



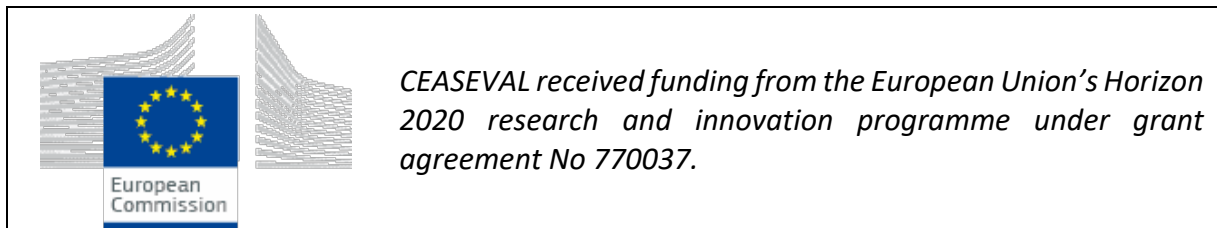
## **Borders and the mobility of migrants in Luxembourg**

**Claudia Paraschivescu, Birte Nienaber and Lucas Oesch**

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**Herausgeberschaft:**

Prof. Birgit Glorius and Dr. Melanie Kintz  
Technische Universität Chemnitz  
Institut für Europäische Studien  
Humangeographie mit Schwerpunkt Europäische Migrationsforschung  
09107 Chemnitz

<http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/europastudien/geographie>

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## Borders and the mobility of migrants in Luxembourg

### Abstract

*This country report sought to explore the border as a site of control and the ways in which it interferes with migrants' (asylum seekers, refugees and rejected asylum seekers) trajectories before, upon and after arrival in Luxembourg. To this end, it explored, through qualitative interviews with a total of 29 state and civil society actors and migrants, as well as ethnographic observation at Findel airport, Luxembourg's only external border, the multiple conceptualisations and experiences of borders. It has identified that the suppression of internal controls within the Schengen area has been accompanied by a surge of controls within the member states, either at the stage of lodging an asylum claim, or at the street level, where migrants can be stopped and searched by police officers. Furthermore, the data showed that the migrants interviewed not only did they experience bordering practices during their interactions with public actors, but they were also subject to bordering during their interactions with private actors from the housing and employment market. The principal finding of this research with regards to the interplay between borders and the mobility of migrants is that cross-border mobility is commonplace, the migrants' mobility practices reflecting the movements of the local population. As such, borders do not represent efficient mechanisms of control which can prevent migrants' mobility trajectories.*

**Keywords:** borders, mobility, asylum seekers, refugees, Schengen Agreement, Dublin Regulation, CEAS, EU, Luxembourg

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. How does this report relate to the broader Work Package and CEASEVAL project**

The overall objective of WP4 is to investigate the functioning of the European Union's internal and external borders in the governance of migrants' mobility.

This report seeks to investigate the border (and the ensuing bordering processes) as a site of control and the ways in which it interferes with asylum seekers', refugees' and rejected asylum seekers' migratory trajectories before and upon arrival in Luxembourg.

### **1.2. Context and research questions**

Specific objectives of WP4 are:

1. To understand the interactions between Schengen and Dublin;
2. To explore the reasoning behind the participants' journeys before and in the Schengen area; and
3. To examine the tensions between the determination of responsibility for assessing asylum claims and the respondents' preferences, choices and trajectories within the Schengen area.

A considerable amount of literature has investigated the issue of borders. According to Walters (2006), there are three imaginings of borders in Europe: the European external frontier, borders as geopolitical and socioeconomic actors and borders as firewalls. Therefore, borders do not always coincide with state frontiers, they are not walls designated to stop trespassers, although fences and walls become more and more common (Collyer and King 2016). Rather, they are dynamic processes which filter peoples' movements through various mechanisms of security (Walters 2006:152).

While border controls are now intensified through various materialities (such as physical frontiers), they have also become prolific in identity politics. Control mechanisms of migration have thus moved from the outskirts of the territory towards its centre, represented by the societal level (Bendixsen 2016:541). To put it differently, borders are temporal, spatial and social and are experienced differently by people depending on their legal status, race, ethnicity, gender, age etc.

In this respect, this research agrees with Newman (2006:148), who argues "borders create (or reflect) difference and constitute the separation line not only between states and geographical spaces, but also between the 'us' and 'them', the 'here' and 'there' and the 'insiders' and 'outsiders'". Therefore, migrants are surrounded by borders in their everyday lives, which are enacted by various individual actors and institutions such as in the housing or labour markets. Throughout this report, the term border will refer to the various mechanisms of control the migrants are subject to in their daily lives.

### **1.3. Methodological considerations**

The research was done in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg between May 2018 and February 2019. Data for this study were collected using in-depth and semi-structured qualitative interviews with institutional actors and 'migrants' (asylum seekers, refugees and rejected asylum seekers) as well as ethnographic observation at Findel airport. Interviews were conducted with the following groups of actors:

1. Institutional actors: a total of 12 interviews with representatives of the Luxembourgish employment agency (ADEM), Police, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, border agents, one public institution, Member of the European Parliament;
2. Civil society actors: a total of two interviews with Caritas and the Luxembourgish Red Cross;
3. Three interviews with project officers from three organisations based in Luxembourg; and
4. Migrants: eight interviews with refugees, three interviews with asylum seekers, one interview with a rejected asylum seeker, as per the table below.

**Table 1 Participant Details**

| Participant pseudonym | Nationality | Age     | Time in Host Country | Gender | Marital Status                                | Multiple Migrations | Considers secondary movement | Date of interview |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|----------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Interview_1           | Iraq        | 23      | 3 years, Dec 2015    | Male   | Single                                        | No                  | No                           | May 2018          |
| Interview_2           | Syria       | 33      | 3 years              | Male   | Married, one child                            | No                  | No                           | May 2018          |
| Interview_3           | Syria       | 22      | 2 (?) years          | Female | Married, one child                            | No                  | No                           | May 2018          |
| Interview_4           | Eritreea    | Mid 30s | A couple of months   | Male   | Married, wife back in Eritreea (out of touch) | Israel              | No                           | May 2018          |
| Interview_5           | Gambia      | 28      | Nov 2013             | Male   | Single                                        | Yes                 |                              | June 2018         |
| Interview_6           | Sudan       | 23      | 8 months June 2018   | Male   | Single                                        | France              | No                           | February 2019     |
| Interview_7           | Syria       | 20      | 2 years              | Male   | Single                                        | No                  | No                           | May 2018          |
| Interview_8           | Syria       | Mid 30s | 3 years              | Male   | Single                                        | Lebanon and Jordan  | No                           | February 2019     |
| Interview_9           | Syria       | Mid 30s | 2 years              | Female | Married, 2 children                           | No                  | No                           | June 2019         |

|              |       |         |              |                    |                     |        |    |               |
|--------------|-------|---------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------|----|---------------|
| Interview_10 | Syria | Mid 20s | May 2018     | Transgender Female | Single              | Turkey | No | June 2018     |
| Interview_11 | Iraq  | 40s     | 3 years 2015 | Male               | Married, 2 children | No     | No | February 2019 |
| Interview_12 | Syria | Mid 20s | 4 years 2015 | Female             | Single, one child   | No     | No | July 2019     |

The data was collected during interviews carried out in both French and English which were recorded and then transcribed in the original language of the interview. The quotations used in the report have been translated into English. Moreover, ethnographic observation at the FINDEL airport, the only external border of the Duchy of Luxembourg, was conducted.

The main challenges during the research consisted of recruiting participants. Snowballing was not always effective. For example, one participant, when asked whether any of their friends might be available to answer some questions, said that *“the people who I know are disappointed as they have already participated in interviews but don't feel something changed”* (Interview\_2).

Another challenge encountered was doing ethnographic observation in the airport. During one of the ethnographic visits, the researcher observed a group of rejected asylum seekers who were returned to their countries of origin. Due to the high level of security, the researcher needed to be escorted by an authority figure. This might have influenced migrants' behaviours, might make them feel uneasy and ultimately may alter their attitude towards the researcher as a researcher/participant observant. Fortunately, the police agent accompanying the researcher kindly agreed to wear civilian clothes rather than a police uniform and he was discrete most of the time, not interfering with the group of migrants/the researcher. However, his authority was obvious at moments of security checks, when he did not have to show a passport, but a badge.

Moreover, carrying a notebook, taking notes, might have also influenced migrant's behaviours. Whilst queuing at the check-in desk with the migrants, the investigator wrote something in their notebook, and one of the friends accompanying an Iraqi returnee told them *‘She is observing you!’*.

A limitation of this research is represented by the observation of the interaction between borders and the mobility of asylum seekers, which was impossible to achieve because of the low numbers of asylum seekers arriving into Luxembourg via air borders.



## **2. The legal national framework for the bordering of asylum-seekers and refugees**

### **2.1. Introduction of the chapter**

This chapter firstly contextualises the national legislative framework with regards to the reception of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their housing and employment rights. Secondly, it sheds light on the trajectories of the asylum seekers and refugees' interviewed before and after arriving in Luxembourg, as well as the control they are subject to once they arrive in Luxembourg, at the air border. It then examines the bordering practices to which they are subject in Luxembourg.

### **2.2. Asylum legislation**

The latest legislation contextualising the asylum package in Luxembourg was introduced in 2015, transposing two European directives into national law, Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures regarding the granting and withdrawing of international protection, and Directive 2013/33/EU detailing the standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Under this law, asylum seekers can apply for a work permit if no decision has been made on their application within six months of lodging their application. Regarding the deadline for the review of asylum applications, the time frame is set at six months and can be extended under certain conditions, to 21 months. A clear distinction is also made between the three stages of the asylum application process, these being the filing of the application for international protection, the registration of the application and finally the lodging of the application (European Migration Network 2015).

As far as the air border is concerned, asylum applications made with a border agent of the Central Unit of the Grand Ducal Airport Police should be registered six days after they have been filed. Information on the asylum process is made available to asylum seekers at the external border.

The total number of asylum applications in Luxembourg in 2018 was of 2.205 (Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes 2018). 978 people received the refugee status, while 78 received subsidiary protection, and 361 applications were rejected. The top five nationalities of asylum seekers were:

1. 392 Eritreans
2. 227 Syrians
3. 196 Iraqis
4. 176 Afghans
5. 141 Georgians

Asylum seekers in Luxembourg are entitled to accommodation, food and an allowance, which varies according to the number of family members and whether they are provided with meals. For example, a single asylum seeker receives a monthly allowance of 26,27€ if food is provided to them in the shelter they live in. If they need to purchase food, the monthly allowance is of 205€. (Ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région 2018).

Turning now to refugees' access to employment, they (as well as other people from Luxembourg) are entitled to a social revenue (REVIS), calculated on the basis of the household size and income. One of the conditions to maintain the benefit is for people to be actively seeking employment and be aged 25 years or older. This means that they need to register with the employment agency, and refugees younger than this do not qualify.

Given the raising number of refugees registered with ADEM (850 in 2018), the Refugees unit opened in 2016 within the employment agency. It aims at matching beneficiaries of international protection in

Luxembourg with job vacancies listed within the agency. This is done by providing extra advice to the employment advisors dealing with refugees, as well as organising professional events for refugees, such as 'speed dating' with companies and mock job interviews. Refugees are encouraged to apply for traineeships in order to have some professional experience from Luxembourg on their Curriculum Vitæ (CV), which is seen as a way to increase their employability. Talking about the significance of Luxembourgish work experience, Thierry Hirsch<sup>1</sup>, the head of the Refugees Unit, commented on the availability of professional internships for refugees and other residents alike:

*What ADEM offers is assistance and support measures. People from the age of 30, for example, have the possibility to complete a work internship of a duration of not more than 6 weeks or a maximum duration of 9 weeks if the person holds at least a Bachelors degree and the position is connected the field of study. It's an internship that doesn't cost the company anything and ADEM pays the intern a compensation. Therefore, it's a very good way for the companies to find out if a candidate is suitable or not. There is also a special contract for persons under the age of 30, the CIE contract (Contract for professional integration). It's a contract for a duration of 12 months where half of the salary is paid by ADEM. There is, as well, a similar contract for people from the age of 45. (Thierry Hirsch, ADEM)*

While most support refugees can obtain from ADEM is available to all residents from Luxembourg, refugees receive tailored support for the development of their professional projects. This initiative aims at supporting refugees who are unable to find employment to consider other sectors.

As such, refugees do not encounter any administrative barriers in their access to the labour market. In contrast, in order to have access to employment, asylum seekers need to request a temporary work authorisation (AOT) six months after having lodged their asylum application, authorisation which is renewed every six months. The final decision on whether the work authorisation is granted belongs to the Immigration Unit within the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. Commenting on the complicated administrative process surrounding the application for a temporary work authorisation, an Employment officer from Caritas concluded that the numbers of asylum seekers in work are relatively low. In the below comment, she described the administrative process that asylum seekers are subject to, which decreases their chances of finding a job:

*Yes, there are some people [who find employment], but it is rather unusual. It's rare because the administrative procedures are very complicated. Thus, when they find an employer who is willing to hire them, the employer has to declare the post to ADEM. But first the employment is offered to unemployed persons, to Europeans, to Non-Europeans, and only after that if nobody corresponds to the needs of the job, the offer it is made available to asylum seekers. Therefore, imagine for example a position as a cook. There are plenty of unemployed persons who look for a position as cook. So, in this case ADEM can refuse and say: No, no, no. They sent fifteen candidates who are corresponding to the job profile. So, you have to be among those 15 candidates. Often, [the asylum seekers] create work places for others because they look for work and the employer launches the process. But in the end ADEM sends them registered unemployed persons. So,*

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<sup>1</sup> The referenced respondents have agreed to be named.

*they created jobs, but not for themselves. It happens from time to time [that asylum seekers get a job], but it has to be a business segment with low-level-jobs or an over qualification. (Employment officer, CARITAS)*

If we now turn to the housing situation, while waiting for their refugee status, asylum seekers live in a variety of accommodation structures, such as first reception centres, transit and temporary accommodation. The transient character of the accommodation options can represent an obstacle to their social integration, as the feeling of place which can enhance their belonging to the locality in which they live is undermined by the frequent need to move.

