is available for Bremen for the year 2015. For this reason, information from 2014 has been used for this particular federal state. In the federal states of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein in 2016, the area of the medical healthcare professions was under-reported by a figure in the low hundreds. To this extent, the federal result should be viewed as a minimum figure.

For the purpose of the presentation in Chapter 6.1, applications from abroad were identified via “Place of residence of the applicant” because “Foreign application” is not an independent statistical characteristic. All applications in which a foreign place of residence is stated in the statistics were defined in the analyses as foreign applications. The remaining applications were treated as domestic applications. The assumption is that the official statistics under-report of foreign applications for which no precise figure can be stated. The reasons for this include the fact that this characteristic did not become obligatory until 2013. Sometimes the data includes a correspondence address in Germany, for example for the purpose of processing the necessary paperwork relating to the recognition procedure, rather than the foreign place of residence. For further information, see Schmitz and Winnige 2019.

^a Following an amendment to the law in 2015, BIBB was granted access to the aggregated data records of statistics on professions and occupations governed by federal law.

Recognition figures for qualifications from third countries continue to rise

Since 2016, most applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law have had their basis in qualifications from third countries. Whereas such applications made up just over half of the application volume in 2016, by 2018 this proportion had risen to almost 70 percent or nearly 20,300 applications. The proportion of professional and vocational qualifications from the EU, EEA or Switzerland fell further to just over 30 percent, and there was once again a slight decline in the absolute figures (see Figure 6).

In 2018, Syria was the most common country of training for the second year in a row with almost 3,200 applications. It was followed in second and third positions once again by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia respectively. This meant that Syria recorded an increase in applications of approximately 250 compared to the previous year. The significant rise in qualifications from third countries was mainly the result of a marked increase in the number of applications relating to certifications from the Philippines and from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together, these countries of training accounted for 43 percent of the total growth in applications concerning qualifications from third countries. The number of applications regarding



The 28-year-old Chilean Matías León initially received partial recognition as a master pastry cook. He then proceeded to complete the two parts of the master craftsman examination he still lacked within the scope of the IQ subproject “Adaptation training in dual training occupations”. This was financed by the Hamburg Scholarship Programme. Matías became the proud recipient of a German master craftsman qualification only a few months later. He and his wife now run a successful café in Hamburg.

Philippine qualifications more than doubled compared to the previous year (see Figure 7, see also Chapter 2.3). Competent bodies also reported significantly more applications than in the previous year from countries of training that are comparatively less popular in this regard, such as India, Albania, Tunisia and Mexico.⁴⁴

A differentiated consideration of applications by the regulated and non-regulated sectors shows that Syria led the way in non-regulated occupations in 2018. By way of contrast, most applications relating to regulated professions originated from the countries of training of the two West Balkan states of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and from the Philippines (see Figure 7). Figure 7 also shows that the composition of the most frequent reference occupations varies by country of training.

As well as being the leading country of training, Syrians also once again formed the largest group of nationalities

in 2018 by making almost 3,200 applications. Nationals from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia followed in second and third places respectively. Germans, who up until and including 2016 had formed the largest group of nationalities, were in fourth position in 2018. A continuous slight fall in demand for recognition occurred in the case of the latter group between the entry into force of the Recognition Act and 2017. In 2018, however, the number of applications exceeded the quantity made in the previous year for the first time.⁴⁵

Outcome of procedures

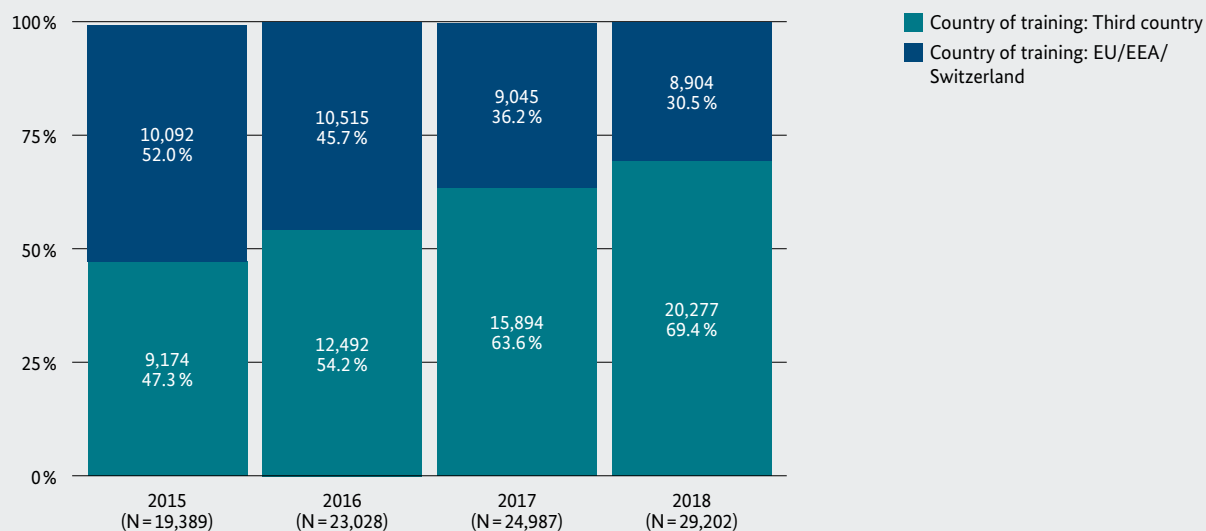
In 2018, competent bodies made decisions on more than 28,700 procedures relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law. Full equivalence⁴⁶ of the foreign professional or vocational qualification with the German reference occupation was certified in just over 52 percent of these cases. Almost one in ten

⁴⁴ Country of training India: 2017: 339 applications, 2018: 633 applications
Country of training Albania: 2017: 870 applications, 2018: 1,131 applications
Country of training Tunisia: 2017: 186 applications, 2018: 390 applications
Country of training Mexico: 2017: 48 applications, 2018: 222 applications.

⁴⁵ Syrian nationals 2018: 3,171 applications.
Bosnia and Herzegovina nationals 2018: 2,532 applications.
Serbian nationals 2018: 2,469 applications.
German nationals 2015: 2,205 applications, 2016: 2,061 applications, 2017: 1,887 applications, 2018: 2,235 applications.

⁴⁶ In the case of regulated professions, the notice attesting full equivalence may be preceded by a compensation measure initially imposed and then successfully completed (see Chapter 3.1).

Figure 6: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law by countries of training: (categorised) 2015 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2015 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. Not included or N missing: unknown country of training, country of training not clear, no information provided. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

notices identified partial equivalence. A compensation measure in respect of which completion was still outstanding as of 31 December 2018 was imposed in just over a third of procedures.⁴⁷ The percentage of procedures resulting in a negative notice was in low single figures (see Figure 8).⁴⁸

The rising numbers of applications regarding qualifications from third countries are also reflected in the result of the procedures. Significantly more procedures of this kind than in the previous years were decided in

2018, when 20,100 notices were issued.⁴⁹ Automatic recognition in a sector profession pursuant to Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (European Recognition Directive) does not apply in these cases.⁵⁰ This increases the likelihood within the regulated sector that applicants will initially need to successfully complete a compensation measure imposed by the competent body for the purpose of gaining full recognition. Since 2015, there has actually been an increasing number of notices imposing a compensation measure issued during the current year and not completed by the end of the same year. This figure was just over 2,500 in 2015. It then rose to over 6,200 and then to almost 10,200 by 2017 and 2018 respectively.⁵¹ This represents just over 45 percent of procedures within the regulated sector in respect of which a decision has been reached (see Figure 8). But

47 A notice imposing a compensation measure is issued when the equivalence assessment identifies substantial differences for which the additional consideration of professional experience is unable to compensate. This form of decision is only possible for regulated professions. The compensation measure must be successfully completed in order to obtain the full equivalence. If this takes place within the current reporting year, the competent body will register the outcome as the final decision of the procedure (i.e. full equivalence or no equivalence in the event of definitive failure to fulfil the condition imposed). If fulfilment of the condition is still outstanding at the end of the reporting year, the competent body will report that a notice imposing a compensation measure has been issued.

48 Alongside the possible outcomes to procedures presented here, procedures may also end without the issuing of a notice if applicants withdraw from the process once it has been instigated. The official statistics show that there were 1,002 procedures in which this happened in 2018. In addition, procedures may still be unresolved at the end of a reporting year, i.e. a decision or withdrawal by the applicant is outstanding as of 31 December of the year in question.

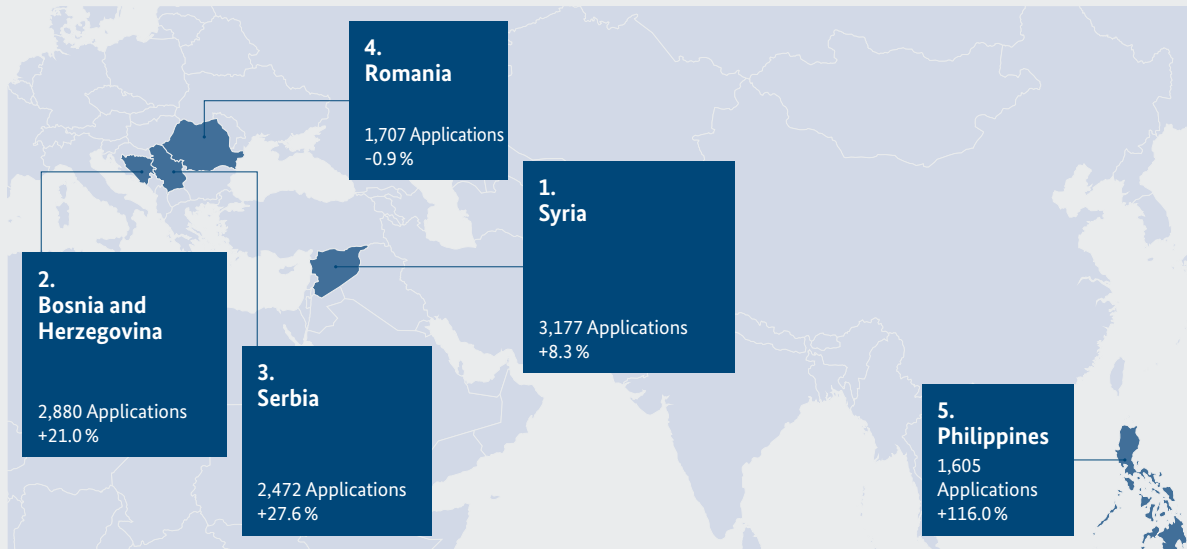
49 Qualifications from third countries: 2015: 8,049 procedures in which a decision was reached, 2016: 10,260 procedures in which a decision was reached, 2017: 13,932 procedures in which a decision was reached.

50 The sector professions comprise doctor, dentist, veterinary, pharmacist, registered general nurse and midwife.

51 Number of notices imposing a compensation measure within the respective reporting year which was not completed by 31 December of the respective year: 2015: 2,532 notices, 2016: 4,008 notices, 2017: 6,231 notices, 2018: 10,188 notices.

Figure 7: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – most frequent countries of training and reference occupations

Top 5 countries of training, applications 2018 and change to 2017



Regulated professions

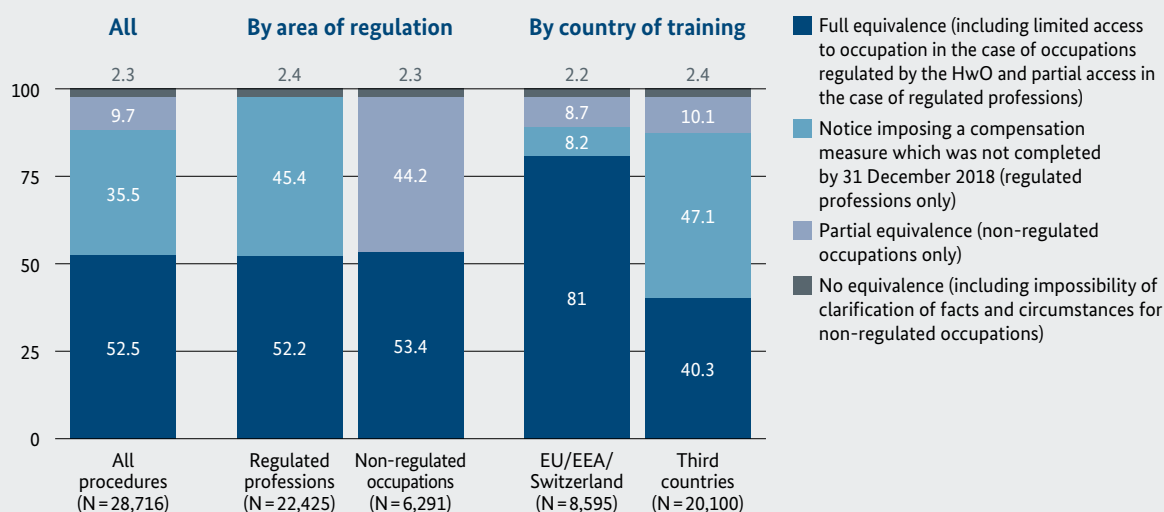
Top 3 countries of training	Applications	Top 3 German reference occupations					
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,481	Registered general nurse	2,019	Physiotherapist	102	Doctor	93
Serbia	2,319	Registered general nurse	1,764	Doctor	225	Registered children's nurse	120
Philippines	1,596	Registered general nurse	1,560	All other German reference occupations <12 applications			

Non-regulated occupations

Top 3 countries of training	Applications	Top 3 German reference occupations					
Syria	1,584	Office manager	312	Information technology specialist (no info sp.)	108	Industrial electrician (no info sp.) and electronics technician for industrial engineering	81 each
Poland	558	Office manager	69	Electrical fitter	57	Sales assistant for retail services and electronics technician (no info sp.)	39 each
Bosnia and Herzegovina	396	Electronics technician (no info sp.)	114	Electrical fitter	33	Driver	30

Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2017 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Figure 8: Applications relating to professions and professions governed by federal law – outcome of procedures in which a decision was reached by area of regulation and country of training (categorised) 2018 (in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. 2018 reporting year. Calculations and representation by BIBB. Procedures by country of training: not included or N missing (all procedures): unknown country of training, country of training not clear, no information provided. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

these cases are also increasing within the group of procedures relating to qualifications from third countries. In 2015, almost 2,000 applicants had not completed a compensation measure imposed during the reporting year by the end of the same year. This figure rose to almost 5,500 in 2017 before reaching nearly 9,500 in 2018. This represents a proportion of 47 per cent of procedures within this group in respect of which a decision was reached (see Figure 8).⁵²

2.3 Take-up by refugees

The legal right to a recognition procedure applies irrespective of the status of residency of the applicant. This means that refugees also have the opportunity to submit an application for recognition of a professional or vocational qualification which they have acquired abroad regardless of whether they secure a residence permit. A notice confirming equivalence can provide an important foundation for integration into the

labour market in a way that is in line with a person's skills (see Chapter 7). The number of asylum seekers in Germany has risen significantly over recent years and reached the highest level recorded thus far in 2016. Most initial applications were made by Syrians.⁵³

Within the context of recognition, the counselling centres initially recorded rising guidance figures for refugees. A corresponding increase in the data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) has been discernible since 2016, and this was shown very clearly in the 2017 reporting year (see Figure 9). However, because the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act do not record the residency status of applicants, it is only possible to make approximate statements regarding the nationality and main countries of origin of refugees.⁵⁴

⁵² Number of notices imposing a compensation measure within the respective reporting year which was not completed by 31 December of the respective year in procedures relating to qualifications from third countries: 2015: 1,944 notices, 2016: 3,339 notices, 2017: 5,463 notices, 2018: 9,468 notices.

⁵³ See Asylum System Reports by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees from 2016 to 2018.

⁵⁴ Main countries of origin include Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria. When approximating via nationality, it needs to be borne in mind that applicants may be in possession of different types of residence permit. The group presented here is thus probably made up of asylum seekers, persons with recognised refugee status and persons with permanent leave to remain etc.

In addition to this, the official statistics do not document the applicants' year of entry to Germany. No statements can accordingly be made regarding how long persons had already been living in Germany at the time of the application. For this reason, we can only surmise at this point that the strong increase in the numbers of applications, especially from Syrians, also correlates with the major refugee movement of 2015. It is also conceivable, for example, that applicants had been living in Germany for a longer period of time. The results of the 2016 IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees indicate that good prospects of being able to remain in Germany make it more likely that persons will endeavour to apply for recognition of the professional or vocational qualification they held upon arrival in the country (see Chapter 7.3).⁵⁵

Applications from nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees have been increasing since 2016. Just over 2,400 such applications were received in 2016, more than twice as many as in the previous year. In 2017, the number of applications rose to over 3,800 (a 58.5 percent rise compared to the year before), and there was a further increase to just over 4,100 in 2018 (a year-on-year growth of 7.3 percent) (see Figure 9). Applications from Syrians are by far and away the largest and fastest growing number amongst applications received from nationals of the main countries of origin (see Figure 9).⁵⁶

In 2018, just over half (55.4 percent) of applications made by nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees related to regulated professions. The most popular profession was doctor (1,194 applications), followed by pharmacist (345 applications) and dentist (234 applications). In the non-regulated sector, which accounted for 44.6 percent of the volume, the most popular occupations for which applications were submitted were office manager (333), information technology specialist (123) and industrial electrician (no specialism stated, 105).

Just over 4,600 procedures in which a decision was reached related to applications made by nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees. The competent

bodies identified full⁵⁷ equivalence in slightly more than a third of these cases, whilst partial recognition (which only applies in non-regulated occupations) was attested on nearly a quarter of occasions. A compensation measure (regulated professions only) which was still outstanding at the end of the reporting year was imposed in 37 percent of cases in which a decision was reached.⁵⁸ The percentage proportion of procedures resulting in a negative decision was in low single figures. In the case of Syria, the country of origin with the largest number of applications, the outcomes of procedures exhibited a similar distribution. With regard to Iran and Iraq, the second and third most frequent sources of applications respectively, deviations can sometimes be discerned in respect of full and partial equivalence and the imposition of a compensation measure (see Figure 10).

► In overall terms, the data from the official statistics attests to a positive development in applications relating to professions and occupations governed by both federal and federal state law. A significant rise with regard to nationals from the main countries of origin of refugees was recorded in 2016. This development was most notable in 2017 especially, although the increase also went on into 2018. Recognition in professions in the medical and health-care sector continued to attract the most demand. In 2018 too, full or partial equivalence was predominantly accorded, although a significant increase in the number of compensation measures imposed was also recorded. How the increase in compensation measures imposed will lead to structural challenges with regard to their execution remains to be seen. Possible problems that could become apparent include longer waiting times for knowledge test appointments or insufficient supply of training measures (see Chapter 3.1 and Chapter 4).

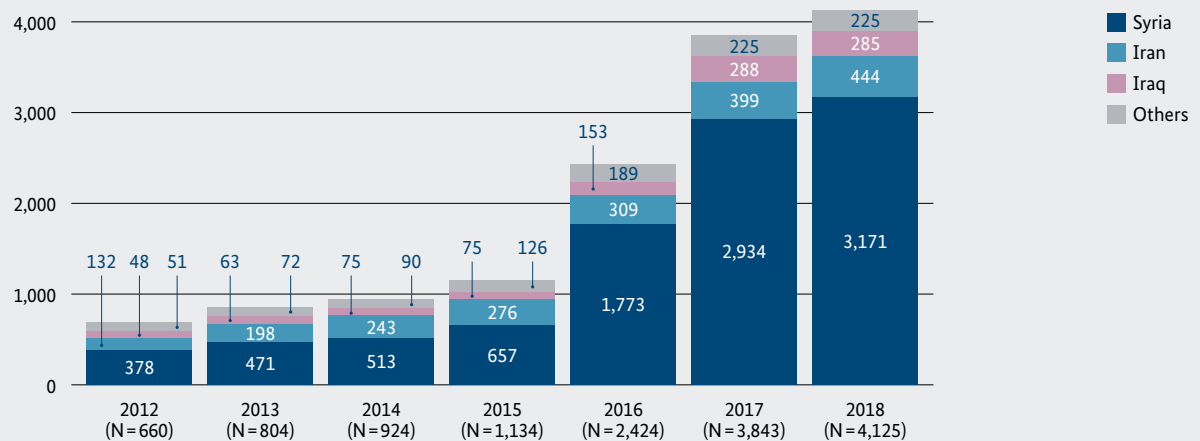
⁵⁵ See Brücker et al. 2018.

⁵⁶ In 2018, competent bodies also reported 2,172 applications regarding professions and occupations governed by federal state law made by nationals of the main countries of origin stated. 7,257 applications for a certificate assessment were made to the ZAB by nationals of the main countries of origin. The ZAB recorded 23,912 such applications over the whole of the period from 2012 to 2018.

⁵⁷ In the case of regulated professions, the notice attesting full equivalence may be preceded by a compensation measure initially imposed and then successfully completed.

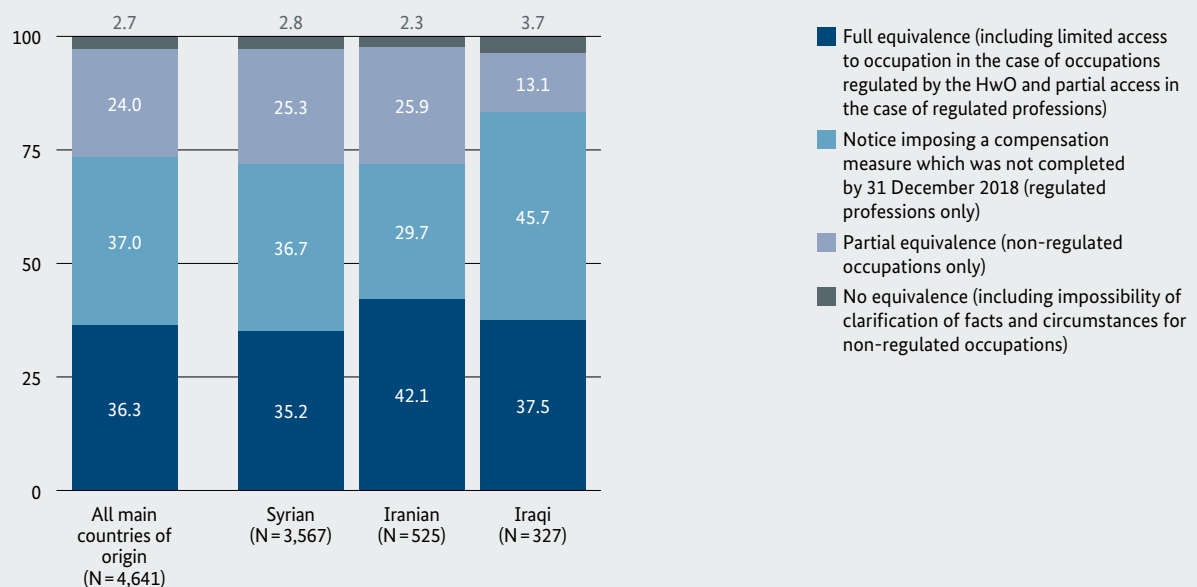
⁵⁸ A notice of full equivalence is issued once the compensation measure has been successfully completed.

Figure 9: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – applications made by nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees 2012 to 2018 (absolute terms)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2012 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Figure 10: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – outcome of procedures in which a decision was reached for nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees 2018 (in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. 2018 reporting year. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

3 Implementation and execution by occupational areas

Implementation and execution in the respective occupational areas are organised differently. Established structures exist in the area of the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades for the purpose of standardising procedures relating to the recognition of non-regulated initial and advanced training occupations (see Chapter 3.2). The same goal is also pursued in the case of the healthcare sector (see Chapter 3.1) and with regard to professions and occupations governed by federal state law (see Chapter 3.2). Different challenges are also faced in respect of the implementation of recognition procedures. These will be set out in greater detail below for occupational areas which attract a large number of applications.

3.1 Healthcare professions

Interest in recognition in medical professions for which academic qualifications are required and in healthcare professions where academic qualifications are not needed (the latter will be referred to below as specialist healthcare professions) remains high.⁵⁹ This occupational group has attracted 106,140 applications since the entry into force of the Federal Recognition Act on 1 April 2012, by far the highest number. The continuation of the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG) has significantly fostered standardisation of procedures in this sector, particularly

⁵⁹ Medical professions governed by federal law for which academic qualifications are required are doctor, dentist, veterinary, pharmacist, psychotherapist and child psychotherapist. All these professions are regulated.

Specialist healthcare professions governed by federal law are registered general nurse, children's nurse, geriatric nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, rescue paramedic (previously known as emergency paramedic), speech therapist, medical and technical laboratory assistant, medical laboratory assistant in radiology, medical laboratory assistant in function diagnosis, veterinary laboratory technician, pharmaceutical assistant, masseur and medically qualified lifeguard, midwife, dietitian, podiatrist and orthoptist. All these professions are regulated. In addition to these, further regulated professions and non-regulated occupations exist which may be aligned to the healthcare sector. These include, for example, optician, medical assistant (not regulated) and audiologist master craftspersons (regulated). These, however, are not considered to be medical professions. For this reason, they are not taken into account below (see [bundesegesundheitsministerium.de/themen/gesundheitswesen/gesundheitsberufe/gesundheitsberufe-allgemein.html](https://www.bundesegesundheitsministerium.de/themen/gesundheitswesen/gesundheitsberufe/gesundheitsberufe-allgemein.html)).

with regard to the evaluation of qualifications. In respect of other issues relating to execution, implementation within the federal states still varies in some cases. Pass rates for the knowledge test also deviate sharply in the different states.

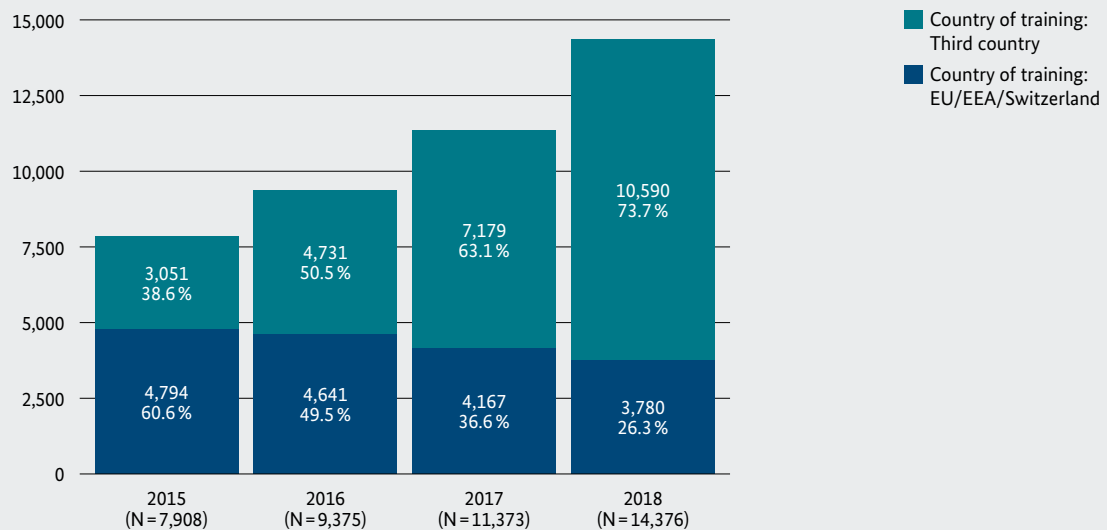
Interest in recognition in the healthcare sector remains high

In 2018, medical professions for which academic qualifications are required and specialist healthcare professions accounted for almost three quarters of around 29,200 applications for recognition in professions and occupations governed by federal law. In the case of the specialist healthcare professions, this represented a growth of 26 percent compared to the previous year (see Figure 11). Application volume in medical professions for which academic qualifications are required rose by 4 percent (see Figure 12). A significant increase in applications relating to qualifications from third countries can be observed in both groups over recent years, especially in connection with the specialist healthcare professions. In 2018, the competent bodies reported more than 10,000 applications regarding such qualifications (see Figure 11).

