



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

2016 Report on the Recognition Act



Resolution of the Federal Cabinet of 8 June 2016

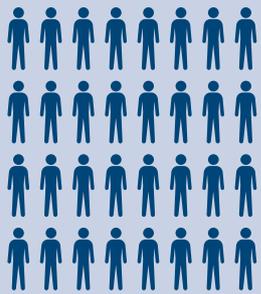
The Federal Government adopts the ‘2016 Report on the Recognition Act’ submitted by the Federal Minister of Education.

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Most important results at a glance

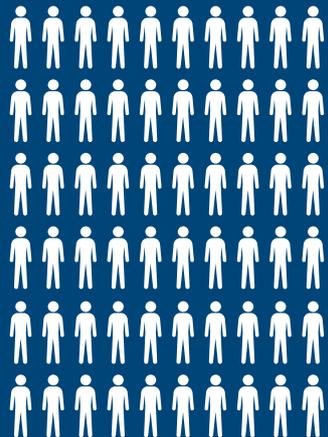


Between 2012 and 2014, more than

44.000

applications for recognition in a profession or occupation governed by federal law were submitted.

Significant rise in the number of new applications for professional or occupational recognition



Between 2012 and 2015, over

160.000

recognition consultations took place at the IQ initial counselling centres, via the BAMF Hotline and at the chambers in which persons interested in seeking recognition were informed about the prerequisites for a recognition procedure or provided with support in the procurement of documents.



Two thirds of those receiving advice from the IQ initial counselling centres or from the BAMF Hotline between 2012 and 2015 were in possession of at least one higher

education **qualification.**

One third held one or more vocational training qualifications.



Just over two thirds of persons receiving advice from the IQ initial counselling centres between 2012 and 2015 were

unemployed.

Of these, just under 70 Percent were in receipt of (supplementary) benefits pursuant to SGB II and/or SGB III or in accordance with the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act. The most frequent

target professions

on which guidance was provided were teacher, engineer, registered general nurse and doctor.



In 2015, over 4.700 consultations on training were conducted within the scope of the new main action focus "ESF training within the context of the

Recognition Act". Around 2.400 persons took part in training measures.

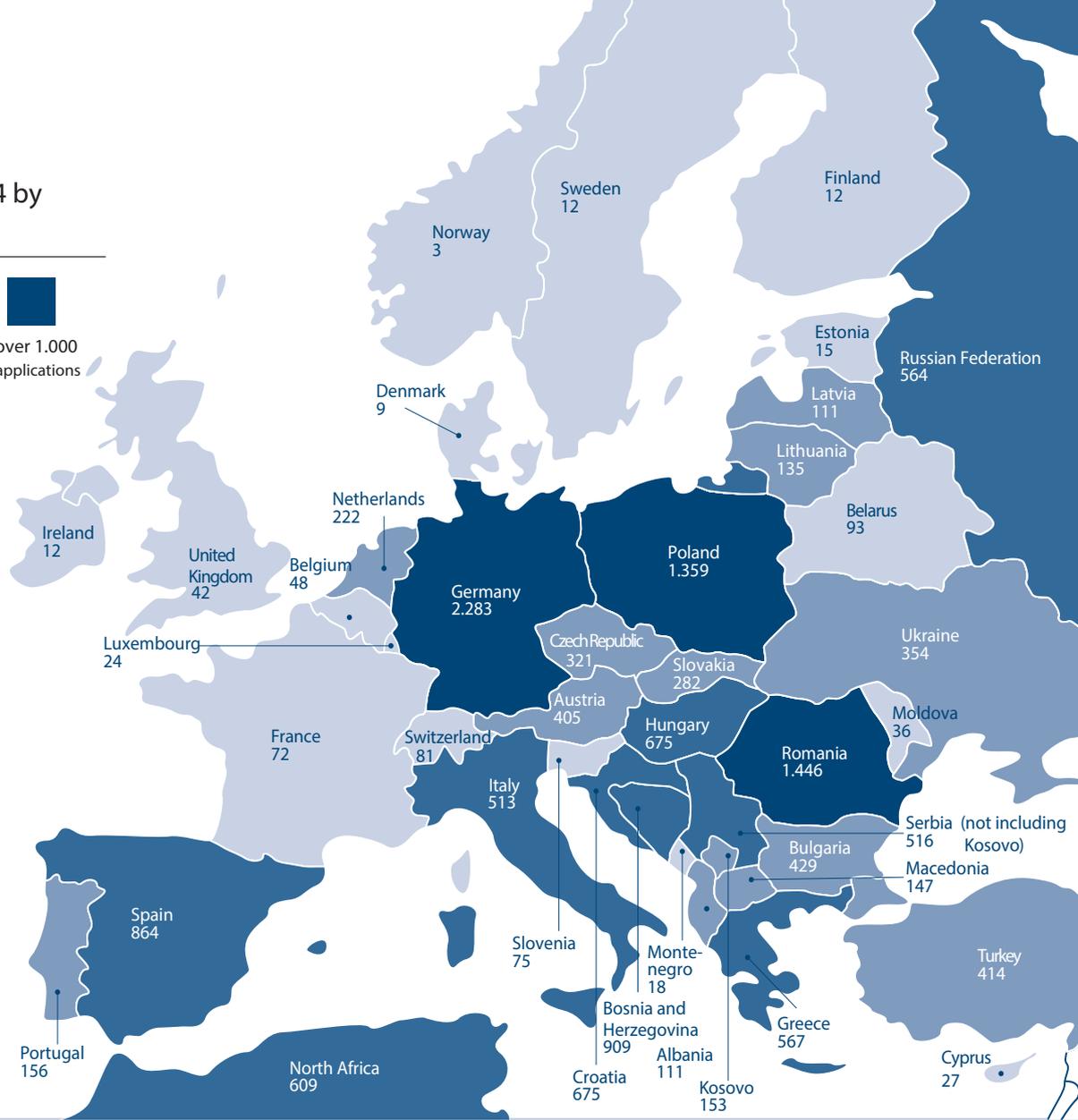
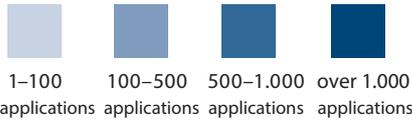


Just under 20 Percent of those receiving guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres in the second half of 2015 were refugees. Syrians accounted for just over 60 Percent of

refugees receiving guidance, by far the largest group.



Application figures 2014 by nationality (Europe)

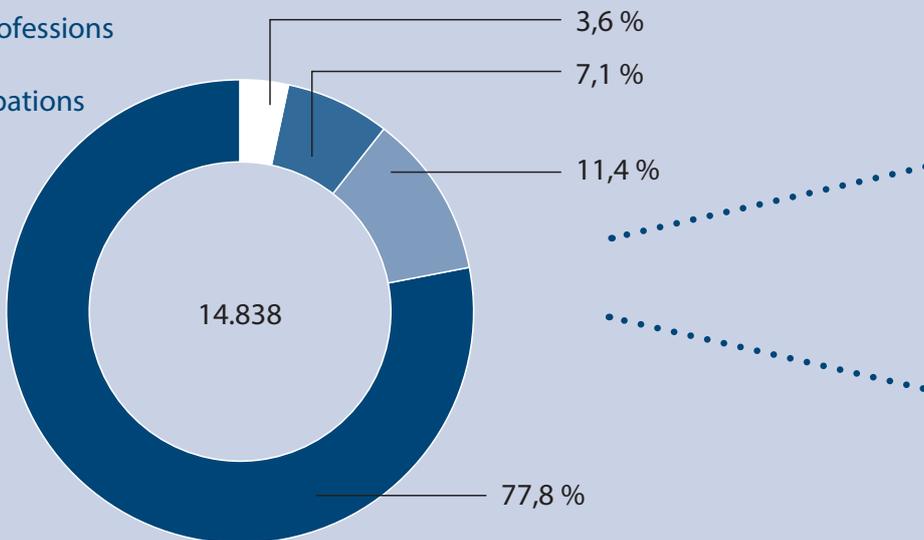


Application figures 2014 by world region

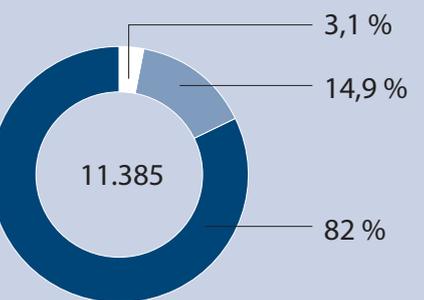
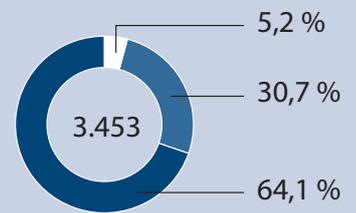
Europe (continent)	14.202
Asia	2.166
Africa	786
South America	219
North America, Central America and Caribbean	150
Australia and Oceania	27

Most applications in 2014 led to full equivalence

All professions and occupations



Non-regulated occupations



Preface

Education, science, work and innovation are the foundations of the prosperity we enjoy today. Although we have a pleasingly high level of employment, there is also an acute shortage of skilled workers in some areas. For this reason, no stone must be left unturned with regard to the exploitation and further development of the existing competences and skills of every single individual.

The Federal Government assists with this process by strengthening vocational education and training via vehicles such as expansion of the Upgrading Training Assistance Act. However, trade and industry and policy makers also need to make sure that better consideration is accorded to existing professional and vocational qualifications and that prospects for adequate employment are opened up. This is where new regulations relating to the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications take effect. Since the introduction of the Recognition Act in 2012, these regulations have developed into an important building block of skilled worker and integration policy. The German Recognition Act operates in conjunction with a multitude of other support measures and is seen by international observers as being exemplary and trail blazing.

The year 2015 was decisively marked by the large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees wishing to obtain protection in Germany. Their initial reception was facilitated by the impressive social commitment displayed by countless professional and volunteer workers, companies and institutions. Those with prospects of remaining in the country can be successfully integrated into training and work if tried and tested instruments such as the regulations relating to professional and occupational recognition are applied in a robust fashion. In addition to this, there is a continued need on the German labour market for qualified skilled workers from abroad. An individual and transparent procedure for the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications already acquired is a crucial factor in the migration of such workers to Germany.

The project conducted over recent years to monitor the implementation of the Recognition Act has already shown us that target-group specific information and guidance are key to successful professional and occupational recognition. During 2015, these services were in constant demand and were expanded on an ongoing basis. One important innovation within this context has been the increase in provision available within the scope of the “Integration through Training” funding programme (IQ). This provides a bridge for persons for whom no decision can yet be made within the recognition procedure regarding the full equivalence of their qualification.

In overall terms, the present report shows that the recognition regulations have undergone further modernisation and that development of the recognition system in Germany has been positive. Interest in the recognition procedure has once again increased considerably, and guidance and application figures are rising all the time. At the same time, processes have been further standardised, and interfaces to other legal areas have been improved. We are now able to build on these successes and, especially in times of increased immigration, make entry to the German labour market easier for as many people as possible. The Federal Government will continue to work towards this goal with all those involved in the recognition system and face new challenges together. My aim is to reinforce a culture of professional and occupational recognition in trade and industry, government and society in order to be able to tap into existing areas of potential and open up additional opportunities.

Prof. Dr. Johanna Wanka,
Federal Minister of Education and Research

Summary

Using existing skills, implementing opportunities on the labour market

The present report once again confirms that the Recognition Act acts as an important component in the tool box for securing a supply of skilled workers in Germany by helping to open up new employment prospects and create opportunities for societal participation. It also expands possibilities for the legal migration of skilled workers to Germany.

Interest in professional and occupational recognition has risen steadily since the introduction of the Recognition Act. During the reporting year, regulations for the recognition procedure were simplified and activities aimed at standardised implementation were introduced. This report also documents that the general conditions relating to guidance and procedures have been further improved and that an expansion has taken place of the funding of adaptation training in particular.

Further development of the legal foundations, standardising recognition procedures

2015 saw the instigation of changes to the Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts and laws governing the professions enacted by the Federal Government and the federal states in order to implement the amended EU Directive. The new regulations mainly relate to simplifications or improvements for EU citizens. The three most important new features are the introduction of the European Professional Card, an alert mechanism and partial access to a profession.

Despite the fact that the federal nature of the basic structure dictates differences in some areas, the foundations have been laid for further standardisation of recognition procedures. A new central cross-federal state assessment agency for the healthcare professions set up in January 2016 is expected to deliver greater standardisation in the implementation of the recognition procedures. The initial task for this new body is to ensure uniform application of existing equivalence assessment benchmarks (for professions such as doctor and registered general nurse).

In addition, constant networking between the Federal Government, the federal states and the chambers provides important impetuses for further standardisation in administrative implementation. Work has, for example, taken place in conjunction with the federal states to achieve further improvements, especially with regard to dealing with applications from abroad, application documentation, evidence of language knowledge and refugees.

Residency and asylum law adjusted, integrating refugees and asylum seekers

A gap in residency law has been closed. Since August 2015, it has been possible to issue visas for adaptation training undertaken within the scope of recognition procedures, in particular for the acquisition of full equivalence or to meet language requirements. This further increases opportunities for legal migration by skilled workers. Refugees and asylum seekers in possession of a formal qualification but not able to submit any documentation or whose documentation is insufficient can also benefit from a so-called skills analysis, a wide-reaching regulation in international comparative terms. At Federal Government and federal state level, extensive support opportunities for the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers are being rolled out

further. These include language provision and timely labour market assistance, not the least of the aims of which is the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Refugees who seek out IQ initial counselling centres now predominantly do so shortly after their arrival in Germany. Many are young and highly qualified. Syrians account for just over 60 percent of refugees receiving guidance in this way, by far the largest group. They are followed in second and third place by Iranian and Afghan nationals respectively. Between 2012 and 2014, citizens from the main countries of origin of refugees to Germany submitted a total of more than 2,800 applications in accordance with the Federal Recognition Act. Many of the procedures resulted in a positive decision. The processes involving Syrians led to the identification of full equivalence in over three quarters of cases.

High degree of interest in information and guidance

This report also shows that target-group specific information and guidance are a main bridge to successful professional and occupational recognition and to labour market integration. The established information services “Recognition in Germany” (Recognition Portal), anabin and the BQ Portal (databases) are being widely used. The number of visits to these websites has once again risen compared to the previous year. Additional information and service provision is being created to cater to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, such as a new recognition app for the Recognition Portal and the introduction of an Arabic language offering.

The Federal Government provides nationwide and quality-assured recognition guidance via the IQ initial counselling centres and the BAMF Hotline. Since the launch of the Recognition Act, over 105,000 persons have sought guidance from the latter service alone. The BAMF Hotline is being increasingly contacted from abroad. In particular, there has been a fourfold increase in the proportion of persons interested in obtaining recognition whose place of residence is in one of the third countries. The BAMF Hotline and IQ initial counselling centres are most frequently used to obtain guidance relating to the professions of teacher, engineer, registered general nurse and doctor.

In order to meet the requirement for guidance whilst potential applicants are still abroad, advisory centres have been set up at eight foreign chambers of commerce and industry and German trade delegations as part of the new “ProRecognition” Project.

Rise in the numbers of applications

Between 2012 and 2014, more than 44,000 applications for recognition in a profession or occupation covered by the Federal Recognition Act were submitted. Just over 17,600 of these applications were made in 2014. In addition to this, there were over 6,600 recognition procedures for professions and occupations governed by federal state law in 2014 alone. In 2014, around 15,000 notices relating to professions and occupations governed by federal law were issued. 78 percent of these attested full equivalence. The rejection rate is once again at an extremely low level of 3.6 percent. The proportion of applications for recognition in a non-regulated reference occupation rose to just over 23 percent. The most common states of training of new applicants were Poland, Romania and Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 60 percent of applications made in 2014 related to recognition as a doctor or registered general nurse, professions in which there is a high shortage of skilled workers.

The number of skills analyses conducted as reported within the scope of the official statistics has risen from year to year. A look at the outcomes shows that around 85 percent of participants were

able to use the skills analysis to prove knowledge, skills and competences not demonstrable via required documents.

Expanding training provision, strengthening financing instruments

For the 2015 to 2018 funding period, the “Integration through Training” Programme (IQ) has been extended by adding a main action focus entitled “ESF training within the context of the Recognition Act”. In the first year, a total of 184 ESF-funded training measures involving just over 2,500 participants were conducted whilst more than 4,700 interested parties availed themselves of the new training consultations offered by the IQ initial counselling centres. Three quarters of measures were compensation measures in the regulated sector and bridging measures for persons holding academic qualifications. Language support was highly significant in all training areas.

Procedural fees account for only part of the overall costs of recognition. Further costs are incurred in respect of matters such as procurement of documentation for the application or further training to enable (full) recognition to be achieved. The existing financing instruments have been further developed and supplemented by new provision in some areas. These include new funding instruments at federal state level such as plans for scholarship programmes in Berlin and Baden-Württemberg to run alongside the existing scheme of this nature already established in Hamburg. In the IQ Programme in 2015, ESF training courses within the context of the Recognition Act were joined by the instrument of individual funding at federal level. Nevertheless, individual financing gaps may continue to exist, for example in the area of procedural costs.

Conclusion

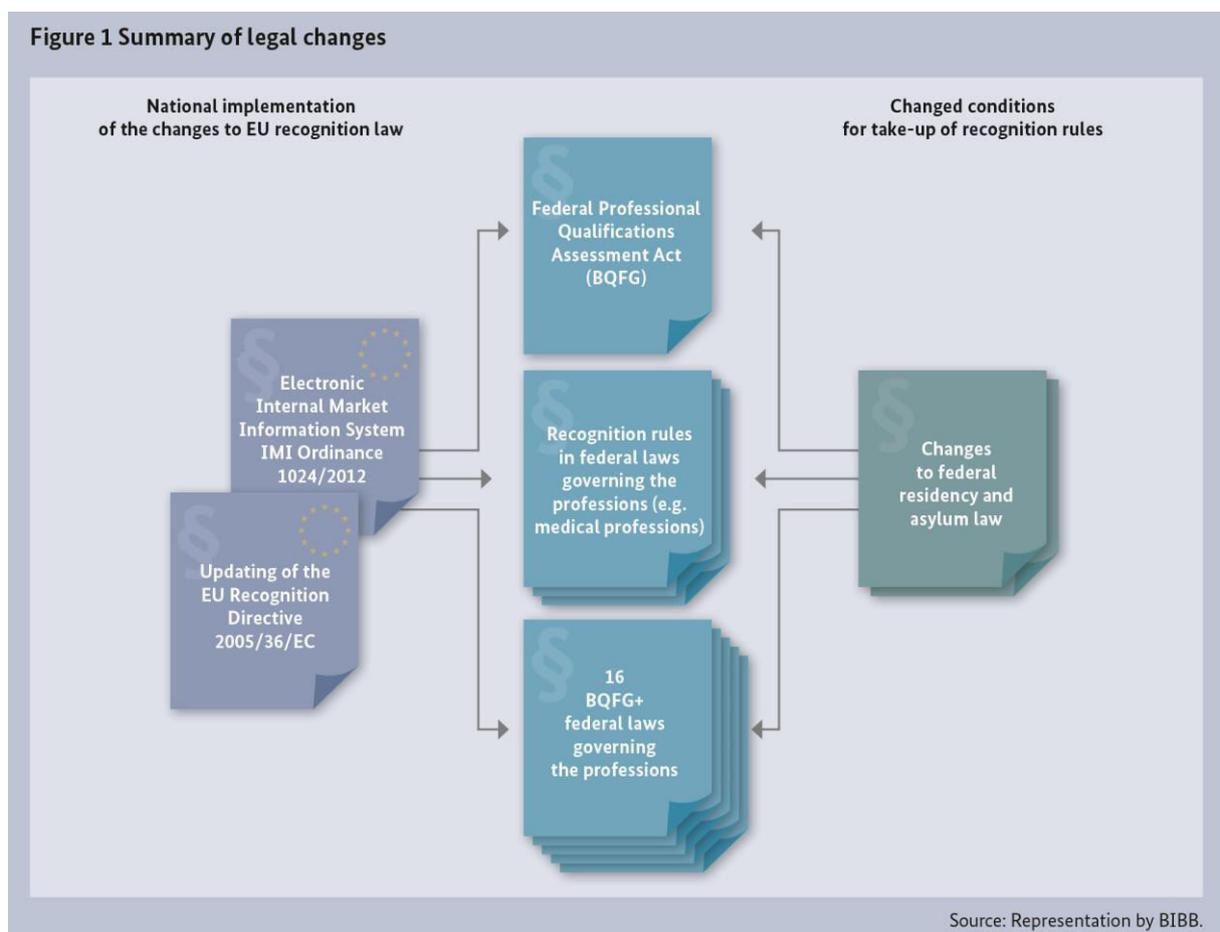
High level of demand and effective general conditions

The changes to recognition regulations presented and the measures initiated to bring about a necessary standardisation of administrative practice will continue to strengthen the effectiveness of the Recognition Act. The support projects described, which need to be expanded further, may help to tap into these areas of potential. More detailed investigation results regarding the impact of the Recognition Act will be presented in 2017 in the form of a separate evaluation report.

Not least in the light of rising numbers of refugees, the prospect is that a further growth in recognition procedures can be expected. The report shows that general conditions conducive to enabling the instrument of professional and occupational recognition to make a powerful contribution to training and integration into the labour market are already being put in place.

1. Basic legal principles of recognition developed further – residency and asylum law adjusted

Last year, the Federal Government and the federal states initiated a modernisation of their Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts, of the numerous laws governing the professions and of occupationally related legal ordinances. This further development of the legal framework was in particular necessary in order to implement the updated EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications in national law.¹The aim of the new EU Directive is to make it easier for citizens to access the labour market in another EU member state. In addition, changes to residency and asylum law have entered into force. These relate to matters such as establishing closer interlinking between recognition and immigration law. They allow immigration for training measures within the context of a recognition procedure. Also, occasioned by the migration of refugees, a series of changes had been made that will also have an impact on professional and occupational recognition. Figure 1 presents the correlation between the changes.



¹ Cf. the summary of required changes in the second Report on the Recognition Act (BMBF 2015, pp. 44 ff.).

1.1 Modernisation of recognition procedures – BQFG initiates the process at federal level

Directive 2013/55/EU amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications² needed to be implemented in Germany both within the Professional Qualifications Assessment Acts and in the laws governing the professions enacted by the Federal Government and the federal states. The essential objective of the current changes is to achieve improvements for persons who are already qualified or recognised in the EU and wish to work in another member state. The aim is to increase the mobility of workers within the European single market. In accordance with the scope of application of the EU Directive, the amendments primarily relate to regulated professions.

Some procedural simplifications are facilitated by the electronic Internal Market Information System (IMI), to which only EU and EEA states are connected. Other amendments aimed at improving the process also, however, apply equally to skilled workers from third countries. The extent to which further progress can be achieved in this regard remains to be seen.

The Federal Government BQFG Amendment Act, drawn up to meet the requirement to implement the EU stipulations in the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act and in German Industrial Code duly entered into force on 18 January 2016.³ The Federal BQFG as amended is widely in accordance with the BQFG's of the federal states and offers a possible point of reference for the specific laws and ordinances issued by the Federal Government in which professional and occupational recognition is in particular being regulated. More numerous references to the BQFG could both bring about further standardisations in the regulations and help to facilitate the changes to the law that will be necessary in future.

Possible to make electronic application for recognition of qualifications acquired in Europe

In accordance with new regulations in EU law, in regulated professions, necessary documentation (examination certificates, other evidence of competence) may be transmitted electronically alongside the application for recognition itself insofar as the certificates and evidence were issued or recognised inside the European Union or European Economic Area. This means that the whole of an application for these professions may be submitted in electronic form. The process can also be exercised at the so-called national contact points of the country in which the profession is to be exercised. The national contact point will then forward the documentation to the competent body which will execute the recognition procedure (cf. Chapter 1.3).

In the event of justified doubt as to the genuineness of the documents, the competent body may request information from the country of origin via the electronic Internal Market Information System (IMI) or arrange for applicants to submit certified copies. The benefits afforded by the possibility of electronic transmission of documents include saving of postage costs and acceleration of application procedures. Application by post is still possible.

² Directive 2013/55/EU of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC (OJ L 354 of 28 December 2012, p. 132). The amended Directive was required to be implemented in the national law of member states by 18 January 2016.

³ Law for the Amendment of the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act and other laws (BQFG-ÄndG) of 22 December 2015, (Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I No. 55, p. 2572, https://www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/1965_1964.php).