*In my opinion it is difficult for people to integrate [if they live in] temporary accommodation. I think (...) that it is a lot easier as soon as they are settled in a municipality and they can live their lives like all the others who live around them. As long as they are in a collective accommodation, it is complicated. (Institution)*

There are three categories of shelters to which asylum seekers have access, depending on the status of their application. The Luxembourg Reception and Integration Agency (OLAI) has responsibility for the shelters, which are managed either by OLAI itself, the Luxembourgish Red Cross or Caritas. Stage one accommodation is in the first reception shelter called 'Logopédie' (as the building was formerly used for speech therapy purposes) in Strassen, a town neighbouring Luxembourg city. There, asylum seekers spend the night before lodging their application at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. They are then moved to the stage two shelter in the city of Mersch, while they are having their health checks done. Here, asylum seekers start to take integration classes on Luxembourgish culture or language classes. Finally, asylum seekers are transferred to stage three shelters, where, in theory, they can stay until their application is processed. As such, there are no shelters directly aimed at the refugee population, since, once they have obtained their status, they enter the 'resident population' group. However, due to housing shortage and the lack of housing affordability, refugees often prolong their stay in the shelters initially intended for asylum seekers, as detailed below in an interview with an institution:

*For the beneficiaries of international protection [there is no] specific accommodation. (...) Only for asylum seekers. But there are, nevertheless, beneficiaries of international protection who live in [these] accommodations. (...) After all the beneficiaries of international protection are normal residents. Therefore, they can live in social housing or wherever. (...) But they also stay in [these] structures. (...) Actually, more than half of the inhabitants in [these] accommodations are beneficiaries of international protection and not asylum seekers. (...) Keeping the housing situation in Luxembourg in mind, there are people who obtain the status of international protection and who do not find housing, although they have access to social welfare like all the other residents. It is complicated to find accommodation without a high income. As a consequence, in [these] structures, more than 50% of the inhabitants are beneficiaries of international protection. (Institution)*

### **2.3. Trajectories and border control**

Turning now to evidence regarding the trajectories taken by asylum seekers before arriving in Luxembourg, most of them arrive in Luxembourg by bus and train.

Asylum seekers from the Balkans tend to arrive to Luxembourg by bus. They enter Schengen on a three months tourist visa, and in Luxembourg they apply for asylum:

*[S]ince the visa liberalization, a lot of people from the Balkans come by bus in a totally legal manner. They could stay for three months, but they apply for asylum for accommodation purposes, and some of them work illegally. (Asylum Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

Other asylum seekers (from Syria or Iraq) mostly come to Luxembourg by train via Brussels or Paris, but also Germany. In such cases, the police from the train station calls the foreign police.

For example, an Iraqi refugee who arrived in Luxembourg in December 2015, refers to his long journey to Luxembourg, which typifies the migratory routes for most respondents:

*Respondent: I started from Turkey. Iraq-Turkey*

*Interviewer: How long were you in Turkey for?*

*Respondent: Like two days in Turkey. And then I went to Greece, to the island of (...). And then from the island we went to Macedonia, and from Macedonia we went to Serbia. Yeah, it is long trip. Serbia to Croatia, Croatia to Slovenia. Slovenia to Austria and we arrived to Germany. Then in Germany I heard about Luxembourg. (Interview\_1)*

Some participants stop over in Turkey for a period of time which can vary from a few months to a couple of years, time during which they work illegally in various sectors such as tourism, agriculture, construction or real estate. Finally, very low number of asylum seekers enter the country via the external border, by plane from Istanbul (direct flight with Turkish Airlines).

The only external border of Luxembourg is situated at Findel airport, where the border police operate. The flights from outside of the European Union landing at Findel airport, in Luxembourg, are charter flights from Northern Africa and Turkish Airlines flights from Istanbul. The Turkish flight is the only one which, based on a risk analysis done following data from FRONTEX, is a 'vol à risque'. It is also the only flight which carries passengers likely to claim asylum in Luxembourg, although the numbers are low (in 2017, seven people claimed asylum at the airport). Commenting on the risk factor of the flight, the Head of the Border control unit at the airport, details the reasons for this:

*Istanbul is a big airport or a hub, it is not a final destination, but Turkish Airlines bring passengers from Asia and Africa to Istanbul and distribute them on to Europe. As such, passengers from Asia and Africa take a connection flight in Istanbul and come to Luxembourg. These passengers are different from the tourists who take the plane to Djerba. They go on holiday and come back. Most of these people live in the Great Region, are Europeans, but also third country nationals who have a residency permit, come here to go to Djerba for holidays. There are not many problems with these people. But the people who come from Istanbul are either Europeans who return from Asia or Africa, or third country nationals in possession of a visa and who we need to check differently from the people from the Great Region who go on holiday. (Head of the Border control unit, Findel Airport)*

The comment above illustrates the existence of a two-tier control mechanism which operates according to the passengers' nationality. As such, the types of control differ greatly depending on the flight concerned. More precisely, the passengers on the Turkish Airlines flight are subject to more checks than the tourists returning from Northern Africa. All passengers and their documents are thoroughly checked in the data bases and one border agent is present in order to monitor and flank the passengers.

Turning now to the procedure in place at the airport for dealing with asylum seekers, when an individual says that they wish to claim asylum, the border agents call the hotline of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The asylum seeker is then fingerprinted and their fingerprints are checked against the EURODAC database. Finally, they are taken to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The border agents met at the airport claimed that some people decide to claim asylum when they realise that they cannot get into Luxembourg because of fake documents.

With regards to the procedures for evaluating the applicants' status, the border agents are not allowed to refuse one's asylum claim and their entry on Luxembourgish soil, even if the concerned individual does not say the word 'asylum':

*(...) this person does not need to say asylum application, if the border agent is under the impression that this person needs protection, the border agent is not allowed to reject them. (Head of the Border control unit, Findel Airport)*

Only two respondents, who had a work visa and a family reunification visa, arrived in Luxembourg by plane and did not report any incidents during the border crossings. Talking about her journey, a Syrian female refugee, coming to Luxembourg to join her husband, said: "I got to Lebanon, then to Turkey, then by plane to Lux. [with a visa]. I stayed in Turkey 3 hours transit and I came to Lux" (Interview\_3).

#### **2.4. Bordering practices**

Once in Luxembourg, asylum seekers are directed to the so-called 'Logopédie' first reception shelter, by contacts, random strangers or the police. After they spend the night in the shelter, they are shuttled to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, where they start the asylum application process. The quote below from an interview with the Asylum Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs illustrates the process:

*Applying for asylum consists of three stages: the filing, registration and lodging of the application. [The asylum seekers] are seen by the police for the lodging of the application. Everything is done at the same time, during the same day, as well as determining which member state is responsible. (...) A physical folder is then opened and the individuals need to give us their original identity documents. (...) The certificate for the lodging of an asylum claim is the pink paper, with this document they can travel within Luxembourg. It is not a residence permit, it is not an identity document, it is only to travel freely within the territory. (Asylum Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

In the eventuality that Luxembourg is the first country of arrival, asylum seekers are taken to temporary shelters initially, and finally to permanent shelters.

The process is further detailed in the below interview with a police chief commissioner, who highlights the importance of fingerprinting the applicant and checking their fingerprints against the EURODAC database.

*At the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, their fingerprints and photos are taken, as well as a short interview is conducted in order to find out how you got here. Did you come by yourself or with other family members? Why? Have you been persecuted? In a nutshell, we ask if you have already lodged an asylum application somewhere else? And the fingerprints. If we have a positive hit, we write it down in the report, which goes to the Ministry. (...) If [the individual] is already known in Italy, we make a transfer request. Because we have many [Dublin cases]. (...) We have on a daily basis people, families from Italy, Germany. It is the aftermath of the 2015 crisis. Most of the people were in Germany in 2015, they got registered early 2016 in Germany. Many left Germany and arrived in Luxembourg. With the fingerprints, we have positive results and we send them back. (Police chief commissioner)*

The majority of informants referred to this process, as suggested by the below Syrian refugee:

*We arrived to the train station, while I was in Germany I asked one of my friends in Sweden about Luxembourg, 'what do you think?', 'I don't know, but I have a relative there. He provided me with his phone number. He gave me the address of a foyer, so I took taxi to Logopédie. (...) I arrived to the foyer, I gave the passport, they welcomed us, we had dinner, we slept one night, and then we went to the Ministry of... [Direction de l'Immigration]. Otherwise they would not accept us to be in the foyer. So we went there. Before, I ask for an appoint for starting the asylum procedures, making the fingerprints (Interview\_2)*

If Luxembourg is not the first country of arrival, the asylum seekers are considered Dublin cases. In that case, they are sent to the Emergency Shelter *Structure d'hébergement d'urgence au Kirchberg* (SHUK), a facility where the applicants wait for their transfer to the first country of entry to be made.

The below asylum seeker from Sudan (who had his asylum claim rejected from France) referred to the interaction with the Luxembourgish police upon his arrival in Luxembourg. He commented that he was initially told to go back to Germany, the starting point of his train, however the attitude of the police agents changed when he mentioned that he wanted to claim asylum. He was then given the necessary information regarding the first reception shelter. Due to his previous trajectories, he was eventually sent to the SHUK:

*Respondent: When I arrived here, it was the last train from Trier. I arrived to the central station. And I asked a police for the camp. They said, we don't have any camps here. Who told you this? I said, every country they have a camp. They said, no, except us. We don't have one. Where did you come from. I said, from Germany. So, they said, okay go back to Germany.*

*Interviewer: They said you should go back to Germany?*

*Respondent: Yes, because I did not say that I want to apply for asylum. And after that I said I want to apply for asylum. So they said, okay, come in. (...) So they gave*

*me an address, to go to the Logopédie. (...). So I went to the Logopédie there and the next morning they took me to the ministry, yes. (...) they did an interview for 2 hours, about 2 hours. And after that they said to me that I cannot stay here (...) [and that] they will send me to SHUK and I cannot stay in Luxembourg for more than 1 week(...) So, I went out of SHUK after 2 months and 2 weeks. It is for departing people back. (...) (Interview\_6)*

Trajectories are not always linear, with asylum seekers spending variable periods of time in the stage one, two or three shelters, depending on the available places. This is illustrated below by the same Sudanese asylum seeker:

*Respondent: So after [the stay in SHUK], they accepted to start my file. And they... I moved to Logopédie. So I stayed in Strassen for 20 days maybe and after that they supposed to move me to another camp for the integration classes. So it took about one month.*

*Interviewer: So this is where you are at the moment?*

*Respondent: No, this was in Mersch. And from Mersch I have to go to a permanent place. And this is where I live now. It is in Wecker. (Interview\_6)*

## **2.5. Conclusion of the chapter**

This chapter contextualised the study by providing background information on the legislation relevant to asylum procedures and reception, with focus on bordering practices performed by state actors. It showed that the only border where there are in place immigration controls is at the Findel airport, however, less than ten migrants a year arrive via the air border. Most of them come to Luxembourg by train or by bus from the neighbouring countries, and they are not subject to immigration control, due to Luxembourg being part of the Schengen area.

### 3. Empirical research with institutional actors

#### 3.1. Introduction of the chapter

This chapter presents and briefly discusses the findings related to institutionalised bordering practices performed by the border agents at Findel airport and highlights the views the institutional actors interviewed have on the meaning of borders, the relationship between internal and external borders, as well as Schengen and Dublin and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). It finally explores the obstacles to which asylum seekers and refugees are prone in the housing and employment sectors.

#### 3.2. Institutionalised bordering practices performed by border agents

This section presents an analysis of the aspects covered mainly during the ethnographic observation conducted at Findel airport on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2018 and the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2018, as well as two interviews with border agents. The purpose of the ethnographic observation was to make sense of the bordering practices to which passengers from Istanbul were subject, the only flight which carries passengers likely to claim asylum in Luxembourg.

Below the ethnographic observations are presented.

*Ethnographic observation 1: 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2018.*

*The 'vol à risque' from Istanbul is landing at 12:25. Accompanied by the Head of the Border control unit, carrying my orange visitor pass, I am making my way to the passport control windows where we are waiting for the passengers to go through the passport control. At the moment it is quiet, with some airport cleaners and technicians sorting out the final touches regarding the Automated Border Control (ABC) gates which should be operational in a couple of weeks' time.*

**Figure 1 ABC gates at Findel airport**





Source: Photo credit Dr. Claudia Paraschivescu

*The passengers from the Istanbul flight start arriving. There are two queues (one for EU passport holders, with which one border agent is in charge; and a second one for non-EU passport holders, with two border agents). Most passengers queue in the non-EU line. A few of them have diplomatic Turkish passports (I am told this by the border agent, who notices the cover colour). Most passengers are being asked how long they are in Luxembourg for and the border agents look through their passports, the databases on their computers and stamp the respective passports. Each passport control lasts anywhere between 30 seconds and one minute, unless the border agents have additional questions. There are several reasons which may lead to a non-EU person being asked additional questions: absence of an invitation letter or a hotel reservation, the third country national has a new passport, which makes it difficult to know if (s)he has already been to Luxembourg, and the absence of return tickets. According to the border agents interviewed, the document control is very time consuming. They are of the opinion that it could be easily speeded up by the presence of a sign listing the documents which need to be presented to the border agents somewhere during the queuing stage.*

*An individual shows us (the border agent and me) his European Economic Area (EEA) family permit and asks if he can go in the European Union (EU) queue (understandably, as it took visibly less time to go through the control reserved to EU people and here was less of a queue). The border agent looks at his document and his passport (it was an Iranian passport) and tells him that he can go to the EU queue.*

*The border agents are interested in three elements during the passport control:*

- 1. That the passengers are not impostors (the border agents look very carefully at the passport photo and peoples' faces);*
- 2. That the documents are not falsified; and*
- 3. That the people meet the visa conditions for entry into Luxembourg.*

*The migrants who do not meet these criteria (called INAD) are being interrogated and sent back to Istanbul. In these cases, on the way back to Istanbul the pilot keeps their documents (such as their passports). Some people are proactive in showing their return tickets in order to justify how long they will be in Luxembourg for before they get asked this question by the border agents.*

