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Table of Contents

- INTRODUCTION TO THE DELIVERABLE AND SCOPE..... 5**
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 6**
- 1. INTRODUCTION..... 9**
- 2. METHODOLOGY..... 10**
 - 2.1 INTERVIEWS WITH NATIONAL EXPERTS ON LABOUR MOBILITY 10
 - 2.2 ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES AND POLICIES 10
 - 2.3 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING EU INITIATIVES ON LABOUR MOBILITY 10
 - 2.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BEST PRACTICES AND POLICIES 11
 - 2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION 11
- 3. INTERVIEWS WITH NATIONAL EXPERTS ON LABOUR MOBILITY..... 12**
 - 3.1 JOHN DENNEHY – IRELAND 12
 - 3.2 YVONNE VAN HEST – THE NETHERLANDS 15
 - 3.3 HENRIK VALENTIN JENSEN – DENMARK 19
 - 3.4 IVAN JIMENEZ – THE BASQUE COUNTRY / SPAIN 22
 - 3.5 RICARDO NOBRE & FRANCISCO MOURAZ - PORTUGAL RICARDO NOBRE / FRANCISCO MOURAZ 26
 - 3.6 TIMO BERG – GERMANY 29
- 4. ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES AND POLICIES..... 33**
 - 4.1 GLOBAL TRAINING PROGRAMME BASQUE COUNTRY SPAIN 33
 - 4.1.1 Introduction 33
 - 4.1.2 Aims 33
 - 4.1.3 Eligibility criteria 33
 - 4.1.4 Grants specifications 34
 - 4.1.5 Relation with labour mobility 34
 - 4.1.6 Results 34
 - 4.1.7 What can other EU countries learn from this? 35
 - 4.2 CROSS BORDER TALENTS 35
 - 4.2.1 Introduction 35
 - 4.2.2 Aims 35
 - 4.2.3 Activities 35
 - 4.2.4 Relation with labour mobility 36
 - 4.2.5 Results 36
 - 4.2.6 What can other EU countries learn from this? 36
 - 4.3 BRAINPORT TALENT CENTRE 36
 - 4.3.1 Introduction 36
 - 4.3.2 Aims 36
 - 4.3.3 Activities 37
 - 4.3.4 Relation with labour mobility 38
 - 4.3.5 Results 39
 - 4.3.6 What can other EU countries learn from this? 40
 - 4.4 FWD.US 40
 - 4.4.1 Introduction 40
 - 4.4.2 Aims 40
 - 4.4.3 Activities 41
 - 4.4.4 Relation with labour mobility 41
 - 4.4.5 Results 41
 - 4.4.6 What can other EU countries learn from this? 41
 - 4.5 IMAGINE PITTSBURGH 42
 - 4.5.1 Introduction 42
 - 4.5.2 Aims 42
 - 4.5.3 Activities 42
 - 4.5.4 Relation with labour mobility 42
 - 4.5.5 Results 42

4.5.6 *What can other EU countries learn from this?* 42

5. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING EU INITIATIVES ON LABOUR MOBILITY 43

5.1 ERASMUS+ 43

5.1.1 *Introduction* 43

5.1.2 *Activities* 43

5.1.3 *Applications* 44

5.1.4 *Relation with labour mobility* 44

5.1.5 *Results* 44

5.1.6 *What can other EU countries learn from this?* 45

5.2 YOUTH ON THE MOVE: YOUR FIRST EURES JOB 45

5.2.1 *Introduction* 45

5.2.2 *Aims* 45

5.2.3 *Activities* 45

5.2.4 *Relation with labour mobility* 46

5.2.5 *Results* 46

5.2.6 *What can other EU countries learn from this?* 47

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BEST PRACTICES AND POLICIES..... 48

7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION..... 49

Introduction to the deliverable and scope

The aim of this report is to identify best practices and policies on labour mobility – both inbound and outbound - in EU Member States and to provide recommendations to the EU for the further stimulation of labour mobility in Europe. The main focus was on labour mobility of STEM¹ talents - including ICT.

This deliverable is part of WP3 – Mobility. The objective of WP3 is to assess how ICT practitioners could be hired from across Member States to meet the demand of employers. WP3 aims to:

- Identify regions with an existing gap between demand and supply and where solutions based on mobility could be envisaged in the short term.
- Identify short-term mobility packages solutions for these regions. This will be based on best practices and on new models identified throughout the course of the project (including the body of knowledge available through group of experts).