Even better use can be made of official statistics in future

In addition, further opportunities for the transmission of statistical information to the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) have now been incorporated into the BQFG. The purpose of this amendment is to support the evaluation of the Recognition Act which is statutorily required and to facilitate ongoing monitoring of the recognition rules by the Federal Government.

1.2 Modernisation of laws governing the professions enacted by the Federal Government

Far-reaching changes have emerged from the new EU stipulations, particularly with regard to the healthcare professions. The Federal Government has enacted an implementation law for EU Directive 2013/55/EU. This relates to medical professions governed by federal law and to other professions. It entered into force on 23 April 2016 in Kraft.⁴

The three most important new features to emerge in the wake of the EU Directive are the introduction of the European Professional Card, an alert mechanism and partial access to a profession. Further changes affect areas such as minimum requirements for training in certain professions⁵ and the exclusion of duration of training, irrespective of training contents, as a key criterion for the term “substantial differences”.

European Professional Card already in use

The so-called European Professional Card (EPC) is a new instrument that constitutes an electronic certificate. It is issued within the scope of a procedure stipulated across the EU and via an existing technical environment – the Internal Market Information System (IMI). The aim is for the EPC to be more user friendly than conventional documentation processes in the recognition procedure and to facilitate more rapid procedures that involve less administrative expense.

Initially, the EU has established the EPC for the five professions of nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, mountain guide and real estate agent.⁶ It may be used for the provision of temporary services or for the purpose of settlement.

The Commission has announced that the EPC will also be introduced for other professions. For this reason, a statutory ordinance for the EPC not thus far used has been included in the BQFG and in German Industrial Code alongside the changes applying to the healthcare professions as currently stated.⁷

⁴ Law of 18 April 2016 for the implementation of Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (‘the IMI Regulation’) for medical professions governed by federal law and for other professions, Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I No. 19, p. 886, cf. www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl116s0886.pdf.

⁵ Doctors, dentists, dispensing chemists, midwives, registered general nurses and architects.

⁶ Commission Implementing Regulation EU 2015/983, OJ L 159 of 25 June 2015, p. 27.

⁷ The intention is that this statutory ordinance will be triggered when an EU implementing act regarding the stipulation of professions for which the European Professional Card is introduced encompasses professions which relate to the BQFG or are regulated pursuant to German Industrial Code.

Applications and certificates are submitted via an online procedure and initially checked by the competent authority in the country of origin with regard to genuineness and completeness. The competent authority of the host state then acts within stipulated deadlines to decide upon recognition of the qualifications and issues the Card. Depending on the profession in question, further evidence relating to areas such as language knowledge or health status may still need to be submitted in order for authorisation to practise to be given. Because formal checking of evidence of qualifications takes place in the host state, the burden for the applicant and for the authorities is reduced.

It is noticeable that this new possibility of a simplified procedure began to be used directly after its introduction. Despite the very small number of professions covered,⁸ within the first three weeks of the launch of the scheme on 18 January 2016 the authorities had already recorded more than 242 EPC applications across the EU. Four in five applications related to one of the three healthcare professions, the most popular being physiotherapist.

Alert mechanism for patient safety and consumer protection

EU stipulations, and therefore also the laws governing the professions, provide for an alert mechanism in two cases. One such case is when national authorities ban individuals from exercising a profession completely, partially or temporarily. In such an event, the competent authorities in all EU countries must be notified. This applies to professions which impact on patient safety (for examples, see footnote 5), to veterinary surgeons and to professions which affect the safety of those whom they have in charge (e.g. nursery school teachers). By the same token, duty to provide information further applies if a court establishes that someone has made use of falsified evidence of professional or vocational qualifications in a recognition procedure. This applies to all occupational groups. In both cases, the alert is required to take place through the Internal Market Information System, either via the competent body or via the court dealing with the case (legal foundations are being prepared in this regard).

Partial access to a profession may help reduce barriers

The new regulations further permit “partial access to a profession” if the respective occupational profiles and training courses differ in the EU states. The prerequisite is that the result of an equivalence assessment would be that the applicant would need to complete compensation measures within the scope of the overall training programme in order to obtain full professional access in the host country. Because this represents too high a hurdle, access to a profession may be restricted to the part of the occupational profile for which the person is qualified. “Partial access to a profession” already exists at federal level (cf. for example § 8 Paragraph 2 of the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code, HwO) and has now become the object of statutory regulation in individual healthcare professions governed by federal law (psychotherapist, psychotherapist for children and young people, occupations regulated by the Medical Technical Assistants Law⁹).

In order to observe use of the new instruments, the intention is that the official statistics pursuant to § 17 BQFG or pursuant to the laws governing the professions that make reference to § 17 BQFG will

⁸ Applications up until 8 February taken into account, source: information provided by the EU Commission on 9 February 2016.

⁹ Law on Technical Assistants in the Medical Sector of 2 August 1993 (Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I p. 1402).

include new characteristics in the form of “partial access to a profession” and use of the “European Professional Card”. This is expected to be in place from the 2016 reporting year onwards.

Further improvements in recognition procedures which also apply to qualifications from third countries

Improvements in recognition procedures have been achieved within the scope of the implementation of Directive 2013/55/EU. The following changes also apply to qualifications from non-EU states.

The precedence of the equivalence assessment prior to checking of the necessary language knowledge has been strengthened in law. The equivalence of the qualification should usually be checked before demonstration of the required language skills. This represents an important statutory clarification, especially for applications from abroad. On request, the authority is required to provide applicants with a separate notice regarding equivalence.

The stipulations contained within the Directive modify the term “substantial differences”. Duration of training is no longer considered to be a key criterion independently of training contents.

A further stipulation is that applicants must be offered the opportunity to complete an aptitude or knowledge test for the purpose of compensating for substantial differences within a deadline of six months.

Further adaptations in federal laws

In order to implement the European stipulations, the EU/EEA Ordinance on the Craft Trades¹⁰ has also been amended. The amendment entered into force on 1 April 2016, whereby the chambers were able to apply the new stipulations with effect from the cut-off date of 18 January 2016.

Amendments to the laws governing the professions of veterinary surgeon, lawyer and patent lawyer and other legal services providers are also being prepared and should be concluded shortly.

The amendment to the Ordinance on the recognition of European professional qualifications for civil service career entry¹¹ is already in force. This applies to Federal Government employees with qualifications from other EU states. Partial access to a profession is also now possible.

1.3 National contact points and new assistance centre

A further new feature introduced by the EU Directive is that the national contact points established by the Services in the Internal Market Directive¹² can now also be used for recognition

¹⁰ Ordinance of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology (BMW) regarding the prerequisites for entitlement to operate an independent business in crafts or trades where a licence and possession of a master craftsman qualification is required for nationals of a member state of the EU, nationals of treaty states to the European Economic Area (EEA) or nationals of Switzerland (EU/EWR HwO) of 18 March 2016, Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I p. 509; cf. www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl116s0509.pdf.

¹¹ Ordinance on the recognition of professional qualifications for civil service career entry, most recently amended via the Ordinance of 5 January 2016 (Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I p. 6).

¹² Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market (OJ. L 376 of 27 December 2006, p. 36; see also Federal Parliament Printed Paper 18/5326.

procedures.¹³The national contact points are set up by the federal states. Some are housed at federal state authorities (ministries, regional councils etc.) and others at chambers (of commerce and industry) or chamber associations. Their remit is usually confined to provision of information and to the acceptance and forwarding of applications and procedural correspondence. The “Recognition in Germany” portal provides a downloadable summary of all 16 national contact portals for Germany.¹⁴

Within the area of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, provision of information currently primarily takes place via the link between the e-government portals of the federal states with which the national contact points work (“Authority Finder Germany”) to the “Recognition in Germany” portal. There are prospective plans to create a connection between these two systems via a technical interface so as to allow exchange of data to take place.

Alongside data protection, one considerable challenge prior to the forwarding of applications would be to persuade applicants to seek guidance (IQ initial counselling centres, competent bodies), because this does not usually take place via the national contact points. The BQFG stipulates integration of the national contact points pursuant to Directive 2005/36/EC for the regulated professions only.

BIBB is the German assistance centre

The task of acting as the German assistance centre for issues relating to recognition of professional or vocational qualifications at EU level was transferred to BIBB with effect from 18 January 2016.¹⁵The new assistance centre provides EU citizens and assistance centres in other member states with information on the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications in Germany.

1.4 Recognition laws and laws governing the professions enacted by the federal states also updated

Just as at Federal Government level, the BQFG’s, laws governing the professions and legal ordinances in all 16 federal states needed to be amended as of 18 January 2016 in order to implement the EU Directive. As in 2013 when the first BQFG’s of the Federal Government and federal states were drawn up, the basis for these amendments was a Model BQFG Amendment Law agreed between the Federal Government and federal states. This contains the changes necessary to implement the EU Directive and was prepared within the framework of the Working Group of the “Coordinating Departments” of the federal states with participation by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). In accordance with the respective scope of application, the BQFG Amendment Acts of the Federal Government and the federal states deviate from one another in parts.

¹³ Cf. Article 57 Directive 2005/36/EC.

¹⁴ See www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/1951.php.

¹⁵ Administrative agreement on the use of the information and service agency of the federal Government for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications as an assistance centre pursuant to Article 57b of the EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, concluded between the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology (BMWi) and BIBB on 14 January 2016.

Information on the amendments is available on the “Recognition in Germany” portal and has been included in the results pages for the individual professions and occupations in the so-called Recognition Finder.¹⁶

1.5 Changes to residency law and take-up of the Recognition Act

New legal regulations relating to professional and occupational recognition were also introduced with regard to new migration of skilled workers and integration of persons seeking asylum and protection.

Gap closed in residency law for training

There was initially very little take-up of the opportunities for migration of skilled workers without academic qualifications in shortage occupations created by the updating of the Employment Ordinance (BeschV) in 2013. The visa offices and Aliens Departments were uncertain whether a residence permit, and if so which residence permit, could be issued within the context of § 8 BeschV for participation in a compensation measure.¹⁷

The entry into force of the amended German Residency Act (AufenthG) on 1 August 2015¹⁸ created a uniform permit for all adaptation measures, which optimises the interfaces between the Recognition Act and residency law and closes gaps in the law. The new residence permit pursuant to § 17a AufenthG permits skilled workers from third countries to compensate for substantial differences identified within the scope of a recognition procedure by taking part in a training measure (adaptation courses, language courses, courses to prepare for the knowledge test) in Germany. In order to cover their living costs during such a training measure, applicants in possession of this residence permit may gain experience of employment in an area closely related to the occupation in which recognition is sought. They can also use the permit to take a knowledge test as part of the recognition process and may look for a job for a period of up to one year following successful completion of the adaptation measure.¹⁹ Foreign skilled workers thus have an opportunity to qualify for full equivalence and become integrated into the labour market.

In overall terms, the amendments to residency and labour migration law which have been introduced in conjunction with recognition regulations over recent years have created a set of instruments which expands opportunities for legal migration to Germany.

Earlier registration of the professional and occupational knowledge of refugees

At the same time, the Federal Government has put a mechanism in place which will allow better use to be made of the prior professional and occupational knowledge of newly arrived migrants. The

¹⁶ See www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/laendergesetze.php.

¹⁷ BMBF 2015, pp. 102 ff.

¹⁸ Amended by the Law on the redetermination of right and termination of residence of 27 July 2015, Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I No. 32 of 31 July 2015, p. 1386.

¹⁹ For details on the individual regulations, see “Information Sheet § 17a AufenthG” issued by the Federal Employment Agency in October 2015 on Employment of foreigners from third countries within the recognition procedure pursuant to § 17a AufenthG.

introduction of a new Central Arrivals Registry as part of the Data Exchange Improvement Act²⁰ which entered into force on 5 February 2016 makes it possible to collect data (in particular on prior school learning, higher education study, training, profession or occupation and language knowledge) for the conducting of integration measures. Data is passed on from the registration agencies to the Central Register of Foreign Nationals (AZR) and to the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and made available to the competent bodies responsible for providing basic social security benefits to job seekers.

How this data collection will function in practice remains to be seen. If utilisable information in German on training, profession or occupation and competences is to be collected from the target group at the time of entry to the country, sophisticated procedures will be needed.

Further statutory changes aimed at the more rapid labour market integration of refugees and affecting professional and occupational recognition were mainly introduced within the scope of the Asylum Procedure Acceleration Act (AsylVfBG), the so-called Asylum Package I (see remarks in Chapter 7). These include language support and early activation for the labour market, for example via an opportunity to record competences and offer placement support instruments whilst migrants are still at initial reception institutes.

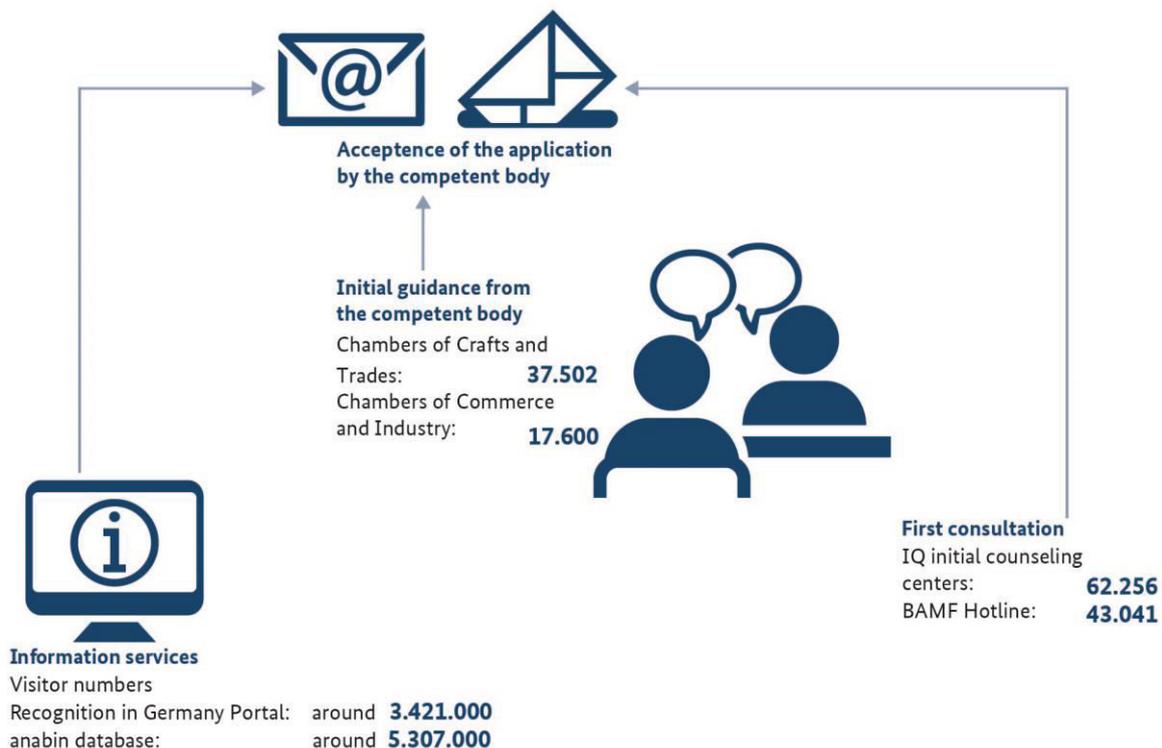
2. Still a high degree of interest in information and guidance

The information and guidance provision that has been put in place on the topic of recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications continues to be highly significant and an essential factor in terms of successful recognition and labour market integration in a way that is in line with a person's skills. Up to the end of 2015, the information services available online were used more than 8 million times, and over 160,000 parties availed themselves of initial guidance or a first consultation (cf. Figure 2). Both the numbers of hits received²¹ by the information services (cf. Chapter 2.1) and the guidance data (cf. Chapter 2.2) make it clear that demand both in Germany and from abroad is constantly rising.

²⁰ Law for the improvement of registration and of data exchange for residency and asylum law purposes (Data Exchange Improvement Act) of 2 February 2016, Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. I No. 5 of 4 February 2016, p. 130.

²¹ Because the methods deployed by web analysis tools are inconsistent and variable in some cases, the numbers of hits stated below are not fully comparable. For further information, see BMBF 2015, pp. 65 ff.

Figure 2 Routes to the application – Information and guidance volume at selected institutions 2012 to 2015 (in absolute terms)



Source: Representation by BIBB. For further information on the survey period, see the following sections. Cut-off date 31 December 2015.

The overall picture with regard to use of guidance provision shows that since the entry into force of the law there has been particular take-up from persons with considerable labour market potential who are well qualified and in possession of professional and vocational qualifications which are in strong demand on the German labour market. The majority was not older than 34.

2.1 Intensive use of established information provision

The information services which have been established are enjoying increasingly frequent use. As in previous years, the numbers of hits to the Internet portal “Recognition in Germany”²² have continued to rise and reached just under 1.5 million visits in 2015. The portal recorded around 1.1 million visits in 2014. This represents a rise of approximately one third. The portal enables comprehensive information to be accessed on every aspect of the topic of recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. The right competent body for every German reference occupation can be identified by using the so-called Recognition Finder.

The portal is also aimed at an international and multilingual audience. Taking into account the Arabic version launched in the spring of 2016, the portal is now available in a total of nine different languages.²³ Expansion to encompass further languages, including Russian, is being prepared. Since April 2016, the portal has also been offering a new recognition app for refugees, which enables them

²² “Recognition in Germany” (www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de) is the official Federal Government portal for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. For further information, see BMBF 2015, p. 65 ff. and BMBF 2014, pp. 33 ff. Survey period of access data: March 2012 to December 2015.

²³ The languages on offer are German, English, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Polish, Turkish, Greek and Arabic.

to download information and service provision tailored to their needs. The international alignment of the portal is increasingly taking effect. In 2015, more than half of the visits to the site were from abroad, predominantly from Italy, Turkey, the USA and India.²⁴

The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)²⁵ uses the public area of the anabin database to make detailed information on the national educational systems of 180 countries available to authorities, to employers, to educational institutions (primarily institutes of higher education) and to persons interested in seeking recognition. The database indexes and evaluates just under 30,000 educational institutions, 25,000 higher education qualifications and 1,600 secondary qualifications. In addition, recognition bodies can access more than 30,000 sample assessments in the internal area of the site. Almost two million hits were registered in 2015, more than double the total for 2012.

The BQ Portal²⁶, which is mainly aimed at competent bodies and companies and currently provides more than 1,500 occupational profiles from 70 countries, around 70 descriptions of foreign VET systems in its public area and over 700 evaluation results in its internal section²⁷, also enjoyed increased popularity. Visitor numbers rose from an average of approximately 7,300 per month in 2014 to over 10,000 in 2015. Strong growth has been recorded since September 2015 in particular. Since this time, information on the Syrian vocational education and training system has in particular been very frequently accessed. In over 20 percent of cases, visits to the BQ Portal took place from abroad.

2.2 Strong demand for first consultation from IQ initial counselling centres and the BAMF Hotline

Since 2012, staff at the initial counselling centres operating within the scope of the “Integration through Training” funding programme (IQ)²⁸ and at the hotline run by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF Hotline)²⁹ have been offering a first consultation service which provides information and guidance on fundamental questions and prerequisites for the take-up of a recognition procedure. Account needs to be taken of the fact that provision is of varying advisory detail and intensity. In addition, persons interested in seeking recognition are referred on to the relevant competent body.³⁰ The first consultation thus makes a major contribution towards successful recognition and with regard to good expectation management on the part of the persons interested

²⁴ In 2014, the proportion of portal visits from abroad was around 47 percent.

²⁵ For information on the ZAB, cf. BMBF 2015, pp. 55 ff. and BMBF 2014, pp. 33 ff. Survey period for access data to anabin: 2007 to December 2015.

²⁶ For further information on the BQ Portal, cf. BMBF 2015, pp. 54 ff. and BMBF 2014, pp. 38 ff. Survey period of the access data: March 2012 to December 2015.

²⁷ Last updated: 31 December 2015.

²⁸ In some federal states, the Federal Government funding programme is supplemented by guidance provision which is wholly or partly financed by the federal states themselves. Some federal state laws contain an additional statutory right to receive advice insofar as the holders of foreign professional or vocational qualifications live in the particular federal state or intend to work there.

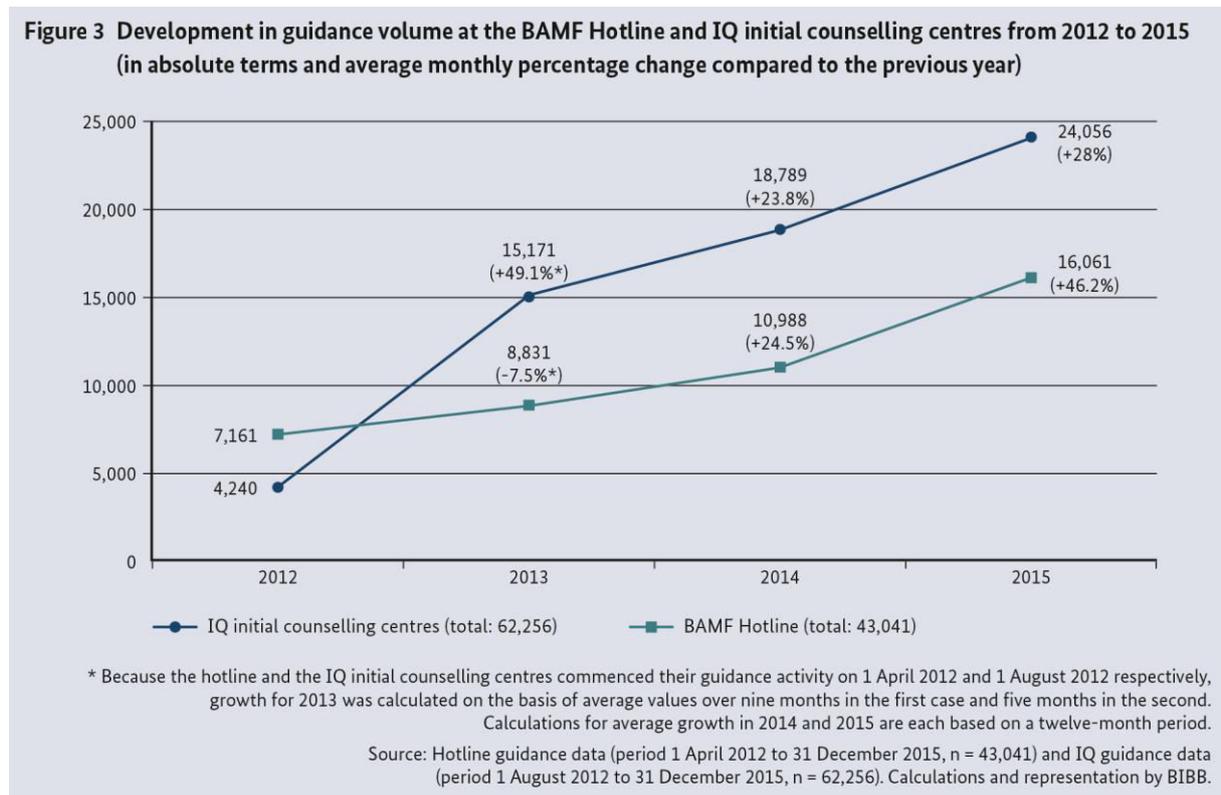
²⁹ Since 1 December 2014, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) Recognition Hotline has continued as part of the “Working and Living in Germany” Hotline, a cross-departmental initiative by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology (BMWi), the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA). As well as dealing with recognition, the hotline also provides guidance on the topics of looking for a job, work and occupations, entry and residency and learning German via the BAMF and the Central Foreign and Specialist Placement Agency (ZAV).

³⁰ For further information on first consultations, cf. BMBF 2015, pp. 55 ff. and BMBF 2014, pp. 75 ff.

in seeking recognition. In the case of the IQ initial counselling centres, preparatory, procedural and follow-up support is also provided. In order to facilitate access to a first consultation for as many potential recognition applicants as possible, mobile guidance provision is also becoming increasingly relevant alongside the locally based counselling centres making up the IQ Networks, which are mostly based in larger cities. This approach means that mobile appointments for a first consultation can be made in smaller towns and rural areas. Meetings take place at venues such as schools, town halls and adult education centres.³¹

IQ initial counselling centres and the BAMF Hotline experience a considerable increase in guidance volume

The number of persons receiving advice from the IQ initial counselling centres and the BAMF Hotline is constantly rising (cf. Figure 3).³² In 2015, average monthly volume at IQ initial counselling centres increased by 28 percent compared to the previous year, whilst the hotline recorded an increase of just over 46 percent. 105,000 first consultations have been conducted in total since 2012. Over 62,200³³ of these were handled by the IQ initial counselling centres, and around 43,000 took place via the hotline.³⁴



³¹ Examples of good practice can be found at: www.netzwerk-iq.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Downloads/IQ_Publikationen/Good_Practice/GP_Anerkennung_Mobile_Beratung.pdf.