In the specialist healthcare professions, the occupation of registered general nurse once again exhibited the highest level of demand in 2018 and accounted for 79.9 percent of reported applications. In the case of medical professions for which academic qualifications are required, the profession of doctor was once again the most popular. This made up slightly more than three quarters (77.6 percent) of applications for recognition submitted in this sector.

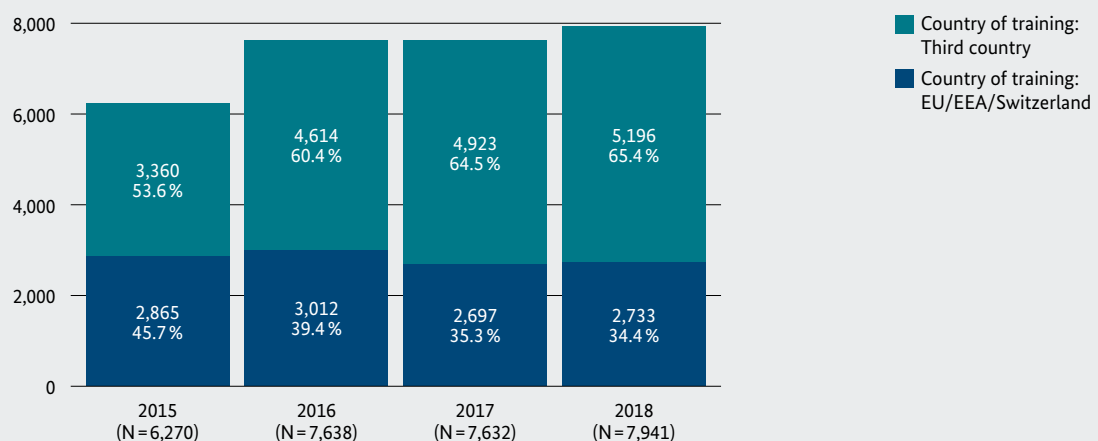
By way of contrast, there was a significant variation with regard to the composition of countries of training in which qualifications in these two professions had been obtained. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia were the most frequent countries of training for registered general nurses, whereas Syria and Romania led the way in the case of doctors (see Figure 13). The countries of training of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the Philippines have been responsible for increases in the numbers of applications made for recognition in the profession of registered general nurse ever since the Recognition Act entered into force,

Figure 11: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – specialist healthcare professions by country of training (categorised) 2015 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



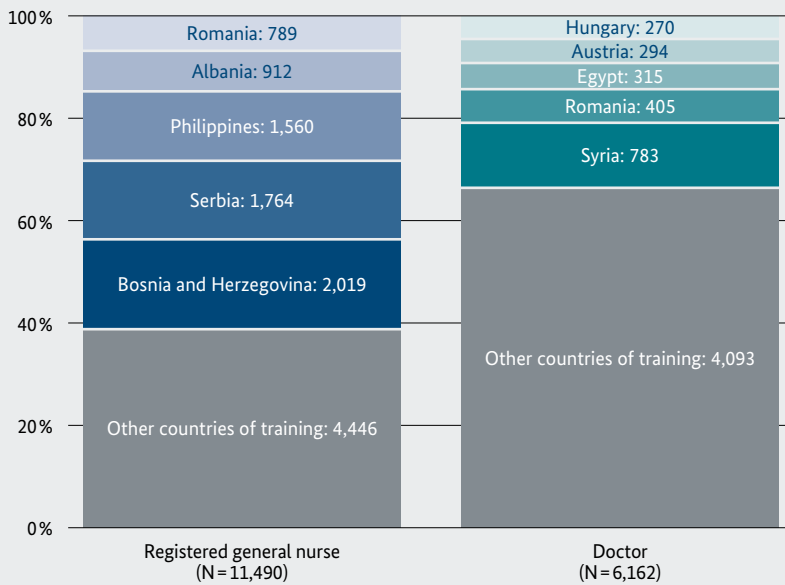
Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2015 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. Not included or N missing: unknown country of training, country of training not clear, no information provided. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Figure 12: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – medical professions for which academic qualifications are required by country of training (categorised) 2015 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2015 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. Not included or N missing: unknown country of training, country of training not clear, no information provided. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Figure 13: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – countries of training in the case of the reference occupations of doctor and registered general nurse 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. 2018 reporting year. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

and these rises have been significant in all three cases since 2016.⁶⁰

Decisions were arrived at in 12,978 procedures relating to specialist healthcare professions in 2018. Full equivalence was accorded in 47.5 percent of cases.⁶¹ A notice imposing a compensation measure that was still outstanding at the end of the reporting year was issued in 50.1 percent of procedures. Both the proportion and number of these notices rose once more

(see Chapter 2.2).⁶² The percentage of procedures resulting in a negative notice was in low single figures. Full equivalence may be achieved via different routes. In the case of 2,310 of the 6,162 procedures which culminated in full equivalence, the competence bodies reported that the attestation of such full equivalence had been preceded by completion of a compensation measure previously imposed. This represents a growth of 40.0 percent compared to the previous year (2017: full equivalence awarded in 1,650 procedures in which a decision was reached after successful completion of a compensation measure imposed).

60 Bilateral placement agreements exist between the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and the relevant labour administration authorities in these states for the purpose of acquisition of skilled nurses for the German labour market. These are implemented via the “Triple Win” project. Together with Serbia and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina is also one of the countries to which a special West Balkans economic migration regulation has applied since the end of 2015. Syria has been one of the most popular countries of training for applications in the profession of doctor since as long ago as 2012. There was a particular rise in numbers in 2016 and 2017, although applications declined in 2018 (2015: 423 applications, 2016: 708 applications, 2017: 951 applications, 2018: 783 applications, see also Figure 13).

61 Includes positive decisions leading to partial access to the profession.

A decision was reached in 9,210 procedures relating to medical professions for which academic qualifications are required. Full equivalence was certified in 59.2 percent of these. In 39.1 percent of cases, full equivalence was contingent on a compensation measure which had

62 Number of notices in specialist healthcare professions imposing a compensation measure which had not yet been completed by 31 December of the reporting year (proportion of procedures relating to specialist healthcare professions in which a decision was reached is given in brackets): 2015: 1,629 notices (26.9 percent), 2016: 2,634 notices, (35.2 percent), 2017: 4,065 notices (41.1 percent), 2018: 6,504 notices (50.1 percent).



Field report: registered general nurse Lidiia Skurat

Lidiia Skurat obtained a nursing diploma from a medical college and had already worked for several years in the paediatric surgery ward of a hospital.

However, when she migrated to Germany for personal reasons in 2013, she was unable to work as a registered general nurse without official recognition. Helped by her advisor at the job centre, Lidiia applied to the Düsseldorf District Government for recognition of her certificates. Because of the missing practical elements in her training, she was not able to receive certification of full equivalence. She received support in the form of a language course in order to improve and consolidate her knowledge of the German language before successfully embarking upon a compensation

measure to compensate for substantial differences between the Russian and German training.

Lidiia completed her practice-based hours of learning in an Essen hospital. The mibeg Institute of Medicine based in Cologne specialises in the post graduate training of health sector specialists. It found an appropriate position for her via IQaMed (part of the Network IQ Fund), which provided full support over this period.

Almost two years after submitting the application, Lidiia Skurat was holding the positive notice in her hands. Now she is an officially recognised registered general nurse. The 36-year-old now also has a permanent position at the hospital and is looking towards the future with optimism.

Two questions to...

“Healthcare Professions” Working Group of the Consortium of the Supreme Healthcare Authorities of the Federal States (AOLG), represented by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Health of the State of Saxony-Anhalt (federal state currently holding the presidency of the organisation)

1. Where do you believe the greatest progress has been achieved over recent years with regard to the implementation of the Recognition Act in the area of the healthcare professions?

Since the Recognition Act entered into force in the field of the healthcare professions, recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications has become an established instrument for improving labour market integration and for securing a supply of skilled workers. The Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG), which operates on a cross-federal state basis, took some time to become established. However, it is now working in an increasingly efficient way, and we believe that this represents major progress. We also take a positive view of the further standardisation and greater transparency the GfG has created.

2. Which tasks do you believe we face in terms of the further implementation of the Recognition Act in the healthcare professions in future?

Even better networking and cooperation between recognition agencies are indispensable. This is also linked with a perceived need for greater standardisation of the types of procedures in the federal states. Numbers of applications are constantly rising, especially those from third countries. This is resulting in higher processing time and constitutes a challenge. Some of the new provisions contained within the Skilled Immigration Act also require even shorter processing times. Patient protection will need to be taken into account as the recognition bodies face this heavier workload. The federal states are calling for the introduction of a central register in order to prevent multiple applications and to help counter recognition tourism. Another problem is a shortage of refresher training measures and of appointments for knowledge tests for doctors in particular.

not yet been completed by the end of the reporting year. A clear increase in this type of notice was also recorded in this area.⁶³ The proportion of procedures ending with no equivalence was under two percent. In 1,470 of a total of 5,451 procedures which resulted in a decision of full equivalence, competent bodies reported that such full equivalence had been achieved following successful completion of a compensation measure imposed. This constituted a slight increase compared to the previous year (2017: full equivalence awarded in 1,317 procedures in which a decision was reached after successful completion of a compensation measure imposed).

Routes to full equivalence in medical professions for which academic qualifications are required and in the specialist healthcare professions

Full equivalence can be achieved via various pathways—through automatic recognition pursuant to the European Recognition Directive, after a document-based equivalence assessment or subsequent to the successful completion of a compensation measure in cases where documentary examination has identified substantial differences with the German reference occupation. The knowledge test⁶⁴ is the only possible compensation measure for doctors whose qualification from a third

⁶³ Number of notices in medical professions for which academic qualifications are required imposing a compensation measure which had not yet been completed by 31 December of the reporting year (proportion of procedures relating to medical professions for which academic qualifications are required in which a decision was reached is given in brackets): 2015: 849 notices (12.9 percent), 2016: 1,305 notices (18.8 percent), 2017: 2,079 notices (28.0 percent), 2018: 3,600 notices (39.1 percent).

⁶⁴ Federal Medical Code (§ 3 Paragraph 3 BÄO) and German Medical Licensing Ordinance (§ 37 ÄApprO) constitute the legal basis for the conducting of knowledge tests. Knowledge tests for dentists and pharmacists are governed by stipulations that are similar to the provisions set out in the field of human medicine. In the case of dentists, § 2 Paragraph 3 Clause 3 of the Law on the practising of Dental Medicine (ZHG) applies in conjunction with § 58a Paragraph 2 Clause 2 of the German Dental Licensing Ordinance. Knowledge tests for pharmacists take place pursuant to § 4 Paragraph 3 Clause 3 of the German Pharmacists Ordinance (BApO) in conjunction with § 22d of the Licensing Ordinance for Pharmacists (AAppO).

country exhibits substantial differences. The same applies to the other medical professions for which academic qualifications are required. A knowledge test is also used in circumstances where no documentation or only insufficient documentation can be submitted for reasons which are not the fault of the applicant (see BMBF 2015). Adaptation training measures are completed in the specialist healthcare professions in many cases. These may contain theoretical and practical elements in order to compensate for substantial differences that have been identified. The competent bodies also sometimes adopt an administrative practice whereby doctors who are in possession of a qualification and licence from a third country are afforded the opportunity to complete a knowledge test without undergoing an equivalence assessment procedure. The aim of this approach is to shorten the duration of the process. Research carried out within the scope of the BIBB Recognition Monitoring has shown that this practice does not take place in a nationally standardised way. It has also emerged that this option is offered by competent bodies in most federal states. Some federal states are still looking at the possibility of doing without an

individual equivalence assessment procedure, whereas others adhere to the view that an individual process can only be waived if documentation submitted is insufficient. It remains to be seen whether the process outlined above will be extended to other professions and federal states. In the healthcare professions, sufficient language knowledge also needs to be demonstrated before a person may commence work (see Information Box 7).

Pass rates in knowledge tests in medical professions for which academic qualifications are required

In mid-2017, the BIBB Recognition Monitoring contacted the competent bodies to carry out a survey of pass rates in the knowledge tests taken by doctors, dentists and pharmacists.⁶⁵ The aim was to gain a more comprehensive picture of the way in which knowledge tests were being conducted in the medical professions for which academic qualifications are required. 18 of 21 competent bodies responded. The results show that 88 percent of doctors pass the test on the third attempt at most. By way of comparison, the rates for pharmacists (72 percent) and dentists (66 percent) are significantly lower. Pass rates also vary considerably between the competent bodies. This applies both to applicants who pass first time and to those who fail a third attempt. In the case of doctors, the difference in the case of candidates who pass first time ranges from 45 percent (one competent body) to as high as 93 percent (one competent body). Two competent bodies recorded a 100 percent pass rate after three attempts at most. At two other competent bodies, the corresponding figures were only 55 percent and 64 percent of candidates respectively. The differences with regard to passing the test by the third attempt are even more stark amongst dentists. One competent body reported a pass rate of 17 percent, whereas two others achieved 100 percent.⁶⁶ Regional differences are lower in the case of pharmacists. The average pass rate lies between 51 percent (one competent body) and 100 percent (six competent bodies). These outcomes were explored by the “Healthcare Professions” Working Group of the Consortium of the Supreme Healthcare Authorities of the Federal States (AOLG). One factor that was discussed as possibly

Information Box 6

Waiting times for knowledge tests – an example of best practice from Bavaria

The relevant statutory provision requires every applicant to be offered an examination date within six months. In practice, however, this deadline is frequently exceeded. In some federal states, individuals have to wait for 12 months and longer for a test appointment. In Bavaria, an administrative agreement has been concluded between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science, the Licensing Authority and the universities. Test dates have been arranged to coincide with state examinations. The remuneration paid to examiners has also been increased by categorising the work they perform as a specialist assessment. This approach has made it possible to conduct significantly more knowledge tests in overall terms. The number of knowledge tests carried out in 2016 was between 50 and 80. By 2018, this figure had risen to 380.

65 See Koch et al. 2019.

66 Unlike the situation that prevailed in respect of doctors and pharmacists, no nationally standardised regulations were in place in 2017 for the conducting and contents of the knowledge test for dentists. Uniform provisions will also exist for dentists once the Licensing Ordinance is adopted (2020).

Information Box 7

Implementation of the specialist language test

The demonstration of knowledge of German does not constitute a component of the recognition procedure for doctors. It is, however, a prerequisite for obtaining approbation (licence to practice medicine).^a The language requirements for medical healthcare professions are high. In order to ensure patient safety, a specialist language test needs to be passed in the medical professions for which academic qualifications are required. The situation is not the same in the specialist healthcare professions^b (such as registered general nurse), for which general language certificates are usually sufficient.^c In most federal states, these specialist language tests are conducted by the (federal state) Medical Councils.^d It is also the case in most federal states that successful completion of the specialist language test is required for the issuing of a “temporary authorisation to exercise the profession”

(temporary licence to practise).^e In order to gain a detailed insight into practice concerning the specialist language test taken by doctors, The BIBB Recognition Monitoring carried out a survey of various stakeholders in this area.^f The results of this study allow us to conclude that all federal states align the components of the test to the “Benchmarks for assessment of the knowledge of German necessary for exercising a medical profession in which academic qualifications are required” adopted by the 87th Conference of Ministers of Health of the Federal States (GMK). Differences exist nevertheless, particularly with regard to the composition of the examination board. The examination is conducted by doctors alone in some federal states, whereas others also involve persons with a linguistic background who, in some cases, even act as the chair of the board.

a § 3 Paragraph 1 Clause 1 Sub-section 5 of the Federal Medical Code requires persons exercising the profession to be in possession of the necessary knowledge of the German language.

b There are plans to introduce the same kind of language test in the specialist healthcare professions in future. The 92nd Conference of Ministers of Health of the Federal States (GMK) agreed by a majority decision that the benchmarks relating to monitoring the knowledge of German necessary to exercise the specialist healthcare professions should be reviewed. The result is that the knowledge of the German language required to exercise all specialist healthcare professions will be set at a minimum of reference level B2 in order to protect patients. In the case of speech therapists, a minimum level of C2 will apply. The aim is for the federal states to implement these benchmarks by the time of the 94th GMK if possible. See gmkonline.de/Beschluesse.html?id=871&jahr.

c Doctors, dentists and pharmacists must be able to demonstrate a general knowledge of German at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and specialist language knowledge within a specific professional context at level C1. In the case of the professions of psychotherapist and child psychotherapist, the requirement is to demonstrate general knowledge of German at level CEFR-B2 and specialist language knowledge within a specific professional context at level CEFR-C2.

d In Hesse and the Saarland, the specialist language test is conducted by various providers rather than by the Medical Council. In Schleswig-Holstein, the test is carried out in conjunction with the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Medical Council in Rostock. The telc German B2/C1 specialist test in medicine, which is recognised by the Schleswig-Holstein Federal State Office, can also be taken at the max Q. training centre in Kiel, part of the not-for-profit education and training institution of the German Confederation of Trade Unions. See aeksh.de/aerzte/arztinfo/sprachkenntnispruefung.

e Deviations in this regard exist in the case of the following federal states. Baden-Württemberg requires a level B2 test certificate (CEFR) from a recognised language institute. The specialist language test set by the Baden-Württemberg Medical Council must be subsequently completed without delay. Berlin requires a level B2 test certificate (CEFR) from telc or the Goethe Institute or the TestDaF in German as a Foreign Language. The requirement in Bremen is for a level B2 test certificate (CEFR) from a recognised language institute followed by a personal interview with the authorities. Hamburg requires a level B2 test certificate (CEFR) from a recognised language institute. In circumstances where a temporary licence to practise is extended for a period of more than one year, there is an additional requirement to complete the specialist language test of the Hamburg Medical Council at reference level C1.

f See Koch et al. 2020.

leading to the varying pass rates was the different availability of preparatory measures.⁶⁷

Continuation of the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (GfG)

The GfG, which is housed at the ZAB and covers all federal states, commenced operations on 1 September 2016. In the case of the 21 regulated reference professions in the medical and healthcare sector which are governed by federal law,⁶⁸ competent bodies are able to task the GfG with checking the genuineness of qualifications evidence submitted, determining the German reference qualification and drawing up a detailed assessment of equivalence. Following a three-year pilot phase, a decision was made to continue with the GfG with effect from 1 January 2019. The concept on which the establishment of the GfG was based originally assumed that the agency would be able to process 3,000 cases per year. The plan was that detailed assessments of equivalence would account for around 85 percent of these. Practice, however, has shown that the drawing up of assessments is significantly more time consuming than first thought, because evaluation of contents requires extensive curricula to be scrutinised. In the first half of 2019, specific measures introduced as part of a concept to streamline the GfG enabled a further shortening of processing times and an increase in capacity to be achieved. This process is ongoing. The GfG currently receives just under 100 commissions per month. Detailed assessments for the profession of doctor are only being produced in limited numbers thus far. The aim is, however, that this restriction of assignments will be lifted as of 1 January 2020. At the same time, “anabin” database (see Chapter 1.1) is being further expanded for use by the competent bodies. The database describes training and prerequisites for licences to practise for the professions that have hitherto attracted the greatest level of demand (doctor, dentist, pharmacist and registered general nurse) and for the most popular countries of origin (around 75). This task is also being continuously pursued. Sample assessments (270), German translations of curricula (70) and

summaries of subjects and marks (90) have also been linked with the respective occupational descriptions and have been made available to the competent bodies.

Information Box 8

More rapid and more efficient recognition procedures via cooperation between stakeholders

As well as seeking to standardise decision-making practice, endeavours are also being undertaken to complete recognition procedures quickly. The competent body responsible for recognition of medical healthcare professions in Rhineland Palatinate, the Federal State Office for Social Affairs, Young People and Assistance, has been cooperating with the IQ regional network for this purpose since 2016. The aim is that persons interested in seeking recognition in medical and healthcare professions where academic qualifications both are and are not required should be able to complete the recognition process more rapidly in Rhineland Palatinate. The focus of the work is on applicants from third countries. This cooperation is based on a written agreement which includes structured networking on individual cases and procedural processes. The goal is to pool competencies and thus accelerate the recognition procedures. Persons seeking recognition frequently require assistance with completing the necessary formalities in the recognition process in order to make proper subsequent use of their recognition notice. Referral to the Network IQ by the authority responsible for recognition may be helpful in this regard. All partners perceive the cooperation agreement as a means of easing the administrative burden and as an enrichment.^a

⁶⁷ Pass rates are not the only variable element. Fees levied for the knowledge test taken by doctors also differ widely. Whereas one federal state charges €266, the fee in two other federal states reaches €1,100.

⁶⁸ Doctor, dentist, pharmacist, psychotherapist, child psychotherapist, geriatric nurse, dietitian, occupational therapist, midwife, registered general nurse, registered children’s nurse, speech therapist, masseur and medically qualified lifeguard, orthoptist, physiotherapist, podiatrist, pharmaceutical assistant, rescue paramedic/emergency paramedic, technical medical assistant.

^a See netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/IQ_Publikationen/Good_Practice/IQ_GP_2018_Kooperationsvereinbarung_mit_anerkannter_Stelle.pdf.

The administrative agreement for the GfG does not stipulate that existing professional experience or life-long learning should be evaluated within the scope of the assessments. The GfG provides the authorities with information regarding evaluation to the extent that this is possible without expending considerable amounts of time. The competent bodies constantly reiterate their desire for this service.⁶⁹

Competent bodies committed to harmonising decision-making practice

Alongside the GfG, there are also further initiatives aimed at standardising the yardsticks used to evaluate foreign qualifications across the federal states. The competent body responsible for recognition of specialist healthcare professions in North Rhine-Westphalia has, for example, initiated a networking process with other competent bodies on the evaluation of a Mexican healthcare and nursing training programme because qualifications from identical training centres had previously been differently evaluated. Eleven federal states ultimately agreed on a uniform basis of evaluation.

A high degree of dynamism continues to exist in the recognition system in the healthcare sector. Application figures are rising, and the proportion of applications from third countries is also increasing further. Especially against the background of the need to secure a supply of skilled workers, recognition of medical healthcare professions is a central instrument. Further tendencies towards standardisation can be observed in the area of the medical healthcare professions. One example of this is the equivalence assessment, in which the GfG is taking on an increasingly strong evaluation role. Another instance is the specialist language test for doctors, in respect of which the GMK's benchmarks for medical professions for which academic qualifications are required have now been implemented right across the country. There is, however, still an absence of cross-federal state harmonisation in respect of the way in which individual aspects of the recognition procedure are handled. In practice, for example, persons are frequently allocated to take part in a knowledge test on the basis of training documentation without previously undergoing an equivalence assessment.

⁶⁹ Including within the scope of the BIBB Networking Workshop for competent bodies in November 2017.

3.2 Non-regulated initial and advanced training occupations

When the Federal BQFG was introduced, foreign skilled workers with a vocational qualification in a non-regulated occupation⁷⁰ were afforded the legal right to recognition of this qualification for the first time. Even though access to the labour market and to the occupation in question remains possible without a notice of equivalence in this area, recognition provides an opportunity for both skilled workers and employers (see Chapter 7). A notice creates transparency with regard to the qualification compared to qualifications in Germany and may improve a person's occupational situation.⁷¹ In the non-regulated sector too, recognition can act as an instrument for securing a supply of skilled workers and opens up access to advanced and further training.

The recognition system in the official statistics

Around 140,700 applications for recognition of a foreign professional or vocational qualification were reported to the official statistics between 2012 and 2018. Almost a quarter of these applications related to non-regulated occupations (see Chapter 2.2). Almost all of the occupations involved fall within the areas of responsibility of the chambers of crafts and trades and the chambers of commerce and industry.⁷² The chambers of crafts and trades reported 9,624 applications during the period stated above.

⁷⁰ Non-regulated initial and advanced training occupations including non-regulated master craftsman occupations.

⁷¹ See Ekert et al. 2017, pp. 50 ff. and Chapter 7.

⁷² Taken together, the quantity of applications made in these two areas in the period from 2012 to 2018 account for 96.2 percent of the total of 32,964 applications relating to non-regulated occupations. Alongside the applications mentioned above, the chambers of crafts and trades reported a further 1,137 applications in regulated master craftsman occupations. These predominantly related to master craftsman qualifications in hairdressing, motor vehicle technology and bricklaying and specialist concreting. In the trade and industry sector, the IHK FOSA acts on behalf of 76 of 79 of the chambers of commerce and industry in Germany by carrying out equivalence assessments for occupations which are governed by the Vocational Training Act (BBiG). These accounted for 20,055 applications. The chambers of commerce and industry in Wuppertal-Solingen-Remscheid, Hanover and Braunschweig do not take part in the IHK FOSA, although the Braunschweig Chamber of Industry and Commerce has transferred these tasks to the Hanover Chamber of Industry and Commerce in accordance with the Federal BQFG (See BMBF 2014, p. 32). Together, these three chambers of commerce and industry processed 2,043 applications.

Two questions to...

Daik Witt (Head of the Vocational Education and Training Department at the ZDH)

1. Where do you believe the greatest progress has been achieved over recent years with regard to the implementation of the Recognition Act in the area of the chambers of crafts and trades?

Since it entered into force, the Recognition Act has been implemented in the craft trades sector in accordance with uniform standards. These have become engrained in the way in which the craft trades are organised because of the establishment of a lead chamber system, whereby individual chambers specialise in certain countries of origin and engage in concentrated networking activities and regular training measures nationwide.

The chambers of crafts and trades adopt a decentralised approach towards implementation with recognition bodies at a total of 53 locations. This has enabled a particular degree of customer proximity to be established and allows persons seeking recognition to be provided with detailed guidance. The chambers of crafts and trades provide persons in possession of foreign qualifications with all the services they need to support recognition from a single source. They offer initial guidance, advice during the procedure itself, follow-up assistance and training guidance.

Particular progress with expanding the lead chamber system has been made over the past few years. Lead chambers have specialised in certain countries of origin and act on behalf of other chambers of crafts and trades to draw up evaluations of vocational qualifications from these states. They are supporting the efficiency of the procedure whilst also helping to ensure standardisation of decisions. New lead chambers were established for the refugee countries of origin of Syria, Iran and Afghanistan in 2017 and 2018 to reflect the fact that a particular increase in numbers of applications from these countries was being recorded.

The chambers of crafts and trades have also conducted most of the skills analyses that have taken place in Germany as a whole. This has also opened up opportunities for recognition to people who do not have sufficient documentation for the implementation of a recognition procedure.

2. Which tasks do you believe we face in terms of the further implementation of the Recognition Act in the craft trades sector in future?

If the Skilled Immigration Act produces the desired effect, chambers of crafts and trades will be required to evaluate vocational qualifications from new countries of origin. This will bring new challenges, especially with regard to the procurement of information, and may also lead to a further expansion of the lead chamber system.

