



**TALENT
DEVELOPMENT**

EUROCHAMBRES POSITION ON THE EU TALENT POOL

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Eurochambres welcomes the EU Talent Pool and its emphasis on facilitating international recruitment, particularly in light of significant and enduring skills and labour shortages across Europe. Recognizing the importance of legal migration as a solution to workforce deficits, it is imperative to address key shortcomings that hinder the European Union's attractiveness. Therefore, Eurochambres considers the EU Talent Pool a significant stride in the right direction.

To ensure the EU Talent Pool's efficacy, it must be user-friendly and easily accessible for companies. Seamless interoperability with existing national systems is crucial. Additionally, there should be no list of shortage occupations because companies themselves should be able to determine their specific recruitment needs from third countries.

To fully exploit the potential of the EU Talent Pool, Eurochambres stresses the importance of a coordinated and comprehensive approach. Cooperation and effective dialogue between local, national, and European levels will be key, while also acknowledging the realities of labour markets and soliciting input from relevant stakeholders.

1. Executive summary

More legal migration of skilled workers from third countries is increasingly seen as a remedy for the growing structural skills and labour shortages in the European labour market. Demographic trends, such as an aging European population, alongside the demands of green and digital transitions necessitating new skills in emerging sectors, further amplify the urgency of the situation. Eurochambres agrees with the assessment that there is untapped potential in attracting skilled workers from third countries, as the EU's attractiveness remains relatively low in an increasingly competitive global market.

Key shortcomings, such as the length and complexity of procedures for working and residing in the EU, as well as challenges

linked to the recognition of qualifications and the complexity of matching candidates with employers, have long been identified. The chambers network has supported amending existing legislation governing the right to work and reside in the EU, such as the Blue Card Directive and Long-Term Residency, to complement the Skills and Talent Mobility package and ensure a coherent European approach. Eurochambres welcomes the emphasis on simplifying and improving international recruitment, as well as enhancing the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals.

Furthermore, Eurochambres advocates for a better inclusion of migrants and refugees in the labour market. SMEs, in

particular, face challenges when seeking skills outside of the EU, often due to limited human and financial resources needed for international recruitment. For these reasons, Eurochambres welcomes the proposed EU Talent Pool.

Crucially, practical implementation of the EU Talent Pool is essential for companies. Interoperability of the EU Talent Pool platform with existing national and EU-wide systems must be ensured. The idea of a predefined list of shortage occupations should be discarded, allowing companies the autonomy to decide for themselves which occupations they wish to recruit labour and skilled workers from third countries. Overall, we advocate for striking a right balance between necessary European convergence and national competencies to garner support from as many Member States as possible.

2. Why the chamber network considers the EU Talent Pool relevant

The Single Market, with its free movement of workers, goods, services, and capital across Europe, remains one of the core pillars of the European Union. It remains imperfect, however, and its full potential is not always exploited. Persistent skills shortages across all sectors of the European economies have been identified as one of the top three challenges in recent years according to the Eurochambres Economic Survey. In an era where such shortages have become widespread, enhancing the mobility of skills and talent can play a pivotal role.

Among the main barriers identified as hindering the recruitment and mobility of third-country workers are the EU's lack of attractiveness, the administrative burden, and lack of know-how linked to international recruitment. Additionally, difficulties in the recognition of qualifications, skills, and job matching pose significant challenges.

Eurochambres welcomes the EU Talent Pool, recognizes its potential to address these barriers and facilitate the mobility of human capital, and considers it a crucial component of the European Skills Agenda.

3. Summary of Eurochambres' main messages/recommendations

Legislation to set up an EU Talent Pool

- Eurochambres supports the transformation of the Talent Pool pilot project into a fully-fledged legislative proposal, to improve job and skills matching for third-country nationals in the European labour market.
- As skills matching remains one of the main challenges in recruiting workers from third countries, and with businesses, especially SMEs, facing ongoing limitations in their international recruitment capacity, Eurochambres believes that a Talent Pool has the potential to address the issue. Eurochambres supports the voluntary approach to the EU Talent Pool, respecting national competencies in the field while encouraging Member States to participate, provided it is established cost-efficiently and with minimal bureaucracy for participating companies.
- The chambers network is in favour of exploring all possible synergies with existing tools at both national and European levels, particularly Eures and Europass. Interoperability with existing systems must be ensured. Provided that legal and technical barriers do not prevent an integration, establishing an ecosystem of tools for job advertising and skills matching would greatly enhance coherence and user-friendliness. Duplicative processes and platforms should be eliminated. The participation of employers, including SMEs, in the EU Talent Pool, must be as simple and unbureaucratic as possible. Ideally, employers should have access to all profiles of skilled workers from both the EU and third countries through a single website ("one-stop shop"). Furthermore, to streamline the selection process for companies, profiles meeting the requirement for an EU Blue Card could be labelled accordingly. Additionally, clarity regarding the various national legal options for skilled workers within the EU Talent Pool, alongside the respective non-obligatory national lists of shortage occupations, would benefit both employers and employees.