³² With regard to the figures presented in Chapter 2.2, cf. also Benzer et al. 2016. Also see the dataset description for guidance data in the Annex.

³³ This relates to the number of persons who “[had] their first guidance contact with an IQ initial counselling centre. The number [of all] consultations conducted (guidance performance) is, however, higher, since initial contact is usually followed by further contacts with the persons seeking advice” (Benzer et al. 2016, p. 18). 1.7 guidance contacts per person take place on average (cf. *ibid*).

³⁴ All percentage and absolute values stated in Chapter 2.2 relate to valid information only.

Growing interest in guidance from the BAMF Hotline from third countries

During the period from 2012 to 2015, a total of just over five percent of persons obtaining guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres were not resident in Germany. By way of contrast, the corresponding proportion recorded for the BAMF Hotline was 33 percent. IQ initial counselling centres³⁵ primarily conduct face-to-face consultations, whereas the hotline³⁶ places a particular emphasis on telephone-based guidance. This helps to explain the difference in user numbers in respect of persons whose place of residence is outside Germany.

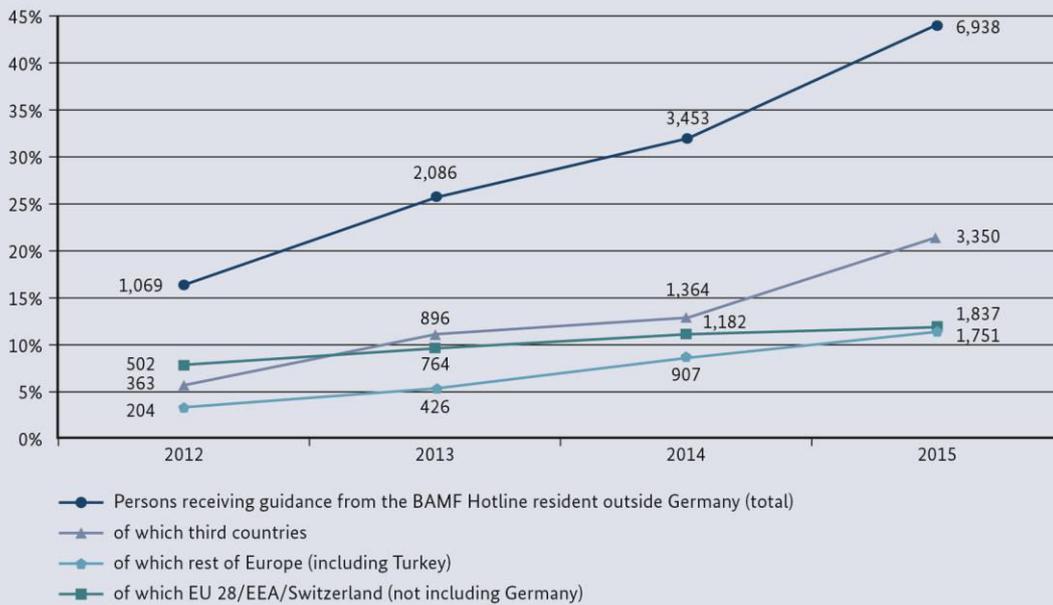
Particularly in the case of the BAMF Hotline, the number of contacts from abroad has risen considerably since 2012. Figure 4 shows the quantity of persons resident outside Germany receiving guidance from the hotline over the course of time, both in overall terms and for various country categories. This makes it clear that the topic of recognition is also becoming increasingly significant for those who live abroad. There has been a particular increase in the proportion of persons interested in seeking recognition whose place of residence was in a third country at the time when guidance took place. This figure has quadrupled from just over five percent in 2012 to over 21 percent in 2015. It is also possible that a multilingual information flyer produced by the BAMF and the BMBF and specially designed for use abroad has contributed towards the greater use of the BAMF Hotline by making explicit reference to the Hotline as a source of initial information.³⁷In order to take account of the growing requirement for recognition guidance abroad, the BMBF has been funding “ProRecognition – Professional & Vocational Qualifications for Germany”, a project launched by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), since October 2015. Further information on this is provided in Chapter 2.4.

³⁵ First consultations at the IQ initial counselling centres also take place by telephone or e-mail as well as in face-to-face form. In the whole of the period of observation from 2012 to 2015, 68 percent of first consultations were conducted on a face-to-face basis whilst just over 31 percent were carried out over the telephone or by e-mail.

³⁶ Alongside telephone-based first consultations, the BAMF Hotline also offers guidance via e-mail or post. In the whole of the period of observation from 2012 to 2015, 70 percent of consultations were by telephone. Just under 30 percent took place by e-mail and well under one percent by post.

³⁷ The flyer is available at:
www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Flyer/AnerkennungBerufsabschluss/anererkennung-berufsabschluss.html.

Figure 4 BAMF Hotline: Development in guidance volume for persons resident outside Germany – overall and in categorised form (in absolute terms and percent)



Source: Hotline guidance data (period: 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2015, n = 43,041). Not included: 'Persons receiving guidance who are resident in Germany', 'Stateless persons' and 'Others'. Calculations and representation by BIBB.

Most persons seeking guidance have only been in Germany since recently

Over half of persons interested in seeking recognition and resident in Germany at the time when guidance took place had been in the country for no more than two years. The hotline recorded a period of residency of less than one year in 51 percent of cases whilst the corresponding figure for the IQ initial counselling centres was 42 percent. Nine percent of persons receiving guidance from the BAMF Hotline and just over 13 percent of those obtaining advice from the IQ initial counselling centres had been in Germany for between one and two years. Twelve percent (BAMF Hotline) and just under 16 percent (IQ initial counselling centres) had lived in the country for between three and five years.

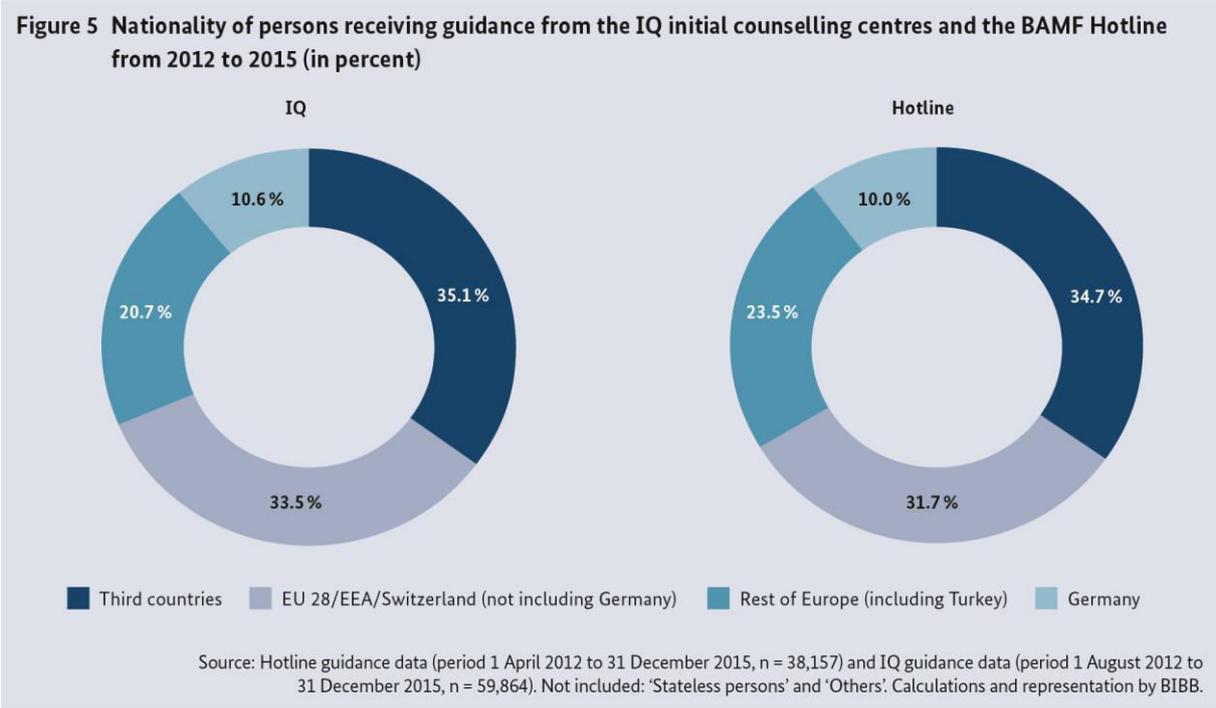
Over the course of time, it is revealed that migrants waited less and less time after arrival in Germany before availing themselves of a first consultation. Whereas in 2012 32 percent of those seeking guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres had been in Germany for no longer than one year, by 2015 this figure had almost reached 50 percent. The corresponding proportions for the BAMF Hotline were 38 percent in 2012 and nearly 57 percent in 2015.

Increasing numbers of persons seeking guidance are Indian or Syrian nationals

Ten percent of persons interested in seeking recognition who have obtained a first consultation from the IQ initial counselling centres or the BAMF Hotline since 2012 have held German citizenship.³⁸ The majority, however, were nationals of one of the other EU-28 states (including the European Economic Area, EEA, and Switzerland) or of a third country such as India or Syria (cf. Figure 5). The

³⁸ Information in the text and in the accompanying figure relate to first nationality. A decision was taken not to evaluate occasional instances of the stating of a second nationality.

spectrum of various nationalities is broad. Guidance was provided to persons who were nationals of a total of 180 different countries.



Since 2012, Germans in possession of a foreign professional or vocational qualification have formed the largest group of persons contacting the BAMF Hotline. Nevertheless, their proportion has more than halved from just under 18 percent in 2012 to seven percent in 2015. A similar development can also be observed with regard to applications submitted (cf. Chapter 3). In 2015, the second and third most frequent nationalities were Indian and Polish. The number of Indian nationals has seen a particular increase, easily doubling from 318 consultations in 2014 to 829 in 2015.

Since 2013, the IQ initial counselling centres have recorded a considerable rise in the number of Syrian nationals. Whereas this group represented fewer than three percent of all persons seeking guidance in 2012 and 2013, their proportion went up from just under six percent in 2014 to just over 15 percent in 2015. Persons seeking recognition who were of Syrian origin formed the largest group of those receiving guidance in 2015, accounting for 3,357 consultations. They were followed by Polish and German nationals in second and third place (see also Chapter 7.3).

Many persons interested in seeking recognition are highly qualified and young

The gender ratio has virtually levelled out since the establishment of guidance provision in 2012. Those seeking guidance have also become somewhat younger on average. The proportion of persons aged under 35 receiving guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres has risen from 47 percent in 2012 to 57 percent in 2015. In the case of the hotline, this proportion rose from 54 percent in 2012 to 66 percent in 2015. By way of contrast, the proportion of persons aged 35 and older at the time when guidance is given has been falling since 2012.

Since 2012, those interested in recognition who seek a consultation from the Hotline and IQ initial counselling centres have exhibited a consistently high level of formal qualification³⁹. In both cases, two thirds were in possession of at least one higher education qualification and one third held one or more training qualifications⁴⁰. Despite the high level of qualification, somewhat more than two thirds of all those obtaining guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres were not in employment. Just under 70 percent were in receipt of (supplementary) benefits pursuant to Social Security Code (SGB) II or III or in accordance with the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act.

The most frequent reference occupations on which guidance was provided were teacher, engineer, registered general nurse and doctor (issuing of licence to practise) (cf. Table 1). The last three of these are bottleneck professions in which a shortage of skilled workers is either impending or already exists.⁴¹ Alongside professions governed by federal and federal state law, the top ten list also includes non-regulated academic professions (such as information technology specialist) for which there is no statutorily regulated recognition procedure. There is, however, the possibility of a certificate evaluation by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) in accordance with the Lisbon Convention. This shows that the first consultations provided by the IQ initial counselling centres and the Hotline are taken up by all persons interested in recognition regardless of the area of regulation.

³⁹ The guidance statistics from 2012 to 2015 only permitted the recording of formal qualifications. For this reason, a distinction is simply drawn at this point between vocational training and higher education qualifications. Since 2016, those receiving guidance who do not have a formal qualification have also been included in the guidance statistics. It will be possible to present information for this group in future reports.

⁴⁰ Just under 30 percent (BAMF Hotline) and 33 percent (IQ initial counselling centres) of those receiving guidance were in possession of a vocational training qualification. Just under 66 percent (BAMF Hotline) and 55 percent (IQ initial counselling centres) held a higher education qualification. About one percent (BAMF Hotline) and six percent (IQ initial counselling centres) had both a vocational training and a higher education qualification. The remaining persons receiving guidance were in possession of two or more training and/or higher education qualifications.

⁴¹ Cf. BA 2015a.

Table 1 The ten most common qualifications (reference occupations and higher education qualifications) forming an object of guidance for the IQ initial counselling centres and the BAMF Hotline (in absolute terms and in percent)

IQ initial counselling centres	absolute	%	BAMF Hotline	absolute	%
Teacher	6,689	11.0	Engineer	3,659	9.0
Engineer	5,210	8.5	Teacher	3,289	8.1
Registered general nurse	2,371	3.9	Registered general nurse	3,100	7.7
Doctor	2,089	3.4	Doctor	2,535	6.3
Business economist	1,880	3.1	Business economist	1,631	4.0
Nursery school teacher	1,833	3.0	Nursery school teacher	1,415	3.5
Economist	1,480	2.4	Dentist	909	2.2
Economic scientist	1,442	2.4	Information technology specialist	843	2.1
Social education worker, social worker	1072	1.8	Social education worker, social worker	771	1.9
Psychologist	975	1.6	Lawyer	709	1.8
Top 10 overall	25,041	41.0	Top 10 overall	18,861	46.6
Further reference occupations	36,008	59.0	Further reference occupations	21,600	53.4
Total	61,049	100.0	Total	40,461	100.0

Source: Hotline guidance data (period 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2015, n = 40,461) and IQ guidance data (period 1 August 2012 to 31 December 2015, n = 61,049). Calculations by the "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme.

Recognition guidance provided by the labour administration bodies and guidance services for adult migrants (adult migrant guidance centres, MBE's)

The employment agencies, the Job Centres and the adult migrant guidance centres (MBE's) have further established themselves as important stakeholders in the field of recognition of foreign qualifications. As well as being a major funder (cf. Chapter 5), the labour administration bodies frequently provide guidance to those interested in seeking recognition. The MBE's also offer advice, and their services also include support in the identification of the competent body.⁴² In many cases, all three stakeholders have good links to the IQ initial counselling centres. The networking that takes place between the labour administration bodies and the IQ initial counselling centres represent a particularly important factor in terms of assessing assumption of costs prior to the recognition procedures.

2.3 High volume of guidance at the competent bodies

The need for guidance on the part of applicants is high in overall terms and constantly rising. This is also revealed in the feedback received from staff at the recognition bodies responsible for the professions of doctor and registered general nurse. They have reported that the high volumes of telephone and personal enquiries received means that it is not always possible to process

⁴² On the topic of recognition guidance via the labour administration bodies and MBE's, cf. also BMBF 2015, pp. 191 ff. Specific figures for recognition guidance at the labour administration bodies and MBE's are not available.

applications.⁴³ Some competent bodies see an urgent need for more staff at the federal state authorities.

Over 55,000 initial consultations in the chamber area

The chambers offer initial guidance⁴⁴ on vocational qualifications acquired abroad if recognition of such qualifications falls within their respective area of responsibility.⁴⁵ The most consultations took place in North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. Within the scope of these initial consultations, the chambers provide information on the procedure, legal foundations, requirements and possible costs and financing options. They also clarify the aims of the procedure and highlight alternative measures to a recognition procedure if appropriate. In addition, available documents are viewed during the initial consultations. The initial guidance provided by the chambers is designed on an individual basis in order to prepare for the procedure ahead and is offered free of charge. The human resources costs involved are considerable. In 2015, the local chambers of commerce and industry conducted more than 4,000⁴⁶ consultations. The corresponding figure for the chambers of crafts and trades was in excess of 11,000. In overall terms, more than 55,000 consultations have been reported since 1 April 2012. Just over 17,600 of these were carried out by the local chambers of commerce and industry and 37,500 by the chambers of crafts and trades. The chambers also performed numerous referral consultations and consultations relating to the Federal Expellees Act (BVFG). In the trade and industry sector, there have been more than 20,000 referral consultations and about 1,300 consultations in connection with the BVFG since 2012. Relevant data from the chambers of crafts and trades is not available.⁴⁷

2.4 Information and guidance services abroad undergoing further expansion

As part of the new “ProRecognition” Project, the guidance and information opportunities available in Germany have, since October 2015, been supplemented for the first time by advisory centres set up at eight foreign chambers of commerce and industry and German trade delegations (Egypt, China/Shanghai, India, Iran, Italy, Morocco, Poland and Vietnam). The aim is to provide locally based guidance on the prerequisites and on the procedure for the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications in Germany. The qualified guidance on offer enables interested parties to

⁴³ Results of a workshop conducted by BIBB with competent bodies in the healthcare sector (cf. Chapter 4).

⁴⁴ Because there is no binding definition of this term, it may not always be applied conterminously in different chamber areas. 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 is not used by all chambers of commerce and industry (including the IHK FOSA – Foreign Skills Approval Competence Centre of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry). For this reason, data from the chamber of commerce and industry sector should be interpreted as a minimum figure. Survey period of the guidance data: 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2015.

⁴⁵ Craft trade occupations, private sector technical occupations and commercial occupations in which training in Germany takes place within the dual system.

⁴⁶ The DIHK data management tool is used to record both initial consultations and other guidance services. The DIHK estimates that around 80 percent of cases relate to initial guidance. For this reason, the total number of consultations recorded in the data management tool in 2015 is above the figure stated here. Only 80 percent have been taken into account.

⁴⁷ For more detailed information on the chamber-specific guidance and procedural process see BMBF 2015, pp. 52 ff. and pp. 82 ff. and BMBF 2014, pp. 75 ff.

decide to apply for recognition of their qualification whilst still in their home country. This could lead to a rise in the number of applications received from abroad (cf. Chapter 3). The foreign chambers of commerce and industry are thus able to help with the qualifications-related labour market integration of persons who wish to come to Germany in order to work.

The motives for seeking recognition of a professional or vocational qualification vary widely from country to country. Whereas some interested parties believe that they have long-term professional opportunities in Germany, others wish to use the possibility of a temporary period of work in the country as a springboard for their further career. This project, which is funded by the BMBF and executed by the DIHK, initially runs until September 2018.

In order also to expand and improve online information services on professional and occupational recognition, the information and service agency of the federal Government for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, which is based at BIBB, conducted a foreign campaign to promote the Recognition Portal. This campaign was launched on behalf of the BMBF and took place between July 2014 and July 2015. The aim was to provide information on the opportunities and necessities of recognition to persons interested in migrating to Germany. The campaign was staged in the target countries of Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and Turkey. Some elements were also conducted online. The common focus was on cooperation with multipliers who advise immigrants and maintain contact with them. These include German missions abroad, foreign chambers of commerce and industry, Goethe Institutes and language schools. In addition, online advertising measures and local PR activities also took place in some target countries. In overall terms, the foreign campaign has produced a considerably higher level of interest in the Recognition Portal and in guidance services (such as the BAMF Hotline). The information and service agency has also established initial contacts with embassies, missions abroad and further foreign stakeholders. This can now be used as a basis to develop further provision. A further lasting outcome of the foreign campaign is the extensive multilingual expansion of information provision. In overall terms, this is now even more closely aligned to the needs of persons interested in seeking recognition and is thus more user-friendly.

The visa offices based at the missions abroad also play a significant role in the guidance of foreign skilled workers. Because the recognition procedure is in some cases a prerequisite for the issuing of a residence permit to foreign skilled workers, any issues relating to recognition should be clarified before the visa application process is instigated. In order to ensure quality of guidance, the instructions contained in the Visa Handbook have been revised, particularly with regard to the new § 17a of the German Residency Act (AufenthG).

3. Official statistics – growing demand and a fall in the rejection rate

As has already become clear in the presentations relating to information and guidance services, the demand for recognition of professional or vocational qualifications acquired abroad is growing steadily. This is also reflected in reports made by the competent bodies on recognition applications within the scope of the official statistics for 2014, which were published by the Federal Statistical Office on 30 September 2015. This means that data is now available for three years. In overall terms,

account needs to be taken of the fact that alternative options for the use of existing competences mean that not every consultation will lead to an application for recognition.

3.1 Considerable rise in the number of applications for non-regulated occupations and from abroad

Since 2012, 44,094 applications⁴⁸ for recognition have been made in professions governed by federal law alone.⁴⁹ Applications were also submitted for professions governed by federal state law, although no integrated federal state statistics are currently in place. This means that the overall volume of the recognition system in Germany is considerably higher than represented here.⁵⁰ The number of applications has risen year-on-year (cf. Figure 6), even if we take into account that data for 2012 only relates to nine months. In 2012, an average of 1,221 applications was submitted each month. By 2014, this figure had increased to 1,469. Increases have been recorded both with regard to regulated professions and non-regulated occupations. In 2014, a total of 19,806 procedures were processed. In 17,628 of these cases, the application had been submitted in the same year. The other 2,175 applications represented procedures which could not be concluded in the previous year because, for example, documentation was incomplete or applications were received shortly before the end of the year.

⁴⁸ It is possible for a person to submit two applications, for instance when a training measure is conducted following identification of partial equivalence in non-regulated occupations and a new application is then made in order to gain full equivalence.

⁴⁹ For the purpose of anonymisation, the absolute values from the official statistics 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 figures were calculated on the basis of the non-rounded values.

⁵⁰ According to information from the statistical offices of the federal states, more than 6,600 recognition procedures were conducted in 2014. The application figures for evaluation of (non-regulated) higher education qualifications by the ZAB also reflect a high degree of interest. The number of applications rose from 5,233 in 2012 to 10,000 in 2015.

Figure 6 Development in numbers of applications in regulated professions and non-regulated occupations from 2012 to 2014 (in absolute terms and in percent)



Source: Evaluations by the Federal Statistical Office.
Representation by BIBB. Registered applications.

The proportion of applications in non-regulated occupations increased further in 2014 (from 20.2 percent in 2012 to 22.1 percent in 2013 to 23.5 percent in 2014). Applications for regulated professions accounted for more than three quarters of all new applications in 2014.

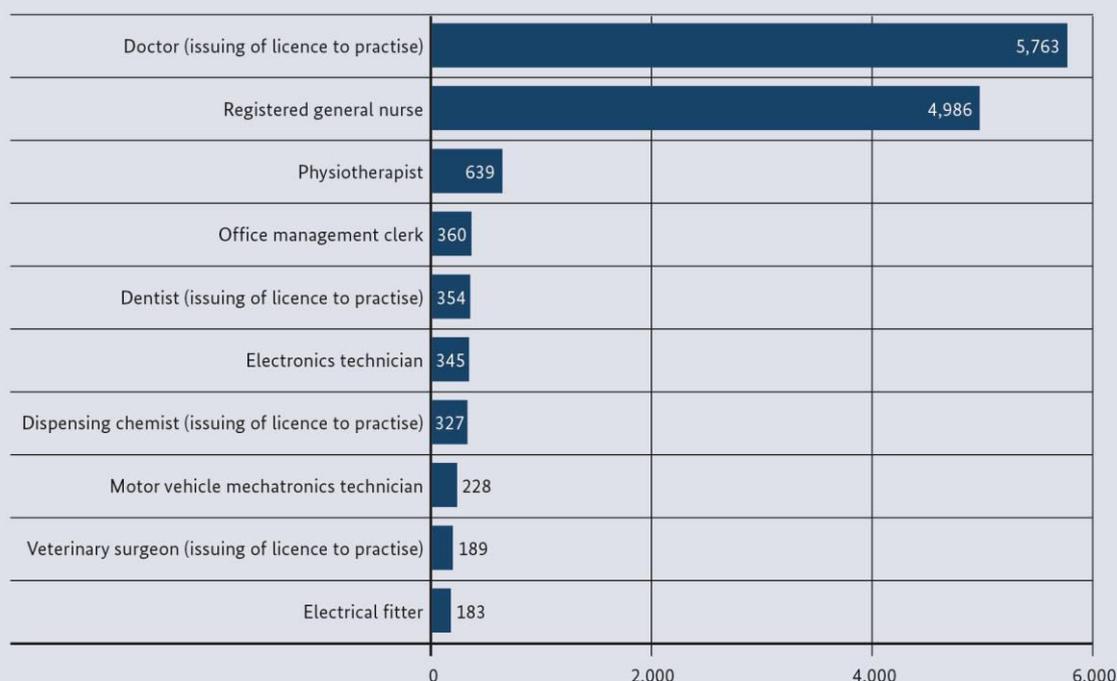
The most frequent reference occupations (cf. Figure 7) were the medical healthcare professions, especially doctor⁵¹ and registered general nurse. This two reference occupations made up 61.0 percent of all new applications in 2014. Both professions are currently officially designated as experiencing an acute shortage of skilled staff.⁵² The law thus takes effect in areas where qualified staff is needed.

