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# New joint EMN-OECD inform examines innovative strategies to attract foreign talent

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**The latest joint European Migration Network (EMN) – OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) inform examines new and innovative ways to attract foreign talent used by EMN Member Countries and selected non-EMN OECD countries, covering the period January 2021 and March 2024. Based on input from 21 EMN Member Countries and data provided by the OECD, on OECD countries, it reviews practical measures implemented by national authorities.**

*Brussels, Belgium*

Since 2021, a total of 15 EMN Member Countries have introduced new or innovative approaches to attract foreign talent.<sup>1</sup> The EMN inform focuses specifically on two groups of "foreign talent" - third-country nationals with higher professional qualifications or skills and individuals of all skill levels working in high value-added economic sectors.

EMN Member Countries use varying approaches to define what constitutes a high value-added economic sector. However, frequently highlighted sectors include healthcare and life sciences (including social work and the pharmaceutical industry),<sup>2</sup> information communication technology (ICT) and (high) technology,<sup>3</sup> and manufacturing and chemical industries.<sup>4</sup>

EMN Member Countries use various funding strategies to attract foreign talent, including EU funds, national resources, and a combination of both. Nine of the 15 countries with new or innovative approaches reported relying on EU funds, initiatives and programmes, such as Talent Partnerships. Talent Partnerships provide a policy framework and funding to enhance international mobility by aligning EU labour market needs with skills from partner countries. Italy was the only country to report initiatives solely relying on EU funding. Others use a combination of EU and national resources.<sup>5</sup> Six EMN Member Countries fund their projects through national resources.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AT, BE, DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>2</sup> BE, CY, CZ, DE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT (life sciences), LU, LV, NL, SI, SK.

<sup>3</sup> CZ, DE, EE, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SI, SK.

<sup>4</sup> BE, CY, DE, EE, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, SI, SK (manager, specialist, researcher level).

<sup>5</sup> BE, DE, EE, FI, IE, LT, LU, SK.

<sup>6</sup> AT, FR, LU, NL, SE, SI.

Some EMN Member Countries have not introduced new initiatives but continue to rely on established measures to attract foreign talent which may not be specifically targeted.<sup>7</sup> Each EMN Member Country defined 'new and innovative' based on their own criteria.

Some initiatives target specific economic sectors or countries of origin. 15 EMN Member Countries<sup>8</sup> have at least one initiative focused on specific economic sectors, nine<sup>9</sup> target specific third countries of origin, and some initiatives address both. High-skilled sectors (e.g. information technology) are the primary focus, with the Philippines, India, and Brazil being the most targeted third countries of origin.

Digital platforms aimed at third-country nationals and employers are the most frequently used method to attract foreign talent. Four EMN Member Countries use websites to post vacancies for both domestic and third-country job applicants.<sup>10</sup> Eleven have developed,<sup>11</sup> and one is currently developing,<sup>12</sup> online platforms specifically targeting employers<sup>13</sup> wishing to hire foreign labour and prospective third-country national employees. Other initiatives include diplomatic efforts and tax incentives. For example, at least 24 OECD countries offer tax relief programmes for foreign migrants and returning nationals,<sup>14</sup> including flat tax rates for highly qualified workers or specialists.<sup>15</sup>

Some EMN Member Countries use skill development and assistance programmes to support foreign talent throughout the migration process. Six EMN Member Countries are implementing or planning programmes to validate and develop skills in third countries,<sup>16</sup> while thirteen provide third-country nationals with pre- and post-arrival assistance, such as relocation information and cultural orientation.<sup>17</sup>

One non-EMN country is enhancing its human resources to align its immigration policies with a long-term skills and labour strategy, announcing in 2024 its plans to introduce a Chief International Talent Officer.<sup>18</sup>

Initiatives are implemented by a range of actors, including national authorities, private stakeholders, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Ministries of Economic Affairs, Labour, and sometimes Migration or Foreign Affairs can also play a role.

Regular monitoring of initiatives to assess effectiveness against national objectives is carried out by ten EMN Member Countries.<sup>19</sup>

Challenges that deter participation in initiatives, for example, complex administrative processes or verifying foreign qualifications have been identified in ten EMN Member Countries.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> BG, CY, CZ, HU, PL, PT.

<sup>8</sup> AT, BE, DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, SE, SI, SK.

<sup>9</sup> AT, DE, EE, FI, IT, IE, LT, SI, SK.

<sup>10</sup> BE, CZ, PT, SK.

<sup>11</sup> AT, DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, SI.

<sup>12</sup> SE (in development).

<sup>13</sup> AT, FI, LT, LU, LV

<sup>14</sup> OECD, 'Why do OECD countries offer tax relief programmes to attract foreign migrants and returning nationals?', 2024, [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/why-do-oecd-countries-offer-tax-relief-programmes-to-attract-foreign-migrants-and-returning-nationals\\_5a23e2a3-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/why-do-oecd-countries-offer-tax-relief-programmes-to-attract-foreign-migrants-and-returning-nationals_5a23e2a3-en.html), last accessed on 10 September 2024.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Korea and Israel.

<sup>16</sup> AT, DE, IE, IT, LT, SK.

<sup>17</sup> AT, CZ, DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, SE, SK.

<sup>18</sup> Canada

<sup>19</sup> AT, DE, EE, FI, IE, IT, LT, NL, SE, SK.

<sup>20</sup> AT, BE, DE, FI, IE, IT, LT, NL, SI, SK.

**The inform:**

Title: New and innovative ways to attract foreign talent in the EU

Subject: This EMN inform provides an overview of innovative initiatives to attract foreign talent between January 2021 and March 2024 by EMN Member Countries and selected non-EU OECD member countries.

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a Europe-wide network consisting of [National Contact Points \(NCPs\)](#) in the EMN Member (EU Member States except Denmark) and Observer Countries (NO, GE, MD, UA, ME, AM, RS, MK), the European Commission and is supported by the EMN Service Provider, providing information on migration and asylum. The EMN was set up in 2008 by the European Commission on behalf of the European Council to satisfy the need for a regular exchange of reliable information on migration and asylum related issues on a European level.

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