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# SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CAREERS OF PEOPLE GRANTED INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN BELGIUM, 2001-2014

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**Summary**

Arriving in a new country and finding a job may be a daunting task. This is all the more true for refugees, who often have to leave their country without a long preparation, and spend months, or years, waiting for their asylum request to be processed. Even after obtaining the status of refugee, finding a job remains a serious difficulty. In this report, make use of linked administrative longitudinal data from the National Register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection to study the study the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) in Belgium during the period 2001–2014 (36,540 persons). We compare people granted a status of international protection in the periods 2001–2006, 2007–2009 and 2010–2014 (further named cohorts), to evaluate whether the labour market participation of more recent cohorts improved relative to earlier cohorts.

Five years after being granted international protection, 37% of the 2001−2006 and the 2007−2009 cohort was working. For the 2010−2014 cohort this share was only 29%, indicating a slightly downward trend in access to employment among refugees. While this share is relatively low, it continues increasing beyond 5 years (after 10 years about 50% of the people who obtained an international protection status in the period 2001−2006 was working). The share of people who ever worked is also much higher than the share of people working at some point. For instance, 81% of the 2001−2006 cohort had ever worked by 31 December 2014. Hence, the majority of the people has ever worked (in a formal job) at one stage during their stay, despite the fact that the population obtaining international protection is a vulnerable group. However, first and later employment episodes last on average less than one year, pointing to rather short labour market episodes and high employment instability. Hence, durable labour market integration remains a point a concern.

Changes in the work regimes for asylum seekers and the economic crisis in 2009 may explain part of the variations in labour market outcomes for the successive cohorts, but this question deserves further research to fully understand these trends.

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## List with terms

| | |
|---|---|
| Cohort | We use the term cohort in an atypical way, namely for the people who obtained a status of international protection during a specific period. |
| Human capital | The skills people have acquired through education, training and work experience which signal productivity, adaptability and trainability |
| International protection | The status of international protection covers both the subsidiary protection status and the refugee status |
| Refugee | As stated by the 1951 Convention, a refugee is someone with “a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, who is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country”. |
| Subsidiary protection | The protection given to a person who does not qualify as a refugee, but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to the country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person to the country of habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm, and is unable or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. The subsidiary protection status exists in Belgium as from 10 October 2006. |
| Spell | A spell or episode is a consecutive period with the same socio-economic position, measured on a quarterly basis in this report. |

# 1. Introduction

In this report, we examine the socio-demographic profile and the socio-economic careers of people who obtained a status of international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) in Belgium. More specifically, we examine individuals aged at least 18 at arrival, who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014 and came to Belgium after 31 December 1998. We make use of linked administrative longitudinal data from the National Register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection. We compare people granted a status of international protection in the periods 2001–2006, 2007–2009 and 2010–2014 (further named cohorts[1]), to evaluate whether the labour market participation of more recent cohorts improved relative to earlier cohorts. In summary, we examine what the socio-economic trajectories of people granted international protection look like and how these trajectories have evolved over time.

Although we study the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection, we should keep in mind the broader context of the Belgian labour market. Within the European Union, Belgium has one of the highest employment gaps between Belgian-born and migrants (Corluy & Verbist, 2010; De Keyser, Delhez, & Zimmer, 2012; Eurostat, 2011). In addition, most Belgian and international studies show that beneficiaries of international protection have a fragile labour market position relative to nationals and other migrants, especially in the first years after arrival (Connor, 2010; Corluy, Marx, Verbist, Godin, & Rea, 2008; Lens, Marx, & Vujić, 2017; Rea & Wets, 2014; Bevelander, 2016; OECD, 2018).

This report, requested by the Belgian National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN), complements the study "Integration of beneficiaries of international protection into the labour market in Belgium" that was published in May 2016.[2] The latter report described the policies in place in 2016 for the labour market integration of people who qualified for international protection. This report also complements what we know about the socio-economic careers of beneficiaries of international protection in Belgium by the study "The Long and Winding Road to Employment. An Analysis of the Labour Market Careers of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Belgium" (further called the study CAREERS) by Rea and Wets (2014) and research by Lens et al. (2017).

After this introductory section, the second section gives an overview of the literature on the relevance of labour market participation, the findings regarding labour market outcomes for beneficiaries of international protection and the factors influencing such outcomes. Subsequently, the third section describes the Belgian legislative and institutional framework for the period 1999–2014. We describe the asylum procedure, the economy and labour market situation, the work regime, the material aid and social assistance scheme, and finally, the training and integration courses. In section four, we sketch the data used, whereas the fifth section describes the design of the longitudinal study of socio-economic careers. Section six gives insight in the asylum procedure and the socio-demographic profile of the people granted international protection and the seventh section describes their socio-economic careers. More specifically, we describe the socio-economic position of people for each quarter since the introduction of their asylum demand, we measure the number of years needed for people granted international protection to obtain their first employment, and we look at how long they stay in employment after getting their first job. The final

[1] To make reading easier, we use the term cohort in an atypical way, namely for people who obtained a status of international protection during a certain period.

[2] Publications by EMN are available on the site https://emnbelgium.be/all-publications (04/07/2018).

section concludes by summarising the key findings and discussing policy recommendations and future research.

# 2. Literature review[3]

## 2.1. The relevance of labour market participation

People who apply for international protection face multiple integration challenges in various life fields, such as housing, employment, schooling of the children, vocational training, language training and family reunification, even after they are granted a status of international protection. Labour market participation is of relevance for the individuals themselves and for the home and host society. For beneficiaries of international protection, the socio-economic career is pivotal for well-being and development in various life fields. Work has an intrinsic value and is of relevance as 'door opener or closer' for life-course development. Work is intrinsically valued as a source of self-sufficiency and economic security, facilitating well-being and social inclusion (Jahoda, 1981; Winefield, 2002), in particular in case of decent and sustainable work. Work often provides a time structure for activities, social contacts, status and identity, it improves involvement in the community and increases the number of activities carried out (Jahoda, 1981). Work often also means access to information gathering and sharing and to within-job and out-of-job use of goods, services and activities (e.g. travel and lunches) through income and in-kind benefits. However, employment is not always improving well-being and social inclusion. A certain level of job and income security and job quality (in line with employment aspirations) are important conditions to ensure that work contributes to well-being (Clark, Knabe, & Rätzel, 2010; Esser & Olsen, 2012).

Labour market participation also facilitates the multi-dimensional integration of migrants (Gabrielli, Paterno, & Strozza, 2007). Due to the interrelatedness of life fields, work can function as a 'door opener or closer'. For example when refugees, who did not manage to collect all the necessary documents for family reunification within one year (which is the legislative time limit for a more advantageous procedure for refugees), want to reunify with their family, they may need to prove stable, sufficient and regular income (Flamant, forthcoming). Furthermore, work experience is a common criterion taken into account for granting citizenship, and citizenship has become conditional on social, economic and linguistic integration requirements. In addition, being unemployed can impede valued events such as buying a house or having children (Maynard & Feldman, 2011). The inability to find a (decent) job within a reasonable time after arrival is also likely to bring about financial strain, when people do not have substantial means.[4] In addition, benefit dependency (and being inactive) can be scarring: it can entail human capital deterioration and demotivation and can influence negatively future earnings and life satisfaction (Arulampalam, 2001; Bane & Ellwood, 1994; Clark, Georgellis, & Sanfey, 2001).

The first steps in labour market trajectories of migrants are important for their integration, and for their future careers, as such careers are path-dependent (Barone & Schizzerotto, 2011; Fuller, 2014; Manzoni, Härkönen, & Mayer, 2014). Their labour market position is not only of relevance for them, but may also impact on the labour market position of their children and their descendants (Lindahl, Palme, Massih, & Sjögren, 2015; Platt, 2005). Hence, early successful labour market integration is of relevance from a social investment perspective (i.e. to maximise labour

[3] This literature review makes use of the work done in Carpentier (2016) about the labour market integration of social assistance beneficiaries in Belgium.

[4] Typically, the only available option for people granted a status of international protection in case of little work experience in Belgium is the means-tested tax-financed social assistance benefit. The social assistance benefit levels are below the poverty line.

market outcomes and well-being over the life course of individuals and over generations). Furthermore, a favourable labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection is also of relevance for the social cohesion, for the economic development and innovation, and for the financial sustainability and social legitimacy of the welfare state in host society (Kremer, 2013; OECD, 2013). In addition, employment is key for home countries, through remittances, investments and transfers of skills and knowledge (European Commission, 2011).

## 2.2. The labour market participation of beneficiaries of international protection

Newly arriving migrants typically have difficulties to access the Belgian labour market. The employment gap between foreign-born and Belgian-born people is one of the highest of the European Union (Corluy & Verbist, 2010; Eurostat, 2011; Jean, Causa, Jimenez, & Wanner, 2010). In particular Non-EU non-OECD migrants have a very low labour market participation rate (Corluy & Verbist, 2010; Mussche, Corluy, & Marx, 2014). Furthermore, the lower labour market outcomes of many immigrant groups cannot be accounted for by differences in educational attainment, or individual characteristics such as age and household type (Corluy & Verbist, 2010; Neels & Stoop, 2000). Hence, other factors may matter, such as discrimination and the lack of recognition of diplomas (De Keyser, 2012; Demart et al., 2017).

Most international and Belgian studies show that refugees have an even more fragile labour market position relative to other migrants and to natives, especially just after their arrival (Bevelander, 2016; Lens et al., 2017; Connor, 2010; Bertrand, 2017; OECD, 2018). Yet, quick labour market integration is generally viewed as an important determinant of future labour market outcomes (Bertelmann Stiftung, 2016; OECD, 2018; Stewart, 2003)[5]. Refugees have typically lower employment rates, less favourable occupations and lower earnings (Connor, 2010; Bevelander, 2016; DeVoretz, Pivnenko, & Beiser, 2004), although not all studies find confirmation for these three aspects of labour market integration. It is not fully clear why refugees have an unfavourable position on the labour market. Studies suggest, among other factors, that refugees have lower educational levels, faced war and conflict situations impacting mental health, and that migration was involuntarily and unplanned which may account for these differences (Bertrand, 2017; Connor, 2010).

A study by Rea and Wets (2014) examined the socio-economic position of the total population of individuals aged 18 to 65 who arrived in Belgium after 2001 and were recognised as refugees in the period 2003–2006. They found that 19% were (self-)employed or claimed unemployment benefit at the moment of their recognition, 57% were entitled to social assistance and 24% had another situation (i.e. they had no (personal) link to the labour market or the social protection system). Four years later, 42% were (self-)employed, 13% were receiving unemployment benefits, 25% claimed social assistance and 20% had another situation. Lens et al. (2017) also find that about half of the (former) asylum seekers who arrived between 2002 and 2010 participated in the labour market after ten years of residence. Furthermore, over time, (former) asylum applicants reduce their participation in social assistance, whereas their uptake of unemployment benefit (conditional on work history) increases (Lens et al., 2017). Hence, there is some catching-up effect over time, as also found in other European countries (Bevelander, 2016; Schultz-Nielsen, 2017). However, in Belgium, the catching-up effect is lower compared to migrants who belong to another legal entry category, such as labour migrants or people who reunify with their family (Lens et al., 2017). Furthermore, social assistance

[5] Yet, some literature suggests that fast entry into low-skilled jobs may not be the best choice for immigrants, and that it may be more profitable to pursue training and education in the host country to get high-skilled jobs at a later time in point (Kogan and Weißmann, 2013). A survey among African immigrants in Belgium also shows that migrants who obtained a diploma in Belgium are more likely to have a job, and especially a job corresponding to their level of qualification (Demart et al., 2017).

plays an important role in the socioeconomic careers of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.[6]

## 2.3. Determinants of labour market participation

Starting to work is the outcome of a process of job search. Job search takes place in several labour market segments (e.g. the regular labour market, temporary work, subsidised employment or the informal labour market) by the person and by supporting services (such as the public employment service or local welfare agency) via a series of channels (e.g. social networks, newspapers or internet advertising) (Arntz & Wilke, 2009; Petrongolo & Pissarides, 2001). The intensity of job search and the number of job applications affect the probability of meeting with a firm or another employer. The latter typically aims to recruit the most productive and least costly applicant. Given the expected labour cost and the productivity of the worker, the employer can do a wage offer, which the worker accepts or rejects based on his or her reservation wage (i.e. the minimum wage a worker is willing to accept) and expectations on the possibility and type of future job offers (Petrongolo & Pissarides, 2006).

The job matching process for people applying for or granted international protection is influenced by multiple factors. We identify five types of determinants, namely policy-led labour market restriction and administrative practices, individual characteristics, local context characteristics, social network, and discrimination and knowledge of employment legislation by employers. Some of these factors are common to migrants more generally, and some are specific to people applying for or granted international protection.

### Policy-led labour market restriction and administrative barriers

First, legal labour market restrictions may affect the possibilities to work on the (regular) labour market for people applying for international protection (Bloch, 2007; Bertrand, 2017). People may not work in certain periods, may only work under certain conditions or may need certain work permits, and this may vary for asylum seekers and people who obtained a status of international protection. Furthermore, people may participate or not in language and vocational training, and eventually need to wait before such programmes start. In addition, how long the asylum procedure lasts matters. Hainmueller et al. (2016) find, for all individuals that applied for asylum in Switzerland in the period 1994–2004 and were granted the subsidiary protection status within 5 years of arrival, that one additional year of waiting reduced the subsequent employment rate by 4 to 5 percentage points. This effect was remarkably stable among various refugee groups, suggesting that discouragement was driving this process rather than the deterioration of their skills. Furthermore, the length of administrative procedures for obtaining or renewing a work permit, for the recognition of diplomas and for obtaining or renewing a residence permit may matter (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006.

### Individual characteristics

Beneficiaries who qualified for international protection are a heterogeneous group. To start with, they vary in their *socio-demographic characteristics*, such as sex, age and household type. Such socio-demographic characteristics are important determinants of labour market careers (Detlev & Hofäcker, 2008; Bertrand, 2017). Women with an international protection status have substantially lower labour market participation rates than men (Rea, 2014). Beneficiaries aged under 25 also have lower labour participation than people aged 26 to 40 (Rea, 2014).

[6] This finding is in line with international studies that show that asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection have higher uptake of social assistance and longer durations in social assistance than other migrant groups (Borjas & Hilton, 1996; Carpentier, 2016; DeVoretz, Pivnenko, & Beiser, 2004; Hansen & Lofstrom, 2003). However, in a number of countries asylum seekers (and beneficiaries of international protection) are excluded from social assistance. Asylum seekers typically benefit from material aid (Poptcheva, 2015; Commission of the European Communities, 2007).

Beneficiaries of international protection also have different levels of *human capital* affecting their chances to obtain and to keep a (good) job. Human capital refers to the skills acquired through education, training and work experience that signal productivity, adaptability and trainability (Becker, 1962; Mincer, 1958). A higher educational level and more work experience are generally associated with higher employment rates. Asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection differ as regards their education and training levels and their transferability to the host country (Basilio & Bauer, 2010; Chiswick & Miller, 2009; Friedberg, 2000). For example, skills gained during work experiences in the home country may be difficult to interpret for employers, and the knowledge of languages or alphabets of the home country may not be of direct use. Furthermore, the skills needed for some professions are more easily transferable than for other professions. With longer duration of residence, differences in human capital among natives and migrants generally erode, as the latter learn the local language and country-specific skills. Schoumaker et al. (2018) (for Congolese migrants) and Demart et al. (2017) (for French-speaking African migrants) find that people who acquired their diploma in Belgium had also better labour market outcomes than others.

*Personal or family-related barriers to employment* may also affect chances to find and keep a job (Ayala & Rodriguez, 2007; Danziger et al., 1999; Bertrand, 2017). Examples are living in a collective household, housing instability, over indebtedness or alcohol abuse. Similarly, *mental and physical health* may influence the employability of beneficiaries and their probability to keep a job (Kiely & Butterworth, 2014; Lindencrona, Ekblad, & Hauff, 2008; Malmberg-Heimonen & Vuori, 2005). Asylum seekers and refugees are known to deal with trauma related to flight and war. Furthermore, people may face *barriers in facilitating services and goods*. They may (not) have a car, vary in access to public transport (at the required hours), and can have difficulties in finding (affordable) child care (Blumenberg & Manville, 2004; Danziger et al., 1999).

In addition, their *migration-specific characteristics,* such as the region of origin and whether they hold citizenship of the host country may affect labour market participation. Acquiring citizenship of the host country can indicate a willingness to integrate and can therefore function as a positive signal to employers (Bevelander & Veenman, 2006; Corluy, Marx, & Verbist, 2011). Also, having national citizenship is required for certain jobs (e.g. in government). The evidence of a net effect of holding citizenship of the host country is mixed. Corluy et al. (2011) find a positive effect of citizenship status on employment status in Belgium in a study of all migrants in Belgium. On the other hand, a recent study among African immigrants in Belgium finds that citizenship is not significant when the level of education and the country where the diploma was obtained are taken into account (Demart et al., 2017). Rea and Wets (2014) also do not find significant differences in the transition to work among beneficiaries of international protection holding Belgian citizenship and those not holding such citizenship. In summary, even though people granted international protection are more likely than other migrants to apply for citizenship, this may not have a substantial influence on their labour outcomes.

### Characteristics of the (local) labour market (policy)

*Labour market conditions* affect also labour market participation in particular for young persons and migrants (Hansen, 2008; Riphahn & Wunder, 2013; van der Klauw & van Ours, 2001). Furthermore, job opportunities (of the appropriate skill-level) are not equally distributed over space (Gobillon & Selod, 2007; Gobillon, Selod, & Zenou, 2007; Korsu & Wenglenski, 2010). This may be the result of the regional concentration of activities, and spatially articulated segmentation of the labour market (i.e. certain people having access to specific types of occupations and economic sectors concentrated in some areas) (Amiti & Pissarides, 2005; Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Lindbeck & Snower, 2001; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Furthermore, labour-market-integration policies for refugees and asylum seekers may vary among various areas (Bertrand, 2017). The location of people applying for or granted international protection may thus hamper their access to employment, especially for people living in remote centers for asylum seekers.

### Social network characteristics

The (local) social network affects labour market opportunities through access to information and knowledge and through the norms, values and job searching and matching attitudes developed through socialisation (Bertrand, Luttmer, & Mullainathan, 2000; Korsu & Wenglenski, 2010; Markussen & Røed, 2015). Moreover, informal job search is especially important for groups who are in less favourable positions on the labour market and low-educated individuals (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008). The size, type and intensity of social networks are of relevance (Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1973; Lancee & Hartung, 2012). Asylum seekers and refugees may lack the social and family network that would favour their integration on the labour market.

### Discrimination and knowledge of employment legislation by employers

Discrimination for various reasons may play. In particular having a migration background makes people more likely to experience *discriminatory practices* by employers (Baert, Cockx, Gheyle, & Vandamme, 2013 (for youngsters in Flanders); Carlsson & Rooth, 2007 (Sweden); OECD, 2008). A study for Belgium by Baert, Cockx, Gheyle, and Vandamme (2015) showed that discrimination plays less for vacancies in occupations with high labour market tightness. Furthermore, employers may face administrative hurdles for employing asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection or they may be insufficiently informed about the employment legislation in place for this group (Bloch, 2007).

# 3. The Belgian legislative and institutional framework

In general, the access to social and economic rights and the asylum procedure are bound by the international refugee law, international and European human rights treaties, European directives and regulations and national law (Tsourdi, 2015; Poptcheva, 2015).