BRAIN has already conducted researches to identify regions with an existing gap between demand and supply and a detailed report on the outcomes of this research has been provided (Deliverable 3.1). The main conclusions of this report are:

- Countries with high demand of ICT practitioners (top 3): Germany, UK/Scotland, and Netherlands. From now on we will refer to these as demand side;
- Countries with high supply of ICT practitioners (top 2): Poland and Spain. From now on we will refer to these as supply side.

Based on the choice of regions, BRAIN has set up a group of experts on labour mobility to identify features of possible ‘mobility packages’. Experts from Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Spanish Basque Country and Portugal have been interviewed in order to identify what EU Member States are currently doing to increase labour mobility, and what these Member States and the EU can do to further stimulate mobility in the future. The results of these interviews have been used to prepare this Deliverable 3.2.

Based on the key learnings of this report, BRAIN will implement a mobility pilot that will be showcased in Europe through the National and Local Coalitions, via the DIGITALJOBS partners’ networks and through the Grand Coalition website.

¹ STEM stands for Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics. This definition includes ICT professionals.

Executive Summary

While several EU Member States are experiencing shortages of STEM² professionals, other Member States deal with fierce unemployment rates. Labour mobility can provide an answer to these issues by addressing labour market mismatches in the short and middle long term. Still, labour mobility in the EU only reaches 3.3% and increased actions are called for to stimulate mobility of EU citizens.

The aim of this report is to identify best practices and policies on labour mobility in EU Member States and to provide recommendations to the EU for the further stimulation of labour mobility in Europe. While the report looks at general labour mobility, the main focus is on labour mobility of STEM talents - including ICT.

Information was gathered through interviews with seven experts on the topic from different EU countries. Based on the interviews, several best practices and policies were selected and further analysed. In addition to this, existing EU programmes aiming at increasing labour mobility are described. Information on these best practices, policies and initiatives was gathered via desk research and through direct contact with experts on the topic.

Experts from Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Spanish Basque Country and Portugal have been interviewed in order to identify what EU Member States are currently doing to increase labour mobility, and what these Member States and the EU can do to further stimulate mobility in the future. The experts provided input for both outbound and inbound mobility. The following questions were asked to each expert:

1. What is your profession and your field of expertise?
2. Which country do you come from?
3. Could you give an overview of the most important policies on labour mobility in your country?
4. Is your government currently implementing any specific actions to increase labour mobility of STEM talents/ICT practitioners to other countries in Europe?
5. What do you think your government should further do to increase labour mobility in the EU?
6. What is your recommendation to the European Commission to increase labour mobility in Europe?
7. Do you know of any best practices/initiatives aiming to increase mobility of STEM talents/ICT practitioners in Europe and non-EU countries?

The interviews give insights into how each EU country is dealing with labour mobility, what can be done to attract and retain highly skilled workers and 'mobility packages' that can be duplicated in other countries.

A number of programmes, initiatives and policies mentioned during the interviews are further elaborated upon in the report. The purpose is to highlight best practices that have proven to stimulate labour mobility and can easily be duplicated in or used by other countries. The following initiatives of EU Member States are explored:

1. [Global Training Programme Basque Country Spain](#);
2. [Cross Border Talents](#);
3. [Brainport Talent Centre](#).

These initiatives focus on amongst others training of graduates, upskilling professionals and attraction and retention of highly skilled workers.

Furthermore, the majority of the experts admired the US for being able to attract and retain talent. Therefore, two US initiatives are explored as well:

² STEM stands for Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics. This definition includes ICT professionals.

1. [FWD.us](https://www.fwd.us)
2. [Imagine Pittsburgh](https://www.imaginepittsburgh.com).

The EU has already launched several initiatives to stimulate EU labour mobility. Two of these initiatives are described including the results achieved, namely the [Erasmus+ programme](#) and Youth on the Move: [Your first EURES job](#). EU countries could easily take advantage of these programmes by attracting students, graduates and professionals from other EU countries or offering its citizens the opportunity to go abroad to acquire new skills.

A few lessons can be derived from the best practices and initiatives from the EU and EU Member States.

- 1. Offer exchange programmes for students and professionals**

Exchange programmes offer people the chance to gain international experience, acquire new skills and get familiar with other cultures, which can have a positive effect on labour mobility.

