General Information and Educational Attainment

- Population (2017): 18.6 Million
- Population by age group (2017): 0-24 years: 51.1 % / 25-54 years: 39.2 % / 55 and older: 9.6 %
- Population aged 15-24 years (2017): 3.63 million
- Illiteracy rate (2015): 13.6 %
- Primary school enrolment ratio (2013): 63.2 %
- Secondary school (2013):
  - Secondary school enrolment ratio: 45.5 %
  - Secondary school graduation ration: 50.5 %
- Vocational education enrolment ratio (2011): 16 % per age cohort
- Tertiary school enrolment ratio (2013): 45.5 %
- Tertiary school graduation ration: 50.5 %
- Expenditure on education (2011): 5.1 % of GDP
- Languages: Arabic, widely spoken foreign languages: English and French

Asylum applicants in the EU Member States

- Asylum applications in 2017: ca. 102,400 first time applicants (2016: 334,900)
- EU Countries with the most asylum applications in 2017: Germany (48 %), Greece (15 %), Austria (7 %)
- Asylum recognition rate in 2017: 94 % (2016: 98 %)

Education System

- **History**: French origin of the education system
- **Structure**: highly centralised education system with uniform state curricula
- **State training programs**: initial vocational training in the field of agriculture, trade and industry at technical secondary schools; Requirement: 9-year compulsory education; Duration: 3 years (mostly theoretical learning, depending on profession practice is provided in workshops and labs; then specialisation at technical intermediate institutes is possible; Duration: 2 years (including min. 1-month practical training in a company)
- **No. of training occupations**: ca. 20 at technical secondary schools (2013/2014)
- **Non-state training programs**: Since 2011, significant increase in the number of private institutes, some of which are accredited by state; furthermore, training programs provided by aid organisations (UNRWA, UNHCR, UNESCO, IRC etc.) and informal apprenticeship training ( „learning by doing“)
Further information available in the country profile Syria at www.bq-portal.de

Particularities of the Education System

- The Syrian education system was regarded as one of the best systems in the Middle East until the outbreak of the civil war in 2011. Due to the civil war, the education system is currently (end 2018) very limited in many regions.
- All curricula, textbooks and examinations for general education are prepared by the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Higher Education. Private schools are also regularly inspected by the Ministry of Education.
- In addition to the technical secondary schools, which are subordinated to the Ministry of Education, numerous ministries run their own or subordinated vocational training centres.
- Men and women were more or less equally involved in the education system at all levels. In the labour market, however, women accounted for only a small share.

Syria’s (vocational) education system
(since 1978)
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational education</strong></td>
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<td><strong>General education</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Post-secondary, non-tertiary education</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tertiary education</strong></td>
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"At Last I’ve Reached my Goal: Employment as a Qualified Joiner"

Fares Schammas from Syria applied for asylum in Germany in 2001. Having initially done a lot of temporary casual jobs, since 2015 he has been able to work as a joiner, the occupation in which he trained.

A life without wood is unimaginable for Fares Schammas, now aged 40 and originally from Syria. His nostrils have been used to the smell of freshly planed wood since early childhood. In his home country, his family ran three joinery businesses, and he and his seven brothers all learned the trade. Until the age of 26, Fares worked for his father’s company, which he helped to establish.

When he was forced to leave Syria as quickly as possible in 2001, Fares Schammas applied for asylum in Germany. This was a pragmatic decision on his part given the fact that one of his brothers was already living here. Upon his arrival in Germany, he was then confronted with a sobering experience for such a passionate joiner. "I didn’t have a work permit for the first few years I was here, and I also had to learn German from scratch." This meant that for many years Fares was forced to earn a living by doing casual and temporary jobs including stints as a washer up and caretaker. He also worked as a carpenter’s assistant. "That was not really my true occupation, but it was enjoyable because it had to do with wood," stresses Fares Schammas.

He found it relatively easy to learn German. "I then tried to find work as a joiner, but it was difficult without a journeyman certificate." But Fares refused to let things get him down. "Everything here was better than the life I had before."

On the advice of his boss at the carpentry workshop at the time, he contacted the chambers of crafts and trades in Stuttgart and Mannheim in 2006. The process, however, did not get going until 2012. Following the entry into force of the new Recognition Act, the Mannheim Chamber of Crafts and Trades got in touch with him, and Fares subsequently submitted an application for recognition.

Nevertheless, he did not have sufficient documentation to present a reliable picture of the contents of his training. This was particularly because of the differences which exist between Germany and Syria in areas such as safety regulations. However, following an interview, the experts at the chamber were of the view that he was in possession of the essential knowledge required in the occupation of joiner. For this reason, he was offered a skills analysis funded via the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) "Prototyping Transfer" Project. This official procedure offers applicants who are unable to produce sufficient written evidence to have their professional competences identified in a practical manner. Fares Schammas took his chance.

In order to achieve full equivalence of his qualification, he had one last hurdle to overcome – adaptation training. Like all joiners from abroad, he had to complete the machine courses for the occupation, which are required because they relate to safety.
The chamber of crafts and trades helped him to secure funding for his adaptation training from the Employment Agency. He subsequently completed a practical placement at the Winnes Joinery in Walldorf and took three machine courses at the training centre of the chamber of crafts and trades. After six months, he had finally successfully concluded his adaptation training and received full recognition at the end of February 2015. "Once again, this was a particularly difficult time. Everything took so long, although I had already learned it all it was just that I couldn't formally prove it," says Fares Schammas in summary.

His patience paid off. "I now have an official German certificate that shows that I can do what a German joiner can do. And Germany is famous all over the world for its craft trades," he laughs. The relief in his face is clear to see.

Fares is now employed as a joiner at RUCHTI GmbH in Offenheim, where he makes shop fittings and trade fair stands. "I love being a joiner and am happy that I can work in my occupation once more. I have a regular working life, and my salary is better too."

**Further success stories at** [www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/en](http://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/en)  
**Find out how you can support your employees in the recognition process in Germany at** [www.bq-portal.de](http://www.bq-portal.de)