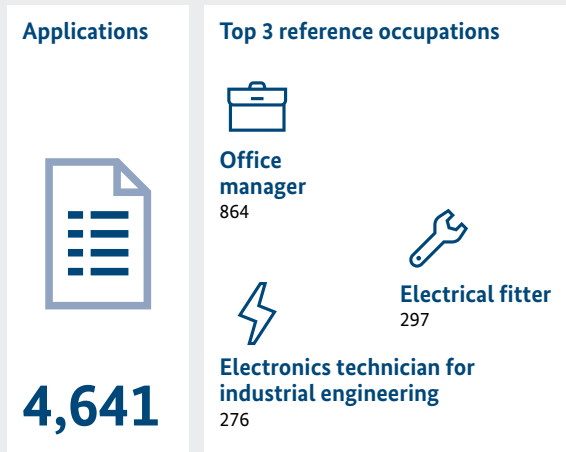
The chambers will maintain their multifarious commitment within the scope of the Recognition Act. For this reason, the craft trades sector is heavily involved in the BMBF-funded projects “Netzwerk Qualifikationsanalyse [Network Skills Analysis]” and “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung [Company recognition]”.

Our wish is for the Federal Government to continue to provide the chambers with the active support they need in order to fulfil their important role as recognition stakeholders for the dual occupations. Long-term financing of the BQ Portal is particularly vital.^a This provides the chambers of crafts and trades with outstanding support in the evaluation of foreign vocational qualifications by offering quality-assured information on education and qualification systems abroad.

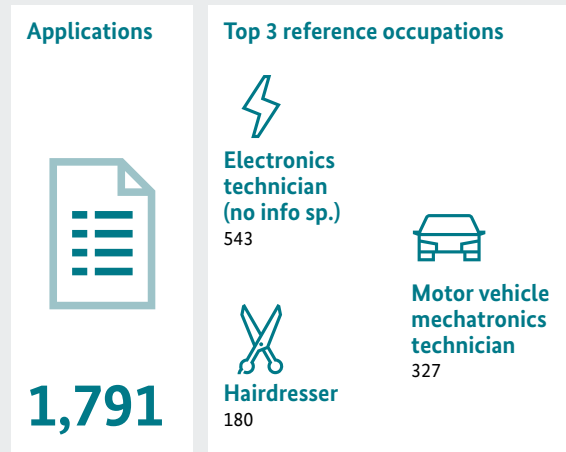
^a The BQ-Portal – das Informationsportal für ausländische Berufsqualifikationen is an online platform which offers information on foreign professional and vocational qualifications. It has been funded by the BMWi since 2011. The current funding period runs until 31 March 2022 with an option to extend until 31 March 2024.

Table 4: Applications, Top 3 countries of training and reference occupations in the areas of responsibility of the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades with regard to non-regulated occupations – 2018 (absolute terms)

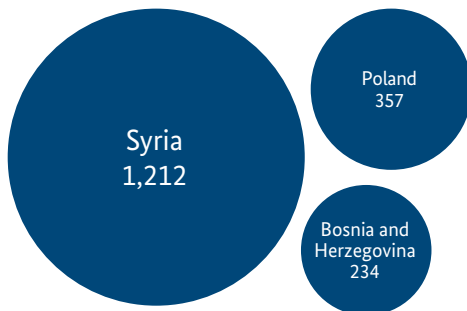
Trade and industry (area of responsibility of the chambers of commerce and industry)



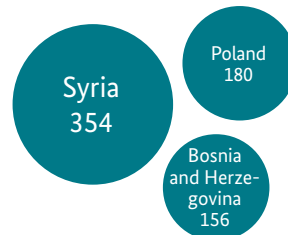
Craft trades (area of responsibility of the chambers of crafts and trades)



Top 3 countries of training



Top 3 countries of training



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. 2018 reporting year. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Almost 1,800 of these were submitted in 2018.⁷³ The chambers of commerce and industry recorded just over 4,600 applications in this same year. In overall terms since 2012, they have received a total of 22,101 applications (see Table 4).

Syrian qualifications once again led the way in both sectors. Significant growth from 2016 to 2017 was observed in this case. Numbers of applications more than doubled in the chambers of commerce and industry sector whilst the chambers of crafts and trades recorded a rise of around 60 percent. These figures increased further in 2018, albeit to a comparatively lower extent (see also Chapter 2.3).⁷⁴

⁷³ To provide an example by way of comparison, the chambers of crafts and trades provided initial consultations to just over 12,100 persons in 2018. The ratio of consultations to applications was thus roughly 7:1. We have already reported that not every case of guidance leads to an application. The reasons for this may be many and varied. They include the adoption of alternative options such as an external examination, false expectations regarding the recognition procedure, the commencement of employment or the realisation that the foreign qualification does not correspond to the current standards of the German occupational profile (see BMBF 2014).

⁷⁴ Applications relating to Syria as a country of training in the chambers of commerce and industry sector: 2016: 429 applications, 2017: 1,020 applications, 2018: 1,212 applications Applications relating to Syria as a country of training in the chambers of crafts and trades sector: 2016: 171 applications, 2017: 282 applications, 2018: 354 applications.



Field report: dental technician Ammar Allaham

30-year-old Syrian-born Ammar Allaham is a dedicated dental technician. When he fled to Germany via Turkey in 2015, it was important for him to continue to be able to work in the occupation he loved. Ammar received support from an association specialising in asylum issues. He attended a crash course at the Goethe Institute and completed two internships at a dental technician firm and at an orthodontic practice. The latter subsequently offered him permanent employment as a dental technician. “We work more quickly and more precisely here. There is also much closer coordination between the dentist and the laboratory. I am learning something new every day and feel good when I work well.” Ammar’s aim was, however, to become a master dental technician. In order to achieve this, he needed his professional qualifications to be

recognised. In April 2017, he made a relevant application to the Heilbronn-Franken Chamber of Crafts and Trades. But Ammar’s decision to flee his country of origin meant that documentation was incomplete. For this reason, the chamber of crafts and trades decided to offer a skills analysis. An appointment was quickly arranged, and Ammar was able to demonstrate his skills in a laboratory in Schriesheim near Heidelberg. “I had to complete a range of tasks, for example producing a partial denture. The examiner was very satisfied with me and even offered me a job.” Recognition and the chance to enter steady employment are providing Ammar Allaham with a sense of security as he carefully plans what to do next. Now there is nothing to prevent him from becoming a master dental technician.

As in previous years, office manager was once again the most popular occupation in the chambers of commerce and industry sector, attracting more than 860 applications. In the chambers of crafts and trades sector, the number one ranking went to the reference occupation of electronics technician, in which there were in excess of 500 applications (see Table 4).

In 2018, the numbers of procedures decided regarding non-regulated occupations in the chambers of commerce and industry sector and in the chambers of crafts and trades sector were 4,662 and 1,437 respectively. Over half (53.7 percent) of procedures in the chambers of commerce and industry sector ended in full equivalence. Partial equivalence was awarded in a further 46.0 percent of cases. The proportion of procedures ending with no equivalence was 0.3 percent. 51.7 percent of procedures in the chambers of crafts and trades sector led to full equivalence. 40.0 percent resulted in partial equivalence. Competent bodies in the chambers of crafts and trades sector were unable to identify any equivalence in 8.3 percent of procedures.⁷⁵

If a notice attesting partial equivalence is issued, the Federal BQFG stipulates that this should list the substantial differences identified in the equivalence assessment. This makes it possible to attend suitable refresher training. Full equivalence may then be awarded once this has been successfully completed (see Chapter 4).

Evidence of occupational experience can be taken into account if substantial differences are identified in the equivalence assessment.⁷⁶ This has a particular role to play in the case of the dual occupations, because occupational experience can, for example, often be used to compensate for the practical components of training which are missing. In many countries, the focus is on school-based rather than on practical training.⁷⁷ The figures from the official statistics show that this possibility plays a part in the chamber sector. In 2018, the competent bodies reported that occupational experience was used to inform the decision in 48.0 percent of cases regarding non-regulated occupations in which the chambers of

commerce and industry had arrived at a final assessment. The corresponding figure in the area of responsibility of the chambers of crafts and trades was 34.3 percent.⁷⁸

Focus on the occupations of motor vehicle mechatronics technician and electrical fitter

The numerous recognition procedures conducted in medical professions where academic qualifications are required and in specialist healthcare professions are enabling the Recognition Act to contribute towards the securing of a supply of skilled workers in a sector which urgently needs trained staff (see Chapters 2 and 3.1). However, acute shortages of skilled workers also exist in some trade and industry and craft trades sectors. In a survey of more than 23,000 companies in the area of responsibility of the chambers of commerce and industry, almost one in two respondents stated that they had long-term vacancies due to a lack of suitable skilled workers.⁷⁹ 40 percent of craft trade companies also reported problems in filling vacancies.⁸⁰ Two occupations in which skilled workers are currently required will be considered in greater detail as examples. These are of motor vehicle mechatronics technician and electrical fitter. Both occupations attract some of the largest numbers of applications in the chambers of crafts and trades and chambers of commerce and industry areas and both are currently included on the BA's positive list.⁸¹

A total of 1,602 applications in the occupation of motor vehicle mechatronics technician were recorded between 2012 and 2018. In more than half of these cases (53.5 percent), applicants had obtained their vocational qualification in a third country. The remainder had qualified in the EU, EEA or Switzerland. Applications were distributed across numerous countries of training, the most popular of which was Poland (18.2 percent). A Turkish (8.7 percent) or Romanian (8.1 percent) qualification each formed the basis for almost one in ten applications. A decision was reached in 1,260 procedures between 2012 and 2018. Full recognition and partial recognition were the outcomes in

75 Attention needs to be drawn to the fact that recognition procedures in the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades sectors relate to different occupations. The division of occupations is largely governed by § 8 BQFG.

76 Learning outcomes acquired via non-formal routes (participation in continuing training, additional training or other advanced and continuing training certificates) may also be taken into account.

77 See Adacker and Reyels 2019, p. 3.

78 In the area of responsibility of the chambers of crafts and trades, the consideration of occupational experience as a means of compensating for substantial differences led to the awarding of full equivalence in 291 procedures and to attestation of partial equivalence in 147 procedures. 2,127 procedures conducted in this way in the chambers of commerce and industry sector led to full equivalence. There were 111 such procedures which resulted in partial equivalence.

79 See DIHK Labour Market Report 2019, p. 2.

80 See ZDH Position Paper 2017, p. 2.

81 See BA 2019.



A poster at the Frankfurt Stock Exchange advertises the interactive travelling exhibition on professional recognition that has been set up as part of the “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung” project.

42.9 percent and 45.1 percent of procedures respectively. No equivalence was established in the remaining proportion of cases.

During the same period, competent bodies reported 1,332 applications in the occupation of electrical fitter. In this instance too, slightly more than half of applications (54.5 percent) were based on qualifications from third countries. The range of countries of training was also broad. The list was led by Poland (18.5 percent), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (11.4 percent) and Romania (7.7 percent). One notable circumstance is that the five most frequent countries of training include two states which no longer exist. These are Yugoslavia (6.3 percent) and the Soviet Union (5.0 percent). Naturally enough, this also meant that the vocational qualifications in question were acquired some considerable time ago. A decision was arrived at in 1,152 procedures during the period from 2012 to 2018. More than three quarters (77.1 percent) of these ended in full equivalence. Partial equivalence was certified in 22.0 percent of

cases. The proportion of procedures in which no equivalence could be established was one percent.

The sample consideration of these two shortage occupations shows that over 2,300 applications have been submitted since 2012 and that full or partial equivalence has been attested in the vast majority of cases. Recognition of foreign qualifications thus makes a specific contribution towards raising the potential number of skilled workers in shortage professions and occupations.

Opportunities for a skills analysis in procedures where documentation is missing or incomplete

Applicants are not always able to produce all the written evidence required. In such circumstances, the Federal BQFG states that “other suitable procedures” may be used.⁸² In the case of missing or incomplete

⁸² § 14 BQFG and § 50a Paragraph 4 of the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO). Knowledge tests are possible in the healthcare sector. See Chapter 3.2.

documentation, one possibility is for employability skills to be identified via competence assessment procedures. In the chamber sector, these are referred to as skills analyses. In 2018, competent bodies reported 264 skills analyses to the official statistics. This represented more than double the figure recorded in the previous year (2017: 117 skills analyses). 864 skills analyses have been reported since the law entered into force. The chambers of crafts and trades sector accounted for 822 of these (predominantly relating to non-regulated occupations, although there were some instances of skills analyses in the regulated professions). The chambers of commerce and industry have thus far reported 33 skills analyses

Information Box 9

“Netzwerk Qualifikationsanalyse” project (NetQA)

NetQA was launched on 1 January 2019 as a cooperative project involving partners from the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades.^a It is financed by the BMBF. The objectives are to support the competent bodies in the establishment of a regional expertise and networking structure for skills analyses and to firmly embed these within the infrastructure of the chambers. The main focus is on networking between the competent bodies. The project offers networking and support provision with a view to achieving quality-assured and efficient processing of skills analyses across the country by 2022. For the purpose of financing their skills analysis, applicants are able to receive support from a special fund administered by the West German Association of Chambers of Crafts and Trades (WHKT) insofar as funding pursuant to German Social Security Code II and III (SGB II/III) is not possible. BIBB is responsible for overall coordination and knowledge management, whilst the WHKT coordinates the technical aspects of the project.

^a The project partners are the Berlin Chamber of Crafts and Trades, the Frankfurt (Oder) Chamber of Crafts and Trades – East Brandenburg Region, the Koblenz Chamber of Crafts and Trades, the Chamber of Crafts and Trades of the Palatinate, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Munich and Upper Bavaria, saaris – saarland. innovation&standort e. V., IHK FOSA, the Central Agency for Continuing Vocational Education and Training in the Skilled Crafts (ZWH) and the WHKT.

to the official statistics. In some individual cases, skills analyses have also been conducted in other chamber areas (for example agriculture). Particular use was made of skills analyses in the occupations of electronics technician and motor vehicle mechatronics technician.

The “Prototyping Transfer” project, which was coordinated by BIBB and financed via funding from the BMBF between 2015 and 2018, raised awareness for the instrument of the skills analysis. Partner chambers conducted 187 skills analyses during the term of the project. About half of these related to reference occupations from the electrical and metalworking sectors. In most of the cases, a skills analysis took place because no sufficient evidence could be provided of the duration, contents and general conditions of the vocational qualification in question. Refugees made up almost a third (29 percent) of participants. The main instruments deployed were specialist oral examinations and work samples. A combination of these was sometimes used. Of these skills analyses, 96 were financed via the project’s own internal special fund. The follow-up project NetQA was launched in 2019 (see Information Box 9).

Implementation models and knowledge management – IHK FOSA and the lead chamber system

Various models for the execution of recognition procedures and different ways of pooling competencies have been developed in the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades sectors.⁸³ In the area of responsibility of the chambers of commerce and industry, the IHK FOSA⁸⁴ was created in 2012 to act as a central competent body to conduct equivalence assessments. The chambers of crafts and trades, on the other hand, have established a decentralised structure which uses lead chambers.⁸⁵ The lead chambers specialise in certain countries of training. In the case of some countries, such as Turkey, several chambers exercise the function of a lead chamber. The establishment of lead

⁸³ See BMBF 2017, p. 36.

⁸⁴ The Foreign Skills Approval Competence Centre of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK FOSA) is a consortium under public law of 76 of the 79 chambers of industry and commerce. It acts as a central decision-making body in respect of applications for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications.

⁸⁵ In the case of the decentralised approach adopted in the chambers of crafts and trades sector, local chambers assume all tasks within the scope of the recognition process. In the interests of division of labour and the creation of synergies, however, they are also able to request an overall assessment of foreign qualifications in the form of an expert opinion from the lead chambers.



Originally from Kazakhstan, Olga Gotjur had been working as a teacher of German and English in Ukraine and came to Germany as a so-called “resettler” (immigrant of German origin from Russia and Eastern Europe). She quickly received a positive notice when she submitted an application for recognition to Tübingen Regional Council.

chambers is adapted and expanded according to requirements.⁸⁶ An internal knowledge management system has been put in place at the IHK FOSA to cover aspects such as countries of origin, expertise in occupations and procedures.⁸⁷ This has its foundations in the knowledge of staff members who are able to speak the languages of the main countries of origin and can offer specific expertise. The BQ Portal is a central knowledge management instrument in the chambers of crafts and trades sector. Once applications have been accessed, the (lead) chambers use the site to upload relevant information about foreign vocational qualifications. Most importantly, however, results of the equivalence assessments are made available in an internal section of the portal. Other chambers are then able to benefit from these outcomes by viewing them and using them in their own work. 1,354 assessment results were available at the end of 2018. Over recent years, these have been supplemented by just under 100 translations of training regulations or relevant extracts from regulations. These have been financed

by the BQ Portal and uploaded to the publicly accessible part of the site (see Chapter 1.1).⁸⁸ This approach is fostering more uniform evaluation practice at a national level and can accelerate recognition procedures.⁸⁹

As already mentioned, almost 33,000 applications for recognition in the area of non-regulated occupations have been submitted since 2012. The decision in most of these instances has been full or partial equivalence. The provisions included in the Federal BQFG concerning accordance of due consideration to occupational experience and to skills analyses are pioneering in international comparative terms and offer multifarious opportunities to the heterogeneous group of applicants. In both the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades sectors, there are also established structures which facilitate the standardised and efficient implementation of the procedures. Knowledge

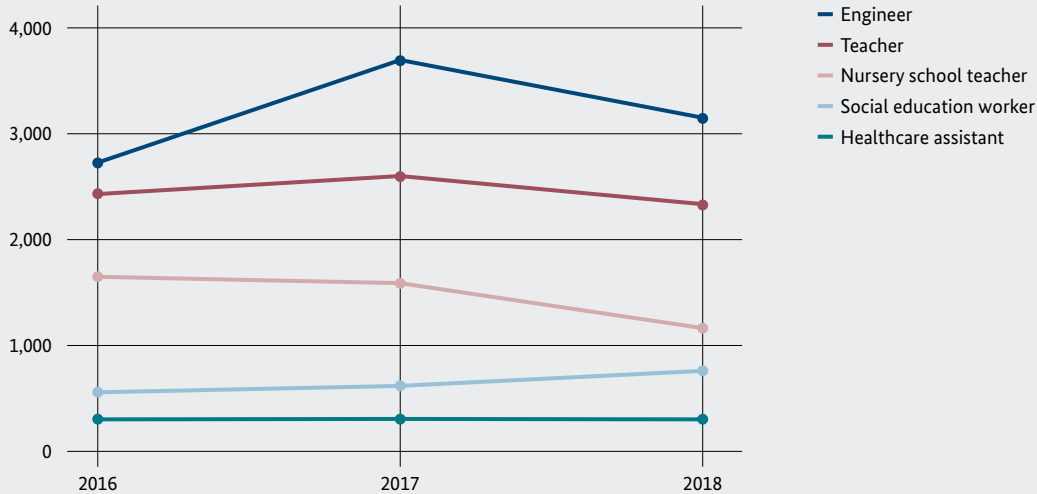
⁸⁶ Additional lead chambers for Syria, Iran and Afghanistan were stipulated in 2017 and 2018.

⁸⁷ See BMBF 2017.

⁸⁸ The initiative emanates from the competent body which is dealing with the procedure. There is a particular emphasis on financing translations of training regulations relating to occupations which are frequent objects of applications for an equivalence assessment.

⁸⁹ See BMBF 2014 and 2017 and Chapter 1.1.

Figure 14: Top 5 applications in professions and occupations governed by federal state law 2016 to 2018



Source and explanations: Federal Statistical Office (coordinated federal state statistics), representation by BIBB.

management systems and internal process sequences serve as an important foundation for the work which is carried out. Particularly against the background of the shortage of skilled workers which exists in the dual occupations in many places, it remains important for companies to be notified of the opportunities that are associated with recognition and to be kept informed of the positive developments in this occupational area.⁹⁰

3.3 Professions and occupations governed by federal state law

There has been a significant expansion in information and data relating to the recognition system for professions and occupations governed by federal state law. The Federal Statistical Office has published coordinated federal state statistics on recognition since 2018 (see Chapter 2). An evaluation of the recognition laws of the federal states was also conducted in 2018 and 2019.⁹¹ Individual investigations have also appeared. These

⁹⁰ The continuation of the “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung” project represents the achievement of a significant milestone in this regard. See Chapter 1.3.

⁹¹ As the final report was published after the editorial deadline of the Report on the Recognition Act, its results are not used in this report.

have included a detailed report on recognition in the State of Bremen in 2017.⁹²

Professions and occupations governed by federal state law (so-called “federal state professions and occupations”) accounted for one quarter of the total of around 39,100 recognition applications made in 2018. Procedures and areas of responsibility are regulated in the recognition acts of the federal states and in specific federal state legislation governing individual professions. 9,912 applications for recognition in federal state professions and occupations were made in 2018 (as opposed to 29,202 in professions and occupations governed by federal law, see Chapter 2.1). This is a decrease of around 1,000 applications compared to 2017. As in previous years, the regulated sector accounted for approximately 90 percent of applications. Most related to the five professions of engineer, teacher, social education worker/social worker, nursery school teacher and healthcare assistant (see Figure 14).

The decrease is also reflected in application figures relating to individual professions and occupations. There was a decline in applications in three of the five most important professions. The profession of engineer was particularly affected in this regard in 2018. Applications

⁹² See Böhme and Heibült 2017 on professions and occupations governed by both federal and federal state law.

Figure 15: Recognition procedures for teachers
(generalised for all federal states)

Legal basis

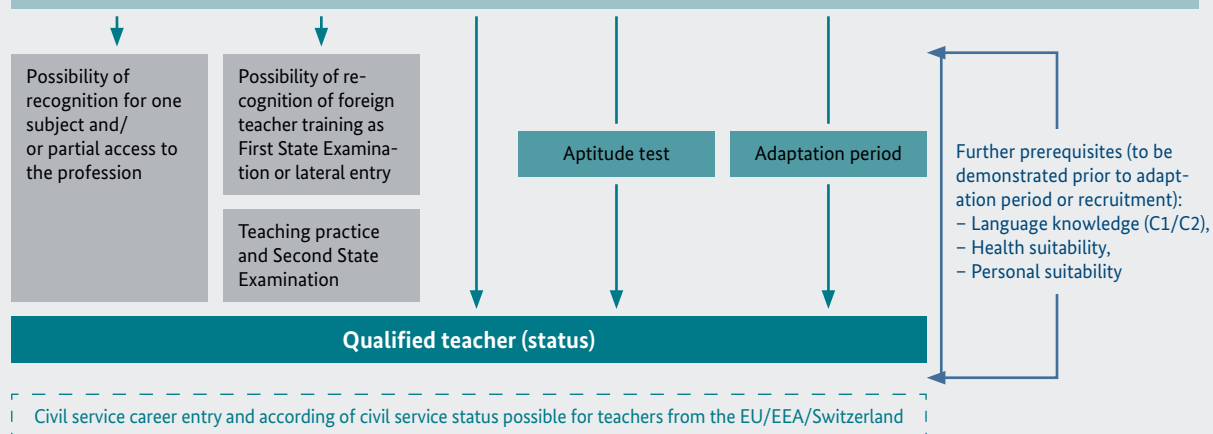
Partially federal state BQFG, partially specific legislation governing the professions and ordinances
In some cases variances EU/EEA/Switzerland and third countries

Prerequisites

Evidence of a qualification which permits the exercising of the profession of teacher in the country of training
Possibility of alignment of training to a teaching subject/type of school in the respective federal state
Possible requirement for completion of a course of higher education study of at least three years' duration
Possible requirement for evidence of intention to work as a teacher in Germany (third country nationals)

Equivalence assessment

Investigation of existence of substantial differences (subject knowledge, didactic, teacher training, educational and/or practical), compensation usually possible via professional experience, lifelong learning and/or additional qualifications



Source and explanations: schematic diagram generalised for all federal states, see Roser 2019

relating to the profession of teacher also fell in 2018. The profession of nursery school teacher had already previously exhibited a downwards trend. The numbers of applications for healthcare assistant remained stable, whereas social education worker saw a rise.

Nevertheless, the guidance data shows the significance of these professions. When all professions and occupations are taken into account, the IQ Counselling Centres reported that teacher and engineer were the professions most in demand in both 2017 and 2018. Nursery school teacher was the seventh (2018) and eighth (2018) most popular profession or occupation in which guidance was sought.

Large degree of heterogeneity with regard to recognition

In the case of federal state professions and occupations, the results of the recognition system are heterogeneous. Differences exist between professions and occupations and relate to various levels including access to the procedure, implementation and possible outcomes of the procedures. The vast majority of engineers received recognition and the right to use the professional title (in 2018, about 95 percent of procedures relating to the profession of engineer culminated in a positive notice). This being said, however, it is currently not possible (as of September 2019) to introduce a recognition procedure for engineers in the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Recognition rates are also very high in

Two questions to...

Claudia Sommer (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Science and Digitalisation of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt) and Margarete Horn-Andaç (Hesse Ministry of Science and Art) (representatives of the Working Group of the Coordinating Departments of the Federal States at an operational level)

1. Where do you believe the greatest progress has been achieved over recent years with regard to the implementation of the recognition acts of the federal states?

The creation of a largely comparable legal basis in Germany is proving to be a benefit. Harmonisation of the legal situation in the federal states provides a good basis for assimilations and for joint endeavours aimed at achieving simplification of the recognition procedures.

The pooling of competencies in the area of recognition can make a major contribution towards accelerating and improving procedures. One initial step in this direction is the establishment of the Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions.

Additional bodies for recognition and training guidance have also been set up within the federal states. In overall terms, implementation of the recognition acts has led to a greater degree of dynamism in guidance and support for recognition procedures.

2. Where do you believe the greatest present and future challenges lie with regard to further implementation of the recognition acts of the federal states?

Particular challenges will result from the impending implementation of the Skilled Immigration Act and as a result of measures aimed at recruiting skilled workers. Quality assurance of an accelerated skilled worker procedure will require adaptations to administrative execution, and there will be a particular need for secure financial and human resources capacities in the federal states.

Increasing digitalisation represents a further challenge. This includes implementation of the Online Access Act and the expansion of an efficient e-government system for the recognition procedures.

With regard to alternative education and training models, adequate recognition of non-formal competencies will need to be addressed in future.

the case of healthcare assistants (around 85 percent of whom achieved full equivalence in 2018) and with regard to the non-regulated school-based training occupations (about 72 percent of applications in 2018 resulted in full equivalence). By way of contrast, procedures relating to the professions of nursery school teacher, teacher and social education worker in which a decision was reached display an extremely mixed picture. Although only 17 percent of procedures for teachers resulted in a negative notice in 2018, only around 11 percent of processes led to the awarding of full equivalence. A compensation measure was imposed in 68 percent of cases (see Chapter 4.3).

There are considerable regional differences in access to the procedure with regard to teaching qualifications. Only a few federal states permit recognition if only one teaching subject is offered. Most continue to insist on two subjects. In Bavaria, it is currently not possible for

teachers with third country qualifications to undergo a recognition procedure.⁹³ Language prerequisites are generally very high (usually level C2) (see Figure 15).