- 2. Involve all relevant stakeholders**

The best practices showed that it is of utmost importance to include all relevant stakeholders in the development of new programmes focused on increasing labour mobility. Only by doing so, the problems the market is facing can be tackled effectively.

- 3. Make use of existing EU programmes and initiatives**

EU Member States should make better use of existing EU initiatives on labour mobility. EU Member States could play a role by better information provision to their citizens and supporting citizens with grant applications.

- 4. Provide support structures to foreign workers**

As the market for STEM professionals is becoming more competitive, the provision of support structures to foreign workers becomes more important. Therefore, besides showing which vacancies are on offer, EU Member States should also provide information on other aspects and support 'settling in' and 'living in' initiatives in order to attract and retain talent in the country.

Apart from recommendations for EU Member States, the report provides clear recommendations for the EU to stimulate mobility so as to tackle unemployment rates, stimulate development and innovation and safeguard the growth of the EU as a whole.

- 1. Promote brain circulation**

The EU needs to promote labour mobility as a brain gain instead of a brain drain. The EU should embrace labour mobility as a positive thing for both the individual as well as the economy of the countries involved and the EU as a whole.

- 2. Simplified tax systems for knowledge workers across EU28**

Increasing transparency of tax systems and stimulate countries to offer tax advantages to knowledge workers and companies hiring these workers would greatly contribute to labour mobility. The EU could for example initiate programmes on this topic in order to get input from EU Member States on related best-practices and to stimulate them to collaborate in the field of fiscal issues for knowledge workers.

- 3. Larger EU programmes on labour mobility**

At the moment, not enough EU citizens are aware of the opportunities EU programmes offer to them and the majority of the programmes focuses on students and recent graduates. The EU misses out on potential here as not only part of the youth but also experienced professionals are unemployed and experience difficulties in finding jobs. The EU should collaborate more with EU Member States in order to spread the message to their citizens and to support them in applying for grants.

4. Increased focus on families instead of solely on individual talents

The importance of facilitating and supporting families of incoming talents is increasingly being recognised. The EU can help countries become aware of the fact that investing in good infrastructures and support programmes contributes to attracting and retaining talent.

Furthermore, Europe has to improve the dual career system, which involves offering couples jobs in a country. This will facilitate the process of relocating talent.

5. Create a dashboard with the availability of skills in EU regions and countries

Many of the experts recommend the EU to develop an overview in the form of a dashboard of the availability of talent and their skills in EU regions and countries, including predictions on the demand and skills needed in the future. This will facilitate the process of interchanging talent between EU countries.

6. Upskilling and training people is crucial

It is of utmost importance to train and upskill EU citizens according to the (current and future) needs of the market. One of the actions the EU can undertake is to stimulate more collaboration between educational institutes and the industry. In addition, investing in the personal and professional development of people will eventually lead to growth and value creation for the EU as a whole.

7. Collaboration between DGs for value creation for Europe

The previously mentioned recommendations and actions can only be successfully implemented through inclusive collaboration between the different DGs of the European Commission involved. Only if the different DGs join forces, while closely involving both EU member states and triple and multiple helix partners, vast mobility rates for the EU can be achieved, thereby solving skills shortages on the short term, leading to value creation and competitive advantage for the European Union as a whole.

1. Introduction

According to forecasts of the European Commission, the shortage of ICT professions may rise up to 825.000 by 2020, thereby creating an adverse impact on the growth of Europe's digital innovation and worldwide competitiveness. Increased action needs to be taken to solve these shortages and to safeguard Europe's position in the world economy.

Although several EU Member States experience severe shortages of especially STEM professionals, others experience a surplus of workers albeit facing high unemployment rates. In order to solve the labour market problems in the short term, labour mobility can provide an answer. In theory, European professionals who are unemployed in their home country should be able to find a job in EU Member States with a shortage of workers, due to the free movement act of the EU. Alternatively, companies should be able to recruit talents from all over the EU. Yet, in reality labour mobility between EU countries reaches a mere 3.3%.

Fortunately, the importance of labour mobility is increasingly being recognised by EU Member States. Several programmes, policies and initiatives on a local, regional and national level are being introduced in order to attract and retain highly skilled workers, and to promote going abroad so as to gain international experience. Also, the EU itself has initiated programmes that contribute to mobility, such as EURES, Erasmus+ and the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to achieve higher EU mobility rates and tackle the problems of unemployment on the one hand and unfilled vacancies in especially STEM on the other hand.