As already indicated in the presentation of information and guidance services, a considerable rise is revealed in the number of applications received from persons whose place of residence was abroad at the time when the application was made. In 2014, a total of 2,082 new applications were submitted by persons living abroad. This represents an increase of 51.9 percent compared to the previous year (2013: 1,371 2012: 531 applications).

⁵¹ Issuing of a licence to practise.

⁵² Cf. BA 2015a, p. 13.

Figure 7 Number of newly submitted applications in 2014 in the ten most frequent reference occupations (in absolute terms)



Source: Evaluations by the Federal Statistical Office. Representation by BIBB. Registered applications 2014.

3.2 Applicants from the EU predominate – also an increase in the number of applicants from third countries

Comparing the states in which applicants acquired their qualification⁵³, the leading training area for 2014 was the EU, the EEA and Switzerland, which accounted for a proportion of 54.8 percent. 23.9 percent completed their training in one of the other European countries and 12.9 percent in an Asian country.

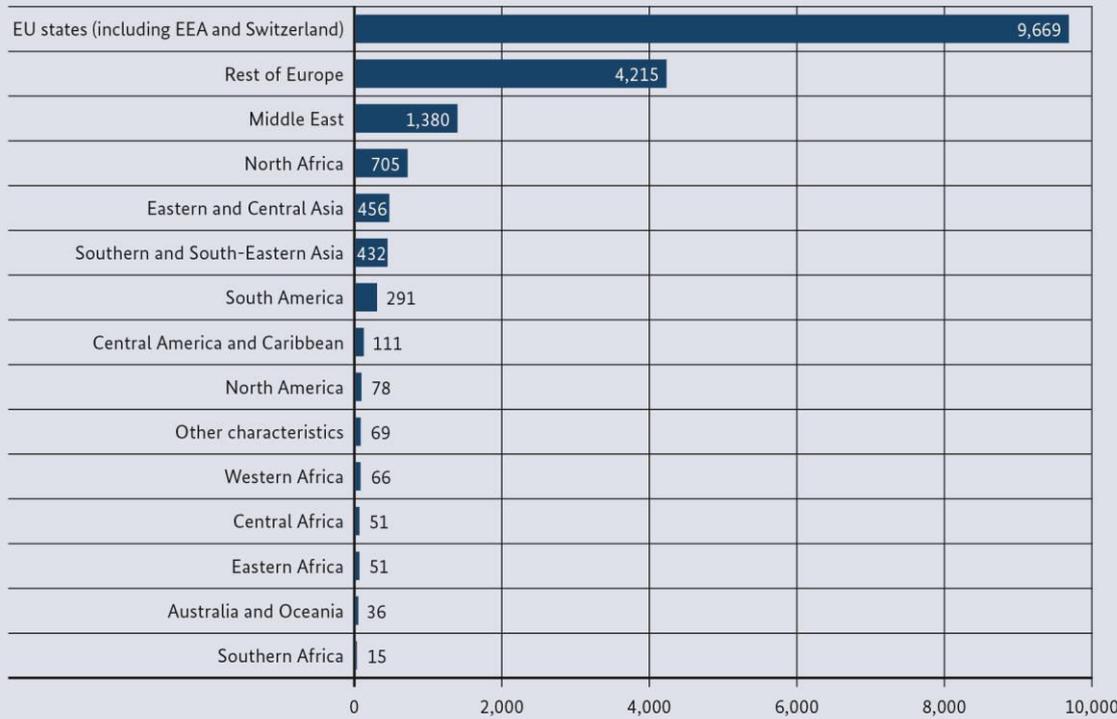
Since the entry into force of the Recognition Act, Poland (1,662 applications in 2014) and Romania (1,614) have been the countries of training most frequently recorded. They are followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (1,020) and Spain (921). In fifth place for 2014 is the Russian Federation with a fall in its number of applications from 906 in 2012 to 780 in 2014.⁵⁴

Figure 8 shows the regions in which applicants in 2014 acquired their qualifications.

⁵³ Countries of training may also be states which no longer exist, such as the Soviet Union (153 applications from persons with this country of training in 2014) or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (66 applications in 2014). Because no more detailed information is available other than the state in which the qualification was acquired, it is not possible to distribute this information across countries which currently exist. Indeed to do so would not be useful given the fact that different educational systems may be in place.

⁵⁴ Further information on countries of training of applicants is available at https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/statistik_zum_bundesgesetz.php.

Figure 8 Countries of training of persons who submitted an application in 2014, grouped by regions (in absolute terms)

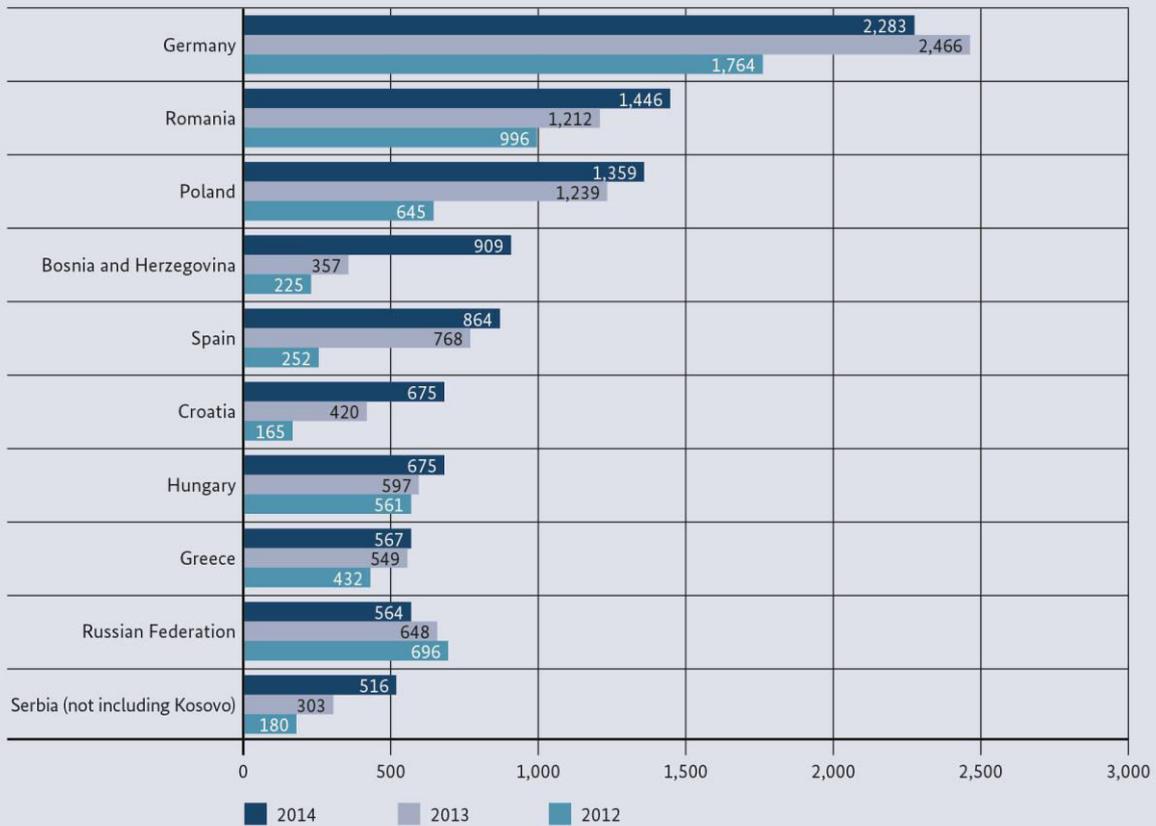


Source: Evaluations by the Federal Statistical Office. Representation by BIBB. Registered applications.

61.7 percent of persons who submitted an application in 2014 were nationals of an EU/EEA state or of Switzerland. 18.8 percent were citizens of another European state and 12.3 percent were from an Asian country.

As in the preceding years, German was the most common nationality amongst applicants with qualifications acquired abroad. Nevertheless, the proportion of German nationals declined from 16 percent in 2012 to 13 percent in 2014. As in previous years, second and third places were occupied by applicants from Romania and Poland (1,446 and 1,359 applications respectively). The number of new applications from nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina more than doubled from 357 in 2013 to 909 in 2014. Spanish was the fifth most frequent nationality in 2014 with 864 applications.

Figure 9 Number of newly submitted applications 2012 to 2014 from the ten most frequent nationalities (in absolute terms)



Source: Evaluations by the Federal Statistical Office. Representation by BIBB. Registered applications.

3.3 Recognition rates at a high level

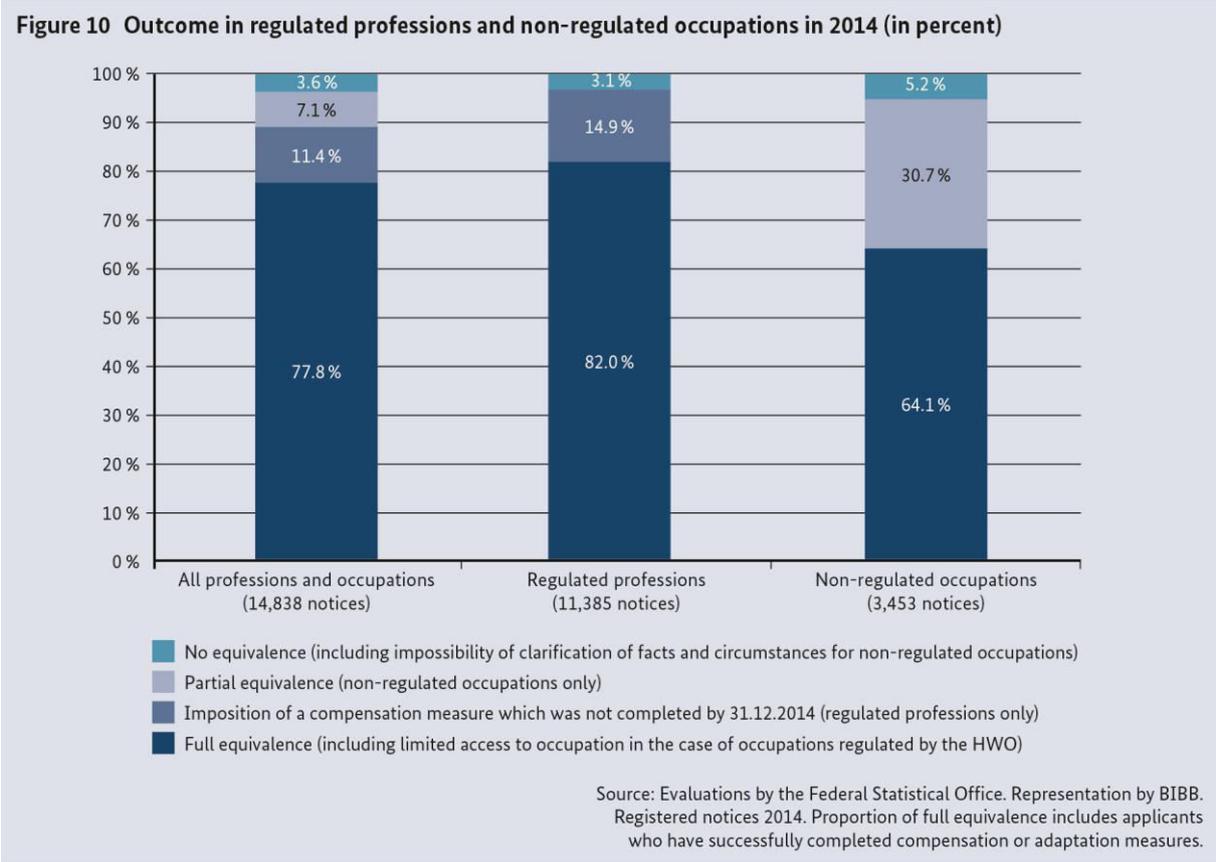
The competent bodies reported that 14,838 notices had been issued in 2014. Compared to 2013, this represents an increase of 1,491 notices or 11.2 percent. 36.162 notices have been issued since the law entered into force in 2012.⁵⁵

Figure 10 shows the outcome of procedures in which a decision has been reached, differentiated by regulated professions and non-regulated occupations. 77.8 percent of all notices identified full equivalence of the professional or vocational qualification acquired abroad with the German reference occupation. This is an increase of 3.1 percent compared to 2013 (74.7 percent). A total of 28,062 positive notices were issued between 2012 and 2014⁵⁶. Of these, 23,523 notices, or 83.8 percent, related to regulated professions for which recognition is a prerequisite for the exercising of the profession. The rejection rate fell further from 4.0 percent in 2013 to 3.6 percent in 2014.

⁵⁵ This does not mean that the same number of procedures has been completed. There may be more than one notice per procedure, such as in the case of regulated professions when a compensation measure is imposed.

⁵⁶ Full equivalences and limited access to occupation pursuant to the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO). Exceptional authorisation for entry into the Register of Crafts and Trades is limited to essential activities for which equivalence has been identified.

In 2014, 11,385 notices related to a regulated profession. Only 3.1 percent of notices were negative. The corresponding figure for 2013 was 4.0 percent. 9,336 notices or 82 percent identified full equivalence of the foreign qualification with the German reference occupation.⁵⁷As of 31 December 2014, an imposed compensation measure was still outstanding in respect of 14.9 percent of notices. When applicants have completed the compensation measures (test or course), a notice attesting full equivalence can also be issued in respect of these cases.



In 2014, a total of 3,453 notices were issued in respect of non-regulated occupations. The proportion of notices attesting full equivalence also rose from 62.9 percent in 2013 to 64.1 percent in 2014. There was also a small increase in the proportion of negative notices – i.e. notices not identifying equivalence or notices stating impossibility of clarification of the facts and circumstances – from 4.4 percent in 2013 to 5.2 percent in 2014. By way of contrast, the proportion of notices according partial equivalence fell from 32.8 percent to 30.7 percent. A notice certifying partial equivalence may also be useful. Documentation of the substantial differences identified enables applicants to take part in adaptation training in a targeted manner (mostly involving catching up on practical training elements). By presenting existing qualifications, the notice also provides transparency for employers and can thus facilitate integration into work.

⁵⁷ This may be preceded by successful completion of a compensation measure.

3.4 Rapid equivalence procedures and a high degree of acceptance for decisions

In 2014, the average time between availability of full documentation and the issuing of the first notice appealable in law was 79.9 days for procedures in which a decision was reached. There were considerable differences between individual reference occupations in some cases.⁵⁸ The spectrum ranged from about 30 days up to 171 days.⁵⁹

According to reports from the competent bodies, an (initial) notice was issued in under one month in 6,660 procedures, i.e. 44.9 percent. In 62.1 percent of cases, a notice was issued in under two months. In eight out of ten cases, the procedure until the issuing of the first notice appealable in law took less than four months. Even if some procedures lasted longer than the stipulated processing deadlines of three or four months, this does not mean that the statutory deadline has not been complied with. The deadline may be extended in circumstances such as when it becomes clear during the evaluation process that the documents submitted are not sufficient for an equivalence assessment and a request for follow-up documentation therefore needs to be made. In 2014, this was the case with 7,092 notices for regulated professions and 264 notices for non-regulated occupations.

A legal challenge was instigated against a negative decision, against a notice according partial equivalence, against a notice imposing a compensation measure or against limited access to the occupation pursuant to the HwO in 15 procedures for non-regulated occupations and in 33 cases in regulated professions in 2014. As in the years before, this shows that applicants are extremely unlikely to seek legal redress.

4. Recognition procedures – current developments

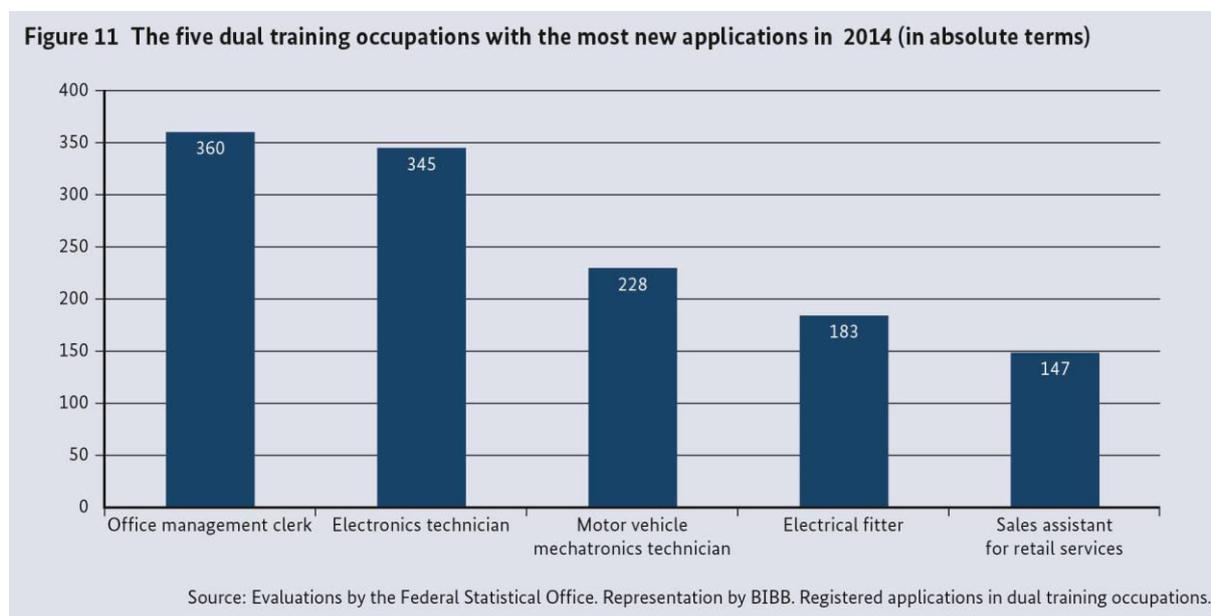
4.1 Also an increase in recognition procedures in the dual training occupations

As already presented, the need for guidance on the recognition of foreign qualifications also rose sharply in the non-regulated sector (cf. Chapter 2). The official statistics also reveal the importance of detailed guidance. Additional requests for documentation needed to be made in fewer than 6 percent of procedures conducted for non-regulated occupations in 2014. This is also evidence that important foundations for a successful and rapid procedure are being laid during initial guidance. The proportion of applications relating to recognition of a dual training occupation as compared to all occupational groups is rising from year to year. In 2014, a total of 3,453 notices for non-regulated

⁵⁸ The procedure for an application for recognition in the profession of veterinary surgeon (174 notices), for example, took an average of 30.4 days. The average figure for office manager (57 notices) was 51.4 days, whilst procedures in the case of midwife/midwifery assistant took an average of 133 days. The duration of a procedure is, however, not solely dependent on the reference occupation. Nationality or country of training may be further influencing factors.

⁵⁹ This spectrum only encompasses professions and occupations with more than 29 notices. Under this figure, the average is too greatly dependent on individual cases.

occupations were issued. This represents a rise of over 20 percent compared to the previous year. Almost 95 percent of notices identify full or partial equivalence of the qualification acquired with the German reference qualification.



The most frequent dual training occupations in which recognition was sought in 2014 were office management clerk and electronics technician (see Figure 11).⁶⁰

4.2 Medical professions – routes to uniform standards and procedures

Even four years after the entry into force of the Recognition Act, specific implementation of the recognition regulations still varies between the federal states. This is particularly apparent in the case of the healthcare professions.⁶¹ In these professions, which are governed by federal law, robust cooperation is required between the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) and the federal states in order to achieve procedures which are as standardised as possible. Over 27,500 applications received for recognition as a doctor or registered general nurse have thus far been assessed on the basis of differently implemented criteria and requirements. This is, for example, revealed by the results of a survey of doctors⁶² and by workshops conducted with the competent bodies.

From September to December 2015, the BIBB Monitoring Team staged workshops for the staff at the federal state authorities which are responsible for recognition of doctors and registered general nurses.⁶³ The aim of these workshops, which were held at different locations all over the country, was

⁶⁰ The application figures for the former fell from 426 in 2013 to 360 in 2014. This can be explained by the fact that the three occupations of office management clerk, commercial clerk for office communication and specialist in office communication were amalgamated with effect from 1 August 2014 to form a single new training occupation of office manager. Between August and December 2014, a total of 144 applications were received for the new occupational profile.

⁶¹ Cf. Böse and Wünsche 2015, pp. 32 ff.

⁶² See the dataset description for the survey of doctors in the Annex.

⁶³ Also see the dataset description for the workshops in the Annex.

to create transparency by collecting the experiences of the competent bodies and by fostering networking between them. In addition, emphasis was placed on opportunities for improvement and on the challenges of setting up a cross-federal state assessment agency (cf. Chapter 4.2.2).

4.2.1 Further standardisation of criteria and approaches

The previous two reports on the Recognition Act made mention of the non-uniform approaches adopted towards assessment of applications. The workshops also confirmed that there is an absence of uniform stipulations and criteria at various points within the recognition procedure.

The most relevant thematic areas are as follows.

Checking area of responsibility/application documentation

In order to clarify whether responsibility really exists in respect of an application, the competent authorities require various types of evidence to be submitted together with the application. For some bodies, a declaration of intent is sufficient proof of a desire to work in the relevant federal state. Others require evidence of a firm job offer and/or a personal interview at the authority. Certifications of place of residence are also sometimes demanded. This renders an application from abroad impossible in these cases.

The relevant competent bodies state that this approach, which is very “strict” in some regards, is necessary given the strong level of demand. They claim that their objective is to filter out persons who intend to pursue their application seriously and who have a high chance of integrating into the labour market.

However, the recognition regulations clearly state that no irrelevant criteria may be imposed as a prerequisite for the submission of an application. The statutory regulations also permit an application to be made from abroad. Regional responsibility is defined by the location at which the profession is to be exercised. Job offers and certifications of place of residence are not prerequisites for the submission of an application.⁶⁴ The competent bodies may require that an intention to work in the local area of responsibility should be presented in specific terms. Requirements may not, however, be set at such a high level so as to deny applicants their right to access the recognition procedure. The requirement to show a firm job offer before recognition takes place cannot be fulfilled by applicants in most cases.

The BMG and the BMBF have written to the Working Group of the Supreme Healthcare Authorities of the Federal States (AOLG) to point out this legal position, and the issue was made an object of discussion at a meeting of the AOLG’s “Professions” Working Group held on 18 and 19 February 2016. Broad consensus was reached with regard to the legal situation presented.

There is still disunity in respect of the level of detail required for translations and certifications. Some bodies, for example, accept all translators whilst others only recognise sworn translators in Germany. Other differences persist, in particular with regard to the issue of which documents need to be certified. At a meeting of the “Healthcare Professions” Working Group of the AOLG in February 2016,

⁶⁴ Cf. BMBF 2015, p. 104.

the Federal Government and the federal states agreed to accept a catalogue of requirements for translations and certifications aligned to ZAB stipulations and prepared by the BMBF as a joint basis.

The federal states are called upon to work towards relevant uniform implementation via the competent authorities and to adjust internal administrative stipulations or issue appropriate edicts where required. On the basis of corresponding responses received from the federal states, the BMG is currently drawing up a report on experiences with federal regulations relating to the recognition procedures. This report can then serve as a foundation for investigating whether additional statutory adaptations are necessary.

Checking the genuineness of documents

The competent bodies describe evaluating the genuineness of documents as a major challenge. Even if documents are certified (via authentication/apostille), the suspicion remains in many instances that falsification has taken place. This is particularly the case when documentation produced during the course of the procedure (such as regarding occupational experience) covers precisely the substantial differences previously formulated in the initial notice. It is also a common occurrence that curricula submitted from universities in third countries correspond to the comparable curricula in the federal state in which the application is being made both in terms of the order in which subjects are listed and with regard to certain contents. Despite authentication, there is at least the supposition that documents have been adapted in a targeted way for the recognition application.