## 3.1. The asylum procedure

The people who applied for international protection in Belgium are those who were able to apply for international protection at the border or at the Immigration Office (Office des Etrangers). They apply for a status of international protection granted by a state on its territory. International protection encompasses both the refugee status and the subsidiary protection status.

In Belgium, the asylum procedure is regulated by international treaties (namely the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol that gave the Convention universal coverage), several European directives and Belgian law (Act of 15 December 1980 regarding access to the territory, residence, settlement and removal of foreigners) that (partly) transposes European directives and enacts international treaties (Carlier, 2016; Denys, 2015). As stated by the 1951 Convention, a refugee is someone with "a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, who is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country" (Convention of Geneva, 1951). The people who obtained the refugee status in the period 2001 to 2014, were granted a residence right of unlimited duration.[7] The people who did not satisfy the criteria for the refugee status, but who would run a real risk of serious harm if they were to return to their country of origin and who could not, or because of this risk, did not wish to avail themselves of the protection of their countries, could obtain the subsidiary protection status, as from 10 October 2006 (Rea & Wets, 2014). This subsidiary protection status, unlike the refugee status, opens a residence right of one year that is renewable, if the criteria still apply. When

[7] From 8 July 2016 onwards (Law of 1 June 2016), refugees are initially entitled to a residence right of five years. Five years after having introduced the asylum application, a residence right of unlimited duration can be granted (unless the refugee status is withdrawn or ceases to apply).

introducing an asylum application, and if the asylum seeker does not qualify for the refugee status, the asylum authorities investigate whether he or she qualifies for the subsidiary protection status. Hence, both forms of international protection are examined within one procedure (Rea & Wets, 2014).

The asylum procedure was substantially reformed from 1 June 2007 on. Before that date, an asylum application passed through three stages. First, in line with the prevailing Dublin convention or regulation, the Immigration Office identifies the responsible state. Second, the admissibility of the application was determined and whether subsequent asylum demands had to be taken into account. Third, an 'in-merit' examination defined whether the person was eligible for the refugee status (or for subsidiary protection from 10 October 2006 on). If the asylum application was inadmissible, an appeal for annulment could be lodged with the Council of State. Appeals against in-merit decisions could be lodged with the 'Permanent Appeals Committee for Refugees' and appeals against these decisions could be lodged with the Council of State. Very substantial numbers of appeals were lodged in the beginning and mid-2000s with the Council of State when the application was declared inadmissible. Since 1 June 2007, the asylum procedure has had only two phases. The asylum application is introduced at the Immigration Office (Office des Etrangers) that examines the state responsible and subsequently transfers the demand to the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) if Belgium is responsible. The CGRS examines whether the individual qualifies for the status of international protection. The appeal procedure was also reformed to relieve the Council of State. Appeals had to be lodged with the newly created Council for Alien Law Litigation (Conseil des Contentieux des Etrangers) and appeals against these decisions had to be lodged with the Council of State.

The number of applications for international protection has fluctuated substantially over time due to international war and conflict situations,[8] challenging the asylum authorities during some periods to determine which individuals qualify for a protection status within a reasonable time. The duration of the asylum procedure has also been substantially reduced since the beginning of the 2000s, and recognition rates have also increased. They were much lower in the beginning years of the 2000s than in the recent years (see section six and Myria (2013)).

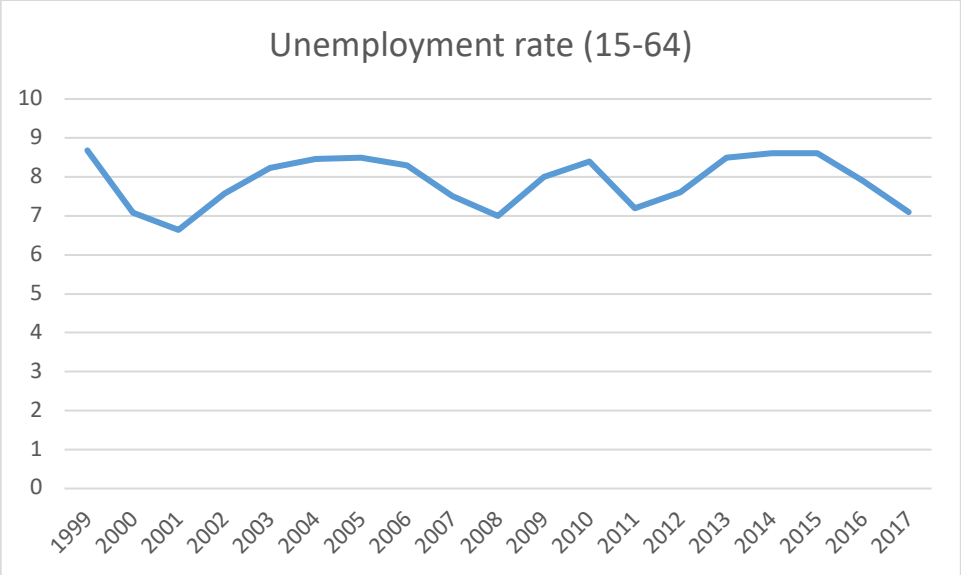
## 3.2. The economy and labour market in Belgium

Belgium is a small state with a very open economy and high spatial inequalities in labour market opportunities (De Beer & Koster, 2009; Marissal, Medina Lockhart, Vandermotten, Van Hamme, & Kesteloot, 2006). The Belgian labour market had during the period studied relatively high minimum wages, a rather highly centralised and coordinated wage setting, a rather stringent employment protection which is differentiated for blue and white-collar workers, and a high expenditure on active labour market programmes (De Deken, 2009; De Klerck & Van Wichelen, 2008; Lohmann, 2009; Van Rie & Marx, 2014). Belgium had also a low wage inequality and a rather low share of working poor (Lohmann, 2009; Maitre, Nolan, & Whelan, 2012; OECD, 2011). However, inactivity was strongly concentrated within households (Corluy & Vandenbroucke, 2012). In 2008, the share of workers in employment contracts with a limited duration (i.e. temporary and seasonal work and fixed-term contracts) was 8% (Van Lancker, 2013). This was a rather low to medium share compared with other EU-countries. The Belgian labour market is rather strongly segmented (Adam, 2007). In addition, Belgium has a rather substantial informal economy, in particular in Brussels and in the catering and building sectors (Pacolet et al., 2008; Schneider, 2007). Although Belgium had a rather elaborated legislation to fight discrimination, it was found to be more important than in many other OECD-

[8] http://www.myria.be/files/FR2018-4.pdf (30/08/2018).

countries (Arijn, Feld & Nayer, 1998; OECD 2008). Discrimination protection and equality measures improved over the years (Huddleston, 2011).

Over the period 1999–2014, the unemployment rate fluctuated from about 6.5% (in 2001) to about 9% (in 1999 and in the years 2014 and 2015) (see figure 1). The economic crisis hit Belgium mainly from 2009 on. The low unemployment rate in 2011 is due to a break in the data. In addition, labour market conditions vary strongly by region in Belgium. The Flemish region typically has the lowest unemployment rate, whereas the unemployment rate peaks in the Brussels region.




Note that there was a break in the series between 2010 and 2011
*Figure 1: Yearly unemployment rate for people aged 15-64 on 1 January*
Source: Statistics Belgium, Eurostat LFS [9]

## 3.3. The work regime for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection

Whether asylum seekers could work and from when on, changed several times over the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2014 due to changes in Belgian and European legislation (that was transposed into Belgian law) (see table 1 for an overview). Before 31 March 2003 asylum seekers could work with a work permit B. From 1 April 2003 to 31 May 2007, asylum seekers declared admissible could work with a work permit C. Such a work permit is valid for one year and renewable. It is not linked to a specific employer (as is the case for work permit B). From 1 June 2007 to 11 January 2010, asylum seekers could no longer work, as the asylum procedure was reorganised and the admissibility phase was abrogated. From 12 January 2010 to 11 February 2011, asylum seekers could work with a work permit C if they had not received a negative decision 6 months after their asylum application.[10] From 12 February 2011 to 31 December 2014, the same work regime was valid. However, from February 2011 on asylum seekers who worked need to contribute to the cost of the reception centre. The amount of the contribution is defined incrementally in function of the gained loan.[11] In addition, from 2012 on, in case they have substantially secure income from employment,

[9] http://www.steunpuntwerk.be/cijfers?field_collectie_tid=All&field_indicator_tid=556&items_per_page=50 (10/06/2018)
[10] In the future, the work permit C will be part of the immatriculation certificate, which covers the residence during the asylum procedure.
[11] Part of the loan from 0 to 79,99 euro: no payment to the reception centre; from 80,00 to 149,99 euros: 35%; from 150,00 to 299,99 euros: 50%, from 300,00 to 499, 99 euros: 65%; above 500, 00 euros: 75%.

they need to leave the reception centre. If people obtain the refugee status, they can work without work permit. When being granted the subsidiary protection status, they need a work permit C.

*Table 1: Overview of the work regimes in place for various groups during the observation period of the study*

| Group | Period | Work regime (in general) |
|---|---|---|
| Asylum seekers | 1 January 1999 – 31 March 2003 | Asylum seekers can work with work permit B (link to specific employer) |
| | 1 April 2003 – 31 May 2007 | Admissible asylum seekers can work with work permit C (not linked to employer) |
| | 1 June 2007 – 11 January 2010 | Asylum seekers can no longer work |
| | 12 January 2010-11 February 2011 | Asylum seekers can work if no negative decision 6 months after asylum application with work permit C |
| | 12 February 2011 – 31 December 2014 | Idem & asylum seekers who work need to contribute to the cost of the reception centre (& leave the reception centre) |
| Refugees | 1 January 1999 – 31 December 2014 | Can work without work permit |
| People granted subsidiary protection | 10 October 2006–31 December 2014 | Can work with work permit C |

Source: Authors

## 3.4. The material aid and the social assistance scheme

People who applied for asylum after 1 January 2001 and before 1 June 2007 were entitled to material aid in reception centres during the admissibility phase of their asylum request. Since 2011, material aid has been coordinated by Fedasil.[12] During the in-merit phase, they could claim social assistance benefit, which is serviced by local welfare agencies. Also, when people obtain a status of international protection they are entitled to social assistance.

Since 1 June 2007, material aid is in principle provided from the moment that people apply for international protection at the Foreigners Office and it lasts during the whole asylum procedure (as there is no longer an admissibility phase). Material aid is delivered in collective and individual reception centres. Material aid covers housing, food, garments and medical, social and psychological guidance (Rekenhof, 2017). In collective centres, people get also pocket money of about 7 euro per week. People are not obliged to take up the proposed material aid. They can live with their own means or live with family and friends (called 'no shows'). People who do not take up material aid, can decide to take up material aid later if their condition changes and if they are still eligible for material aid. As the material aid network was saturated in the period 2008−2011 people who could not be allocated to reception centres or other emergency reception places (e.g. in hotels), could claim a minimum income benefit. From January 2010 on, reception centres had the possibility to limit the right to material aid from the third asylum application on. In that case, people were only entitled to 'urgent medical assistance'. Since 19 January 2012, the right to material aid has been curbed from the second asylum application on. From 27 February 2013, the right to material aid is again opened for people whose appeal is declared admissible by the Council of State.

The social assistance benefit can be claimed based on either the 2002 'Right to Social Integration'-act or the 1976 'Right to Social Assistance'-act by people who are residing legally and continuously in Belgium, who are in need, who are available for work (if they can work), and who are not entitled to other social insurance benefits. Recognised refugees and stateless persons, and people having more

[12] More information about FEDASIL can be found at https://www.fedasil.be/fr (13/08/2018).

than five years of residence in Belgium fall under the 2002 'Right to Social Integration'-act. Other foreigners who cannot claim the minimum income benefit under the 'Right to Social Integration'-act, can claim the social assistance benefit under the 'Right to Social Assistance'-act. Asylum seekers with material aid in reception centres cannot claim the minimum income benefit (except in some particular situations). A means test for the household, according to the de facto living arrangement, regulates eligibility for the social assistance benefit.[13] Families with children in addition receive child benefits.

Social assistance beneficiaries should be available for work if they can work. They can be exempted for health or other reasons considered valid by the welfare agency (e.g. full-time study for beneficiaries aged up to 25, caring for a handicapped child or attending an intensive language course). People can also be offered to participate in active labour market programmes (such as the Article 60 programme).[14]

In the period before 2007, when people received a negative in-merit or admissibility decision and lodged an appeal with the Council of State they could still claim social assistance. From 2006 on, these people were excluded from social assistance. Since 1 June 2007 (Reception Law of 12 January 2007), people who applied for international protection after this date are entitled to material aid during the entire asylum procedure (Agten & Asselberghs, 2008; Rea & Wets, 2014). People who applied for asylum before this date who did not reside in a reception centre or with an asylum application declared admissible (and those who lodged an appeal with the Council of State after receiving a negative decision on the in-merit review) could still claim social assistance benefit. People who introduced an asylum demand before 1 June 2007 and received material aid, had to stay in reception centres until the end of the asylum procedure.

## 3.5. The (language) training and integration courses

Depending on the region and community in which they live, newcomers also have to follow a possibly mandatory integration pathway (European Migration Network, 2016). In Flanders, this was the case since 1 April 2004 for newcomers aged 18 and over, except for asylum applicants who were not (yet) declared admissible. It consisted of a social orientation course to become familiar with the Belgian society, Dutch language courses and counselling regarding the socio-economic career (European Migration Network, 2016). Since 2012, for applicants for international protection the trajectory has no longer been mandatory. However, when having applied for four months for international protection, they can follow components of the integration pathway (European Migration Network, 2016). In Wallonia, an integration pathway for newcomers has been established since 28 April 2014. It consisted of a personalised reception module, French language courses, citizenship training and counselling on the professional career and applied to people granted the international-protection status living in Belgium for less than three years (European Migration Network, 2016). In the Brussels region, the Flemish and the Walloon policies coexist. However, the Flemish policy is not compulsory.

[13] The evolution of the amount of the social assistance benefit for the three household types changed over time can be found at https://www.mi-is.be/fr/outils-cpas/montants (13/08/2018).

[14] The article 60 programme is a public job creation programme accessible for social assistance beneficiaries. It offers a work experience, but only as long as the number of days needed to become eligible for the unemployment benefit. The welfare agency is the employer and workers can be seconded to ONG's or other partners.

# 4. Data

## 4.1. Data sources

We make use of longitudinal administrative data from the National Register linked to data from the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection to analyse the profile and the socio-economic careers of beneficiaries of international protection. More specifically, we study the people who entered Belgium from 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2014, aged at least 18 at arrival, who obtained a status of international protection in the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2014.

In this study, we use the information about the asylum procedure (information type (IT) 206), contained in one of the sub-registers of the national register, namely the 'waiting register'. This information is linked with data about socio-demographic characteristics (sex, birth date and country of birth) and data about the residence history (IT001). The study makes also use of longitudinal administrative data from the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection from the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS).[15] The Data Warehouse links data from various administrative databases about labour market participation, the uptake of social insurance and social assistance benefits. For reasons of privacy protection, we have only a one in four random sample of the people aged at least 18 who migrated in the period 1999–2014 to Belgium.

For the people who applied for international protection and obtained such a status, the national register data were linked to the sample from the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection. The socio-economic trajectories of people in the sample were traced quarterly from their arrival until 31 December 2014. Their social benefit and work histories were observed from the moment of arrival in Belgium. To examine their socio-economic careers, mutually exclusive states were defined based on the socio-economic position, as defined by the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Security.[16] These states are 1) working, 2) claiming social insurance benefit, 3) claiming social assistance benefit and 4) another unspecified socio-economic position. Employment covers both salaried employed (in the regular labour market, in active labour market programmes or in other subsided work) and self-employment. Employment in the black labour market is out of scope. Furthermore, we have no view on job changes. We measure episodes of being employed, i.e. periods of uninterrupted employment regardless of job changes. Social insurance benefit uptake refers to the uptake of unemployment benefit (or the 'waiting benefit' for school leavers), pension or the incapacity-to-work or invalidity benefit. While claiming social assistance benefit, people can also study full-time in a programme on which the welfare agency agreed. Another unspecified socio-economic position covers a variety of diverse situations. It can mean, among others, that a person is entitled to material aid in a collective or individual reception centre, he or she lives together with a partner or child that has an earnings income, he or she is imprisoned, has been sanctioned or has an administrative ending of a social insurance or social assistance benefit, has moved out of the country, is studying (while his or her parents pay for the costs) or is a person of independent means. Persons granted only child allowances are also covered under 'another unspecified socio-economic position'.

## 4.2. Data quality and delivery: opportunities and limitations

Despite some limitations, the linked administrative databases from the National Register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection are uniquely rich data to track the socio-economic trajectories of people granted international protection. Since these are administrative

[15] For more information on this data source, see https://www.ksz-bcss.fgov.be/fr/dwh/homepage/index.html (24/04/18).

[16] See https://www.ksz-bcss.fgov.be/fr/dwh/dwh_page/content/websites/datawarehouse/others/structure-nomenclature.html (10 July 2018) for more information about the socio-economic nomenclature.

databases, they are always subject to legislative changes and administrative definitions. Therefore, these data are complementary to data acquired by surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey or the Survey on Income and Living Conditions.

### National Register data

The information type 206 (IT206) from the waiting register, offers rich information about the various steps taken by asylum applicants (e.g. introduction of application and lodging an appeal) and the administrative decisions taken during the procedure (with dates for each steps in the procedure). In addition, we have data on the socio-demographic profile (sex, birth date and country of birth) and on the residence history (IT001). As most administrative data sources, the data contain some administrative errors. However, these errors typically apply only to a limited number of persons.[17] Despite such inconsistencies, the data allow gaining reliably insight into the socio-demographic profile, the moment of arrival and the asylum procedure of the population that obtained a status of international protection.

### Data from Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection

The population covered by the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection evolved over time, as more institutions of the welfare state were integrated in the data base and more people were known in the various registers (through their family members or by themselves). Data about some benefits have only been integrated since 2003 in the Data Warehouse. These were the data concerning social assistance, child allowances, incapacity-to-work and invalidity benefit, occupational diseases and some pensions. On 31 December 2002, the Data Warehouse covered 84% of the Belgian population known in the National Register, whereas, from 2005 on, the data covered the total population in the National Register.[18] However, people enrolled in some sub registers and some particular categories were not included.[19] For this study, it is especially of relevance that the data on social assistance are only included from 2003 on, and that material aid is not included in the socio-economic nomenclature. Furthermore, data about education were not reliable for our sample and, unfortunately, we do not have data on language and vocational training and education. The data received does not contain information on the type of employment. Hence, we cannot gain insight in the quality of the jobs, nor evaluate the mismatch between education and employment. Information on the type of employment would also be useful to understand the reasons for the short durations of employment (Lens, Marx and Vujić, 2018).

## 4.3. Data validation

As Figure 2 shows, the data from the National Register on the number of people granted international protection that arrived from 1999 and the data of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) correspond very well. Slight differences exist between these data sources because the data of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons do not include positive decisions after appeal. They cover only the decisions taken by the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons.

[17] Examples of such errors are that the first record does not correspond to an application for international protection, a person has several applications for the same date in different places or duplicate records appear in the database. In addition, sometimes dates are missing or dates have mixed meanings (e.g. some dates in IT 001 contain mixed information about birth dates and other dates).

[18] For more information over the population included in the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection see https://dwh-live.bcss.fgov.be/nl/dwh/dwh_page/content/websites/datawarehouse/menu/populatie.html (10 July 2018).

[19] This concerns seamen, frontier workers working outside of Belgium, international staff, diplomats, non-declared domestic staff and overseas development workers.

