European Parliament
Brussels
Room Spaak 1A2

9 December 2026
16:00 - 18:00

Interpretation available:
Italian ↔ English

Hosted by Vice-President ***Antonella Sberna***, European Parliament

SKILLS FOR COMPETITIVENESS

Making talent mobility work for European businesses

CONCEPT NOTE

ORGANISED BY

UNIONCAMERE

EUROCHAMBRES

Background and rationale

Skills are a fundamental driver of European competitiveness. The ability of businesses to find, develop and effectively use the competences they need is essential to productivity, innovation and growth. Yet persistent skills and labour shortages, mismatches between labour market needs and available skills and qualifications, and obstacles to cross-border mobility continue to constrain the potential of the European Single Market.

For many businesses, particularly SMEs, the challenge is not simply the availability of qualified workers. It is also the ability to identify relevant competences, understand qualifications acquired in different education and training systems, assess their suitability for specific professional roles and recruit talent across borders without disproportionate administrative burdens.

The European Commission's Fair Labour Mobility Package, presented on 15 September 2026, provides a timely framework for discussing skills portability, the recognition of qualifications and barriers to cross-border recruitment. The event will focus on the initiatives most directly relevant to employers and Chambers of Commerce.

The proposed Skills Portability Act seeks to make qualifications more accessible, verifiable and comparable across Member States, including through digital credentials and improved information tools. Related policy initiatives concerning professional qualifications and the recognition of qualifications obtained outside the EU also merit attention from an employer perspective.

These initiatives could facilitate cross-border recruitment and improve labour market matching, provided they respond to the practical needs of workers, employers and national administrations.

> **Making qualifications portable is an important step. Making competences understandable, trusted and usable across borders is the real competitiveness challenge.**

Objectives of the event

Against this background, Unioncamere and Eurochambres are organising a high-level discussion at the European Parliament to explore how the new European initiatives can translate into tangible benefits for businesses and workers.

The event will bring together Members of the European Parliament, representatives of the European Commission, national and European Chambers of Commerce and business stakeholders to:

1. Examine the contribution of skills portability and fair labour mobility to European competitiveness and the functioning of the Single Market.

2. Discuss how digital qualifications, transparency tools and recognition procedures can help employers identify and assess competences acquired in other countries.

3. Identify the practical barriers that SMEs encounter when recruiting workers across borders and consider how the new legislative proposals could address them.

4. Explore how skills intelligence, validation of competences and closer cooperation between education systems and businesses can improve labour market matching.

5. Highlight the contribution of Chambers of Commerce as intermediaries connecting businesses, skills development, labour market intelligence and European policy implementation.

Panels

PANEL 1
Making skills portable: from qualifications to competences

The first panel will focus on the Skills Portability Act and the conditions necessary to ensure that its instruments provide practical value to employers and workers.

Digital credentials and qualification comparison tools can improve transparency and facilitate the verification of qualifications across Member States. However, verifying the authenticity of a qualification does not necessarily enable an employer to understand the competences it represents or assess their relevance to a specific job.

The discussion will explore how European and national qualification frameworks, learning outcomes and digital credentials can be made more meaningful for businesses, particularly SMEs.

It will also consider the distinction between qualification comparability and formal recognition, the importance of competences acquired through work and non-formal learning, and the contribution of Chambers of Commerce to skills identification, validation and certification.

Special attention will be given to the role of labour market intelligence in connecting qualifications and training pathways to the actual skills needs of businesses.

Guiding question

> **How can the Skills Portability Act move beyond the digitalisation of qualifications to make competences genuinely understandable and usable by European employers?**

Panels

PANEL 2
Removing Barriers to Cross-Border Recruitment

The second panel will focus on practical obstacles to cross-border recruitment and on the policy measures that could help businesses access the skills and talent they need.

European businesses, particularly SMEs, continue to face barriers to cross-border recruitment, including complex administrative procedures, lengthy recognition processes and difficulties in assessing qualifications obtained abroad.

The panel will explore how EU initiatives, particularly the envisaged revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive and measures to facilitate the recognition of qualifications held by third-country nationals, can simplify recruitment, improve access to international talent and help address labour and skills shortages.

The discussion will also consider the need for more responsive education and training systems, including vocational education and training (VET) curricula that better reflect changing labour market needs, while safeguarding quality and respecting national competences.

Training, upskilling and reskilling, alongside intra-EU mobility and access to international talent, will be considered as complementary responses to skills shortages.

Chambers of Commerce can play a practical role by informing and supporting SMEs, identifying skills shortages, connecting employers with training providers and facilitating skills matching.

Guiding question

> **How can EU initiatives reduce barriers to cross-border recruitment and help European businesses access the skills and talent they need?**

Expected outcomes

The event aims to contribute to the European policy debate on skills portability and fair labour mobility by identifying practical priorities for the implementation and further development of the Commission's proposals.

In particular, the discussion should help establish a shared understanding of how European initiatives can:

- Improve the transparency and practical usability of qualifications and competences.
- Reduce administrative complexity and increase predictability for employers and workers.
- Ensure that new digital instruments are accessible, interoperable and adapted to SMEs.
- Strengthen the connection between skills development, labour market needs and business competitiveness.
- Mobilise Chambers of Commerce and business networks to support effective implementation at national and local levels.

The overarching ambition is to help make skills portability and cross-border recruitment practical enablers of a more competitive, inclusive and integrated European Single Market.