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**Measures and tools to develop the Employability of a
refugee/asylum seeker**

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Re.Inclusion



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1. **Transferability of Skills** **across Economic Sectors**

1.1 Role and Importance for Employment at European Level

The importance of the development of transferable skills for people who are between different professions and sectors that come from different countries and their contribution to the quality of microeconomic work and the effective functioning of the Labour market at the macroeconomic level has been highlighted by the business sector, employers 'and workers' representatives, Academic institutions, policy-makers and other important actors on several occasions.

Subsequently, this was reiterated in the European Commission's Communication "A shared commitment for employment" (Europe 2009) and the "New skills for new jobs"¹ communication (Expert Group 2010).

Raising people's awareness of the role of transferable skills for their employability and occupational mobility is the job of employment centres and agencies, as well as education institutes and university system and specialized centres for the work and social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers.

These organizations use different channels, such as: Individual vocational guidance and counselling through career guidance services; "Information seminars and workshops", "clubs", promotional events such as "job fairs" or "educational fairs" or they use websites and electronic tools.

Employment agencies have a number of official publications, leaflets and posters highlighting the need for new skills in the workplaces of the future. These publications support operators that deal in the field of work inclusion of refugees.

Generally, **the main task is to motivate people to become interested in developing their transferable skills.**

1

file:///C:/Users/Monica/Downloads/New%20Skills%20for%20New%20Jobs_%20Anticipating%20and%20Matching%20labour%20market%20and%20skills%20needs%20.pdf

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The tools used to motivate people to develop their transferable skills may differ according to the specificities of different groups.

1.2 Role of transferability of skills in the current situation of the Labour market

Skills, and mainly those applicable across various segments of the Labour market (transversal skills), play an important role in smoothing the business cycle during an economic downturn, and notably during the economic recovery that follows since they enhance adaptability and occupational mobility of individuals. Without these skills within the workforce, the hysteresis effect may occur, when both low employment and high unemployment persist despite the economic recovery.

Generally, the effects of skills on the probability of employment and/or unemployment are crucial. Available data shows that the more skills and knowledge an individual acquires, the higher his chance of employment and the lower his chance of unemployment. Even more important is the impact of this stock of skills and knowledge on the change in employment and unemployment rates during the current economic recession.

Individuals possessing a higher stock of skills have experienced both a smaller drop in employment levels and a smaller increase in unemployment levels between 4Q 2007 and 4Q 2009, which suggests more favourable conditions for them in the Labour market even during the recession.

Adducing any evidence of the importance of transferable skills during the current economic crisis is subject to several limitations. The most important one is the **non-availability of relevant statistics**, i.e. data describing the stock of skills at individual or at least at more aggregate levels, which would form the starting-point for analysing their impact on relevant Labour market values².

² The need for statistical data describing adult population skills has led to the launch of programmes for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which will be realised in OECD and partner countries in 2011 and focused on assessing the literacy skills, numeracy skills and ability to solve problems in technology-rich environments by individuals aged 16 - 65 (OECD, on-line).



High sensitivity of educational and training activities to the business cycle, namely the availability of financial resources is also very important.

In the times of recession, companies are forced to reduce their costs, and employee education is often cut first. **Lack of resources for human capital development in the private sector should be compensated for by public sources**, which often reduces the cost of education (Education International 2009) and training.

In these circumstances, a paradox occurs: **whilst supporting the acquisition of skills on the part of both employed and unemployed people would help preserve employment and minimise unemployment, funding is being reduced.**

1.3 Definitions of the different types of skills

Human capital, accumulated through education, training in the workplace, information gathering, health investment, investments in personal virtues, etc., represents human potential as an economic contribution. The extent and structure of human capital differ between individuals and predetermine them for a specific group of economic activities or jobs.

The level of pre-determination of individuals for a specific group of jobs is given by combining an individual's human capital with the requirements of employers relevant to such jobs. Only an individual who meets these specific requirements is able to perform properly and perform the job to a satisfactory level.

This competence to perform specific tasks can be described, referring to a large number of more specific skills needed to perform specific tasks.

It should be noted that individuals have a range of skills in various fields of human activities, which facilitates their occupational mobility.

Skills here are defined as a set of characteristics, attitudes, knowledge and personal skills acquired or acquired that lead to high quality performance. (The individual parts of competencies are listed and described in Box 1.).