This report aims to identify the best practices and policies on labour mobility – both inbound and outbound - in EU Member States and to provide recommendations to the European Commission for the further stimulation of labour mobility in the EU. In doing so, the report takes into account labour mobility in general, but puts particular emphasis on initiatives that aim to increase labour mobility of STEM - which includes ICT - professionals thereby supporting one of the main objectives of the European Commission Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

Experts on labour mobility from Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Spanish Basque Country and Portugal have been interviewed in order to understand what their countries are currently doing to increase mobility. Also, the report shows their personal views on additional actions their countries and the EU should undertake to stimulate mobility across EU Member States and solve labour market problems in the short and middle long term. Subsequently, several best-practices and policies from both EU and non-EU countries that have generated promising results are elaborated upon so as to serve as an inspiration to other countries and the EU. Finally, the report concludes with clear recommendations to both EU Member States and the European Union to increase EU labour mobility.

2. Methodology

The methodology used in each chapter of the report is explained hereafter.

2.1 Interviews with national experts on labour mobility

12 experts on labour mobility from 11 EU countries have been invited for an interview in order to identify the best-practices and policies on the topic in the different countries and to collect their main recommendations on how to increase EU labour mobility. From these 12 experts, 10 experts replied positively. When the interviews were actually conducted however, 7 experts from 6 EU countries were able to contribute to the report. The following questions have been asked to each of these experts:

1. What is your profession and your field of expertise?
2. Which country do you come from?
3. Could you give an overview of the most important policies on labour mobility in your country?
4. Is your government currently implementing any specific actions to increase labour mobility of STEM talents/ICT practitioners to other countries in Europe?
5. What do you think your government should further do to increase labour mobility in the EU?
6. What is your recommendation to the European Commission to increase labour mobility in Europe?
7. Do you know of any best practices initiatives aiming to increase mobility of STEM talents/ICT practitioners in Europe and non-EU countries?

The answers of the experts are written down in the report by taking in mind a narrative approach. The most interesting facts and quotes are highlighted so that the reader can easily see the main takeaways of the different interviews. The interviews in the report give insights into how each EU country is dealing with labour mobility, what can be done to attract and retain highly skilled workers and 'mobility packages' that can be duplicated in other countries.

2.2 Analysis of best practices and policies

From the interviews, several best practices and policies were selected that were further elaborated upon in order to serve as an inspiration for other EU countries. The best practices and policies were analysed on the basis of desk research. Information on the results, including quantitative and qualitative data, was gathered through directly contacting the relevant representatives. As a result, the analysis gives insights to EU countries and can help them in choosing what strategy to follow in terms of labour mobility.

2.3 Analysis of existing EU initiatives on labour mobility

The EU introduced several programmes to stimulate EU labour mobility. Two initiatives are explained in detail, [Erasmus+](#) and [Your first EURES Job](#), including the opportunities they offer to EU countries and its citizens. Information about these two initiatives was gathered through websites, programme guides and evaluation reports of the different programmes. As much quantitative and qualitative data as possible was being analysed, although it was sometimes hard to find exact figures and statistics on the implementation and execution of the programmes.

Besides desk research, several experts interviewed for the report touched upon the programmes and Dutch professionals active in labour market development were asked to share their experiences with the programmes and provide insights into the implementation in the Netherlands.

2.4 Recommendations from best practices and policies

The best practices, policies and initiatives provide insights and recommendations for EU Member States to take into account when developing programmes to stimulate labour mobility.

2.5 Recommendations to the European Union

The report concludes with clear recommendations for the European Commission to enhance labour mobility in Europe. The recommendations were collected by means of the interviews with the experts.

3. Interviews with national experts on labour mobility

3.1 John Dennehy – Ireland



John Dennehy
Chief Executive Officer
Zartis.com
Ireland
www.zartis.com



"The national policies on labour mobility are misguided and do not work significantly", argues John Dennehy, CEO at Zartis.com. Most of the policies in Ireland focus on attracting talent from outside of the European Union and are mainly dealing with visa simplification. The government is missing the key point here: people in the EU do not need a visa, have great skills and could easily fill the open vacancies in Ireland. We need to be aware of the fact that most of the mobility comes from EU countries and a lot is still to be gained in this field.