In the case of social education workers, almost half (about 44 percent) of procedures ended with the imposition of a compensation measure. Around 42 percent of cases ended with full recognition, and approximately 14 percent of procedures resulted in a negative

⁹³ Recognition for teachers with special subject combinations also varies from federal state to federal state. Bremen, for example, no longer trains physical education teachers and also does not conduct any recognition procedures in this subject (Böhme and Heibült 2017). The two-subject rule continues to form the greatest obstacle to recognition for teachers, because very few teachers from abroad have been trained to offer two subjects. Some federal states (Hamburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Schleswig-Holstein) facilitate access to the labour market for such teachers by recognising competency in one subject only. A number of other federal states merely issue a "permit to teach". This does not, however, constitute equivalence (Weizsäcker and Roser 2018).

decision.⁹⁴ Nursery school teachers recorded a significantly higher level of negative outcomes in 2018. About 20 percent of applications led to full equivalence, and a negative notice was issued on around 34 percent of occasions. The proportion of notices imposing a compensation measure was also high. This was the outcome in approximately 45 percent of cases.⁹⁵

Further developments in federal state professions and occupations

Although nursery school teachers are not included on the BA's list of shortage professions and occupations, there are clear signs of bottlenecks, at least at a specific level.⁹⁶ For this reason, various federal states allow persons with foreign qualifications to enter the profession and classify them as supplementary skilled workers despite the fact that they have not completed a recognition procedure. These special approvals only apply to one certain employer in the respective federal state.⁹⁷ At the request of the employer, the qualification in question is assessed by the local youth welfare office. Authorisation is then issued for this particular employer to give the person concerned a job. The Bavarian portal "Kita Berufeliste"⁹⁸ offers a transparent presentation of anonymised cases in which persons holding foreign qualifications are authorised to work in child daycare centres without having undergone a

recognition procedure.⁹⁹ This enables those who are interested to see for which qualifications and countries authorisations have already been issued. The added value of such an approval process compared to a possible subsequent equivalence procedure which permits access to the profession regardless of the employer and federal state lies in the fact that work experience can be acquired in Germany and a person is able to take up work within the occupation prior to or during the recognition procedure.

In the case of social workers and social education workers, which are federal state professions for which academic qualifications are required, investigations are currently underway as to whether and how the ZAB can take over responsibility for the equivalence assessment from the federal states in future. These negotiations were initiated in 2017 at a Youth and Family Ministers Conference of the federal states (JFMK)¹⁰⁰ and are currently still ongoing. The expectation is that this concept will also be transferable to regulated professions governed by federal state law in which training takes place at trade and technical school level, such as the profession of nursery school teacher. Some federal states are already regularly involving the ZAB with regard to obtaining expert opinions. One example here is Bremen, which is taking this approach with nursery school teachers and teachers.¹⁰¹

94 Source: Federal Statistical Office.

95 Ibid.

96 See Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer 2019, see also: Response of the Federal Government to the Parliamentary Question put by the Members of Parliament Annalena Baerbock, Katja Dörner, Beate Walter-Rosenheimer, by further Members of Parliament and by the BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN Parliamentary Party of 21 June 2018 (Printed Paper 19/2504), Printed Paper 19/2928, German Bundestag at dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/029/1902928.pdf. For Hamburg, see for example Response of the Senate to the Parliamentary Question put by the Member of Parliament Daniel Oetzel (Freie Demokratische Partei): Shortage profession nursery school teacher of 1 September 2017, Printed Paper 21/10173, Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg at buergerschaft-hh.de/ParlDok/dokument/59005/mangelberuf-erzieher.pdf.

97 Bavarian practice is based on § 16 Paragraph 6 of the Ordinance on the Implementation of the Bavarian Children's Education and Childcare Act (Kinderbildungsverordnung – AVBayKiBiG), see blja.bayern.de/unterstuetzung/kindertagesbetreuung/paedagogisches-personal/index.php and also the response to a written question posed by the Member of Parliament Gabi Schmidt (Freie Wähler): Lateral entrants to child daycare centres of 30 May 2018, Printed Paper 17/23155, Bayerischer Landtag at bayern.landtag.de/www/ElanTextAblage_WP17/Drucksachen/Schriftliche%20Anfragen/17_0023155.pdf.

98 See egov.bayern.de/kitaberufe/onlinesuche/suche.aspx.

► In addition to this, the "recognition gaps" that exist in cases where no opportunity for recognition is as yet in place for certain professions are increasingly being closed. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is, for example, planning to introduce recognition for engineers via the specific legislation relating to the profession. As the example of the social occupations shows, centralisation and cooperation are being driven forwards in the case of the professions and occupations governed by federal state law. Nevertheless, this area will remain heterogeneous in future.

99 Approval by youth welfare services enables employers to recruit such persons as skilled workers but does not in all cases accord them full skilled worker status. Their salary may, for example, be below that received by state recognised nursery school teachers.

100 See JFMK in Quedlinburg, Agenda Item 6.1 Recognition of foreign professional qualifications with regard to regulated social occupations that are governed by federal state law at jfmk.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MndN6j-Jugend-_und_Familienministerkonferenz_18-19_Mai_2017_-_Protokoll.pdf.

101 See Böhme and Heibült 2017, pp. 50, 53.

4 Training guidance and measures



Samad Hamuch from Spain was granted full recognition as an electronics technician for automation technology upon completion of adaptation training at TÜV Nord. The Saarland IQ Network arranged and financed the measure.

The demand for training guidance and measures within the context of recognition continues to be high. Given the rising numbers of applications being received from third countries and the developments forecast in conjunction with the Skilled Immigration Act, the expectation is that it will rise further (see Chapter 4.1). A new guideline entitled “ESF training within the context of the Recognition Act” was added to the IQ Funding Programme with effect from 2015. This brought about a reorganisation of the Recognition Counselling Centres and training counselling centres, which had already undergone further development by this point (see Chapter 4.2). The new guideline also facilitates the development and testing of pilot courses and individual funding measures (see Chapters 4.2 and 4.3). Course provision in the IQ Funding Programme began to be certified in accordance with the AZAV in 2015. This means that the BA is able to issue training vouchers for participation in such measures if the usual prerequisites are fulfilled. Provision

within the framework of the new guideline will be continued until the end of 2022. There are also further guidance services, such as those offered by competent bodies, as well as measures delivered by training providers operating under public law or organised by the chambers, the private sector or employers. These will be considered only briefly in the following chapter because no such systematic overview has been undertaken thus far.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Indeed, a systematic recording of these services is not possible. Individual training measures sometimes take place in a purely company-based form or else as a combination of company phases together with elements of existing initial or continuing training programmes. Private sector provision is rarely advertised via the usual channels such as KURSNET and continuing training databases and is in a constant state of flux. This is the result arrived at by an analysis conducted by the f-bb on behalf of the “Recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications” working group of the State Secretaries Steering Meeting “Coherent approach to immigration of skilled workers from third countries”. It was presented at a meeting of the aforesaid working group in Berlin on 9 May 2019.

4.1 Major developments and challenges

Any substantial differences between the foreign qualification and the German reference occupation identified in the equivalence assessment may be offset. This must take place if full access to the profession or occupation is to be granted.¹⁰³ The differences which need to be compensated for may vary depending on the procedure and the professional or vocational qualification acquired. This means that training measures derived are heterogeneous in nature (see Chapter 4.3). In addition to this, acquisition of language skills is central to further training. Although language knowledge is not in itself necessary for the equivalence assessment, it may be crucial in terms of gaining access to the profession or occupation in question.

Even though a multitude of types of training have been established within the context of professional recognition, the structure of this provision faces a challenge with regard to its scope and the heterogeneity of training requirements. One aspect of this challenge is the growing number of applications for recognition from third countries. The task of securing a sufficient training supply will exacerbate in future given the expectation that the Skilled Immigration Act will lead to a further increase in applications. Alongside the well documented IQ provision, we also know that other continuing training providers offer measures to an extent that is probably not inconsiderable (cf. BMBF 2015). No complete and systematic overview currently exists, either with regard to the total number of measures or in respect of capacities.¹⁰⁴

IQ measures thus cover only part of training needs. This is confirmed by contrasting the 4,231 participants in IQ measures in 2018 with the official statistics on outcomes of procedures (Chapters 2.2 and 3.1). In this year, 10,188 persons in regulated professions governed by federal law alone were required to undertake compensation measures which they had not completed by

31 December 2018. Around 3,800 further persons were only accorded full equivalence after they had successfully concluded a compensation measure. This meant that approximately 14,000 persons faced a training need solely in order to fulfil measures imposed as the result of an equivalence assessment.¹⁰⁵ Further requirements possibly arose because of language or labour market integration requirements. Partial equivalence in a non-regulated occupation was further certified in the case of 2,784 more persons. At least some of these faced a training need too.

The 2018 *wbmonitor*¹⁰⁶ survey reveals that 19 percent of continuing training providers recorded course participants within the context of recognition last year.¹⁰⁷ In some areas such as healthcare and nursing, employers also frequently organise and finance the necessary measures themselves.¹⁰⁸ Initial investigations indicate that numerous programmes are in place for certain professions, doctors being one example. There is, however, a considerable shortage in some other professions and occupations.¹⁰⁹ Concentration of supply and demand also varies regionally. In order to support craft trade companies, the “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung HWK” project is developing a guide and a toolbox to facilitate refresher training. The focus below will be placed on data relating to training guidance and measures within the IQ Funding Programme.

¹⁰⁵ Although the figures informing this calculation relate to procedures reported in 2018, it is important to remember that some applications may have been made in the previous year.

¹⁰⁶ *wbmonitor* is a cooperation project between the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE). It conducts an annual survey of continuing training providers in Germany. A total of 18,981 providers were invited to take part in 2018. The survey’s weighted and extrapolated results are based on valid information supplied by 1,267 institutions (response rate 7.3 percent). A weighting and extrapolation procedure using regional indicators is deployed because knowledge of the structure of the statistical population of continuing training providers is insufficient. For further information, see *wbmonitor.de*.

¹⁰⁷ 30 percent of the courses in which persons took part with the intention of pursuing recognition of their foreign qualifications were pure language courses (for example, occupation-related German). 28 percent were specialist professional courses, and 42 percent were courses featuring both focuses. 125 providers covered requirements via their regular programmes. 9 had developed special courses, and 33 providers stated that they had taken both these approaches. 50 providers designed their training services in cooperation with at least one competent body. 41 percent had received a direct referral from a competent body. 36 providers had institutional links with a competent body (for example in their capacity as the education and training institute of a chamber).

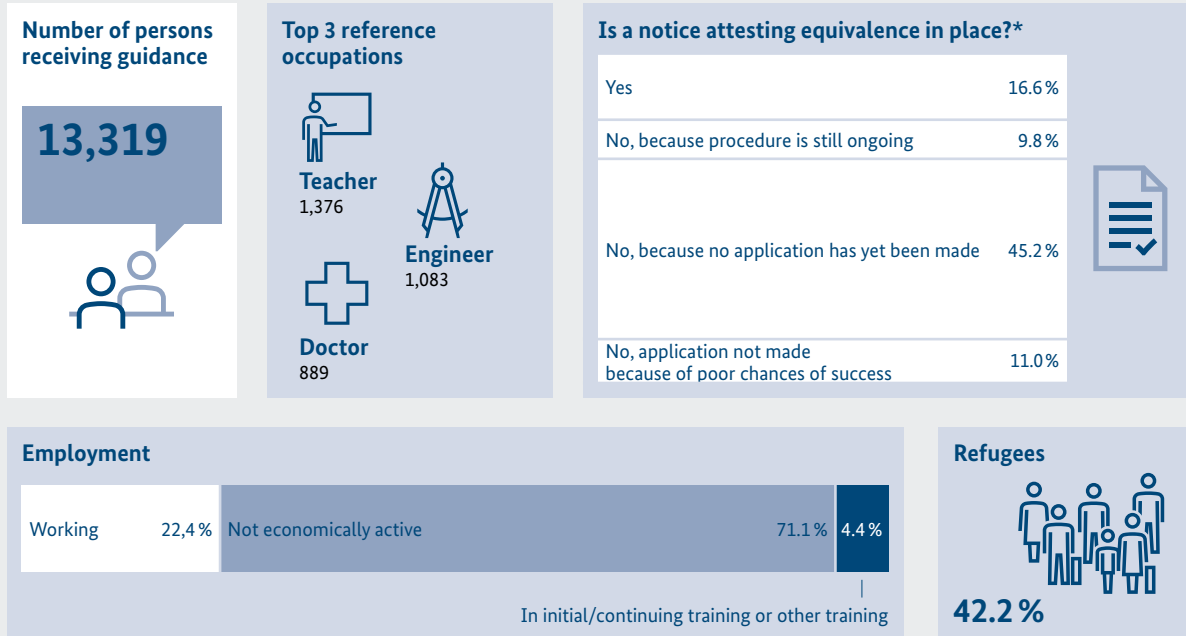
¹⁰⁸ See Best et al. 2019.

¹⁰⁹ See *ibid.*

¹⁰³ Regulated professions may only be fully exercised if full equivalence has been attained. If substantial differences are identified, a compensation measure will need to be undertaken in order to achieve this full equivalence. By way of contrast, refresher training measures in non-regulated occupations are optional. This is because full equivalence is not mandatory for those wishing to practice them. Nevertheless, it can also pave the way to full equivalence and increase employment opportunities.

¹⁰⁴ As stated by the f-bb analysis (see footnote 102).

Table 5: IQ training counselling – selected characteristics
Persons receiving guidance 2018



Source and explanations: IQ training counselling data (period from 1 January to 31 December 2018), calculations by the IQ Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants and BIBB. Representation by BIBB. Percentage distribution on the basis of valid values.
*Not included: persons receiving guidance with a qualification not covered by the BQFG (non-regulated academic qualifications): 17.4%.

4.2 Demand for IQ advice on job training and training measures

44,093 persons made use of IQ training counselling services during the period from 2015 to 2018 in order to find out about training measures within the context of recognition. 13,319 of these counselling services took place last year (see Table 5).

As in 2017, the three professions most in demand in 2018 were teacher, engineer and doctor. Compared to the previous year, however, guidance was provided to a quarter more teachers and to 24 percent fewer engineers.¹¹⁰ Most guidance related to regulated professions governed by federal state law and 23 percent were regarding regulated professions under federal law. These were followed by dual training occupations and non-regulated academic higher education

qualifications, which accounted for 16 and 15 percent of cases respectively.¹¹¹

Following a continuous increase in guidance numbers amongst refugees¹¹² from 2015 to 2017, these figures fell back for the first time in 2018. In 2018, refugees accounted for 42 percent of persons receiving guidance. The corresponding proportion for the previous year was 48 percent.

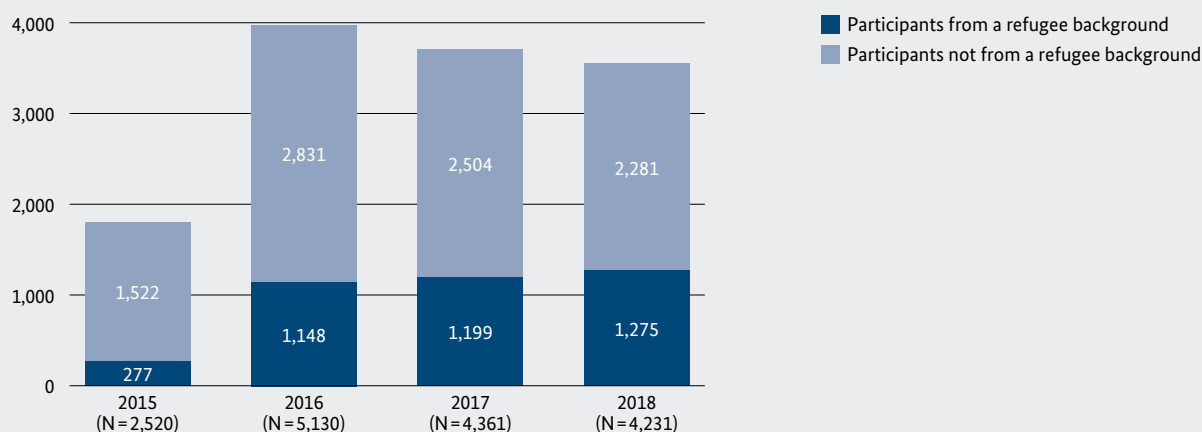
More than a quarter of persons receiving guidance had already commenced a recognition procedure at the

¹¹¹ The categories in which the remaining persons received guidance were non-regulated occupations governed by federal state law (1.9 percent), non-regulated advanced training occupations (including master craftsman) (1.3 percent), regulated master craftsman occupations in the craft trades sector (0.2 percent), other professions and occupations (9.3 percent) and cases in which no alignment to a German reference occupation was possible (8.4 percent).

¹¹² For the purpose of this chapter, refugees are defined as persons with the following residency status: leave to remain whilst an application for asylum is ongoing (§ 55 Paragraph 1 Asylum Act), leave to remain according to international law or for humanitarian or political reasons (§§ 22-26, 104a, 104b Residency Act [AufenthG]) and special leave to remain (§ 60a AufenthG).

¹¹⁰ Liedtke and Vockentanz 2019a, Table 2.6, calculations by BIBB.

Figure 16: Participants in IQ training measures by refugee background 2015 to 2018 (absolute terms)



Source and explanations: IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act (period from 1 January 2015 to 1 December 2018). Calculations by the IQ Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants and BIBB. Representation by BIBB. The total annual figures (N) also include participants for whom the data does not contain any information regarding residency status. For this reason, the sum of the two categories depicted deviates from the total figure.

time when the consultancy took place, and most of these had been issued with a notice (17 percent of all persons receiving guidance). A compensation measure had been imposed on nearly half (49 percent) of those receiving guidance who had been issued with a notice. About one in five persons who had had full equivalence attested still sought guidance on training opportunities within the context of the Recognition Act, especially with regard to language courses and orientation measures aimed at labour market integration.

Participation in IQ training measures

Between 2015 and 2018, 16,242 persons took part in an IQ training project within the context of recognition.¹¹³ Participant numbers in IQ training programmes more than doubled in 2016 compared to the previous year but have been falling back again since 2017. One reason for this is that language courses are now being funded within the scope of the Ordinance on support for occupation-related German language learning (DeuFöV) rather than via IQ (see Chapter 5). The first measures

have already been certified in accordance with the AZAV, meaning that the BA is able to finance them via training vouchers.

Over 80 percent of the total of 4,231 participants in 2018 were nationals of third countries. This was not least due to the fact that no automatic recognition takes place with regard to qualifications from third countries, meaning that third country nationals have greater training requirements (especially in the regulated sector).¹¹⁴ They are therefore more likely to take part in training measures. Over a third of all participants in 2018 were refugees. One notable aspect is that training provision that has been instigated and launched since 2015 saw an initial rise in participation figures before experiencing a general fall in numbers from 2017 onwards. Nevertheless, the proportion of refugees continued to increase (see Figure 16).¹¹⁵ The proportion of nationals from third countries also went up in overall terms. The figure in this case rose from 68 percent in 2015 to 82 percent in 2018.

¹¹³ Including 15,556 participants for whom the measure was funded via ESF financing together with federal funds. In the case of the remaining participants, financing took place solely via federal funding. IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act. Calculation by the IQ Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants, compiled for BIBB in April 2019, evaluation period: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018.

¹¹⁴ In 2017, the proportion of notices including impositions was 30 percentage points higher for third country nationals than for EU citizens. The proportion of notices attesting partial equivalences (just for non-regulated occupations) was only slightly higher (see Chapter 2.2).

¹¹⁵ This development follows the time-delayed course of participation in recognition by refugees, meaning that they are currently less likely to take part in IQ guidance (see Chapters 1.2 and 4.2), but are entering training measures in increasing numbers.

Information Box 10

Activities for the quality assurance of IQ measures

The development and quality assurance of IQ measures are the responsibility of the federal state networks and the Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants. A quality matrix and orientation framework have been drawn up for the sub-area of counselling. A paper entitled “IQ training measures within the context of the Recognition Act. Framework, tasks and stakeholders” has been published in respect of the training provision in order to strengthen IQ regional networks with regard to quality assurance.^a National minimum requirements for IQ training programmes have also been drawn up. A tool box containing various aids, a forum on the “Recognition in Germany” portal and training sessions all support advisors in their work and contribute to quality assurance.^b

a See Adacker and Kehl 2019.

b See Hauck et al. 2016, p. 6.

Of persons embarking upon a measure in 2018, 1,609 were striving to achieve recognition in a profession or occupation governed by federal law and 1,030 in a federal state profession or occupation. 513 were pursuing an occupation in the dual system and 446 a non-regulated academic profession. Both specialist professional and language contents were imparted to the majority of participants. Contents were purely professional in the case of one third of participants. A smaller proportion (11 percent) received language input only. 94 percent qualified via face-to-face programmes. The remainder used virtual provision or a combination of different forms of learning. Just over half of IQ training measures took place at the premises of service providers, sometimes in combination with home-based learning. Learning venues also included companies (3 percent or 10 percent in combination with training service providers), schools (7 percent), institutes of higher education and home (4 percent) and other learning venues. Compared to the previous year, participation in pure language courses fell by 53 percent. This was largely

because many programmes switched from IQ to DeuFöV funding (see Chapter 5). By way of contrast, the number of participants in training measures including professional contents only rose by almost 50 percent.¹¹⁶

4.3 IQ training provision in the most important occupational areas

The requirements of training measures vary considerably depending on the profession or occupation. Structure of provision is therefore also heterogeneous. Selected aspects and developments will be presented here for the most important occupational areas—healthcare professions, dual occupations and professions and occupations governed by federal state law. Particular initiatives will be discussed within the respective occupational context.

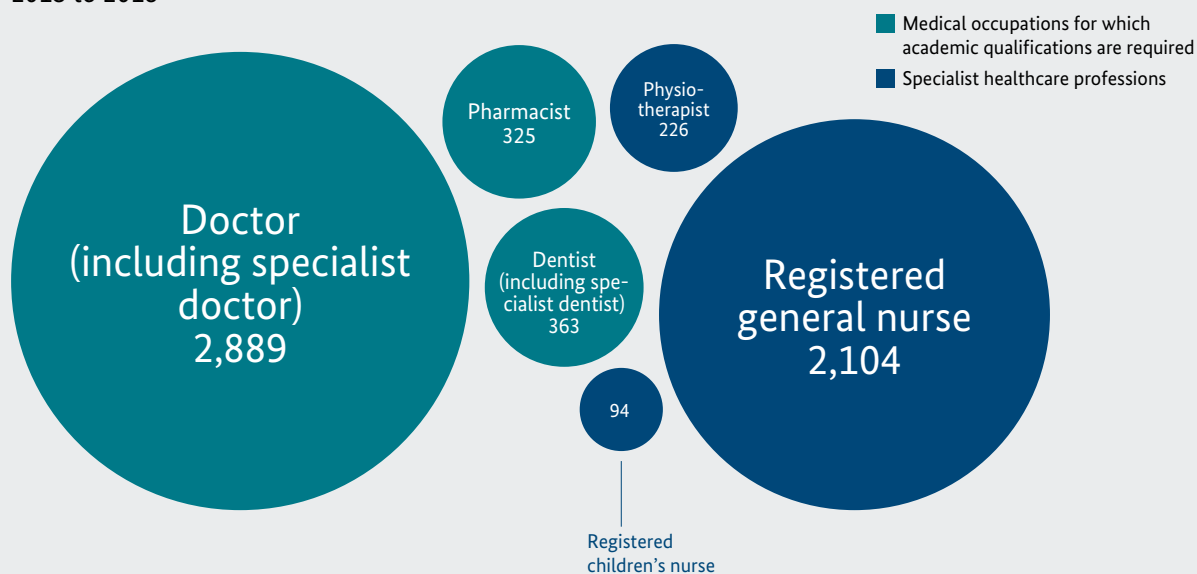
Healthcare professions

Healthcare professions are mostly regulated. If foreign training exhibits substantial differences from the German training, these differences need to be compensated for before the profession can be fully exercised (see Chapter 4.1). (Specialist) language requirements also need to be fulfilled to gain access to the medical professions in which academic qualifications are required and to specialist healthcare professions.¹¹⁷ This means that training requirements in this area are high. Measures offered encompass the following.

116 IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act. Calculation by the IQ Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants, compiled for BIBB in April 2019, evaluation period: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018.

117 For medical professions in which academic qualifications are required see Chapter 3.1. In the case of the specialist healthcare professions, the knowledge of German necessary for the exercising of the profession is a prerequisite for issuing authorisation to use the professional title. This is stipulated in § 2 of the Nursing Act (KrPflG). The same criterion will apply with regard to future training pursuant to § 2 of the new Nursing Professions Act with effect from 1 January 2020. The federal states have adopted the “Benchmarks relating to monitoring the knowledge of German necessary to exercise the specialist healthcare professions” by a majority decision. The result of this is that level B2 will apply to all specialist healthcare professions except for speech therapists, for whom level C2 will be required. There are plans to introduce the same kind of language test in the specialist healthcare professions in future. See Chapter 3.1.

Figure 17: Participants in IQ training in the most frequent professions in the healthcare sector 2015 to 2018



Source and explanations: IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act (period from 1 January 2015 to 1 December 2018). Calculations by the IQ Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants and BIBB. Representation by BIBB.

- Specialist language courses¹¹⁸
- Preparation courses for knowledge tests and aptitude tests
- Adaptation courses, which may for example include theoretical and practical modules

Between 2015 and 2018, 3,588 persons entered IQ training provision in medical professions in which academic qualifications are required. 81 percent of these were doctors. The professions of dentist¹¹⁹ and pharmacists each accounted for around 10 percent of participants, and there were also small numbers of veterinaries and psychotherapists (see Figure 17).¹²⁰

A further 2,750 persons took part in IQ measures in specialist healthcare occupations. Most of these were registered general nurses, who made up 77 percent of

the total. Second and third positions were occupied by psychotherapists and registered general children's nurses (8 and 3 percent respectively). 12 percent of the overall total participated in measures for 13 further specialist healthcare professions.

One of the challenges of the training was reconciling face-to-face attendance with the needs of the course participants. In more rural areas, it proved difficult to create training provision or to facilitate participation. Some challenges have already been countered via the development of training courses which combine face-to-face and online phases of learning. Training needs to be adapted to the requirements of participants in the best possible way. Appropriate formats need to be developed for this purpose, and there is also a requirement for cooperation between the competent bodies responsible for recognition of foreign qualifications, healthcare institutions in their capacity as employers and the training providers.

In the nursing professions, there are numerous examples of “good practice” projects in this regard. North Rhine-Westphalia, for instance, has gone down the route of issuing notices which impose modular-like compensation measures. Training providers then offer tailored courses at various locations. Modularised

¹¹⁸ Now DeuFöV funded instead of being financed via IQ, see Chapter 5.

¹¹⁹ This figure comprises doctors under federal law (2,655 participants), specialist doctors under federal state law (234 participants), dentists under federal law (361 participants) and specialist dentists under federal state law (number of participants in low single figures).

¹²⁰ IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act. Calculation by the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants, compiled for BIBB in April 2019, evaluation period: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018.

refresher training is also being offered in the profession of midwife, which is in less demand.¹²¹ Special provision offering in-service preparation for the knowledge test is in place for doctors. These combine online-based segments with phases of face-to-face attendance and are thus also suited to persons who do not live in the main metropolitan areas.¹²²

Non-regulated training occupations

The exercising of a non-regulated occupation is not dependent on obtaining full equivalence. Although refresher training is not mandatory following the attestation of partial equivalence, it may improve individual career prospects.

There are virtually no course-based training programmes in this area. The requirement in most cases is to catch up with practical training contents. The wide range of reference occupations means that it is difficult to offer occupationally specific training programmes.¹²³ Another factor is that the substantial differences identified in the notices show a high degree of diversity, even in relation to one and the same occupation. As a result, training needs indicated are predominantly heterogeneous. The consequence is also that individual training plans are needed.¹²⁴ Additional challenges arise in the case of persons who are in employment within or even outside the occupation in which they have trained. In such instances, very individual solutions need to be found in order to be able to reconcile training and employment.¹²⁵

Between 2015 and 2018, 1,721 persons underwent training in dual occupations via 42 sub-projects within the scope of IQ.¹²⁶ Participants in this occupational area were

most frequently (43 percent) referred by competent bodies¹²⁷ to the training provision in the IQ Programme.¹²⁸ As in other occupational areas, the recommendations of the IQ Counselling Centres played an important role. They drew the attention of one quarter of participants to the provision available.