*There are three stages of control:*

- 1. 1<sup>st</sup> stage of control (conducted by the border agents themselves during the passport control);*
- 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of control (which, due to staff shortages, is also performed by the same border agents); and*
- 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of control (done by the Unit in charge with the Determination of Fake and Forged Documents, in front of the passport control windows).*

Figure 2 Border control sign at Findel airport



Source: Photo credit Dr. Claudia Paraschivescu

*A family of four (two parents and two young children, the woman was wearing a head scarf) are told to step aside during the passport control because the border agents had additional questions (2<sup>nd</sup> stage of control). Asking them additional questions would have otherwise disturbed the fluidity of the control for the other persons. The family go towards the end of the queue and they wait peacefully, although the kids are rather energetic and start running around. The family are also given a sheet of paper (in Turkish) which contains information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of control. Communication is difficult, as the family do not speak any French/English. Once all the people from the Istanbul flight have gone through the passport control, the border agent went to the arrivals to look for the family member of the family who was supposed to wait for them in order to ask him some questions. Unfortunately, he was not there yet because he was still in traffic. They talk to him on the phone, explain to him that he should have written a letter of invitation, and finally the border agent lets the family go through.*

*I am told by the Head of the Border control unit that it is very uncommon for border agents to refuse entry to a whole family, usually this is the case for single persons. He also emphasises the fact that there will be no problems with the family (and they should be able to leave the premises once the border agent is satisfied), as they are very peaceful, genuine and they look like they do not have anything to hide. The border agents I talk to later on also stress the fact that you can determine the level of risk posed by some people by the way they act (I assume depending on how agitated they are/scared they come across). During an interview with the passport control officer, I am told that the reason why the family was not let through was due to a lack of an invitation letter written by the family member hosting*

*them. Also, the family did not have the return tickets with them, but showed them to the immigration officers in an electronic format, on the phone a few minutes later, when they got access to internet.*

*It took approximately 40 min for all the 63 passengers to go through.*

*A few minutes later I witness the arrival of the passengers from Djerba. The Head of the Border control unit tells me that the control of documents is going to go a lot smoother because most of them are EU citizens, having been on holiday in Tunisia.*

*Around 98% are European nationals, many travelling on their IDs (I see many French IDs). It takes around six seconds per person to get their passports/IDs checked.*

*A Tunisian man shows his passport, it is not clear why he is coming to Luxembourg, but he has a lot of Schengen visas in his passport, so everything should be fine. The border agent then hears that the Tunisian man said that he was going to Germany to buy a Mercedes car and he then tells me that in Tunisia there are many old German cars operating as taxis. Everything is fine, he is let through. I then understand that I probably would not have been able to get a sense of the reasons for which various people were asked additional questions and thus the control was taking much longer than for the other passengers, if it was not for the border agent decrypting the situations for me. Everything happens very fast, at the passport control stage. Many 'migrants' or tourists have limited linguistic abilities, which makes it difficult for an outsider like me to understand what's going on.*

*Ethnographic observation 2: 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2018*

*There is a general holiday atmosphere in the Departures hall. I can only hear the noise of suitcases of holiday makers and the occasional business person. Most people seem joyful and I hear a lot of European languages, all spoken by mainly white bodies. I do not see any Police within the airport, only a couple of LUXAIRPORT security guards wearing high visibility vests (with the LUXAIRPORT inscription in them). Outside of the airport, however, I notice a group of five police agents all dressed in black uniforms (having POLICE written on them), seemingly wearing arms and having a dog with them. I look at the flight information screens, I only notice outgoing European flights. The migrants I am going to meet in half an hour will be boarding a flight to Istanbul and will be returned to their countries of origin, as their asylum claim has been rejected.*

*The migrants are starting to arrive in the Departure hall accompanied by friends or shelter staff. Four of them are supposed to be boarding the Istanbul flight: two Iraqis, one Egyptian and one Georgian, all men. I do not notice anyone gazing at our group. One of the Iraqis is accompanied by a person from the shelter he used to live in. He has been in Luxembourg for 2.5 years and still no decision has been made on his case. He has had a difficult time here. The Iraqi tells me that he is happy to go back because of family reasons. He also seemed nervous, but like someone who is so excited about something that is going to happen in the near future, that 'THAT' something cannot come quickly enough for him. I notice his big shiny blue suitcase, which looks like a holiday suitcase.*

*The second Iraqi has come to the airport with two other Iraqi friends. He has been in Luxembourg for three years, and after two rejections, he is returning to his country of origin. He looks disappointed. It is quite a contrast between the joy, eagerness and impatience to leave displayed by the other Iraqi and his emotions. He is carrying two big suitcases with him and a laptop bag – more belongings than the first Iraqi I talked about, and possibly more experiences in Luxembourg and memories, all of which will be left behind. I am talking to one of his friends. He has the refugee status, he is staying. He spent a*

*few years in Finland and he tells me how blond the people are there. He feels more comfortable in Luxembourg, as it is more cosmopolitan, he does not stand out although he has dark hair.*

*The Georgian arrives too, with two other friends and meets us at the check-in desks. Still no sign of the Egyptian. It turns out that the Egyptian could not sleep well the night before, so he took sleeping pills, which meant that he did not hear the alarm and overslept.*

*The security control took 5-10 minutes, during which the Iraqi's laptop bag was searched. The border control lasted for around 10 seconds per migrant. The border agent looks at one of the Iraqi's passport rather inquisitively, stamps it and gives it back to him. After their passports are stamped, the two Iraqis smile to each other and they look relieved. The Georgian looks less joyful – he has only been in Luxembourg for three months, he has probably had less negative experiences than the Iraqis who have been here between two and three years and probably also more hopeful at the idea of a silver lining.*

*This part of the airport, once we have passed the immigration checks, is very quiet. There might be flights to just two destinations departing from here, both outside of Schengen, towards the United Kingdom and Turkey. This part of the airport is having a makeover done, as ABC gates are being introduced, so things have changed since three weeks ago when I last travelled to the United Kingdom myself. The location of the cubicles the immigration officers are in has moved, a couple of new ones have been added and the place where two of the cubicles used to be has been blocked out. The booths, as well as the walls are different shades of grey.*

**Figure 3 Immigration control booths at Findel airport**



Source: Photo credit Dr. Claudia Paraschivescu

*The immigration officers greeted and smiled at us. Even the one who had the inquisitive/slightly authoritarian attitude towards the Iraqi, is very smiley when greeting us (this was the case later on too, when I finally went through immigration with the police officer in order to have a look at the rooms in which INAD migrants are kept in for questioning purposes). He was smiling at us every time we would cross the border and seemed very friendly and approachable.*

*The police official and myself went to the waiting rooms in which the INAD migrants are kept via the waiting area where the gates for Istanbul/United Kingdom are. I was looking for the three migrants who were nowhere to be seen. I am told by the official that they must have got on the plane before the other passengers. The questioning rooms are very simple and do not feel welcoming. There is a table, a few uncomfortable looking chairs, but there are also some beds, toilets, even a cot. The place looks sterile.*

### **3.3. The ways in which CEAS could be reformed**

A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense of lack of solidarity and responsibility sharing amongst the member states, which benefit from EU funds, while at the same time showing a lack of willingness to receive asylum seekers, which meant that Italy and Greece are being submerged by the high numbers of arrivals.

*In my opinion [The European Union] also must try to introduce a certain conditionality relative to solidarity within the framework of the future multi-annual financial programming. On the one hand there are European countries that benefit from the solidarity of the others through the cohesion funds. That's the case for the Visegrad states, Romania, Bulgaria, as well as all the countries that benefit from those funds. And also from the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy)! And on the other hand, however, there is total refusal of those countries to accept refugees, even on a logistical level. Therefore, I think conditionality has to be introduced that acknowledges the contributions of beneficiary states of the cohesion funds to the reception of refugees and the burden linked to their distribution. (Charles Goerens, Member of the European Parliament)*

In this context, it has been reported that one way of sharing the numbers of asylum seekers amongst the member states could be on the basis of criteria such as demography and GDP.

*The burden relative to the reception needs to be divided in a fair manner and along certain criteria. Above all, with regards to the states' demography and the wealth generated by the GDP. Thus, it's a dual-key, two criteria that need to be the basis of the repartition of the burden connected to the reception of refugees. (Charles Goerens, Member of the European Parliament)*

### **3.4. The interaction between the Dublin Regulation and the Schengen Agreement**

The first stage of the Dublin procedure starts with a Dublin interview. It is a personal interview during which the applicants are asked information about their migratory trajectories before arriving in Luxembourg.

*There is a Dublin interview, which has been mandatory since 2015... to know which member state is responsible. (...) If Dublin elements are present, positive*

*EURODAC or information from the person that they have crossed another country. So if there is this information after the presentation of the asylum request, we are going to do the Dublin interview. We are going to ask them about their trajectories in Europe, the borders they have crossed, the residency permits they have received, if they lodged an asylum application. All information is obtained during a Dublin interview, which goes to the Dublin unit, which will contact the member state responsible depending on the information gathered in order to transfer the person. (Asylum Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

According to a Project officer from an organisation interviewed, the main aspects of Dublin, as applied by the Luxembourgish authorities, is EURODAC and the SHUK. However, the public authorities themselves are adamant that the transfers are done in the name of solidarity and the rule of law. The same organisation lists the following problematic aspects of Dublin in Luxembourg:

1. Children are detained for up to seven days;
2. There is no evaluation of the risk of absconding [around 64% of migrants leave the SHUK before the transfer takes place];
3. Decisions are taken automatically;
4. Migrants are not necessarily aware of their rights as the first interviews with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs are not done in the presence of a lawyer;
5. Their vulnerability is not assessed (this calls into question the training of the case workers);
6. During the first interviews the case workers should determine the family links that migrants have in other countries (this might also help with integration issues); and
7. Discretionary clauses are not put into practice.

Within Dublin, Luxembourg does not operate transfers to Greece due to the questionable and precarious reception system. The suspension of transfers to Greece is a joint European decision of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights.

According to the institutional actors interviewed, Schengen renders Dublin inefficient, as the suppression of borders allows people to move freely. Due to Schengen and the ensuing suppression of border controls, Luxembourg received multiple Dublin cases.

*We cannot say that there are borders... No, a person can easily move around, there is no control... As far as I am concerned, I do not think that borders are efficient. The proof is in the high numbers of Dublin cases, many people who come [here] have passed through other member states... (Asylum Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

Nevertheless, as it emerged during an interview with the European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Luxembourg is still a net beneficiary of the Dublin regulation, as there are more people transferred on to other European countries than to Luxembourg.

*Well, what can be said is that Luxembourg is among the net beneficiaries of the Dublin system. (...) That means that more individuals are transferred to other countries than are returned to us. In that sense it could be said that it is beneficial for us. (European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

Since December 2018, however, Luxembourg has seen the arrival of high numbers of Eritreans coming via Italy.

Indeed, the absence of border controls due to Schengen means that security checks at internal borders cannot be performed on a regular basis.

*[The role of borders is to] guarantee a certain security. I think it is the main aspect. But in that case we talk about external borders. Because regarding the Belgian-Luxembourgish or French-Luxembourgish borders, we are not allowed, under Schengen, to [do border checks] systematically. (Police chief commissioner)*

At the same time, the absence of border controls makes possible the onward movement of asylum seekers who are waiting for their transfer to the responsible member state within the SHUK facility. The SHUK is an open facility which the migrants can leave during the day, and many decide to cross the borders and go to the neighbouring countries. Thus, in Luxembourg, the paradox of the interaction between Schengen and Dublin means that while many Dubliner cases arrive in Luxembourg because of the absence of borders, a large number (over 60%) also leave before the transfer takes place. While it is not known whether they decide to stay in Luxembourg, it is believed that some of them go to the neighbouring countries.

Nevertheless, during an interview with the European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, one concern expressed regarding the Schengen area was the reintroduction of border controls due to various reasons such as migratory movements:

*Within the Schengen area there are many controls at the moment. (...) Some [states justify them] on the basis of public security, others say openly that it is because of secondary movements, it is about migration. (...) Within the Schengen area there is a deterioration of the free movement because of this. (European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

The current Schengen Border Code allows the introduction of temporary border checks at internal borders in the event of threat to public order or internal security for six months. However, Members of the European Union Parliament voted on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 a revised Schengen Border Code, which limits the duration of the temporary checks to six months. Currently, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway have had internal border checks in place since 2015 due to the migration crisis. In contrast, France has introduced border controls due to a terrorist threat (Schengen Visa Info 2019).

In their accounts of the interaction between Schengen and Dublin in Luxembourg, the European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs agreed that they complement each other, as the Dublin regulation allows Schengen to function:

*Respondent: They are rather complementary. In order for Schengen to work, we need Dublin, because once the asylum seekers have crossed the external borders of the European Union, they can move freely. And this is why we need Dublin, in order to determine the responsible member states. But if we think about the questions, 'does it create more borders for the asylum seekers?'. Yes, clearly, (...) But still, asylum seekers cross the border towards France, Germany, Belgium for groceries.*

*Interviewer: Even before receiving the refugee status.*

*Respondent: Yes, absolutely. Not officially, but of course they do it. (European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

This suggests that, in theory, the Dublin regulation creates administrative borders (otherwise inexistent due to Schengen) between the Schengen area countries, barriers which impede the movements of asylum seekers. However, in practice, asylum seekers engage in border crossing for daily necessities, despite the legislation preventing them from doing so.

