



ROUNDTABLE 3

What is needed for more sustainable labour market integration?

11.00 – 12.30 and 14.00 – 15.30 on 4 December 2023 (DAY 1)

Structure: 30min of presentations/mini panel plenary + 60min of discussion to engage participants in exchanging their views, best practices and solutions

Speakers

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Co-moderators

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Finding a job quickly and at the appropriate level of qualifications is very important for migrants themselves as well as for the host society. But although many migrants bring skills to the EU that are highly needed on EU Member States' labour markets, they often struggle to put them to use. When migrants cannot find work or take up jobs below their level of qualifications, the EU economy also misses out on their skills and talent.

Drawing from the priorities of the [Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#) and taking into account the work within the [European Year of Skills](#), discussions in this roundtable should focus on different aspects related to labour market integration, such as skills and qualifications, equal job opportunities and work-related rights.

Whereas the employment rates of migrants have improved over the last decade in most EU Member States, **challenges remain** regarding their full inclusion in the labour market. Such challenges include:

- The **unemployment rate** of third-country nationals (TCNs) is over twice that of EU nationals (12.8% vs. 5.5% in 2022)¹. There is also a **gender gap**: Only 45% of migrant women in the EU

(¹) Eurostat (2023): [Migrant integration statistics – labour market indicators](#)

have a job against 66% of their male peers and 63% of native-born women². The effects of motherhood are more pronounced for migrant women in this regard.³

- Migrants tend to work more in **temporary arrangements** and involuntary part-time work. Often, they have difficulties in having their skills validated and their qualifications recognized. Employed migrants with a university degree are more likely to be **overqualified** for their jobs (i.e. work in low- or medium-skilled occupations) than the local population: In 2022, the Union's over-qualification rate was 39.4 % for non-Union citizens, 31.8 % for Union citizens from other Member States and just 21.1% for nationals of the Member State in question⁴.
- Migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background reportedly often face **direct or indirect discrimination** because of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion when looking for work as well as at the workplace. Hence, ensuring equal treatment and non-discrimination in recruitment processes and at the workplace is key for building **more inclusive working cultures**.

Effective inclusion of migrants and citizens with a migrant background into the labour market requires the active **collaboration of a large variety of actors**, including public authorities at local, regional, national and European level, civil society organisations including migrant organisations, economic and social partners, and employers. Under the [European Partnership for Integration](#), the European Commission and European Social and Economic Partners have worked together closely since 2017 to create opportunities for integrating refugees and other migrants into the EU labour market. Several countries have put similar cooperation structures in place at the national or regional/local level. Such cooperation contributes to matching migrants with the right vacancies and sharing good practices. It can also help to ensure that migrants are effectively informed about their rights and opportunities on the labour market, including how to access quality jobs through up- and reskilling measures as well as validation of prior learning.

Considering the rampant **labour shortages** across all skill levels and numerous industries in the EU, a key objective of the European Year of Skills is to **help people get the right skills for quality jobs**. Activating the un- or underused potential of migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background is important for filling the shortage occupations, as well as realizing the ambition of the green and digital transitions. Providing up- and reskilling measures is as important in this regard as facilitating the validation of skills and recognition of qualifications obtained in third countries.

The arrival of displaced people from Ukraine has also prompted the Commission and EU Member States to speed up labour market integration and launch targeted initiatives. Based on the Commission's 2022 Recommendation on **recognition of qualifications of people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine**, EU Member States implemented a range of innovative and pragmatic measures such as waivers for certain requirements, access to a profession under supervision etc. In June 2023, the Commission published a report with [lessons learnt and good practices](#) identified from the implementation of the Recommendation. These fed into a recommendation with broader scope: On 15 October 2023, the Commission published a [Commission Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals](#) as part of a series of new initiatives in a [Skills and Talent Mobility package](#) to make the EU more attractive to talent from outside EU.

Within the EU, migrants represent an important pool of **potential entrepreneurs**, but can face specific legal, cultural and linguistic obstacles. These issues need to be addressed to provide an environment where entrepreneurs of migrant origin can easily set up their business and grow. Entrepreneurial education and training as well as role models and outreach to specific groups can be important steps in this direction.

(²) EC/OECD (2023): [Indicators of Immigrant Integration – Settling In](#)

(³) OECD (2023): [International Migration Outlook 2023](#)

(⁴) Eurostat (2023): [Non-nationals more likely over-qualified than nationals](#)

Questions to prompt discussions:

- What are the main **obstacles to sustainable labour market integration** of migrants that you observe in your work? Can you share **good practices** to tackle these obstacles?
- In your country, do **multi-stakeholder initiatives** exist at the national or local level to foster the labour market integration of migrants? How can we strengthen such initiatives, in order to scale up sustainable employment opportunities?
- Are there any **anti-discrimination policies** and/or measures in place in your country to tackle discrimination in the recruitment process and at the workplace? Please identify good practices for making workplaces more inclusive.

Links to documents

- [Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#)
- European Commission/OECD (2023): [Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023 – Settling In](#)
- OECD (2023): [International Migration Outlook](#), in particular chapters 1, 3 and 5
- Report: [Assessment of Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2022/554 of 5 April 2022 on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine](#)
- Network of the European Public Employment Services (PES Network, 2023): [Labour market integration of displaced people and refugees - Update of ‘Key Considerations’](#)
- Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) [Being Black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent](#)
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions [Social impact of migration: Addressing the challenges of receiving and integrating Ukrainian refugees](#) and [Barriers to employment of displaced Ukrainians](#)