The most frequent reference occupations of participants were hairdresser (10 percent), motor vehicle mechanics technician (9 percent) and electronics technician (6 percent). The remaining 75 percent were distributed across a total of 131 further occupations. A training programme lasted for eight to nine months on average and took place at several locations. Learning venues stated by the participants included the training provider (84 percent), companies (70 percent) and inter-company apprentice training centres (44 percent). Company-based refresher training enables employers to judge the potential of participants for themselves. They then continue to employ them in many cases.¹²⁹

More than half of participants were able to achieve full equivalence directly after the training measure.¹³⁰ Labour market integration is also improved in many cases. Nearly half of persons who had been in marginal employment prior to the training were able to secure employment subject to mandatory social insurance contributions. The figure for those who were not previously in work was 37 percent. Participants benefited from back-up measures such as language support, application coaching and mentoring at the company. The close cooperation agreements that exist between the various stakeholders in the field, including the competent bodies, the IQ, local employment agencies and Job Centres, contribute towards the success of the training measures.¹³¹

121 A selection of refresher training programmes is available at iq-netzwerk-nrw.de/angebote/qualifizierungsmassnahmen/angebotsuebersicht-akad-heilberufe-gesundheitsfachberufe/.

122 See komed-q.uni-muenster.de/813695.

123 See Adacker and Reyels 2019, pp. 11 ff. Other factors that must be accorded particular consideration are certain minimum numbers of participants and the requirement for a minimum degree of homogeneity of training needs.

124 Further challenges are the long duration of training phases in some cases and particular institutional facts and circumstances (including the fact that participating chambers of crafts and trades in their capacity as part-project providers in the IQ Funding Programme cannot use their own inter-company apprentice training centres. They are therefore unable to offset the costs and are forced to have recourse to other chamber districts) (see *ibid.*, pp. 13 ff.).

125 See *ibid.*, pp. 11 ff.

126 See *ibid.*, pp. 8 ff.

127 Most project providers are either chambers themselves and thus part of the competent body or else have important contacts to chambers and other institutions with close links to trade and industry by dint of their genesis, cooperation agreements or position (see *ibid.*, p. 9).

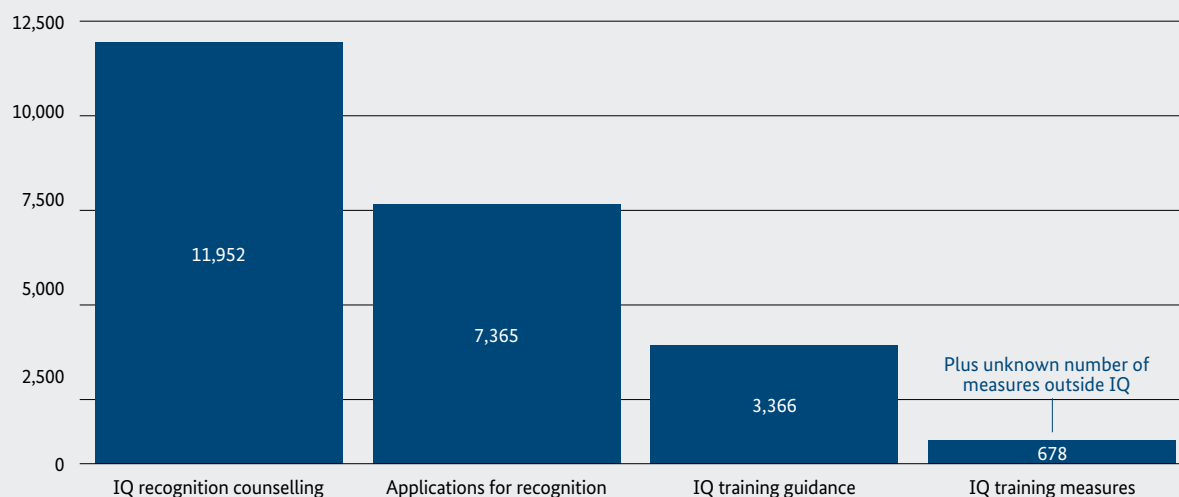
128 See *ibid.*, p. 8.

129 Examples of this are provided by outlets such as the brochure of the “Wir für Anerkennung” Prize. See Project Office “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung – Mit ausländischen Fachkräften gewinnen” 2018.

130 Around one quarter of participants were not (yet) able to demonstrate full equivalence directly upon completion because training had been discontinued or no notice had thus far been issued. No information is available for the remaining participants.

131 See Adacker and Reyels 2019, pp. 9 ff.

Figure 18: Teachers in IQ consultations, procedures and IQ training measures 2016 – 2018



Source and explanations: IQ data on training guidance, participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act, Federal Statistical Office (coordinated federal state statistics) (period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018). Calculations and representation by BIBB.

Professions and occupations governed by federal state law

Training provision for professions and occupations governed by federal state law is largely focused on significant professions such as teacher or engineer. While they do not serve to compensate for substantial differences which have been formally identified, courses and bridging measures are also offered to prepare persons with a higher education qualification for entry to the labour market. As becomes clear in the example of engineers below, these impart important knowledge for exercising the profession in question in Germany. In cases where training in regulated professions in Germany takes place at trade and technical schools or institutes of higher education (such as nursery school teacher or social education worker), these same institutes will generally also offer compensation measures.

Teachers

Although there is a high degree of interest in recognition in the reference occupation of teacher,¹³² the route to full equivalence remains extremely demanding. The greatest challenge is posed by the combination of pedagogical contents and the need to offer two teaching subjects, something which is mandatory in most

federal states. High language requirements, differing regulations for persons with qualifications from EU/EEA states and Switzerland as opposed to those from third countries and very formalised recruitment procedures all make the recognition process more difficult.¹³³

From 2016 to 2018, a total of almost 12,000 persons took part in recognition guidance relating to the reference occupation of teacher. 7,365 applications for recognition were submitted, and 3,366 persons then went on to avail themselves of IQ advice on job training with regard to the reference occupation of teacher.¹³⁴ 678 persons participated in IQ training measures, of whom around 22 percent were refugees.¹³⁵ This quantity ratio makes it clear that there is significant potential for recognition within the profession of teacher. Potential for training is, however, very much higher.¹³⁶

¹³³ See *ibid.*, pp. 7 ff.

¹³⁴ IQ data on training guidance, period 1 January 2016 – 31 December 2018, calculations by BIBB.

¹³⁵ IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act. Calculation by the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants, compiled for BIBB in April 2019, evaluation period: 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018.

¹³⁶ Compensation measures for teachers are also offered outside the IQ (examples include Hamburg and Bremen). However, no figure can be put on these here.

¹³² Between January 2015 and December 2018, 13,918 persons received advice on the reference occupation of teacher at the IQ Recognition Advice Centres alone. Source: see Hoffmann and Roser 2019, p. 2.

Training provision with regard to teaching qualifications is not uniform. Hamburg has taken on a pioneering role in this respect by introducing a compensation measure which is comparable to teaching practice. Participants receive the salary of a student teacher and attend courses whilst also gaining experience of practice in schools.¹³⁷ Schleswig-Holstein also conducts a compensation measure that is similar to student teacher practice. Participants receive appropriate remuneration and also attend courses at the Institute for Quality Development at Schools in Schleswig-Holstein (IQSH). In individual cases in other federal states, there is a requirement to attend further courses at universities (designated in Bremen, for example, as “adaptation study”)¹³⁸ before the practical school-based element of a compensation measure is conducted. North Rhine-Westphalia and the Rhineland Palatinate do not provide any opportunity at all to complete an adaptation course.¹³⁹

Accessibility of adaptation measures in rural regions and for persons who are in full-time employment and need to support a family are a challenge in all professions and occupations. One solution is to have more online-based programmes. A relevant example of this in teacher training is a language course with large online components which is offered in Lower Saxony and prepares foreign teachers for levels C1 and C2 in German. There are only brief face-to-face phases. In this case, these involve two weekends in Hanover.¹⁴⁰

Some IQ regional networks also offer bridging measures which prepare participants with a foreign degree in education for a task in a professional field that lies outside regular teaching at a school, such as within the area of German as a Foreign Language or German as a Second Language. Integration courses and advisory activities are two further possibilities.¹⁴¹

137 Such courses were initially offered as supporting IQ training measures to impart the necessary specialist language and intercultural competencies. Now, however, they have been integrated into normal support provision for student teachers and no longer form part of IQ. See hamburg.de/bsb/bewerbungen/3625164/auslaend-lehramt-anpassungslehrgang/.

138 See uni-bremen.de/zflb/lehramtsstudium/anpassungsstudium-nach-bqfg/.

139 See Vockentanz 2019.

140 See ibb.com/uploads/IQ-Netzwerk_Flyer.pdf.

141 Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Rhineland Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony and Thuringia. Hoffmann and Roser 2019, p. 14.

Engineers

1,593 engineers took part in IQ training measures. They thus constituted the largest group in professions and occupations governed by federal state law (2015-2018) (see Figure 19). Training measures for engineers are often bridging programmes which support recognition and impart knowledge that is relevant to the labour market. Contents include introductions to the general prevailing conditions in the profession of engineer in Germany and assistance with language acquisition, with the establishment of contact with potential employers and with the application process. The measures are of an average duration of six months. Almost half of persons completing such measures who had been in marginal employment prior to training prior to training were able to secure employment subject to mandatory social insurance contributions directly afterwards. The figure for those who were not previously in work was 34 percent.¹⁴²

In 2018, 83 percent of participants held qualifications from third countries. Six in ten were from a refugee background (see Figure 20), the majority from Syria. This is a very high figure compared to the overall proportion in IQ training measures (approximately one third refugees).¹⁴³

Targeted measures tailored towards engineers in certain specialisms supplement provision in some areas. A bridging measure for construction engineers in Schleswig-Holstein, for example, encompasses a language course, specialist courses and observation training with the Schleswig-Holstein State Agency for Road Construction and Transport. This is followed by support in seeking a practical placement with the ultimate aim of facilitating entry to the labour market.¹⁴⁴

142 Period: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018.

143 IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act. Period: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018. Calculations by the IQ Competence Centre for Advisory Services and Job Training of Migrants.

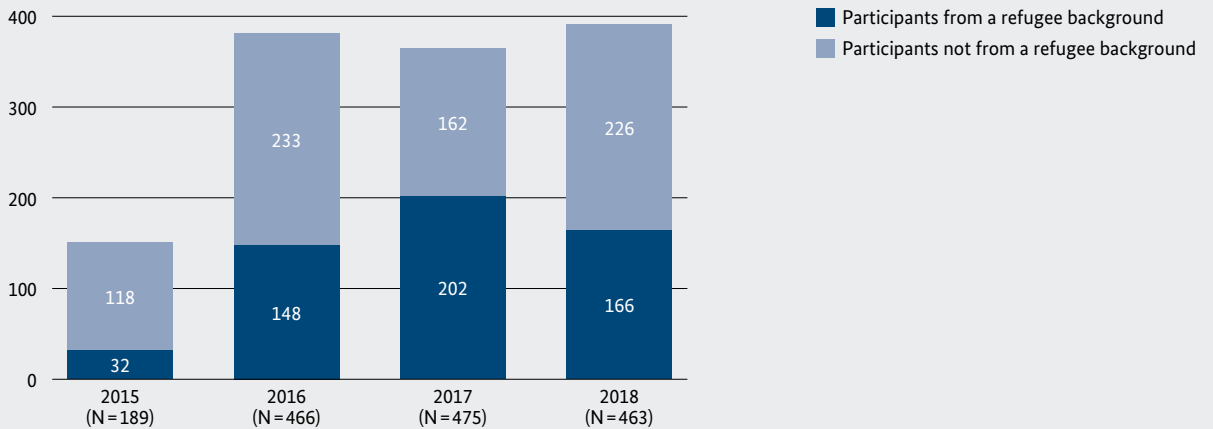
144 See Mainka and Schiemann, 2018.

Figure 19: Engineers in IQ training measures
Participation 2015 to 2018



Source and explanations: IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act (period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018). Calculations by the Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants. Representation by BIBB.

Figure 20: Proportion of refugees amongst engineers in IQ measures



Source and explanations: IQ data on participants in IQ training provision within the context of the Recognition Act (period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018). Calculations by the Competence Centre for Counselling and Job Training of Migrants. Representation by BIBB. The total annual figures (N) also include participants for whom the data does not contain any information regarding residency status. For this reason, the sum of the two categories depicted deviates from the total figure.

- ▶ The development of training provision in various occupational areas exhibits a series of future-looking approaches. The establishment of sustainable networks and cooperation agreements between stakeholders in the recognition system is making it easier to reach interested parties, to integrate such persons into the labour market or to demonstrate how the stating of deficits can be usefully linked with tailored compensation measures. 16,242 persons underwent IQ training between 2015 and 2018. Many also received continuing training at a company or from privately financed providers, although no figures exist in this regard. The IQ Programme thus covers only part of the training needs within the context of recognition.

In 2018, approximately 14,000 persons faced a training need solely in order to fulfil measures imposed as the result of an equivalence assessment. However, even when it comes to partial equivalence, there is still a need for training measures in areas such as language acquisition or market integration. This training need is likely to grow in light of the increase since 2015 in the number of notices imposing compensation measures. Another expectation is that the Skilled Immigration Act will cause the demand for training measures to rise even higher or at least expand to encompass further professions and occupations (see Chapter 6.6 for changes as a result of the Skilled Immigration Act).

In addition to this, there are still gaps in the provision of training measures for individual professions and occupations and in certain regions. This creates a challenge in terms of accessibility for persons who are in employment or for participants living in rural regions. For this reason, the focus in future needs to be on a more systematic identification of which provision exists alongside IQ and on the development of this compared to demand.

5 Costs and funding

Recognition procedures are not merely associated with the costs of processes conducted by the competent bodies. Additional expense is frequently incurred in the form of costs of translations and certifications, travel costs, fees for the procurement of documents and costs for courses and possible loss of earnings if, for example, language training is necessary or a compensation measure is imposed. New funding opportunities have been created over recent years in a bid to ensure that these costs do not constitute too great a barrier for persons interested in seeking recognition. Both the funding instruments and data situation have undergone further development since 2017. This means that it is now possible to take a detailed look at the financial challenges (see Chapter 5.1) and the funding system (see Chapters 5.2 and 5.3).

5.1 Costs and funding opportunities to provide support

Current studies show that costs continue to constitute a major challenge for applicants. In many cases, however, this can be mitigated. In a survey conducted by the Munich Recognition Advice Centre, just under a quarter of respondents thought that knowledge of German and financial aspects were the two main hurdles to making an application.¹⁴⁵ The IQ guidance bodies also perceive that costs still constitute an obstacle if no support is in place.¹⁴⁶

Financing opportunities include funding by Job Centres or employment agencies (e.g. the covering of costs via mechanisms such as training vouchers), participation in training provision financed by the ESF/IQ that is specifically aligned toward recognition, payment of costs by employers, the Federal Government recognition grant and the subsidies offered by individual federal states. Skills analyses may be financed via the special fund of the “NetQA” project (see Information Box 9 in



Nadezda Zubkova obtained financial support for her recognition procedure via the Federal Government recognition grant. The Berlin Construction Industry Chamber recognised her Russian engineering qualification.

Chapter 3.2).¹⁴⁷ The trade union foundation “Gewerkschaften helfen [Trade Unions Help]” provides a hardship fund for refugees.¹⁴⁸ Not all possible forms of funding have been statistically recorded and can be quantified in terms of scope. The role played by the training vouchers issued by the Job Centres and employment agencies is considered to be high in many cases, one instance of this being a study conducted in Bremen.¹⁴⁹ The funding of specialist language courses also significantly

¹⁴⁵ See Gächter and von Loeffelholz 2018, p. 80.

¹⁴⁶ Network IQ North Rhine-Westphalia, Official Statement 17/1253, consultation of the Committee for Labour, Health and Social Affairs and of the Integration Committee on 13 March 2019, see landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/dokumentenarchiv/Dokument/MMST17-1253.pdf.

¹⁴⁷ Both refresher training measures and practical work performed within the scope of a skills analysis are excluded from the minimum wage, see “Joint interpretation and practical guidance on application of the Minimum Wage Act within the context of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications”, sgb2.info/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Service/Startseite/meldung-Mindestlohngesetz.pdf.

¹⁴⁸ Gewerkschaften helfen e. V., see gewerkschaften-helfen.de/cms/index_cGkPtkwNw_.html.

¹⁴⁹ Böhme and Heibült 2017, p. 61. The BA’s own analysis of its funding does not show any clear classification of costs relating to recognition. Quantification is thus not possible.

reduces the financial burden faced by applicants. This became a regulatory instrument of the Federal Government when the Ordinance on support for occupation-related German language learning (DeuFöV)¹⁵⁰ entered into force on 1 July 2016. Since the introduction of specialist languages courses in 2017, numerous programmes which had previously been financed by the IQ were transferred to BMAS funding administered by the BAMF pursuant to the DeuFöV.¹⁵¹

5.2 Funding programmes in detail

Individual funding programmes provided by the Federal Government and by the federal states of Hamburg, Baden-Württemberg and Berlin provide precise insights into financing and therefore also into the recognition costs incurred by applicants.¹⁵² These programmes are aimed at persons interested in seeking recognition whose income is within certain limits.¹⁵³ All programmes offer funding of costs for the procedure, for translations and for the procurement of documentation. The Berlin and Hamburg programmes and the programme in Baden-Württemberg, which has now ended, all provide additional assistance for language courses and training measures. The Hamburg programme also gives scholarships to cover living costs.¹⁵⁴ All programmes are designed to be secondary to the funding that takes place via the BA. This may, for example, take the form of coverage of costs (such as via training vouchers).

150 See bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/ESFBAMFProgramm/Grundlagen/vo-berufsbezogene-deutschsprachfoerderung.html.

151 DeuFöV has been funding the B2 basic course since 1 July 2016. On 1 February 2017, it also took over financing of the C1 basic course and of the course for medical professions in which academic qualifications are required. Other special courses were subsequently transferred to DeuFöV, see bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/DeutschBeruf/Bundesprogramm-45a/bundesprogramm-45a-node.html.

152 The programmes are described in detail in BMBF 2017 and Best 2018.

153 With effect from October 2019, persons eligible to apply for the Federal Government recognition grant are those who have a positive income (total gross income minus child tax allowances) of no more than €26,000 (single people). A limit of €40,000 applies in respect of married persons/civil partners (in each case pursuant to § 2 Paragraph 5 of the Income Tax Act). These income limits also apply to the programmes in Hamburg and Berlin.

154 In Hamburg, scholarships are only funded in the form of loans when loss of earnings can be demonstrated.

Information Box 11

The “Professional Recognition in Baden-Württemberg” scholarship programme

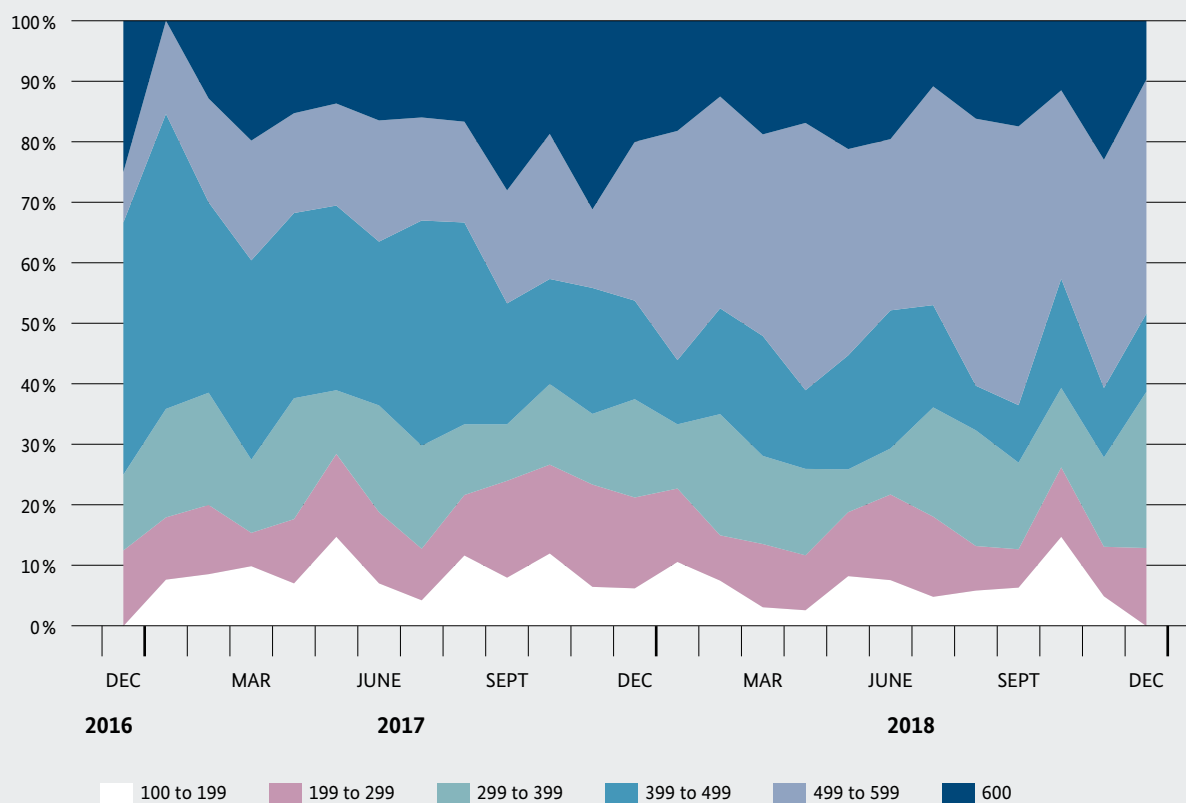
A pilot project funded for two years

From 19 July 2016, funding for recognition costs was available in Baden-Württemberg via a programme run by the Baden-Württemberg Foundation. Financing took place either via a monthly scholarship payable for up to twelve months or in the form of one-off payments.^a This scheme could be used to finance the fees and expenses of a recognition procedure, certificate assessments by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB), refresher training, preparatory courses for knowledge and aptitude tests, language courses and bridging measures for persons with academic qualifications in non-regulated occupations. The programme stopped accepting new applications in February 2018. During the pilot phase between 2016 and 2018, a total of 632 persons (as of 19 October 2018) received funding to assist them with recognition of their foreign professional or vocational qualification. The programme’s 2-million-euro fund will be completely used up once outstanding procedures have been processed. The vast majority of persons receiving funding were doctors from Syria and other MENA states.^b BIBB provided evaluation research for the “Professional Recognition in Baden-Württemberg” scholarship programme.

a See bwstiftung.de/berufliche-anerkennung-bw/#c16632.

b “Middle East and North Africa”, i.e. the countries of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Qatar, Saudi-Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

Figure 21: Federal Government recognition grant (BMBF) – costs reimbursed for applications processed 2016 to 2018 (in euro)



Source and explanations: Database: Recognition grant, applications completed by September 2019 and total sums paid out, not including rejected applications (period from 1 December 2016 to 31 December 2018), calculation by the f-bb. Representation by BIBB.

Federal Government recognition grant

The Federal Government recognition grant¹⁵⁵ was introduced in December 2016 and is funded via the BMBF. 1,470 of a total of 4,624 applications had been processed by the end of 2018.¹⁵⁶ 95 percent of these were approved. 2,505 applications were submitted in 2018, of which 537 had been processed (as of April 2019). Average funding per person was €458.

¹⁵⁵ The recognition grant funds fees relating to the recognition process. Costs for certificate assessment by the ZAB, translations, certifications and expert opinions were funded from October 2019. In addition, financing for skills analyses and travel costs incurred within Germany as part of the application process was available up to 30 September 2019. The funding programme is implemented by the f-bb. See anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/anerennungszuschuss.php.

¹⁵⁶ “Processed” in this case means that applications had been approved, costs eligible for funding had been presented, these applications had been settled and paid up to the limit of funding if applicable and that no further costs were expected to be submitted.

Since 2016, about 10 to 20 percent of annual applications have been awarded the maximum funding amount of €600 (see Figure 21). Just under 40 percent of applications resulted in the awarding of minimum funding between €100 and €400. The greatest changes are revealed in the upper end of the funding range. Until mid-2017, total funding approved in the case of the majority of applications was between €400 and €500. By September 2018, more than 50 percent of applications related to grants of between €500 and €600.¹⁵⁷ Fee increases at some competent bodies are the reason behind this shift.

A glance at the cost categories show that by far the greatest proportion of funding in 2018 (72 percent) was

¹⁵⁷ The figures presented relate to applications processed by June 2019 and total sums paid out sorted by date of receipt of application, not including rejected applications.

used to finance the fees charged by the competent bodies. This was followed by costs of translations (24 percent) and certifications (2 percent). All other types of costs (expert opinions, travel costs, procurement costs, skills analyses) made up less than 1 percent of total funding expenditure.

“Berlin Hardship Fund for Professional Recognition” funding programme

The Berlin Hardship Fund for Professional Recognition¹⁵⁸ has seen a significant increase in the number of applications submitted, from 36 (2017) to 102 (2018). Because most applications to the hardship fund were made by doctors, the two largest funding items were fees for knowledge tests and for courses to prepare for the test. Fees for specialist language tests and refresher training were the third largest type of expenditure. Translations, travel costs and other expenses all accounted for only a small proportion of funding. The Berlin Hardship Fund is used in addition to the Federal Government recognition grant in many cases.

Hamburg Scholarship Programme for the recognition of foreign qualifications

The Hamburg Scholarship Programme offers funding for direct and indirect costs such as loss of earnings, course costs and translation costs.¹⁵⁹ 225 of 229 applications made in 2018 were approved. In contrast to the other two funding programmes, the number of applications submitted is declining. Figures fell from 284 (2015) to 287 (2016) and then to 241 (2017). Total funding provided was also significantly lower in 2018. The above applies both to programme funds paid out for expenditure directly related to recognition (around €343,000 as opposed to €681,000 in 2015) and to scholarships to cover living costs. The latter decreased to around €29,000 after having been approximately €203,000 in 2015. There are two causes of this fall. Firstly, there was an expansion of other funding provision offering support similar to that provided by the Hamburg Scholarship Programme. Examples here include specialist language courses or fees for the specialist language test taken by doctors, which are now funded via the DeuFöV. Secondly, grants to cover living costs have only been paid in the case of

demonstrable loss of earnings since 1 January 2017 (such as leave of absence for training measures) rather than on a fixed rate basis.

5.3 Programmes in comparative terms

The individual programmes cover similar professions and occupations but are used to differing degrees. In the case of the Berlin Hardship Fund, four of the TOP 5 professions and occupations are in healthcare and almost half of applications originate from doctors (see Table 6). Teachers account for just under 12 percent of applications made to the Hamburg Programme. Doctors are in second position (10 percent), followed by engineers, dispensing chemists and registered general nurses.

The 2,505 applications submitted for a Federal Government recognition grant in 2018 were very widely scattered.¹⁶⁰ Engineers accounted for just under 11 percent of applications (270). 10 percent (248) came from registered general nurses, followed by doctors and teachers. Dual occupations (for example office manager) attracted the largest proportion of applications in 2018 (1,038, or 42 percent). A total of 4,624 applications have been received since the Federal Government recognition grant was launched. More than a third of these (38 percent, 1,746) related to dual occupations. 1,277 (28 percent) concerned regulated professions governed by federal law (primarily in the healthcare sector). 1,176 (25 percent) were in regulated professions under federal state law, such as teacher or nursery school teacher. 98 related to non-regulated academic professions such as economic scientist and 125 to advanced training and master craftsman occupations such as a master craftsman qualification in motor vehicle technology.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ See berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/ausbildung-und-arbeit/haertehfallfond-berufsanerkennung.