Since October 2015, documents from Syria are no longer being certified by the embassy in Beirut because there has been a considerable rise in the number of falsified licences to practise and other certificates. The Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) has notified the federal state health authorities of this in writing. The federal states predominantly deal with such cases by indicating the possibility of a knowledge test in the case of an absence of documentation or insufficient documentation. This approach seems appropriate given the fact that it is no longer feasible for the competent bodies to check the genuineness of documents in the current difficult situation.

Basis of evaluation

Inconsistency with regard to the checking the equivalence of foreign doctor qualifications is already inherent within the system. Each competent body uses the curriculum of a university in their federal state as a comparison document. University curricula are not uniform across the country. A standardised set of technical and content instruments to evaluate qualifications on which the federal states will be able to agree is currently being developed in the form of the new central assessment body. Benchmarks continue to be non-standardised. No uniform response has yet been reached with regard to the question of what specifically should be evaluated as a substantial difference. Some bodies adopt a quantitative approach by simply comparing the number of hours spent on the subjects studied. Deviations of 15 to 20 percent are then denoted as a substantial difference. Others check contents, taking the view that quantities alone are not meaningful enough and therefore cannot constitute an exclusive basis of evaluation. In future, consideration will need to be accorded to the fact that, pursuant to the stipulations contained within Directive 2013/55/EU, a difference in the number of hours studied is no longer sufficient to establish a substantial difference. Substantial differences need to be justified on the basis of content.

Some competent bodies offer applicants from certain third countries an opportunity to enter a compensation measure directly without documentary comparison. This offer is usually made by bodies which know from experience that applications from particular third countries always exhibit substantial differences. Because of this, they give applicants the chance to waive the evaluation process. They are also possibly able to save time and money because small-scale translations of elements such as lists of hours studied then become unnecessary. Applicants then proceed directly to a knowledge test. For the applicants themselves, this may be an option to accelerate the recognition procedure, particularly if there is a specific opportunity to participate in an adaptation measure.

The legal ordinance in the healthcare professions⁶⁵ stipulates specific requirements for the contents of notices prepared after completion of the documentary check and containing elements such as the imposition of a compensation measure. The current legal situation is that a notice should be issued on the basis of the results of assessing the documents submitted. This may confirm full equivalence or impose the condition of participation in a compensation measure.

The staff from the competent bodies who took part in the workshops wish to have harmonisation and agreement of uniform benchmarks for the federal states and stipulations which are much more specific. The establishment and instigation of the cross-federal state assessment agency should now mean that these necessary steps are now rapidly adopted (cf. Chapter 4.2.3).

Evidence of language knowledge

The endeavours which have taken place over recent years have generally led to a further tendency towards standardisation with regard to the language level required. In accordance with the benchmark paper⁶⁶ regarding demonstration of necessary language knowledge in medical professions in which academic qualifications are required drawn up by the Conference of Ministers of Health, completion of a specialist language test at level C1 on the basis of evidence of level CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) B2 is needed. In practice, implementation of the benchmarks remains inconsistent. In some federal states, completion of the language test at level C1 is sufficient, since this is deemed to constitute achievement of the B2 language certificate. In other federal states, additional evidence of B2 is required. In the case of the specialist healthcare professions, level CEFR-B2 is usually a prerequisite for admission.

Evidence of language knowledge is frequently required at the beginning of the procedure together with the application documentation. Staff at the competent bodies hope that this will lead to smoother communication with applicants, which is otherwise not possible or only takes place at a rudimentary level. Most staff believe that evidence of language knowledge should be provided no later than at the commencement of a compensation measure since this is also indispensable in terms of the outcome of such a measure.

The current legal situation already dictates that evidence of language knowledge can only be required for authorisation to practise/licence to practise and cannot be demanded when application

⁶⁵ Ordinance of 2 August 2013 on the implementation and content of compensation measures and on the issuing of authorisations to practise in medical professions governed by federal law (Federal Law Gazette, BGBl., I, p. 3005).

⁶⁶ 87th Conference of Ministers of Health (GMK) on 26 and 27 June 2014 "Benchmarks for assessment of the knowledge of German necessary for exercising a healthcare profession where academic qualifications are required", cf. www.gmkonline.de/documents/TOP73BerichtP_Oeffentl_Bereich.pdf.

is made for a recognition procedure.⁶⁷ Within the scope of the implementation of EU Directive 2013/55/EU in the medical professions,⁶⁸ this principle has been strengthened and applicants are afforded the option of applying for an equivalence notice separately from evidence of language knowledge. This gives applicants the opportunity to acquire the necessary language knowledge during the course of the procedure itself

4.2.2 Competence bundling at the cross-federal state assessment agency

Conducting a recognition procedure is demanding. Especially in the area of the medical professions, the high volume of applications, the associated demand for personal guidance and limited human resources capacities all place an especially high strain on the competent bodies. In addition, the competent bodies also bear a particular responsibility for ensuring patient protection.

Carrying out checks on the basis of the files alone inevitably brings inherent risks, and these are also mentioned by staff at the competent bodies. It is, for example, not usually possible to include original documentation if this is only available in different scripts such as Chinese, Korean, Arabic or Russian. The competent authority is often forced to rely on a German translation which may be technically vague or contain errors. In addition, checking the genuineness of original certificates by sight alone without carrying out further research is scarcely objectively possible.

The Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) provides the federal states with a centre of excellence for the description and evaluation of foreign educational qualifications and their categorisation vis-à-vis the German educational system. The ZAB's core tasks include the observation, analysis and assessment of foreign educational systems and documentation and publication of this information via the anabin database.⁶⁹

The ZAB has extensive contacts with educational institutions and authorities, particularly in third countries. The new central assessment body for healthcare professions, which will start to process orders to a new and expanded extent in 2016, can use this as a basis to make a crucial contribution to supporting authorities in the checking and assessment of documentation and help improve knowledge management of foreign qualifications and quality assurance in the recognition procedure. The establishment of a central cross-federal state assessment agency is also an important step from the point of view of uniformity of administrative decisions and the use of synergy effects. The concept shown presents the work of the assessment agency in its pilot phase. During this period, the new assessment agency will be monitored by a working group comprising members from the Conference of Ministers of Health (GMK), the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) and the ZAB in order to assess the stipulations contained within the concept and to be able to make adaptations where necessary.

⁶⁷ Cf. BMBF 2015, p. 134.

⁶⁸ The Directive stipulates implementation by 18 January 2016. For the status of implementation in the healthcare professions, see Chapter 1.

⁶⁹ See <http://anabin.kmk.org>.

Table 2 The cross-federal state assessment agency for healthcare professions at the Secretariat of the KMK/ZAB

Schedule	
January 2016: Commencement of the establishment and induction phase	
By August 2016: Transition to order processing in the three-year pilot phase	
Reference occupations	
Medical occupations for which academic qualifications are required	Specialist healthcare professions
<p>Doctor</p> <p>Dentist</p> <p>Dispensing chemist</p> <p>Psychotherapist</p> <p>Psychotherapist for children and young people</p>	<p>Geriatric nurse, dietary assistant, occupational therapist, midwife/midwifery assistant, registered general nurse, registered children’s nurse, speech therapist, masseur, medically qualified lifeguard, orthoptist, physiotherapist, podiatrist, technical pharmaceutical assistant, paramedic, emergency paramedic, technical medical assistants (medical laboratory assistant in function diagnosis, medical and technical laboratory assistant, medical laboratory assistant in radiology)</p>
Types of order	
Checking the genuineness of documents	<p>It is useful for the ZAB to check genuineness if there are doubts as to the authenticity of evidence of qualifications, and the documents presented cannot be checked by the recognition authority responsible because, for example, the necessary language knowledge/knowledge of the script is not available. Depending on the political situation, the ZAB is also subject to limitations with regard to the involvement of institutions abroad.</p>
Determination of the German reference qualification	<p>This order is assigned when the authority to which the application for recognition has been submitted cannot itself unequivocally identify the German reference occupation. The reference occupation determines which authority is responsible for recognition.</p>
Detailed assessment of equivalence	<p>The assessment is divided into three parts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recording the essential characteristics of the foreign professional qualification. 2. A qualified comparison with the German reference qualification presenting and justifying the substantial differences identified. 3. A recommendation relating to the equivalence of the German reference qualification.

Documentation
The assessments and decisions made by the authorities are documented in the anabin database. The aim is for multiple evaluations of similar qualifications by the ZAB to be avoided and for uniform recognition decisions to be made for the same qualifications across the federal states.
Order volume
Pursuant to a resolution adopted at the 86th Conference of Ministers of Health (GMK) of 26 and 27 June 2013 in respect of Agenda Item 7.1 No. 4, the assessment agency is to draw up 3,000 evaluations per year during a pilot phase of three years.
Reimbursement of cost
<p>The ZAB will invoice the authorities for costs incurred depending on the type of order.</p> <p>Checking the genuineness of documents €145 Determination of the German reference occupation €206 Detailed assessment €515</p> <p>Pursuant to a resolution adopted at the 86th Conference of Ministers of Health (GMK) on 26 and 27 June 2013, the ongoing costs of the cross-federal state assessment agency must be refinanceable to the greatest extent possible by the authorities responsible via the charging of expenses. Start-up financing via the health departments in accordance with the Königstein Funding Formula is planned for the first year. The ZAB will invoice the authority ordering a service for costs incurred depending on the type of order. For its part, the authority responsible can charge expenses to the applicant for the costs to be reimbursed to the ZAB.⁷⁰</p>

Source: Specific concept for the establishment of a cross-federal state assessment agency for healthcare professions (medical professions in which academic qualifications are required and specialist healthcare professions) Joint “Healthcare Professions” Working Group of the GMK and KMK, 9 March 2015. Representation by BIBB and the ZAB.

4.2.3 Uniform benchmarks required at the assessment agency and federal state authorities

One of the priority tasks of the new assessment agency is to secure uniform implementation of the existing benchmarks⁷¹ for equivalence assessment in the medical professions. To this end, the assessment agency is currently developing standardised set of technical and content instruments to evaluate qualifications, which will be agreed with the federal states. Once such agreement has been reached, the plan is for the set of instruments to be made available to the competent bodies as a standard assessment benchmark. The intention is also to draw up standardised guides on cooperation between the competent bodies and the ZAB in the recognition procedure.

The assessment agency depends on active cooperation with the competent bodies. Assessments already drawn up and court decisions should be made accessible to the assessment agency so that

⁷⁰ On the topic of costs, see also Chapter 5.1.1.

⁷¹ As described above, for example, a uniform set of technical and content instruments must initially be developed in order to serve as the foundation for equivalence assessments of the foreign qualifications of doctors.

these can be evaluated and documented in a knowledge management system (anabin database). This makes them usable by all bodies.

The scope to which the assessment agency will, in practice, investigate the possibility of compensating for differences ascertained by professional experience is not yet clear. According to the joint concept of the GMK and KMK, the main focus of the assessment will be on a qualified comparison of the qualifications and identification of substantial differences. The assessment may also contain an indication of the possibility of compensation via professional experience.

The competent bodies which participated in the workshops staged by the Monitoring Team from September to December 2015 hold differing views regarding this aspect. Some expect that the activity of the assessment agency can only effectively reduce workload if it goes on to check professional experience. Others believe that they will have no difficulty in investigating professional experience for themselves on the basis of the ZAB assessment. With regard to the desired standardisation of procedures and reducing the workload on the authorities, how the activity of the ZAB in conjunction with the competent bodies develops on this issue will need to be an object of precise observation.

4.2.4 Identification of a need for support in the implementation of compensation measures

Most competent bodies report that substantial differences are often identified amongst applicants who have undergone training in third countries and that therefore compensation measures are required in order to be able to certify full equivalence.⁷²

Implementation of the statutory regulations has proved to be difficult in practice, at least in some federal states. The competent bodies state that adaptation courses within the scope of recognition of registered general nurses are not feasible in all federal states because it is frequently difficult to acquire institutions to conduct them.

In some cases, there are long waiting times before acceptance onto an adaptation course becomes possible.

Also, some federal states will only accept adaptation courses that have taken place in the federal state in which the application was made. At a meeting of the "Professions" Working Group of the AOLG on 17 and 18 February 2016, agreement was reached that provision from other federal states can be used and recognised within the scope of the legal possibilities if a federal state does not have any provision or has insufficient provision. The federal states need to work towards achieving implementation by the competent bodies.

The appointment of examination boards for doctors' knowledge tests is proving to be a problem in some cases. One demand made by the competent bodies is for the Federal Medical Code to be relaxed in this regard in order to expand the group of possible examiners.

⁷² For an explanation of the terms adaptation training, knowledge test, aptitude test etc. see BMBF 2015, pp. 219 ff.

What the competent bodies desire above all is an improvement in the involvement of the institutions which are able to conduct knowledge tests and especially adaptation courses, such as clinics or schools of nursing.

The organisation of compensation measures is especially difficult in the case of reference occupations which are less frequently demanded, such as occupational therapist. In some instances, this is even impossible. The small numbers involved mean that implementation on a single case basis is viewed as being too costly for schools and experts. For this reason, several parties have expressed the wish that a central agency should be created for these professions, particularly for the organisation and implementation of compensation measures. It would also be conceivable that individual competent bodies could specialise in certain reference occupations.

Recognition in cases where documentation is missing or incomplete

It is frequently the case that many persons interested in seeking recognition are unable to procure all the necessary documentation. This particularly applies to those from countries affected by war and crisis seeking asylum and protection in Germany. The recognition regulations also make provision for such cases. The prerequisite is, however, always a formal professional or vocational qualification, even if the relevant documents are no longer available.

4.3.1 Knowledge test in the event of absence of evidence in the medical professions

There are differences in the way in which the authorities responsible for the healthcare professions deal with persons who wish to make an application despite the fact that documentation is missing or incomplete. Whereas competence assessment procedures followed by an adaptation course take place in at least one federal state, most bodies do not believe that they are in a position to accept such applications.

The legal situation with regard to the recognition regulations is clear. In such cases, the professional recognition regulations in the medical professions state that equivalent status of knowledge must be demonstrated by a knowledge test in order to obtain recognition (for examples Federal Medical Code, BÄO, § 3 Paragraph 3 Clause 4, Nursing Act, KrPflG, § 2 Paragraph 3 Clause 5). At the meeting of the "Professions" Working Group of the AOLG on 17 and 18 February 2016, fundamental agreement regarding this legal situation was reached. Nevertheless, in the interests of patient protection, it is viewed as necessary to require prima facie evidence of the qualification if no documents can be submitted. An affidavit is sometimes demanded. The federal states are called upon to work towards achieving compliance with the legal situation agreed.

4.3.2 Recognition via skills analyses in the absence of evidence

The BQFG also offers possibilities if documents are missing or incomplete. Professional competences which are not proven by written documents may be demonstrated by “other suitable procedures”⁷³, for example via a specialist interview or work sample. An identical paragraph has been included in each of the recognition laws of the federal states. When implemented, this procedure is referred to as a “skills analysis”.⁷⁴

The number of skills analyses conducted as reported within the scope of the official statistics has thus far risen from year to year (cf. Figure 12). In overall terms, however, the number of skills analyses carried out up until now is very low. Some competent bodies report that applicants are deterred by the examination situation of a skills analysis. A further important reason for the reticence thus far demonstrated is that some competent bodies and guidance institutions are still not currently sufficiently aware of skills analyses. Some bodies see the costs of organising a skills analysis, which they perceive to be high, as a hurdle. In order for quality-assured implementation to take place, the services of experts need to be secured and instruments and task assignments must be developed for the respective individual case. However, the competent bodies who have gained experience with skills analyses report that costs go down and that initial development work is the most extensive.⁷⁵

These procedures have thus far been most frequently conducted for the reference occupations of motor vehicle mechatronics technician, electronics technician and joiner. Up until now, far greater use has been made of the procedure by the chambers of crafts and trades. The outcome has been full equivalence in well over half of cases. A further third received either a notice attesting partial equivalence or a notice imposing participation in a compensation measure (in the case of regulated master craftsman occupations).⁷⁶

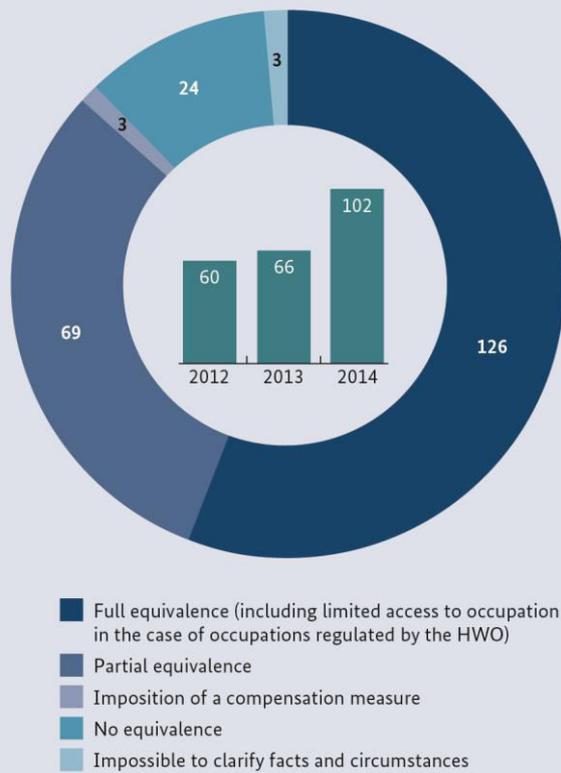
⁷³ Cf. § 14 BQFG and § 50a Paragraph 4 HwO.

⁷⁴ Cf. Oehme 2012.

⁷⁵ Cf. also BMBF 2014.

⁷⁶ Because of a correction made on 1 March 2016, the values presented here deviate slightly from previous publications.

Figure 12 “Other suitable procedures” (skills analysis) in non-regulated occupations and in regulated master craftsman occupations
by number in years (middle) and by decisions (external circle)
(in absolute terms)⁷⁶



Source: Evaluations of the Federal Statistical Office. Representation by BIBB. Nine cases were deducted for the year 2012 because of implausible reports.

The three-year project “Prototyping Transfer – recognition via skills analyses” was launched in January 2015 with the aim of increasing the number of skills analyses. The intention is for the procedural standards developed in the predecessor project “Prototyping” to be disseminated within the scope of “Prototyping Transfer”.⁷⁷ The project is funded by the BMBF and coordinated by BIBB. It has thus far been implemented by seven project partners. These are the West German Association of Chambers of Crafts and Trades (WHKT), IHK FOSA (Foreign Skills Approval), the chambers of crafts and trades in Hamburg and Mannheim and the chambers of commerce and industry in Cologne, Munich and the Saarland⁷⁸. The results developed will be published in the internal chamber area of the BQ Portal and in the protected area of Recognition in Germany.

⁷⁷ Cf. www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/2012.php, BMBF 2015, p. 59 and Böse, Tursarinow and Wünsche 2016, pp. 20 ff.

⁷⁸ The project is being conducted as a joint venture by the Saarland Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its subsidiary “saarland.innovation&standort e.V. (saar.is)”.

Initial findings are presented below and are largely based on the evaluation of 40 skills analyses reported within the scope of the project in the year 2015.⁷⁹

Costs and financing

The costs of a skills analysis vary depending on duration, instrument selected and any workshops and/or material that may be required.⁸⁰ It is revealed that most are financed by the labour administration bodies or by the participants themselves. “Prototyping Transfer” offers the possibility on an individual case basis and following examination that the costs of applicants may be paid if it can be demonstrated that they are unable to meet these themselves and that they will not be met by the labour administration bodies pursuant to Social Security Code II/III. The special fund used to finance skills analyses within the scope of “Prototyping Transfer” is administered by the WHKT. All chambers not involved in the project nationally are able to apply for financing from the special fund for candidates.

Evidence of a vocational qualification is usually available

The project partners also stated which documents applicants were unable to supply, the absence of which made it necessary to conduct a skills analysis. It is revealed that the training certificate itself could be presented in most cases (33 out of 40). However, more detailed information about specific contents and general conditions is required for the equivalence assessment. In 34 of 40 cases, this information could not be supplied or otherwise identified, meaning that the qualification documents submitted could not be used within the scope of an equivalence assessment. Furthermore, in eight cases there was no meaningful evidence of occupational experience. In all cases, the individual knowledge, skills and competences acquired were ascertained with the assistance of a skills analysis.

Work sample and specialist interviews the most frequent means deployed

The most frequent tools deployed by some distance for the identification of occupational skills, competences and knowledge were the specialist interview and the work sample (in 37 and 32 cases respectively). In 29 cases, a combination of both instruments was used by conducting a work sample process and subsequently staging a specialist interview in which the procedure and approach were explained and discussed.⁸¹

All project partners expect that, because of the numbers of refugees arriving in the country, interest in skills analyses will continue to increase in future, especially from new arrivals. For this reason, it is important to create active points of access for refugees and to explain which legal opportunities exist in respect of a foreign professional or vocational qualification and which prerequisites need to be fulfilled for this purpose. This strategy is already being pursued by the competent bodies and guidance institutions, for example in refugee institutions and via language courses financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the BAMF.

⁷⁹ The foundations are provided by information given by project partners from “Prototyping Transfer”, who fill out a questionnaire on every skills analysis conducted in their chamber.

⁸⁰ Cf. Böse, Schreiber und Lewalder 2014.

⁸¹ Further techniques used were role play/simulated discussion/presentation (seven cases), company-based work test (three cases) and case study (one case).

5. Costs and financing instruments

The results which have emerged from the monitoring process thus far have shown that the financing of the procedure often represents a hurdle along the route to recognition.⁸² New empirical findings on the amount of costs incurred are presented below. These make it clear that, depending on the individual case, costs of recognition extend beyond the actual procedural fees and that overall costs vary greatly on an individual basis.

The existing financing instruments have been further developed during the reporting period and supplemented by new provision in some areas. These include, for example, new funding instruments at federal state level and changes to funding of recognition for asylum seekers. An important instrument was added in January 2015 in the form of ESF-financed training courses in the IQ Funding Programme within the context of the Recognition Act and associated individual support.

The Minimum Wage Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2015, has also produced discernible effects on practical activities in company-based compensation measures and adaptation training

5.1 Procedural fees sometimes make up only a small part of overall costs

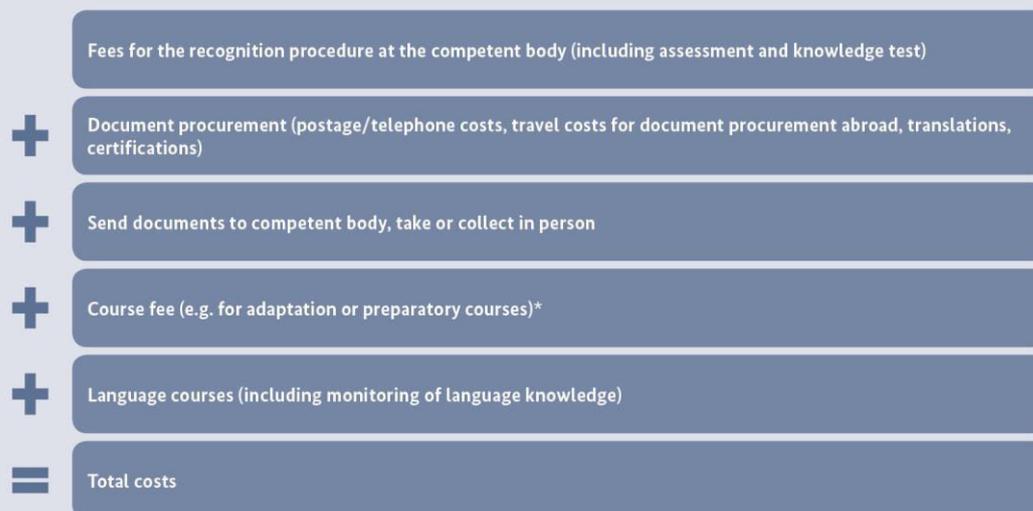
Within the scope of recognition procedures, depending on the individual case and whether a regulated profession or non-regulated occupation is involved, further costs arise in addition to the fees charged by the competent bodies (cf. Figure 13).⁸³ Applicants may incur these costs in respect of matters such as procurement of application documentation or further training for the achievement of (full) recognition. Depending on the profession or occupation and individual initial starting point, these costs may be as high as or even significantly higher than the actual fees.

Representative information on actual overall costs is not yet available and indeed cannot be realised because of the considerable differences between the professional and occupational areas and individual case characteristics. Nevertheless, investigations into individual areas can be used. This year's report uses two new BIBB surveys as a basis for taking a detailed look at the costs of recognition for doctors. Consideration needs to be accorded to the fact that costs for doctors may be particularly high, especially in the case of qualifications from third countries (mainly caused by the adaptation measures that are frequently necessary, including preparatory courses and the language courses and tests that need to be taken).