In most cases, the informants reported that both external and internal borders are unlikely to fully prevent the mobility of migrants. Talking about this issue, an official from a public institution gave the example of a Moroccan national who has already been sent back to Morocco three or four times with an entry ban into Schengen. Despite this, he somehow managed to return to Luxembourg and he currently is in the detention centre. Another migrant from Kosovo has been sent back to Kosovo nine times, but each time he managed to come back to Luxembourg. Based on these examples, the official interviewed feels that there are gaps in the protection of borders, as they cannot fully stop migration:

*A border can never be totally hermetical. (...) It prevents some types of migration, but those who want to immigrate illegally, they do it anyway. Borders or no borders, is not going to change much to the overall picture. The borders reduce a bit the influx, they regulate it to some extent, but they cannot fully stop it. (Public institution)*

In the context of borders being unable to prevent human migration, some of the comments about the Dublin regulation were rather negative with regards to its effectiveness in practice:

*[Dublin] does not work. (...) Plenty of people come from Germany, Belgium, France. (...) We will take them to the border. Or these people will be taken over (...) by the national police. Quite often, these people will not be placed in retention centres. They will be told: 'Go, leave!'. (...) That person (...) will take the train and come back to Luxembourg and will get controlled again an hour, a week or a month later. So Dublin has no impact. Particularly for a small country like ours. It is good for the statistics (...) you can say: I sent back, transferred is the word [they use], transferred a certain number of people. (...) The problem is that it is a transfer which at the point in time is effective, but 10 minutes later you don't know if it is still effective. Very often it is not effective. (Public institution)*

### **3.5. How internal and external borders are connected**

A common view among the participants interviewed was that the absence of border controls within the Schengen area meant that thorough border checks at external borders are needed. For a border agent, the role played by the control operated at the external border of the Grand Duchy is that of ensuring a high level of security for the internal borders within the Schengen area. During the interview it was also suggested that compared to other countries, Luxembourg's only external border is an air border, which makes it significantly easier to manage the influx of people, compared to maritime and land borders.

Talking about the issue of control, which was at the core of the notion of border, another interviewee stated the role that external borders play in protecting the Schengen area:



*The checks at the borders are very important for the internal security of countries and we need to protect the Schengen area against terrorist threats, against illegal migration. (...) If the border control does not work as it should, there are problems on various levels. At a political level and even feelings of uneasiness and controversies within the population and external borders should be properly protected. And the free movement on the territory is also very important at economic and touristic level and for the exchange, and I think that the concept of Schengen is good, but external borders should be protected and solutions should be found in the countries of origin. African and Asian countries should be helped, supported, and their problems resolved. (Head of the Border control unit, Findel Airport)*

There was also a sense that controls operated at the border had somewhat a more 'humane' role, by protecting underaged children who need protection.

One border agent commented that the border is *"the control for all the Schengen countries"*, as many people landing at Findel airport go to France, Germany etc. He indicated *"If the control was just for Luxembourg, the airport wouldn't exist."*, as the population of Luxembourg is rather small. For example, there was only one Luxembourger on the flight from Istanbul the researcher witnessed arriving during the ethnographic observation.

Regarding the efficiency of borders in the management of international migration, he says that it is easy and efficient to manage migration at borders situated in airports, but it is more difficult when dealing with land borders. However, there are two aspects which undermine the efficiency of border controls at Findel airport:

1. There is no 2<sup>nd</sup> stage control, which would enable them to proceed to even more thorough controls; and
2. Language issues, as it is difficult to communicate when border agents don't speak the same languages as the people questioned.

The importance of border controls at external borders was also shared by the Police chief commissioner interviewed. He noted that the checks operated at external borders, such as Greece, Malta or Italy, have grown in importance at a time where borders are absent in Europe. In this context, both FRONTEX and the 'responsibility' shown by member states by sending out police agents to the external borders play an important role in the safeguarding of internal borders:

*(...) there are no more borders in Europe. Now, it's the external borders. You have already heard of FRONTEX, and Luxembourg needs to take on its share [of responsibility] by saying that we will send out agents. (...) We need to show responsibility. But I do not want to say that we are about to build a fortress. There are organisations which say that external borders are prisons. They will reinforce, certainly. That's the objective of FRONTEX and of the European community, to reinforce [external borders], because we do not have the choice. There is an influx [of migrants]. (Police chief commissioner)*

Together, these results suggest that due to the lack of border controls within the Schengen area, external borders emerge as the guarantors of security for the Schengen area.

### 3.6. The definition of borders given by the state actors interviewed

A common view amongst the participants was that the border was a mechanism of control which operated at various levels. For example, the role of the borders is described below, with focus on the ways in which they should differentiate between different groups of people: people legally entitled to cross the borders, those humanly entitled to do so and finally those who should not be allowed to engage in border crossing.

*The role of a border is to let people pass who have the right to pass, hence, the European citizens who left the European Union and who are coming back; those who have a residence permit for the European territory. The responsibility of a border is also to let people pass who flee from war, torture and rape. And the responsibility of those who manage the borders is to stop those who do not have the right to pass: the criminals. (Charles Goerens, MEP)*

This suggests that the border is a mechanism of control which filters people and allows or denies them entry based on their status. Importantly, the border should not act as a fortress, rather it should be welcoming:

*Borders should not be a fortress, but should be focused on reception (...) The Geneva Convention contextualises this very well, the principles are very clear and all the European legislations are also rather clear. (Charles Goerens, MEP)*

Some participants expressed the belief that borders are in place for legal migrants, who respect them, while they are deemed ineffective for illegal migrants, who either find a way to cross them or change the migratory routes depending on the absence/presence of borders and border controls:

*(...) [the border] is a filter for those who respect the rules. For that person, it is going to be a filter. For those who do not respect the rules anyway, it is not a filter, because they are going to find a way to avoid it. That is the problem. (Public institution)*

Following this line of thought, the paradox of borders consists in being mechanisms of control in place for legal migrants who cross them via official checkpoints, while being totally ineffective for irregular migrants, who should be banned from entering the territory of nation-states.

It was also further suggested that the border has a territorial and an administrative component:

*(...) I would say that [the border] is a separation between countries. (...) Then, it has an important administrative role, also of management. Let's say within a country. So it delimits a bit the administrative side. Even if at European level it is more and more inexistent (...) But I would say at (...) it has an administrative characteristic. And I would also say... (...) We see more and more the externalisation of borders. So it is not a [land] line between countries any more. But it is about the process... if we define borders are processes... (European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

Reflecting more on the administrative component of the border, the interviewee further notes that the administrative role is also highly present within countries, while the territorial element is more present outside of countries, in terms of regulating migration:

*[when it comes to its administrative role] to benefit from services available in different member states. (...) This is in the interior. Then, if you look towards the exterior, [they] demarcate [states], manage migration. Controlling who comes in and who goes out. (...) And this is not the same characteristic as in the past, when you were at the entry into a country. ETIAS and the interoperability of IT systems which allows to, so to speak, filter or perform controls before the person gets on the territory. (European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

ETIAS is a pre-travel authorisation system for visa exempt travellers. It verifies if third country nationals meet the entry requirements before travelling to the Schengen area. The information is submitted online ahead of the nationals' arrival at the Schengen external border, allowing the pre-travel assessment of the individual on the basis of irregular migration risks, security or public health risk checks. Each application is checked against EU and Interpol databases.

### **3.7. Changes and challenges since 2015**

The informants reported multiple changes to their professional activities in different sectors since 2015. For example, the profile of detainees changed drastically well before 2015. In the past, the asylum process used to take longer, which means that by the time one would see their claim rejected, they would have been somewhat integrated in Luxembourg. As such, they were not posing any particular problems in detention. However, from 2015 onwards, the cases of rejected asylum seekers have spiked, and almost all of those arriving into detention have a criminal background. The comment below illustrates this:

*Yes, but not only since 2015, even before, the population did not change for the better. At first, we saw a lot of rejected asylum seekers who already had another level of integration. That's because they had been asylum seekers all along the procedure, which lasted a certain time. Thus they tried to integrate, they made efforts. (...) Since then, there aren't a lot of rejected asylum seekers anymore. Essentially, there are illegal [migrants] and it is a totally different population. The great, great, great majority of them, unfortunately I have to say that, are petty criminals. (Public institution)*

The numbers of people being granted refugee status has gone up since 2015, which has put some pressure on the reception facilities in Luxembourg due to the lack of (affordable) accommodation. In an interview with an institution, it emerged that one of the main challenges they have to deal with is the speed of the asylum process. Since some populations receive the status very quickly, they do not have time to learn French or find employment and find accommodation in the private market, which means that they find it difficult to move out of shelters. As such, more and more refugees are found in reception facilities which would otherwise be for asylum seekers:

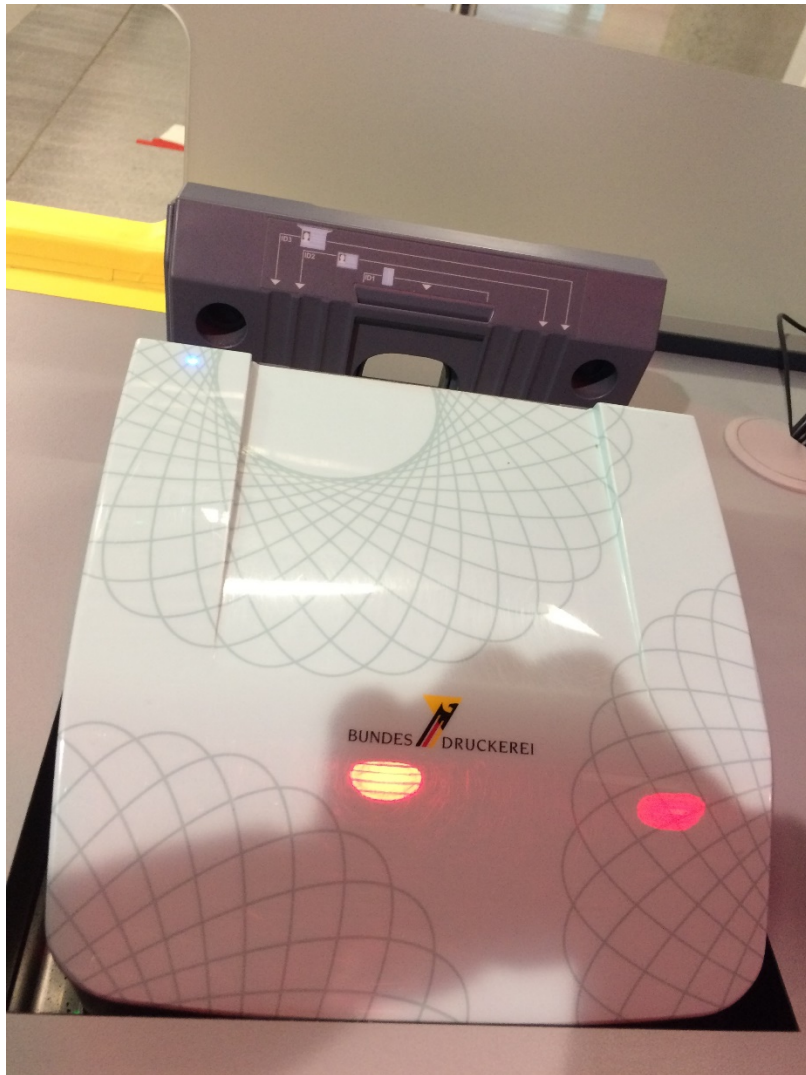
*In [accommodation] structures there are more and more Eritreans for example. Those people receive the status very quickly, within a few months. It is even more difficult for them to quit the accommodation structures since they don't speak the language and, therefore, more and more beneficiaries of international protection stay there. Because those people receive the refugee status very early on, they don't have time to (...) find an employment. (Institution)*

The 2015 'migration crisis' changed the work activities of border agents at the airport mainly due to the fact that they have to deal with more fake passports owned by migrants who want to go to Great Britain. These migrants often travel by train to Luxembourg from Belgium or France, and they come to Findel with a fake British passport.

Also, since April 2017 the border agents need to check the passports of all EU and non-EU citizens, who fly into Luxembourg from a non-Schengen airport due to the terrorist risk. Grey passport-reading machines have been provided. As such, the terrorist threat is believed to have a bigger impact on the daily work of border agents in terms of the waiting queues and document control, as they need to check Europeans and non-Europeans alike, since the majority of those who get radicalised are EU citizens.

*I think that the terrorist threat has a greater impact on our work since we also have to control the Europeans very thoroughly. (...) And that has had an impact on the waiting lines and on the workload of the border guards. Thus, for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, for our aerial border, I can say that this terrorist threat has a greater, or as well a great impact. And yes, well, the wave of migrants has an impact on the departure controls. Our work has changed in the sense that we have to be a lot more attentive to detect radicalized individuals who are not indicated in the Schengen Information System. (Head of the Border control unit, Findel Airport)*

**Figure 4 Passport scanner at Findel airport**



Source: Photo credit Dr. Claudia Paraschivescu

Post 2015, the number of Dublin cases in Luxembourg has increased, with 98% more cases in 2017 compared to 2016. Nevertheless, the spike in of Dublin cases is not necessarily attributed solely to the 'migration crisis', but also to other events such as the visa liberalisation for Georgia:

*[I] think that in certain countries, like Georgia, the visa liberalisation plays a role. Particularly, many Georgians have Dublin cases. A lot of people from all the countries of the Western Balkans are Dublin cases. In fact, it's a tendency that we see all over Europe. The number of Dublin cases is increasing. (Asylum Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

### **3.8. Institutionalised bordering practices performed by actors in the housing and labour sector**

This section presents analysis of bordering practices that asylum seekers and refugees experiences in the employment and housing markets.

The largest number of refugees who have been registered with the employment agency ADEM and found employment are found in the hospitality sector, followed by the 'other activities' sector, which

groups different professions that are not included anywhere else, then commerce, the financial sector and lastly the service sector. During interviews with state and civil society actors, it was reported that the main obstacles faced by refugees in the employment market are the following: linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as obstacles related to the recognition of qualifications and low mobility.

One of the main challenges that the refugees face when trying to access the employment market in Luxembourg is the language barrier. With this in mind, ADEM collaborates with OLAI, the Luxembourg Reception and Integration Office, for the refugees to learn a language which will facilitate their job search. However, it should be noted that the case of Luxembourg is rather unique from a language perspective. While Luxembourgish is the national language, French is the language of legislation. French, German and Luxembourgish are all official administrative languages. In the private employment market, one language is often needed over the other, depending on the sector and the location of the job, with German or Luxembourgish being more prevalent in the north of the country. However, since the laws are in French and most of the communication between the state and citizens is in French, refugees generally learn French as a foreign language, which opens opportunities in the labour market:

*Let's say, in the majority of cases French is the best language choice. But that also depends. For example in the construction sector there are certain companies where it is sufficient to speak Portuguese. But that's a specific sector. In another sector like agriculture knowledge in German rather than French is needed. There is no magic formula that applies to every single person but it can be said that with French there is the highest probability that it will work out. (Thierry Hirsch, ADEM)*

*Regarding employment it is right that learning French stays one of the priorities. Looking at the different services with contacts to a certain number of employers, a minimum of language knowledge is needed regardless. Be it French or English. After all, French is still the common language of employment in Luxembourg. (Employment officer, CARITAS)*

Another challenge which refugees need to overcome in search for an employment are cultural differences, which are tackled through mock job interviews conducted by ADEM in association with various companies, during which refugees are informed about details such as the appropriate dress code during job interviews.

