

**The EU in the Global Race for Talents: Challenges and Solutions in  
Strengthening the EU's Competitiveness, 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017**

**Opening speech by Marion Pajumets, The Coordinator of the EMN National  
contact Point in Estonia**

Dear Colleagues

As the Coordinator of the Estonian National Contact Point for the European Migration Network, I have the privilege to be the first person to welcome you at the EMN's Annual Conference, which is also the official migration conference of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU. We have more than 300 registered participants coming from about 25 countries – an auditorium full of international talents!

While the last few Annual Conferences of the EMN have focussed broadly on issues related to international protection and the Migration Crisis unravelling across Europe, the EMN, however, believes that the need to attract and retain talented and skilled third-country nationals is no less important immigration issue. First and foremost, it is an economic matter – foreign talents bring new ideas, skills and connections, which boost innovation, international collaboration and growth. Europe needs this energy and growth.

Our conference seeks to explore a range of issues linked to highly-skilled migration, moving from higher-level multilateral and supranational considerations down to national, regional and company levels and finishing at the individual level. These are all essential to understand the talent migration dynamics of today. I would like to wish you very useful and inspiring two days to come!

There are, however, a few housekeeping rules that need to be addressed before that. The conference is in English, but there is English to Estonian and vice versa interpretation available. You may find the headphones at the back of this room. We encourage everyone to ask questions and there will be an opportunity to do so at the end of each session. You may ask questions either in English or Estonian, but give others a chance to put on their headphones if necessary.

In case of emergency, this room has three exits: two at the back and one in the front. We are not expecting any fire drills, so if you hear an alarm, please exit the hall.

May I also ask you wear your conference badge at all times, including at the evening reception. This badge will be the only way for us to identify you as registered conference participants.

And now, I am delighted to invite Rector, Professor Tiit Land to welcome you on behalf of Tallinn University. Professor Tiit Land, the floor is yours.