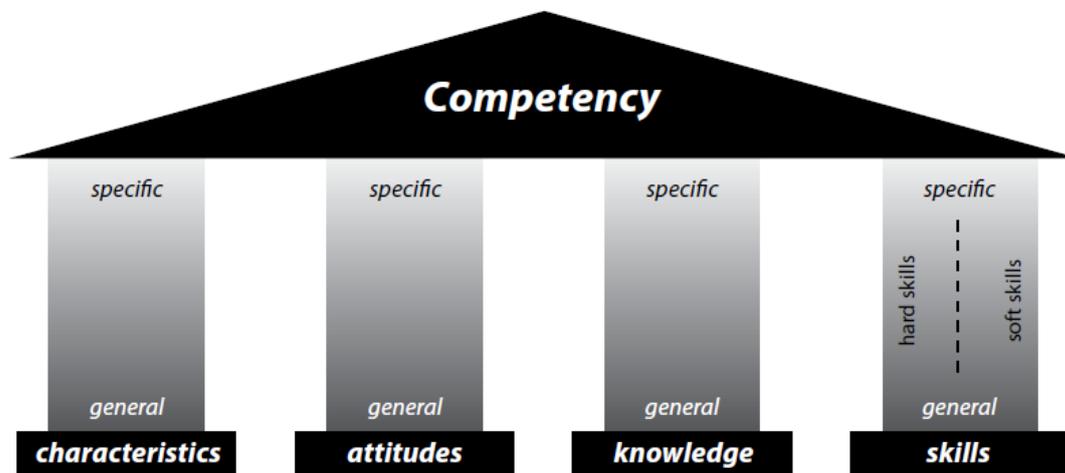


Figure 1. Competency Model

Note: it should be emphasized that each component of human capital affects others; Thus, skills are built based on the characteristics, attitudes and knowledge of an individual. It is not possible to construct them without any of the mentioned components of human capital.

Characteristic, as generally understood, is a typical or noticeable quality of an individual (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

Attitude is a stable, long-lasting, learnt predisposition to respond to certain things in a certain way, and attitudes are formed on the basis of beliefs (cognitive aspect), feelings (affective aspect) and intentions (conative aspect) (Statt 1998: 10).

Knowledge is the set of information peculiar to an individual, group of individuals or culture (Reber, Reber 2001: 380), which can be acquired by learning or experience. Knowledge can be divided into declarative knowledge (knowing facts), procedural knowledge (knowing how to do something) and knowledge of concrete persons, things and places, which is derived from sensation (Matsumoto 2009: 274).

Skill is the ability to act in accordance with well-managed models of behaviour, which enables the achievement of a certain purpose or aim (Reber, Reber 2001: 683). Skills can be both cognitive, involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking, and practical, involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments (European Commission 2008: 13).

Box 1. Specification of the competency model

With regard to competency in the learning process, **skill can be seen as the practical learning outcome, knowledge as the learning input into skills development, attitude**



as an acquired mode of behaviour influenced by internal and external motivation and characteristics as a disposition related to innate talent. Differentiation of skills as general and specific based on their applicability to the labour market affects the willingness of various economic subjects, be they individuals or companies, to invest in their acquisition.

The more general skills are, the more likely employees are to invest in acquiring them in order to increase their employability in other companies, occupations and sectors. The more specific the skills, the less likely employees are to invest in acquiring them due to their narrow application; should they leave the specific employer, these skills could become useless.

For employers, the opposite applies: general skills increase the risk of losing the employee, whilst investing in acquisition of specific skills ties the employee ever more closely with the company. General skills are those that increase the value of a person across the labour market, i.e. in companies, sectors and occupations.

On the other hand, specific skills increase the value of a person only within the company where he/she has acquired it; leaving the company leads to devaluation of all the specific skills since they do not apply in other companies, sectors and occupations.

The existence of purely general or purely specific forms of skills, i.e. their extreme forms as described above, are very rare in real life.

Moreover, drawing the line between general and specific skills is made difficult by its depending on institutional and structural conditions of the market, i.e. on its extent or type of competition, as Box 2., illustrates.



Charles is a 34-year old IT engineer living in a small village. Programming in Java language is one of his most valuable skills. The local labour market, with only a few employers, offers a very limited space for the application of this skill.

