

New and innovative ways to attract foreign talent in the EU

Presentation of emerging findings

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Scope and aims of the study

- This EMN provides an **overview of new and/or innovative initiatives pursued by EMN Member Countries and selected non-EMN OECD countries** to attract foreign talent from **January 2021 to March 2024**.
- Topics explored:
 - High value-added economic sectors prioritised by EMN Member Countries
 - Specific programmes and initiatives to attract foreign talent, including national initiatives that receive EU funding
 - Other forms of national support in recruiting foreign talent
- Whether and how EMN Member Countries monitor the effectiveness of these initiatives
- Key challenges faced in attracting foreign talent.
- **'Foreign talent' in focus:**
 - third-country nationals with higher professional qualifications or skills and
 - third-country nationals of all skill levels working in high value-added economic sectors.



Context

International context:

Global competition for talent drives convergence in migration policies across EMN and OECD countries, focusing on attracting skilled workers and addressing labour shortages, though key differences persist.

The OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness (ITA) benchmark countries' ability to attract and retain diverse migrant talent by evaluating migration policies, economic opportunities, and social inclusiveness, with New Zealand, Sweden, and Switzerland ranking highest in 2023 for highly skilled workers.

EU context:

European labour markets face skill shortage challenges from ageing populations, technological change, and growing demand for digital and STEM experts.

The European Skills Agenda highlights the need for foreign talent to sustain economic growth and drive innovation, especially in green and digital sectors.

To drive growth, innovation, and competitiveness in the green and digital transitions, the EU has introduced initiatives like the proposed Talent Pool, revised Blue Card, and Talent Partnerships to attract and integrate highly skilled foreign workers.



High value-added economic sectors

- **Understandings of 'high value-added economic sectors' vary among EMN Member Countries.**
 - 19 EMN Member Countries compile lists of high-value sectors but define them differently.
 - These lists vary in structure, appearing in formal policies, legislation, or informal frameworks.
 - Sector identification methods include economic indicators (GDP, GVA, investment trends) and targeted external research.

High value-added economic sector ³¹	EMN Member Countries
Healthcare and life sciences, including social work and the pharmaceutical industry	BE, CY, CZ, DE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT (life sciences), LU, LV, NL, SI, SK.
Information Communication Technology (ICT) and (high) technology	CZ, DE, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SI, SK.
Manufacturing and chemical industry	BE, CY, DE, EE, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, SI, SK (managers, specialists, researchers' area).
Research and education	DE, EE, IE, IT, LU, LV, SK.
Services and hospitality	CY, IE, IT, LU, PL, SK (only managers level).
Agriculture and food	BE, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, SK (only managers level).
Transport and logistics, including aircraft and aerospace	CY, CZ, DE, FR, NL, LU, SK (managers and specialist level).
Financial services and insurance	CY, FR, IT, LU, SK (only managers level).
Energy and power technologies	DE (mining – only managers level), CY, CZ, IT, LV, NL, SK (specialist level).
Engineering and automotive industries	CZ, DE (construction and civil engineering – only managers level), EE, IT, LT, LV, SI.
Creative industries	DE (architecture and graphic design), NL, LU.
City and infrastructure planning	DE

New and innovative approaches

Since 2021, 15 EMN Member Countries **have introduced new or innovative approaches to attract foreign talent.**

- Most targeted **economic sectors**: technology, ICT, healthcare
- Most targeted **third countries**: Philippines, India, Brazil

Six EMN Member Countries **did not report** on introducing any new or innovative approaches.

- This does not imply a lack of measures or initiatives; rather, it indicates that the measures in place were not considered new or innovative, or they did not specifically target the groups outlined in the Inform



New and innovative approaches

Websites aimed at prospective job applicants from third-countries and employers seeking to hire foreign talent were the most commonly used approach by EMN Member Countries.

General platforms for posting vacancies for domestic and TCN (4 EMN MC)

Websites addressing foreign talent un multiple economic sectors (9 EMN MC)

Websites tailored to a particular sector (3 EMN MC)

Austria, Ireland and Sweden EMN Member Countries are working on **diplomatic initiatives** to attract foreign talent.

Resources to embassies and consulates for attracting foreign talent.

Diplomatic agreements for regular dialogue to facilitate attracting foreign talent.



New and innovative approaches

Nine EMN Member Countries offer **tax and/or financial incentives** to attract foreign talent, a strategy that has existed for decades and is expanding to benefit both employers and third-country nationals.