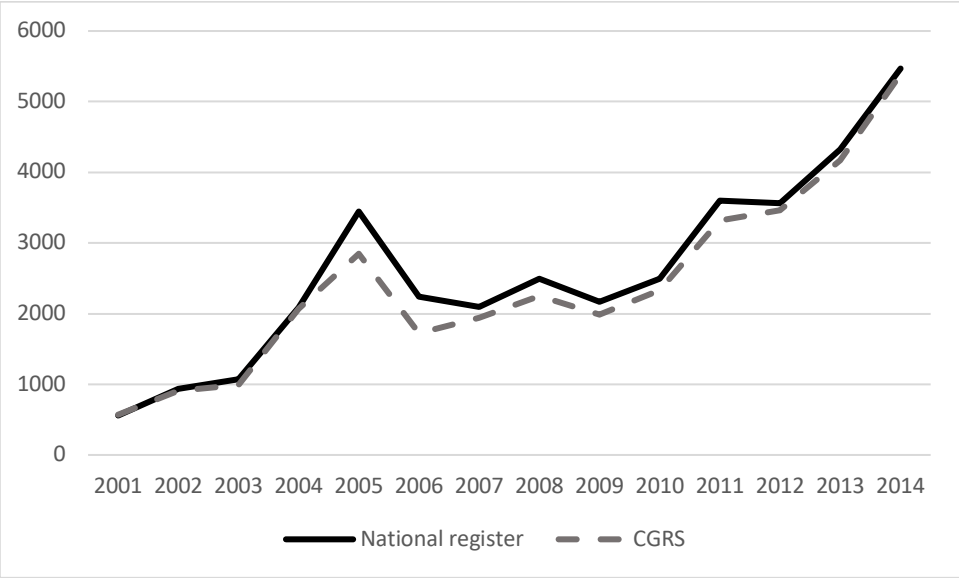



*Figure 2: Comparison of the yearly number of people granted a status of international protection in the data of the National Register and the CGRS-data for people who arrived since 1 January 1999 aged at least 18 in Belgium*

*Source: National Register (LIMA data base) and Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (unpublished data)*

Furthermore, the one in four random sample obtained from the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection is representative for the population. The number of individuals with the refugee or subsidiary protection status for the three cohorts in the BCSS sample corresponds very well with the proportion expected for a one in four sample of the population (not shown). The socio-demographic profile of the sample corresponds also very well with these characteristics for the total population.

# 5. The design of the longitudinal study of socio-economic careers

## 5.1. The sample studied

For the longitudinal study of socio-economic careers, we examine the people who satisfy four criteria: they arrived in Belgium between 1 January 1999 and 31 December 2014, they obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014, they were aged 18 to 59 at their arrival in Belgium, and they remained continuously legally on the Belgian territory until 31 December 2014.[20] In our ¼ sample, 7709 individuals satisfy these criteria.

We do not study the people who obtained the refugee status in the years 1999–2000 because our sample is selected for this period. Figure 3 shows for each year of obtainment of the international-protection status the share that introduced an asylum application before 1 January 1999. We note that the date of introduction of the asylum application typically corresponds with the date of arrival in Belgium.[21] Of the individuals who obtained a status of international protection in 1999 and 2000, respectively only 6% and 39% introduced an asylum application after 31 December 1998. In 2001, 78% of the people introduced their asylum application after this date. The more detailed table A1 (annex A) shows the distribution of the year in which the individual obtained a status of international protection by the year of introduction of the asylum application.

[20] Note that the profile of the beneficiaries of international protection is examined for all people aged over 18 at arrival, including people who did not reside continuously on the territory.

[21] The share that introduced a first asylum demand in the quarter of arrival was for the 2001–2006 cohort 99.0%, for the 2007–2009 cohort 98.7% and for the 2010–2014 cohort 98.0%.

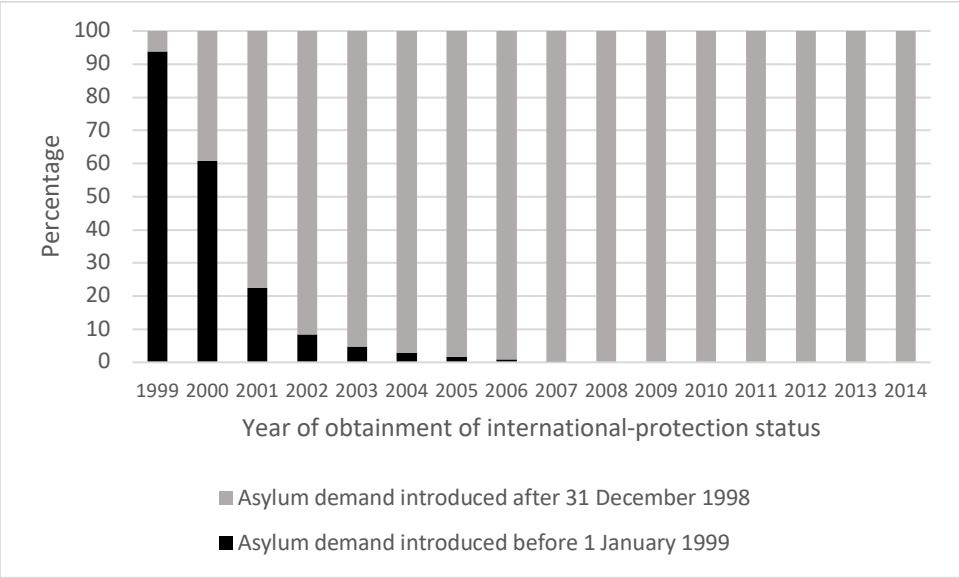



*Figure 3: Share of people who were granted international protection who introduced the asylum application before and after 31 December 1998, by year in which the status of international protection was granted (not including decisions after appeal, for people aged 18 and over when applying for asylum)*

*Source: calculations by authors based on unpublished data by CGRS*

Furthermore, we examine the individuals who were aged under 60 at their arrival in Belgium, as we are especially interested in the labour market dynamics for people at working age. Sensitivity analyses show that adding people aged 60 and over to the analysis only marginally alters the patterns described, as the number of people aged 60 and over granted a status of international protection is very limited. The fact that we study only the people who were aged at arrival 18 to 59 may impact the labour market outcomes, as people who obtained their educational degrees in the hosting country, typically have better labour market outcomes.

In addition, we study the people granted an international-protection status who were up to 31 December 2014 always having a legal residence in Belgium. People not having a legal residence may reside outside of Belgium, may be deregistered by the municipality (in case they did not reside at the chosen address and the new principal residence cannot be determined) or they had no (or not yet a) legal address of residence during a period.[22] We consider that the group that resided continuously legally on the territory is the most relevant to study from a policy perspective. Furthermore, a detailed investigation of the residence trajectories of asylum seekers and people granted the international-protection status is out of scope of this research. Future research could study the residence trajectories and examine how these affect the labour market participation, as people not legally registered may be deprived. Sensitivity analyses show that other specifications for the period of legal residence in Belgium (e.g. legally residing for five years when studying the socio-economic career for five years after arrival) do not substantially alter the patterns described. Keeping only the people with a longer period of legal residence in the analysis slightly increases the labour market participation rates.

[22] The latter situation may occur if an individual residing in a reception centre (entitled to material aid) needs to leave the reception centre because he or she obtained the status of international-protection and needs to register with the certificate of the CGRS that states that he or she obtained the international-protection status in the new municipality of residence. Finding a new housing situation is not easy given a housing crisis (in particular in the Brussels capital region) and discrimination in the housing market. Furthermore, the municipality needs to conduct a residence check (which could take some months in some municipalities during certain periods). Consequently, during this time, the individual may not have legal residence.

## 5.2. The cohorts studied for five years after arrival

We have chosen to study the socio-economic careers for three cohorts, namely the people granted a status of international protection in the periods 2001–2006, 2007–2009 and 2010–2014, for two reasons. First, we are interested in studying whether the labour market participation of beneficiaries of international protection improved over time. Second, the legal framework has changed regarding the legal permission to work and the work permit needed (cf. section 3.3.) and the uptake of material aid versus social assistance (see section 3.4.). One should note that the cohorts are defined according to periods of recognition, and not according to period of asylum demands. For each cohort, the period during which people were asylum seekers is on average 1-2 years earlier than the period during which they were granted international protection.[23]

We have chosen to present the socio-economic careers since the year of arrival, rather than since the year in which they have obtained the status of international protection (as was the case in the study CAREERS by Rea and Wets (2014)). Both options are valid, but this perspective has the advantage that the starting point (arrival in Belgium) is the same for every cohort, and does not vary in terms of the average length of the asylum procedure (as the duration of the procedure was reduced over time). Furthermore, by presenting the situation from arrival on, we also make best use of the information available given the observation window of the study. However, we also present in annex B the distribution of the socio-economic careers in every quarter since recognition and in annex C a comparison of both perspectives for labour market participation.

Finally, as we have data on the socio-economic careers from the moment of arrival until 31 December 2014, the socio-economic careers we study for these three cohorts are of varying length. We are able to observe longer the socio-economic careers for the people who arrived earlier in Belgium, but in most cases we study the careers for five years. Tables and figures presented in the forthcoming section show whether the data are calculated on a group that remained constant over time (as we observe all individuals over the same number of years) or whether it was calculated on a sample changing over time.

## 5.3. The indicators used

We make use of various complementary measures to gain insight into the socio-economic careers.[24] The measures that help to disentangle the 'spaghetti' of dynamic careers are the following:

- The quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions over five years;
- The percentage of people who worked at some point in the five years following arrival in Belgium;
- The share of people who worked in the period before the quarter in which a first status of international protection had been obtained;
- The median duration from arrival in Belgium until a first employment episode;
- The median duration of first and later employment episodes;
- The distribution of socio-economic positions after the first employment episode;

[23] This means that the cohorts used in this report are not strictly aligned on legal changes regarding labour market participation among asylum seekers. The link between legal changes and labour market participation will thus be interpreted in a loose way. In another work, cohorts are defined using the year of asylum demand (Carpentier & Schoumaker, 2018a), allowing a more systematic evaluation of the impact of changes in the legal framework on employment.

[24] As we have only quarterly data on the socio-economic position (measured at the end of the quarter), our measures slightly underestimate the true socio-economic dynamics.

The quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions is presented by cohort, by gender and by international-protection status.

# 6. The asylum procedure and the profile of beneficiaries of international protection

This section gives insight in the asylum procedure, the socio-demographic profile and the household type of the beneficiaries of international protection in the period 2001–2014 aged 18 and over at arrival in Belgium. The characteristics of the asylum procedure and the socio-demographic profile are calculated on the population data from the National Register. The household type is based on the CBSS sample (as explained in section four about the data).

## 6.1. The procedure and international-protection status granted

Over the period 1999–2014, 236,579 persons aged over 18 applied for international protection in Belgium according to our data from the National Register. Among these, 36,540 persons or 15.4% obtained a status of international protection in the course of the years 2001 to 2014. It is worth noting that this number cannot be seen as a recognition rate as persons who applied for international protection in the period 1999–2014 may have obtained international protection before 2001 or after 2014. Of these 36,540 persons, 81.8% (29,883 individuals) obtained the refugee status, whereas 18.2% (6,657 individuals) qualified for the subsidiary-protection status. Among the individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014, 89.0% submitted one application, 7.8% also submitted a subsequent application and 3.2% submitted three or more applications for international protection.

Table 2 presents the distribution of the population by cohort. If we consider refugees and people with subsidiary protection together, the majority of the beneficiaries of international protection in our sample (53%) obtained a status in the period 2010−2014. 28% obtained international protection in the period 2001–2006 and 19% in the period 2007–2009. Among refugees, about one third (34%) obtained the refugee status in the years 2001–2006, 18% in the 2007–2009 period and 47% in the years 2010–2014. Few people obtained subsidiary protection before 2007 as it could only be granted from 10 October 2006 on.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of the population that arrived in the period 1999–2014 and obtained an international-protection status in the course of the years 2001–2014 by year of first positive decision (including decisions after appeals). In the beginning of the 2000s, the yearly share of people with a positive decision was very low (2 to 3%). In 2005, this share was substantially higher (9%), and subsequently it reduced to 6% or 7% in the period 2006–2010. In the years 2011–2014, this yearly share increased from 10% in 2011 to 15% in 2015. In 2014, substantial shares of the people applying for international protection came from Syria, and were granted an international-protection status without detailed examination of the application given the general need for international protection of people coming from this country of origin.

*Table 2: Distribution by cohort (year of obtaining the first positive decision) over the period 2001–2014 for refugees and people with a subsidiary-protection status and both together*

| Year | Refugee | Subsidiary protection* | International protection |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2001–2006 cohort | 34.2 | 1.9 | 28.3 |
| 2007–2009 cohort | 18.4 | 18.8 | 18.5 |
| 2010–2014 cohort | 47.4 | 79.4 | 53.2 |
| All (2001–2014 cohort) | 100 | 100 | 100 |

**: since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

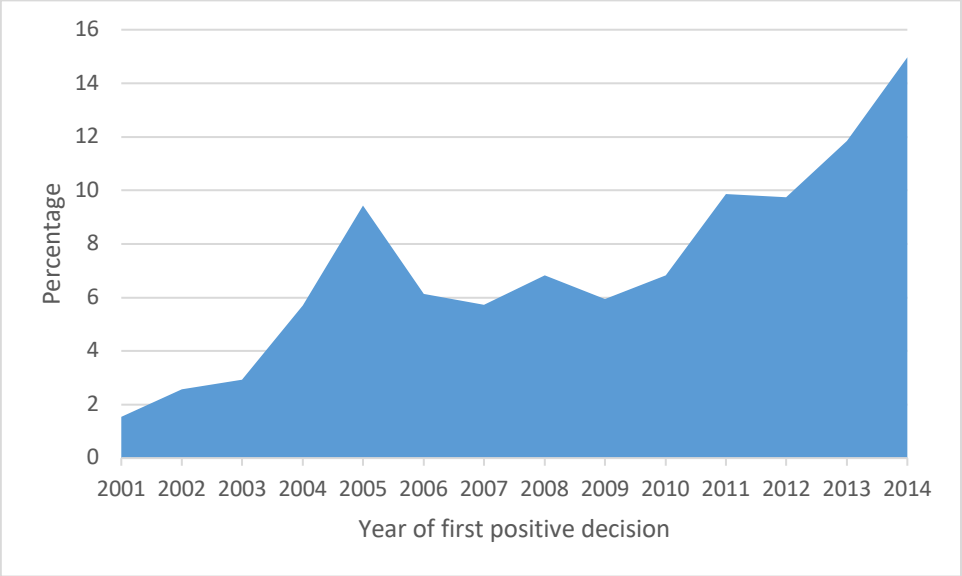



*Figure 4: Distribution of the population that obtained an international-protection status in the period 2001–2014 by year of first positive decision (including decisions after appeals)*
*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

Table 3a below shows data on the waiting time between the first application for international protection and the obtainment of the international-protection status (including positive decisions after appeal). From the people who obtained international protection in the period 2001−2014, around half (46%) waited for less than one year, about one in five (21%) waited for one up to two years, and 13% waited for two years up to three years. Still 17% waited for 3 to 5 years, and even 3.4% waited for six or more years. Such long waiting times can be problematic from an investment perspective on life-course development and integration. Such periods are often experienced as 'life on hold' (Brekke, 2010). The time until a positive decision was substantially shorter for the 2007–2009 and 2010–2014 cohort relative to the 2001−2006 cohort. For the latter cohorts, 57% received a positive decision within one year. Despite the shorter average duration in the 2007–2009 cohort relative to the 2001−2006 cohort, still 10% waited for three to five years and 6% waited for more than 5 years. For the 2001−2006 cohort, the average waiting time until the first positive decision was 2.1 years. The average waiting time until a first positive decision (by the CGRS or after an appeal) amounted to respectively 1.1 and 1.0 year in the 2007–2009 and 2010–2014 cohort.

Table 3b shows the distribution of the waiting time by cohort and by type of international-protection status. Only 19% of the refugees of the 2001−2006 cohort got a positive decision in the first year after their application, whereas 24% waited for one up to two years, 19% for two years and 36%

waited for three to five years. Of the 2001−2006 cohort of refugees, 2% waited for six years or more. For the few persons granted subsidiary protection status in the year 2006, waiting times were typically longer than for refugees. Of the 2007–2009 cohort of refugees, a high share (7%) waited six years or more for a first positive decision. For the 2010–2014 cohort of refugees, the majority (56%) waited less than one year, 22% waited for one year, and 10% waited for two years. Still 12% of the refugees waited for three years or more for a positive decision. About 1% waited even for more than 10 years. We observe a quite similar pattern of waiting times for people granted subsidiary protection in the period 2010–2014.

*Table 3a: Distribution of the number of years waited for a positive decision (including appeals) by cohort*

| | **2001–2014** | **2001–2006** | **2007–2009** | **2010–2014** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **International protection** | **International protection** | **International protection** | **International protection** |
| Less than 1 year | 45.9 | 18.5 | 57.2 | 56.6 |
| 1 year | 21.4 | 23.9 | 17.8 | 21.4 |
| 2 years | 12.5 | 19.4 | 8.3 | 10.3 |
| 3–5 years | 16.8 | 36.0 | 10.4 | 8.9 |
| 6–9 years | 3.0 | 2.3 | 6.3 | 2.2 |
| 10 years or more | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Average waiting time (years) | 1.3 | 2.1 | 1.1 | 1.0 |

**: Since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

*Table 3b: Distribution of the number of years waited for a positive decision (including appeals) by international protection status and cohort*

| | **2001–2006** | | **2007–2009** | | **2010–2014** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Refugee** | **Subsidiary protection*** | **Refugee** | **Subsidiary protection** | **Refugee** | **Subsidiary protection** |
| Less than 1 year | 18.5 | 13.8 | 59.0 | 49.3 | 56.3 | 57.4 |
| 1 year | 23.9 | 26.0 | 17.8 | 17.6 | 22.4 | 18.5 |
| 2 years | 19.4 | 12.2 | 7.3 | 12.7 | 9.6 | 11.9 |
| 3–5 years | 36.2 | 25.2 | 9.5 | 14.6 | 8.5 | 9.7 |
| 6–9 years | 2.0 | 22.8 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 2.3 | 2.0 |
| 10 years or more | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

**: Since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

*Table 4: Distribution of the place of introduction of the first applications for people who obtained a status of international protection in various periods*

| Place of application | 2001–2014 cohort | 2001–2006 cohort | 2007–2009 cohort | 2010–2014 cohort |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Immigration Office | 95.1 | 96.4 | 94.2 | 94.7 |
| At the border | 4.0 | 2.6 | 4.9 | 4.5 |
| Prison or closed centre | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Missing | 0.4 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

Table 4 shows the distribution of the place of introduction of the first application for the three cohorts and for all the people who obtained the international-protection status in the period 2001–2014. In the period 2001–2014, a very large majority (95%) introduced their application at the Immigration Office, whereas 4% introduced it at the border. Less than 1% of the persons concerned applied for international protection in a prison or closed centre. This distribution was very similar in the period 2007–2009 and 2010–2014. In the period 2001–2006, slightly less people introduced their application at the border.

## 6.2. The socio-demographic profile

Table 5a shows the socio-demographic profile of the people aged 18 and more who obtained the international protection status in Belgium in the period 2001–2006, 2007–2009 and 2010–2014 and over the total period 2001−2014. Table 5b is a similar table as Table 5a, but age and sex are shown for each cohort of refugees and people with a subsidiary-protection status separately. The characteristics at the moment (or year) of being granted the status of international protection are calculated for the first status of international protection obtained. Some people may for example first obtain a status of subsidiary protection, and later acquire the refugee status.