"We need to be aware of the fact that most of the mobility comes from EU countries"

Ireland has a governmental organisation named [Enterprise Ireland](#) responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. The organisation works in partnership with Irish enterprises to help them start, grow, innovate and win export sales on global markets. In this way, the organisation supports sustainable economic growth, regional development and secures employment. One of the aims of the organisation is to attract foreign talent to Ireland by promoting Irish companies abroad. Related to this, Enterprise Ireland supports the job board [IT's Happening Here](#). IT's Happening Here is an initiative of the Irish indigenous software sector and promotes career opportunities in Irish owned software companies. With over 600 companies, this dynamic sector offers exciting positions from graduate to director level. The job board has amongst others been created to attract foreign talent to fill the open vacancies of the software companies involved. Another semi-state body, [IDA Ireland](#), is also involved in talent attraction. IDA Ireland's main focus is on attracting high-performing industries to Ireland. IDA puts Ireland on the map by amongst others promoting the flow of talent coming from schools, universities and abroad.

In Dennehy's opinion governmental organisations still focus too much on mobility from outside of the EU, instead of attracting talent from within the EU. Enterprise Ireland's IT's Happening Here is an exception in this regard. Dennehy believes policies and initiatives should be set up directly targeted at the EU talent pool. An example of such a policy is providing language training to foreigners. Furthermore, Dennehy argues a better information provision, on a national, regional and local level, is needed to convince foreigners to come to Ireland. Information about moving to Ireland, what it involves, what needs to be taken into account, what formalities need to be fulfilled, costs of primary goods and so on should be easily available. Examples of initiatives that would be easy to implement and duplicate in this regard are the Dutch expat centres and the programme Make it in Germany that provide foreigners (EU and non-EU) all necessary information about living in the Netherlands and Germany, respectively. Currently Dennehy offers these services to foreigners with his company Zartis.com, but he feels this should be the responsibility of the Irish government and industry together. "The government spends a lot of time on welcoming foreign companies to Ireland and supports them in settling in the country, why don't we do this for foreign employees as well?", asks Dennehy. "Ireland can be made more attractive to foreigners by giving them support and helping them to get settled in the country. Welcoming more foreign talent to Ireland will in turn contribute to attracting companies as a high quality labour force is a prerequisite for attracting FDI in the first place."

Highlights

- + Need to focus on mobility between EU countries
- + Increase the availability of short-term accommodation
- + Build talent pipelines between countries
- + Make use of expat network
- + [Zartis.com](#)
- + [Make IT in Ireland](#)
- + [Make it in Germany](#)
- + [Holland Expat Centre South](#)

The single biggest problem Dennehy has experienced with attracting foreign labour is the lack of the availability of short-term accommodation. People need 1 to 3 months to arrange all formalities and find a neighbourhood they want to live in before they are able to take on accommodation for a longer period of time. However, finding accommodation for these first three months is nearly impossible. If Dennehy needed to choose one area outside of recruitment to focus on it would be this issue.

Countries and companies can do practical things to attract foreign talent, such as being present at recruitment fairs and launching promotional campaigns abroad. Dennehy gives an example of what his company is doing to find people to fill vacancies of clients. In Ireland a lot of companies are competing for the same talent, meanwhile Spain is experiencing a surplus of tech workers of whom a large part is interested in working abroad. For one of his clients, Dennehy's company Zartis.com is organising a recruitment fair in Madrid so as to help them hiring a new team of software developers. Zartis.com provides foreign workers with information about living in Ireland and a 'soft-landing' when they enter the country.

Dennehy is in great favour of building talent pipelines between countries. So far, Zartis.com has been most successful in attracting talent from Spain. Therefore, Zartis.com opened an office in Madrid and launched special campaigns about Ireland and its companies targeted at Spanish tech workers. By building up a good reputation in Spain, Zartis.com is now able to attract a continuous stream of good quality workers from Spain to Ireland. Dennehy explains it has been way more difficult to build a talent pipeline between Ireland and Eastern European countries and thinks this is partly due to the language barrier, cultural differences and distance between the countries.

Another action that has been very successful, and contributes to building a talent pipeline, is to involve persons who have already moved to Ireland in the promotional activities of the company. Zartis.com asks everyone who has moved to promote the platform by sharing it via their own social media accounts. In case someone is hired who they recommended, they receive a financial fee from the company. The idea behind this is that persons who have already moved usually know other people

who are mobile too and can better convince these persons to come to the country as they have similar demographics and trust each other. Additionally, Dennehy believes a great power exists within the network of Irish expats which should be used more to attract foreigners.