Within this context the “programming in Java” skill is specific, because it can be applicable (is valuable) only in one company. Leaving this company would lead to total devaluation of this skill, because there is no other employer in the local labour market to whom this skill is applicable (valuable).

Extending Charles’ labour market by commuting to the big cities nearby will increase the number of employers demanding the “programming in Java language” skill, because there are more companies focused on the creation of web applications, games and mobile phone applications there. Changing the context, i.e. extending the labour market from a village to that of neighbouring cities, makes the “programming in Java language” skill more general, because the number of companies where it is applicable (valuable) increases.

Box 2. Importance of context for applicability (transferability) of skills; an example.

Business sector employers, on the other hand, distinguish between **hard skills and soft skills**. This division of skills is not based on the context, because individual employers are not so interested in external transferability of skills between different employers, but on the content of skills. The traditional meaning of the word “skills” as a whole range of technical, job-specific abilities that require training and instruction for a worker to become proficient or skilled within a particular job reference corresponds to the present understanding of “hard skills”. Hard skills are described as skills which are easily observed and/or measured, easily trained and closely connected with knowledge; e.g., specific technical knowledge, ICT skills, knowledge of laws, rules and regulations. Rapid changes in the structure of economies, apparent mainly as part of service sector expansion, together with organisational changes of work and technological progress, have boosted the demand for certain non-job specific skills related to the ability to operate effectively in the workplace either alone or with others. These skills are usually referred to as behavioural or soft skills, and can be described as intangible skill which are hardly measurable and are closely connected with attitudes; e.g., communication, creativity, team work, conflict management, time management, making presentations and negotiating and leadership.



Distinctions between skills according to their content (i.e. hard skills and soft skills) and according to their context (i.e. general skills and specific skills) are complementary. It is possible to distinguish 4 types of skills according to their characteristics, as Table 1., shows.

Table 1. Typology of skills

	Hard skills Technical, job-specific skills that are usually easily observed, measured, trained, and closely connected with knowledge	Soft skills Non-job specific skills, which are usually intangible, hard to measure, and closely connected with attitudes
General skills Skills applicable in most companies, occupations and sectors.	Generic hard skills	(Generic) soft skills
Specific skills Skills applicable in a small number of companies, occupations and sectors.	Specific hard skills	(Specific) soft skills

Note: Soft skills, although they can theoretically be both generic and specific, are always described as perfectly generic in relevant literature.

Specific hard skills are characterised by their lower level of transferability, whereas soft skills and generic hard skills are skills with high transferability.

Transferable skills is not a synonym for soft skills, as confirmed by analysis of skills transferability and examples of job-specific hard skills which are transferable between occupations. Nonetheless, a substantial number of professionals perceive it as such (similarly to perception of the term competence or competency as synonymous with skill). There is a link between skill transferability and the risk of losing a job or failing to find another one. Employability of individuals is based on specific skills, but transversal skills support it. Individuals possessing a higher stock of skills have faced a lower risk of unemployment than others during the current economic crisis.



Easy outsourcing in the globalising world increases the dynamics of the labour market, and employees should invest in their skills development to enhance their chances of keeping their job or easily finding a new one. Neither the private nor the public sectors can be fully responsible for an individual's employability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transversal rather than transferable skills should be used as a higher category term that labels and groups together soft skills and generic hard skills which have, by their nature, a high level of transferability across all sectors and occupations and an important impact on success in life.

Internal and external transferability should be distinguished. Internal transferability within one organisation and external transferability to other organisations, sectors and occupations are two interlinked but still different “worlds” with regard to motivation of key players, tools and methods used to support skill development (or validation of skills already acquired in previous learning).

All skills are more or less transferable based on the specific context. The **real transfer of skills** (as a process connected with occupational mobility) should be supported by specific systems, methods and tools.

Personal responsibility and self-development are important. It is an advantage to be multi-skilled so that one can move both within one's current organisation, or away from it to other occupations and sectors if necessary.

What employers look for is an employee able to do the job and do it well. In this respect, transversal skills that range from problem solving to interpersonal skills are considered important. Having these skills, which can be transferable from one context to another, represents a good basis for accumulation of specific skills required by a given job.