*Table 5a: Gender and age at the moment when granted a status of international protection by cohort*

| | 2001–2014 | 2001–2006 | 2007–2009 | 2010–2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | International protection | International protection | International protection | International protection |
| N | 36,540 | 10,333 | 6,757 | 19,450 |
| *Gender* | | | | |
| Males | 61.5 | 53.5 | 62.3 | 65.4 |
| Females | 38.5 | 46.5 | 37.7 | 34.6 |
| *Age at recognition* | | | | |
| 18–24 | 21.6 | 16.3 | 22.5 | 24.1 |
| 25–34 | 42.5 | 40.1 | 43.9 | 43.3 |
| 35–44 | 22.5 | 26.7 | 21.5 | 20.7 |
| 45–54 | 8.8 | 11.8 | 7.9 | 7.4 |
| 55 and over | 4.6 | 5.2 | 4.2 | 4.4 |
| *Mean age at recognition* | 33.0 | 34.7 | 32.5 | 32.3 |

**: since 10 October 2006*

*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

*Table 5b: Gender and age at the moment when granted a status of international protection by type of international-protection status and cohort*

| | 2001–2006 | | 2007–2009 | | 2010–2014 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Refugee** | **Subsidiary protection*** | **Refugee** | **Subsidiary protection*** | **Refugee** | **Subsidiary protection** |
| N | 10,210 | 123 | 5,506 | 1,251 | 14,167 | 5,283 |
| *Gender* | | | | | | |
| Males | 53.4 | 59.3 | 59.0 | 76.7 | 60.5 | 78.6 |
| Females | 46.6 | 40.7 | 41.0 | 23.3 | 39.5 | 21.4 |
| *Age at recognition* | | | | | | |
| 18–24 | 16.3 | 15.5 | 21.5 | 27.1 | 21.6 | 30.8 |
| 25–34 | 40.1 | 40.7 | 43.9 | 44.2 | 44.6 | 39.9 |
| 35–44 | 26.7 | 26.0 | 22.2 | 18.2 | 22.0 | 17.3 |
| 45–54 | 11.8 | 11.4 | 8.3 | 6.5 | 7.4 | 7.5 |
| 55 and over | 5.2 | 6.5 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 4.5 |
| *Mean age at recognition* | 34.7 | 35.3 | 32.7 | 31.4 | 32.5 | 31.4 |

*: since 10 October 2006

*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

If we consider all beneficiaries of international protection over the period 2001–2014, nearly two out of three are men. The 2007−2009 and the 2010−2014 cohort had more men relative to the 2001−2006 cohort, respectively 62% and 65% versus 54%. The 2007−2009 and the 2010−2014 cohort consisted also of more young people relative to the 2001−2006 cohort. In terms of age, young people are strongly represented among people granted an international-protection status in the period 2001–2014. The average age is 33. When looking at the age distribution, 22% are younger than 25. The age group 25 to 34 accounts for 43% and the age group 35–44 is about as big as the group aged 18 to 24. Only 5% is 55 years or older.

For all periods, people granted the subsidiary-protection status were more often male than refugees. This trend is especially pronounced for the most recent cohorts. Nearly four out of five beneficiaries of subsidiary protection of the 2010–2014 cohort were men. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection for the 2007–2009 and the 2010–2014 cohort are more often aged 18–24. The average age is 31 at the time of obtaining status for these two cohorts.

*Table 6a: Top 10 countries of birth of persons granted an international protection status for various periods*

| 2001–2014 cohort | | 2001–2006 cohort | | 2007–2009 cohort | | 2010–2014 cohort | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **International protection*** | **%** | **International protection*** | **%** | **International protection** | **%** | **International protection** | **%** |
| Former USSR | 15.8 | Former USSR | 35.5 | Iraq | 20.7 | Afghanistan | 15.9 |
| Iraq | 11.6 | Rwanda | 13.9 | Former USSR | 13.5 | Syria | 15.5 |
| Afghanistan | 10.2 | Form. Yugoslavia | 12.4 | Form. Yugoslavia | 7.3 | Iraq | 13.2 |
| Syria | 8.9 | DR Congo | 7.6 | Rwanda | 7.0 | Guinea | 8.1 |
| Rwanda | 6.5 | Afghanistan | 3.1 | Guinea | 5.9 | Former USSR | 6.2 |
| Form. Yugoslavia | 6.5 | Iran | 2.6 | DR Congo | 4.7 | China | 4.0 |
| Guinea | 5.8 | Iraq | 2.6 | Afghanistan | 4.6 | DR Congo | 3.5 |
| DR Congo | 4.9 | Burundi | 2.5 | China | 4.3 | Form. Yugoslavia | 3.1 |
| China | 3.4 | Ivory Coast | 2.0 | Cameroon | 2.7 | Iran | 2.8 |
| Iran | 2.7 | China | 1.8 | Iran | 2.6 | Rwanda | 2.4 |
| Others | 23.7 | Others | 15.9 | Others | 26.7 | Others | 25.5 |
| | 100 | | 100 | | 100 | | 100 |

*: since 10 October 2006

*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

*Table 6b: Top 10 countries of birth of persons granted an international protection status by status of international protection and cohort*

| 2001–2006 cohort | | | | 2007–2009 cohort | | | | 2010–2014 cohort | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Refugee** | **%** | **Subsidiary protection*** | **%** | **Refugee** | **%** | **Subsidiary protection** | **%** | **Refugee** | **%** | **Subsidiary protection** | **%** |
| Former USSR | 36.0 | Former Yugoslavia | 61.8 | Former USSR | 16.4 | Iraq | 57.3 | Guinea | 10.8 | Syria | 32.0 |
| Rwanda | 14.1 | Iraq | 22.8 | Iraq | 12.4 | Afghanistan | 11.3 | Afghanistan | 10.7 | Afghanistan | 29.7 |
| Former Yugoslavia | 11.8 | Ivory Coast | 12.2 | Rwanda | 8.6 | Former Yugoslavia | 7.2 | Syria | 9.3 | Iraq | 25.5 |
| DR Congo | 7.7 | Sudan | 1.6 | Former Yugoslavia | 7.3 | Somalia | 7.1 | Iraq | 8.6 | Somalia | 2.6 |
| Afghanistan | 3.1 | Germany | 0.8 | Guinea | 7.1 | Burundi | 2.8 | Former USSR | 8.1 | Palestine | 1.9 |
| Iran | 2.7 | Ethiopia | 0.8 | China | 5.3 | DR Congo | 2.4 | China | 5.4 | DR Congo | 1.3 |
| Burundi | 2.5 | | | DR Congo | 5.2 | Ivory Coast | 2.0 | DR Congo | 4.4 | Guinea | 0.9 |
| Iraq | 2.4 | | | Cameroon | 3.3 | Sudan | 1.8 | Former Yugoslavia | 4.1 | Former USSR | 0.9 |
| Ivory Coast | 1.9 | | | Iran | 3.1 | Palestine | 1.5 | Iran | 3.8 | Sudan | 0.5 |
| China | 1.9 | | | Afghanistan | 3.1 | Ethiopia | 1.0 | Rwanda | 3.3 | Former Yugoslavia | 0.4 |
| Others | 83.9 | | | Others | 28.2 | Others | 5.7 | Others | 31.6 | Others | 4.4 |
| | 100 | | 100 | | 100 | | 100 | | 100 | | 100 |

*: since 10 October 2006

*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

As shown in Table 6a, for the people granted the international-protection status in 2001–2014, the first country of birth was the former USSR (16%), followed by Iraq (12%) and Afghanistan (10%). Especially the 2001–2006 cohort covered a very large group from the former USSR (36%). Also people coming from Rwanda and former Yugoslavia were important groups among the people granted international protection in the period 2001–2006. Among the 2007–2009 cohort, the most important country of origin was Iraq (21%), followed by the former USSR. The 2010–2014 cohort covered 16% of people from both Afghanistan and Syria.

People from the former USSR were strongly represented among refugees in the 2001–2006 cohort, and to a lesser extent in the 2007–2009 cohort (Table 6b). People from Afghanistan were part of the top ten countries of birth over the whole period, with especially high shares of people who obtained subsidiary protection in the period 2010–2014. Guinea and Afghanistan (accounting each for 11%)

were the main countries of birth of refugees during the period 2010–2014. With Syria, Iraq and the former USSR, they form the top five countries of birth of refugees in the period 2010–2014. For the 2007−2009 cohort, the top 3 countries of birth of refugees were the former USSR, Iraq and Rwanda, whereas more than half of the people who obtained subsidiary protection were coming from Iraq.

*Table 7a: Distribution of the region of birth for people granted an international protection status by cohort*[25]

| **International protection*** | **2001–2014** | **2001–2006** | **2007–2009** | **2010–2014** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Region of birth** | **%** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| Western Asia | 37.5 | 10.4 | 34.7 | 37.5 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 31.2 | 34.0 | 34.3 | 31.2 |
| Europe (non-EU) | 25.5 | 50.9 | 24.5 | 25.5 |
| Eastern Asia | 3.8 | 2.1 | 4.6 | 3.8 |
| Northern Africa | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Stateless and unkwown | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| 13 new EU-member states | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| EU-15 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| North America | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

**: since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

*Table 7b: Distribution of the region of birth for people granted an international protection status by international-protection status and by cohort*[26]

| | **2001–2006** | | **2007–2009** | | **2010–2014** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Region of birth** | **Refugee (%)** | **Subsidiary protection* (%)** | **Refugee (%)** | **Subsidiary protection (%)** | **Refugee (%)** | **Subsidiary protection (%)** |
| Western Asia | 10.3 | 22.8 | 26.2 | 72.4 | 38.6 | 90.7 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 34.3 | 13.0 | 38.3 | 17 | 36.9 | 6.3 |
| Europe (non-EU) | 50.8 | 61.8 | 28.0 | 8.7 | 16.5 | 1.5 |
| Eastern Asia | 2.1 | 0.0 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 6.0 | 0.0 |
| Northern Africa | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 0.9 |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Stateless & unknown | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| 13 new EU-member states | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| EU-15 | 0.2 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| North America | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

**: since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register, calculations by authors*

[25] Europe (non-EU) covers among others Turkey and the former USSR. This classification of the country of birth differs from the one for citizenship used in the study CAREERS where Turkey is considered as Asia, and the former USSR as Eastern Europe.

[26] Europe (non-EU) covers among others Turkey and the former USSR. This classification of the country of birth differs from the one for citizenship used in the study CAREERS where Turkey is considered as Asia, and the former USSR as Eastern Europe.

Considering the regions of birth of people granted international protection in the period 2001–2014 in table 7a, we find that the largest group (38%) is born in Western Asia. People born in Sub-Saharan Africa follow with 32%. The third largest group consists of people from non-EU Europe (26%, covering a substantial share of people from the former USSR). For the 2001–2006 cohort, the group coming from non-EU Europe was the largest (51%). For the 2007–2009 and the 2010–2014 cohort, the people coming from Western Asia constituted the largest group, followed by the individuals arriving from Sub-Saharan Africa.

As table 7b shows, in the 2001–2006 cohort, 51% of the refugees and 62% of the people with subsidiary protection were born in non-EU Europe. Their share decreased substantially in the 2007–2009 cohort and was further reduced in the 2010–2014 cohort. For the cohort 2010–2014, Western Asia is the most important region of origin for refugees (39%), closely followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (37%). These regions constitute also the top two regions of origin for persons granted subsidiary protection in the period 2010–2014. However, more than 90% of those with a subsidiary protection status obtained in the period 2010–2014 came from Western Asia.

## 6.3. The household type

The data for the household type are calculated for the CBSS sample (n=9,134), in contrast to the figures above that were calculated for the total population. Of the individuals granted a status of international protection in the period 2001−2014, about 40% of the household types is unknown (table 8a). The missing category was especially large for the people who qualified for international protection in the years 2001–2006, namely 75%. This share was reduced to 54% for the 2007–2009 cohort and to 16% for the 2010–2014 cohort. The large and varying share with a missing household type hampers comparison across the cohorts. Therefore, we discuss the household type only for the 2010–2014 cohort. In this period, the biggest share (29%) of the people granted international protection is married and has children. Also about one in four lives in another household type than the ones listed (for example several adults with or without a kinship relation living together). Only eight per cent of the people granted international protection in the period 2010–2014 were living in single households and another 8% were single parents. Only a very small share (less than 1%) was registered as living in a collective household in the year of being granted a status of international protection. One of the surprising findings is the low percentage of people living alone. This may be underestimated, because of the substantial percentage of unknown household types. Yet, it suggests that most people granted international protection do not live alone. The fairly high share of people living in “other household types” suggests some people granted international protection share housing with non-related persons, maybe partly because of financial constraints.

*Table 8a: Distribution of household types at moment of obtaining a status of international protection by cohort*

| Household type | 2001–2014 International protection* (n=9,134) | 2001–2006 International protection* (n=2,554) | 2007–2009 International protection (n=1,738) | 2010–2014 International protection (n=4,842) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Married couple with children | 21.3 | 9.8 | 18.6 | 28.4 |
| Married couple without children | 3.9 | 2.7 | 3.7 | 4.6 |
| Couple not married, with children | 4.2 | 1.1 | 2.6 | 6.4 |
| Couple, not married, without children | 2.5 | 1.3 | 1.8 | 3.4 |
| Single-parent family | 5.9 | 3.2 | 5.5 | 7.5 |
| Single person household | 6.5 | 3.3 | 6.0 | 8.3 |
| Other household type | 15.8 | 3.5 | 7.0 | 25.5 |
| Collective household | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Unknown household type | 39.6 | 75.0 | 54.4 | 15.6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

**: since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register and CSBB data, calculations by authors*

*Table 8b: Distribution of household types at moment of obtaining a status of international protection by cohort and by international-protection status*

| Household type | 2001–2006 | | 2007–2009 | | 2010–2014 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Refugee (n=2,519) | Subsidiary protection* (n=35) | Refugee (n=1,386) | Subsidiary protection (n=352) | Refugee (n=3,494) | Subsidiary protection (n=1,348) |
| Married couple with children | 9.7 | 17.1 | 19.6 | 14.8 | 27.9 | 29.5 |
| Married couple without children | 2.7 | 2.9 | 3.9 | 3.1 | 5.0 | 3.6 |
| Couple not married, with children | 1.0 | 2.9 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 6.4 | 6.4 |
| Couple, not married, without children | 1.3 | 2.9 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 3.2 | 3.9 |
| Single-parent family | 3.2 | 2.9 | 5.1 | 7.4 | 7.7 | 7.1 |
| Single person household | 3.3 | 5.7 | 6.1 | 5.4 | 8.2 | 8.8 |
| Other household type | 3.5 | 5.7 | 6.6 | 8.5 | 25.4 | 25.5 |
| Collective household | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Unknown household type | 75.2 | 60.0 | 53.8 | 56.5 | 15.8 | 14.8 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

**: since 10 October 2006*
*Source: National Register and CSBB data, calculations by authors*

Table 8b shows the distribution of the household types in the year of obtaining the refugee or subsidiary protection status for the three cohorts. We discuss the household type also only for the 2010–2014 cohort. Household data are lacking for 16% of the people granted refugee status in 2010–2014. A very similar distribution over household types is found among individuals who were granted subsidiary protection in the period 2010–2014 and those with refugee status.

## 7. The longitudinal study of socio-economic careers

We turn to the description of socio-economic careers of people granted international protection during the first five years of their stay in Belgium. We focus on differences between cohorts, between gender, and between types of international protection (refugee status or subsidiary

protection). Other factors, such as the region of origin, are not covered in this research. Results by region of origin can be found in the study by Rea and Wets (2014).

## 7.1. The quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions by cohort

Before we look in detail into the quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions over the five years following the arrival in Belgium, we first focus on the labour market participation for the three cohorts for the first ten years (when available) (see Figure 5). For the 2001–2006 cohort our sample consists of 2,018 individuals. For the 2007–2009 cohort and the 2010–2014 cohort, we observed respectively 1,425 and 4,266 individuals. However, we note that the labour market outcomes could only be observed for the 2010−2014 cohort over five years for those who arrived in 2010. In every quarter during the first five years, the labour market participation was the highest for the 2007–2009 cohort. The labour market participation increased rather constantly during the first four years for the 2007–2009 cohort. This was also the case for the 2001–2006 cohort, though at a lower level. However, for the most recent cohort, the share of people participating in the labour market slowed down strongly after three years. At the end of year one 6% of the 2001–2006 cohort, 7% of the 2007–2009 cohort and 4% of the 2010–2014 cohort was working. After three years, these percentages had raised respectively to 23%, 30% and 25%. After five years, 37% was working for the 2001–2006 and 2007–2009 cohort, whereas only 29% participated in the labour market for those of the 2010–2014 cohort. Hence, we do not find an improvement of the labour market participation rate over time. It is unclear why the labour market participation was highest for the 2007–2009 cohort. As mentioned earlier, these people introduced their asylum demands on average 1 year before and, while some of them were allowed to work as asylum seekers, most were not. This cohort also faced the economic crisis which hit Belgium mainly from 2009 on, and would be expected to face greater difficulties finding employment. A possible explanation is that the 2001–2006 cohort was more demotivated by the long asylum procedures despite the fact that they may have had more human capital than more recent cohorts.[27] The 2010–2014 cohort may have been affected stronger by the economic crisis. Another hypothesis is that the 2010–2014 cohort was entitled to material aid (instead of social assistance), which may have negatively affected their labour market participation. Probably they participated also a longer time in language and vocational training and civic integration programmes (which became more demanding), which may have slowed down the labour market participation in the short term. Other factors related to the compositions of these cohorts may explain part of these differences. The 2007-2009 cohort contains more males and younger people than the previous cohort, which may be related to their higher chances of being employed.[28] Participation to informal work may also have changed across cohort, and explain part of these changes, although this is difficult to ascertain with existing data. From five to ten years after arrival, labour market participation still increases but at a lower pace. In addition, from five up to ten years after arrival, the labour market participation of the 2001–2006 cohort seems to become better than for the 2007–2009 cohort. They seemed to catch up in the long run. This can be due to the fact that they had more human capital than the later cohort given the stronger selection during the application procedure. At the end of the 10 years about 50% of the people participate in the labour market, which corresponds with the findings by Lens et al. (2017). All in all, despite small variations across cohorts, the situation has neither clearly improved nor deteriorated.

[27] Our data unfortunately do not provide information on the level of education of asylum seekers and refugees.
[28] As discussed in section 7.2, males obtain a first employment faster than women, and a larger share of males in the cohorts is thus expected to be associated to a quicker access to employment.