⁸² The financing of the recognition procedure is one reason why persons interested in seeking recognition do not do on to make an application after having received guidance. Other reasons include insufficient knowledge of German, commencement of employment or seeking an alternative procedure (for more detailed information see BMBF 2015, pp. 165 ff. and 200 ff.).

⁸³ For more detailed information, see BMBF 2014, Figure 28 and pp. 126 ff.

Figure 13 Composition of possible costs of recognition – depending on the individual case



*These costs may be incurred, although there can also be differences between the regulated and non-regulated sectors or differences that arise by profession or occupation or on an individual case basis.

Source: Representation by BIBB.

Two new developments in recognition practice in the healthcare sector and chamber area may bring possible consequences for the costs of document procurement and procedural fees in their wake. For this reason, the developments in this area will be explained prior to presenting the financing and funding instruments.

5.1.1 Central assessment agency for healthcare professions – consequences for costs

According to the KMK and GMK concept on which the central assessment agency is based,⁸⁴ costs for applicants should be minimised by the fact that the competent bodies will have recourse to detailed information on foreign professions and occupations and on assessments already completed via the anabin database. This means that multiple evaluations of similar or identical qualifications by the assessment agency can be dispensed with.

The cost invoiced by the ZAB to the respective competent body can be apportioned to applicants in accordance with the cost covering principle.

The federal states may take different legislative routes in terms of implementation. There are signs that the fee will mostly be charged in an application-based way. Some federal states are considering apportioning the costs of assessments to more than one applicant. The aim here is to avoid a situation whereby one applicant will have to bear the full cost of the ZAB assessment whilst subsequent cases exhibiting similar characteristics can be decided without a new assessment by the ZAB and will thus be more cost-effective.

⁸⁴ For further information on the new assessment agency at the ZAB see Chapter 4.

5.1.2 Cost reduction via knowledge management – the BQ Portal

Effective knowledge management helps to avoid or reduce expenditure and costs for document procurement and procedural fees at the competent body.⁸⁵ The more information on foreign educational courses and qualifications that is accessible to the competent bodies, the fewer documents they will need to require from the applicants. The lower the cost of the individual procedure is for the competent body, the fewer the fees they will need to invoice to applicants.

The BQ Portal is one vehicle which achieves this effect with regard to the equivalence assessment, particularly in the craft trades area. Occupational information and legal foundations regarding training courses in the respective country of training collated in earlier procedures are uploaded to the BQ Portal in German translation.⁸⁶ If someone submits an application for an equivalence assessment for the same vocational qualification in the same period of validity, procurement and translation of this document may no longer be necessary, although individual evidence will, of course, still need to be submitted. In such cases, costs of procurement are likely to be significantly lower. Persons interested in seeking recognition and guidance institutions will be able to access these documents from all over the world and will be better able to evaluate the prospective cost.

In addition to this, the competent bodies will be able to benefit from the results of equivalence assessment already conducted and stored in the protected area. This will also shorten the time needed to process a recognition application, and in the long term this should reduce the fees to be apportioned to the applicants.

This important support service for the competent bodies has been further secured by the decision taken by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology (BMWi) to extend funding for the BQ Portal for at least another three years until the end of 2018.⁸⁷ In November 2015, the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) for innovative and effective public administration was conferred on the BQ Portal to mark the way in which a highly diverse range of stakeholders had participated in the collaborative establishment of knowledge.

5.1.3 High costs of procuring documents taking the profession of doctor as an example

On the basis of the results of two BIBB surveys in which a total of 84 doctors participated,⁸⁸ an example breakdown can be provided of the financing of the preparatory course for the knowledge

⁸⁵ Cf. the postulation in BMBF 2014 and BMBF 2015.

⁸⁶ Example of an available translation from Spanish: Royal Ordinance 751/1994 for the stipulation of a framework curriculum 1796/2008 on minimum standards for higher level skilled worker training in carpentry and wood products; www.bq-portal.de/de/db/berufsqualifikationen/3886.

⁸⁷ Cf. notification by the BMWi in a communication dated 20 January 2016. After conclusion of the evaluation of the BQ Portal, extension was instigated by the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control (BAFA), acting on behalf of the BMWi.

⁸⁸ See in this regard the dataset descriptions for the personal survey and the survey of doctors in the Annex.

test, the costs of procurement of documentation and overall costs of the recognition procedures for doctors.⁸⁹

Of the doctors who had taken part in a preparatory course for the knowledge test, more than half of those who responded had received financing for this course from the employment agency or Job Centre. Around a quarter stated that their course has been funded by the “IQuaMed”⁹⁰ project. “IQuaMed” is being financed within the scope of the new funding guideline “ESF training within the context of the Recognition Act” enacted within the IQ Funding Programme. Respondents were considerably less likely to state that they were self-funded or had been financed via other routes (e.g. scholarship or spouse).

Both BIBB surveys enquired about the amount of costs involved in procuring paperwork and documentation. The information includes the costs of procuring statutorily prescribed individual evidence such as certificates and of further documentation which the competent bodies may require within the scope of the duty to cooperate. Costs of copies, translations and certifications are also covered. The most common cost level stated in both surveys was up to €1,000. In about one in three cases, procurement of documents cost as much as between €1,000 and €3,000.

According to the information gleaned from the personal survey, overall costs for the recognition of doctors vary widely,⁹¹ whereby one in three stated costs of over €2,500. Average total costs were around €2,200. Costs of procurement of documents (€791) and of languages courses (€938) accounted for the largest proportion of overall costs on average. Average costs for the recognition procedure at the competent body including fees and expenses were €318, whereas the lowest average costs were those incurred for participation in the test (€184). This shows that, in the case of doctors, the costs of procurement of documents made up a high proportion of overall costs.

5.2 Funding and financing instruments expanded further

Additional opportunities for the financing of recognition costs have been created over the past year. Alongside the regulatory instruments included within the area of Social Security Code II and III and Federal Government funding specifically targeted at recognition, decentralised funding instruments are currently being established in the federal states to support those interested in seeking recognition (Hamburg, Berlin and Baden-Württemberg). Finally, financial support services are also being offered in certain areas by the social partners.⁹²

⁸⁹ 1. 2015 BIBB survey of doctors, n = 56; 2. BIBB survey of persons who completed a recognition procedure between 2014 and 2015, including doctors n = 28.

⁹⁰ For more information on the project, see www.anerkennung-nrw.de/.

⁹¹ For the composition of overall costs, see Figure 14. One case in which procurement of documentation was stated to have cost €20,000 was excluded from the evaluations in order to avoid distortions (all other cases stated costs of up to €1,500 in response to this question).

⁹² Refugees in particular, for example, have since this year also been able to receive financial assistance from donations made to the association “Trade unions help”. This is funded by the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) and its member unions. The donations collected by the association are, amongst other purposes, also used to provide support for the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications.

5.2.1 Federal Government regulatory instruments – new interlinking of work placement and training

Employment support funding (Social Security Code, SGB, III) and funding for the provision of basic benefits (SGB II) continue to constitute the most important national instruments for the financing of costs incurred within the scope of recognition procedures.⁹³ The specialist placement and integration staff at the employment agencies and Job Centres use the statutory funding opportunities pursuant to SGB II and SGB II for this purpose.⁹⁴ They also continue to provide information on the training available via the “Integration through Training” Funding Programme (IQ), which is co-financed by the ESF.⁹⁵

Existing funding possibilities in pursuit of the same aim, such as measures to facilitate entry into the labour market and occupational integration or support for continuing vocational training in accordance with SGB III and SGB II, should be used in preference to ESF-funded training. This means that ESF measures are only selected when the regulatory funding measures stated are not possible on an individual case basis. The specialist placement and integration staff then check the extent to which they can continue to grant unemployment benefits or basic benefits during participation in ESF training. The training measure itself, however, is financed via ESF and IQ funding.

The database KURSNET, which is operated by the Federal Employment Agency (BA), has been used as the central information platform for this ESF training provision since 30 April 2015. Course information can be accessed via an extended search function covering the educational area of “Training measures for the recognition of foreign qualifications”. At the same time, this specific provision can also be accessed via the “Recognition in Germany” portal.

5.2.2 New Federal Government approaches – support with training and integration into the labour market

The public purse offers free **training measures** within the context of the Recognition Act in the form of courses within the scope of the IQ Funding Programme, co-financed by the ESF and launched in 2015 (for more detailed information, see Chapter 6). In addition to this, the IQ may fund further **individual support** costs required in order to achieve the objective of the measure (such as travel or childcare costs) or costs of supplementary measures (for example occupationally related language courses). Decisions regarding assumption of costs are taken on an individual case basis. Both the benefits paid and the available budget vary from federal state to federal state. In the fourth quarter of 2015, a total of 130 participants received average funding of €332 each. Total funding was just under €43,200.⁹⁶ By far the greatest proportion of this was spent on travel costs (cf. Figure 14). The

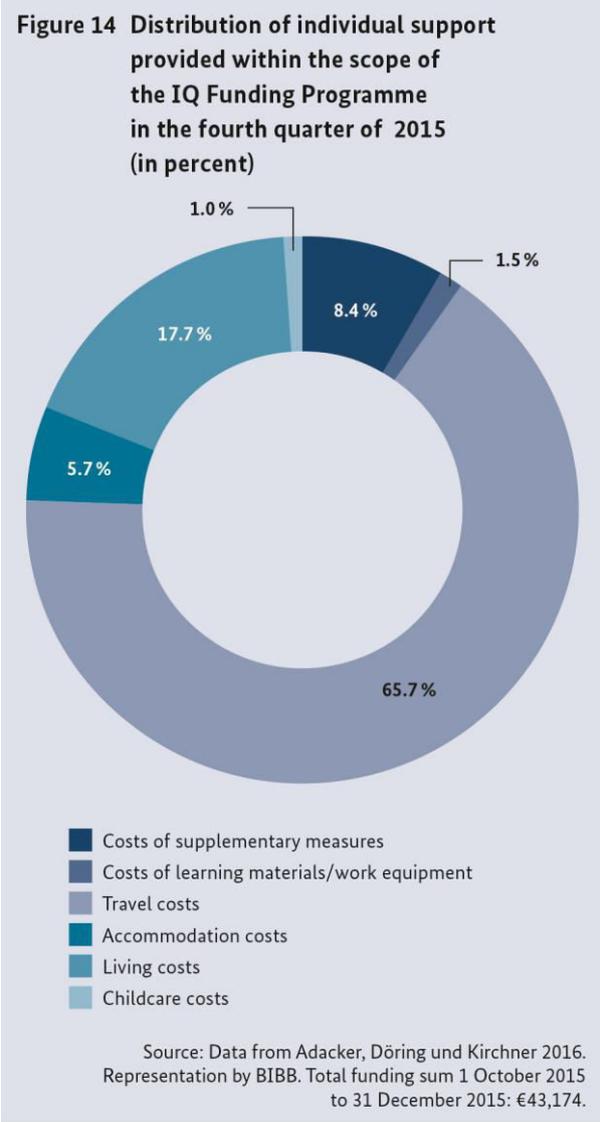
⁹³ Cf. BMBF 2015.

⁹⁴ This approach has its basis in the “Recommendations and Instructions” (“HEGA”) document issued by the Federal Employment Agency, HEGA 03/2012; cf. <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/web/content/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/Weisungen/Arbeitgeber/Detail/index.htm?dfContentId=L6019022DSTBAI431814>.

⁹⁵ HEGA 09/2015: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/web/content/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/Weisungen/Arbeitgeber/Detail/index.htm?dfContentId=L6019022DSTBAI778264>.

⁹⁶ All information regarding individual support have been taken from the first version of the “Report on experiences from the ‘Integration through Training Programme (IQ)’ on the implementation of individual funding”, last updated 29 January 2016 (Adacker, Döring und Kirchner 2016).

reason for this is likely to be that over 90 percent of participants attended measure that were conducted on a face-to-face basis and therefore had to travel long distances, particularly in the large non-city states. Further observation of participant structure reveals the following. Over three quarters of participants were not in employment at the start of the measure. Almost one third came to Germany as refugees. 20 percent of participants completed their qualification in Syria. The most popular professions in which participants sought recognition were doctor (23 percent) and engineer (18 percent).



Alongside the IQ Funding Programme, a further support opportunity was introduced in 2015 for persons who have applied for asylum in Germany in the form of the “Early Intervention” scheme. A total of 1,419 persons were included in this project during the period from January 2014 to December 2015.⁹⁷

The early and extensive assistance provided enabled a total of 161 persons to be placed in employment subject to mandatory social insurance contributions (135) and training (26). This

⁹⁷ Of these, 460 have transferred to basic social security benefit providers, and 96 were deregistered because they failed to attend guidance appointments. In December 2015, 386 persons began to receive support at the three new locations covered by the pilot project and have thus been taking part in the scheme for only about nine months.

represents a rate of 11 percent.⁹⁸ These results are not transferable to the entire refugee population because selection of participants focused on qualified asylum seekers. The pilot project reveals, however, that successful integration is not usually achieved until substantial language barriers have been removed or reduced.⁹⁹

Following the expiry of the “Early Intervention” project phase at the end of 2015, the intention now is for the experiences gained to inform the usual work placement processes. The statutory foundations in this regard have been put in place in the form of Asylum Package I. Two examples from the federal states are as follows. In North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, so-called “Integration Points” were set up with the participation of several institutions such as the employment agency, the Job Centre and the IQ counselling centres. In December 2015, the employment agency, local government authorities, Caritas and the chambers of commerce and industry established a guidance centre in Koblenz in the Rhineland Palatinate to act as a central contact point for the labour market integration of refugees. The aims here are to secure ongoing assistance for clients and to avoid interruptions in support, which arise as a result of change of legal domain and have shown themselves to be a practical hurdle.

5.2.3 Funding instruments of the federal states – the Hamburg Scholarship Programme shows the way

Since the end of 2010, the **Hamburg Scholarship Programme** has funded the costs of a recognition procedure in cases where funding via the regulatory instruments of the Federal Government is not possible.¹⁰⁰ Application takes place within the scope of recognition guidance and is made to the Hamburg Counselling Centre for Recognition of Qualifications (ZAA). In the year 2015, the programme supported 281 persons via one-off grants for costs incurred within the scope of a recognition procedure and provided 35 scholarships to finance living costs.¹⁰¹ The overall funding total for 2015 was around €680,000, representing an increase in volume of around 39 percent compared to the previous year. Just under half of the total amount for 2015 was used to finance training measures¹⁰². Scholarships to cover living costs accounted for just under one third of funding, and nearly a quarter was spent on fees and expenses for recognition procedures and on translations (cf. Figure 15). The average amount of applications for adaptation courses, knowledge or aptitude tests, preparatory courses and language courses was between €1,000 and €1,800. All other one-off grants averaged under €500.

⁹⁸ Information on the 460 former project participants who transferred into the legal domain of SGB II is not currently available, although this could improve the outcome further.

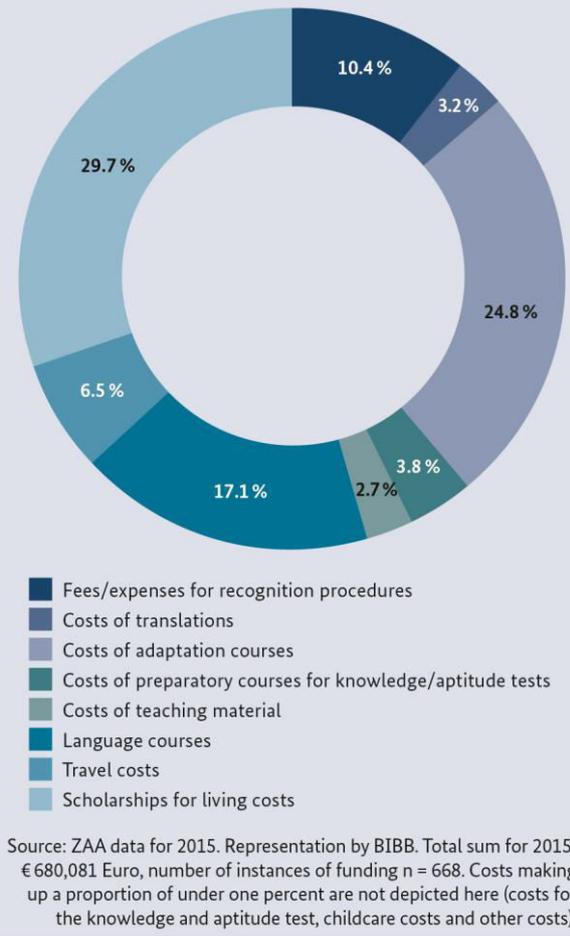
⁹⁹ For further information on the project, see BMBF 2015, pp. 60 ff. and p. 154. Academic research analyses focusing on areas such as integration from basic social security benefits, sustainability of integration and possible effects of participation in the pilot project are planned for 2017 once more data is available.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. BMBF 2015, pp. 158 ff.

¹⁰¹ Between 2011 and 2015, a total of 2,284 one-off grants and 127 scholarships to cover living costs were given. Total funding volume was €2,317,529.

¹⁰² This includes costs of adaptation courses, preparatory courses, teaching materials and language courses (plus costs of knowledge and aptitude tests).

Figure 15 Distribution of funding measures within the Hamburg Scholarship Programme for the year 2015 by costs (in percent)



Based on the Hamburg model, a new such funding opportunity will also be provided in a non-city state in the form of the new **“Scholarship programme for professional recognition in Baden-Württemberg”**¹⁰³. This scheme will initially be tested within the framework of a pilot project to be run by the Baden-Württemberg Foundation over a term of three years and with funding of €2 million. The plan is for the first applications for the scholarship to be received by the not-for-profit company “Mannheim Intercultural Education Centre – Ikubiz” in its capacity as project provider on behalf of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation from the middle of the first half of 2016 onwards and for persons expressing an interest to be advised of the application procedures. “Ikubiz” will in particular work to coordinate the Baden-Württemberg IQ Network within the framework of the IQ Funding Programme. The final decision regarding the awarding of scholarships will be taken by the Baden-Württemberg Foundation.

As in Hamburg, scholarships will only be used in Baden-Württemberg if funding is not possible via employment support funding (Social Security Code, SGB, III) and funding for the provision of basic

¹⁰³ Information about the programme is based on the details provided on the website of the Baden-Württemberg Association (www.bwstiftung.de/berufliche-erkennung-bw), an as yet unpublished description of the pilot project last updated on 28 January 2016, verbal and written communications from the Baden-Württemberg Association made on 7 January and 2 February 2016 and a press release dated 18 November 2015 on the relevant resolution adopted by the Association’s Supervisory Board (www.bwstiftung.de/newsroom/pressemitteilungen/pressemitteilungen/40-mio-euro-fuer-projekte-2016/).

benefits (SGB II). Applications will be permitted from persons with a professional, vocational or higher education qualification acquired abroad whose main place of residence is in Baden-Württemberg or who provide an assurance that they are seeking to obtain employment in the federal state. They must also either be German nationals or nationals of an EU member state or else be in possession of a residence permit or leave to remain in Germany pursuant to § 55 of the Asylum Procedure Law. The intention is that the scholarships will cover the costs of (1) recognition procedures and certificate evaluations by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB), (2) adaptation measures and preparatory courses for knowledge and aptitude tests, (3) language courses and (4) bridging measures for persons with academic qualifications in non-regulated occupations. Funding can be considered for course and examination fees, translation costs, teaching materials, fees charged by the competent bodies, travel costs, childcare costs and living costs during a course.

A funding guideline is also being prepared in Berlin. The plan is that a new **federal state programme entitled the “Berlin hardship fund for professional recognition”** will make grants to persons who do not have the means to finance “the costs of fees and expenses in recognition procedures or costs of compensation measures in the case of partial recognition”. Once again, funding will only be granted if applicants do not receive support via the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (BAföG), via employment support funding (SGB III), via funding for the provision of basic benefits (SGB II), via a federal state programme or via financing available from a federal assistance programme within the context of recognition legislation. Unlike in Hamburg, the intention is not to provide funding to cover living costs. The sum of €200,000 has been earmarked in the budgets for both 2016 and 2017 for the “Berlin hardship fund for professional recognition”. Funding of around €50,000 per year is available for administrative implementation via an external service provider. The plan is for the first applications to be accepted during the course of 2016.¹⁰⁴

5.3 Gaps in financing

The previous monitoring reports on the Recognition Act from the years 2014 and 2015 have shown that the practical effect of overall costs of recognition and of a lack of financing opportunities may sometimes be that those interested in seeking recognition do not submit an application or else withdraw an application they have already made. The experts who gave evidence to the Federal Parliament Select Committee for Education, Research and Technology Impact Assessment (BF Committee) on 30 September 2015 also stated that costs and the financing of costs constituted a major hurdle to implementation practice of the Federal Recognition Act.¹⁰⁵ This requirement was also made clearly apparent at a specialist conference attended by 200 experts on 25 September 2015.¹⁰⁶

Finally, in accepting a recommendation from the BF Committee on 12 November 2015, the German Lower House of Parliament stated that “the Federal Government will act rapidly to investigate the

¹⁰⁴ Information provided in a communication received from the Berlin Senate Department for Labour, Integration and Women dated 16 October 2015 (www.parlament-berlin.de/ados/17/Haupt/vorgang/h17-2294.A-v.pdf) and the draft resolution for the amendment of the Berlin Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) of 15 March 2016 (www.parlament-berlin.de/ados/17/Wiss/vorgang/w17-0133-v.pdf, p. 78 Item E).

¹⁰⁵ See the minutes of the meeting at

www.bundestag.de/blob/395264/969927ffe5e5ed42f6689faa72a1d908/wortprotokoll-data.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ See documentation from the conference at www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/1897.php.

extent to which supplementary financial support for second-chance training measures is required to accompany existing provision (...).¹⁰⁷

Alongside public funding measures, applicants also have access to private financing instruments which they can use individually or with the support of companies. Ultimately, a positive outcome from an equivalence assessment represents a sensible investment in a person's career because it fosters qualified occupational activity. Individual returns are significantly higher than the overall cost of professional or occupational recognition if the result is a higher income in the long term.

With regard to existing funding instruments, the first area in which challenges lie in practice is in the case of those who do not receive support pursuant to SGB II or SGB III. This particularly applies to persons who do not work in the profession or occupation in which they have trained because they have not obtained recognition and instead earn a living via casual jobs or other poorly paid employment. In many such cases, their financial means are insufficient to pay for a procedure and all its associated costs or do not permit them to forgo this source of income in order to take part in further training leading to full recognition.

IQ individual funding is fundamental relevance to workers of this kind. However, because the costs of the actual procedure are usually excluded, only a part of the support requirement can be covered. It is also not possible to use IQ funding of training measures in isolation since training provision within the funding programme does not entirely cover all professions and occupations.

Secondly, unemployed persons or job seekers threatened with unemployment may meet a financial hurdle on an individual case basis if, for example, the labour administration bodies act within their discretion in refusing to grant the relevant benefits or if continuing training courses without AZAZ certification ("Ordinance regarding the conditions and procedure for the accreditation of professional bodies and the admission of employment support providers") are requested.

6. Increasing labour market opportunities – expanding training provision

As data from the official statistics has already shown, not all recognition procedures end at the first stage with full recognition of the professional or vocational qualification acquired abroad. For this reason, relevant training provision is required to lead to full equivalence. In the regulated sector, this takes the form of a compensation measure, whereas those in the non-regulated area undergo adaptation training if at least partial equivalence and therefore competences offering connectivity are in place. In order to improve the labour market opportunities of persons from a migrant background and counter the shortage of skilled workers, the guidance structures and provision of training measures within the IQ Funding Programme have been further extended.

The new main focus "ESF training within the context of the Recognition Act" has been added to the programme for the funding period from 2015 to 2018. Alongside actual first consultations, the established IQ counselling centres now provide training guidance on the opportunities afforded by

¹⁰⁷ See Parliament Printed Paper 18/6632 and Parliament Plenary Protocol 18/136, p. 13373A.

recognition. These relevant ESF-financed training measures are developed and implemented in sub-projects conducted by the 16 federal state networks and at the “Guidance and Training” agency.

There is a strong demand for this new provision amongst participants, and over 4,700 training consultations and just over 2,500 training measures were offered in the first year alone.¹⁰⁸ As well as being used by persons who need to participate in a compensation measure in order to exercise their profession, there was also take-up of the guidance provision by persons who were in possession of a notice attesting partial equivalence in a non-regulated occupation (see also Chapter 6.1.1). In addition, persons interested in recognition holding non-regulated higher education qualifications also sought guidance. The training measures are carried out by various providers. Alongside the chambers, these include migrant organisations, social welfare associations, companies, education service providers, institutes of higher education and vocational schools.

