

## Possibilities for war refugees to enter the labour market based on their qualifications

In relation to the need to integrate a large number of Ukrainians who have arrived in Estonia into our labour market, situations may occur in which awarders of profession are asked for information on the conditions for working in Estonia.

Their inclusion in the labour market is at the highest possible level, taking into account that the qualifications and skills of those entering the market is in the interests of both parties (both Estonian society and the arrived war refugees). It is also important to make taking up work as smooth and quick as possible.

The prerequisite for fulfilling these objectives is to give people accurate and relevant information about the ways of entering the labour market.

Here are some of the most important points.

### Unregulated professions

Foreign citizens can work without a professional certificate in unregulated professions, i.e. professions for which the law does not prescribe qualification requirements or require a professional certificate.

Therefore, access to **unregulated professions** (e.g. beauticians, hospital caregivers, chefs, gardeners, construction workers) **in the labour market is free**. Hiring is decided by employers and applying for a profession is not necessary.

### Regulated professions

There are several fields and occupations in Estonia that are restricted by requirements for specific qualifications and professional experience, i.e. **regulated professions**. These are medical professionals, teachers, responsible persons in construction (e.g. responsible construction managers, civil engineers), railway workers, etc.

If a person who has obtained qualifications abroad wishes to work in a regulated profession, they have to go through the process of **recognition**. Recognition means that a **competent authority** appointed by the state **assesses** the compliance of the qualification with domestic or international requirements for education and professional experience.

As a rule, the competent authority is either the ministry or agency of that specific field that has established the regulation and monitors its compliance. **Awarders of profession are not competent authorities**. A list of regulated professions and competent authorities is available here: <https://harno.ee/arenguvoimalused-ja-kvalifikatsioonid/valisriigi-kvalifikatsioonide-tunnustamine/kutsealane>.

Therefore, in regulated professions where a professional certificate is required by law as a prerequisite for employment, foreign citizens do not need to apply for a professional certificate – **completing the recognition process is enough**.

It is also possible to work in unregulated positions in regulated professions without undergoing the recognition process. For example, a legal adviser does not have to be entered into the list of the Bar Association, a civil engineer can work without being a person responsible, a speech therapist can work in a private practice, etc. It is also possible to enter into short-term agreements, in which case meeting the qualification requirements to the full extent is not obligatory.

### Applying for a profession

Foreign citizens can also **apply for a profession**, if they wish to do so. This requires that all the prerequisites for applying for a profession have been met (including the language requirement) and that the awarder of the profession has the ability to assess documents issued abroad which prove the fulfilment of the prerequisites.

**The Estonian ENIC/NARIC** helps to assess foreign higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education (academic degrees, diplomas, certificates, etc.) and determine the correspondence of qualifications to the Estonian education system and makes recognition proposals.

Assessing the qualifications of **undocumented refugees** and the issuing of relevant documents is regulated in Estonia. The Estonian ENIC/NARIC, which issues a bilingual document '**Educational Background Paper**' prepares them as a result of assessment.

**More information with references** to legislation and the application form is available on the website of the Education and Youth Board in Estonian and English: <https://www.harno.ee/en/development-and-qualifications/qualifications/academic-recognition#recognition-of-refug>.

Considering the lack of a skilled workforce in nearly all fields and the difficult situation of war refugees, we ask people to fully support the employment of Ukrainians who have arrived in Estonia. In addition to sharing the formal conditions for entering into the labour market, please share other sectoral information which could contribute to getting them employed as quickly and smoothly as possible.

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