The activities of Zartis.com have been very fruitful in attracting foreign talent: 70% of the people they have placed in new roles come from other countries than Ireland, including Spain, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands.

"Mobility is one of the key ingredients to EU trade"

According to Dennehy mobility is an essential part of the EU project and should be in the top 5 of the EU political agenda. One of the key ingredients to EU trade is mobility: because of mobility people understand each other's cultures and discover how to trade with each other, leading to more clustering and specialisation. "EU initiatives aimed at increasing labour mobility, such as EURES and Erasmus+, are not large enough to create significant impact. The EU should put much more weight on increasing mobility as this will benefit the EU as a whole."

Lastly, Dennehy highlights the Irish pubs located all around the world are a great way for Irish expats to meet each other and to find economic opportunities in other countries. With this Dennehy is trying to say that increasing mobility is not just a matter of implementing policies, it can also be achieved by making use of existing infrastructures present in countries.

3.2 Yvonne van Hest – the Netherlands



Yvonne van Hest
Program Director Labour Market Development
Brainport Development
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In the Netherlands, labour mobility is mostly concerned with international labour attraction and retention. On a national level, specific regulations exist mainly for knowledge migrants – who are non-EU citizens – and their families. An interesting regulation for all incoming international knowledge workers is the 30% tax ruling. This 30%-tax-rule encompasses that the employee will not have to pay any income tax over part of his or her salary. Incoming employees qualify for this rule if they have specific skills that are limitedly available or lacking on the Dutch labour market and they need to earn a minimum annual taxable salary. For most of the highly skilled ICT practitioners coming from abroad to live in the Netherlands, these rules are applicable and very beneficial.

On a regional level, several initiatives have been initiated to attract and retain talent and foreign workers. Expat centres have been set up throughout the Netherlands to give a ‘red carpet treatment’ to foreigners. The centres support in a number of activities, from arranging permits, registrations at municipalities and housing to helping spouses find a job. The centres also often provide a physical place for internationals to meet each other and share experiences. Furthermore, international schools are becoming more and more important in the Netherlands and Dutch schools are stimulated to be more international by offering their program bilingual in Dutch and English. These initiatives can help convince foreign workers to choose for a job in the Netherlands.

“The Dutch national government is increasingly focusing on the retention of international graduates”, says Yvonne van Hest, Program Direct Labour Market Development at Brainport Development. The government is stimulating universities to put more effort in showing international and exchange students what the Netherlands could offer them on a professional level. In 2013, the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) addressed an advisory report on talent retention to the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science. The report – *Make It in the Netherlands* – claims the Netherlands’ prosperity, its economy and Dutch higher education will all benefit enormously if talented foreign students can be persuaded to study in the country and remain after graduation. The recommendations included that companies, public and non-profit organisations, educational organisations and government should make more vigorous joint efforts to attract and especially retain foreign students. As a response to the report, the organisation Nuffic was chosen to implement the recommendations from the report and to develop stable, long-term relationships with international students to strengthen the Dutch knowledge economy. The programme *Make It in the Netherlands* started in 2013 and will run until 2016. The initiatives Nuffic undertakes are aimed at: 1) making all international students feel welcome in the Netherlands and encourage them to start a career here; 2) having as many international students as possible deciding to work in the Netherlands after they graduate from a Dutch higher education institution, especially in sectors with good labour market perspectives; 3) ensuring that all international students stay connected to the Netherlands after completion of their study programme.

Van Hest welcomes initiatives like *Make It in the Netherlands* and the increasing focus on talent retention, but sees one big pitfall: retaining people with an education and skills that are already abundant in the Dutch labour market. "Therefore, the initiatives need to take into account the developments on the labour market and act upon them", recommends Van Hest. At the moment, the labour market is experiencing a shortage of tech and IT workers. "As a result, we need to attract STEM students to the Netherlands in the first place and put emphasis on retaining these students after their graduation."

"Without people with the right skills, our economy will not be able to grow"

On a national level, the government is not specifically targeting at attracting STEM talents from other countries to the Netherlands. Yet, the government is doing a lot to stimulate Dutch youngsters to choose for STEM. Already in kindergarten, children have the opportunity to play with and learn from innovative technologies. "Nevertheless, the national government forgets about short-term solutions to tackle the shortage of tech and IT workers on the labour market", argues Van Hest. Stimulating labour mobility from EU countries can be an easy and effective tool to solve the challenges the labour market is facing today. "It is important that our government recognizes the importance of talent attraction", continues Van Hest. "Without people with the right skills, our economy will not be able to grow." Companies cannot find the rightly skilled people for their vacancies which limits them in the ability to expand their businesses. Additionally, having a labour force of good quality with the right skills also contributes to attracting foreign investments and start ups to the country. "The government is now simplifying the rules for non-EU start ups so as to attract them to the country, but if we want them to settle down here and expand, we need to have a high quality and matching talent pool. The availability of talent is one of the prerequisites to attract them in the first place. Likewise, in order to grow we need to innovate, but remember: innovation is done by people."