*For example as part of the simulated job interviews a company of the "big four" was here. (...) Another person came wearing a T-shirt for the same company. In reality, in this case the door is already closed. Just because of the dress code. Thus, for explaining things like that it's, let's say, preferable that the persons hear this also directly from the companies. Like this, they know that it is not only the state that says they should act like this, but it really is someone from the labor market itself who tells them. (Thierry Hirsch, ADEM)*

Qualifications obtained abroad, as well as the lack of work experience in Luxembourg also form important barriers to employment. The validation of overseas qualification can be difficult, particularly in the case of the health sector, which is not done in Luxembourg, but in other European countries.

*And for example for the health field the recognition of diplomas is more difficult than in other fields because the recognition of medicine diplomas is not done by Luxembourg but by other European countries. (Thierry Hirsch, ADEM)*

Even in cases where degrees have been validated in Luxembourg, sometimes a time gap (time out of the employment market) or a perceived lack of (local) experience might constitute another barrier for the refugees seeking employment.

*We had people who for example came from Iran and who had studied computer science at a university and let's say they didn't work in this field for the last 2 or 3 years. As it is a field that evolves very rapidly, and they had already not used the latest standards in their country of origin that are used here, the gap between a certification and what is requested at this level in Luxembourg and in Europe in general can be enormous. (Thierry Hirsch, ADEM)*

According to stakeholders, the ability to drive is a crucial aspect to accessing employment, particularly in rural areas, or when the refugees live in parts of the country where public transport is limited.

*Mobility in the interior of a country needs to be fostered in the sense that, as I looked at it one time, I think a little more than 40 % of the beneficiaries of international protection do have a category B driving license. Consequently, more than 50 % don't have the driving license and a lot of small villages in Luxembourg don't necessarily have bus connections every 20 or 30 minutes. That can cause problems, especially if, for instance, it is an employment in a restaurant where you have to work until late at night. There might be no bus to return home. So, mobility is another factor that can cause troubles while seeking employment. (Thierry Hirsch, ADEM)*

Refugees also face numerous barriers in the private housing market. While some are of a structural nature, i.e. the general housing shortage in Luxembourg and the high costs of rents, there are also various requirements which they should fulfil, together with other applicants who want access to independent housing. These will be dealt with in the next chapter, but at this stage it suffices to say that the main challenges are related to the lack of employment and therefore income, as well as discrimination due to the lack of language skills, as reported below:

*There are many people (...) who obtain the status quickly, notably Eritreans but also Syrians, Afghans or Iraqis. The persons who obtain their status relatively fast aren't able to make conversation, to talk to a landlord, to explain their situation and all of that. Therefore, I think it's difficult if the landlord has the choice between them and someone else who knows the language and with whom he can communicate, who also wants an accommodation. (...) And questions are raised: "Do they know how to live here?" (...) There's no scientific proof, but I put myself in the shoes of a landlord. Thus, if I feel something is more convenient, I probably have a greater tendency to choose that option rather than to create problems with someone I do not understand. Someone who doesn't understand my language, who doesn't know how to live in Luxembourg. All those aspects. I might be mistaken but I think it's logical. (Institution)*

However, the refugees and asylum seekers are generally well received by the host community, even though some of the members of the population tend to express worries about their arrival mainly due to a certain image the media have attributed to asylum seekers and refugees:

*Yes, I understand the fears because the public has questions. People wonder: "But what do they do all day? They will roam the streets. Do we have to be scared of robberies now?" Things like that. (...) They mistrust them because they don't know them. Therefore, [they are being explained], that they have the option to take courses and that their kids go to school. [They are being explained that] it's an accommodation structure where the people can cook and do their chores. Because the people ask themselves: "How will this come about?" Since the last influx there was a lot of coverage in the newspapers and other media. Everyone remembers the tents at Luxexpo that were there at first. Those are the images people who don't have contact with this population hold onto. Or they saw things abroad and fear that what happened abroad might happen here as well. And that's where I say, there are reservations, there are fears. That's how I interpret that.*  
(Institution)

A similar view was also shared in an interview with Marc Josse, coordinator of the LISKO (*Lëtzebuurger Integratiouns- a Sozialkohäsiounscenter*), a social integration programme for refugees from the Luxembourgish Red Cross. He believes that the reception of refugees by the local community falls into two categories: either having a somewhat patronising but welcoming aspect, or racist:

*In any case, what is happening in the municipalities and in the lives of people is that either the beneficiaries of international protection are perceived as poor little refugees in the need of help and, therefore, they are welcomed and receive a lot of assistance. Or, on the other hand they are perceived as refugees who come and take jobs away, who steal resources, live from social benefits and take advantage of the country.* (Marc Josse, Red Cross)

### **3.9. Conclusion of the chapter**

Based on interviews with institutional actors, this chapter identified the bordering practices in place at the Luxembourgish air border and how the border free Schengen area interacts with the Dublin Regulation in Luxembourg. It showed that, the Schengen area renders the Dublin Regulation somewhat inapplicable in practice, as the mobility of migrants is enabled by the borderless area. The final section of the chapter described the numerous obstacles asylum seekers and refugees encounter in the labour and housing markets.



## 4. Empirical research with migrants

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter relies on information gathered through interviews with asylum seekers and refugees. It is divided into three sections. The first section highlights migrants' experiences of borders before and upon arrival in Luxembourg. The second section is concerned with the obstacles they have been subject to in the housing and employment market. The third and final section discusses asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences of (im)mobility.

### 4.2. Lived experiences of borders and bordering practices before and upon arrival in Luxembourg

For the participants in this study, the borders they crossed during their migratory journeys to Luxembourg were understood as mechanisms of control, which aimed at impeding their onward movement. During the interviews, borders came into existence through the presence of border agents, natural borders (maritime and mountainous borders), physical barriers, immigration control at air borders and human flows.

Reflecting on his journey to Luxembourg, an Iraqi participant refers to the general easy process of border crossing, made difficult by aggressive police and border agents in Serbia and Germany.

*[Crossing the border] was easy because I arrived when the borders were open. It was really easy. A bit difficult it was in Serbia, they were pushing people. I didn't like it. The train it was really crowded, you couldn't even sit or stand. In Serbia it wasn't good. And also you had to wait a lot, it was a line for waiting at the border. It was really cold. (...) [T]he first time I arrived in Germany I had to make Dublin, the fingerprints. And the police was not really kind. (...) They check you, everything, they scream at people and... But sometimes they don't let people to pass the border, you have to tell them that you are just coming to Germany. If you tell them you want to go to another country, they would not let you go. Or they make you give your fingerprints. But I told them that I want to stay in Germany, they let me, then I went to the train station, I took the train to Luxembourg. (Interview\_1)*

The coercive territorial control of borders performed by border agents also emerged during an interview with an Eritrean respondent. Below, he comments on the control exercised by Egyptian border agents, at the border with Israel:

*[The Egyptian smugglers] set you free at the border, but from the border is your chance to get into Israel, or to get killed also because there is border guards also there. Egyptian soldiers are on the border, and also Israeli soldiers are on the other side. I believe the smugglers are soldiers too. The Egyptians tell us 'we shoot, but don't come back. Anybody who comes back, we will kill them', because they are soldiers and are smugglers. They shoot in order they are keeping [protecting] the border, [not letting people through]. (...) The border is closed with wire, you need to cross it. (Interview\_4)*

The securitisation of borders is thus understood as the control over migrants by police and border agents.

Some of the first representations of the so-called migration crisis in Europe have been represented by the human bodies awash on the maritime shores, since asylum-seekers need to cross either the Mediterranean sea on their way from Libya to Italy, or the Aegean sea, from Turkey to Greece. Thus, the sea becomes one of the most dangerous borders in the world, due to the high numbers of migrants who died trying to reach Europe. The lethal dimension of the Aegean sea is discussed by a Syrian respondent, who took the boat from Izmir in order to get to Greece.

*When you cross the sea... [feeling of relief and happy tone]. You breathe, you really breathe. And the people [smugglers]... You give them your life to cross the sea, and if you do something, they'll kill you, nobody knows. We went to Izmir because according to people who came to Europe before us, (...) to start the journey from Izmir, in Turkey. (...) Then we waited for 6 days in Izmir we were looking for smugglers, and it was a bit difficult at that time, because when I arrived it was storm in the sea, so we had to wait. (...) After that, we crossed the sea, around 10-13km, so it took us 5-6 hours to arrive on island. It was very slow because it was high waves in the sea, it was very risky. Everything you saw on Youtube. We threw everything from the boat. The boat was very small because we were 12-13, 3 of us had to throw themselves to reduce the weight. And we were catching the boat for 2-3 hours. So finally we arrived after a really dangerous, the most dangerous night in my life. (Interview\_2)*

The perilous nature of the sea crossing surfaced also in an interview with a Sudanese interviewee, who crossed the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy:

*I took the boat. (...) . And we were 135 persons in a rubber boat that is supposed to carry maximum 70 people. And we sailed for 17 hours. (...) It was, I guess international waters and the Italian coast guard they came and rescued us. So, it was adventure. It was like you don't know the feeling. Even if I told you.(...) You cannot even imagine. It was like you're gonna die any second. You gonna see the god or you're gonna go to hell. So it was very terrifying. But I managed to overcome all of these obstacles. (Interview\_6)*

But the maritime border is not the last of the borders one has to cross upon arrival in Italy. A Sudanese asylum seeker, who initially planned to go to the United Kingdom, had to first get to France. As he states below, in order to go to France, he had to pass through the mountains, and take the train, running the risk of being sent back to Italy if he was travelling without a train ticket:

*I took the train until I arrived to (...) Ventimiglia. I remember Ventimiglia, it is on the borders. (...) And to cross into the French border it is a little bit difficult, because if you take the train the control will come and ask for the ticket and if you don't have a ticket they will call the police and they will send you back. And there are like other ways. We climbed the mountains, very high mountains. Maybe you can fall down and break your leg or... That's one thing. But any way or another there's snakes...so much of things. Dangerous things. (Interview\_6)*

Fences, like the one built by Hungary at the Serbian border in the summer of 2015, represent another meaning that the informants attributed to borders. They represent a way for governments to show that they are doing something in practice about controlling migrants trying to cross the border.

*The first [difficult point] one was the sea between Turkey and Greece and the second one was how to come in Hungary because there were a lot of policemen and the Hungarian government... I don't know how to put it... something to not allow you to come into country... (...) it's not wall, but something to prevent people to come into country [looking online at photos]... [barbed wire]... [at the border]. When we were in Turkey, my friend told me that Hungary is building this the long of the borders. (...)*

The razor wire fence, meant to keep migrants out of Hungary, was enforced by the presence of police officers in areas where it was broken:

*There were policemen as well. This barb wire was on the long of the borders, but there were certain points where they could not install them, which is the train way. So you can just access from these points, and in these points there were a lot of policemen, more than in other places. The other places there were policemen as well, but it is less because people would not think to jump. But some people jumped and we saw a lot of pictures on Facebook, they were injured because of passing. I don't remember how high it was, but for us, we just went on the railway, A lot of policemen, a lot of police cars... (Interview\_2)*

Despite its role, that of providing a separation between migrants and Hungarian society, the above testimonial shows that the fence was not hermetic, which enabled the interviewee to continue his journey.

Compared to the participants who had to cross land borders on their way to Luxembourg, those who flew into Findel airport experienced relatively low levels of control, during a less perilous journey. A female refugee from Syria, who first arrived in Luxembourg on a work permit, as an employee for a European organisation, talks about her straightforward encounter with the border agents in Luxembourg.

*[The immigration officers asked me] the normal questions. Why are you here in Luxembourg. I told them I had a contract with [an European organisation]. I had all my papers with me. 'Can I see them?' I said 'Yeah of course'. He saw the things and then 'Welcome to Luxembourg' (...) My situation was really legal, so he didn't have... For example I remember in Beirut airport they checked the visa to see if it's fake or not. (Interview\_9)*

In the case of this respondent, the screening process had started with the visa application for Luxembourg in the Belgian embassy in Jordan, which facilitated her entry in Luxembourg, since she was in possession of all the necessary documents to enter the country.

It is worth mentioning that not all participants referred to a clear conceptualisation of borders. For example, one interviewee acknowledges that human flows proved essential to the border crossing, as they enabled him and his family to get to destination safely, which would have not been otherwise possible, due to his lack of knowledge regarding the logistics of the land borders of the area.

*We took, we say like: Follow the flow. There was people going and we went with them. So you don't.. we don't.. I have plan and they make a plan to come but we*

*didn't know which train do we take, which border we cross from where. So we followed people... (Interview\_11)*

In most cases, the participants reported the importance of online media and social networks during the border-crossings, which would provide useful and up to date information on the countries one needs to go through or the state of the borders.

*My friend who was the leader knew everything. He had some friends who had journey before us, a few days or weeks, and he was in connection with them. And he would say, ok, we are going from Athens to Macedonia, we have to buy bus tickets, we go there, then we walk, he knew everything. For me, not meet him, it would have been very difficult. So it took maybe 6 hours by bus to arrive at the borders. (Interview\_11)*

Turning now to the bordering practices experienced by the respondents in Luxembourg, some expressed the belief that the institutional actors with whom they have interacted over the course of their stay in Luxembourg could not be faulted. The below interviewee, a Syrian female refugee and mother of one, talks very laudatorily about her experiences within the state context.

*To be honest, when you go to a state institution the behaviour towards us is really good, in my opinion. At state institutions I haven't experienced any racism at all here in Luxembourg. (...) Up until today they try to help and encourage us when we want to do something. They explain what needs to be done because as an expatriate you don't know anything. Especially with OLAI I remember when I had a social assistant and I asked her a question: "You have to do this, you have to do that." It was impressive, yes. (Interview\_12)*

Nevertheless, these positive experiences within the Luxembourgish institutional context are contrasted to her experiences with the general public, as illustrated at the end of the section.