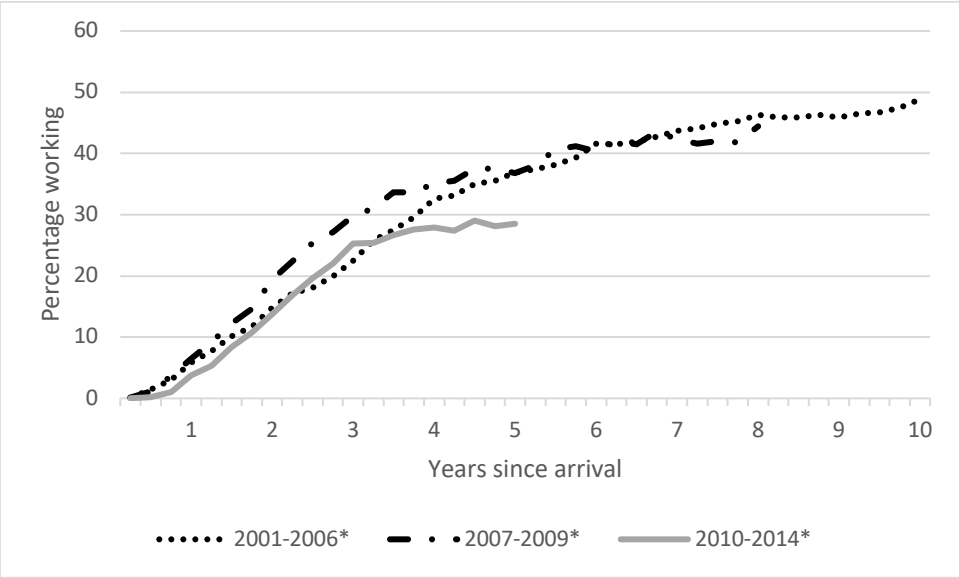



*Figure 5: Share participating in the labour market over the years following their arrival by period of obtaining the international-protection status*

*: calculated on a sample changing in size
*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

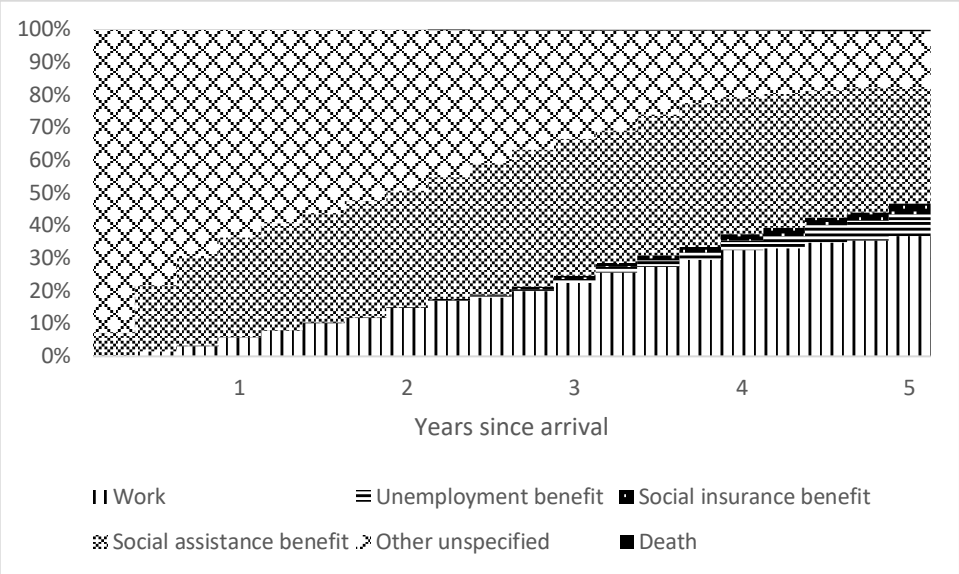
The figures 6a to 6c show the distribution of socio-economic positions in each quarter over the first five years after arrival for the three cohorts. The exact numbers of the figures 6a to 6c are presented in table 9. Annex B shows the same figures for the five years following the obtainment of the status of international protection. We find that the labour market participation of the people who obtained the international protection status in the period 2007–2009 is the strongest, as shown also in figure 6. They had a faster access to employment than people recognised in the years 2001–2006, and more people from this cohort have been long enough employed to receive an unemployment benefit. Nevertheless, at the end of the observation period, the increase in the share participating in the labour market for the 2007–2009 cohort slows down and stagnates in the last three quarters of the five years. For the 2001–2006 cohort, the share participating in the labour market still increases between year four and five. As a result, at the end of the five years, the labour market participation of the cohorts recognised in 2001–2006 and 2007–2009 is for both 37%. However, five years after arrival, for the 2007–2009 cohort, 13% of the people had worked sufficiently to obtain unemployment benefit, whereas for the cohort 2001–2006 only 7% claimed an unemployment benefit. Regarding social assistance uptake, we find for the 2007–2009 cohort that the uptake of social assistance benefit was higher and peaked during the second and third year of their arrival (being highest after one and a half year with 59%), whereas for the 2001–2006 cohort uptake peaked in the third and fourth year (being highest in quarter 15 with 44%). This is probably due to the duration of the procedure to obtain the international protection status, as the chance to take up social assistance is higher once people obtained the international-protection status (see box 1). Furthermore, this finding is influenced by the fact that social assistance data are only integrated in the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection from 2003 on. Whereas those recognised in the period 2007–2009 had a higher uptake of social assistance benefit in the beginning years, those recognised in 2001–2006 had more often another unspecified socio-economic position.[29] The

[29] As we have little information about the people with unspecified socio-economic position, we describe the profile of the people having this unspecified position. During the quarters that people had an unspecified socio-economic position in the five years after arrival for people granted international protection in the period 2001−2014, 50.2% of the records were from

uptake of other social insurance benefits than unemployment benefit is in both periods low, but increasing over the observed five years (respectively 3% and 5% for the 2001–2006 and 2007–2009 cohort at the end of the five years).

Comparing the 2010–2014 cohort with the 2007–2009 cohort, we find a slower and lower labour market integration. We remind that for the 2010–2014 cohort we mainly observe people who arrived early in the observation period over the five years. One year after arrival, we still observe 91.6 % (n=3,907) of the 2010–2014 cohort. After two years, we have data for 78.6% (n=3,355) of this cohort. After three, four and five years, we are still observing respectively 62.2%, 40.2% and 21.9% of the 2010–2014 cohort. The slower and lower labour market participation may be due to the unfavourable work regime and the difficult labour market conditions during the economic crisis. Furthermore, the more demanding integration pathway and the uptake of material aid rather than social assistance may play. After five years, only 29% are working compared to 37% for the 2007–2009 cohort. In addition, fewer people were employed long enough to obtain the unemployment benefit (9% at the end of the five years relative to 13% for the 2007–2009 cohort). The uptake of social assistance peaks especially around the third year after arrival (with rates up to 54% claiming a social assistance benefit) and diminishes only slowly in the following years. Hence, the peak of social assistance uptake is later than for the 2007−2009 cohort as asylum seekers who arrived after June 2007 were excluded from social assistance. Still 37% takes up social assistance at the end of the five years. We find a similar pattern for social insurance benefit uptake as for the two other cohorts: a low, but slowly increasing participation rate. The share of people with another unspecified socio-economic position decreases slower than for the 2007–2009 cohort and at the last quarters of the observation period more people have no connection to the social protection system or the labour market than was the case for the 2007–2009 cohort.

*Figure 6a: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the five years following their arrival for individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period **2001–2006** (n=2,018)*




Note for the 2001–2006 cohort that social assistance data were only available from 2003 on. Before 2003, people with

women. Furthermore, 28% of the records was from people aged 18−24, 42% from people aged 25−34, 21% from people in the age group 35−44, and 9% was from people who were aged over 45. The most important regions of origin of the people having records with an unspecified socio-economic position are Western Asia (36%), non-European Europe (32%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (27%).

social assistance are in the category 'other unspecified'.

*Figure 6b: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the five years following their arrival for individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period **2007–2009** (n=1,425)*

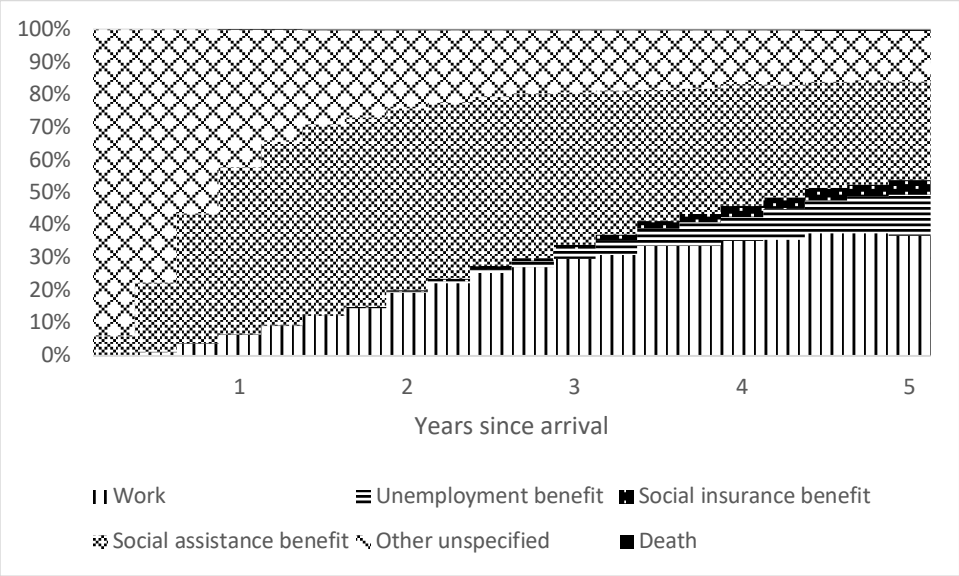
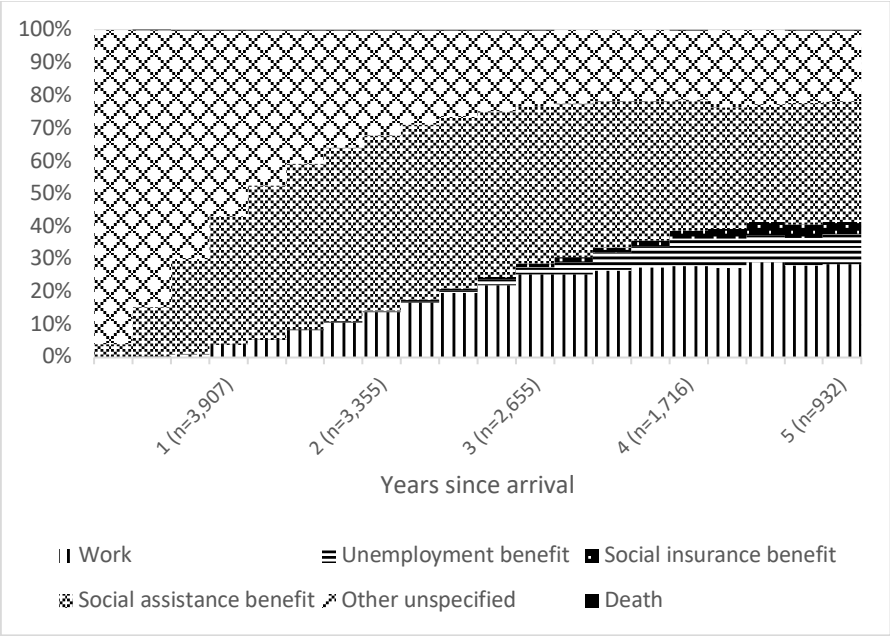



*Figure 6c: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the five years following their arrival for individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period **2010–2014** (calculated on samples that vary in terms of the number of individuals as shown on the X-axis)*




*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

*Table 9: Distribution of the socio-economic positions in the five years after the arrival by period (numbers for figure 6a to 6c)*

| Granted international protection in the years 2001–2006 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quarter | Work | Unemployment benefit | Social insurance benefit | Social assistance benefit | Other unspecified | Death | Total | n |
| 1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.1 | 92.8 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 2 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.2 | 78.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 3 | 3.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 27.6 | 69.2 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 4 | 5.8 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 30.6 | 63.5 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 5 | 7.7 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 33.0 | 59.1 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 6 | 10.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 33.6 | 56.1 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 7 | 11.7 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 35.8 | 52.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 8 | 14.9 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 35.6 | 49.2 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 9 | 17.1 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 37.3 | 45.0 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 10 | 18.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 40.2 | 40.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 11 | 20.0 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 41.9 | 36.6 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 12 | 22.5 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 42.0 | 33.3 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 13 | 25.8 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 40.6 | 30.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 14 | 27.5 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 43.1 | 25.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 15 | 29.5 | 2.3 | 1.6 | 44.3 | 22.1 | 0.2 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 16 | 32.6 | 3.0 | 1.9 | 42.0 | 20.3 | 0.2 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 17 | 33.2 | 3.7 | 2.5 | 41.1 | 19.3 | 0.3 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 18 | 35.0 | 5.2 | 2.5 | 38.8 | 18.3 | 0.4 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 19 | 35.6 | 6.0 | 2.5 | 38.2 | 17.4 | 0.4 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 20 | 36.9 | 6.7 | 3.3 | 35.1 | 17.7 | 0.4 | 100 | 2,018 |
| **Granted international protection in the years 2007–2009** | | | | | | | | |
| Quarter | Work | Unemployment benefit | Social insurance benefit | Social assistance benefit | Other unspecified | Death | Total | n |
| 1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 5.7 | 94.0 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 2 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 21.1 | 77.5 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 3 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 39.9 | 56.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 4 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 51.4 | 42.0 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 5 | 9.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 56.5 | 34.2 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 6 | 12.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 58.7 | 28.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 7 | 14.6 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 58.2 | 26.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 8 | 19.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 55.7 | 24.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 9 | 22.3 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 54.0 | 22.2 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 10 | 25.4 | 1.3 | 0.8 | 51.8 | 20.6 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 11 | 27.2 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 50.3 | 19.6 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 12 | 29.8 | 3.1 | 1.2 | 46.7 | 19.0 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 13 | 31.0 | 4.3 | 1.9 | 44.1 | 18.5 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 14 | 33.7 | 5.3 | 2.4 | 40.1 | 18.3 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 15 | 33.7 | 7.2 | 2.5 | 38.5 | 17.9 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 16 | 35.2 | 7.4 | 3.4 | 37.2 | 16.6 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 17 | 35.6 | 9.4 | 3.6 | 34.4 | 16.8 | 0.3 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 18 | 37.5 | 10.1 | 3.9 | 32.4 | 15.8 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 19 | 37.5 | 11.2 | 3.7 | 31.9 | 15.2 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 20 | 36.8 | 12.6 | 4.5 | 30.3 | 15.4 | 0.5 | 100 | 1,425 |
| **Granted international protection in the years 2010–2014** | | | | | | | | |
| Quarter | Work | Unemployment benefit | Social insurance benefit | Social assistance benefit | Other unspecified | Death | Total | n |
| 1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 4.1 | 95.9 | 0.0 | 100 | 4,266 |
| 2 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 15.2 | 84.5 | 0.0 | 100 | 4,229 |
| 3 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 28.9 | 69.9 | 0.1 | 100 | 4,071 |
| 4 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 39.2 | 56.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,907 |
| 5 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 47.1 | 47.4 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,780 |
| 6 | 8.3 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 50.6 | 40.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,648 |
| 7 | 10.7 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 53.0 | 35.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,482 |
| 8 | 13.8 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 53.6 | 32.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,355 |
| 9 | 16.8 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 53.6 | 28.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,212 |
| 10 | 19.6 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 52.4 | 26.4 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,029 |
| 11 | 22.0 | 1.8 | 0.9 | 50.6 | 24.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,835 |
| 12 | 25.3 | 2.3 | 1.1 | 47.8 | 23.4 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,655 |
| 13 | 25.4 | 3.7 | 1.6 | 46.9 | 22.4 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,473 |
| 14 | 26.7 | 5.4 | 1.6 | 44.8 | 21.6 | 0.0 | 100 | 2,218 |
| 15 | 27.6 | 6.5 | 1.8 | 42.6 | 21.5 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,923 |
| 16 | 27.9 | 8.5 | 2.4 | 40.0 | 21.2 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,716 |
| 17 | 27.3 | 8.9 | 3.1 | 37.2 | 23.5 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,482 |
| 18 | 29.0 | 8.3 | 4.1 | 35.8 | 22.7 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,267 |
| 19 | 28.1 | 8.4 | 4.1 | 37.3 | 22.0 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,053 |
| 20 | 28.5 | 9.2 | 3.7 | 36.8 | 21.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 932 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

**Box 1 — Social assistance careers for beneficiaries of international protection**

A study by Carpentier and Schoumaker (2018b) examined the take up of social assistance (= the minimum income serviced by local welfare agencies) for people who satisfy a number of criteria, namely: they came in the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2010 to Belgium; they were aged 18 to 59 at arrival; and they obtained a status of international protection before 31 December 2014.

They made use of longitudinal administrative data from the National Register linked to a one in four random sample from the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection (n=3,519). For these people they tracked on a quarterly basis the social assistance careers over five years since their arrival in Belgium. The legislation regarding the uptake of social assistance versus material aid changed substantially during this period (as described in section 3.4).

Of the individuals granted a status of international protection 86.1 % took up at least once social assistance in the five years after arrival in Belgium. This share is high relative to migrants who entered via other legal entry categories: from all extra-European migrants who entered Belgium in the period 2008–2014 (and were observed until 31 December 2014), 15% took up social assistance during their stay in Belgium. Sixty percent of people granted a status of international protection had only one social assistance spell over the five years observed. This share is in line with findings for the social assistance population in general (studying a period of four years, 1 out 3 returns to social assistance after a social assistance episode (Carpentier, 2016)). Twenty-seven percent had two episodes, 9% three episodes and 3.5% had four or more episodes. The median duration of the time from arrival to the uptake of social assistance for the period observed is 11.2 months. The median duration of the first spell in social assistance in the sample is 15.8 months. Median duration of the second episode in social assistance is substantially shorter, namely 8.7 months. Especially the first episode lasted very long in comparison to the median duration of first spells in the general social assistance population. The median duration of the first episode for the latter group is found to be 8 months (for entrants in 2004 (Carpentier, Neels, & Van den Bosch, 2014)) or 7 months (for people under the 'Right to social integration'-act over the period 2004-2014 (SPP Integration Sociale, 2013)). In Belgium, median durations in social assistance are typically longer for (recently arrived) migrants (Carpentier, 2016). Also a study by the social assistance administration finds longer durations for people granted the refugee status (POD Maatschappelijke Integratie, 2017). Of the sample studied, 37.3% received social assistance benefit before obtaining a status of international protection, whereas 39.0% claimed social assistance during the quarter of obtaining a status of international protection.

In annex D, we show the quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions for the 2001–2006 cohort over the 15 years following their arrival (for those we can observe for 15 years). The share working still increases from 37% in year five to 49% in year ten. However, this increase in the share working is less pronounced than in the first five years after arrival. From the 10th until the 15th year after arrival, the share working (of those followed for 15 years) stabilises just below the 50%.

## 7.2. The quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions by gender

Of the 2001−2014 cohort 60.7% (n=4,679) are men and 39.3% are women (n=3,030). We observe the distribution of the quarterly socio-economic positions over the five years following their arrival for men and women who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001−2014 (see Figure 7 and 8). Men start to work faster and have at the end of the five years a labour market participation that is twice as high as the labour market participation of women (45% versus 23%). At the end of the five years the share of men that claims an unemployment benefit is also about twice as high as for women (12% versus 5%). The shares with social insurance benefit are very similar, whereas women claim more often social assistance benefit. At the end of the five years, also a substantially higher share of women (28%) has an unspecified socio-economic position (10%).