In overall terms, the well-established guidance structure within the IQ Funding Programme was successfully expanded during the past year. There was take-up of the new training guidance by persons interested in seeking recognition across all phases of the recognition procedure. This extension of the guidance structure and the additional provision of training measures thus constitute decisive factors for the comprehensive success of recognition procedures.

6.1 Considerable interest in the new IQ training consultations

Within the scope of training guidance, the IQ counselling centre provide assistance with such matters as the interpretation of recognition notices and also highlight possibilities for the further training pathway. They advise on training measures for professions which are governed by the recognition laws of the Federal Government and federal states, on bridging measures for academic professions and on the external examination in the dual system. They also offer information on opportunities for financial support for participation in training measures.¹⁰⁹

In 2015, more than 4,700 interested parties received guidance on the topic of training. Of these, just over three quarters were aged between 25 and 44.¹¹⁰ The proportion of women was just under 60 percent.¹¹¹ Training guidance can be preceded by a first consultation, but does not have to be. Nevertheless, just over 70 percent availed themselves of a first consultation and training guidance.¹¹²

This shows that training guidance usefully builds upon the established provision of the IQ Network and on guidance services offered by some competent bodies. It appeals in particular to persons who still have several decades of employment ahead of them and who can therefore decisively benefit from further training.

¹⁰⁸ Survey period 1 January to 31 December 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. IQ “Guidance and training” agency (Ed.) 2016.

¹¹⁰ All percentage and absolute values stated in this chapter relate to valid information only.

¹¹¹ The current period of observation is one year. For this reason, the IQ “Guidance and Training” agency points out that “significant shifts in the nature of individual characteristics [...] cannot be excluded in future reports” (Benzer et al. 2016, p. 51). In addition, “comparisons between training guidance figures and recognition guidance figures [...] are planned from the report on the first quarter of 2016 at the earliest” (ibid).

¹¹² With regard to the figures presented in Chapter 6.1, cf. also Benzer et al. 2016. Also see the dataset description for the training guidance data in the Annex.

6.1.1 Strong demand for compensation measures and also guidance requirements for non-regulated occupations and academic professions

45 percent of the 4,715 guidance cases concerned professions governed by federal or federal state law which require identification of full equivalence with the German reference occupation before they can be exercised. For this reason, it is indispensable for those affected to seek guidance and obtain information on compensation measures. 22 percent of cases concern non-regulated occupations, in respect of which the exercising of the occupation is not linked to the outcome of the equivalence assessment. The fact that such persons have taken up training guidance demonstrates that adaptation training is also highly relevant and that there is a corresponding need for advice. Just over twelve percent of cases involved non-regulated academic professions.

The most frequent reference occupations or higher education qualifications for which training consultations were sought in 2015 were engineer, teacher and business economist (cf. table 3). The ten most common reference occupations and higher education qualifications accounted for 45 percent of training consultations.

Table 3 The ten most common qualifications (reference occupations and higher education qualifications) forming an object of training at the IQ counselling centres (in absolute terms and in percent)

Reference occupation	absolute	%
Engineer	421	9.5
Teacher	381	8.6
Business economist	226	5.1
Registered general nurse	223	5.0
Doctor	199	4.5
Nursery school teacher	147	3.3
Office manager	80	1.8
Economic scientist	74	1.7
Dentist	65	1.5
Social education worker, social worker	63	1.4
Top 10 reference occupations overall	1,879	42.5
Further reference occupations	2,547	57.5
Total	4,426	100

Source: IQ training guidance data (period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015, n = 4,426). Calculations by the “Guidance and Training” agency of the IQ Funding Programme.

6.1.2 Guidance frequently takes place prior to the procedure or notice

Interested parties may avail themselves of training guidance independently of whether an application has actually been submitted and irrespective of the outcome of the recognition procedure. Just under 1,600 persons (39 percent) receiving guidance had not yet made an application for recognition of a foreign professional or vocational qualification at the time when the

consultation took place. These persons were possibly seeking to compensate for deficits already identified in the first consultation before or during the application process and thereby accelerate the procedure. Around 850 persons receiving guidance (21 percent) were already in possession of a notice regarding the equivalence assessment whilst in approximately 370 cases (nine percent) the procedure was still ongoing. Just under 1,600 of persons (just over 39 percent) receiving guidance had not yet made an application for recognition. About 830 cases (just under 21 percent) concerned professions which are not covered by the Recognition Act but in respect of which relevant application for a certificate evaluation by the ZAB may be made. Just over 17 percent of these persons had already received a certificate evaluation at the time when guidance took place, whilst for over 80 percent this was not yet the case.

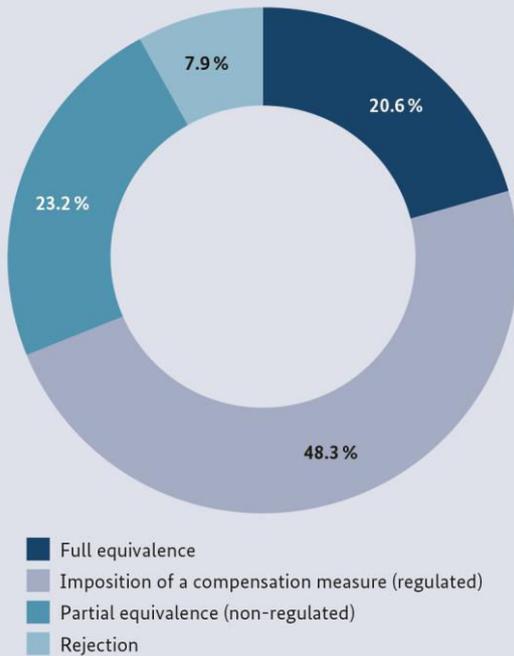
6.1.3 Guidance beyond the substantial differences identified in the notices

It is revealed that even persons who conclude their recognition procedure by gaining full recognition still avail themselves of guidance on training measures. It is possible that they are seeking to discover how they can enhance their opportunities on the training market still further. In over 70 percent of consultations where a notice had been received, compensation measures had been imposed (regulated professions) or partial equivalence (non-regulated occupations) had been identified (cf. Figure 16). Nevertheless, consideration needs to be accorded here to the fact that not all persons with a notice attesting no equivalence or partial equivalence avail themselves of guidance on training opportunities. Information in this regard may be gleaned from a survey of the chambers of crafts and trades conducted in the summer of 2015¹¹³.¹¹⁴ Just over 37 percent of the chambers had received a wish for guidance on continuing training opportunities from this group of persons with a frequency ranging from relatively frequently to very frequently. However, 60 percent of the chambers stated that such guidance had been requested with a frequency ranging from relatively seldom to never. The chambers of crafts and trades believe that the main reasons why persons who are awarded partial recognition fail to take part in adaptation training to be insufficient knowledge of German, the time and organisational effort required and costs and financing. They also attach significance to the fact that partial recognition is sufficient for commencement of employment in non-regulated occupations (see Chapter 3.3). In most cases, a combination of the reasons stated was viewed as relevant.

¹¹³ Also see the dataset description for the survey of the chambers of crafts and trades in the Annex.

¹¹⁴ Some competent bodies conduct adaptation training, either as an IQ sub-project or in self-financed form.

Figure 16 Outcome of the equivalence assessment in the case of training guidance of persons with a notice (in percent)



Source: IQ training guidance data (period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015, n = 783). Calculations by the "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme. Representation by BIBB.

When guidance is provided to persons who have received the imposition of a compensation measure or partial equivalence, this takes place with the aim of removing the substantial differences identified in the notice. However, notices sometimes do not contain any precise indications in this regard, as described in the 2015 Report on the Recognition Act in respect of the medical professions.¹¹⁵ This means that it may be difficult to derive specific training contents from the notices. In such cases, the theoretical and practical learning aims to be achieved in the adaptation training in order to obtain full recognition need to be determined in the guidance meeting.¹¹⁶ There may also be language deficits, which are not permitted to be an object of the recognition procedure. In the implementation of the EU Recognition Directive in the medical professions, a process which is currently ongoing, statutory clarification¹¹⁷ is being put in place that equivalence should be assessed within the scope of a professional recognition procedure even if no language knowledge is yet in place. Although language knowledge is not listed in the notice, in some medical professions, for example, it is a prerequisite for the issuing of authorisation to practise or a licence to practise and therefore also constitutes an important component of the training guidance. Knowledge of German is an important part of guidance in other professions and occupations too, because IQ pursues a holistic approach towards integration into the labour market.

¹¹⁵ Cf. BMBF 2015, pp. 123 ff.

¹¹⁶ At the chambers of commerce and industry, for example, training guidance is in many cases conducted by staff who specialise in training opportunities and measures and exhibit a relevant degree of expertise in this area.

¹¹⁷ Draft law Parliament Printed Paper 18/6616.

The substantial differences identified in notices or consultations differed depending on the category of profession or occupation. Whereas in the dual occupations in particular substantial differences in the area of practical skills have a part to play, in more academically aligned professions a lack of theoretical knowledge was frequently ascertained alongside substantial differences on the practical side. Consideration also needs to be accorded to the fact that the differences identified often related to more than one aspect. Language deficits, for example, were almost always revealed in combination with at least one other difference. In some cases, persons exhibited deficits or substantial differences in all three areas.

In overall terms, it is clear that training guidance is deployed at different times within the recognition procedure. Guidance also needs to address specific differences in respect of the outcome of the recognition procedure and further prerequisites for authorisation to practise or a licence to practise.

Guidance provision seems to be able to meet these diverse requirements successfully. This is shown by the fact that 86 percent of the 3,332 persons receiving guidance for whom valid information was available as of the cut-off date of 31 December 2015 had already been referred to an appropriate training measure. This figure included 1,705 persons who were recommended to pursue an internal IQ training measure.¹¹⁸

6.2 IQ training measures well received

Since the launch of the new main action focus of “Training measures in the context of the Recognition Act” in the IQ Funding Programme in the year 2015, the 16 federal state networks and the IQ “Guidance and Training” agency together have already offered a total of 184 training measures¹¹⁹.¹²⁰ Of the 115 training measures which took the form of a course,¹²¹ 86 percent were compensation measures for regulated professions (Module 1) and bridging measures for persons holding academic qualifications (Module 3). Almost half of the 68 individual training measures¹²² constituted provision for occupations in the dual system (Module 2). Most of the courses and individual training measures were designed to be delivered on a face-to-face basis. Whereas the training provision that takes the form of a course is predominantly aligned towards the imparting of specialist theoretical contents, individual provision is characterised by a close interlinking between

¹¹⁸ No appropriate measure could be found for 14 percent of those receiving guidance. The data does not make it clear whether the guidance process has already been concluded or not. This means that no statement can be made in respect of whether an appropriate measure has not found yet or not been found at all.

¹¹⁹ Interpretation of the documentation of individual training is different in some cases. This means that such training tends to be over represented in the evaluations, the result being that a slight variance in results may occur in later evaluations.

¹²⁰ For the data included in Chapter 6.2, see the dataset description for the IQ training data in the Annex.

¹²¹ “Training is described as taking the form of a course if the same contents are offered to a certain number of participants. Such training may also be constructed in a modular way, so that individual participants are able to complete only certain of these modules in line with their needs and are afforded flexible entry.” (Hoffmann et al. 2016, p. 35).

¹²² “By way of contrast, so-called individual training and planned and executed for a single person. The characteristic feature is that participants enter the training at different times and undergo training for different lengths of time.” (Hoffmann et al. 2016, p. 35).

practical and theoretical contents and by individual support for participants. Training provision is also accompanied by a high proportion of occupationally related language courses.¹²³

In 2015, just over 2,500 persons attended IQ training measures¹²⁴, just over half of whom were female. The average age of participants was 34. Syria was by a large distance the most frequent nationality, followed by Poland, the Russian Federation, Germany and the Ukraine. Participants have varying residency status in Germany. Twelve percent state that they are in the country according to international law or for humanitarian or political reasons (cf. Chapter 7.3). Two percent of participants had taken advantage of the new residence permit for the purpose of adaptation training or a knowledge test pursuant to § 17a of the German Residency Act (AufenthG) (cf. Chapter 1.3). Just over a quarter were nationals of the EU, the EEA or Switzerland, therefore being entitled to freedom of movement. One in five participants was endeavouring to achieve recognition as a doctor, and one in five was seeking recognition as a registered general nurse (cf. Figure 17). There are skilled worker shortages in both these professions. 80 percent of participants were in possession of a language certificate, most at level B1 or B2. One in six participants holding a language certificate had reached a level as high as C1 or C2.

Figure 17 The five most frequent target reference occupations for participants in IQ training measures (in percent)



Source: IQ training data (period: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015, n = 1,956).
Calculations by the "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme. Representation by BIBB.

1,060 participants had already concluded their training by 31 December 2015. Just over half of participants in Module 1 and Module 2 achieved full equivalence. A further 33 percent are likely to achieve this.¹²⁵

In overall terms, it is revealed that the training measures are relevant both to persons who enjoy freedom of movement and to persons with temporary residency status. Most participants also had a high level of qualification and language skills.

¹²³ Multiple responses were possible in the question relating to learning contents since one measure may cover more than one learning content.

¹²⁴ Period: 1 January to 31 December 2015, cut-off date for the dataset download: 18 April 2016.

¹²⁵ All results cf. Hoffmann et al. 2016.

7. Integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market

Over recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of persons coming to Germany to flee political persecution and war. Many of these persons will remain in the country, and this means that integration into training, higher education study and work will be a major future task. Recognition of professional and vocational qualifications acquired in the country of origin is an important bridge to the labour market.

7.1 Refugees and asylum seekers are able to benefit from the Recognition Act

One of the legislative objectives of the Recognition Act was to improve the labour market prospects of refugees and asylum seekers via recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. For this reason, there is a legal right to a recognition procedure irrespective of nationality, residence permit or work permit. This means that refugees, asylum seekers and persons with leave to remain can all submit an application for recognition.¹²⁶

These people can also benefit from the Recognition Act via a provision which is trail-blazing in international comparative terms.¹²⁷ Pursuant to § 14 of the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act, BQFG (and § 50 of the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code, HwO) persons who have acquired a formal qualification but are unable to produce a certificate or submit sufficient documentation are afforded the opportunity to seek evaluation of professional and vocational qualifications via so-called skills analyses (cf. Chapter 4). An identical paragraph has been included in each of the recognition laws of the federal states permitting skills analyses in professions to the extent that these are covered by the respective BQFG of the federal state. In the medical professions, the statutory regulations state that equivalent status of knowledge must be demonstrated by a knowledge test in order to receive recognition in circumstances where no documentation or only insufficient documentation can be submitted. In order further to expand these opportunities, especially those afforded by the skills analyses, and to broaden awareness the BMBF has joined forces with the chambers to instigate the “Prototyping” and “Prototyping Transfer” project (cf. Chapter 4).

Many asylum seekers and refugees are in possession of professional and occupational skills and competences, albeit without having acquired a formal or state recognised professional or vocational qualification¹²⁸. The recognition procedures are not relevant in such cases, since they require formal evidence of training. In order still to be able to make full use of the existing potential, established procedures are available within the chamber area. These include the external examination, retraining

¹²⁶ For example, the “Explanatory memorandum to accompany the Recognition Act” issued by the BMBF states: “The new provisions of contained within §18 AufenthG, introduced as a result of the Law on the Regulation of Labour Migration of 2009, [make it possible] to grant a residence permit to persons with leave to remain if they find employment that is appropriate to their qualification. The opening up of the recognition procedure to those with leave to remain enhances the effectiveness of this provision, which was introduced in the interests of securing a supply of skilled workers” (BMBF 2012).

¹²⁷ Cf. OECD 2016, pp. 34 ff.

¹²⁸ This refers to qualifications in respect of which an equivalence assessment pursuant to the recognition laws or a certificate evaluation by the ZAB is possible.

and abbreviated training or continuing training.¹²⁹ In addition to this, the new BMBF funded project “Qualifications related validation of informal and non-formal competences” (ValiKom)¹³⁰ is developing standards and procedures for the assessment of occupationally relevant competences in comparison with formal qualifications which can also be used by refugees who have utilisable occupational experience but no formal qualifications. “ValiKom” is aligned towards the experiences for recognition procedures gleaned within the “Prototyping” project.

7.2 Support opportunities continue to be expanded

Alongside “ValiKom” and “Prototyping Transfer”, there are further projects aimed at identifying the areas of potential and competences offered by refugees and asylum seekers in order to facilitate rapid labour market integration. From 2014 to 2015, for example, selected asylum seekers with good prospects of remaining in the country¹³¹ received special early stage support within the scope of the pilot project “Early Intervention” instigated by the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). The project encompassed surveys of competences as well as the introduction of recognition procedures. The “Early Intervention” was enshrined in law in Social Security Code III (SGB III) via the Asylum Procedure Acceleration Act¹³² and was opened up to all refugees with good prospects of being able to remain in Germany. Since October 2015, as part of measures aimed at facilitating entry into the labour market and occupational integration, the Federal Employment Agency (BA) has been offering an opportunity to take place in a scheme entitled “Perspectives for refugees (PerF)” with a view to paving the way for sustainable labour market integration. The aim of this measure is to identify the occupational competences of refugees who have labour market access by conducting some measures at real companies. Contents of the measure include information on prevailing conditions on the German labour market and on the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, support with job application activities and the imparting or enhancement of occupationally related language knowledge. Decisions on participation are made by specialist placement and integration staff at the employment agencies or Job Centres on an individual case basis.

The acquisition of knowledge of German is a lynchpin of labour market integration. As well as adding to the number of integration courses available, the Federal Government has also established a new statutory basis for occupationally related language support (§ 45a AufenthG) and considerably expanded provision. During its initial stage, federally financed occupationally related assistance with learning German is conducted via basic and special modules within the scope of the “Overall Language Programme”. These modules facilitate the acquisition of qualifications in accordance with the levels set out in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as well as providing for occupationally specific courses, training oriented courses and individual support. The modules are flexibly arranged with regard to time and media. The main objective is to allow interlinking with labour market policy instruments. In the second stage, occupationally related

¹²⁹ For further information on alternative procedures, see BMBF 2015, pp. 216 ff. and BMBF 2014, pp. 78 ff.

¹³⁰ Pilot initiative “ValiKom” by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) and the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH). Further information at: www.whkt.de/aus-und-weiterbildung/initiativen-des-whkt/valikom.html.

¹³¹ For specific details on the participant selection process, see Daumann et al. 2015.

¹³² The Asylum Procedure Acceleration Act (Federal Law Gazette, BGBl. 2015 I p. 1722) has been in force since 24 October 2015.

language support is collated with the integration courses to form a modular and interconnected system.

Many measures are being instigated at federal state level in order to foster the labour market integration of refugees. One example of many is the new project “W.I.R. – Work and integration for refugees”¹³³ in Hamburg. This involves cooperation between central institutions and stakeholders such as Job Centres, competent authorities and providers of assistance to refugees, not the least of the aims being to allow rapid progression to recognition for refugees with foreign qualifications.¹³⁴

In order to be able to meet the expected increase in numbers of persons interested in seeking recognition, the provision contained within the IQ Funding Programme has also been expanded and extended. More funding has, for example, also been made available to the IQ counselling centres. The new main action focus of the IQ Funding programme for training, within the scope of which adaptation training, language provision and bridging measures for persons with academic qualifications are financed (cf. Chapter 6), is also of significance to the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

The federal states have also resolved to create 16 new posts at the ZAB in order to be able to undertake rapid processing of the increased numbers of applications that are expected for recognition of academic qualifications, school leaving qualifications and higher education entrance qualifications.¹³⁵ As we went to print, most of all these positions bar one had been filled, especially in the division/occupational field Arab nations/Iran.

The BQ Portal is also expanding the information on refugees’ countries of origin which it makes available to recognition bodies and companies. A questionnaire in German, English and Arabic has, for example, been designed in order to clarify entitlement to make an application by applicants without documentation. Brief descriptions on the main countries from which asylum seekers originate have been drawn up for companies. These contain the most important facts and figures regarding training system, level of education and migration.

7.3 Many young and well qualified refugees at IQ initial counselling centres

Since 1 June 2015, the IQ initial counselling centres have been recording the residency status of those seeking guidance in order to obtain information on the target group of refugees.¹³⁶ This concerns persons who in their first consultation have stated that they are in Germany according to international law or for humanitarian or political reasons (§ 22 to 26, 104a, 104b AufenthG) or are in

¹³³ Further information is available at: www.diakonie-hamburg.de/de/visitenkarte/zaa/Unterstuetzung-der-Vermittlung-von-Fluechtlingen-in-Ausbildung-Studium-und-Arbeit.

¹³⁴ Further information on national initiatives can, for example, be accessed at: <http://www.kofa.de/themen-von-a-z/fluechtlinge/initiativen>.

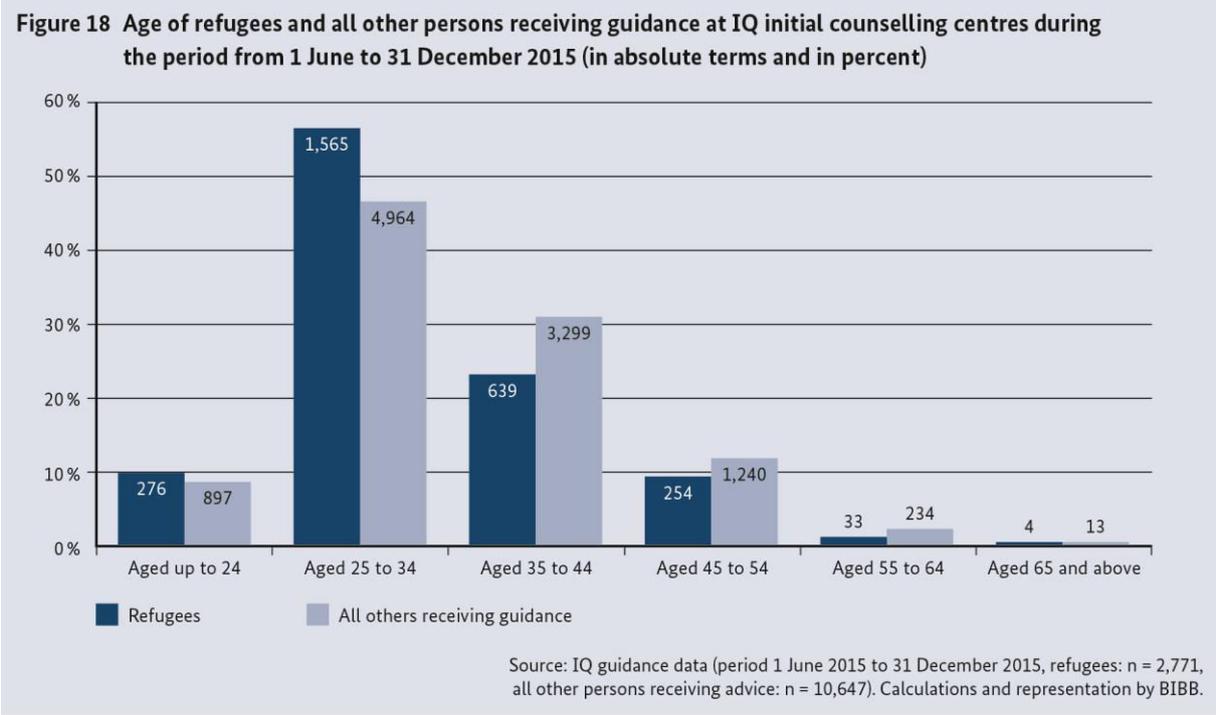
¹³⁵ Commitment made by the federal states at asylum policy talks held between the Federal Chancellor and the Heads of Government of the Federal States on 24 September 2015 (so-called “Asylum Summit”).

¹³⁶ Because the IQ has only collected information on the characteristic of “residency status” since 1 June 2015, account needs to be taken of the fact that sample sizes are low thus far and no final picture can be drawn regarding refugees as a group of persons.

possession of leave to remain (pursuant to § 55 Paragraph 1 of the Asylum Procedure Law (AsylVfG) or leave to remain (pursuant to § 60a Paragraph 4 AufenthG).

In the period from 1 June to 31 December 2015, the IQ initial counselling centres provided guidance on the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications to a total of 2,869 refugees.¹³⁷ This represents just over 19 percent of all 14,443 persons who received guidance during this period. Two thirds were 34 or under, over half were aged between 25 and 34 (cf. Figure 18)¹³⁸. More than three quarters were male. This is in line with the age structure of all asylum seekers in 2015, of whom more than two thirds (72 percent) were under 30 years of age.