- Additionally, fostering synergies with existing tools could streamline the registration process for companies/employers, potentially sparing them from completing the entire registration and verification procedure before being able to post a job advertisement. This approach could maximise the potential of the Talent Pool (and of the EU labour market) and contribute to building an entire ecosystem that supports improved vacancy and candidate matching.
- The administrative requirements for the Talent Pool should not exceed those mandated at national level.
- The establishment of an EU-wide list of shortage occupations appears difficult and bureaucratic. The criteria for filling the EU shortage list are currently insufficiently defined. Moreover, the definition of a shortage occupation is heavily reliant on available data, which may lead to occupations with inadequate data being overlooked. Furthermore, regional peculiarities cannot be adequately reflected by EU-wide and national lists.

As such, mandating a shortage occupation list as a prerequisite for participation in and posting vacancies to the EU Talent Pool should be avoided. Instead, the EU Talent Pool should be open to all skilled workers and professions (for which immigration is generally possible). Companies must have the opportunity to determine for themselves which positions they seek to fill with skilled workers from abroad.

To aid job seekers, a non-obligatory list of shortage occupations for each EU country could be made available on the EU Talent Pool Platform. This would serve as a reference point for job seekers, indicating profiles that are in high demand in EU Member States.
- Further clarification is necessary regarding the definition of occupations contributing to the digital and green transformation. It is essential to avoid favouring specific occupations or sectors and instead consider the entire value chain. Many occupations play a role in the digital and green transformation without being explicitly labelled as 'green' or 'digital' at first glance. This underscores the importance of avoiding a predefined list of shortage occupations.
- Eurochambres emphasizes the importance of governance within the EU Talent Pool, particularly focusing on coordination, reactivity, and consultations with all relevant stakeholders. We underscore the need to involve chambers and the business community to effectively identify shortages and skills needs. In general, adopting a multi-stakeholder approach and utilizing comprehensive skills intelligence tools will be critical for achieving success. Eurochambres advocates for chamber representatives, such as Eurochambres, to have (at least) observer status at the EU Talent Pool steering group meetings. This ensures alignment with the needs of the economy and businesses during the development of the EU Talent Pool.
- Eurochambres stresses the importance of increasing awareness about the development and availability of a Talent Pool, both within the EU and in third countries. Insufficient investment in communication efforts on both sides may result in the underutilization of this tool and limit its widespread adoption. Beyond mainstream promotion, there is a critical need to reach low-skilled workers in short-

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supply job categories who may lack internet access or digital skills to engage with the platform. Collaborating closely with reputable or certified recruitment agencies in third countries is crucial to ensure proximity to potential applicants and prevent exploitation through illegal or excessive recruitment fees.

- Eurochambres reiterates its support for the development of bilateral sectoral agreement between willing member states and third countries through Talent Partnerships. Additionally, Eurochambres supports the integration of third-country workers who have participated in Talent Partnership into the EU Talent Pool, provided that a Member State involved in both frameworks agrees to it.
- Eurochambres emphasizes the significance of situating the EU Talent Pool within the broader framework of enhancing and facilitating legal migration to the EU. In this regard, Eurochambres welcomes the conclusion of the negotiations related to the revisions of the Single Permit and Long-Term Residency Directive, as they ensure a coherent framework and expedited, enhanced procedures for working and residing in the EU.
- Eurochambres emphasises that a multitude of factors contribute to the attractiveness of a country or economic area. In addition to simplifying rules and facilitating matching, infrastructures and living conditions, encompassing education, housing, health, and transportation, also play a crucial role. Similarly, providing assistance and support for third-country nationals in terms of administration and integration should be considered and expanded.

Eurochambres – the association of European chambers of commerce and industry – represents more than 20 million businesses through its members and a network of 1700 regional and local chambers across Europe. Eurochambres is the leading voice for the broad business community at EU level, building on chambers’ strong connections with the grass roots economy and their hands-on support to entrepreneurs. Chambers’ member businesses – over 93% of which are SMEs – employ over 120 million people.

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