¹⁵⁹ See ifbh.de/fileadmin/pdf/IFB_Download/IFB_Foerderrichtlinien/FoeRi_Stipendienprogramm.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Only 2,472 applications could be clearly aligned to reference occupations.

¹⁶¹ 202 applications were not classified.

Table 6: Top 5 professions and occupations in the funding programmes 2018 (absolute terms)

Federal Government			Hamburg			Berlin		
Occupation	Applications	%	Occupation	Applications	%	Occupation	Applications	%
Engineer	270	10.8	Teacher	27	11.8	Doctor	50	49.0
Registered general nurse	248	9.9	Doctor	20	8.8	Teacher	17	16.7
Doctor	164	6.5	Engineer	16	7.0	Dentist	16	15.7
Teacher	129	5.1	Pharmacist	12	5.3	Pharmacist	5	4.9
Office manager	90	3.6	Registered general nurse	11	4.8	Technical pharmaceutical assistant	2	2.0
208 further professions and occupations	1,571	63.6	70 further professions and occupations	143	62.4	12 further professions and occupations	12	11.8
All professions and occupations	2,472	100	All professions and occupations	229	100	All professions and occupations	102	100

Source and explanations: Calculation by BIBB on the basis of programme data (period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018). The total of 2,472 stated for the Federal Government recognition grant deviates from the total number of applications (2,505) because of missing information.

Table 7: Top 5 nationalities of applicants in the funding programmes 2018 (absolute terms)

Federal Government			Hamburg			Berlin		
Nationality	Applications	%	Nationality	Applications	%	Nationality	Applications	%
Syria	218	8.3	Syria	28	11.4	Syria	17	16.7
Germany	204	7.8	Iran	19	7.8	Serbia	12	11.8
Poland	196	7.5	Germany	18	7.3	India	10	9.8
Romania	160	6.1	Russian Federation	16	6.5	Egypt	8	7.8
Croatia	113	4.3	Spain	13	5.3	Turkey	7	6.9
Further countries	1,738	66.1	Further countries	151	61.6	Further countries	48	47
Total	2,629	100	Total	245	100	Total	102	100

Source and explanations: Programme data, calculations by BIBB (period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018). The number of nationalities may deviate from the number of applications because of dual nationalities.

Syrian nationals submitted most applications in all three programmes (see Table 7). Eastern and South-Eastern European applicants are strongly represented, although there are slight degrees of deviation between the various programmes.¹⁶²

- Financial support via individual funding programmes is very well received by applicants, and many regard this as material to recognition. Changes such as the introduction of language funding in accordance with the DeuFöV are having an impact on the use of funding programmes. Although there are significant differences in costs that are eligible for financing, individual support programmes are being accessed by a broad range of applicants and this is borne out by the fact that the number of people receiving funding is growing. Nevertheless, a number of issues remain unresolved. These indicate that further investigation is required. The financing contributions made by employers and the proportion of costs paid by the persons interested in seeking recognition themselves, for example, remain difficult to identify. Neither does funding cover every requirement. The recognition grant of the Federal Government, for instance, constantly shows that around 10 to 20 percent of applications exceed the maximum funding amount of €600.

¹⁶² The Federal Government recognition grant and the Hamburg Scholarship Programme reported more nationals than applicants because of dual nationalities.

6 Recognition and immigration

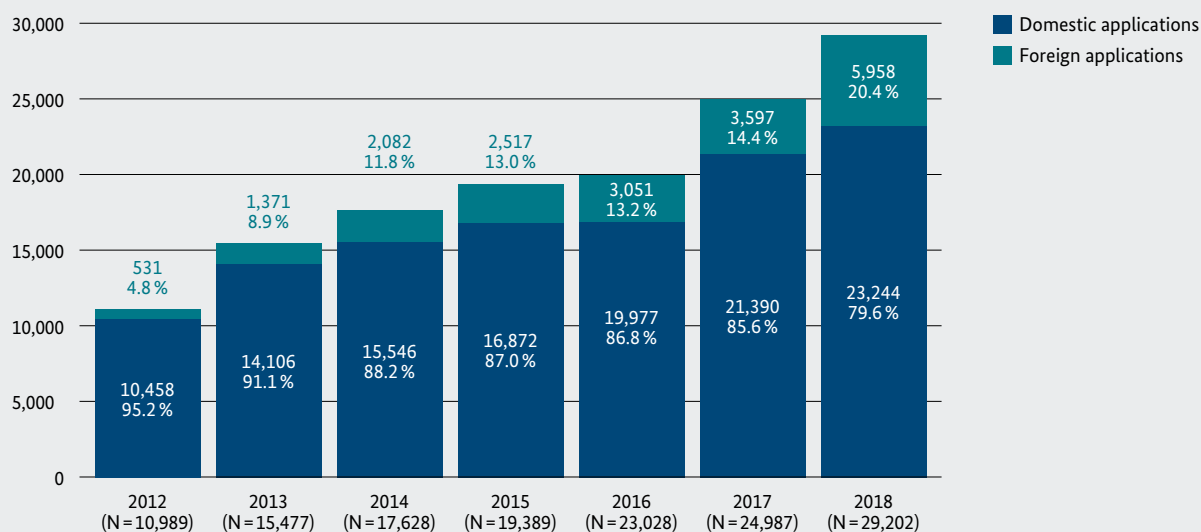
In order to cover the requirement for skilled workers in Germany, areas of domestic potential will need to be tapped into and additional sources of qualified labour will also have to be sourced from other countries within and outside Europe. Recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications plays a crucial role in this regard. Current figures (see Chapter 6.1) document the extent to which use is already being made of the opportunity afforded by the Federal Recognition Act to submit applications from abroad. Applications from abroad pose challenges with regard to implementation of the procedures (Chapter 6.2), and these are being countered via various regulations and measures. Guidance abroad, such as ProRecognition, is an important measure (Chapters 6.3 to 6.5). The final part of this chapter highlights the role of recognition in the new Skilled Immigration Act (see Chapter 6.6).

6.1 Applications from abroad

Applications from abroad are becoming ever more significant. Since the Recognition Act entered into force, competent bodies have reported around 19,100 applications that were submitted from outside Germany (referred to below as foreign applications). This represents a proportion of just over 13 percent of all applications submitted, which numbered around 140,700 (see Figure 22). 61.7 percent of foreign applications originated from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland, and 38.3 percent were submitted from third countries. In the case of applications from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland, Hungary, Austria, Poland and Romania were particularly strongly represented. The largest numbers of foreign applications from third countries came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Philippines and Serbia.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Foreign applications during the period from 2012 to 2018: Hungary: 2,268 foreign applications, Austria: 1,680 foreign applications, Poland: 1,479 foreign applications, Romania: 1,323 foreign applications, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1,248 foreign applications, Philippines: 1,212 foreign applications, Serbia: 1,209 foreign applications.

Figure 22: Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – distribution by domestic and foreign applications 2012 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source and explanations: Data from the official statistics pursuant to § 17 of the Federal Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) or pursuant to the respective laws governing the professions which make reference to § 17 BQFG. Reporting years 2012 to 2018. Calculations and representation by BIBB. For further information, please consult Information Box 5 in Chapter 2.2.

Information Box 12

Economic migration

In 2018, migrants made up around 18 percent of the labour demand in Germany. These persons included 3.2 million immigrants from the EU and 4.1 million from third countries.^a

Around 396,400 persons emigrated to Germany from other EU states in 2018,^b particularly from Romania, Poland and Bulgaria. This represented the majority of economic migration to the country.^c These figures had been rising continuously since 2012 before beginning to fall again from 2016 onwards. In the case of nationals of third countries, a virtually ongoing increase in the influx of persons for the purpose of employment was revealed.^d Figures rose from 38,745 in 2012 to reach 60,857 in 2018.^e One of the reasons for the clear increase that has taken place since 2016 in particular (plus 31 percent compared to the previous year) is the liberalisation of entry requirements in accordance with the West Balkans regulation.^f

Two thirds of immigrants from the EU hold a professional or vocational qualification, one third of whom are in possession of an academic qualification.^g Almost two thirds of third country nationals who migrated to Germany for the purpose of employment in 2018 were also trained skilled workers or held higher level qualifications.^h The majority of these persons (58 percent) continued to comprise immigrants pursuant to § 18 Paragraph 4 AufenthG (qualified employment). Higher qualified persons with an EU Blue card accounted for almost a third, and their significance has risen considerably since 2012.ⁱ

Even given the strong influx that has occurred over recent years, net migration to Germany will, according to a study carried out by the Bertelsmann Foundation, need to be at least 260,000 persons a year until 2060 if a supply of skilled workers is to be secured.^j There is a particular need for immigration from third countries, because EU immigration is expected to fall in the light of demographic and economic developments in the countries of origin.^k With regard to skilled labour, the results of the qualifications and occupational field projections prepared by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) up until the year 2035 suggest that a decline in the labour supply will take place at the intermediate qualification level in particular.^l Shortages of skilled workers currently especially exist in individual technical occupational fields, in construction occupations and in healthcare and nursing professions.^m

a See StBA 2019, Special Publications 1 Series 2.2, Table 16, calculation by BIBB.

b Migration reasons for EU citizens are not recorded because of general freedom of movement. This means that only a limited calculation of economic migration can be made. The results of the microcensus are used for this purpose, and these show that economic migration makes up 50 percent of total EU migration to Germany. This should be seen as significant under-reporting because many people who migrate to Germany primarily because of other reasons will also enter the labour force. See Research Council of German Foundations for Integration and Migration (SVR) 2019, pp. 17 ff. Calculations for the year 2018 by BIBB.

c Romania and Poland have been countries of training that have produced high levels of applications since the Federal Recognition Act entered into force in 2012 (see Chapter 2.2 and fact sheet in the present report).

d Includes those who have obtained a residence permit for the purpose of employment pursuant to § 18 of the German Residence Act (AufenthG) or an EU Blue Card (§ 19a AufenthG) or who have migrated as researchers (§ 20 AufenthG) or as self-employed persons (§ 21 AufenthG).

e One of the reasons for the fall in the number of arrivals to about 24,000 skilled workers is the accession of Croatia to the EU. Since 1 July 2013, Croatian nationals have no longer needed residency permits in their capacity as citizens of the European Union. See BAMF 2019, p. 90.

f See *ibid.*, p. 89. In 2018, immigrants pursuant to § 18 AufenthG were most likely to be nationals of Serbia and of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia together accounted for 46 percent of arrivals. See *ibid.*, p. 93.

g Not including persons aged under 15. See StBA 2019, Table 9, calculations by BIBB.

h There were 27,300 such persons in 2012 and 38,700 in 2018. See BAMF 2019, p. 90, calculations by BIBB.

i See *ibid.*, calculations by BIBB.

j This calculation was conducted on the basis of the assumption that all latent human resources reserves will be exploited to an extreme degree. See Fuchs et al. 2019, pp. 70 ff.

k See *ibid.*, p. 27.

l See Kalinowski 2018, p. 25. For current projections on the expected skilled worker situation by occupational groups, see Maier et al. 2018.

m See BA 2019.

6.2 Challenges when submitting an application from abroad

Successful application from abroad represents the overcoming of an important threshold relating to the immigration of skilled workers to Germany because qualification recognition is usually a prerequisite for the issuing of a visa (see also Chapter 6.3 on § 17a of the Residency Act).¹⁶⁴ A BIBB investigation¹⁶⁵ analysing a number of aspects of professional recognition within the immigration process arrived at the following results. The complex recognition and visa procedures are difficult for skilled workers from third countries to negotiate successfully without guidance and support. For this reason, assistance is important. Help provided should include advice and support for applicants and should extend to encompass integration into the German labour market and close collaboration with missions abroad and competent bodies. Recruitment projects in the form of publicly supported offers, private sector placement agencies or cooperation arrangements can also make procedures easier for foreign skilled workers.¹⁶⁶

Long recognition and visa procedures can still delay the immigration of skilled workers. Long waiting times for a knowledge test (see Chapter 3.1) may also make entry significantly more difficult or even impossible. Other inhibiting factors include non-standardised requirements regarding demonstration of language knowledge¹⁶⁷ and provision of documents in some cases depending on the federal state and competent body, areas of uncertainty in respect of local responsibility and cost and language problems.

The Skilled Immigration Act already contains possible solutions for a number of these critical points. The aim

¹⁶⁴ Skilled worker migration from third countries is not tied to recognition in every case. Other immigration routes, such as family reunification, are also conceivable. Within the scope of economic migration, however, recognition is particularly necessary for skilled workers with non-academic vocational education and training or for those who intend to work in a regulated profession.

¹⁶⁵ See Best et al. 2019.

¹⁶⁶ See Best et al. 2019.

¹⁶⁷ In some cases, the intention is that applicants from abroad should provide evidence of language knowledge before an application for recognition is accepted, see consultation at the 25th meeting of the Committee for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs at the Parliament in Berlin on 6 September 2018 at parlament-berlin.de/ados/18/IntArbSoz/protokoll/ias18-025-wp.pdf.

is that the ZSBA will act as a uniform point of contact and as a centre of guidance for foreign applications. Foreigners' authorities are also striving to achieve specialisation (see Chapter 6.6).

6.3 Immigration of skilled workers and recognition (§ 17a Residency Act)

According to the legal situation applicable during the present reporting period, the outcome of the recognition procedure is crucial to the immigration of skilled labour. Pursuant to § 18 Paragraph 2 Clause 1 of the German Residency Act (AufenthG), a so-called national visa with subsequent residence permit for skilled workers who have completed vocational education and training or who intend to work in a regulated profession for which academic qualifications are required¹⁶⁸ may only be issued if employment in this occupational group is permitted by legal ordinance in accordance with § 42 AufenthG. § 6 Paragraph 2 of the Employment Ordinance (BeschV) stipulates that skilled workers without a (comparable) higher education qualification must have established equivalence¹⁶⁹ of training with a profession or occupation included on the so-called white list of the Federal Employment Agency. Skilled workers with a higher education qualification wishing to work in a regulated profession must be in possession of authorisation to practise this profession pursuant to § 18 Paragraph 5 AufenthG. § 17a AufenthG, on the other hand, permits the issuing of a visa with subsequent granting of a residence permit in order to allow the applicant to take part in a training measure which, together with a test to follow if necessary, will serve the purpose of identification of equivalence or to authorisation to exercise the qualification. Relevant training can take place in Germany if a compensation measure is imposed (in the regulated sector) or if partial equivalence is ascertained and a suitable measure is identified. A residence permit for the purpose of employment can only be issued once equivalence

¹⁶⁸ A further case group would be persons with a foreign higher education qualification which equates in Germany to non-academic qualified vocational education and training.

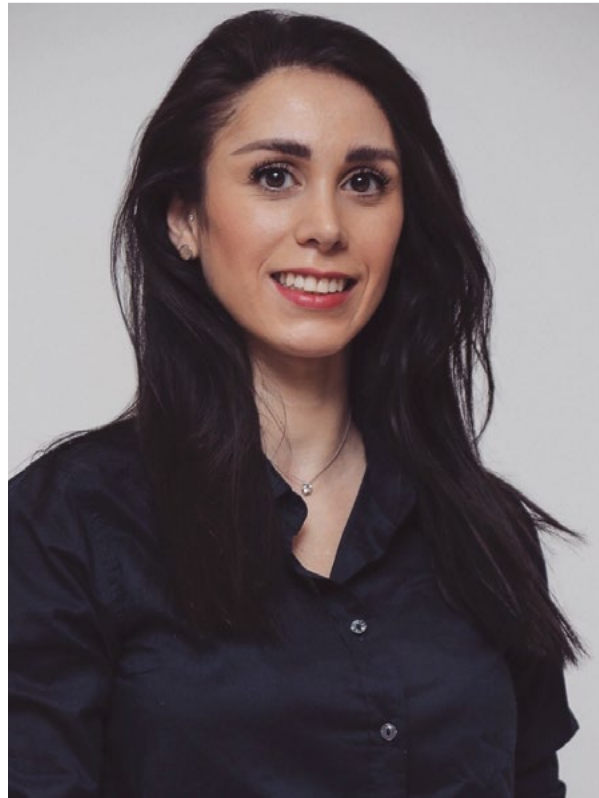
¹⁶⁹ In this chapter, the term "equivalence" is used in its precise legal meaning to refer to what is designated in the rest of the report as "full equivalence".

has been established or authorisation to practise the profession has been issued and when there is evidence that a specific job offer is in place. However, if equivalence has been ascertained and permission to exercise the profession or to use the professional title has been granted, the residence permit previously issued pursuant to § 17a Paragraph 4 AufenthG may be extended for up to one year to allow the person to seek a job that is commensurate with the professional qualification. § 17a AufenthG is of particular interest in the recognition system because of this close link between residency law and recognition. Its increased application reflects the rise in the number of immigrant skilled workers. According to the immigration monitoring carried out by the BAMF, the number of residence permits issued for the purpose of completion of recognition measures for foreign professional and vocational qualifications (§ 17a Paragraphs 1 and 5 AufenthG) rose from 350 in 2016 to 789 in 2017 before reaching 1,280 in 2018.¹⁷⁰ In the second half of 2018, German missions abroad issued 930 visas to enter the country pursuant to § 17a AufenthG.¹⁷¹

6.4 Specific information and guidance provision

Given the degree of interest in a recognition procedure shown by potential immigrants, it is important for information and guidance provision to be available online and abroad.

The “Make it in Germany” portal has been the main Federal Government site for skilled workers from abroad since December 2018. It refers users to specialist portals such as “Recognition in Germany” and to the personal advice provided via vehicles such as the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline. Demand for these services from abroad is growing constantly. In 2018, more than two



“Last year, we conducted a regular series of information events for doctors, engineers, IT specialists, electricians, mechatronics technicians, registered general nurses and further occupational groups. We place a strong focus on sectors which are in particular demand in Germany. The skilled workers we advise enjoy very good opportunities to secure recognition and employment in Germany following the guidance process. We always carry out quick checks before consultations take place. This is to ensure that we only offer advice to interested parties who are in possession of a state recognised qualification and who have a good grasp of German. Because language knowledge usually represents the greatest barrier, we work closely with local language institutes.”

Nina Mohammadi, Project Head of ProRecognition at the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Iran

¹⁷⁰ See BAMF 2019.

¹⁷¹ Source: Data from the Federal Foreign Office (AA). Developments over longer periods cannot currently be mapped because the AA has only been collecting figures since July 2018. Approvals issued by the BA for employment “not related to training” during a compensation measure (§ 17a AufenthG in conjunction with § 8 Paragraph 2 BeschV) rose from 189 in 2015 to 2.663 in 2018. These approval figures do not match the visa figures of the AA since several successive approvals may be issued for the same person (data of the BA).

thirds of visits to “Recognition in Germany” were from abroad (the majority from third countries). More than 55 percent of calls received by the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline came from abroad (see Chapter 1.1).

The aim of the “ProRecognition” project, which is funded by the BMBF and is being implemented by DIHK Service GmbH, is to offer information and personal recognition guidance and support whilst applicants are still living outside Germany. The project partners selected comprise eight German chambers of commerce and industry abroad and delegations of German trade and industry in the EU states of Poland and Italy and in the third countries of Algeria, China, Egypt, India, Iran and Vietnam. A total of 5,288 interested parties received guidance at all eight chambers of commerce and industry abroad between the project launch in 2015 and the end of 2018. Persons who used the project to submit an application for recognition or who have already taken up a job in Germany are distributed across the IT, electrical, engineering and healthcare sectors. “ProRecognition” has also helped business economists to enter the German labour market.

6.5 Example projects for the acquisition of skilled workers

A project for the acquisition of doctors from Mexico is one example of the cooperation that takes place between stakeholders in the fields of guidance, recruitment, recognition and immigration. The BA’s Central Foreign and Specialist Placement Agency (ZAV), the BMBF and the Federal Foreign Office (AA) joined forces with five IQ regional networks to conduct a BMAS-coordinated project entitled “Placement of Mexican doctors in Germany” (4 December 2017 to 3 December 2020). The project integrates the Mexican labour administration authorities and relevant professional recognition stakeholders alongside the respective federal state ministries, competent bodies and foreigners’ authorities. It also includes potential employers in selected regions (such as Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Baden-Württemberg). The aim of this approach is to ensure that the whole of the process from recruitment to labour market integration in Germany is secured. One of the project’s objective—to use the pilot phase to recruit 30 doctors primarily in regions where there

is a significant shortage—has already been achieved. The core goal is to create a best practice model for immigration of doctors from third countries, and the close cooperation between the stakeholders has already proved to be pioneering.

Another example is “Triple Win”, a cooperative project between the BA and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) which aims to acquire and place nursing staff from the Philippines, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Tunisia. Here too, the objective is to offer process support and achieve close cooperation between the stakeholders. Visa authorities, competent bodies responsible for recognition and employers in Germany are all involved. As of 14 November 2019, “Triple Win” had succeeded in placing a total of 3,522 skilled workers from the four partner countries stated since its launch in 2013. 2,185 have already entered Germany. 593 nurses were placed in 2017, followed by 859 in 2018. The figure for 2019 so far is 970. In seeking to acquire and place foreign nursing staff within the scope of the “Triple Win” project, the BA and the GIZ are robustly pursuing a fair recruitment approach. This basic principle applies to applicants from the country of origin and to employers in Germany.

The BA and the GIZ do not recruit skilled workers from countries which demonstrate a shortage of nurses themselves. Acquisition of skilled staff at a local level takes place in close collaboration with national labour services, the ministries responsible in the partner countries and the relevant German embassies. For this reason, the World Health Organisation (WHO) views “Triple Win” as an example of good practice. The project also stipulates minimum levels of remuneration which are aligned to collective wage agreement standards in the nursing sector in Germany. Within the scope of admission to the labour market, the BA carefully scrutinises that applicants placed via the scheme are not being employed under less favourable conditions than those enjoyed by domestic nurses.

The Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) implements committees within the “Aktion Pflege” project to support the pooling of nurse recruitment via private healthcare institutions from a single source and the development of a seal of quality for private sector skilled worker acquisition. It works with the federal states to bring about improvements in the recognition of

Two questions to...

Kathrin Tews (Head of Department for recognition of foreign qualifications and competence assessment at the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, DIHK) and Heike Klembt-Kriegel (Managing Director, IHK FOSA)

1. What are your hopes for the new Service Center for Professional Recognition?

Kathrin Tews (DIHK): The immigration process is complex, and communication between the most important stakeholders is crucial. The Service Center for Professional Recognition will be able to act in a timely way to explore relevant issues relating to recognition and immigration of skilled workers interested in coming to Germany and will be in a position to provide targeted support in the form of guidance. Companies and skilled workers also need clarity, comprehensibility and clearly defined contact partners. The central approach of the new service agency will deliver these and help accelerate the processes.

Heike Klembt-Kriegel (IHK FOSA): The first thing that we expect from the Service Center for Professional Recognition is that it will guarantee productive recognition guidance for skilled workers from third countries. Well-founded guidance forms the basis for an application of good quality. This means that we as a competent body do not need to make any or only very few subsequent requests for documentation that is relevant to the procedure. This will result in a shorter processing time for applications, and the overall outcome will be a quicker recognition process. This will increase the efficiency of the procedure for both applicants and competent bodies.

2. Which general conditions are required in order for a recognition notice to open up (new) occupational prospects for a skilled worker?

Kathrin Tews (DIHK): Germany is an attractive country of immigration. A more proactive approach should be adopted both at home and abroad to communicating that there are opportunities to work in many professions and occupations in Germany if persons have a good qualification and relevant recognition, and this message should be aligned to the specific needs of companies and their potential employees. Guidance agencies and competent bodies that work in a networked way and company-related and unbureaucratic implementation are important prerequisites in terms of integrating skilled workers quickly. Support and advisory structures support the process.

Heike Klembt-Kriegel (IHK FOSA): The first focus needs to be on promoting the recognition procedure more widely abroad in order to make the effectiveness of the process clear. The sustainability aspect of a recognition notice must continue to be emphasised. The outcome of the equivalence assessment will exert a long-term influence on a person's employment biography. Ensuring that persons with a notice of equivalence and companies are linked up is also indispensable in order to create a symbiosis.

foreign professional qualifications and in adaptation measures in Germany. The aim is that these improvements will soon undergo initial testing in pilot projects for the acquisition of skilled staff in selected third countries. An advisory board has been set up to enable participation by the federal states and specialist communities. Evaluation research is also being planned.

In addition to this, the BMG is looking into the possibility of establishing qualification measures abroad which will include integrated acquisition of German language skills and thus simplify recognition of foreign

nursing training programmes. The aim is to ensure ongoing compliance with German training standards.

These and other successful projects illustrate that the current legal framework certainly facilitates the recruitment of international skilled workers via organised cooperation projects. The effect which the new statutory regulations relating to the immigration of skilled labour (see Chapter 6.6) will have on recognition remains to be seen.

6.6 Immigration of skilled workers – new legal framework

The Skilled Immigration Act, which will enter into force on 1 March 2020, was drawn up during the reporting period.¹⁷² This new law has its basis in the “Benchmark paper on the immigration of skilled workers from third countries”, which resulted from the coalition agreement between the CDU, CSU and SPD and was adopted by the Federal Government on 2 October 2018.¹⁷³ The aim is to act in accordance with the needs of trade and industry by making the acquisition of qualified skilled workers from third countries more straightforward. In future, the Skilled Immigration Act will introduce a uniform definition of skilled workers who have completed vocational education and training and skilled workers who have undergone academic training. If a contract of employment and a recognised qualification are in place, skilled workers will be able to work in all professions and occupations relevant to their qualification. The restriction to shortage professions and occupations will no longer apply. No priority review will be made for skilled workers. Entry to Germany for skilled workers for the purpose of seeking employment will be facilitated in the same way as in the existing regulation for higher education graduates. Recognition procedures will be structured more simply, more transparently and more efficiently. A central guidance system in the form of the ZSBA will also be set up. The aim is that this body will provide support in the recognition procedure for persons interested in seeking recognition prior to their entry to Germany (see Information Box 13).

The Skilled Immigration Act was adopted by the Bundestag on the basis of the draft law of the Federal Government on 7 June 2019 and was passed by the Bundesrat on 28 June 2019.

Residency in Germany for the purpose of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications is being expanded and made more attractive.

Placement arrangements by the BA will be re-regulated in the area of residence permits for the purpose of obtaining recognition for foreign qualifications. Recognition procedures will be able to be conducted entirely in Germany, meaning that employment can also be taken up at the same time. Employment opportunities to support adaptation and compensation measures will be extended, and a new possibility to work as a skilled employee in non-regulated occupations will be introduced. It will also be possible to extend residence permits to 24 months. An “accelerated skilled worker procedure” represents a particularly relevant innovation for recognition procedures. Employers will be able to apply for accelerated procedures on behalf of foreign skilled workers in future if they have already made a specific job offer. The plan is that these procedures, which will be subject to a fee, will be managed by the central foreigners’ authorities of the federal states (see Information Box 14). The Skilled Immigration Act will facilitate migration without a recognition procedure for one particular occupational group. IT specialists with a minimum of three years of professional experience and a salary of at least 60 percent of the general pension contribution assessment ceiling will be admitted irrespective of whether their qualifications have been recognised.

