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## SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to compare the integration of immigrants in Norway with immigrants in the other Scandinavian countries and in Europe. The most important question was therefore: How successful is the integration of immigrants in Norway compared with other countries? We have used known integration indicators based on data from the OECD and Eurostat in our comparative analysis.

We compare integration in three selected areas: employment, education and living conditions. A separate chapter is dedicated to the integration of descendants of immigrants and young immigrants. In order to understand differences in integration between the countries, we have also analysed the volume of immigration and the composition of immigrants now and how it has changed over time in the different countries.

### Migration

Immigration to the Scandinavian countries has increased considerably over the past ten years. Since 2007, the rate of immigration<sup>1</sup> in all the Scandinavian countries has exceeded the EU average.

- ◆ Norway has had the highest rate of immigration in Scandinavia, and one of the highest in Europe. This is largely due to extensive labour immigration from Poland and the Baltic states, but also from Sweden.
- ◆ In the 25–45 age group, immigrants are over-represented in relation to persons without an immigrant background. This is the case in both Scandinavia and the EU.
- ◆ In the latter half of 2015, the influx of asylum seekers to Europe increased dramatically. More than a million asylum seekers were registered in the EU in 2015. Norway alone received 31,000 asylum seekers, while the number was 162,000 in Sweden and 21,000 in Denmark.

### Integration in the labour market

The labour market is a key arena for the integration of immigrants in society. Work is important to each individual's possibility of social participation, self-fulfilment and self-subsistence, and it helps to increase the level of welfare for both individuals and society at large.

- ◆ Norway has a high employment rate among both immigrants and the rest of the population compared with Sweden, Denmark and the EU countries. Only three of the European OECD countries have a higher employment rate than Norway (Iceland, Switzerland and Luxembourg).
- ◆ Norway stands out in that the employment rate among immigrant women is particularly high, at nearly 66 per cent. In the EU, the average employment rate among immigrant women is 54 per cent, i.e. 12 percentage points lower than in Norway. The employment rate among immigrant women in Norway is also high compared with Sweden and Denmark: almost 7

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<sup>1</sup> Immigration in relation to population size.

percentage points higher than in Sweden and 6 percentage points higher than in Denmark. The employment rate for immigrant men in Norway is around 75 per cent. That is 5 percentage points higher than the EU average.

- ◆ When we look at the difference in employment among immigrants and the rest of the population, the picture changes slightly. The employment rate in most European countries is much lower than in the Scandinavian countries. The employment gap between the majority and the minority is smaller in many countries than in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.
- ◆ The labour market participation of immigrants with a low level of education is much lower than that of immigrants with a high level of education. Norway is the Scandinavian country with the highest employment rate among immigrants with a low level of education.
- ◆ Compared with Sweden, Denmark and the EU, Norway has the lowest unemployment rate among both immigrants and persons without an immigrant background.
- ◆ In all the Scandinavian countries, immigrants are nonetheless almost twice as likely to be unemployed as the rest of the population. Sweden stands out with a very high unemployment rate among immigrants with a low level of education. The proportion of unemployed persons in this group is almost twice as high as in Norway: 13 per cent in Norway compared with 27 per cent in Sweden.
- ◆ In all the Scandinavian countries, the proportion of over-qualified persons is low among people without an immigrant background (approximately 10 per cent). Among immigrants with a high level of education who are employed in Norway, 31 per cent have a job they are over-qualified for. The proportion of over-qualified immigrants in Sweden is on a par with Norway, while the proportion in Denmark is somewhat lower at 24 per cent. The EU average is slightly higher than in Norway and Sweden, at 33 per cent.
- ◆ The proportion of over-qualified immigrants drops sharply in step with the duration of their residence in Norway and Sweden.

## **Education and qualifications**

What kind of education, qualifications and cognitive skills a person has or acquires is of great importance to how they find their place in and adapt to a new society.

- ◆ In the EU as a whole, there are more immigrants who have lower secondary school as their highest level of education than immigrants who have taken higher education. In the 15–64 age group, 36 per cent have lower secondary school as their highest level of education, while 26 per cent have a university college or university level education.
- ◆ In the Scandinavian countries, the level of education is higher among both immigrants and people without an immigrant background. In Sweden and Denmark, more than one in three immigrants have higher education. Norway has the highest proportion of highly educated immigrants, at 37 per cent.
- ◆ The level of education among immigrants is higher now than it was ten years ago. We see this trend in all the Scandinavian countries, and in most of the EU countries.

- ◆ Both in Scandinavia and in the EU, immigrants have poorer reading skills than others. About 30 per cent of immigrants in selected EU countries<sup>2</sup> have poor reading skills, meaning at level 1 or lower. The proportion in the native-born population<sup>3</sup> is about 15 per cent.
- ◆ The reading skills among immigrants is poorer in Norway, Sweden and Denmark than in the EU. The native-born population, on the other hand, have better reading skills in Scandinavia than in the EU. Reading skills among immigrants improve with the duration of residence, and considerably more in Scandinavia than in the EU.
- ◆ In Norway, highly educated immigrants have slightly better reading skills than non-immigrants with lower secondary school as their highest level of education.
- ◆ Scandinavia stands out in that a very high proportion in the 25–64 age group have participated in education/training the past year, among both immigrants and others. Norway is the OECD country with the highest rate of participation in education or training among immigrants in this age group.