In overall terms, it is revealed that the IQ counselling centres represent important points of contact for those who wish to become integrated into the labour market as quickly as possible via the vehicle of recognition. In addition, individual federal states have expanded their own guidance provision for the target group of refugees.



Syrians¹³⁹ accounted for just over 60 percent of refugees receiving guidance, by far the largest group. They were followed in second and third place by Iranian and Afghan nationals respectively (cf. Table 4).

¹³⁷ With regard to the figures presented in Chapter 7.3, cf. also Benzer et al. 2016. Also see the dataset description for guidance data in the Annex.
¹³⁸ All percentage and absolute values stated in this chapter relate to valid information only.
¹³⁹ Information in the text and in the accompanying table relate to first nationality. A decision was taken not to evaluate occasional instances of the stating of a second nationality.

Table 4 The ten most frequent nationalities of refugees at the IQ initial counselling centres (in absolute terms and in percent)

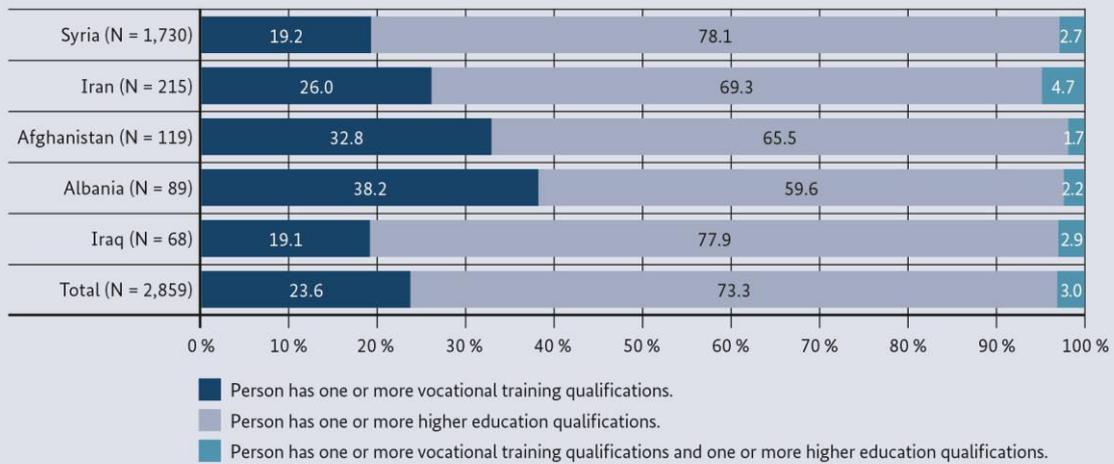
Nationality	absolute	%
Syrian	1,734	60.9
Iranian	215	7.6
Afghan	119	4.2
Albanian	89	3.1
Iraqi	68	2.4
Ukrainian	62	2.2
Pakistani	57	2.0
Eritrean	55	1.9
National of the Palestinian Territories	53	1.9
National of the Russian Federation	41	1.4
Top 10 nationalities	2,493	87.6
Refugees of other nationalities receiving guidance	352	12.4
Total	2,845	100.0

Source: IQ guidance data (period 1 June 2015 to 31 December 2015, n = 2,845). Calculations by the “Guidance and Training” agency of the IQ Funding Programme.

The qualification level of refugees who sought guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres was high in overall terms. More than three quarters of the Syrians and Iraqis respectively were in possession of one or more higher education qualifications. 19 percent of each of these groups had one or more vocational training qualifications. Just over 32 percent and 38 percent respectively of refugees from Afghanistan and Albania had one or more vocational training qualifications (cf. Figure 19). The assumption is that the refugees receiving guidance do not form a representative portrayal of all refugees currently living in Germany because the group of those receiving guidance only contains persons in possession of a professional or vocational qualification which could be recognised. Although other publications point out that the proportion of asylum applicants with higher level school leaving qualifications or higher education qualifications is large in some cases, with regard to the qualifications structure as a whole they also draw a heterogeneous picture in which the proportion of those with higher qualifications is considerably lower than within the context of recognition guidance.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Cf. BAMF Brief Analyses 1/2016 (Worbs and Bund 2016) and 3/2016 (Rich 2016).

Figure 19 Professional and vocational qualification of refugees receiving guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres by the five most common nationalities and in overall terms (in percent)



Source: IQ guidance data (period 1 June 2015 to 31 December 2015). Calculations and representation by the "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme.

The high level of qualification of refugees receiving guidance from the IQ initial counselling centres is also reflected in the reference occupations and higher education qualifications. Nine of the ten professions were based on academic training (cf. Table 5). The most frequent professions for which consultations took place were engineer, doctor (issuing of licence to practise) and teacher, i.e. precisely those professions in which there is a high degree of demand for skilled workers in Germany.

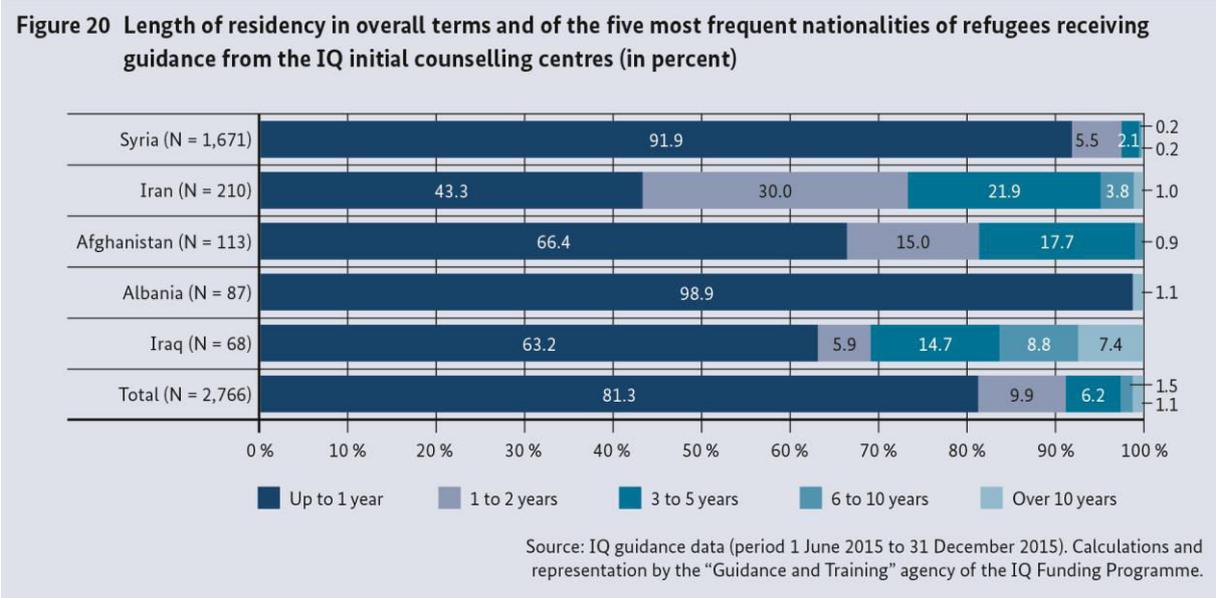
Table 5 The ten most frequent qualifications (reference occupations and higher education qualifications) of refugees at the IQ initial counselling centres (in absolute terms and in percent)

Reference occupations	absolute	%
Engineer	436	14.9
Doctor	206	7.0
Teacher	188	6.4
Economic scientist	104	3.6
Business economist	102	3.5
Dispensing chemist	89	3.0
Dentist	80	2.7
Lawyer	78	2.7
Information technology specialist	70	2.4
Registered general nurse	59	2.0
Top 10 reference occupations overall	1,412	48.2
Further reference occupations	1,516	51.8
Total	2,928	100.0

Source: IQ guidance data (period 1 June 2015 to 31 December 2015, n = 2,928). Calculations by the "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme.

Just over 81 percent of refugees receiving guidance had been in Germany for no more than one year. Of all refugees with Albanian or Syrian nationality, the vast majority had only been in the country

since recently. By way of contrast, Iranians in particular had in some cases been living in Germany for some considerable time (cf. Figure 20). In overall terms, this confirms that the IQ is able to reach refugees and asylum seekers very quickly upon their arrival in Germany and that the IQ initial counselling centres have therefore established themselves as an important stakeholder for the provision of early guidance and support for the purpose of labour market integration of this group of persons.



Knowledge of German stated by the refugees in the IQ consultation is a further object of interest. Over 2,000, or just over 73 percent, of refugees receiving guidance spoke German as a second language. Just over 25 percent had no knowledge of German, and less than one percent had a native speaker command of the language. Information regarding certified language level was also available for just over 1,100 persons. Almost half were able to show evidence of a language certificate at level B1. One tenth were in possession of a language certificate at level B2. This means that this group of persons differs only slightly from all persons seeking recognition.

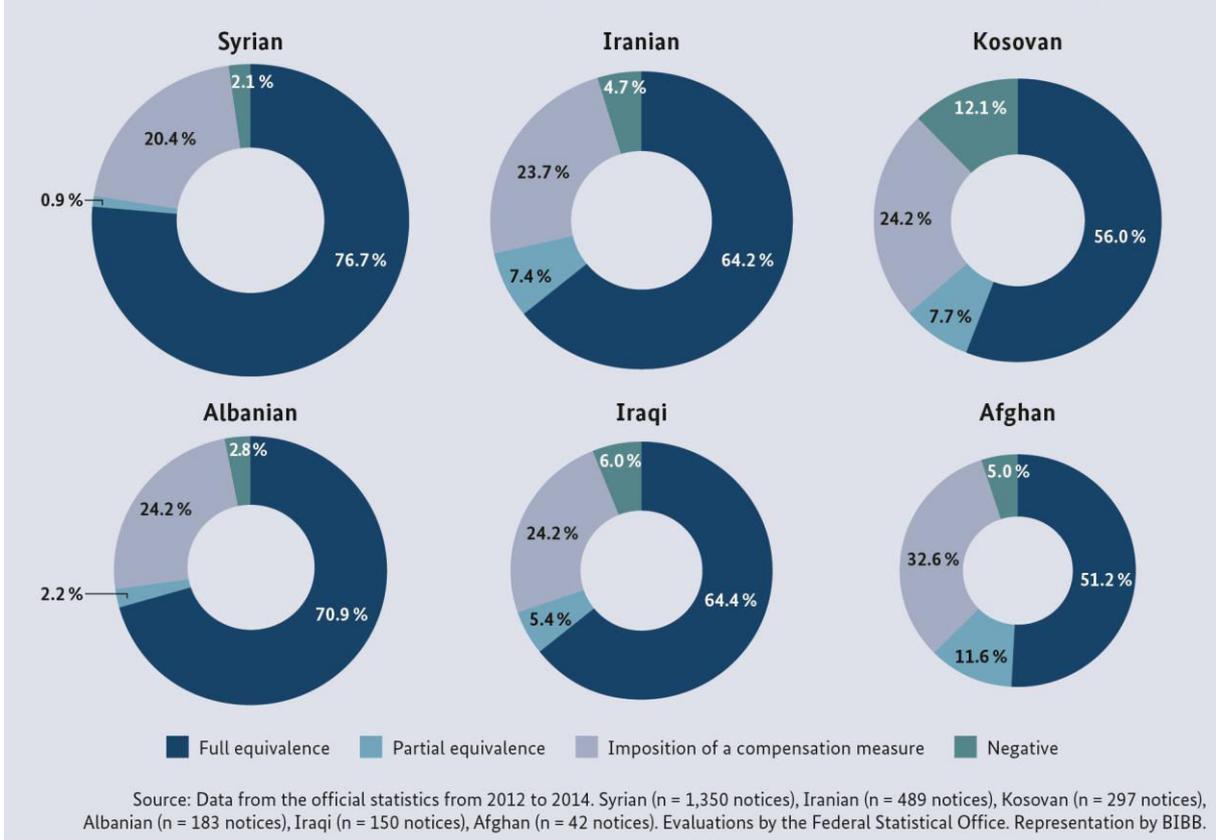
7.4 Many positive recognition notices

The legal right to a procedure for professional or occupational recognition is not linked to possession of a residence permit. For this reason, no information regarding residence permits is collected in the official statistics. Hence, no precise statements can be made on the basis of the current data situation with regard to how likely refugees or asylum seekers are to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Recognition Act. Nationality, however, provides a vehicle via which a rough estimation can be made.¹⁴¹

Public and political focus is currently on the states of origin with the most applications for asylum (Syria, Albania, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan) and on countries which have a high proportion of persons

¹⁴¹ In making such an estimation, account needs to be taken of the fact that applicants may hold different residency permits despite having the same nationality. This group thus presumably comprises persons with refugee status and asylum seekers as well as persons with permanent residency rights and so forth.

Figure 21 Outcome of the equivalence assessment by nationality (main countries of origin) 2012 to 2014 (in percent)



seeking protection (Syria, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea).¹⁴² Against this background, the procedures for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications from applicants holding nationality of the countries stated above (main countries of origin) will be considered in more detail below.

Between 2012 and 2014, citizens from the main countries of origin of refugees to Germany submitted a total of more than 2,800 applications in accordance with the Federal Recognition Act. Further recognition applications were made by nationals of these countries to the federal states in respect of professions governed by federal state law. In the absence of any integrated federal state statistics, however, no figures are available in this regard. The nationalities most frequently submitting applications pursuant to the Federal Recognition Act were Syrians (1,362), Iranians (573) and Kosovans (393). Nationals from Eritrea submitted only nine applications.

The official recognition statistics also show that the most frequent reference occupations amongst nationals from the main countries of origin are medical professions where academic qualifications are required and specialist healthcare professions. In the case of nationals from Kosovo, the reference occupation of motor vehicle mechatronics technician was also strongly represented.

In procedures involving Syrians in which a decision was reached, the outcome in more than three quarters of cases was full recognition. The corresponding figure in respect of Afghan and Kosovan

¹⁴² Because of the low sample size, no information on the number of notices and on the outcome of procedures is available for Eritrean nationals for data protection reasons.

nationals was around a half. Around two thirds of all procedures involving Iraqi, Iranian and Albanian applicants ended in full recognition (cf. Figure 21¹⁴³).

The figures from the guidance statistics confirm, and this is also something indicated by the official statistics, that the refugees and asylum seekers considered here within the context of recognition arrive in Germany with good qualifications. The recognition rules can be of benefit to them in terms of achieving labour market integration in a way that is in line with their skills. In light of the rising asylum migration figures, it may be assumed that the number of recognition applications will rise in future. Nevertheless, for most refugees and asylum seekers professional and occupational recognition is not the most urgent matter to be addressed upon arrival in Germany. Priority is initially accorded to basic provisions, accommodation and above all the overriding necessity to learn the language. For this reason, it is likely that a rise in the number of applications for professional and occupational recognition will not take place until a later point in time.

¹⁴³ Cf. BAMF 2016a and BAMF 2016b

Annex

Data set descriptions

Workshops with competent bodies in the healthcare sector

BIBB conducted a total of six workshops, three for competent bodies in the field of recognition of foreign doctors' qualifications and three for bodies responsible for the recognition of registered general nurses from abroad. These took place on 29 September 2015 in Bonn, on 7 and 8 October 2015 in Hamburg, on 4 and 5 November 2015 in Leipzig and on 16 November 2015 in Schwetzingen. 59 members of staff from competent bodies in virtually every federal state participated in at least one workshop.

Guidance data from the BAMF "Working and Living in Germany" Hotline¹⁴⁴ and the IQ initial counselling centres

The "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme, which is housed at the Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) in Nuremberg, operates a central online database, in which all IQ counselling centres nationally document their guidance cases. The BAMF Recognition Hotline, which since 1 December 2014 has continued within the scope of "Working and Living in Germany", a cross-departmental initiative involving the BMWi, the BMI, the BMBF and the BA, operates its own dedicated database for the purpose. The agency prepares quarterly evaluation reports on all characteristics recorded for the Hotline and IQ initial counselling centres as well as additional annual reports for the IQ data only. The agency and the BAMF Hotline make the data that they have collected on the persons interested in seeking recognition to whom they have provided guidance available to the "Recognition Monitoring" Team at BIBB on a regular basis. Up until 31 December 2015, a total of 105,297 guidance cases were documented. The IQ counselling centres and the Hotline accounted for 62,256 and 43,041 of these cases respectively. Data from the Recognition Hotline and the "Working and Living in Germany Hotline" is available for the period from 1 April 2012. Data from the IQ counselling centres is available from 1 August 2012.

The documentation of the IQ counselling centres contains more variables than that of the "Working and Living in Germany Hotline". For this reason, information for both documentation systems cannot be presented at every point in the evaluations.

The consultation figure is based on the number of initial contacts because only the IQ counselling centres state the number of follow-up contacts.

Data from IQ training guidance

The "Guidance and Training" agency of the IQ Funding Programme, which is housed at the Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) in Nuremberg, operates a central online

¹⁴⁴ The guidance volume of the IQ initial counselling centres and the "Working and Living in Germany" Hotline presented in this report relates only to consultations on professional and vocational qualifications. Advice on school leaving qualifications, use of academic titles etc. is not considered.

database, in which all IQ counselling centres nationally document their training guidance cases. The agency produces quarterly evaluation reports on the characteristics recorded. The agency makes the data that it has collected on persons to whom it has provided training guidance available to the “Recognition Monitoring” Team at BIBB on a regular basis. Data is available from 1 January 2015. A total of 4,715 guidance cases were documented up to 31 December 2015. In the analyses, the guidance figure is based on number of initial contacts.

IQ training data

The “Guidance and Training” agency of the IQ Funding Programme, which is housed at the Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (f-bb) in Nuremberg, operates a central online database, in which all IQ sub-projects nationally document information on the training measures and on the respective participants. The present report represents the first time the agency has made this data available to the “Recognition Monitoring” Team at BIBB.

Data is available for the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015. During this period, the 16 federal state networks and the IQ “Guidance and Training” agency together offered a total of 184 training measures in which just over 2,500 persons took part. With regard to the measures, the catalogue of questions encompasses information on such aspects as module allocation, type of measure, beginning and end of the measure and forms of learning used. Information collected from participants at the commencement of the measure includes gender, age, nationality, German reference occupation aspired to, country in which the foreign qualification was acquired, type of professional or vocational qualification, language certificate and level. At the end of the measure, employment status, information on whether a participant dropped out of the measure or went on to successful completion and further characteristics are all documented. The data also contains information whether, in the case of a compensation measure for a regulated profession or adaptation measure for a dual occupation (Module 1 and Module 2), full equivalence has been achieved (or is expected to be achieved).

Survey of the competent bodies – chambers of crafts and trades

During the periods March/April 2014, December January 2014/15, August/September 2015 and December/January 2015/16, the “Recognition Monitoring” Team at BIBB worked in close conjunction with the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH) to carry out full surveys at German chambers of crafts and trades. All 53 chambers of crafts and trades took part. In the case of the survey carried out in the summer of 2015, the chambers of crafts and trades were posed specific questions on training guidance and adaptation measures.

Personal survey

Between August 2014 and August 2015, BIBB conducted a survey of persons who had completed a recognition procedure. When sending out recognition notices to persons who had concluded a recognition procedure pursuant to the Federal Recognition Act, the competent bodies were requested to enclose an invitation to participate in the survey. A total of 81 persons in academic and non-academic healthcare professions and in chamber occupations were surveyed. The following evaluations take account of responses received from doctors only (n = 28) in order to facilitate comparability with the BIBB doctors survey. The survey was carried out using an online tool.

Survey of doctors

Participants for the survey were contacted via the institutes in Germany which offer integration courses for foreign doctors and preparatory courses for the knowledge test. The following providers are accredited in accordance with the “Ordinance regarding the conditions and procedure for the accreditation of professional bodies and the admission of employment support providers” (AZAV) or the Continuing Training Recognition and Admission Ordinance (AZWV) of the Federal Employment Agency: bfw Unternehmen für Bildung (www.bfw.de), Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft für berufsbildende Maßnahmen mbH Berlin (www.gfbm.de), Kulturakademie Dresden (www.kulturakademie-dresden.de), mibeg-Institut Medizin (www.mibeg.de), VIA-Institut Nuremberg (www.via-institut.de).

The institutes distributed the questionnaires during the preparatory courses for the knowledge test that took place in July 2015. They were also requested to send out the questionnaire to previous course participants by e-mail. The completed questionnaires were collected by the institutes and sent to BIBB in order to ensure anonymity.

In order to achieve a higher degree of participation in the survey by those who did not yet speak good German, the questionnaires were produced in German, English and Russian.

A total of 91 persons took part in the survey. Because many did not respond to the question regarding participation in a knowledge test, only the valid cases for this question were included in the evaluations.

At the time of the survey (June and July 2015), around three quarters of the 56 respondents were preparing for a knowledge test. The other had already taken the test, most having passed. Of these respondents, seven had already received a licence to practise whilst two had not yet. Three respondents had not passed the first knowledge test and were preparing for a resit. Most respondents were aged between 24 and 35. Three quarters had been living in Germany for up to three years, and over half had completed their medical studies abroad up to eight years ago. Almost all respondents had gained professional experience of working as a doctor abroad. 24 respondents had acquired their qualification in a CIS state, and 31 in a third country.

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<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
AiD	Portal „Anerkennung in Deutschland“ – “Recognition in Germany” portal
AufenthG	Aufenthaltsgesetz – German Residency Act
BA	Bundesagentur für Arbeit – Federal Employment Agency
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
BF-Ausschuss	Bundestagsausschuss für Bildung, Forschung und Technikfolgenabschätzung – Federal Parliament Select Committee for Education, Research and Technology Impact Assessment (BF Committee)
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – Federal Ministry of Education and Research
BMG	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit – Federal Ministry of Health
BMI	Bundesministerium des Innern – Federal Ministry of the Interior
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)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DIHK	Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag – Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry
EA	Einheitlicher Ansprechpartner – National contact point
EEA	European Economic Area
ESF	European Social Fund
GMK	Gesundheitsministerkonferenz der Länder – Conference of the Ministers of Health
HEGA	Handlungsempfehlung/Geschäftsanweisung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit – Recommendations and Instructions of the Federal Employment Agency
HWK	Handwerkskammer – Chamber of Crafts and Trades
HwO	Handwerksordnung – Crafts and Trades Regulation Code
IHK	Industrie- und Handelskammer – Chamber of Commerce and Industry
IHK FOSA	Foreign Skills Approval Competence Centre of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a consortium under public law of 76 of the 80 chambers of commerce and industry to act as a central decision-making body in respect of applications for the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications
Ikubiz	Interkulturelles Bildungszentrum Mannheim GmbH – “Mannheim Intercultural Education Centre, a not-for-profit company”
IQ	Förderprogramm „Integration durch Qualifizierung (IQ)“ – The “Integration through Training” funding programme
IQuaMed	Integration durch Qualifizierung und Anerkennung in medizinischen Arbeitsfeldern – “Integration through training and recognition in medical fields of work” (a programme in North Rhine-Westphalia)
KMK	Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Kultusministerkonferenz) – Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
	Republic of Germany (Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)
MBE	Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer – adult migrant guidance centre
MTAG / MTA-Gesetz	Gesetz über technische Assistenten in der Medizin – Law on Technical Assistants in the Medical Sector
SGB	Sozialgesetzbuch – German Social Security Code
ValiKom	Abschlussbezogene Validierung informeller und non-formaler Kompetenzen – “Qualifications related validation of informal and non-formal competences” (project)
WHKT	Westdeutscher Handwerkskammertag – West German Association of Chambers of Crafts and Trades
ZAA	Zentrale Anlaufstelle Anerkennung – (Hamburg) Counselling Centre for Recognition of Qualifications
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)
ZDH	Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks – German Confederation of Skilled Crafts

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Imprint

This translation is based on the printed German publication “Bericht zum Anerkennungsgesetz 2016” which has been published by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in July 2016.

For further information: <https://www.bmbf.de/de/anererkennung-auslaendischer-berufsqualifikationen-1091.html>

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Status

July 2016

Translation

GlobalSprachTeam – Sassenberg+Kollegen; Martin Kelsey

Cover photo

Judith Yawa Aggor-Edorh is working as a custom tailor in Baden-Württemberg. After having completed a skills analysis by demonstrating her professional competences in a practical manner she was awarded with a recognition notice designating the full equivalence of her qualification she had been trained in in Ghana. If you are interested in further success stories, please visit www.anererkennung-in-deutschland.de