Talking about the easy asylum process she went through with her family, a female refugee from Syria who first arrived in Luxembourg on a work permit, but lodged an asylum application when the work permit expired, emphasises the importance of speaking Luxembourgish, French and English:

*[During the asylum process] But it was, I think, it was much more easier if you compare it to other people, because first, the children could speak Luxembourgish, so they were at ease with the employees and everything, we speak English and French, so we didn't have any problem, we didn't need translation, we didn't need anything. (Interview\_9)*

In a similar vein, a male asylum seeker from Eritrea who obtained the refugee status in the meantime, contrasts the support he has been receiving from the social assistants in his shelter, to the racism experienced in Israel, where he lived before coming to Luxembourg.

*They are very nice, I have no words for them. They answer everything, they respect you a lot (...). Sometimes they want to give you a letter. I want to go get the letter, they say 'no, stay there, I will give it to you'. They are very nice people. Because people in Israel are very different. All the time I compare everything, with Arabs in Sudan, with Israel, you can't compare them at all. (...) On your face they*

*say in Israel 'kushi', it means slave. If he's a black man, they say [he] is 'kushi' (...)*  
(Interview\_4)

However, other participants, particularly single men, expressed concerns about the legal and administrative processes in Luxembourg. Such is the case of a Sudanese asylum seeker, who has already had his asylum application rejected in France.

*Everything is complicated. In Luxembourg everything is complicated. The health care system, the educational system, the asylum seeking system. Everything is complicated. You can never be able to understand what is going on. It's like a mystery. (Interview\_6)*

He attributes the 'complicated' nature of the system to the uncertainty his friends have experienced with regards to the long processing times of their asylum applications:

*(...) the bad thing is you don't know anything about when they will respond. Like, when you will receive the reply and I have so many of my friends they spent here about one year plus. After the interview. One year plus. And they received negative. So it is like a risk. You don't know whether they will accept you or not. (Interview\_6)*

Later during the interview he also elaborates on the healthcare system in Luxembourg, which is difficult to access due to the lack of financial means:

*Interviewer: So, overall, all in all do you think this country has an easier administrative process than other countries?*

*Respondent: No, it is very complicated. It is more complicated than the other countries I guess. Because even the law here is different. For instance, the health care system. When I was in France, the health care system was, like... They only give you only a paper and you go to the doctor, and you meet the doctor, and you can buy the medicine with this piece of paper. But here in Luxembourg they give you this health care and they deposit 100 Euros in the bank. So sometimes you want to buy medicine, you meet the doctor. So you have to pay for the doctor. And they say that whenever you payed the doctor, you have to come with the invoice so that we will deposit again your money. So if I'm very sick, I come to see the doctor. I pay the doctor. And I go to the pharmacy in order to get the medicine. And I don't have enough money. What would I do? And this process... (Interview\_6)*

Commenting on his first interaction with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, a Syrian male refugee points to the initial unhelpful character of the member of staff:

*[At the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs] there was only one employee, she was angry when we arrived, I asked her why are you angry. 'because I explained this info before'. 'I just arrived, don't blame me'. I talked to her 'we are obliged to be here, we are not happy to be here, so please if you are not able to be polite treating with people, just not to work for this service'. She said 'I'm sorry, but a group of people were before you make me angry'. So she explained me the*

*procedures take between 6 and 12 months and family reunification it should be within 3 months after getting the status. (Interview\_2)*

Taken together, these testimonials seem to allude to the gendered experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in Luxembourg, with gender interacting positively in the case of female respondents and their encounters with decision-makers.

The gender dimension is further evidenced by the encounters with the police.

For the purpose of this research, participants' interactions with the police stationed at the train station is of particular interest, since the train station is the main entry point for many of them in Luxembourg. Therefore, the police agents are often the first public actors with whom they interact.

A Gambian participant comments on his first encounter with the police from the train station upon arrival in Luxembourg via Brussels:

*I went to the police at the train station. I told the police that I am seeking asylum. I was asked if I had an ID, so, I handed them my passport. But since there are really a lot of visas in the passport, (...) the policeman asked me to wait. Afterwards, (...) he said to me: "You go back to where you come from". [Without explanation]. You see a guy like that arrives, 23 years old and besides that African. I don't know. You have doubts about him. (...) I went away and tried to ask other people. (Interview\_5)*

The respondent above attributes the unwelcoming nature of the interaction with the police officer to his previous travels, materialised into the stamps in his passport, as well his race. Self-awareness of racial profiling is not surprising, since black people disproportionately come into contact with the police, as evidenced by a study conducted in the United Kingdom (Shiner et al. 2018). As such, the male participants in the study often relied on the use of social networks or strangers found by the train station in providing support in navigating the system.

In contrast, a Syrian female respondent, mother of one, talks about the help she received from the police officer, who even drove her and her son to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

*I remember that when I came I was at the train station and I asked someone from the police. I said that I don't know what to do here. He looked at me like that and brought us with his car right to the Ministry of foreign affairs. (...) When he explained me how to take the bus to the Ministry and when he saw that I am alone with a child he helped me right away. (Interview\_12)*

#### **4.3. Everyday lived experiences of borders and bordering practices in the housing and employment sectors**

While waiting for their application to be processed, asylum seekers live in a variety of accommodation, such as first reception centres, transit shelters or temporary accommodation structures.

As such, a common experience among the participants was their fragmented housing journeys, having had to move out of the accommodation provided in different parts of Luxembourg several times, depending on the stage of their application process, but also in order to have access to an apartment, rather than to a basic room in a shelter:

*I came in October. I left August 1st. Because I was without work, without language. It is true that I spoke English... (...) At first, I was at Don Bosco [shelter], Limpertsberg. Afterwards I was in Ettelbruck. (...) [After that] I found housing through Caritas, (...) an apartment [in Mersch]. (Interview\_12)*

As previously argued by some institutional respondents, short-term accommodation can undermine the social integration of asylum seekers and refugees, as they are less likely to make new social encounters in places in which they reside for short periods of time.

During the interviews, the informants reported various disadvantages of the accommodation they were provided in shelter. Several participants referred to the geographical isolation they have experienced due to the shelters being situated in places where there are no direct public transport links. This has a negative impact on their inclusion in Luxembourgish society, as it makes attending French classes difficult, as detailed below:

*I did one course in French and it's, believe me, it takes 2 hours to come from Bourscheid to... I was in INL [National Institute for Languages], so 2 hours everyday to go. 2 hours... It was really... (...) [W]e were living in the forest. Literally in the forest. It's "Chalet" in the forest. So we have to walk 15 minutes to the bus stop. Snowing, raining, at that time we demand, we asked for transportation or just extend the bus to this chalet... group of chalets. They didn't accept. So this was really something that provoked me, it was really for 4 months (Interview\_8)*

Furthermore, the precarious conditions in shelters was a recurrent theme in the interviews, as mentioned by the below interviewee, who lives in a shelter in Luxembourg city:

*It's a really nice city (...), but the place where we live is really old, old building, and the toilettes, bathrooms, are really not clean...And we share with a few people, and sometimes you can't even sit on it. (Interview\_1)*

Regarding refugees, one of the main reasons why they have difficulty accessing accommodation in the private market in Luxembourg is the lack of affordable housing. This is evident in the following quotation, in which the respondent, an Iraqi refugee, talks about the challenge to provide the required deposit and work contract.

*Last time I was in Esch [a city in Luxembourg], I found an apartment, I went to the agency and first two months, cost 6000€, something like that. I have looked for something for 3-4 months, in a room, to share it, in an apartment. I did find it, but they want at least 6 months contract to job, full time. (Interview\_1)*

This was also suggested by a Syrian refugee, who pointed to the paradox of his situation: that of being a refugee in employment. This meant that he fell through the cracks of the system as he would not earn enough to be able to afford easily an apartment for his family, but he would be better off compared to other Luxembourgish residents who would only receive the Social Minimum Revenue, as he would not be entitled to other benefits.

*When I started working I became out of the social system and out of the professional system because from social point of view I have a good situation*

*comparing to others and from professional point of view I have a bad situation compared to others. (Interview\_2)*

Due to the high rents of private accommodation and a shortage of social housing, many refugees are compelled to live, at least initially, in substandard accommodation, experience which was made even more difficult due to cultural aspects, as explained below:

*I rented a room in a house in Bonnevoie [neighbourhood] which is dedicated to students. (...) The space was maybe like this living room, space enough, but we shared bathroom, kitchen with others, living room of the house was next to our sleeping room. They are students, they don't have some commitment to get up every day. (...) so it was very annoying to stay here. And you know, my wife puts hijab, so it's a bit difficult for her for moving freely and... Even [son] could not stay alone in the room, she wanted to take him even if she cooks. So it was very difficult period, we stayed there for 9 months. (Interview\_2)*

A female Syrian refugee who first arrived in Luxembourg as an employee of a European organisation, accompanied by her two children, while her husband joined her at a later stage. After her one year employment contract ended, they all applied for refugee status. Below she describes the layers of vulnerability she experienced during the interactions with landlords, due to her being a single mum, a Syrian, and having a temporary work contract.

*[I]t was really hard to find an apartment here. I was first a single mum, I don't have my husband with me, I have two children, and above all this, I am Syrian, and the situation in Syria was really bad, so nobody thought that I would pay the rent... (...) They were like.. 'where are you from?' 'I am from Syria'. 'Syria? But how can you pay? Are you an asylum seeker? Are you on RMG [Social Minimum Revenue]?' And then I showed them the contract. 'But this is a one year contract, what are you going to do afterwards?' (Interview\_9)*

At the time of the interview she was trying to find another flat in order for her husband's family to join them in Luxembourg, but it proved to be extremely challenging as one of the requirements the landlords would require was that one of the adults should have a permanent position, and they only had temporary part-time jobs.

Access to the residential market is thus fairly limited for refugees due to inadequate financial resources, precarious employment or the discrimination they face as a result to their migrant background. In this context, several of the participants interviewed reported having found independent accommodation through social networks. Such is the case of a Syrian refugee, who talks about the process of finding the one bedroom flat in which he currently lives:

*A friend of me he told me about the lady. She said, maybe okay she would like to offer a place in her house. So, I came, I've met her. We talked, I said this is who I am. If you would like. She said, yes, of course we should support you with what you are doing. And that's why I am here. (Interview\_8)*

Together with access to decent housing, labour market integration was one of the main concerns voiced by the participants in the study. In their accounts of the obstacles encountered, the participants



mentioned factors related mainly to non-recognition of their qualifications and experience from the country of origin.

For example, one informant, who has a degree in civil engineering from Iraq, details the challenges encountered in Luxembourg when looking for a job in his sector, due to the fact that his degree was not recognised, which meant that he should have done two extra years of study in order to re-qualify. However, that was not a viable solution due to the good French language skills he would have needed.

*(...) My degree, civil engineer. I have to study two years to qualify it. So I don't want it. Because I have to study one year French and one year to European design. Because I worked Middle Eastern Design. So they told me I have to study one year in the college. (Interview\_11)*

Eventually, he decided to work temporarily in an IT company which hires refugees, providing IT training, in order to enhance his CV.

*When I get employed in [company] it should be temporarily, only to see the market and how you work on a job in Luxembourg. (...) It is only to get to know how everything. And also to get something in your CV. Because here my CV, most of our CV's they don't care. They told me. Even now when I worked here, he told me everything before 2015 I will not count. I worked 8 years as IT in the Ministry of oil. They told me we don't have proof or anything. So we don't count. We will count only the two years you worked here as IT. (...) I did a lot of.. Hundreds of interviews before. They have the same. They say we don't consider what you were doing outside Europe. Or even my certificates. (Interview\_11)*

Another interviewee, when asked about his experiences of looking for a job, talked about his experience:

*Respondent: It was not easy. I applied for many, I got many many rejections, but there was a social [programme], they sent my CV to [a company], they accepted to offer me internship for six weeks and then they offered me contract.*

*Interviewer: It's a permanent position?*

*Respondent: Yes. (...) When I was hopeless, when I applied to many jobs and I received rejections, I applied to very simple positions and small jobs. I applied, I said, they don't have any argument to refuse me as Junior, because Junior...*

*Interviewer: You had a lot of experience from back in Syria.*

*Respondent: Yes, very strong experience comparing to other, because I had the chance to work in accounting field, which is medium size and I could work in all the departments at the same time, not like big firms where you are specialized in something. I just applied to Junior and then they offered me the contract on that position, so I got Jr salary, it was around 2500 net salary. (Interview\_2)*

Foreign degrees and work experience tend to be overlooked in the Luxembourgish job market mainly due to reasons associated with a perceived discrepancy between the training received in the country of origin and the tasks associated with the position in the local job market. Therefore, the respondents experience downward occupational mobility, as they settle for a job below their skill level.

In this context, most of the participants who were in employment at the time of the interviews, had initially entered the labour market in Luxembourg via internships, volunteering or part-time work. This enabled them to both create professional networks and gain some local experience which would eventually allow them to integrate the Luxembourgish labour market.

Such is the case of a Syrian female refugee, who volunteered with different institutions during the asylum process, which allowed her to obtain a part-time position after she received the refugee status.

*I was volunteering with [a company], my current job, and this is in the afternoon, after I got my status, they hired me. And in the morning we were volunteering with the Croix Rouge. And in between we did Luxembourgish course. (Interview\_9)*

#### **4.4. Lived experiences of im/mobility**

A variety of perspectives were expressed with regards to the respondents' mobility trajectories upon arrival in Luxembourg. A common view amongst them was that they cannot travel outside of Luxembourg whilst their application is still in process. Commenting on this, a Sudanese asylum seeker whose asylum claim had been rejected in France before coming to Luxembourg, said:

*[It] is not allowed for us to go outside of Luxembourg. Or this will be considered like illegal. (...) I have to wait for a response. I have to get legal purpose. (Interview\_6)*

This was also implied by a rejected asylum seeker from Gambia, who, despite showing knowledge of the legislation surrounding the fact that asylum seekers are not allowed to leave the territory of Luxembourg, agrees that crossing the borders is feasible because of the absence of physical borders:

*Interviewer: Have you travelled to Belgium or Germany so far?*

*Respondent: I am not authorised.*

*Interviewer: Yes, but that doesn't mean... [smiles]*

*Respondent: [smiles] No, here I wouldn't like to say anything. [laughs] I'd like to say nothing. In any case, it is possible. (Interview\_5)*

Interestingly, he does mention that the lack of physical borders does not mean that there are no controls in place any longer. Rather, the borders have been transferred into the inside of the nation state, as one can get easily stopped and searched by police:

*(...) [T]here are no borders. But there are still some risks. Already when you enter a country there are risks the moment you cross the border, when you pass customs. (...) Sometimes there are police controls. So, the police randomly stops cars. Just like that. Identity control, to see if there are any smugglers, any drugs. (Interview\_5)*

The majority of participants who have refugee status engage in border crossing to the neighbouring countries on a regular basis for a variety of reasons, such as visiting family in Germany, Turkey or groceries shopping in Belgium.

