



Even without an employment contract, you can now come to Germany to look for work in highly skilled areas for a total of six months | Photo: picture-alliance/dpa/C. Schmidt

Things seem to be moving in a positive direction for Syrians, however. The proportion receiving state benefits is lower than last year: in March 2020 it was close to 70%. Since then, many have got jobs as doctors – according to the German Medical Association, Syrians now make up the largest group among foreign doctors, with 4,970 employed throughout the country last year

As of April 2021, about 27% of Syrians in Germany were of working age. Those attending integration courses or professional language courses are not included in unemployment figures but are counted as "underemployed". But benefits are also paid to those who earn so little that they cannot support themselves on their income

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### Unemployment despite high protection rate

The figures from the Federal Employment Agency show that we still have a lot to do in the area of integration," German interior minister Annalena Baerbock, spokeswoman for the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, Mathias Middelberg, told the *dpa* news agency

Middelberg pointed out that the proportion of Syrians receiving state benefits remained high *in spite* of their relatively good chances of being granted protection in Germany. In other words, he suggested, having secure status does not lead to better integration into the labor market

More should be done to help "those already living here who are entitled to protection ... especially in the area of labor market integration, ... instead of providing incentives for low-skilled and unskilled immigration, like the Greens want," Middelberg added

### Many in low-pay jobs

One reason for the relatively high proportion of Syrians receiving benefits, according to a study done by the Employment Agency last year, is that refugees often lack documents with formal qualifications and are employed in areas with "pay in the lower pay range." According to the agency, a quarter of Syrian refugees had attended universities or vocational training institutions, and 16% had a degree. Among Syrians who were born in Germany, however, four-fifths had vocational or academic degrees

In general, we see that the unemployment rate among refugees is always particularly high in the first years of residence," said Panu Poutvaara, a member of the German Expert Council on Integration and Migration



For most Syrians who arrived in Germany as children, returning to Syria to live is out of the question | Photo : Picture-alliance/dpa/S.Willnow