## Living conditions

Living conditions is about the social and economic conditions that have a bearing on our actions and way of life.

- ◆ The income level is generally higher in Norway than in the other Scandinavian countries, and the Scandinavian average is higher than the EU average. Also among immigrants, the income level is higher in Norway than in Sweden, while immigrants in Denmark have an income level on a par with immigrants in the EU as a whole.
- ◆ There is higher income inequality among immigrants than others. Norway is among the countries in Europe with the lowest income inequality, among both immigrants and others. Denmark is among the countries in Europe with the greatest income inequality among immigrants, but with low income inequality among non-immigrants.
- ◆ Immigrant households in both Scandinavia and the EU are far more likely to be below the poverty line than households without immigrants. There are differences between the Scandinavian countries, however. The proportion of poor immigrants is lowest in Norway and Sweden, and higher in Denmark (and the EU). Norway is also the country with the lowest proportion of poor households without immigrants (11 per cent), while the corresponding proportion in Sweden and Denmark is between 14 and 16 per cent.
- ◆ In Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the risk of child poverty is generally low compared with the EU. Children raised in immigrant households are much more likely to live below the poverty line than other children, however. In Norway, a child with immigrant parents is four times more likely to be poor than a child of Norwegian-born parents.

## Integration of young people from immigrant backgrounds

How well children of immigrants do at school, in education and later in working life is often described as the acid test of how successful the integration of immigrants has been. The analysis in this report shows the following:

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<sup>2</sup> Average of 16 EU countries, OECD/European Union (2015) *Indicators of immigrant integration 2015: Settling in*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 135

<sup>3</sup> Refers to the OECD category 'native born', meaning everyone who has not themselves immigrated. In other words, the category includes both persons without an immigrant background and persons with immigrant parents.

- ◆ Young people from immigrant backgrounds make up an increasing proportion of young people in both Scandinavia and the EU. In Sweden, children of immigrants and young people who are immigrants themselves make up a third of the 15–34 age group. In Norway, 28 per cent of all young people between the ages of 15 and 34 are from immigrant background.
- ◆ The level of reading skills is generally higher in Scandinavia than in the EU among young people without an immigrant background.<sup>4</sup> Young people from immigrant backgrounds have poorer reading skills than young people without an immigrant background. The differences between the groups are greater in the Scandinavian countries than in the EU. In particular, young people who are immigrants themselves have considerably poorer reading skills. Young people with two immigrant parents have better reading skills than young people who are immigrants themselves, but not as good as young people without an immigrant background. Young people with one foreign-born parent have equally good reading skills as young people without an immigrant background.
- ◆ The employment rate among young people in the 15–34 age group without an immigrant background is higher in Norway and Sweden than in Denmark and the EU. The employment rate is slightly higher among men than women, among both non-immigrant young people and young people from immigrant backgrounds, but the differences are smaller than in the 15–64 age group seen as a whole. In Norway, Sweden and Denmark alike, and on average in the EU, the employment rate is highest among young people without an immigrant background and young people with one foreign-born parent. The employment rate is considerably lower among young people with two foreign-born parents than among young people without an immigrant background. In Sweden and on average in the EU, the differences among both men and women are approximately 10–12 percentage points, in Norway approximately 15 percentage points and in Denmark about 20 percentage points.

## Conclusion

By comparing results across a number of indicators, we can gain an impression of how successful the integration of immigrants is in Norway compared with other countries. The analyses presented here indicate that integration in Norway is going well, both when compared with Sweden and Denmark and with the EU average. The level of education is high among immigrants in Norway, and it has increased with time. The employment rate among immigrants is higher in Norway than in the other Scandinavian countries and in the EU. The same applies to the income level, adjusted for purchasing power.

There is great variation between different groups of immigrants. A lot of the reason why Norway scores high on many of the integration indicators is that we have experienced strong economic growth and high demand for labour over the past ten years. This has helped to change the composition of the immigrant population, where labour immigrants make up a higher proportion than before. Established immigrant groups in Norway have also improved their situation in the labour market.

The analysis shows that there is still a big gap between the majority and the minority in important areas of society. Many immigrants, even among those with a high level of education, have fairly poor reading skills in Norwegian. This also applies to Norwegian-born children with two immigrant parents. Many children with immigrant parents grow up in low-income households. The risk of marginalisation is also significantly higher among young people from immigrant backgrounds compared with young people without an immigrant background.

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<sup>4</sup> Reference is made to PIAAC results for 'Native-born offspring of native-born' in the 16–34 age group. See OECD/European Union (2015) *Indicators of immigrant integration 2015: Settling in*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