For example, one Syrian participant has been several times to Germany to visit her family. Although the police were checking most peoples' documents on the train, she believes that the reason why she and her family were not targeted is because they did not look 'suspicious', which she attributes to them not being identified as Muslim and to them travelling as a family, which means that they are not considered threatening.

*To Germany I travelled two times by train and one time by plane (...). We got, when we went to Germany, because it's a long way, 11-12 hours, something like that, we had police checking the documents, but I think because we are a family, we don't look suspicious, I don't wear veil or something like that, nobody has come near us. They were checking travelling documents of a lot of people. (Interview\_9)*

An Iraqi informant talks about the ordinary character of his cross-border movements to Belgium, mainly to Arabic ethnic shops, where he can find products otherwise unavailable in Luxembourg:

*[H]ere we have very difficult to get shopping. (...) I go to Belgium. To Liège, or Brussels to get shopping. Normally I go to Liège. There's a lot of Arabic shops. (...) We go shopping there a lot. And restaurants. Because there's Iraqi restaurants there. Yeah, here we only take the normal things. But special things we have to go there. (Interview\_11)*

In this context, of frequent travels from Luxembourg to other countries, the informants consider applying for Luxembourgish nationality, as a European passport would facilitate their travels outside of the European Union in order to be reunited with friends and family, as illustrated by the two respondents below:

*We are planning to [apply for Luxembourgish nationality]. Because the kids will get it and we have to. Because now we have travel document. We cannot go. Because my family is different countries. My brother in Egypt, my father and my brother in Istanbul and my brother also here in Luxembourg. And I have some relatives in Germany, in Canada. So if I want to go visit. Even Egypt it is forbidden. I asked and they told me no. (Interview\_11)*

*[in five years], I will be in Luxembourg of course. I will be, I hope that I will get the nationality and I will be Luxembourgish. Because I will be free in somehow. Because now there is.. You know, I can move within the EU but I couldn't go out of the EU. I would like to go to Turkey. To find.. There's friends in Turkey, so I would like to go there [to visit them] (Interview\_8)*

The Luxembourgish passport is thus highly sought after for its quality of enhancing visa-free mobility to non-European countries.

In most cases, the participants showed very good knowledge of the Schengen area, which meant that they did not have to show their documents during their migratory trajectories, as illustrated below:

*Interviewer: Were there any controls at all, were there any checks [throughout the journey]?*

*Respondent: In Vienna you don't need to show any paper because you're inside the European Union, so you don't.*

*Interviewer: Did you know that before, that you don't have to show your documents anymore? Or did you find out here from other people I mean on the way?*

*Respondent: On the way they told me, if you go to Vienna everything will be OK.*

#### **4.4.1. Secondary movements**

At the beginning of their trajectories, some participants had a clear idea of the countries of destination, mainly Germany and the United Kingdom.

The below participant first considered going to Germany or Belgium, but once in Germany he heard positive things about Luxembourg, such as that it is a multicultural country and it is relatively easy to get the refugee status, which convinced him to change the course of his trajectory:

*Then in Germany I heard about Luxembourg. (...) It's a small country and it's like (...) multicultural. And actually I had a friend with me and they had a brother here in Luxembourg. They know about it. And then we decided to come to Luxembourg. (...) I came to Luxembourg, because they said it was more easier to take papers, but actually it was a bit long, it took me two years, then I got my papers  
(Interview\_1)*

Germany was also considered by a Syrian interviewee due to its reputation amongst the asylum seekers fleeing Syria:

*[T]he target was Germany, as everybody. It was not planned to come to another country, because it's like hazard behaviour, because everyone went to Germany. It has the best reputation among the EU countries for cars and German national team in the World Cup, and the World War(...). (Interview\_2)*

A participant from Sudan initially wanted to go to the UK due to his English proficiency and an easy asylum process. Due to the impossibility to cross the border, he decided to claim asylum in France, where he was rejected, and he is currently in Luxembourg, where he has lodged another asylum application.

*First of all the obstacle of language. I can speak English, so it's easy for me to live in the UK. You see. Second of all because the asylum procedure in the UK is more easy than here. (...) I have a lot of my friends there. It's confirmed information. (...) But it is very difficult to go there. (...) Calais. (Interview\_6)*

The United Kingdom was also initially considered by a respondent from Syria, due to his English language proficiency, which would have facilitated his integration.

*The plan, we had two plans. One of them to go to Britain. Because I speak English and I don't want to waste more time to integrate. But then it was so difficult at that time in Calais. We have read in the news that in Calais...so I said that, okay.  
(Interview\_8)*

Since it was impossible to go to the UK, he came to Luxembourg, after carefully reading information about the country online. The low number of refugees as well as the high number of foreigners and a general sense of fairness associated with the asylum system were among the main reasons which prompted the choice of Luxembourg over Germany:

*Respondent: I found it's more...I searched in the Internet. You can find everything. That it is more multicultural country. (...) Because you know as a future or maybe for my education I would prefer to go to Germany. You know, the industrial or the...I will not have...Because of finance, I will not have opportunity if I decide to work. But what I saw even when I was reading the asylum process. They said, it is very difficult, and they will not give you the status if you don't deserve it.*

*Interviewer: Here in Luxembourg?*

*Respondent: Yes, that's what I read in the Internet. You should deserve it. You should really have a serious case. And that's why I came here. I'm sorry, but I didn't want to be a number. Because when I thought about Germany, I thought, I will be a number. Because they have hundreds of thousands of refugees. Not because their fault. But they will treat you as a number. Because when you are dealing with a half million. You will deal with them as a number. Not as human beings. I don't want to be dealt with as a number. That is two reasons why I chose Luxembourg. I think I was right. Because really there is diversity, there is multiculturalism in Luxembourg. Even if we talk about how we look like. If you are in Germany, no matter how you spent time in Germany, you will be the German and the "Ausländer" [foreigner], people who are not German. Even the face. But here in Luxembourg.*

*Interviewer: You blend in.*

*Respondent: Yeah, it's like you find all the nationalities. I think there is 160, more than 160 nationalities. So, it is beautiful. So it is really enriched, this community. But I was wrong about the process. About asylum. (Interview\_8)*

Other participants did not consider a country in particular, as long as the country of destination was safe. Such is the case of an Eritrean asylum seeker who was brought to Luxembourg by a smuggler who told him that he was in Germany:

*I didn't select to come to Luxembourg, it's a smuggler that brought me here. (...) I didn't select the country – to be in England, to be here. It was my first desire to be in a safe country. (...) [The smuggler] dropped me here, he told me actually 'you are in Germany'. The smuggler said 'bye bye, finished' and left. But I found people from Eritrea, I talked to them, 'This is Luxembourg, it is a good place also, you can ask asylum here'. Someone [from Eritrea whom I found at the train station] took me to the police station. (Interview\_4)*

This was also the case for another interviewee from Syria: "When I left Syria, I had no country in mind. I just wanted to leave Syria. It was like a prison for me". (Interview\_7)

However, at a later stage during the interview he says that he would have considered going to Norway due to its green nature.

*I wanted to go to Norway. I do not know the countries in Europe. I know all the countries, but I do not know what way they are different in. I searched a bit online and I like green countries. (Interview\_7)*

Nevertheless, during his trajectory he was told by an Iraqi family he travelled with that he shouldn't consider Norway because there are too many asylum seekers there already. The ambivalence towards the destination country shows that the respondent did not have a preference for a particular country, rather the choice of a host country changed depending on the information gathered from fellow asylum seekers.

Turning now to the reasoning behind the choice of Luxembourg, a Syrian respondent chose Luxembourg over Germany for cultural and professional reasons.

*I read from Google (...) about the jobs in Luxembourg, the society, languages, the culture, because here it's mixed society. So they accept the others, they accept the foreigners more than in other countries, they would be open minded, English would be important because they have already 3 official languages. So who can speak 3 languages, can speak English. (...) I tried to convince my friend to come because he has the same education area like me, in accounting, and accounting is a very good knowledge to have in order to have a job in Luxembourg. Finally he said 'I come'. We did not have clear information about asylum in Luxembourg, we had information about the normal life, but not about asylum, so I came too... (Interview 2)*

Another participant decided to come to Luxembourg because he heard that, unlike Norway (where he was initially planning to go), there were not many refugees in Luxembourg and it was a wealthy country. He had also considered Ireland because the nature is green and the people are very friendly, but he knew that it was impossible to cross the sea: *"The Iraqi person told me, there is a very good country, Luxembourg, it is very wealthy and there are not many refugees. I said yes, since we cannot go to Ireland."* (Interview\_7)

Decisions regarding the final country of destination change depending on the difficulty of border crossings, but also on the encounters made and the advice received along the way.

For one of the participants interviewed (and his family), the decision to come to Luxembourg was carefully discussed with relatives from Belgium, whilst analysing the Belgian asylum system and the educational system in Luxembourg

*Respondent: My wife's aunt lives [in Belgium]. So we went there and we was decide before to stay in Belgium. But, she told her husband, so he told me study all the countries because now you didn't do fingerprints anywhere, so you can choose which country. So, check the countries because Belgium was so difficult. The time in 2015 it was difficult.*

*Interviewer: It was difficult to get refugee status?*

*Respondent: Yeah, my relative from 2014 until today he didn't get status. So it takes longer and is complicated. So he told me study all the areas. And choose the best country for your kids. So I checked online and I asked a lot of friends here and there. He recommended me to come Luxembourg. So I studied about Luxembourg and some other countries. And I checked first the education for the kids, so it was so motivated.*

*Interviewer: So you prioritised the educational system.*

*Respondent: Yeah it was so far from other countries depending on education, languages and kids treatment. So we decided to come and next day we took the train and came here. (Interview\_11)*

Engaging in onward movement is carefully thought out by considering the positive and negative aspects of the countries they could potentially go to should they leave Luxembourg, in terms of social networks, feelings of inclusion, racism, knowledge of the asylum system, as well as language proficiency.

One participant indicates that he did not want to stay in Germany despite several of his friends being there and asking him to join them, because Luxembourg is a more diverse and open society than Germany:

*I don't like Germany (...) They are cold... It is better here, not everybody has got blond hair, over there everybody has got blond hair [laughs]. There are many cultures here, it is good. They are more open-minded here. (Interview\_7)*

At a later stage, he reiterates that he does not like Germany, which does not leave him many options, since he only knows people there:

*And I do not like Germany, I do not have many choices. If I go somewhere else, I go to Germany, I only know people there, in Germany. I don't know how it works [for refugees] in France. (...) Switzerland is too difficult for me (...) because it is very difficult to get asylum. They have several types of asylum [applications]: one year, and then you can leave Switzerland. So, I stay here because I do not like Germany. And I like French language, because we use it in Syria, Lebanon... (...) But I don't like German. (Interview\_7)*

Other informants report planning to leave Luxembourg in the case of an insecure future in the country, attributed to their migratory of educational status. In one case, a respondent from Sudan initially tried to get to the United Kingdom, but could not cross the Channel, and after a rejected asylum application in France, decided to attempt to get the refugee status in Luxembourg. He reported that the only deciding factor regarding his desire to engage in onward movement would be if his application was rejected and he lost the appeal too: "Only if they give me a negative and I got an appeal and they give me another negative." (Interview\_6). In that case, he would attempt again to reach the United Kingdom:

*I would try to go to the UK definitely. Because this is the only place that I can go to. The only shelter. (...) First of all, for language reasons and second of all, I have a lot of friends there. Even if I got negative or something I can stay with them. And*

*this won't last forever. I know in some point the British government they have to accept my application any way or another. I guess this is the only choice for me, to go to UK. (Interview\_6)*

A participant talks extensively about his desire to study law at the university. According to him, the only reasons which would dissuade him from staying in Luxembourg, where he has refugee status, is if he did not manage to get an offer to start a course, in which case, he would try to study either in Belgium or in France.

*Respondent: If I get accepted (into university) in Luxembourg, I will stay in Luxembourg. I will see myself in Lux, if not, I have to move. (...) I think [I would go to] France or Belgium, for study. Then maybe I come back to work here, in Luxembourg. I would like to work here in Luxembourg, because they offered me, the place where I lived, I want to offer them something back.*

*Interviewer: Why France or Belgium?*

*Respondent: Because here in Lux the law is mostly from French law, so it would be easy to study in France in French. I will study in French next year. [And Belgium] is also for the language. I think it is also easy to get into university in Belgium, I heard something it is easier than France and it is not far [from Luxembourg]. (Interview\_1)*

#### **4.5. Politics and experiences of (non)belonging**

Racism and discrimination were not directly mentioned during the interviews with migrants, with the exception of one female participant from Syria, who has been a victim of racism in Luxembourgish society on several occasions.

*You find older people who [don't like] refugees. (...) At the train station in Luxembourg someone approached me. He was old and I had the impression that he was drunk. He began [to tell me] that "Islam doesn't exist here in Luxembourg". (...) Also sometimes when I came here (...), when you find yourself in a place you are afraid of everything, especially when you are alone. And you try to be like that, always hidden. (...) When I asked for directions [I was answered]: "I don't take the bus" (laughing). (Interview\_12)*

Although she does not refer explicitly to racism, she attributes these situations mainly to ignorance and a lack of knowledge about Islam.

