

# Social partners' consultation on the EU Talent pool Ceemet Response

## PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The EU transition towards a green and digital economy demands specific skills as well as an adequately skilled workforce to ensure a smooth and successful twin transition. However, today, all sectors of the economy are facing the double and increasingly aggravated challenge of labour and skills shortages. Our industries do not escape this reality, and currently all our members across the EU report that labour and skills shortages are the number one obstacle hindering their competitiveness and ability to innovate and thus to provide quality jobs.

Whereas skills shortages have been there for years and continue to be a persistent and unsolved issue for companies, labour shortages are more of a recent phenomenon that are due to the demographic situation with less active people, the ageing of the European population and consequently a large group of active workers close to retirement or workers benefiting from early retirement schemes. All these elements reduce considerably the available pool of workers.

Against this background, the tech and industry employers consider that putting in place well-designed legal migration policies are certainly a key tool to address labour shortages. It is for this reason that we welcomed the skills and talent package released by the European Commission in April 2022.

Both the operational and legislative measures contained in the package represent an effective manner to deal with labour shortages, tackle the demographic challenge and improve migration management as a way to enhance also employment opportunities for Third Country Nationals (TCNs).

Whereas the legislative pillar aims at putting in place an efficient legislative framework, simplified and less bureaucratic in order to improve legal migration to the EU, the operational measures, such as the EU talent pool, intend to address the challenges of international matching of TCNs and job opportunities in EU businesses. The tech and industry employers consider that this pool, if designed in an easy and user-friendly manner, will certainly facilitate the recruitment of the qualified workers that our companies are looking for.

However, Ceemet would like to emphasize that legal migration policies are not the only solution to labour shortages. Indeed, alongside migration policies, policy makers should continue to invest, for example, in active labour market policies, in order to urgently bring back to the labour market those people who are not in employment nor undergoing training. Promoting intra-EU mobility, incentivising workers who stay longer at work and others are also relevant measures to cope with labour shortages.

As there is no unique solution to labour shortages, but a variety of them, Ceemet continues to call on European and national policy makers to develop and implement well-planned and coordinated strategy with a combination of European and national measures addressing migration, skills, employment and labour market issues.

## CEEMET VIEWS ON THE POOL

Ceemet would like to highlight that the MET industries are very much in need of highly qualified workers but also medium and low skilled workers. We require both blue-collar and white-collar workers.

Our companies need highly skilled workers to thrive and remain competitive, such as data analysts, engineers, cybersecurity and ICT specialists, mechanical and metal designers, software engineers, and the skilled workforce to advance robotics and automation in manufacturing. Workers with the adequate analytical and system design skills, as well as workers with the adequate STEM background are crucial for the sustainability of the MET industries.

Not only that, we also have a significant demand for medium and low-skilled workers such as mechanics, electric and electronic technicians, boilermakers, welders, electricians, and more. In general, our companies are experiencing a strong need for workers with vocational backgrounds.

All these professions and skills sets are indispensable to ensure the success of the green and the digital transformation that the industries are undergoing, especially in critical sectors such as the automotive and aerospace industries, providing with millions of jobs in Europe.

It is for this reason that we fully support the deployment of the EU talent pool and seek to contribute to its development. Indeed, the tech and industry employers strongly back the overarching objective of the pool, which aims to provide Member States with an EU-level tool for facilitating international recruitment and creating opportunities for qualified third-country nationals to work in sectors of interest within the EU. Ceemet considers that a real talent pool open to all Member States and that ensures a broad participation of EU countries, will be more effective as TCNs will have the possibility to access more job opportunities across the EU, and EU employers will be able to access a larger pool of talent

The pool should start with addressing specific labour shortages and develop gradually in order to progressively include other qualifications and professional profiles while extending its scope to more Member States.

As for the organizational aspects of the EU talent pool, Ceemet is of the opinion that it should build on certain elements of EURES notably the interoperability with national recruitment portals and other private and sectoral portals: such as LinkedIn or others. In order to ensure its success, the pool has to facilitate automatic matching.

Additional components facilitating international recruitment such as the provision of specific support services to employers (after the entry) and third-country nationals (before or after the entry) that provide with information on the conditions of entry and work conditions in the EU (Member States) are certainly of added value. Ceemet recognises the advantages of incorporating measures and functionalities within the pool that address the validation of skills and recognition of qualifications. This is particularly relevant considering the forthcoming initiative on the recognition of qualifications for third-country nationals, which will accompany the EU Talent Pool proposal. We believe that these measures should be thoroughly discussed with the social partners.

The pool will only be a successful initiative if it is easily accessible for SMEs and TCN as well as designed in a user-friendly manner and easy to navigate. In this regard, it is of the utmost importance that the Commission launches targeted communication campaigns to promote this “talent pool” amongst SMEs once it is put in place.

Even though we believe that the pool will have a larger positive impact if the majority of the EU Member States become part of it, Ceemet considers that the pool should remain a voluntary system for the Member States. As already stated, the pool should be developed gradually and avoid brain drain as much as possible.

Finally, as regards the argument often brought forward about third country nationals being discriminated, Ceemet would like to highlight that the MET industries provide for good wages and working conditions. We strongly oppose and condemn unfair recruitment procedures or unlawful working conditions. Third-country nationals must be entitled to the working conditions that comply with EU and national labour law.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

As the policy instrument required for the development of the EU talent pool is legally binding and would thus require lengthy discussions amongst the Member States before the legislative act can be adopted, Ceemet calls on the policy makers to give a push to already existing EU tools in order to start attracting the talent that the EU is in need of.

For example, the possibility of upgrading and modernising the EU immigration portal in order to provide with accessible, interactive and user-friendly information to TCNs interested in moving and working in the EU, could be rolled out easily and rapidly. This portal could also act, in the future, as a support tool of the talent pool.

Ceemet, in conjunction with the EU immigration portal, advocates for the deployment of targeted job matching events in specific sectors and occupations as a means to facilitate the connection between EU employers and third-country nationals in those sectors. While the impact of such events may be modest, we support their promotion due to their relatively low logistical and organisational costs, enabling their immediate implementation.

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