



## **IMMIGRATION AS A CHALLENGING FACTOR ON EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN EUROPE**

Assist. Prof. Dr. Jordan Deliversky  
Department of National Security  
University of Library Studies and Information Technologies  
Sofia - Bulgaria  
[deliversky@yahoo.com](mailto:deliversky@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

Factors influencing migration processes have multiple origins, mostly related to economic, social and political circumstances. Education systems in Europe are important settings in which young people develop values related to social relations and personal citizenship.

Many immigrant families are likely to encounter difficulties of a linguistic or cultural nature. Newly arrived migrants, especially those who arrive through humanitarian protection channels, often have difficulty achieving success in host-country education systems. Some migrants face difficulties obtaining relative information, on their native language, regarding the education system structure, the different education levels, enrolment and assessment procedures, as well as parental rights and obligations.

In order to facilitate the process of integration of immigrants into the education system in Europe, coordinated actions need to be introduced on institutional level, via transparent policy actions and social contribution initiatives.

**Keywords:** Immigration, education, challenges, integration.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The right to education is a universal human right according to which everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. The right to education must be understood as a right to be educated. Education involves the acquisition of knowledge and skills that is why education is important public function. The process of education is provided and protected by the state and for this reason the state regulates the education system and provides sustainable budgetary resources. Besides the state, all parents are also responsible for the education of their children.

The right to education is protected in many international legal instruments. Some main international legal instruments regulating the right to education include The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1952, as well as the European Social Charter. The European Convention on Human Rights in article 14 sets the principle of equality, which means that appropriate measures need to be adopted for assuring equal treatment without discrimination for people in a different situation.

The exercise of the right to education, conceive as the right of equal access and if a person is denied the opportunity of receiving monomial education this involves consequences for the development of the person.

Access to education system might be interrupted in cases where families migrate from one country to another. Migration processes are related to important questions regarding education such as free access to education, good quality of education, supporting measures for adaptation towards the new education system, access to free education, etc.



The issue of variability in school adaptation and outcomes among different immigrant groups is very sensitive as the quality of early childhood education and care is crucial, as it is at this stage that the foundations are laid for subsequent learning and achievements.

A globalized cultural rights regime, the politics of recognition, and the culture of multiculturalism are generating extremely complex new identity formations. Integration into the culture of the immigration country is a major function of schools in immigration countries.

The presence in schools in Europe of millions of children from foreign cultural communities constitutes a source of enrichment and a major medium and long-term asset, provided that education policies are geared to fostering open-mindedness and an understanding of cultural differences. The successful integration of migrant children in European schools and societies is both an economic necessity and a pre-condition for democratic stability and for social cohesion.

International migrant is a person who is living in a country other than his or her country of birth. The term immigrant is also used in various situations like cases where children are born to families with different legal status in the host country – families with full rights of residence and refugee status, asylum seeking families, or families without any rights of residence. European Directives define immigrant children as minors who are nationals of third countries, whether or not they are accompanied. They enjoy certain educational entitlements, which depend on their legal position.

Migration decisions are frequently motivated by financial considerations, but it is the financial welfare of the family unit that is of central motivation factor. The number of international migrants worldwide has grown rapidly over the past fifteen years reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000.

Many immigrant parents are likely to encounter difficulties of a linguistic or cultural nature, for that reason it is important to understand how the children of immigrants are accommodated by the host country's education system and how they perform in it relative to native children.

The integration process of migrants generally lasts for generations. During this process, cultural differences between migrants and natives usually decrease. With some immigrant groups, however, cultural differences remain strong and these migrants sometimes change into ethnic minorities within the nation state.

## **DISCUSSION**

Main international legal acts introduce special protection mechanisms in regard to access to educational systems. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child , if a minor has applied for international protection, access to the educational system cannot be postponed for more than three months. This legal act also emphasises the right to special protection for migrants and refugee children, as well as their right to education, their language, culture and religion.

According to European law, minors who are children of third-country nationals with the status of long-term residents have received the same treatment as nationals as far as education is concerned, including the award of study grants.

In regard to education and training, European Union Member States may require proof of appropriate language proficiency for access to education and training. Access to university may also be subject to the fulfilment of specific educational prerequisites. In relation to access to education system for minors, the European Union Member States should remain subject to the obligation to afford access for minors to the educational system under conditions similar to those laid down for their nationals. As up to safety and security measures in regard to access to educational facilities, host countries may sometimes introduce safety mechanisms by providing access control via biometric technologies.



Newly arrived migrants, especially those who arrive through humanitarian protection channels, often have difficulty achieving success in host-country education systems. Some migrants face difficulties obtaining relative information, on their native language, regarding the education system in host country. Initially they are not familiar with the education system structure, the different education levels, enrolment, assessment, and orientation procedures, parental participation, and parental rights and obligations. Unfortunately not in all European countries local, regional or school authorities provide written information on the education system and their services in the native language of the migrant or in other familiar for the migrant family language.

Another challenge faced by immigrants is related to the development of multicultural skills. Administrative authorities in some European countries or local municipalities provide information materials on school practices and activities in the languages spoken by the immigrant communities. Unfortunately this is not a practice widely introduces in all countries.

In order to overcome language difficulties in communication between schools and immigrant families, some countries provide interpreters' support at primary and secondary education levels. Depending on the country, the opportunity to use interpreters may be a statutory right for families, may be a subject of central-level recommendation that schools are supposed to implement. Rarely central governments provide special resources for funding interpreters' support at the education system.

Interpretation services are necessary in all cases when refugees do not speak the host country language and in all situations where they may need support, including in schools.

Communication between immigrant families and school authorities are particularly important during the procedure of asylum seeking, where contacts with schools are usually part of the procedure. In some cases, the good communication and dialogue between immigrant families and school authorities is of specific importance.

## **CONCLUSION**

When supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development in both home and host communities. Support measures are almost always offered on a regular basis to all immigrant children who have a right to schooling, irrespective of their particular immigration or residence status. Most countries do not make a distinction between rights for different categories of immigrant children. Schools frequently take steps to assist immigrant pupils and parents with enrolment, settling in and accessing information about future choices within the school system.

It is especially important to be able to integrate international migrants into the education systems of host countries due to the fact that sometimes migration and corruption are linked in terms of rampant corruption being a reason to migrate in the first place. Corruption tends to produce a variety of negative socio-economic and political outcomes. Corruption negatively impacts the quality of and the return to education. By impairing economic growth and increasing the probability of becoming unemployed corruption reduces the workers' expected return to human capital.

Creating and maintaining transparent regulatory systems, strengthening management capacities for greater accountability and enhancing ownership of the management process can help build an environment, which is favourable to educational systems free from corruption or other unfavourable factors.

In order to facilitate the process of integration of immigrants into the education system in Europe, coordinated actions need to be introduced on institutional level, via transparent policy actions and social contribution initiatives.



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