

Research Workshop on

Skills Shortage and Recruitment of Skilled Workers in European Countries: Development of Local Human Capital or Immigration?

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Agenda

- Introduction of the project
- Presentation of selected findings
- First round of WS
- Upcoming work package
- Second round of WS



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<https://www.skills4justice.eu>

About the project

Research methodology

Activities

Results

Partners

Events





Partners

Universities from	
Destination countries	Origin countries
Germany	Ethopia
France	North Macedonia
Italy	Turkiye
Lithuania	Ukraine
Poland	
Norway	
UK	



Project Aims

1. Designing of shortage model for recruitment of skilled workers in participating countries
2. Comparative analysis of needs and shortages of skilled workforce for both country groups
3. Surveying skilled migrant workers in the countries of destination and origin (returned migrants)
4. Analysis of influencing conditions on local vs. foreign upskilling and recruiting processes compared between source and target countries
5. Development of a toolkit for implementation of just and sustainable transnational skills partnerships



What is a skills partnership?

Different concepts:

Transnational skills and mobility partnerships (SMP): „approaches and frameworks that aim to share the benefits of migration through a modality that is both defined and supported by the involved partners” (OECD, 2018; Bertelsmann Foundation, 2020)

Global Skills Partnerships (GSP): „partnerships that private actors can use to invest in human capital” (Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, 2020)

European Commission’s sustainable model of skills mobility partnerships: based on four principles

1. individualization of skill requirements in supporting integration of migrant workers, individualized training and skill formation for migrants;
2. following sectoral requirements of skills in designing recruitment and training measures;
3. long-term investment in skill formation of involved countries;
4. long-term partnerships with joint approach and sharing costs and benefits (European Commission, 2020)



Structure of the project

WP 1: Project Management

WP2

Shortage Model
Development in
Target Countries

WP 3

Shortage Model
Development
Source Countries

WP2 + 3

Comparative
analysis of
shortage models

WP 4

Survey with
Migrant Workers

WP 5

Analysis of
Conditions and
Validation of
Shortage Models

WP 6

Development of
Toolkit for actors
interested in
establishing skills
partnerships

WP 7: Dissemination



Leading Questions for Current Research (WP2)

- 1) What are the common and specific features of skill matching and skills shortages in the countries?
- 2) How are the eventual skill mismatches and shortages regarded and treated by the enterprises, education and training providers and policy makers?
- 3) To what extent and how immigration and attracting foreign workforce is favored as solution of skill matching and shortage problems?



Recruiting of...

Locals:

- Strengthening career guidance
- target unused reserves of (not yet) skilled workforce, e.g. women for STEM
- Investment in up- and reskilling
- Automation and robotization of the work processes

→ in many target countries no longer sufficient approach

Migrants:

- Without alternative
- Earn less than locals
- Work below level of qualification
- Have language problems
- Have limited access to CVET though they want to develop profession
- Inadequate career guidance

→ recruitment of migrant workers accompanied by contextual obstacles



State of the Art

- Discussion on alternatives to migrant workers:
 - Barriers and obstacles (UNESCO, 2021)
 - Targeting unusual groups (McGrath, 2021)
 - Investment in the up- and reskilling (Livingston, 2017; Brown, Lauder and Ashton 2011)
 - Automation and robotization of the work processes (McKinsey & Company 2018; OECD, 2022).
- Openness of local skill formation systems to migrants
 - national education policies (Wickham, 2017)
 - engagement of social partners in education and training (Aerne & Bonoli, 2021)
 - weaknesses and closeness of the skill formation systems (Leontiyeva, 2020)
 - flexibility and agility of skill formation systems towards needs of migrants (Hofmann, 2022)
- Company-related approaches
 - role of company-specific skills in the HRM and HRD practices (Fregin, et al., 2020)
 - Invisibility of the migrant workers skills (Iskander, 2021; Webb et al., 2017)



Research methodology

Step 1:

Desktop study, including

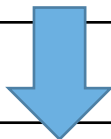
- secondary research data
- Official statistical data
- Policy documents



Step 2 (ongoing):

Qualitative study through interviews, including

- Employers
- Employers' organisations
- Trade unions and intermediaries
- Education and training providers
- Political actors and NGOs



First results



German Case: Selected Results

- Number of labour force potential expected to shrink about 11,7% until 2060 (IAB, 2023) with aging society
- Relation of unemployed to open job offers decreases and stresses labour market (Adunts et al., 2022)
- Main reasons for staffing difficulties are low number of applicants and insufficient qualification (ibid.)
- increasing lack in helping jobs as well as jobs that are trained on workplace (ibid.)
- Labour market integration of refugees overall improving, but still producing mismatches (IAB, 2024)
- 43% from EU, 57% from third countries, immigration from EU is expected to decrease (ibid.)
- New act on immigration of skilled workers supposed to fasten and ease working for migrant workers in Germany



Branches with Need for Skilled Workers

- **Care sector (nursing staff)**
- Social affairs and education
- **Construction and crafts sector**
- IT and digitalization
- Engineering and industry
- Transport and logistics
- Agriculture
- Sustainable (green) energy
- Gastronomy and tourism





