

## **Project Summary and first results**

The main aim of this project was to examine the potential and pitfalls of introducing standardized language requirements (CEFR) in the hiring process, specifically in relation to the labour market inclusion of immigrants. Based on a combination of web-scraped data from roughly 85,000 job ads, a vignette study (survey experiment) and expert evaluations (rating study), it addressed two main objectives: The first objective was to examine if language-related discrimination of immigrants is less pronounced among employers who use standardized language requirements compared to those who don't. The second objective was to provide an overview of the share and level of standardized language requirements for different professions and labour market segments, to be able to assess how many employers are currently using standardized requirements and whether the level of these requirements is adequate for different professions.

Our main findings thus far suggest the following: Based on the web-scraped information, we find that the share of employers who set CEFR requirements is substantially smaller than the share of employers who set subjective language requirements. Among those who set CEFR requirements, the share is biggest for jobs within the public sector, most notably for professions within healthcare and education. The set CEFR levels for these professions were rated as adequate in about half of the examined cases within the expert evaluation study. When the set CEFR levels were seen as inadequate, they were more likely to be evaluated as too high by the experts. This held particularly true for certain professions in the healthcare sector, namely healthcare assistants. Moreover, experts recommended setting more differentiated CEFR requirements (e.g. A2 writing, B1 speaking, listening, reading) for a considerable share of ads that currently set flat CEFR requirements (e.g. B1 without further differentiation). Lastly, results of the vignette study indicated that refugee applicants can be seen as more hireable when employers set CEFR requirements, and applicants hold the required certificate. Positive effects of CEFR requirements on applicant evaluations were particularly pronounced when they were introduced alongside further anti-discrimination (EDI) measures within firms.

In sum, there are some indications that CEFR requirements can reduce language-based discrimination on the individual level, yet these effects are immediately contingent upon proper implementation, most notably, the selection of adequate and differentiated CEFR levels to ensure that they don't pose additional hurdles to labour market integration on a more structural level. Moreover, policy makers and employers should contribute in multiple ways to ensure that the responsibility to reduce language-based discrimination is not solely placed upon the shoulders of immigrants by necessitating additional certification.

**Please note that we are still in the process of finalizing the last data analyses. Some results may still change slightly at a later date.**