2. Transferability skills across economic sectors in Europe in the current context and in the coming years

The following point of the lesson is devoted to the quantification of transferability of skills by sectors, groups of sectors and occupations at the present time and over the next 10 years, i.e. up to 2020.

2.1 Skills transferable across the economy

Skills which are transferable across the economy, i.e. skills applicable to different occupations in different sectors, are best classified under the “transversal skills” heading. At the same time, this represents the most aggregated output of the analysis of skills transferability.

If a skill is required by three or more occupations in the same economic sector, it is considered as transferable within the sector. The number of sectors in which the skill is considered as transferable defines the level of its transferability across the economy. It is possible to distinguish three levels of transferability:

- high transferability (66.6 - 100.0 per cent of occupations);
- moderate transferability (33.3 - 66.5 per cent of occupations);
- low transferability (0.0 - 33.2 per cent of occupations).

Box 3. Skills transferable across the economy, methodology (criteria)

An evaluation of transferability of soft skills, generic hard skills and specific hard skills across the whole economy, including identification of sectors where the skill is required by at least three occupations, we expose the summary of it, without information on sectors, in the next Table 2.

Results of the analysis of transferability of skills across the whole economy, presented in Table 2, confirm the relevance of skill classifications and suitability of assignment of skills to the above-defined categories. This is obvious for hard skills, because all skills which were identified as generic embodied high transferability, whereas 260 of 264



skills identified as specific embodied low transferability, and the remaining four skills embodied moderate transferability. Soft skills were not divided into generic and specific due to lack of empirical evidence of the existence of specific soft skills and the presentation in relevant literature of soft skills as mostly generic, although the existence of specific soft skills is supported by theoretical background. Analysis disproved the assumption that all soft skills are mostly generic (i.e. transversal), as Table 2. shows, because only 5 of 22 soft skills showed high levels of transferability, whereas 9 showed moderate levels of transferability, and 8 showed low levels of transferability.

Table 2. Transferability of skills across economy

HIGH TRANSFERABILITY		MODERATE TRANSFERABILITY		
SOFT SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • others (100.0) • (100.0) • orientation (95.0) • (70.0) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-operation with Communication Achievement Problem solving Autonomy (90.0) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress resistance (55.0) • (35.0) • understanding (45.0) • orientation (40.0) • (55.0) • order, quality and accuracy (50.0) • approach (55.0) • organizing (55.0) • thinking (65.0) 	
	GENERIC HARD SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness (85.0) • (80.0) • science and technology (95.0) • awareness (75.0) • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative/regulatory Economic awareness Basic competencies in Environmental ICT skills (90.0) 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<p>Knowledge of foreign languages (75.0)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">SPECIFIC HARD SKILLS</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of information and documents (40.0) • control of quality of raw materials • of manufacturing and operations • production processes and

Nonetheless, it must be emphasised that transferability of skills as presented in Table 2 is significantly affected by occupations representing various groups of sectors.

The selection of mid-level and low-level occupations led to identification of skills including creativity, leadership, information exploring and other soft skills as having low transferability, because these skills are not often required in the selected occupations.

2.2 Skills transferable within economic sectors

The occupational skills profiles enable identification of skills that are important and transferable across different occupations within economic sectors; they also show differences in requirements of individual sectors.

Highly transferable hard skills identified in different sectors are listed in Table 3. Detailed information on the transferability of all skills, i.e. soft skills, generic hard skills and specific hard skills, according to the level of transferability between different sectors and the economy as a whole (all sectors together).



Transferability of a skill within a specific economic sector was assessed as a share of occupations in the sector where the skill is required. Based on the share of occupations where the skill is applicable, three levels of transferability can be seen:

- high transferability (66.6 - 100.0 per cent of occupations);
- moderate transferability (33.3 - 66.5 per cent of occupations);
- low transferability (0.0 - 33.2 per cent of occupations).

Box 4. Skills transferable within economic sectors, methodology

The information on skills which are transferable within different sectors is useful for taking supportive measures aimed at a particular economic sector. The number of workers with relevant skills can be boosted through education regardless of the specific occupations of individuals.