Main Acts to Manage Labour Migration (BIBB, 2023)

Skilled Workers Immigration Act
("Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz") since 2024:

Pillar I

Skilled Workers:

- Full recognition
- Work contract in Germany

Pillar II

Experience:

- State-recognized degree in source country
- Two years of relevant work
- Minimum salary

Pillar III

Potential:

- Status of skilled worker or
- Point system

Western Balkans
Regulation
("Westbalkan-
regelung")
since 2021:

Work:

- Specific nationality
- Agreement on placement
- Fixed contingency through Federal Employment Agency



Obstacles: Insights in Interviews

No alternative to work migration: there is no alternative to integrating migrant workers in German labour market (POL_P1), VET schools (e.g. care sector, mechanics) have free places (EMP_P7; VET_HE_P5)

Improvement of VET schools: consequent application of concepts fitting all learning levels of apprentices (VET_HE_P5)

Reputation & Impact: some people come for studies and a bad grade is enough for a top position in source country (VET_HE_P6)

Language barrier: language levels for entry into education sector and labour market defined, but considered problematic by employers (EMP_P2)

Lack of strategic development: strong culture of SME in Germany, small companies do not (yet) invest in strategic planning; very „German“ labour market (POL_P1; VET_HE_P1)

Reality shock: need to transport realistic picture of living and working in Germany, view is partly distorted (EMP_P2; EMP_P7)

Qualification system too restricted: perceived closed, inflexible and producing incomprehensible decisions (EMP_P7)



Lithuania: skill shortages in the sectors of economy, policy attitudes to migration

- **Demographic decline:** decrease of the population of working age (15-64 years) decreased by almost 30 percent - 600 thousand up to 1.5 million from 1991 to 2023 (Juska & Lazutka 2024).
- **Economic growth and transition from the net-emigration to net-immigration** since 2019.
- Largest demand of skilled workforce, expressed in vacant places in transport and storage (16,5%), manufacturing (16,3%), education, public administration, health care and social work activities, IT, food industry
- **Conservative immigration policy** oriented to the protection of the labour market.
- Attraction of foreign workers only as a countermeasure to reduce staff shortages, giving political priority to measures for the return of departed Lithuanian citizens.
- Employers' interest - based selection model of granting system of the work permit dominates the legal regulation of labour migration in Lithuania (Žibas 2007; Žitkienė, Liakaitė 2010).



Sectoral responses to skill shortages – international road freight transport

- Road freight transport: the shortage of drivers is evaluated from 5 to 7-8 thousands per year (in total over 80 thousand vacancies), Lithuanian companies employ 79.4 thousand people. drivers, of which 80 percent are third country nationals.
- Combination of immigration and investment in on-the-job training, development of partnerships and skills pacts with the Central Asian region (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan).



Sectoral responses to skill shortages – engineering industry and metalworking

- Years 2020 and 2021 marked significant growth of the engineering industry, including investments in the new factories and production facilities (electronics, ICT hardware, semiconductor industry, laser technologies etc.), benefiting from the disruption of the supply chains during the pandemics (LINPRA, www.linpra.lt).
- Main impediment of growth - decreasing availability of high skilled employees.
- Response: investing in the preparation of the local workforce (including promotion of the jobs and careers in the sector through vocational guidance), investment in the automation and robotization, hiring skilled workers from the third countries (mainly skilled workers and operators).



Questions for first round of Workshop

1. What problems of relationship between skill shortages and migration would be the most pertinent for research in your country?
2. In what ways could VET-research contribute to enforce justice in dealing with skill shortages and labour migration?
3. Could you draft any convincing strategy on how it is done in your country?



Conclusions and Outlook

- 1) Common features of skill matching: skills shortages largely defined by demographic developments
- 2) Specificities of skill matching: role of skill formation and VET in dealing with skills shortages; in DE focus on VET, in LT focus on forecasting of skill needs and vocational and career guidance.
- 3) Treating eventual skill mismatches and shortages: investment in the skill formation of the local population (and migrant workers), investment in automation and robotization, employing third country nationals to larger extent are treated as complementary solutions.
- 4) Factors defining acceptance and favouring immigration and attracting foreign workforce as solution of skill shortages: sectors situation with skill shortages, employers' initiatives and lobbying of immigration measures; cautious and conservative policy approaches largely defined by the geopolitical instability in the neighbouring regions.



Leading themes for upcoming Research (WP4, interviews with migrant workers)

- 1) Approaches of skill formation of migrant workforce in the origin and destination countries.
- 2) Exemplarily mobility patterns and their relations with skill formation.
- 3) Participation of migrants in the local work/skills/VET development in the origin and destination countries.



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Questions for second round of Workshop

Work package 4 covers qualitative interviews with migrant workers in source and target countries.

This is sensitive, especially when people fear restrictions or even punishments.



What **concerns** do you have regarding interviews with migrant workers in origin and destination countries?

What **experience** and **ideas** do you have to master these concerns?

Thank you
for your
attention.