In contrast, a male asylum seeker from Eritrea, talks extensively about his positive experiences in Luxembourg, compared to Israel (where he used to live before coming to Luxembourg). Asked about whether he has experienced racism in Luxembourg, he said:

*I have never experienced it. Even a sign. We are sitting here together, If it was in Israel, everybody looks at us. You can't believe it. (...) They look like this with the side eyes. Last time we went to the theatre. If it was a Israeli theatre, everybody would look at me like this. Everybody looks at you. Especially if you are with a white woman. It is very annoying. For example even when I sit like this with a white woman in Israel, I don't feel comfortable. (Interview\_4)*



This discrepancy in respondents' experiences could be attributed to the time spent in Luxembourg. While the respondent of Interview\_12 has been in Luxembourg for around four years, the informant from Interview\_4 had only spent a couple of month by the time of the interview, which meant that he had less chances to interact with the local population, since most of his time was taken by appointments with public institutions or integration classes.

Nevertheless, most participants indicated that they felt integrated in Luxembourg. This was mainly attributed to the existence of social networks through volunteering and to the presence of a multitude of foreigners, which made them feel at ease and not stand out.

Talking about the uncertainty regarding his application since he is considered a Dublin case, a Sudanese asylum seeker hopes his application will not be rejected because he feels he has integrated into society through the medium of the social connections he has made during his volunteering activities:

*(...) I adapted to the place. I started to know some people, and I have a lot of friends now. (...) The first month that I came to Luxembourg I heard that there are a lot of places to volunteer. So I volunteered in so many places. (Interview\_6)*

Volunteering is a way for the participants to put their free time to good use, while at the same time it enables them to embrace a new sense of self by focusing, during the time spent with other people, on activities which diverts their attention from the uncertainty of their migration status:

*(...) I have a lot of leisure time. Should I stay like this the whole day and sleep and think about the bad things, and make myself full of negative energy? No. I need to invest my time in helping people, in learning new things. In integrating in society. And I am still now volunteering in [company name] (...). (Interview\_6)*

Similarly, a Syrian female refugee and mother of two, talks extensively about the human and urban elements which she appreciates about Luxembourg:

*In general people are friendly, and the thing that I like, is that they are really friends with you. It's not just the appearance, 'we are friends and we want to help you' and when you need them, and when you need something they are not there. So this is something I really appreciate here. And I think because Luxembourg has a particular situation because it has a lot of foreigners, you don't feel this tension. Everybody is a foreigner, you will never hear Luxemburgish on the bus, you will hear so many languages. (...) Here in Luxembourg you feel it's more cozy, it's a city and a village at the same time. I really like it. (...). For me, as I have a family here, I am really content with this. I think if you want to raise a good family, Luxembourg is the best place, really. (Interview\_9)*

The presence of reliable friends who create a close kin community, as well as the cultural heterogeneity of the place and the family-friendly urban layout are all aspects of Luxembourg which make the informant feel at home.

When asked where they see themselves in five years' time and whether they would consider leaving Luxembourg, the respondents carefully weighed the advantages and disadvantages of Luxembourg.

Therefore, the majority of participants with children indicated that they would not choose to move to another country. This is mainly explained by the children being integrated in Luxembourgish society and in the education system, as reported below:

*Well, for the time being, I feel I should establish myself more here, in Lux. (...) After 5 years, my children will be really adapted here in Luxembourg, so it will be really unfair for them to take them back. (Interview\_9)*

*[I will] stay here. The kids... Their school is very good. They like the school. He is now starting with French also. (...) I always tell my friends, for me and my wife our time is finished, so it's for the kids. We didn't live our lives. We lived all war. So now we care about them. So for them staying here good. We will stay. For me, I'm now only planning for them. Not for me. So for them here it's the best education they can get. (Interview\_11)*

However, in one instance, a female Syrian refugee, single mother of one, felt torn between her professional life, which might be fulfilled in Germany, and that of her son's education, when asked about her plans with regards to staying in Luxembourg:

*If I had the opportunity to work in Germany I would love to do so. Because it is stuck in my mind that Germany has a very strong industrial sector. But I am as well happy in Luxembourg. (...) Especially for my son the future will be great. He will have a lot of opportunities. (...) (Interview\_12)*

This might be explained by the fact that at the time of the interview, the informants from Interview\_9 and Interview\_11 had either been in full time employment for a couple of months or had just signed an employment contract in relatively professional jobs, and their respective spouses were active in seeking employment. In contrast, the participant from Interview\_12 was single and was working on a part time basis as a receptionist, and during the interview, she mentioned that she would like to further her career.

#### **4.6. Conclusion of the chapter**

This chapter focused on migrants' perspectives of borders and bordering practices before, upon and after their arrival in Luxembourg. It provided an overview of the borders encountered during their migratory trajectories and the bordering practices experienced during interactions with state actors as well as private actors in the employment and housing markets. Lastly, the mobility practices of the respondents were presented and discussed.

### **5. An analysis of the links, or the lack thereof, between the management of mobility and that of borders**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This study examined the interactions between the mobility of migrants and the borders they encounter (or not) during their migratory trajectories. This final chapter outlines and reflects on the main findings of this research, with focus on cross-border movement, borders, the interplay between the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Regulation, and the impact this has on Luxembourg.

## 5.2. Cross-border movement is commonplace

The current study found that refugees' and to some extent the asylum seekers' mobility trajectories reflect the mobility trajectories of the wider Luxembourgish population. Due to the geographical proximity to France, Belgium and Germany, Luxembourgers choose to go to the neighbouring countries on a regular basis for various reasons, such as shopping or tourism. From the interviews with both migrants and institutional actors, it emerged that both refugees and asylum seekers alike cross the borders regularly, as evidenced below:

*Respondent: I went to Belgium. And to France. It was one of my dreams to go to Paris. I went together with my son to see Disney.*

*Interviewer: Did you have to show the passport?*

*Respondent: No. Honestly, it is amazing here. In Arab countries we always have to travel with passport. There needs to be an authorization, (...) [Europe] is open. (...) Concerning administration and borders it is a different world here. (...) Sometimes when you go shopping here, you go to Arlon, you go to Liège, you go to Germany and you don't notice that you left Luxembourg. We are in Europe, that's it for me. It is one country, not several countries. (Interview\_12)*

In the case of the participants interviewed, the existence of transnational families makes cross-border mobility a necessity which is facilitated by the absence of borders.

Despite cross-border mobility being part of the everyday of the participants, one of the shortcomings of the current system is that it does not facilitate the mobility of refugees for education or training purposes to the neighbouring countries, particularly since most training courses in Luxembourg are in German, as illustrated below in an interview with Caritas:

*Talking for example about Luxembourg, the difficulty is that there is a lot of vocational training in German and in French. Learning one language is already complicated. A country like Luxembourg has three languages. That's even more complicated. If refugees could just get the permission to follow a course of vocational training across the border, in France or Belgium. Just for the vocational training. Because 80% of the professional training opportunities in Luxembourg are in German. (Employment officer, CARITAS)*

## 5.3. State actors and migrants alike do not seem to believe in the effectiveness or even the presence of borders within the EU

During the fieldwork it became clear that both migrants and the institutional actors interviewed do not consider borders efficient mechanisms of control which can prevent migrants' mobility trajectories, as evidenced by the testimonials below:

*The border for me it is a fiction trick. (...) [T]here is no such thing called borders. Humans are everywhere you go the same. So why they put fictional walls between them? And I guess, by putting borders between people this means differentiating people. This means racism. In my vision. (...) So for me I don't believe in the term of fencing, or bordering people. Not at all. (...) Everyone is free. I was born free. Why you want to lock me in one place? (Interview\_6)*

Here, the participant indirectly alludes to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 13-2), according to which “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”. However, while everyone has the right to emigrate, the right to immigrate is frowned upon based on peoples’ nationalities or skill level.

*I think if people want to migrate they will always find a way to do so. Always, that’s clear. Therefore, in my opinion, building barriers and putting up barbed wire fences only creates a climate of fear and leads to mistrust on both sides of the border. So, I don’t think it’s a solution. I think, and that’s certainly also the point of view of [name of the organization], more legal channels need to be created to allow migrants to come to Europe. Legally, without risking their lives. In my opinion the reinforcement of the borders is not a solution to avoid irregular migration. I think if people and families are in danger it is legitimate that they flee from their countries and that they are looking for a better life in a safe country. I don’t think that the reinforcement of the borders will stop them. (Project officer, Luxembourg)*

Nevertheless, this study found that while physical borders are not preventing human mobility, they are effective in interfering with migrants’ trajectories. In other words, migrants adapt to the presence of borders and change their migratory routes accordingly, meaning that borders are experienced both geographically and temporally. In the testimonial below, a Syrian participant reflects on his route from Turkey to Luxembourg via Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria. At the question ‘So you avoided Hungary?’, he responded:

*No, because at that time it was... You know, sometimes they closed the borders, so the time I came in (...) October they closed the... You know, because we have groups in WhatsApp. It became... So, all people who went through this we had groups in Facebook, telling us... You know, we used technology. So, they were telling us there’s, the road to Hungary is closed. So, you should go to. So at that time we chose this. The Hungary way was closed, so we came through Croatia, Slovenia and then Austria, then Germany. (Interview\_8)*

This view was also echoed in an interview with the European Affairs Unit, with regards to the controls at the German-Austrian border, which translated into the suppression of free movement even for European citizens:

*If you look at the border between Austria and Germany. There, there are controls in a frequent manner. Every day I’d say. As an effect, free circulation is not possible anymore. I would say, as well for Europeans. When there are border controls, mobility in that sense is not guaranteed anymore. (European Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

Migrants’ trajectories thus reflect the closure of borders, and while border controls do not impede cross-border movements, they can alter the routes migrants take, while not necessarily changing the final destination.

#### 5.4. The Schengen Agreement undermines the Dublin Regulation

Overall, this study strengthens the idea that, in the context of Luxembourg, the border free Schengen area undermines the Dublin regulation. In other words, despite the Dublin regulation establishing the member state responsible for the examination of the asylum as the first country of arrival, migrants make use of the borderless area in order to claim asylum in multiple countries:

*The problem with the Dublin regulation is still the 'shopping' we encounter. That's clear. The people who produced EURODAC hits, passed I don't know how many countries and asked for asylum every time. It's a recurrent problem in a lot of member states. The Dublin regulation aims at avoiding or preventing this "shopping" but it is not that easy. It is still a problem. It is not possible to prevent the people from leaving, circulating and to finally retain them in one member state. (Asylum Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)*

According to the Luxembourgish authorities, the reasons why people engage in 'asylum shopping' are varied, such as lengthy asylum procedures in Germany or poor reception facilities in Italy. For example, at the beginning of 2019, Luxembourg saw a surge in the arrival of Eritreans from Italy, who made their way to the Duchy via France. Despite the existence of the Dublin regulation, which would allow Luxembourg to return them to Italy, in practice, at the time of the interview, in February 2019, it was unknown by Luxembourgish authorities whether the Italian government would accept them:

*[The Eritreans] entered the Schengen space very often through Italy. The idea is, obviously, that the Italians will take them back. That's the idea. If it will work, I don't know. We will see. (Public institution)*

#### 5.5. Luxembourg – country of destination and transit

Another finding of this study is that Luxembourg emerges as both a destination and a transit country. During interviews with state stakeholders in February 2019, it was confirmed that Luxembourg sits on the geographical route to the United Kingdom, which makes it a transit country for the migrants trying to reach the United Kingdom:

*It is (...) a phenomenon here in Europe, people who are transported hidden [in lorries]. It's clear, that's a big problem. Especially now that the Brexit is not through, yet. There is a tendency of quite a number of people to go to England. (...) There is a strong tendency in the moment because there is also confirmation from Belgian and French colleagues that [migrants] tend to get into lorries and try to make it to England. (Police chief commissioner)*

However, the actors interviews agree that while it can initially be considered a country of transit by migrants, in order to reach other European countries, Luxembourg is becoming a country of destination for those who cannot get to the United Kingdom, or who decide to change their plans and remain in Luxembourg due to the good reception conditions:

*To be honest, I think that right now it is also becoming more and more of a destination country. At the moment it starts a bit, it starts to shift. It will also be a reception country or a country of final destination. But it's true that we cannot ignore the fact that we are on certain axes, which are used particularly from those*

*people who want to go to England. So, we really are located on the transit route. But there are more and more [people] who say: "It's not bad here. After all, why not?" (Public institution)*

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the main findings of the study with regards to the interaction between mobility and borders as discussed by the public actors, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed. One of the most significant findings of this study is that migrants' (refugees and asylum seekers) everyday mobilities are in line with the mobility trajectories of the Luxembourgish residents, whose cross-border movements are commonplace.

## **6. Final conclusion**

This study set out to examine the interplay between borders and the mobility of migrants. It has identified that the suppression of internal controls within the Schengen area has been accompanied by a surge of controls within the member states. In the case of Luxembourg, these controls take place within the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, where asylum seekers are fingerprinted, identified in order to lodge an asylum application in Luxembourg or decide if they are 'Dublin cases'. In parallel, identity checks can also be enacted by police at any time. This suggests that while physical borders have been suppressed, border controls have been transferred into the nation-state. As such, they can happen anytime and anywhere. An implication of this is the possibility that migrants might live in a context of fear and uncertainty due to the everyday bordering practices they experience in their encounters with state actors, but also with private actors in the housing and labour markets.

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## **8. List of Abbreviations**

ABC - Automated Border Control

ADEM - Agence pour le Développement de l'emploi

AOT - Autorisation d'occupation temporaire

CEAS - Common European Asylum System

CEASEVAL - Evaluation of the Common European Asylum System under Pressure and Recommendations for Further Development

CV - Curriculum Vitæ

EEA - European Economic Area

EU - European Union

OLAI - Luxembourg Reception and Integration Agency

REVIS - Revenu d'Inclusion Sociale

SHUK - Structure d'hébergement d'urgence au Kirchberg



The research project CEASEVAL (“Evaluation of the Common European Asylum System under Pressure and Recommendations for Further Development”) is an interdisciplinary research project led by the Institute for European studies at Chemnitz University of Technology (TU Chemnitz), funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 770037.) It brings together 14 partners from European countries aiming to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the CEAS in terms of its framework and practice and to elaborate new policies by constructing different alternatives of implementing a common European asylum system. On this basis, CEASEVAL will determine which kind of harmonisation (legislative, implementation, etc.) and solidarity is possible and necessary.