Table 3. Highly transferable hard skills within economic sectors

Skills	Sectors																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
GENERIC HARD SKILLS																				
Legislative/ regulatory awareness						80		91.7		100	80		75	80	75	100	90	83.3	100	
Economic awareness	80					80		91.7		100	80					100	90		100	
Basic competencies in science and technology			100		100	70		91.7		100	80		67.7	100	83.3	100	80	100	90.9	
Environmental awareness						80		91.7		100	70			100	91.7	100		83.3	90.9	
ICT skills			91.7		100	80		91.7		100	80		67.7	80		100	90	91.7	100	
Knowledge of foreign languages					70	80		91.7		100	80					100	90		100	
SPECIFIC HARD SKILLS																				
Orientation in technical documentation			91.7				66.7		80											
Administration of information and Documentation records													66.7				80			
Appraisal and control of quality of raw materials, semi- and products			83.3																	
Technical drawing		66.7	100				75												66.7	
Machine and industrial sewing		75																		
Hand sewing and needlework		75																		

Note: 1. Accommodation and food and beverage service activities, 2. Manufacture of textile and leather, 3. Manufacture of metals, electronic equipment and transport vehicles, 4. Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco, 5. Manufacture of paper, rubber and plastics products; other manufacturing, 6. Retail trade, 7. Civil engineering and construction, 8. Education, 9. Manufacture of wood and furniture, 10. ICT, 11. Wholesale, warehousing and rental, 12. Activities of households and other personal service activities, 13. Health and social care activities, 14. Mining & engineering, 15. Agriculture, forestry and fishing, 16. Media, 17. Specialized services, postal and librarian services, 18. Manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products; supply of electricity, gas, steam and water; repair of computers, 19. Telecommunications, management, public and administration service, 20. Transport, sewerage, security.

Note: Blue colour means “highly transferable skill”; the number represents the percentage share of occupations where the skill is applicable.



Skills	Sectors																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
GENERIC HARD SKILLS																				
Planning and preparation of trainings and educational events								83.3												
Handling of machines for metal processing			91.7																	
Handling of textile machines		66.7																		
Maintenance and adjusting of machines and appliances			75																	
Knowledge, selection and maintenance of tools, instruments and devices			75																	
Teaching, education and training								91.7												
Analytical preparation of programming										100										
Sales of goods and products																				
Nursing													66.7							
Programming of applications and SW modules										90.9										
Methods and principles of educational results assessment								83.3												
Moderating of programmes and discussions, announcing								66.7												
Applying knowledge of information science										100										
Applying knowledge of software environments, operating systems										100										



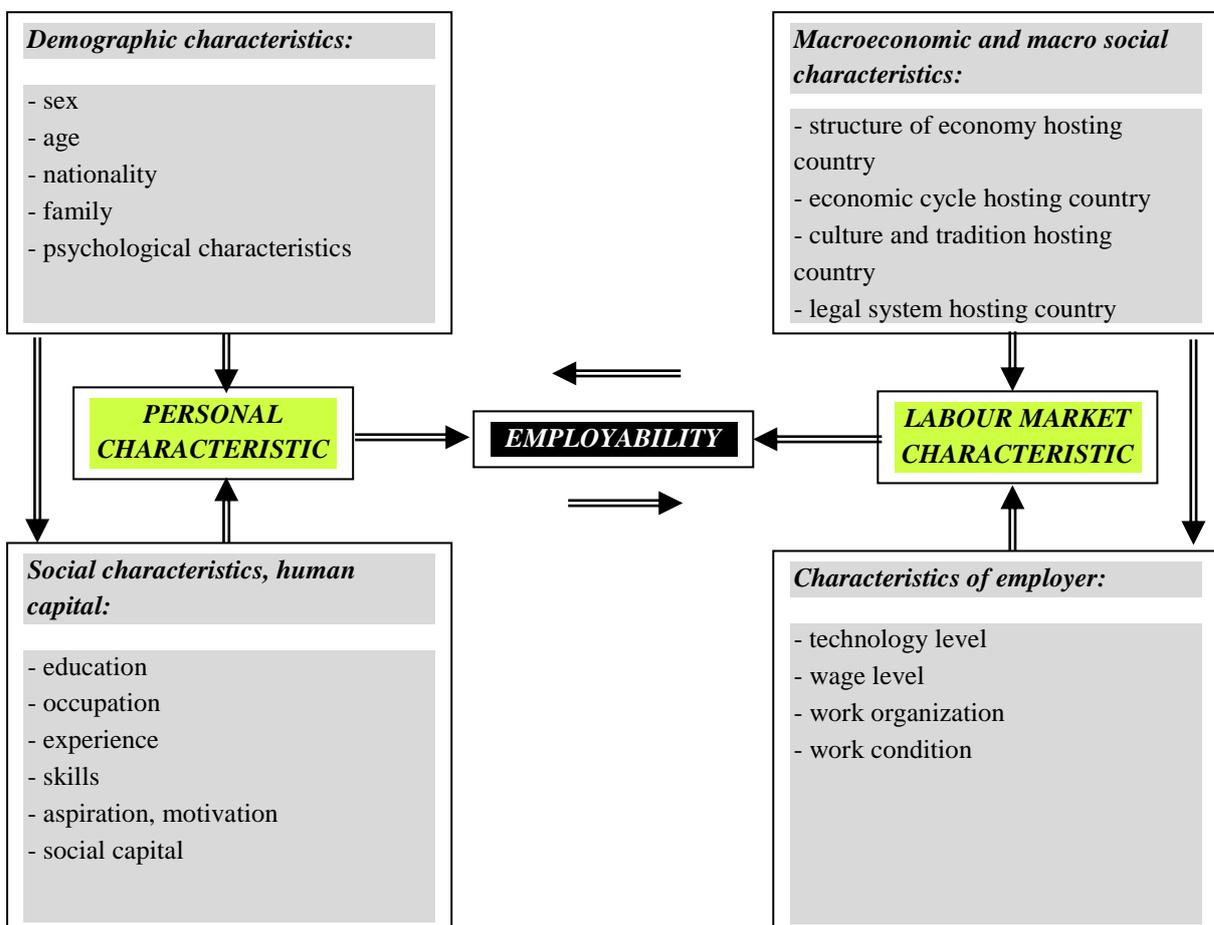
3. Link between transferability of skills and the risk of get a new job and failing to find another