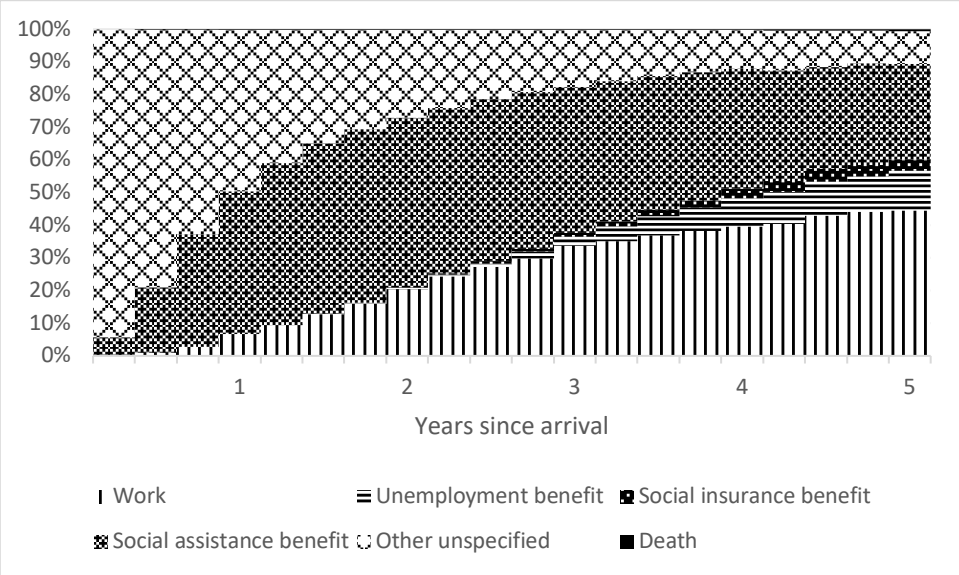



*Figure 7: Quarterly socio-economic position over the five years following their arrival for men who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001−2014 (varying number of individuals)*

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

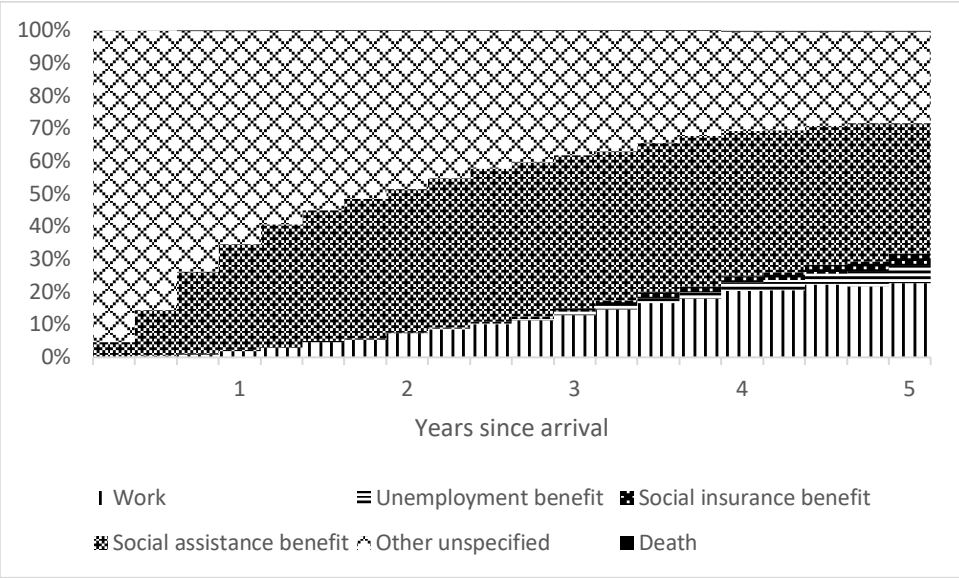



*Figure 8: Quarterly socio-economic position over the five years following their arrival for women who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014 (varying number of individuals)*

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

## 7.3. The quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions by international-protection status

Of the 2001–2014 cohort, 81.2% (n=6,258) are refugees and 18.8% (n=1,451) obtained the subsidiary protection status. In table 10 and table 11 we show the distribution of the quarterly socio-economic positions over the five years following arrival respectively for refugees and for people granted a subsidiary-protection status in the period 2001–2014. Despite the fact that people granted subsidiary protection obtain a residence permit of limited duration, and still need a work permit after recognition, we find very similar labour market participation shares as for refugees at the end of the five years (35% for refugees versus 34% for people with subsidiary protection). However, people with subsidiary protection status start working slower. In year four and five after arrival, the share of people with subsidiary protection claiming unemployment benefit was slightly higher than for refugees (except for the last quarter). Relative to refugees, people with subsidiary protection claimed less often social insurance (especially in the last years). Furthermore, people with subsidiary protection have a rather similar pattern of uptake of social assistance as refugees. Particularly in the later years, the share of people with subsidiary protection with an unspecified socio-economic position was larger.

*Table 10: Quarterly socio-economic position over the five years following their arrival for people who obtained refugee status in the period 2001−2014 (varying number of individuals)*

| Quarter | Work | Unemployment benefit | Social insurance benefit | Social assistance benefit | Other unspecified | Death | Total | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 5.5 | 94.4 | 0.0 | 100 | 6,258 |
| 2 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 17.8 | 81.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 6,226 |
| 3 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 30.3 | 67.2 | 0.0 | 100 | 6,081 |
| 4 | 5.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 38.5 | 56.3 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,947 |
| 5 | 7.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 44.2 | 48.5 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,849 |
| 6 | 10.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 46.6 | 42.9 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,752 |
| 7 | 12.4 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 48.4 | 38.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,639 |
| 8 | 15.8 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 48.2 | 35.4 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,551 |
| 9 | 18.4 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 48.5 | 32.0 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,455 |
| 10 | 20.6 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 48.2 | 29.4 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,336 |
| 11 | 22.5 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 47.6 | 27.2 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,195 |
| 12 | 25.3 | 2.2 | 1.3 | 45.6 | 25.5 | 0.1 | 100 | 5,081 |
| 13 | 26.9 | 3.1 | 1.7 | 44.1 | 24.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 4,958 |
| 14 | 28.9 | 4.0 | 2.0 | 43.2 | 21.9 | 0.1 | 100 | 4,781 |
| 15 | 30.2 | 4.8 | 2.1 | 42.7 | 20.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 4,573 |
| 16 | 32.2 | 5.7 | 2.5 | 40.4 | 18.9 | 0.2 | 100 | 4,435 |
| 17 | 32.6 | 6.5 | 3.2 | 38.6 | 19.0 | 0.2 | 100 | 4,280 |
| 18 | 34.5 | 7.3 | 3.4 | 36.5 | 18.0 | 0.3 | 100 | 4,126 |
| 19 | 34.7 | 8.2 | 3.5 | 36.2 | 17.2 | 0.3 | 100 | 3,967 |
| 20 | 35.2 | 9.3 | 4.0 | 34.1 | 17.1 | 0.4 | 100 | 3,872 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

*Table 11: Quarterly socio-economic position over the five years following their arrival for people who obtained a subsidiary-protection status in the period 2001–2014 (varying number of individuals)*

| Quarter | Work | Unemployment benefit | Social insurance benefit | Social assistance benefit | Other unspecified | Death | Total | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 3.9 | 96.0 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,393 |
| 2 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 16.7 | 82.9 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,199 |
| 3 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 32.0 | 66.7 | 0.0 | 100 | 956 |
| 4 | 4.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 42.2 | 53.7 | 0.0 | 100 | 754 |
| 5 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 48.4 | 46.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 636 |
| 6 | 7.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 50.7 | 41.7 | 0.0 | 100 | 558 |
| 7 | 9.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 51.9 | 38.6 | 0.0 | 100 | 496 |
| 8 | 12.9 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 50.9 | 36.1 | 0.0 | 100 | 450 |
| 9 | 16.4 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 49.8 | 33.6 | 0.0 | 100 | 403 |
| 10 | 19.6 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 49.5 | 30.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 344 |
| 11 | 22.7 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 48.1 | 28.4 | 0.0 | 100 | 307 |
| 12 | 26.2 | 1.5 | 0.2 | 45.8 | 26.4 | 0.0 | 100 | 268 |
| 13 | 26.6 | 3.6 | 0.5 | 44.1 | 25.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 242 |
| 14 | 27.8 | 5.1 | 0.9 | 41.8 | 24.3 | 0.0 | 100 | 214 |
| 15 | 28.8 | 6.6 | 0.9 | 39.1 | 24.7 | 0.0 | 100 | 196 |
| 16 | 28.5 | 8.4 | 2.4 | 37.3 | 23.5 | 0.0 | 100 | 170 |
| 17 | 29.0 | 9.6 | 1.9 | 34.0 | 25.6 | 0.0 | 100 | 165 |
| 18 | 31.5 | 9.1 | 2.6 | 32.9 | 24.0 | 0.0 | 100 | 140 |
| 19 | 32.9 | 8.3 | 1.9 | 34.4 | 22.3 | 0.2 | 100 | 118 |
| 20 | 34.0 | 8.4 | 2.2 | 32.2 | 23.1 | 0.2 | 100 | 116 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

## 7.4. Decomposing the socio-economic trajectories

The previous analyses show how the distribution of people across socio-economic positions evolved over time for different cohorts granted international protection. It does not provide insight into the employment dynamics. Therefore, in the following part, we make use of various indicators to gain insight into the stability, volatility and mobility that the trajectories reveal. Next, we describe the socio-economic position that people who qualified for international protection have after their first employment episode. As mentioned in section four, employment covers employment in the regular labour market, self-employment and participation in active labour market programmes. As we work with administrative data, we have no view on black labour market participation. We will talk about employment spells. A spell or episode is a consecutive period with the same socio-economic position, measured on a quarterly basis. In this analysis, we can only take into account employment spells. Hence, in the measures used, job changes are only taken into account if they are altered with another socio-economic position than employment.

### 7.4.1. The percentage that has ever worked

Among the individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2006 81.4% had at least worked once from arrival up to 31 December 2014.[30] For the cohort recognised in the period 2007–2009 this percentage was 75.2%. Note that the observation period for the latter cohort was also shorter. For the cohort 2010–2014, the observation period is too short to make a meaningful comparison. If we consider only the first five years since arrival, the shares of people who have ever worked are a bit lower, respectively 60.5% and 62.6%. Hence, the shares that ever worked within the first five years after arrival are substantially higher than the shares working after five years (about 37% for both cohorts). This reflects the instability of employment among people benefiting from international protection: While a substantial share of people eventually does get a job, remaining in employment seems to be as much a challenge as getting a job.

### 7.4.2. The share that worked before obtaining the international-protection status

The share working before obtaining the international-protection status is substantially lower for the most recent cohorts than for the earliest studied cohort. The share working before recognition was 25.9% for the 2001–2006 cohort, 10.1% for the 2007–2009 cohort and 7.4% for the 2010–2014 cohort. This decrease is most likely to be due to the reduction of the length of the international-protection procedure (cf. section 6.1.) and to changes in the work regime (cf. section 3.3). The average waiting time before recognition also decreased by half between the 2001–2006 cohort and the two more recent cohorts. This mechanically decreased the chance of working as an asylum seeker. During the period 1 June 2007 to 11 February 2010 asylum seekers could no longer work, as the asylum procedure did no longer include an admissibility phase and no subsequent reform in the work permit regime had been foreseen. From 12 February 2010 on, asylum seekers could work if they had not received a negative decision by the CGRS six months after the date of the asylum application. However, asylum seekers needed also to contribute to the cost of the reception centre and leave this centre in case of quite stable employment.

### 7.4.3. The duration until a first employment

The median duration from arrival in Belgium to a first employment was 3.9 years for those who obtained an international-protection status in the period 2001–2006, 3.5 years for the 2007–2009 cohort and 4.2 years for the 2010–2014 cohort. In addition, during the journey from home to host country, which may be long in some cases, people are also typically not employed. The duration without employment is thus very long among beneficiaries of international protection. Factors that could influence the speed of the transition to the labour market are multiple: the profile of the people (including gender, as discussed before), the duration of the asylum procedure, the work regime, the recognition for educational degrees, the participation in language training, civic integration programmes and programmes concerning labour market orientation, the labour market conditions and discrimination by employers.

The 2007–2009 cohort had somewhat more rapid access to employment, suggesting that people who arrived a few years before had better access to employment than the other cohorts. As already discussed, the slight improvement compared to the 2001–2006 cohort may be due to changes in the composition of the cohorts (including by gender). Compared to the 2010–2014 cohort, part of the difference mays be related to the fact that some people of the 2007–2009 cohort arrived as asylum

[30] Most employment is salaried employment. The share of self-employment is very low for this group: Only 1.4% of the employments of the people granted a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014 is self-employment (as principal or secondary job).

seekers before 2007, with a more favourable work regime. However, changes are not substantial and, regardless of the cohort, the duration until a first employment is long. And the 2010-2014 cohort shows that shorter asylum procedures do not necessarily translate into more rapid employment.

*Table 12: Median duration until first episode of employment by period in which the international protection status is granted*

| | 2001–2006 cohort | 2007–2009 cohort | 2010–2014 cohort |
|---|---|---|---|
| Years | 3.9 | 3.5 | 4.2 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

For those who did not work before obtaining the international-protection status, the median duration from arrival till starting to work was respectively 5.4 years, 3.8 years and 4.7 years for the 2001–2006, the 2007–2009 and the 2010–2014 cohort. The median duration till work since recognition for them is respectively 2.6, 2.7 and 3.2 years.[31] Consequently, for those who did not work before obtaining the international-protection status, we observe for the most recent cohort a slightly longer median duration before work after obtaining the international-protection status than for the 2001−2006 and the 2007−2009 cohort. Probably people are during a longer time participating (or waiting for participation) in language training, civic integration programmes and labour market orientation, as the integration trajectory became more demanding. Their individual characteristics (education, skills, language knowledge, etc.) may also hinder their integration on the labour market compared to earlier cohorts.

Not being active on the (regular) labour market during such long periods, may be a long period in a life course, and may affect motivation and loss of specific job skills. Furthermore, such long gaps in their curriculum vitae may be a disadvantage especially when people have to compete with peers who do not have such gaps in their cv. International studies highlight the importance of early labour market integration (Bertelmann Stiftung, 2016; OECD, 2018).

### 7.4.4. The duration of first and later employment episodes

The median duration of the first employment episode (calculated for employment exits until 2014) is for the three cohorts about 11 months (see table 13). Table 13 shows for the second work episode and later work spells a similar pattern as for the first episode for the 2001–2006 and 2007–2009 cohort. Half of the people thus spend less than one year in their first employment, illustrating the instability they face on the labour market. As suggested by Lens et al. (forthcoming), this may result from the low quality jobs they find, that may be both unattractive in the long run, and insecure in the short term.

*Table 13: Median duration (months) of first and later employment episodes of employment by period in which the international protection status is granted*

| | 2001–2006 cohort | 2007–2009 cohort | 2010–2014 cohort |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1st work episode** | 10.6 | 11.5 | 11.1 |
| **2nd work episode** | 10.8 | 11.4 | 11.4 |
| **All work episodes** | 10.8 | 11.4 | 11.2 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

Figure 9 shows the survivor functions for the first work spell for the three cohorts. The survivor function indicates the probability that individuals are still at work in every quarter since the start of the employment. The survivor functions are very similar for the three cohorts, except that the 2007–

[31] For these calculations we started to count from the quarter of recognition.

2009 and the 2010–2014 cohort have more people who had an employment that lasted at least 9 months (3 quarters). The percentage "surviving" in employment decreases very steeply during the first two years, whereas the decrease is less pronounced in the following years. For the 2001–2006 cohort, 29% had employment spells that lasted at least two years. This percentage was 28% for the 2007–2009 cohort and 27% for the 2010–2014 cohort.


*Figure 9: Survivor functions by cohort*

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors.*

### 7.4.5. The socio-economic position following the first work episode

What do people become after the end of their first employment spell? Table 14 shows the distribution of socio-economic positions at the end of the quarter following the first work episode for the three cohorts. Roughly 36% to 40% of people benefit from social assistance, and 28% to 38% of people have access to unemployment benefit. These figures indicate a large share of people find themselves in precarious situations after their first employment spell, often too short to allow them to have access to unemployment benefit. Social assistance also plays a more important role after work for the 2007−2009 cohort and for the 2010−2014 cohort than for the 2001−2006 cohort, suggesting a deterioration of the living conditions. Yet, unspecified positions have also changed substantially over time, making it difficult to reach firm conclusions.

*Table 14: Distribution of socio-economic positions in the quarter following the first work episode*

| **Socio-economic position** | **2001–2006** (n=1,406) | **2007–2009** (n=848) | **2010–2014** (n=986) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unemployment benefit | 28.0 | 38.7 | 32.3 |
| Other social insurance benefit | 6.0 | 4.0 | 2.7 |
| Social assistance benefit | 35.8 | 39.4 | 41.1 |
| Other unspecified | 30.2 | 17.9 | 23.9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors.*

**Box 2 — Impact of the work regime prevailing in the period of arrival**

A study by Carpentier & Schoumaker (2018a) examined how the administrative status (i.e., being an asylum applicants, being a refugee, having obtained the subsidiary protection status and holding citizenship) and the work regime (whether one can work and under which conditions) affect labour market participation since arrival for people granted an international protection status. They examined a one in four random sample of the people who arrived in Belgium in the period 1999–2014 aged 18 to 60 who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014 (n=8,900), making use of longitudinal administrative data from the national register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection.

| Period of arrival | Work regime (in general) | Share of the sample | % that worked before obtaining the status of international protection | Median duration (in years) until obtaining status of international protection |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 January 1999 – 31 March 2003 | Asylum seekers can work with work permit B (linked to specific employer) | 21% | 30% | 4.4 |
| 1 April 2003 – 31 May 2007 | Admissible asylum seekers can work with permit C (not linked to employer) | 20% | 20% | 2.2 |
| 1 June 2007 – 11 January 2010 | Asylum seekers can not longer work | 18% | 6% | 1.2 |
| 12 January 2010 – 11 February 2011 | Asylum seekers can work if no negative decision 6 months after asylum application with work permit C | 10% | 9% | 1.4 |
| 12 February 2011 – 31 December 2014 | Idem + asylum seekers that work need to contribute to the cost of the reception centre (& leave the reception centre) | 32% | 3% | 0.9 |
| Total period | Mixed | 100% | 13% | 1.9 |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors.*

Multivariate analysis shows that the work regime in place when arriving has an impact on the speed of the transition to work.[32] The chance to start working did not differ for those who arrived in the period 2003–2007 relative to those who came to Belgium in the period 1999–2003. The likelihood to start working for those who arrived in the period 2007–2010 (when asylum seekers could no longer work) was substantially lower relative to those arrived in the period 1999–2003. This was also the case for the people who arrived in the period 2010–2011 and 2011–2014. We found the lowest chances to start working for the period 2011–2014. Furthermore, the multivariate analysis showed that people with an international protection status had higher chances to start working than similar asylum seekers.

Table 15 summarizes the main indicators for the three cohorts of people granted international protection.

[32] The multivariate discrete-time logit model of the hazard of first employment controlled for seasonal variation sex, age, region of birth, being officially registered, the region of first residence, administrative status and work regime prevailing in the period of arrival.

*Table 15: Overview of the indicators for the three cohorts*

| | 2001–2006 cohort | 2007–2009 cohort | 2010–2014 cohort |
|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of people working after 5 years since arrival | 36.9% | 36.8% | 28.5% (a) |
| Percentage of people who have ever worked in the first five years | 60.5% | 62.6% | Cannot be calculated |
| Share of people who worked before obtaining the international-protection status | 25.9% | 10.1% | 7.4% |
| Median duration till first employment | 3.9 years | 3.5 years | 4.2 years |
| Median duration from recognition till first employment for those who did not work before obtaining international-protection status | 2.6 years | 2.7 years | 3.2 years |
| Median duration of the first employment episode | 10.6 months | 11.5 months | 11.1 months |
| Percentage of people with unemployment benefit after the first work episode | 28.0% | 38.7% | 32.3% |
| Percentage of people with social assistance benefit after first work episode | 35.8% | 39.4% | 41.1% |
| (a) This indicator should be interpreted with caution, since only a few people could be observed for 5 years in this cohort. | | | |

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors.*

# 8. Conclusion and discussion

## 8.1. Key findings

In this study, we examined the socio-demographic profile and the socio-economic careers of beneficiaries of international protection who arrived in Belgium between 1 January 1999 and 31 December 2014 aged at least 18, and who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2014 based on linked administrative data from the National Register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection. We studied the socio-demographic profile on the basis of population data. The study of socio-economic careers was done for a subsample of these people, namely those who were aged 18 to 59 at arrival who remained continuously legally on the Belgian territory until 31 December 2014 (n=7,709).