- For example, Ireland, Netherlands and Luxembourg have tax incentives for newly hired employees; whilst Estonia and France have tax incentives for employers

While not focused on legal pathways, the inform highlights **noteworthy innovations in global talent visas** reported by EMN Member Countries and non-EMN OECD countries, such as:

- **EMN Member Countries:** **Estonia's** Start-up Visa programme; **French** Tech visa and Residence Permit; **Latvia's** green corridor initiative; **Netherlands** pilot start-up initiative; **Swedish** resident permit for highly qualified individual to look for work/ start a business in Sweden.
- **OECD countries:** **Australia's** 'Global Talent' visa, a permanent residency visa available for high-earning individuals in future-focused sectors



Other assistance involved in recruiting foreign talent

EMN Member Countries also support the recruitment of foreign talent by offering **comprehensive support throughout the migration process**

- Support **before arrival of the TCN:**
 - **Skills validation and development:** Recognition of qualifications and skills development opportunities offered in third countries.
 - **Relocation guidance:** EMN Member Countries provide information on relocating and finding employment.
- **Pre-arrival recruitment:** Targeted partnerships, like Slovenia's national employment agency collaboration with the same agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, to organise tailored events and job fairs.
- **Language and cultural orientation Support:** Initiatives like the Goethe-Institut offer German language training and cultural orientation abroad.



Other assistance involved in recruiting foreign talent

Support **during and after the arrival of the TCN**

- **Relocation support:** Assistance with finding accommodation and navigating legal and administrative tasks, such as obtaining ID cards and understanding local bureaucracy. For example, online platforms like 'Work in Lithuania' offer detailed relocation guides covering every stage of the relocation process.
- **Comprehensive one-stop shops:** Six EMN Member

Countries provide centralised services offering guidance on administrative procedures, residence laws, job opportunities, and living and working in the country.

- **Integration programmes:** Initiatives like Luxembourg's Citizen's Pact ('Biergerpakt') promote intercultural living through voluntary commitments, language learning, and training on administrative procedures.



EU-funded initiatives and programmes for new and innovative approaches to attract foreign talent

- The main EU tools used to develop new and innovative approaches were:
 - **Migration Partnership Facility (MPF)**, a DG HOME funded program supporting EU Member States with the establishment of partnership projects with targeted countries, to obtain funding for projects that blend tailored training with professional opportunities.
 - The **EU Talent Partnerships**, co-funded by the EU Trust Fund for Africa, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), and the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), provide a policy framework and funding to enhance international mobility by aligning EU labour market needs with skills from partner countries, supporting study, work, and training opportunities.
- Other initiatives under the **AMIF 2021-2027** program, which contributes to supporting legal migration to the Member States, including by funding initiatives aimed at attracting highly skilled third-country nationals, supporting job placement, and fostering integration efforts
- In Luxembourg, the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, part of the **EU's Digital Europe Program**—aimed at advancing digital transformation and skills—and funded by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), unites over 500 public and private stakeholders to develop and implement strategies for improving digital skills nationwide.



Actors involved and funding sources

- **National stakeholders:**
 - Ministries of economic affairs and labour, often supported by migration, foreign affairs, and health ministries depending on the initiative.
 - Local and regional authorities, as well as specialised agencies (e.g. migration, employment agencies, as well as dedicated business, innovation or investment agencies), also play key roles.
- **Private stakeholders:** The private sector contributes to initiatives through collaboration with public entities, participation in recruitment events, and advisory roles.
- **Non-governmental stakeholders:** NGOs engage in implementing, managing, or advising on initiatives, with varying levels of involvement across EMN Member Countries.
- **International stakeholders:** International organisations, such as IOM and ILO, partner with EMN Member Countries to support the implementation and coordination of initiatives.

Of the initiatives reported in this inform, nine EMN Member Countries relied partially on EU funds combined with national resources, Italy relied solely on EU funding, and six used exclusively national resources.

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives to attract foreign talent

- Ten EMN Member Countries with new and innovative methods for attracting foreign talent **regularly monitor their approaches**, with six conducting yearly or quarterly reviews to evaluate progress against national action plans or roadmaps.
- EMN Member Countries have implemented a range of **methods for monitoring their initiatives**, such as introducing specific indicators and/or collecting beneficiary feedback
- Seven EMN Member Countries have conducted **evaluations of their initiatives**.
- In five other EMN Member Countries **evaluations are currently planned or are in progress**.



Challenges in implementing initiatives to attract foreign talent

- **Complex administrative processes**, especially for obtaining visas and work permits, can delay TCN participation and may deter them from choosing to work in their country.
- **Assessing and verifying foreign qualifications**, poses challenges for both authorities and TCN, especially in highly regulated sectors like healthcare.
- **Integration difficulties as a deterrent to participation**, such as difficulties in finding affordable housing, unclear family reunification rules, limited access to childcare and healthcare, language barriers.
- **Coordinating and engaging relevant actors**, citing inefficiencies in syncing IT systems across sectors and involving regional authorities and employers.





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