The link between the lack of skills with high transferability, i.e. transferable skills, and the risk of losing one’s job and failing to find another can be described as the **link between transferable skills and the individual’s employability**.

There are many concepts and definitions of employability (e.g. Gazier 2001), but in general, it is possible to define employability as the ability to obtain and hold a paid job.

There are many factors affecting employability; they can be sorted into four main groups: **demographic characteristics; macroeconomic and macro-social characteristics; social characteristics and human capital, and characteristics of the employer**. Two of them relate to the jobseeker, the other two to the characteristic and structure of the labour market.

Figure 3.1: Factors of employability





In the upper part of the figure are factors **which cannot be changed and/or changed only with great difficulty in the short- or mid-term: age, nationality, family background or psychological makeup** in the case of demographic characteristics; **structure of the economy, economic cycle and culture and traditions** in the case of macroeconomic characteristics. In the lower part of the figure are **factors that may be changed**. As for the jobseeker, their characteristics mainly concern **human capital** (skills, experience, social capital) and **motivation**. Through these factors the jobseeker can adapt to labour market requirements. On the other hand, the employer can change the wage level, work organisation or working conditions. This theoretical background facilitates description of the impact of highly transferable skills on the jobseeker's employability.

As figures above show, Labour market characteristics and demographic and psychological characteristics can hardly be changed by the jobseeker. Therefore, the change of human capital stock and social characteristics are the only way for the jobseeker to enhance his/her employability. Human capital can be divided into general and specific; specific human capital is the main determinant of "the level of excellence" while general human capital supports occupational mobility in the labour market. The accumulation of human capital, especially general, contributes significantly to smooth economy restructuring and changes in various sectors regardless of any underlying changes.

The positive effect of education and work experience, i.e. the most important parts of human capital, on individual occupational mobility (greater probability of finding or changing a job and the smaller probability of losing a job or leaving the labour market altogether) **is confirmed by many empirical studies**. Experts of the New Skills for New Jobs initiative also support this conclusion by saying that "*the employment rate for those with high skill levels across the EU as a whole is 83.9 %, that for medium skill levels is 70.6 % and that for low skill levels is 48.1 %*" (Expert Group 2010:10). They conclude that the continuing process of skills development enables individuals to keep up with the pace of change and move from one job to another easily. Qualifications (specific skills) have a decisive role in the process of finding and holding a job, whereas the role of transversal skills (generic skills), i.e. skills with a high level of transferability, is supportive.