- ▶ The Skilled Immigration Act thus continues to define (full) equivalence of the qualification as an access prerequisite. Nevertheless, it expands entry opportunities for recognition, employment and job searches by third country national with a vocational qualification and also makes it easier to submit an application from abroad. The Skilled Immigration Act will be supported by further measures. These particularly include the establishment of the ZSBA to act as a new provider for skilled workers interested in migrating to Germany. The intention is that the ZSBA will clarify local responsibility of recognition bodies and simplify procedures. The objective behind the accelerated skilled worker procedures conducted by the central foreigners’ authorities is to shorten the immigration process and reduce barriers.

¹⁷² Federal Law Gazette (BGBl) 2019 I No. 31, pp. 1307 ff. at bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl119s1307.pdf.

¹⁷³ See Benchmark paper of the Federal Government on the immigration of skilled workers from third countries of 2 October 2018, Berlin at bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/2018/eckpunkte-fachkraefteeinwanderung.pdf.

Figure 23: Immigration and recognition – Changes via the Skilled Immigration Act for skilled workers who have completed vocational education and training



Source: Representation by BIBB.

Information Box 13

A Central Service Agency to support skilled workers abroad who are seeking recognition

The Service Center for Professional Recognition (ZSBA) is a central instrument to support the acquisition of skilled workers from abroad. It will be funded by the BMBF on a trial basis until 31 December 2023 and will undergo a pilot phase in conjunction with the BMAS under the lead responsibility of the BA. The Service Center for Professional Recognition pursues the following aims.

- 1) Persons interested in seeking recognition and living abroad will receive a central national contact partner which will advise them on the recognition procedure and on related issues under residency law and will support them through the process to the point when they enter Germany (guiding function).
- 2) The burden which the competent bodies face in providing extensive guidance prior to the application and in making subsequent requests for documentation will be reduced.
- 3) The recognition procedure will become more transparent and more efficient for applicants in overall terms.

Services offered by the ZSBA also include guidance on a possible place of employment, support for the applicant in collating the necessary documentation, forwarding of this documentation to the competent body and arrangement of contacts with domestic employers and training provision.

The ZSBA will be assuming an advisory and forwarding function and will not be interfering in the areas of responsibility of the federal states or competent bodies. Initial consultations and information will continue to be provided via the “Make it in Germany” and “Recognition in Germany” portals and via the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline. The ZSBA will build on these information and guidance structures and will cooperate with local guidance agencies in the regions.

Information Box 14

Accelerated skilled worker procedure and central foreigners’ authorities

The aim of the Skilled Immigration Act is to improve procedures for the immigration of skilled workers in two ways. Firstly, at least one central foreigners’ authority will be created in each of the 16 federal states. These will be responsible for skilled worker immigration including immigration for the purposes of training and for family reunification within the appropriate time context (§ 71 Paragraph 1 Clause 5 AufenthG as amended).

The objective here is that skilled worker related procedures will be carried out in a more efficient and more service-oriented manner. Service orientation will also be emphasised by the accelerated skilled worker procedure (§ 81a AufenthG as amended), which is designed to act as “one-stop shop” provision for employers of future foreign skilled workers. The foreigners’ authority responsible will act for the employer as a representative of the applicant or for the applicant in exchange for a separate fee. It will provide guidance and support for any recognition of a foreign qualification that may be required and will obtain authorisation to practise the profession. The immigration office will have the particular task of initiating the procedure for equivalence assessment with the relevant competent body responsible, with which it will also cooperate. Shortened processing deadlines for the identification of equivalence (two months instead of three or four) will apply in respect of an application for an accelerated skilled worker procedure, and the aim is that this will lead to a further speeding up of processes. The deadline for any consent that may be necessary from the BA will be shortened from two weeks to one. If all prerequisites that can be scrutinised in Germany are fulfilled (including the financing of living costs), the foreigners’ authority will agree to the advance issuing of the visa. The mission abroad will then subsequently provide a visa application appointment within three weeks, and decision will be made regarding the application within a further three weeks providing that it is complete. These deadlines and a planned duration of up to four months constitute the first time that the time framework of the process of economic migration has been statutorily stipulated.

7 Effect of recognition on labour market integration

The Recognition Act supports the labour market integration of migrants with foreign professional and vocational qualifications.¹⁷⁴ The national evaluation of the Recognition Act¹⁷⁵ and assessments within the scope of the IAB-SOEP migration sample¹⁷⁶ have already shown that recognition exerts a positive impact on the opportunities of employees on the labour market (Chapter 7.1) and also produces positive effects for their employers (Chapter 7.2). This is also confirmed by more recent results, such as the destination survey carried out as part of the evaluation research for the recognition grant¹⁷⁷ and the impact analysis conducted by the Foreign Qualifications Service Unit of the City of Munich.^{178, 179} Nevertheless, further prerequisites are required for the sustainable labour market integration of persons with foreign professional and vocational qualifications (Chapter 7.3).

¹⁷⁴ See BMBF 2014.

¹⁷⁵ An evaluation survey was conducted to investigate the application and effect of the Recognition Act four years after it had entered into force. In its capacity as the ministry responsible, the BMBF commissioned BIBB to issue an invitation to tender for the order and to provide evaluation research. In the autumn of 2015, the task of evaluating the Recognition Act was assigned to InterVal GmbH and the Institute for Business, Work and Culture (IWAK) at the Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main. The main focus of the evaluation was on a questionnaire of former applicants and on the question of how their labour market integration had developed before and after recognition (see Ekert et al. 2017).

¹⁷⁶ Within the scope of the IAB-SOEP migration sample, migrants were surveyed on issues including their educational and employment biography. The evaluations of the IAB-SOEP migration sample (linked with administrative data from the integrated employment biography) contain results from the first three waves of the survey (2013-2015). They compare migrants with and without a recognised qualification (see Brücker et al. 2018).

¹⁷⁷ A destination survey was conducted for the first time in November 2018 as part of the evaluation research for the recognition grant. This online questionnaire identifies whether and how the occupational situation of grant recipients has changed after the application for and approval of funding.

¹⁷⁸ The analysis investigates the effect of recognition guidance provided by the local government service agency. Analysis took place of the overall economic benefit delivered by the service agency and of the change in the individual economic situation of persons who had availed themselves of its services (see Gächter and von Loeffelholz 2018).

¹⁷⁹ Different databases and methods were used in the studies. For this reason, comparisons are only possible to a limited extent.

7.1 Influence of recognition on the occupational situation

Persons who have achieved recognition believe that this has a positive effect on their own labour market integration. In the national evaluation of the Recognition Act, just under 79 percent of persons who had gained recognition in a regulated profession and around 53 percent of those with recognition in a non-regulated occupation stated that their occupational situation had developed positively.¹⁸⁰ A majority of respondents also identified an improvement in their career entry and advancement opportunities (one reason for this being better possibilities of continuing training) and growths in income.¹⁸¹ Scholarship recipients of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation (see Chapter 5.2) also indicated a significant benefit. When surveyed as part of the evaluation research,¹⁸² over 90 percent of these persons stated that recognition had improved their chances on the labour market.¹⁸³ A majority of the scholarship recipients had submitted an application for recognition in the reference occupation of doctor.

Following receipt of recognition of their foreign qualification, skilled workers also felt that their employer held them in greater esteem and accorded them better acceptance.¹⁸⁴ They see confirmation of the equivalence of their professional or vocational qualification acquired abroad with a German qualification and the ensuing occupational integration this brings as important building blocks along the route towards societal integration and participation. This is also borne out by the field reports presented on “Recognition in Germany”.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ See Ekert et al. 2017, p. 87.

¹⁸¹ See Ekert et al. 2017, p. 88.

¹⁸² Within the scope of the evaluation research of the scholarship programme of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation, BIBB arranged for surveys of the scholarship recipients on labour market integration to be conducted prior to and subsequent to recognition between 2016 and 2018.

¹⁸³ Results of the evaluation research for the scholarship programme of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation.

¹⁸⁴ See Ekert et al. 2017, p. 89.

¹⁸⁵ Field reports are available at anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/erfahrungsberichte.php.

Developments in respect of income and employment confirm these positive personal assessments. A previously unpublished experimental study shows that recognition has a positive effect on the likelihood of being invited to a job interview depending on the profession or occupation and length of experience.¹⁸⁶ Initial results to emerge from the monitoring of the recognition grant (see Chapter 5.2) indicate a correlation between completion of the recognition process and an improvement in occupational situation. The latter includes new work tasks at the company, a higher income or commencement of training programmes.¹⁸⁷ According to the calculations of the IAB-SOEP migration sample, full recognition increases the likelihood that migrants will find employment by more than 16 percentage points on average.¹⁸⁸ This figure rises to more than 24 percentage points three years after recognition.¹⁸⁹ The national evaluation of the Federal Recognition Act and the evaluation research for the scholarship programme of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation also identify an increase in the number of persons in work and in employment that is commensurate with their qualifications once recognition has taken place.¹⁹⁰ The impact analysis of the Munich Service Unit¹⁹¹ particularly underlines the positive effect of recognition on the probability that persons will find a job that is suitable to their qualifications. This effect is greater than that exerted on employment itself.¹⁹²

Growths in income following recognition of a professional or vocational qualification constitute a further indicator of improved labour market integration. The Munich impact analysis has calculated that recognition or a certificate assessment generates an average boost of €342 to monthly gross income.¹⁹³ This is confirmed

by the results of the national evaluation, which identified an average monthly increase in gross monthly salary of around €1,000 (about 40 percent).¹⁹⁴ This rise is largely directly or indirectly attributable to recognition.¹⁹⁵ The monitoring of the recognition grant identified an average increase of €857 for respondents with a notice attesting full equivalence and of €331 for persons who had achieved partial equivalence.¹⁹⁶ The calculations of the IAB-SOEP migration sample also show positive effects. Full recognition leads to an average rise of about 15 percent in the hourly wage.¹⁹⁷ After three years, this wage is just under 20 percent higher than that received by immigrants without recognition.¹⁹⁸

When considering occupational changes, the differences between regulated professions and non-regulated occupations need to be borne in mind at all times. The national evaluation shows that the positive effects of recognition in non-regulated occupations are somewhat more marked than in non-regulated occupations. One of the reasons for this is that access to regulated professions is only possible if recognition has been achieved. In non-regulated occupations, it is possible to begin work without an equivalence notice.¹⁹⁹ Secondly, differing skilled worker requirements and salary structures in the various sectors and occupational groups may exert an influence on the positive effects of recognition.²⁰⁰

186 See Damelang et al. 2020.

187 See f-bb 2018, pp. 9 ff.

188 See Brücker et al. 2018, p. 18.

189 See *ibid.*, p. 20.

190 See Ekert et al. 2017, pp. 75 ff. and p. 83 and results of the evaluation research for the scholarship programme of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation.

191 The Munich Service Unit has been advising persons seeking recognition for a professional or vocational qualification acquired abroad since 2009.

192 See Loeffelholz and Gächter 2018, pp. 57 ff.

193 The €342 relate only to the effect on income of recognition procedures and certificate assessments. The completion of German courses and adaptation or compensation measures, for example, increased monthly gross income by an average of €200 (see Gächter and von Loeffelholz 2018, pp. 65 ff).

194 See Ekert et al. 2017, p. 85. See Information Box 15 for details of differences in the calculation of effects on income.

195 According to Ekert et al. 2017, p. 85, this increase is broken down as follows. Around 5 percentage points are due to general wage development in Germany, and the higher weekly working time of respondents in the summer of 2016 accounts for 9 percentage points. The remaining 26 percentage points of increased income, the equivalent of around €650, are consequences of occupational and professional advancement and of better quality and more highly paid jobs.

196 See f-bb 2018, p. 12.

197 See Brücker et al. 2018, p. 18.

198 See *ibid.*, p. 21.

199 This applies to skilled workers who are already resident in Germany. Complex regulations regarding access to the labour market are in place for skilled workers who intend to immigrate (see Chapter 6).

200 See Ekert et al. 2017, pp. 120 f.

Information Box 15

Calculation of the effects on income of recognition

In the evaluation of the Recognition Act, effects on income are calculated as the difference between the average gross monthly income of workers at the time when the application was submitted and at the time of the survey. Results are based on weighted information provided by persons who from 2012 to 2016 achieved full or partial recognition in a profession or occupation governed by federal law. More than half had gained recognition in a medical profession in which academic qualifications are required. The monitoring of the recognition grant adopted the same approach towards the group of people who received funding.^a

The calculations in the impact analysis of the Service Unit of the City of Munich and on the basis of the IAB-SOEP migration sample were conducted via regression analyses and excluded the effects of general wage development and of changes to working hours. The impact analysis is only representative for the group of persons that received advice at the regional Service Agency. Almost three quarters of them submitted applications in the healthcare sector. The IAB-SOEP migration sample, on the other hand, encompasses data from a panel survey extending over several years of persons who have migrated to Germany since 1995 and received full recognition prior to 2015.^b

a This study is not representative because non-regulated occupations are vastly over-represented. Doctors and healthcare professions for which academic qualifications are not required together accounted for only 8 percent of respondents.

b 80 percent of respondents had applied for recognition before April 2012.

7.2 Company perspective

Recognition can be an important human resources recruitment and development instrument for companies and thus is also able to assist in securing a supply of skilled workers. Employers can also support recognition procedures and encourage staff to go down this route. The creation of loyalty to the company is not the least of the reasons for doing so. In addition to this, prior recognition of a professional or vocational qualification is usually a mandatory requirement for the acquisition of skilled workers from third countries via § 17a AufenthG or for (later) employment pursuant to § 18 AufenthG. The new Skilled Immigration Act is likely to increase the significance of this still further (see Chapter 6.6).

Recognition as an important instrument along the route to securing a supply of skilled workers

An equivalence notice helps companies recruiting skilled workers to arrive at a more reliable assessment of foreign qualifications and therefore also gain a better understanding of the contents and quality of the training.²⁰¹ Recognition can also foster the occupational advancement of skilled workers within the company and thus create a greater sense of staff loyalty. A recognition notice reveals areas of hidden potential and identifies skilled workers. Recognition is an important quality characteristic which can also be of benefit in terms of competing for customers.²⁰² A recognition notice allows companies to recognise which continuing training measures an employee will need in order to advance occupationally. Many company owners are motivated by the chances and opportunities that recognition provides and are already actively supporting staff they already employ or future employees in the recognition process. This also includes assistance with financing, with submission of the application and with further dealings with the authorities as well as the development of training plans or the implementation of training measures at the company.

Informing companies about recognition

Knowledge of and experience with the Recognition Act increases the likelihood that persons with a foreign qualification will be employed.²⁰³ The “Unternehmen

201 Recognition as a transparency instrument, see OECD 2018, p. 108.

202 See Project Office “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung – Mit ausländischen Fachkräften gewinnen” 2018.

203 See Mergener 2018, p. 85.

Two questions to...

Lukas Schmülling (former staff member at the State Examination Office for Medicine, Pharmacy and Psychotherapy at Düsseldorf District Government)

1. Which factors are important in ensuring that a skilled worker in the healthcare sector can complete a recognition procedure quickly, including with support from the employer, thus contributing towards rapid labour market integration?

Neither applicants nor the (potential) employers have a direct overall view of the requirements that need to be met in the recognition procedure. For this reason, the recognition authorities have the difficult task of structuring the recognition procedure in a transparent and comprehensible way. Another factor is that a multitude of stakeholders are involved in the recognition system. It is difficult for applicants to gain an overall picture.

For this reason, the Düsseldorf District Government is seeking both to organise the process in as transparent a way as possible and to offer interface management to support applicants. For this purpose, it has drawn up skeleton curricula for modular compensation measures which are implemented by state-recognised or other suitable institutions. The competent body regularly networks with these institutions to enable the requirement for training measures to be adapted at any time.

Acceptance of and satisfaction with the procedure rise if applicants and employers are able to understand why various documents are needed for the procedure.

The Düsseldorf District Government has therefore made extensive information material available in several languages. We also hold information meetings, to which staff placement agencies, potential employers and training institutions are all invited.

2. Alongside a successful recognition procedure, what else is needed for skilled workers in the healthcare sector in order to secure sustainable integration into the labour market?

Integration extends beyond mere professional recognition. Skilled workers arrive with various ideologies, and the differing significances of the healthcare system have also left a mark on them. Both the applicants and the later employers notice this. We try to take it into account when designing the contents of compensation measures. Adaptation measures offer a suitable framework with pedagogical support for preparing participants for life and work in the German healthcare system.

Those who successfully complete the measures and achieve recognition frequently feed back to us that they feel very well prepared for work in Germany. This is an important instrument for securing the long-term loyalty of the skilled workers which are urgently needed in the German healthcare system.

Berufsanerkennung” and the BQ Portal projects have the express aim of informing companies about the chances and opportunities stated above (see Chapters 1.1, 1.3). The “Anerkannt” projects provides information on the topic of recognition to employee representative bodies, which then in turn raise awareness of the issue amongst workforces (see Chapter 1.3).

7.3 General conditions for the sustainable labour market integration of foreign skilled workers

Demand on the labour market for skilled workers has an encouraging effect on the recognition system. In overall terms, however, further general conditions need to be fulfilled alongside recognition in order for sustainable integration at a company or on the labour market to be achieved. The initial significant factor for access to the labour market is the recruitment decision made by the company.²⁰⁴ It is important to shape the operational integration of skilled workers from abroad in such a way so as to create diversity at all levels of the company (diversity management). Both newly arrived immigrants and established skilled workers should be involved.²⁰⁵ A recognition notice can create specialist and personal equality amongst employees and thus foster the reduction in cases of discrimination called for in works constitutions. Intercultural training programmes for management, mentoring schemes and further support provision for foreign skilled workers with regard to aspects such as dealing with the authorities and recognition procedures are also all important measures for the creation of diversity.²⁰⁶ Senior managers have a key role to play in firmly establishing this topic in the company's guidelines and communications.²⁰⁷ Actively pursued diversity management processes can help avoid possible conflicts and subsequent polarisations of the workforce. The advantages offered by a heterogeneous workforce include the bringing of economic benefits for the company and the fostering of creativity and innovation.²⁰⁸

Participation in company processes and continuing training provision, the encouragement of (further) language acquisition and the combating of discrimination are all important building blocks for long-term integration into the company of foreign skilled workers.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ See Mergener 2018, p. 17 and SVR 2019, p. 74.

²⁰⁵ See Pütz et al. 2019, pp. 193 ff.

²⁰⁶ See Bogyó-Löffler 2018, p. 17.

²⁰⁷ See kofa.de/mitarbeiter-finden-und-bindet/als-arbeitgeber-positionieren/diversity-management.

²⁰⁸ See Merx and Ruster 2015, pp. 6 ff.

²⁰⁹ See the "Anerkannt" project (see dgb-bildungswerk.de/migration/anerkannt) and SVR 2019, pp. 118 and 122.

Migrant organisations, competent bodies, volunteers, works councils, trade unions and the company owners themselves are some examples of sources of support in this regard. A company may, for instance, release staff to attend German courses or provide assistance with looking for housing.²¹⁰

- ▶ It has become clear in overall terms that recognition of a foreign professional or vocational qualification significantly contributes to improving the occupational situation of skilled workers at various levels. Recognition leads to an increase in employment that is commensurate with qualifications and growths in income. Recognition also leads to greater esteem being accorded by employers to persons who have acquired their qualifications and competencies abroad. Nevertheless, in order to ensure sustainable labour market integration, it will also be necessary to embrace heterogeneity in the workforce as an opportunity and to implement measures aimed at implementing diversity.

²¹⁰ See Project Office "Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung – Mit ausländischen Fachkräften gewinnen": Unternehmenspreis Anerkennung 2018.



Field report: electronics technician Kingsford Effisah

Kingsford Effisah from Ghana needed recognition as an electronics technician in order to be able to work in the occupation in which he had trained. The electronics firm Opconnect Kommunikationsnetze GmbH proved to be a good partner. The company makes active use of professional and occupational recognition to acquire skilled workers. “Close collaboration between skilled staff is normal practice at our firm. We offer the same opportunities to all new employees, regardless of whether they are from Germany or abroad”, says Sandra Oswald (Managing Director).

Opconnect encourages language learning by financing courses and by releasing staff from their work duties to take part. Opconnect helps Kingsford Effisah and his other foreign colleagues in their necessary dealings with government authorities. It also provides support with aspects such as finding accommodation and nursery school places. Opconnect won the 2019 “Wir für Anerkennung” Recognition Prize for its exemplary practice in the field of professional recognition.^a

^a See Project Office “Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung – Mit ausländischen Fachkräften gewinnen”: Unternehmenspreis Anerkennung 2018.

Information Box 16

Refugees and labour market integration

Calculations conducted by the IAB refugee monitoring project show that the rate of employment^a amongst refugees was 21 percent in 2017. This was 12 percentage points higher than in the previous year, and the figure is rising constantly as duration of residency increases.^b According to the assessment of the IAB, which is based on the representative IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey of refugees in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of refugees with vocational or higher education qualifications remains low in comparison with the German population and with other migrant groups. About 20 percent of refugees of working age (between 15 and 64) stated that they had completed a vocational qualification in their home country. Just under 12 percent had achieved an academic qualification.^c

According to the IAB investigation, recognition (full or partial) of foreign qualifications increases the likelihood of being in full-time or part-time employment by 8 to 10 percentage points. Participation in language programmes also exerts a positive effect on labour market integration.^d By way of contrast, no significant correlation was demonstrated between the probability of employment and existing qualifications (without recognition).^e

34 percent of refugees surveyed who are in possession of a vocational or higher education qualification have applied for recognition.^f The data of the official statistics show a positive development in applications and high success rates in the area of the main countries of

origin of refugees.^g This is also confirmed by the results of the IAB PASS Survey (Labour Market and Social Security Panel) in the case of refugees from Syria and Iraq in receipt of benefits pursuant to German Social Security Code (SGB) II.^h A higher education qualification, current employment, language knowledge and secure residency status all significantly increase the likelihood that an application for recognition will be submitted. Reasons for non-submission of an application include lack of relevance for the exercising of the occupation from the point of view of the respondents, absence of documents and lack of information about the administrative procedure.ⁱ

The following are examples of recognition-related support provision aimed at fostering the labour market integration of refugees.

- The new IQ programme line “Fair Integration” set up counselling centres all over the country to support refugees with issues related to social and employment law.
- The “Company Network for Integrating Refugees”, an initiative by the DIHK which is funded by the BMWi, supports companies of all sizes and in all sectors and regions which wish to recruit refugees.^j
- In the “Welcoming Guides” project, chamber staff place refugees in internships, observational visits, introductory training measures, training and work.^k

a Amount of the labour demand (persons aged 15 and above who exercise at least one activity for economic gain) as a proportion of the total number of refugees of the same age.

b In the second half of 2017, 9 percent of refugees who had arrived in the country in 2016 were economically active. The corresponding figures for those who had migrated to Germany in 2015 was 19 percent. 36 percent of refugees from 2014 and 2013 were in gainful employment. See Brenzel et al. 2019, p. 101.

c See BIBB Data Report 2019, p. 337; information supplied by the refugees themselves.

d See Brenzel et al. 2019, p. 111.

e See *ibid.*, p. 108.

f See *ibid.*, p. 47.

g Full equivalence was identified in 43 percent of procedures in 2017 in which a decision was reached. Partial equivalence was awarded in around 20 percent of cases. A compensation measure (regulated professions only) which was still outstanding at the end of the reporting year was imposed in about a third of cases in which a decision was reached. The percentage proportion of procedures resulting in a negative decision was in low single figures (see Chapter 2.3).

h See Bähr et al. 2019, p. 3.

i See Brenzel et al. 2019, pp. 52 ff.

j Funded by the BMWi; see unternehmen-integrieren-fluechtlinge.de.

k See bmiw.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Wirtschaft/fluechtlingspolitik.html.