Over the period 1999–2014, 236,579 persons aged over 18 applied for international protection in Belgium according to the data from the National Register. Among these, 36,540 persons or 15.4% obtained a status of international protection in the course of the years 2001 to 2014. Of these 36,540 persons, 81.8% (29,883 individuals) obtained the refugee status, whereas 18.2% (6,657 individuals) qualified for the subsidiary-protection status. From the people who obtained international protection in the period 2001−2014, a small halve (46%) waited for less than one year before a first positive decision, about one in five (21%) waited for one up to two years, and 13% waited for two years. Still 17% waited for 3 to 5 years, and even more than 3% waited for six years or longer. Of the people who qualified for international protection in the period 2001–2014, 62% was male and the average age was 33 years. The former USSR, Iraq and Afghanistan were the three most important countries of origin. Of the beneficiaries of international protection, 38% came from Western Asia, 31% from Sub-

Saharan Africa and 26% from non-EU European countries (including the former USSR). To study whether the labour market participation of recent cohorts improved, we examined three groups, namely the people granted international protection in the period 2001−2006 (28%), 2007−2009 (19%) and 2010−2014 (53%). The 2007−2009 and the 2010−2014 cohort had larger shares of male, people in the age group 18 to 24 and people coming from Western Asia than the 2001−2006 cohort.

The people who faced war and conflict situations and were granted international protection are a heterogeneous group. Their labour market participation is the result of a matching process that is affected by multiple factors, such as labour market restrictions and administrative barriers, the characteristics of the job seekers themselves, the available jobs and the employment policy in the area, the characteristics of the social network of the job seekers, and finally discrimination by and administrative barriers for employers.

During the first five years after arrival, the 2007−2009 cohort of people granted international protection had the best labour market participation, whereas in the five subsequent years the 2001−2006 catched up and performed best. Labour market participation was not better for the most recent cohort observed relative to earlier cohorts. It is unclear what exactly drives the variation in labour market outcomes for the various cohorts given the descriptive nature of this study and the fact that various factors changed simultaneously. In 2007, the asylum procedure was reformed, applicants for international protection could no longer work (until 2010), and material aid was privileged over the allocation of minimum income benefit. The integration trajectory became also more demanding. Furthermore, the economic crisis has hit Belgium, especially since 2009. In addition, people vary in terms of their socio-demographic profile, region of origin and probably human capital. After five years, 37% of the 2001−2006 and the 2007−2009 cohort was working. For the 2010−2014 cohort this share was only 29%. However, after five years, the labour market participation still increases significantly. After 10 years about 50% of the people who obtained an international protection status in the period 2001−2006 was working. The share of people of the 2001−2006 cohort who ever worked (until 31 December 2014) is substantially higher, namely 81%. Hence, the majority of the people did work (in a formal job) at one stage during their stay, despite the fact that the population obtaining international protection is a vulnerable group. First and later employment episodes last on average less than one year, pointing to rather short labour market episodes. This situation may be a combination of people changing in order to improve their situation, and having only access to such jobs in the labour market. Hence, durable labour market integration remains a point a concern. Furthermore, gender is an important determinant of the labour market participation. Men start to work faster and have after five years a labour market participation that is twice as high as the one for women. People with subsidiary protection status had a slower labour market integration than refugees, which may be due to the fact that they face more administrative hurdles: they obtain a residence permit of one year and still need a work permit C after recognition.

Social assistance benefit and, to a lesser extent, unemployment benefit and social insurance benefits are also important income sources for those who obtained international protection during the years after their arrival. Over the five years since arrival, the share claiming social assistance is substantially reduced, whereas the shares entitled to unemployment benefit (which requires sufficient work experience) and social insurance benefit become larger. Social assistance uptake for the most recent cohort typically starts later (as asylum seekers generally are excluded from social assistance and are entitled to material aid), but remains of high importance. A substantial share of the people has also another unspecified socio-economic position.

## 8.2. Policy recommendations

### Labour market participation of people granted international protection

Female labour market participation constitutes a point of concern. Furthermore, the long median duration until employment is worrying: it takes about four years since arrival to start working, and about three years after recognition for people who did not work before obtaining the status of international protection. The long duration from arrival to labour market participation was also the case for the latest cohorts who face shorter asylum procedures. In addition, during the time of the journey to the hosting country, people are typically not active on the labour market of the home or host country. Nevertheless, a fast and successful labour market integration is shown to be of relevance from a social investment perspective. It is of relevance for the individuals themselves and for both the host and home countries. Therefore, it should be examined whether people cannot benefit from programmes that foresee training and education while working. Probably, the current system keeps people granted international protection a very long time away from the labour market and self-sufficiency during language training, vocational training and education, and civic integration courses (and waiting time for participating in these programmes). Furthermore, also the recognition of diplomas takes a long time in the Flemish and French speaking communities, which can put 'life on hold'. Being (at least) four years not active on the labour market, may be a long period in a life course, and may affect motivation and loss of specific job skills. Furthermore, such long gaps in their curriculum vitae may be a disadvantage especially when people have to compete with peers who do not have such gaps in their cv. International studies highlight the importance of early labour market integration (Bertelmann Stiftung, 2016; OECD, 2018). Quickly obtaining a job, is good for the labour market outcomes and well-being in the later career. Furthermore, rapid labour market integration is key to reduce the net fiscal cost for the society. Hence, it seems that the potential of the people granted international protection remains a rather long term untapped in Belgium. However, this should not be done at the expense of obtaining good quality and stable jobs. The current situation indicates that migrants both get their first employment late and exit their first employment spell on average after just one year. Improving access to employment is one key issue, but improving the stability and quality of employment is another key factor in improving the socio-economic position of people granted international protection (Lens et al., forthcoming).

Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (who have a less favourable residence permit and still need a work permit after recognition) have a slower labour market participation. Administrative barriers could be dismantled for them. The waiting time for working for asylum seekers could also be further reduced.[33] Countries such as Canada, Greece, Norway and Sweden do not have a waiting period for accessing the labour market for asylum seekers (OECD, 2018). Next, the work regime in place since 2011 (applicants for international protection need to contribute to the cost of the reception centre) does not seem to facilitate at best labour market participation. Probably, such a work regime does not present sufficiently incentives for labour market integration, or complicates the multiple challenges that applicants for international protection face after arrival in Belgium.

Furthermore, the restructuration of the complex set of active labour market programmes could be a way forward, with focus on (on-the-job) training in the labour market rather than on public job creation schemes. Literature has shown that active labour market programmes are more effective if the employer is a private entity (Bertelmann Stiftung, 2016). Opportunities for self-employment

[33] The waiting time has already been reduced from 6 months to 4 months in 2015, which is a step in this direction.

could also be reinforced, as only a very small share (about 1%) of the (former) applicants for international protection in the period 2001−2014 is self-employed.

The short median duration of employment episodes (i.e. less than one year) of beneficiaries of international protection shows that labour market integration for this group is not just one transition after arrival. Labour market integration should be considered as a process. Hence, services that follow people over the life course (rather than based on which benefit they have or which category they belong to) may be more suitable. Furthermore, policy makers should enforce measures that support the provision of sustainable jobs for new entrants in the labour market and upward job mobility in case of transitions. Labour market segmentation should also be countered.

In addition, the matching process in the Belgian labour market is probably not optimal. It could be useful to oblige employers to register vacancies in a nation-wide database (with sanctions in case of non-compliance) to guarantee that information about job vacancies is easily accessible, also to newcomers. Currently, many vacancies are published on specific sites or in specialised publications, and only a rather limited percentage of the vacancies is integrated in the data bases of the public employment services.

Discrimination and a (fast) recognition of foreign acquired diplomas also remain points of concern. Hence, measures that fight discrimination are needed. The duration from the introduction of the application for recognition of diplomas till a first decision should also be closely monitored. Furthermore, collaboration between the French and Dutch speaking communities in terms of recognition of diplomas should be enhanced. Furthermore, a quick asylum procedure, also in periods of high inflow, remains a point of concern for individual well-being and reducing the cost for society of asylum seekers. Furthermore, investment in prompt language and professional training (without long waiting lists) remains important, and can even have a positive impact on the economy by boosting aggregate demand (OECD, 2018). Beneficiaries of international protection constitute also an important potential workforce to alleviate labour shortages in an ageing Europe, and most of the economic literature has found little support for significant negative consequences of humanitarian inflows on the labour market (OECD, 2018).

Furthermore, one could look to more innovative measures that aim to benefit fully from this human capital potential of the people granted a status of international protection through a better assessment of skills and employment aspirations (rather than orient people only towards labour market shortages). Short programmes at arrival could be designed that increase the labour market knowledge and the development of aspirations in the labour market of the host country, as aspirations typically orient actions. Furthermore, clearer aspirations in the short and long term favour agency in line with these (Mische, 2009). The reallocation of beneficiaries of international protection could be addressed by sectoral groups (across professions). Such groups could allocate (some) people to jobs in line with the human capital and diplomas they obtained in their countries of origin and their employment aspirations.

### Data collection and data delivery

Regarding data collection and data delivery, it would be valuable that data about the household type are also collected for people registered in the waiting register, and that this information is integrated in the LIPRO-typology. Regarding the socio-economic nomenclature, it would be valuable to include material aid in the nomenclature for people who apply for international protection. Furthermore, it should be a priority to gather data on the highest obtained diploma in the country of origin, the highest recognised educational degree in Belgium and data on language training and participation in

civic integration courses. Such data should be of high quality and comparable over the regions or communities.

Data delivery of administrative data from the National Register and the Data Warehouse is very slow, jeopardising the possibilities for monitoring the evolution of labour market participation of applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection at short notice. Such data delivery could reinforce evidence-based policy and make research more valuable for policy makers.

Furthermore, waiting times to register in municipalities should be closely monitored, to avoid that integration trajectories are slowed down due to such administrative barriers. And also the timing of other administrative procedures (e.g. the duration until notification of the decision on the international-protection status) should be closely monitored. Time is a fundamental dimension of agency, often overlooked. In addition, administrative procedures are factors than be rather easily acted upon in comparison to other factors influencing labour market participation.

## 8.3. Further research

This study shows some descriptive statistics that shed light on the labour market participation of applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection. Further studies that use multivariate analysis or quasi-experimental design could give more insight on how various factors affect the labour market participation of this population. For example, future research could study what the impact is on labour market participation of the reduction of the duration of the residence permit for refugees to five years (renewable into a permanent residence permit) since 2015. Further research could also examine how do (female) beneficiaries of international protection benefit from the existing active labour market programmes: who is allocated to which programme and which effect they have (in the long term) on labour market outcomes. Furthermore, how labour market participation and non-activity are clustered within families would be of interest to study. A high share of the people still has also an unspecified socio-economic position. It would be valuable to gain insight in the socio-economic situation of this group. We expect that, even though a substantial share of asylum seekers and refugees are not employed, at least one member of their household may have an employment. Further research could also document the various phases and barriers that delay the start to work (in addition to the training).

As providing material aid in reception centres is more expensive than providing people with a minimum income benefit (Rekenhof, 2017), it would also be of interest to gain insight in the differential effect on well-being and labour market participation of material aid in both collective centres and individual entities versus providing a minimum income benefit.

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## 9.1. Annex A: Selectivity in the sample for the first years

Table A1 gives insight in the selectivity of our sample in the beginning years. In table A1 we see for each year in which a decision on the substance was taken in the asylum procedure by CGRS the distribution over the years of the asylum application. We do not include people who obtained an asylum decision in 1999 and 2000 in our analyses as they represent respectively only 6% and 39% of the decisions taken in that year. In 2001, our data cover about 77% of the people who obtained a positive decision.*Table A1: Distribution of year of decision on the substance in asylum application by year of asylum application for those who obtained an international protection status*

| | Year of decision on the substance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year of asylum application** | **1999** | **2000** | **2001** | **2002** | **2003** | **2004** | **2005** | **2006** | **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| **1990** | 0.3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1991** | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1992** | 0.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1993** | 0.7 | 0.21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1994** | 1.61 | 1.04 | 0.27 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1995** | 3.22 | 1.88 | 0.41 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1996** | 10.2 | 3.76 | 1.36 | 0.4 | 0.29 | 0.09 | 0.14 | 0.06 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1997** | 39.3 | 9.92 | 4.76 | 1.21 | 0.96 | 0.14 | 0.1 | 0.23 | 0.05 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1998** | 37.5 | 44 | 15.8 | 6.28 | 3.28 | 2.44 | 1.24 | 0.63 | 0.26 | 0 | 0 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.12 | 0.02 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **1999** | 6.23 | 33.3 | 32.3 | 24 | 21.1 | 15.9 | 4.8 | 3.39 | 1.03 | 0.09 | 0.15 | 0 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **2000** | 0 | 5.85 | 21.3 | 24.7 | 28.3 | 25.3 | 10.5 | 8.06 | 1.13 | 0.49 | 0.15 | 0 | 0 | 0.12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **2001** | 0 | 0 | 23.8 | 33.5 | 18 | 15.9 | 10.2 | 6.21 | 0.92 | 0.13 | 0.1 | 0.04 | 0 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| **2002** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9.31 | 20.8 | 13.1 | 19.1 | 4.89 | 0.72 | 0.18 | 0.05 | 0.13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.02 | 0 | 0 |
| **2003** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.04 | 21.6 | 23.5 | 10.4 | 1.44 | 0.76 | 0.35 | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **2004** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.4 | 22 | 17.6 | 5.07 | 1.07 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0 | 0 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| **2005** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8.35 | 34.9 | 14.2 | 4.14 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0 |
| **2006** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13.7 | 40.65 | 9.04 | 2.31 | 0.69 | 0.24 | 0.06 | 0.02 | 0 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| **2007** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34.55 | 43.21 | 6.34 | 2.14 | 0.63 | 0.29 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0 |
| **2008** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40.89 | 45.1 | 8.74 | 0.93 | 0.55 | 0.14 | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0 |
| **2009** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 44.4 | 53 | 9.53 | 2.59 | 1.75 | 0.52 | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| **2010** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34.3 | 47.7 | 10.8 | 6.12 | 2.21 | 0.53 | 0.11 |
| **2011** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40.8 | 42.5 | 24.2 | 8.09 | 1.49 | 0.16 |
| **2012** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 42.9 | 33 | 8.3 | 1.56 | 0.2 |
| **2013** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34.6 | 27.1 | 2.84 | 0.33 |
| **2014** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 53.6 | 41 | 2.95 |
| **2015** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52.4 | 81.52 |
| **2016** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14.68 |
| **Total** | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N | 995 | 958 | 736 | 988 | 1,037 | 2,131 | 2,897 | 1,738 | 1,951 | 2,245 | 1,988 | 2,335 | 3,316 | 3,472 | 4,169 | 5,388 | 7,316 | 10,853 |

*Source: unpublished data, calculated by CGRS*

## 9.2. Annex B: The quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions since the quarter after the obtainment of the international-protection status.

In the following figures, the first quarter of observation is the quarter following the obtainment of the status of international protection (as is the case in the study CAREERS).

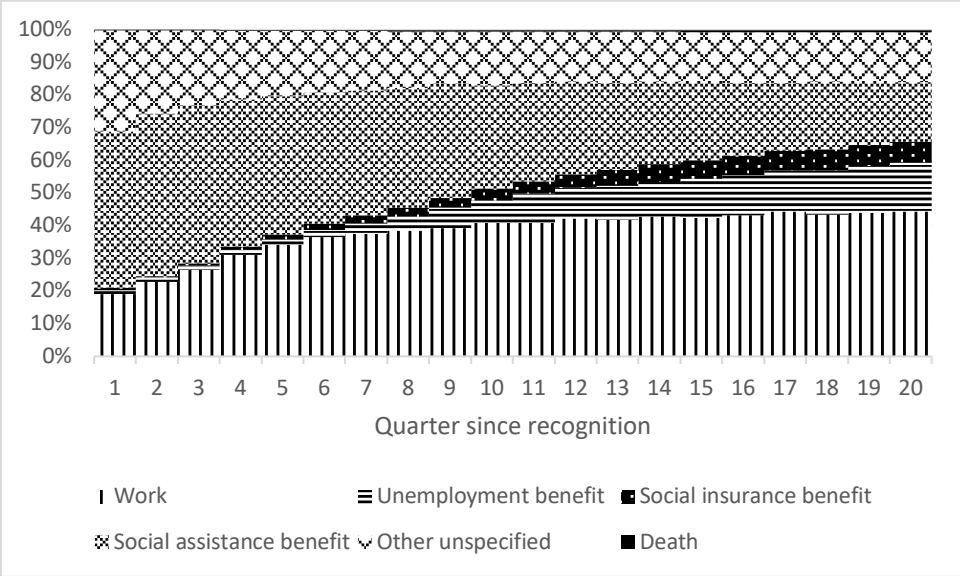


*Figure B1: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the five years following the obtainment of a status of international protection in the period **2001–2006** (n=2,018)*

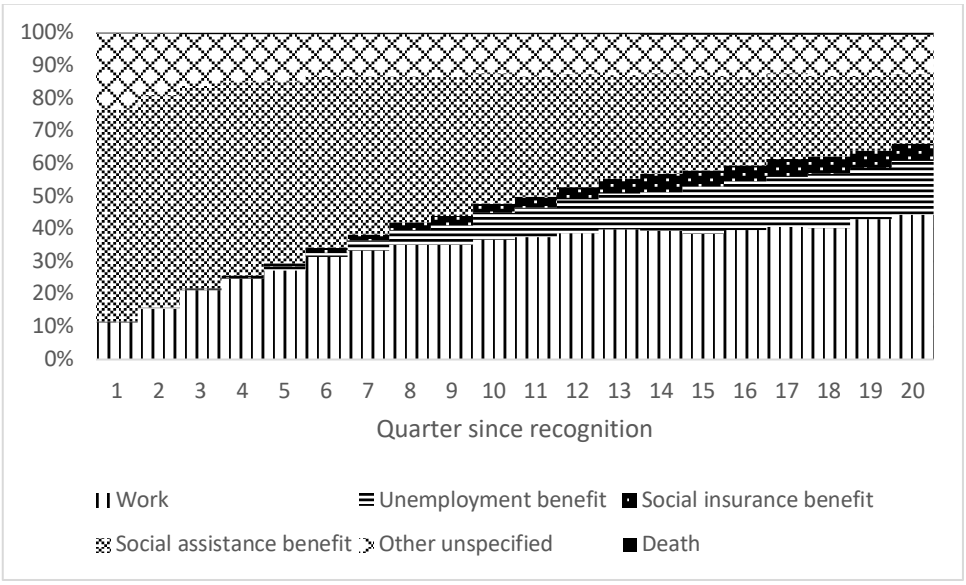


*Figure B2: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the five years following the obtainment of a status of international protection in the period **2007–2009** (n=2,018)*