Appendix

Index of figures

Figure 1	Annual figures for the number of visits made to the “Recognition in Germany” portal, 2012 to 2018 (absolute terms)	17
Figure 2	Initial consultations from the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline, distribution by areas of regulation and Top 3 reference occupations/higher education qualifications, 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	22
Figure 3	IQ recognition guidance, distribution by regulation areas and Top 3 reference occupations/higher education qualifications, 2018 (in percent and in absolute terms)	22
Figure 4	Applications for recognition in professions and occupations governed by federal law and federal state law and applications to the ZAB for certificate assessment of non-regulated higher education qualifications, 2012 to 2018 (absolute terms)	29
Figure 5	Applications relating to regulated professions and non-regulated occupations governed by federal law, 2012 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	29
Figure 6	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law by countries of training (categorised), 2015 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	33
Figure 7	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – Top countries of training overall and by area of regulation including the most frequent reference occupations, 2018 (absolute terms)	34
Figure 8	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – outcome of procedures in which a decision was reached by area of regulation and country of training (categorised), 2018 (in percent)	35
Figure 9	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – applications made by nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees, 2012 to 2018 (absolute terms)	37
Figure 10	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – outcome of procedures in which a decision was reached for nationals of the main countries of origin of refugees, 2018 (in percent)	37
Figure 11	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – specialist healthcare professions by country of training (categorised), 2015 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	39
Figure 12	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – medical professions for which academic qualifications are required by country of training (categorised), 2015 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	39
Figure 13	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – countries of training in the case of the reference occupations of doctor and registered general nurse, 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	40
Figure 14	TOP 5 applications in professions and occupations governed by federal state law, 2016 to 2018	54
Figure 15	Recognition procedures for teachers (generalised for all federal states)	55
Figure 16	Participants in IQ training measures by refugee background, 2015 to 2018 (absolute terms)	61
Figure 17	Participants in IQ training in the most frequent professions in the healthcare sector, 2015 to 2018	63
Figure 18	Teachers in IQ consultations, procedures and IQ training measures (2016-2018)	65
Figure 19	Engineers in IQ training measures, participation 2015 to 2018	67
Figure 20	Proportion of refugees amongst engineers in IQ measures	67
Figure 21	Federal Government recognition grant (BMBF) – costs reimbursed for applications processed, 2016 to 2018 (in euro)	71
Figure 22	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – distribution by domestic and foreign applications, 2012 to 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	75
Figure 23	Immigration and recognition – Changes via the Skilled Immigration Act for skilled workers who have completed vocational education and training	82

Index of tables

Table 1	Top 5 most frequently accessed occupational profiles on the BQ Portal, 2018 (absolute terms)	18
Table 2	“Living and Working in Germany” Hotline and IQ recognition guidance – development of selected characteristics, 2017 and 2018	21
Table 3	Applications relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law – Top 5 reference occupations in the regulated and non-regulated sector, 2018 (in absolute terms and in percent)	30
Table 4	Applications, Top 3 countries of training and reference occupations in the areas of responsibility of the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades with regard to non-regulated occupations, 2018 (absolute terms)	48
Table 5	IQ training counselling – selected characteristics 2018	60
Table 6	Top 5 professions and occupations in the funding programmes, 2018 (absolute terms)	73
Table 7	Top 5 nationalities of applicants in the funding programmes, 2018 (absolute terms)	73

Index of abbreviations

Abbreviation Meaning

AA	Auswärtiges Amt – Federal Foreign Office
AG	Arbeitsgemeinschaft – Working Group
AOLG	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Obersten Landesgesundheitsbehörden – Working Group of the Supreme Healthcare Authorities of the Federal States
anabin	Anerkennung und Bewertung ausländischer Bildungsnachweise – “Recognition and evaluation of foreign educational qualifications” (database)
AufenthG	Aufenthaltsgesetz – German Residency Act
BA	Bundesagentur für Arbeit – Federal Employment Agency
BAFA	Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Ausfuhrkontrolle – Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
BÄO	Bundesärzteordnung – Federal Medical Practitioners Act
BBiG	Berufsbildungsgesetz – Vocational Training Act
BeschV	Beschäftigungsverordnung – Employment Ordinance
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
BMAS	Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales – Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – Federal Ministry of Education and Research
BMI	Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat – Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community
BMWi	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie – Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy
BQFG	Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz – “Law on the assessment of the equivalence of vocational qualifications” (Professional Qualifications Assessment Act)
BQ Portal	Das Informationsportal für ausländische Berufsqualifikationen – Information portal for foreign professional and vocational qualifications
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (German political party)
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (political party in Bavaria)
DeuFöV	Verordnung über die berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung – Ordinance on support for occupation-related German language learning
DIHK	Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag – Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund – German Confederation of Trade Unions
EEA	European Economic Area
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
f-bb	Forschungsinstitut Betriebliche Bildung GmbH – Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (limited company)
FR-Angabe	Information regarding specialism
GER-B2	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), level B2 (ability to express oneself on a range of topics)
GER-C1	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), level C1 (effective operational proficiency)
GfG	Gutachtenstelle für Gesundheitsberufe – Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions (housed at the ZAB)
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH – German Agency for International Cooperation
GMK	Gesundheitsministerkonferenz der Länder – Conference of the Ministers of Health
HwO	Handwerksordnung – Crafts and Trades Regulation Code
IAB	Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung – Institute for Employment Research
IHK FOSA	Foreign Skills Approval Competence Centre of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce, a consortium under public law of 76 of the 79 chambers of industry and commerce to act as a central decision-making body in respect of applications for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications

IQ	Förderprogramm „Integration durch Qualifizierung (IQ)“ – The Network “Integration through Qualification” (IQ) funding programme
JFMK	Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz der Länder – Youth and Family Ministers Conference of the federal states
KMK	Kultusministerkonferenz – Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs
MBE	Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer – Adult migrant advice centre
NAP-I	Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration – National Integration Action Plan
NetQA	Netzwerk Qualifikationsanalyse – Network Skills Analysis (BMBF project)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SGB	Sozialgesetzbuch – German Social Security Code
SOEP	Sozio-oekonomisches Panel – Socio-Economic Panel
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German political party)
StBA	Statistisches Bundesamt – Federal Statistical Office
SVR	Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration – Research Council of German Foundations for Integration and Migration
telc	Language certificate from the company telc GmbH (The European Language Certificates)
TestDaF	Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache – Test in German as a foreign language
WHKT	Westdeutscher Handwerkskammertag – West German Association of Chambers of Crafts and Trades
ZAB	Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen (im Sekretariat der KMK) – Central Office for Foreign Education (at the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, KMK)
ZAV	Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung – Central Foreign and Specialist Placement Agency
ZDH	Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks – German Confederation of Skilled Crafts
ZSBA	Zentrale Servicestelle Berufsanerkennung – Service Centre for Professional Recognition
ZWH	Zentralstelle für die Weiterbildung im Handwerk – Central Agency for Continuing Vocational Education and Training in the Skilled Crafts

Glossary

*	Terms taken directly from the Recognition in Germany glossary. ²¹¹
**	Terms taken directly from the Recognition in Germany glossary, but abridged, amended or supplemented.
***	Terms taken directly from the Integration through Qualification (IQ) glossary, but abridged, amended or supplemented. ²¹²
anabin	anabin is the official portal of the federal states for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. It is operated by the ZAB . anabin provides information on the evaluation of foreign qualifications, educational institutions and certificates for over 180 countries. The portal features an official section for recognition bodies and a public information area. ²¹³
Anerkennungsbescheid – recognition notice	A recognition notice (also referred to as a notice of equivalence) is a legally binding communication via which the competent body notifies the applicant of the outcome of the recognition procedure. If full recognition is granted, the recognition notice can also serve as a licence or authorisation to practise, as permission to use a professional title or as a certificate of state recognition.**
Anerkennungsgesetz – Recognition Act	The “Recognition Act” is the unofficial abbreviated title of the “Law to improve the assessment and recognition of professional and vocational education and training qualifications acquired abroad”, which entered into force on 1 April 2012. The Recognition Act governs the recognition of foreign professional qualifications in professions and occupations for which the Federal Government is responsible. It is a so-called composite act which encompasses the Federal Professional Qualifications Act, BQFG , (area of responsibility of the BMBF) and amendments and adaptations to specific legislation governing the professions and to ordinances (responsibility of the relevant departments).**
Anerkennungsportal – Recognition Portal	“Recognition in Germany” is the official Federal Government portal for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications . It is operated by BIBB on behalf of the BMBF. The portal offers information in German, English, Greek, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, French, Turkish, Russian and Arabic. Those interested in seeking recognition can use the Recognition Finder to localise the reference occupation and to determine the relevant competent body . ²¹⁴
Anerkennungsverfahren – recognition procedure	See Gleichwertigkeitsfeststellungsverfahren – equivalence assessment procedure

²¹¹ See anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/glossar.php.

²¹² See netzwerk-iq.de/berufliche-erkennung/fuer-die-praxis/glossar.html.

²¹³ See anabin.kmk.org.

²¹⁴ See BMBF 2014, p. 28 and anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/ueber_uns.php.

Anerkennungszuschluss des Bundes – Federal Government recognition grant	The Federal Government recognition grant provides assistance with the costs of a recognition procedure for foreign professional and vocational qualifications. Costs incurred within the scope of the application, especially fees and translation costs, are eligible for funding up to a maximum amount of €600 per person. ^{***}
Anpassungslehrgang – adaptation period	The term “adaptation period” originates from the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) . Adaptation periods serve to compensate for substantial differences identified between a foreign professional qualification and their German reference qualifications in the regulated professions in order to achieve recognition and obtain authorisation to pursue the profession or use the professional title. ^{**}
Anpassungsqualifizierung – refresher training	In the non-regulated occupations , refresher training may compensate for substantial differences identified between a foreign professional qualification and the German reference qualification in order to achieve full equivalence. In the non-regulated occupations, completion of refresher training is not a mandatory prerequisite for the exercising of the occupation. Such occupations may also be pursued without an equivalence notice (see equivalence assessment procedure).
Approbation (licence to practise medicine in Germany)	A licence to practise medicine constitutes state authorisation to exercise certain medical professions for which academic qualifications are required (such as doctor, dentist, pharmacist). In order for a licence to practise to be issued, applicants need to fulfil various requirements such as successful completion of higher education study, knowledge of German and suitable health and fitness (see, for example, § 3 BÄO).
Ausgleichsmaßnahme or Anpassungsmaßnahme – compensation measure or adaptation measure	The term “compensation measure” originates from the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) . A compensation measure (= adaptation measure) can be used to compensate for substantial differences identified between foreign qualifications and their German reference qualifications in the regulated professions in order to achieve recognition and obtain authorisation to pursue the profession or obtain the right to use the professional title. Compensation measures serve to furnish evidence of equivalent knowledge and skills. Depending on the profession or occupation concerned, the compensation measure may be an adaptation period or an examination (aptitude test or, in the case of third country qualifications, a knowledge test).
Automatic recognition	Some regulated professions are automatically recognised within the European Union (EU). Automatic recognition applies to doctors and dentists and also covers specialist medical continuing training. Other professions for which automatic recognition can be accorded are veterinary, pharmacist, registered general nurse, midwife and architect. Uniform standards for training in these professions exist across the whole of the EU. They are listed in the Annex to the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EG). Persons seeking automatic recognition still need to submit an application to the competent body, but the recognition procedure in this will not include an individual assessment of equivalence. ²¹⁵

²¹⁵ See anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/glossar.php#a.

Berufserlaubnis – authorisation to practise a profession	Official state authorisation is required in order to work in regulated professions. Unlike a full licence to practise medicine, authorisation to work in medical occupations for which academic qualifications are required is issued temporarily for a fixed term and is usually subject to further restrictions.**
Berufsqualifikationen – professional or vocational qualifications	Professional or vocational qualifications are qualifications demonstrated by evidence of formal qualifications, certificates of competence or other relevant professional or occupational experience acquired in Germany or abroad. ²¹⁶
Berufsqualifikations- feststellungsgesetz – Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG)	The Act concerning the Assessment of Equivalence of Professional Qualifications (BQFG – Section 1 of the Recognition Act) is a federal law within the area of responsibility of the BMBF which has been in force since 1 April 2012. It is a type of core statute for the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications in Germany. It governs procedures and criteria for the assessment of equivalence of a qualification acquired abroad with the German reference occupation . Its main area of application is for equivalence assessment procedures within the area of the dual training occupations.**
BQ Portal	The BQ Portal supports competent bodies and employers in the evaluation of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. It is operated by the German Institute for Business Research. The BQ Portal currently contains 91 published country profiles and 3,430 foreign occupational profiles. ²¹⁷
Brückenmaßnahmen – bridging measures	Bridging measures are primarily aimed at persons with academic qualifications not working in a regulated profession. They help with the acquisition of competencies that are useful in the profession in question. These include, for example, learning specialist language or preparation for integration into the German world of work.***
Bundesrechtlich geregelte Berufe – professions and occupations governed by federal law	These are occupations which fall within the legislative remit of the Federal Government. The Federal Recognition Act only covers professions and occupations which are governed by federal law. This applies to a large number of occupations governed by the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO), i.e. the training occupations included in the so-called dual system, as well as to a series of further professions listed in the law (e.g. doctor, registered general nurse). The equivalence notices appealable in law issued on the basis of federal law are valid nationwide. The federal states have enacted their own recognition acts for professions and occupations governed by federal state law . ²¹⁸
Drittstaat – third country	The European Union (EU) defines all states outside the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA) to be third countries with the exception of Switzerland (see also EU/EEA/Switzerland).**

²¹⁶ § 3 Paragraph 1 BQFG.

²¹⁷ See bq-portal.de/Über-das-Portal/Hintergrund-und-Ziele.

²¹⁸ See anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/media/20120320_erlaeuterungen_zum_anerkennungsg_bund.pdf.

Eignungsprüfung (auch Defizitprüfung genannt) – aptitude test (also referred to as deficits test)	The term “aptitude test“ originates from the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) . It refers to a test carried out by the competent authorities to enable the applicants who are nationals of the EU/EEA or Switzerland to prove the equivalence of their level of knowledge. The aptitude test covers subjects of which it is essential to have knowledge in order to pursue the profession in the receiving member state. Directive 2005/36/EC stipulates that the aptitude test must be limited to subjects not covered by the applicant’s previous training. The recognition authorities must take account of the fact that the applicants have already acquired professional qualifications in their home member states. **
Einstiegberatung – initial guidance	Initial guidance is provided by the competent bodies . They inform those interested in seeking recognition of the legal foundations and of the recognition procedure in overall terms (documentation to be submitted, costs etc.). They carry out a preliminary assessment by working with the person interested in seeking recognition to identify the German reference occupation . Professional and occupational goals and ideas are also explored, and the existence of alternative procedures (such as the external examination or retraining) is indicated. ²¹⁹
Engpassberufe – shortage professions and occupations	Shortage professions and occupations are professions and occupations in which Germany has too few workers. They particularly include technical occupations and some health-care and nursing professions. **
Erstberatung – initial consultation	The initial consultation generally comprises information on the respective relevant legal foundations and procedures, prior clarification of the reference occupation and referral (see referral guidance) to the competent body responsible for the equivalence assessment (see equivalence assessment procedure). Initial consultations are in particular provided by the counselling centres of the Network IQ (see Integration through Qualification), by the Working and Living in Germany Hotline and by further guidance institutions. The regional chambers of industry and commerce also frequently refer to the guidance they provide as an initial consultation. ²²⁰
EU/EEA/Switzerland	States of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. The EU member states are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. EEA states are all EU member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Switzerland participates with the EU in the European professional and vocational recognition system on the basis of bilateral agreements with the EU.*

219 See BMBF 2014, pp. 27 and 29.

220 See BMBF 2014, p. 27.

EU Recognition Directive 2005/36/EC	<p>The European Union’s “Recognition Directive” entered into force on 15 October 2005. It was amended by Directive 2013/55/EU and combines and replaces 15 separate directives on the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications. It applies to regulated professions and establishes criteria and procedural principles for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications acquired by EU citizens in EU member states. The term “substantial differences” is introduced in the Directive as a criterion for assessing the equivalence of professional qualifications. The Directive stipulates that the recognition authorities must take account of relevant professional experience which can compensate for substantial differences between the training requirements. Finally, the Directive also stipulates that so-called compensation measures should take place where substantial differences have been identified.*</p> <p>The Directive has been fully implemented in Germany.</p>
Externenprüfung – external examination	<p>The so-called external examination permits persons who have not completed dual training to take part in the regular final vocational training examination. In order to be admitted, relevant occupational experience or other learning achievements in the occupation in question need to be demonstrated. The admission procedure is conducted by the competent bodies, usually the chambers. The external examination is regulated in the Vocational Training Act (§ 45 Paragraph 2 BBiG) and in the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code accordingly (§ 37 Paragraph 2 HwO). Under certain circumstances, an external examination may be possible instead of the recognition procedure for persons who have acquired a vocational qualification abroad.²²¹</p>
Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz – Skilled Immigration Act	<p>The Skilled Immigration Act will create a new legal framework for targeted and increased migration of qualified skilled workers from third countries. The Skilled Immigration Act was adopted by the Bundestag on the basis of the draft law of the Federal Government on 7 June 2019 and was passed by the Bundesrat on 28 June 2019. It enters into force on 1 March 2020. The act will in particular make it easier in future for skilled workers who have completed qualified vocational education and training to migrate to Germany. The previous restriction to professions and occupations included on the BA’s white list will cease to apply.²²²</p>
Gleichwertigkeitsfeststellungsverfahren – equivalence assessment procedure	<p>In the equivalence assessment procedure, the competent body compares the foreign professional or vocational qualification with a German professional or vocational qualification on the basis of stipulated formal criteria (such as content and duration of training). The competent body issues an equivalence notice stating the result of this comparison. If full equivalence is accorded, applicants have the same legal rights as those in possession of the corresponding German professional or vocational qualification. Full equivalence is certified if no substantial differences are identified between the foreign and the domestic qualifications. Partial equivalence may be certified in the case of non-regulated occupations if there are substantial differences for which relevant occupational experience cannot compensate. If there are substantial differences in regulated professions, a notice imposing a compensation measure is issued. Full equivalence is attested once this has been completed. If there are no commonalities, no equivalence is established (rejection of the application).**</p>

²²¹ See BMBF 2014, p. 73.

²²² See new version of the Skilled Immigration Act at [bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl119s1307.pdf](https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl119s1307.pdf).

Gutachtenstelle für Gesundheitsberufe (GfG) – Central Assessment Agency for Healthcare Professions	GfG is a cross-federal state agency which is housed at the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB). Competent bodies may commission it with the task of checking the genuineness of qualifications evidence submitted, determining the German reference qualification and drawing up a detailed assessment of equivalence for 21 reference occupations in the healthcare sector. ²²³
Hotline Arbeiten und Leben in Deutschland – Working and Living in Germany Hotline	The central “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline has been in operation since 1 December 2014. It provides individual telephone-based initial consultations on the topics of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, entry and residency, looking for a job and learning German. The hotline is available from Monday to Friday between 9 am and 4 pm on the number +49 30 1815-1111. ²²⁴
IHK FOSA	The IHK FOSA (Foreign Skills Approval) is a central competent body created in the spring of 2012. It is responsible for administrative implementation within the scope of the BQFG in the trade and industry sector. The IHK FOSA was set up as an independent body under public law by 76 of the 79 chambers of industry and commerce. The chambers of Wuppertal-Solingen-Remscheid, Hanover and Braunschweig are the only ones that do not participate. The Braunschweig Chamber of Industry and Commerce has formally handed over its tasks pursuant to the BQFG to the Hanover Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Local chambers take responsibility for providing initial and training guidance within the scope of the recognition process. ²²⁵
Integration durch Qualifizierung (IQ) – Integration through Qualification (IQ)	The Network “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” funding programme, which is jointly financed by the BMAS, the BMBF and the BA, has installed 16 regional networks which cover all the states of the Federal Republic of Germany. It advises those interested in seeking recognition and assists regulatory institutions (such as the employment agencies and the Job Centres) as well as supporting the chambers and regional trade and industry. Across the country, there are more than 100 counselling centres and over 60 mobile services for recognition and training guidance . ²²⁶
Kenntnisprüfung – knowledge test	The knowledge test is a compensation measure (= adaptation measure) for persons with qualifications from third countries. Its purpose is to verify the equivalence of previously acquired professional and vocational knowledge and skills. The knowledge test refers to the content of the relevant state-administered final examination in Germany. This does not mean that the test can be understood to be equivalent in scope to the state-administered final examination. The entire range of content covered by the final examination can, however, be tested. ^{**}
Landesrechtlich geregelte Berufe – professions and occupations governed by federal state law	Professions and occupations that lie within the remit of the federal states and for which the federal states have enacted their own recognition acts (e.g. teacher, nursery school teacher). ²²⁷

223 See BMBF 2017, p. 44.

224 See [make-it-in-germany.com/de/ueber-das-portal/kontakt/hotline/](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/ueber-das-portal/kontakt/hotline/).

225 See BMBF 2014, pp. 29 and 34.

226 See BMBF 2014, pp. 27 and 29.

227 See [anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/laendergesetze.php](https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/laendergesetze.php).

Mangelberufe – shortage professions and occupations	See Engpassberufe – shortage professions and occupations
Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer – guidance services for adult migrants (MBEs)	There are over 700 adult migrant advice centres (MBEs) across the country. The BAMF is responsible for the implementation of the MBEs. Guidance provision is fundamentally directed at adult migrants aged over 27. Priority is given to new migrants for a period of up to three years following entry to Germany or for three years following establishment of permanent residency status. Migration guidance for young migrants and young adult migrants aged under 27 is provided via 420 Youth Migration Services (JMD). ²²⁸
Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration (NAP-I) – National Integration Action Plan (NAP-I)	The NAP-I is a Federal Government action plan divided into five phases. Its aims are the pooling, supplementation, further development and management of existing integration provision. The phases relate to the time preceding immigration, during which language courses should take place, to the imparting of societal values after arrival in Germany and to integration into the labour market and civil society. Political participation is also covered. ²²⁹
Netzwerk Qualifikation- sanalyse (NetQA) – Skills Analysis Network	NetQA is a BMBF-financed cooperative project which includes partners from the chambers of commerce and industry and chambers of crafts and trades. It supports the competent bodies in the establishment of a regional expertise and networking structure for skills analyses and in the firm embedding of this within the infrastructure of the chambers. The aim is to facilitate quality assured and efficient processing of skills analyses all across the country by 2022. For the purpose of financing their skills analysis, applicants are able to receive support from a special fund administered by the West German Association of Chambers of Crafts and Trades (WHKT) insofar as funding pursuant to German Social Security Code II and III (SGB II/III) is not possible. BIBB is responsible for overall coordination and knowledge management, whilst the WHKT coordinates the technical aspects of the project. NetQA is the follow-up project to “Prototyping Transfer”.
nicht reglementierte Berufe – non-regulated professions	Access to or exercise of non-regulated occupations (e.g. office manager) is not regulated by the state. Such an occupation can therefore be pursued without state authorisation. This applies in particular to the training occupations in the dual system. If an occupation is not state regulated in Germany, holders of a foreign professional or vocational qualification can directly apply for jobs on the labour market or enter self-employment. In such a case, recognition may serve as an instrument of transparency which is helpful in terms of being able to evaluate knowledge and skills, both for the individuals themselves and for potential employers.**
Projekt „Anerkannt“ – The “Anerkannt” project	“Anerkannt [Recognised]” is a BMBF-funded project run by the Education and Training Institute of the German Confederation of Trade Unions. Its aims are to provide employee representative bodies and workforces with information on recognition and to establish a sustainable culture of recognition. ²³⁰

228 See BMBF 2014, p. 27 and funding guidelines of the MBE 2010 at bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Migrationsberatung/mbe-foeri_pdf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

229 See Commissioner of the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees and Integration: Startschuss für den nationalen Aktionsplan Integration [Green light for the national action plan for integration]. In: integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/amt-und-person/aktionsplan-integration.

230 See DGB: Anerkannt. In: dgb-bildungswerk.de/migration/anerkannt.

ProRecognition	The “ProRecognition” project, which is funded by the BMBF and is being implemented by DIHK Service GmbH, offers information and recognition guidance whilst applicants are still living outside Germany. Consultation is provided in conjunction with eight project partners in the EU states of Poland and Italy and in the third countries of Algeria, China, Egypt, India, Iran and Vietnam.
Qualifikationsanalyse – skills analysis	Within the scope of application of the BQFG , professional and vocational competencies can also be established by means of a skills analysis. Such a skills analysis is used in cases where applicants are unable to submit any or some of the documents required or where doubts as to the genuineness or correctness of documents cannot be excluded (§ 14 BQFG or § 50b Paragraph 4 HwO). Skills analyses can be based on work samples, interviews, and practical and theoretical examinations. The inability to submit the required documentation must not be the fault of the applicant (see also NetQA).**
Qualifizierungsberatung – training guidance	Training guidance provides advice on training opportunities (including funding possibilities) within the context of the Recognition Act. This includes training to compensate for substantial differences in regulated professions (compensation measures) and in non-regulated occupations (refresher training), bridging measures for academic professions and possibilities of completing an external examination. Agencies offering training guidance include IQ and the competent bodies. ***
Referenzberuf oder Referenzqualifikation – reference occupation or reference qualification	In the recognition procedure , the foreign professional or vocational qualification is compared with the training (contents) of a German qualification or with a German occupation, the so-called reference occupation. Identification or stipulation of a reference occupation is necessary in order to enable the competent body to investigate and to conduct the procedure.
reglementierte Berufe – regulated professions	Professional activities the commencement or exercising of which is governed by legal or administrative provisions requiring proof of specific professional qualifications (for example lawyer, psychotherapist). In Germany, there are 81 regulated professions governed by federal law (including 41 master craftsman occupations in the craft trades for which a licence is required) and a further 18 professions regulated at federal state level.**
Stipendienprogramme – scholarship programmes	Funding programmes exist in Hamburg and Berlin which provide individual financing to persons interested in seeking recognition whose incomes lie below a certain level. Monthly or one-off payments are made to cover the costs of a recognition procedure, certificate assessments by the ZAB, adaptation measures, preparatory courses for knowledge and aptitude tests, language courses and bridging measures. ²³¹
Verweisberatung – referral guidance	The term referral guidance is used when persons interested in seeking recognition a) are referred to the competent body by a guidance institution or b) are referred to the right competent body by another competent body which is not responsible in the particular case.

²³¹ See: anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/laenderfoerderung.php.

Westbalkanregelung – West Balkans regulation	According to a provision included in the Employment Ordinance in 2015 (§ 26 Paragraph 2 BeschV), the BA may under certain conditions consent that nationals from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia be admitted to any employment regardless of whether they are able to produce evidence of knowledge of German or of vocational education and training. This regulation applies between 2016 and 2020. The prerequisites are a binding offer of a job and fulfilment of requirements under visa law. ²³²
Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung – Central Foreign and Specialist Placement Agency (ZAV)	The ZAV is an institution of the BA. Its tasks include the recruitment and placement of skilled workers from abroad for employers in Germany. It is responsible for authorising foreign workers to enter the German labour market. ²³³
Zentrale Servicestelle Berufsanerkennung – Service Centre for Professional Recognition (ZSBA)	The Central Service Centre for Skilled Workers Abroad Seeking Recognition, referred to in abbreviated form as the Service Centre for Professional Recognition, has been created to provide a uniform contact partner for persons interested in seeking recognition who are still living abroad. It advises on individual issues relating to immigration and recognition law with the aim of reducing the burden on the competent bodies. It avails itself of expertise from other stakeholders such as the BQ Portal and “Recognition in Germany”.
Zentralstelle für auslän- disches Bildungswesen – Central Office for For- eign Education (ZAB)	The ZAB is housed at the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) and is the centre of excellence of the federal states for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. Its core tasks are the monitoring, analysis and evaluation of foreign educational systems and the documentation and publication of this information on the Internet portal anabin (http://anabin.kmk.org) for the use of government authorities and private persons. The ZAB prepares reports for the assessment of foreign educational qualifications for government authorities and issues private persons with statements of comparability for foreign higher education qualifications in accordance with the Lisbon Agreement. It also acts as the National Information Agency for the EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC) . The recognition acts have created new tasks for the ZAB in the form of assessment of third country qualifications for the relevant recognition bodies of the federal states and the issuing of equivalence notices for non-regulated school-based occupations governed by federal state law ²³⁴ for the states of Berlin, Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony.
Zeugnisbewertung – Statement of Comparability	A Statement of Comparability for Foreign Higher Education Qualifications is an official document issued by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) , which describes a foreign higher education qualification and certifies how such a qualification may be utilised professionally and academically. The aim of a ZAB Statement of Comparability is to facilitate access to the German labour market for persons in possession of a foreign higher education qualification. Such Statement of Comparability is, however, a comparative categorisation rather than a formal recognition (KMK 2018).***

²³² See BAMF 2019, p 89.

²³³ See zav.de.

²³⁴ See BMBF 2014, p. 31 and kmk.org/zab/gleichwertigkeitsbescheide-fuer-nicht-reglementierte-landesrechtlich-geregelte-berufe.html.

zuständige Stelle –
competent body

An authority or other institution which assesses the equivalence of a foreign **professional or vocational qualification** on the basis of applicable legal and administrative provisions.** Pursuant to § 8 **BGFG**, the chambers (chambers of crafts and trades, chambers representing the liberal professions, agricultural chambers etc.) are responsible for the **non-regulated occupations** in the dual system (governed by federal law) which are allocated to them. **Recognition procedures** in the trade and industry sector are conducted by the **IHK FOSA** and the chambers of industry and commerce in Wuppertal-Solingen-Remscheid, Hanover and Braunschweig. In the case of the **non-regulated occupations**, (governed by federal law), responsibility is based on the respective specific legislation and on the implementation provisions of the 16 federal states. Competent bodies are usually federal state authorities (e.g. Regional Councils, state offices). The recognition procedure for occupations regulated in the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (e.g. master craftsman occupations) takes place via the chambers of crafts and trades. **Professions and occupations governed by federal state law** are the responsibility of the federal states.

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In writing to
Publikationsversand der Bundesregierung
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Germany
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Fax: +49 30 18 10 272 272 11

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Authors

BMBF
Part II was completed by the Federal Institute for Vocational
Education and Training (BIBB) on behalf of the BMBF: Dr Jessica
Erbe, Nadja Schmitz, Dr Stefan Arnold, Dr Rebecca Atanassov,
Dr Ulrich Best, Carolin Böse, Vira Bushanska, Judith Gilsbach,
Nina Jaehrling, Ricarda Knöller.

Translated by

GlobalSprachTeam – Sassenberg+Kollegen; Martin Kelsey

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P. 4 Manfred H. Vogel
P. 14 UBA/Jens Gyarmaty
P. 19 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 20 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 26 Manfred H. Vogel
P. 32 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 41 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 49 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 51 Project „Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung“
P. 53 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 58 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 69 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 78 "Recognition in Germany" portal/BIBB
P. 89 Project Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung: „Berufliche
Anerkennung als Instrument der Fachkräftesicherung – neun
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Cover picture

Ms Zubkova (see also page 70) received the recognition of her
Russian engineer qualification from the Berlin Building Chamber
(Baukammer Berlin). You can read all about the recognition pro-
cedures experienced by Ms Zubkova and other skilled workers at
anerkennung-in-deutschland.de.

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