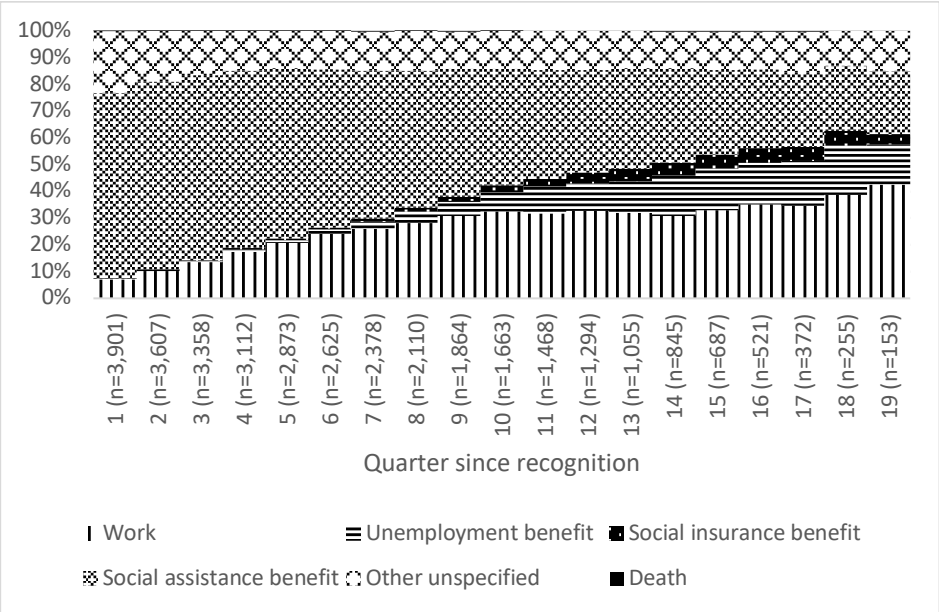


*Figure B3: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the five years following the obtainment of a status of international protection in the period **2010–2014** (changing sample)*

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

*Table C1: Distribution of socio-economic positions in the five years after the obtainment of the status of international protection by period*

| Granted international protection in the years 2001-2006 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Quarter** | **Work** | **Unemployment benefit** | **Social insurance benefit** | **Social assistance benefit** | **Other unspecified** | **Death** | **Total** | **n** |
| 1 | 19.2 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 47.9 | 31.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 2 | 22.9 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 49.7 | 25.6 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 3 | 26.6 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 48.4 | 22.9 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 4 | 31.1 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 45.2 | 21.0 | 0.2 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 5 | 34.2 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 42.3 | 20.1 | 0.3 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 6 | 36.6 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 40.2 | 18.7 | 0.4 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 7 | 37.5 | 3.2 | 2.5 | 38.4 | 18.1 | 0.4 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 8 | 38.6 | 4.3 | 2.6 | 36.8 | 17.3 | 0.4 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 9 | 39.4 | 6.1 | 3.1 | 35.0 | 15.9 | 0.5 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 10 | 40.9 | 6.8 | 3.8 | 31.5 | 16.6 | 0.5 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 11 | 40.8 | 9.1 | 3.8 | 30.2 | 15.7 | 0.5 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 12 | 42.2 | 9.4 | 4.3 | 28.4 | 15.2 | 0.6 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 13 | 41.8 | 10.5 | 4.8 | 26.7 | 15.7 | 0.6 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 14 | 42.9 | 10.6 | 5.4 | 25.4 | 15.3 | 0.6 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 15 | 42.5 | 11.8 | 5.8 | 24.2 | 15.0 | 0.6 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 16 | 43.2 | 12.4 | 5.8 | 22.4 | 15.6 | 0.6 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 17 | 44.5 | 12.5 | 6.0 | 21.0 | 15.5 | 0.6 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 18 | 43.5 | 13.6 | 6.3 | 20.8 | 15.1 | 0.7 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 19 | 44.0 | 14.4 | 6.4 | 19.6 | 14.9 | 0.7 | 100 | 2,018 |
| 20 | 44.3 | 15.1 | 6.3 | 18.3 | 15.3 | 0.7 | 100 | 2,018 |
| **Granted international protection in the years 2007–2009** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quarter** | **Work** | **Unemployment benefit** | **Social insurance benefit** | **Social assistance benefit** | **Other unspecified** | **Death** | **Total** | **n** |
| 1 | 11.4 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 65.0 | 23.4 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 2 | 15.6 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 65.2 | 18.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 3 | 21.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 61.9 | 16.1 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 4 | 24.7 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 59.3 | 14.7 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 5 | 27.4 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 55.7 | 14.5 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 6 | 31.4 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 52.9 | 12.8 | 0.2 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 7 | 33.3 | 3.2 | 1.8 | 48.6 | 12.9 | 0.3 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 8 | 35.2 | 4.4 | 2.4 | 44.7 | 13.0 | 0.3 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 9 | 35.2 | 5.8 | 3.0 | 42.6 | 13.1 | 0.3 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 10 | 36.7 | 8.4 | 2.7 | 39.9 | 12.0 | 0.3 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 11 | 37.5 | 9.1 | 3.4 | 36.8 | 12.8 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 12 | 38.6 | 10.5 | 3.7 | 34.7 | 12.2 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 13 | 39.9 | 11.0 | 4.5 | 31.9 | 12.5 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 14 | 39.5 | 11.8 | 5.6 | 30.7 | 11.9 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 15 | 38.5 | 14.4 | 4.9 | 29.1 | 12.7 | 0.4 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 16 | 39.7 | 15.0 | 4.8 | 27.1 | 12.9 | 0.5 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 17 | 40.6 | 15.3 | 5.5 | 26.3 | 11.8 | 0.5 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 18 | 40.3 | 16.6 | 5.4 | 24.7 | 12.6 | 0.5 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 19 | 43.0 | 15.7 | 5.5 | 23.0 | 12.4 | 0.6 | 100 | 1,425 |
| 20 | 44.4 | 16.5 | 5.3 | 21.3 | 11.9 | 0.6 | 100 | 1,425 |
| **Granted international protection in the years 2010–2014** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quarter** | **Work** | **Unemployment benefit** | **Social insurance benefit** | **Social assistance benefit** | **Other unspecified** | **Death** | **Total** | **n** |
| 1 | 7.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 69.1 | 23.2 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,901 |
| 2 | 10.2 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 70.2 | 18.9 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,607 |
| 3 | 13.6 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 69.1 | 16.5 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,358 |
| 4 | 17.5 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 66.5 | 14.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 3,112 |
| 5 | 20.8 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 63.7 | 13.9 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,873 |
| 6 | 24.0 | 1.7 | 0.7 | 59.3 | 14.2 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,625 |
| 7 | 26.1 | 2.7 | 1.1 | 55.2 | 14.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,378 |
| 8 | 28.3 | 4.1 | 1.5 | 51.2 | 14.8 | 0.1 | 100 | 2,110 |
| 9 | 30.9 | 5.3 | 1.9 | 47.8 | 14.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,864 |
| 10 | 32.6 | 7.1 | 2.6 | 43.5 | 14.1 | 0.1 | 100 | 1,663 |
| 11 | 31.8 | 10.0 | 2.9 | 40.6 | 14.7 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,468 |
| 12 | 32.6 | 10.4 | 4.0 | 38.4 | 14.6 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,294 |
| 13 | 31.9 | 11.9 | 4.8 | 37.5 | 13.8 | 0.0 | 100 | 1,055 |
| 14 | 30.8 | 15.0 | 5.0 | 35.4 | 13.7 | 0.1 | 100 | 845 |
| 15 | 32.9 | 15.6 | 5.4 | 31.4 | 14.4 | 0.3 | 100 | 687 |
| 16 | 35.1 | 15.6 | 5.6 | 29.4 | 14.2 | 0.2 | 100 | 521 |
| 17 | 34.7 | 16.7 | 5.4 | 27.7 | 15.3 | 0.3 | 100 | 372 |
| 18 | 38.8 | 18.4 | 5.5 | 24.3 | 12.9 | 0.0 | 100 | 255 |
| 19 | 42.5 | 15.0 | 3.9 | 23.5 | 15.0 | 0.0 | 100 | 153 |

## 9.3. Annex C: Comparison of the labour market participation share since arrival and from the quarter after recognition on

Annex C shows that the general pattern in terms of labour market participation is rather similar whether one looks to the labour market situation since arrival or since the quarter after recognition. The labour market situation since the quarter of recognition starts at a later point of the career. However, when considering the labour market situation since the quarter after recognition, the starting point is much later (around quarter 11) for the 2001–2006 cohort than for the two other cohorts.

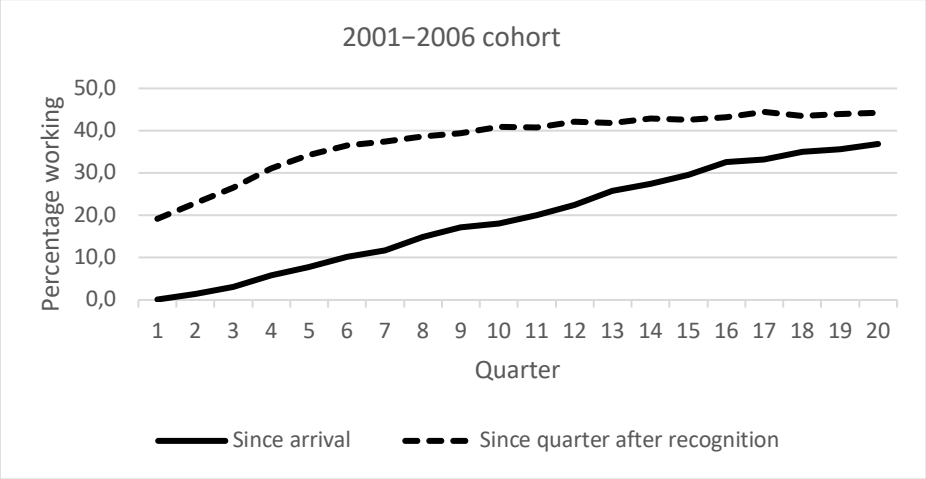


*Figure C1: Quarterly labour market participation rate over five years since arrival and since the quarter after recognition for the 2001–2006 cohort*

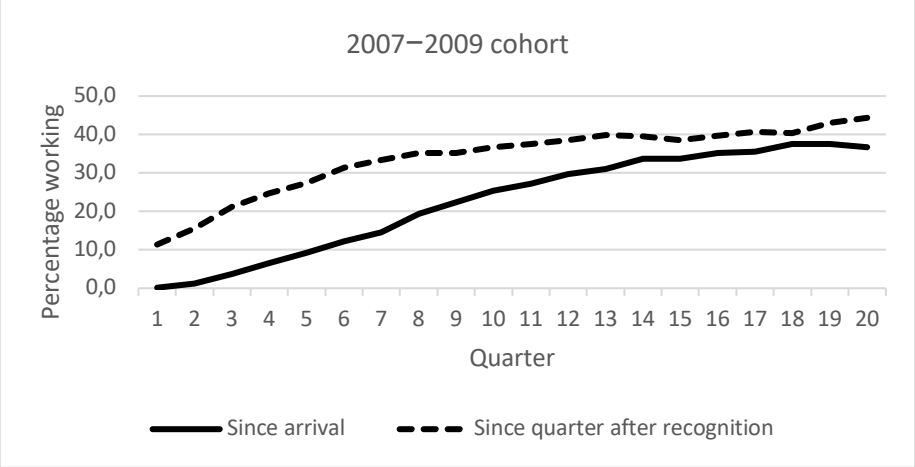


*Figure C2: Quarterly labour market participation rate over five years since arrival and since the quarter after recognition for the 2007–2009 cohort*

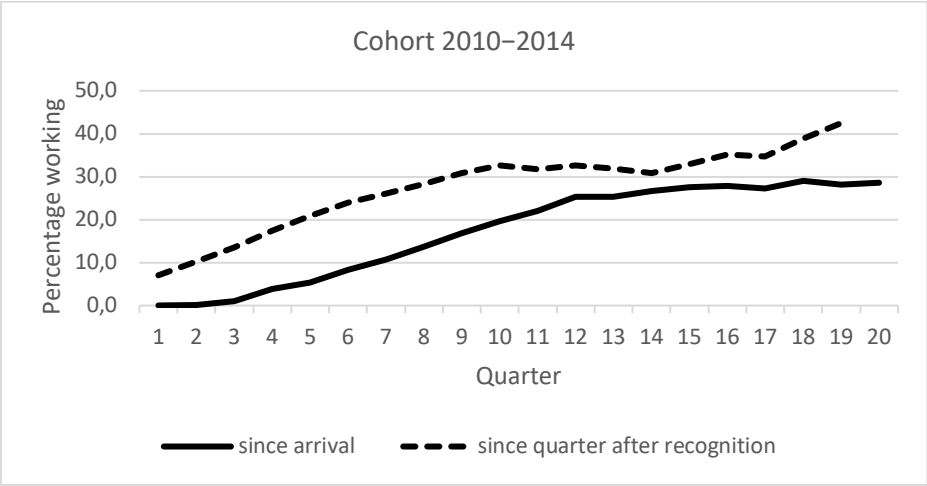


*Figure C3: Quarterly labour market participation rate over five years since arrival and since the quarter after recognition for the 2010−2014 cohort*

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

## 9.4. Annex D: Quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions over 15 years since arrival in Belgium

Figure D1 and D2 represent the same information in two different ways. They present partly the same information as figure 6a for the 2001–2006 cohort. Figure 6a show the quarterly distribution of socio-economic positions for five years, whereas the figures D1 and D2 present the yearly distribution of socio-economic positions over 15 years for those we observe during fifteen years. We observe every individual of the 2001–2006 cohort at least 8 years. Figure D2 shows more clearly the tendencies over time for each of the socio-economic positions by showing how the share of people with a certain socio-economic position evolves over time, whereas figure D1 gives a better general overview on the distribution in each year.

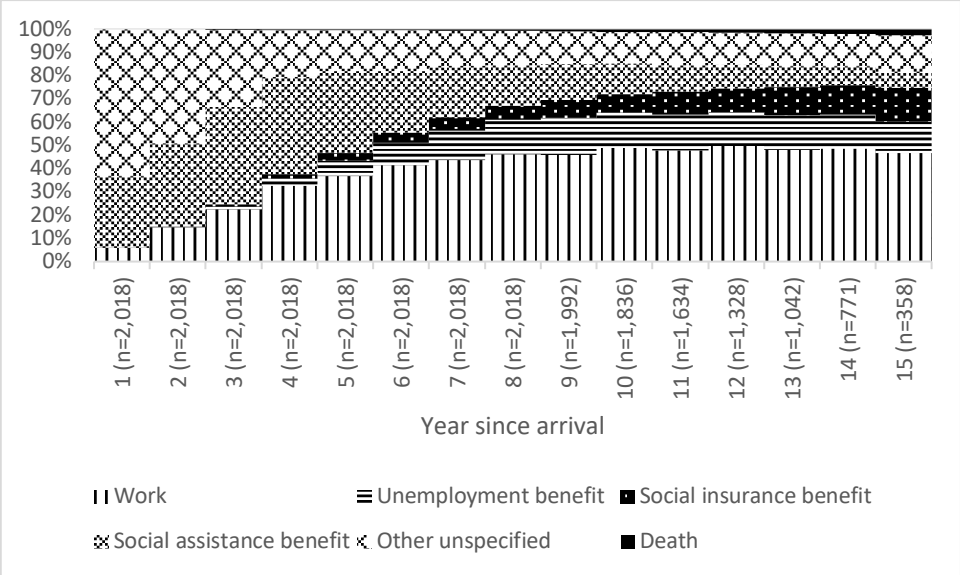


*Figure D1: Quarterly distribution of the socio-economic positions over the fifteen years following their arrival for individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2006 (varying number of individuals)*
*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

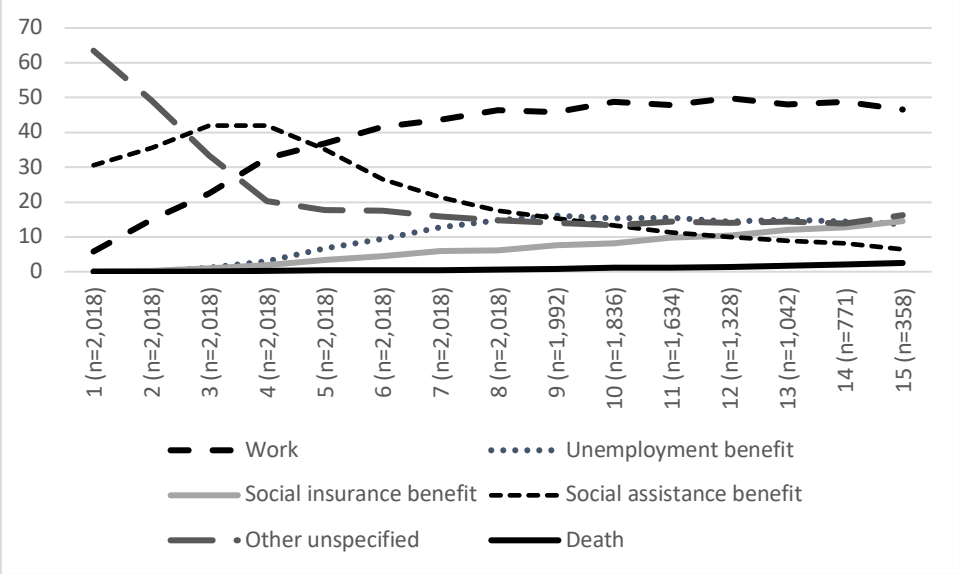


*Figure D2: Evolution of the share of the individuals in various socio-economic positions over the five years following their arrival for individuals who obtained a status of international protection in the period 2001–2006 (varying number of individuals)*

*Source: National register & Data warehouse labour market and social protection, calculations by authors*

The share working still increases from 37% in year five to 49% in year ten. However, this increase in the share working is less pronounced than in the first five years after arrival. From the 10th until the 15th year after arrival, the share working stabilises just below the 50%. Regarding unemployment, figures D1 and D2 show, for the period covering five to 10 years after arrival that the share more or less doubles (up to 15% in year 10). This is a much slower increase than in the first five years. From year 10 to 15 the share of unemployed slightly decreases. Social assistance uptake decreases further

# SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CAREERS OF PEOPLE GRANTED INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN BELGIUM, 2001-2014

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Arriving in a new country and finding a job may be a daunting task. This is all the more true for refugees, who often have to leave their country without being able to carefully prepare their departure, and spend months, or years, waiting for their asylum request to be processed. Even after obtaining the status of refugee, finding a job remains a serious difficulty. This report is based on linked administrative longitudinal data from the National Register and the Data Warehouse Labour Market and Social Protection and studies the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries of international protection (which can either be a refugee status or subsidiary protection) in Belgium during the period 2001-2014 (36,540 persons). We compare cohorts of people that were granted international protection in the periods 2001–2006, 2007–2009 and 2010–2014, to evaluate whether the labour market participation of more recent cohorts improved relative to earlier cohorts.

Five years after being granted international protection, 37% of the 2001–2006 and the 2007–2009 cohort was working. For the 2010–2014 cohort this share was only 29%, indicating a slightly downward trend in access to employment among refugees. While this share is relatively low, it continues to increase after 5 years. By means of a comparison: after 10 years, about 50% of the people who obtained an international protection status in the period 2001–2006 was working. The share of people who ever worked is also much higher than the share of people working at some point. For instance, 81% of the 2001–2006 cohort has worked at least during one period by 31 December 2014. Hence, the majority of the people has worked (in a formal job) at one stage during their stay, despite the fact that the population obtaining international protection is a vulnerable group. However, first and later employment episodes last on average less than one year, pointing to rather short labour market episodes and high employment instability. Hence, durable labour market integration remains a point of concern.

Changes in the labour legislation for asylum seekers and the economic crisis in 2009 may explain part of the variations in labour market outcomes for the successive cohorts, but this question requires further research to fully understand these trends.

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**Disclaimer**
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