In case the government does have talent attraction on the program, their main focus is on non-EU countries, such as China and India. According to Van Hest a mind shift is needed here. Most of the foreign workers in the Netherlands come from countries such as Germany, Belgium and the UK and many potential workers who would qualify for unfilled vacancies in the Netherlands live in for example Spain and Poland and are unemployed in those countries. Only 3.3% mobility is realised in the EU although we have free movement of workers. "We need to put this on top of the political agenda as we now lose a lot of potential for our country, and the EU." On a local and regional level, initiatives to attract talent from EU countries have already started. Yet, more support is needed from the national government, and the different ministries involved with labour mobility need to collaborate more as too much compartmentalization occurs at the moment.

Locally and regionally, a lot of programmes and platforms concerned with talent attraction and retention have been initiated, such as initiatives in Amsterdam, the province of Twente and the Brainport Talent Centre in the Brainport Eindhoven region. Van Hest emphasises that the employers – the industry and the knowledge institutes – must have the largest share in the programmes.

"We know that the primary drive for STEM talents to come to our region, is related to their professional and personal development. Salary is less important for them. So the main driver is the job and therefore the employer. But of course facilities like housing and a good international school are also important."

"Embrace brain circulation and start focusing on labour mobility between EU countries"

Van Hest has two recommendations on labour mobility for the European Commission: 1) the European Commission should improve collaboration between different Directorate Generals³ (DGs), and 2) the term brain circulation should be embraced. With respect to the first recommendation, the topic of labour mobility affects several DGs, such as [DG Employment](#), [DG Growth](#), [DG Connect](#) and [DG Education and Culture](#). These DGs should work together on this issue and implement joint actions to stimulate mobility in the EU Single Market. Concerning the second recommendation, Van Hest argues labour mobility should be seen as a positive development and not as a brain drain. It should be looked at in terms of the EU spirit of improving European collaboration. In this respect, the EU should act as a role model and promote labour mobility as a positive, effective and easy tool to solve challenges on the labour market in the short term. Van Hest: "Of course the European Commission has some really good programs, for example Erasmus+. But I think the focus now is too much on young graduates and starters. What about experienced people? If you look at the need for experienced employees vs. the need for starters in the industry right now, I think we have a lot to win by also focussing on this first group."

Van Hest points out a few best-practices that can be of inspiration to increase labour mobility of STEM practitioners in EU Member States. The Spanish Basque country, for example, runs a [Global Training Programme](#) in which the government offers graduates to do a 6 months traineeship abroad. During these 6 months, the graduates are paid by the government and the companies involved receive 'free' labour. The government of the Spanish Basque country believes every student should be offered the possibility to gain international experience. This in turn benefits the Basque Country, that needs to become more globally minded. The Spanish Basque country does not see graduates leaving the country as a brain drain, but as a brain gain instead. The government trusts the knowledge and experiences will flow back to the region.

Another good example of an initiative increasing labour mobility is the Erasmus+ programme. Via this programme, EU students can do an exchange or internship abroad, and experience what it is like to live, study and work in another country for the benefit of labour mobility. "Every year, we have around 20 Spanish students from these two programmes, and at the moment we even have more traineeship offers than there are trainees, especially our regional SME companies are very happy with these programmes. The retention rate after intern- or traineeship is more than 50%", says van Hest.

Van Hest also admires countries outside of Europe for their initiatives on labour mobility. One of those countries is Singapore whose population is for one-fourth international. Singapore's educational system is way ahead and education has a clear connection with the industry. Yet, the high standard of living in Singapore is a problem for many foreigners. Another country that has undertaken many activities in the field of attraction and retention of STEM people is the United States of America. One example of which van Hest is very in favour of is the movement [FWD.US](#). FWD.US focuses on comprehensive immigration reform, improving the quality of American education, and encouraging more investment in scientific innovation. The movement's mission is to mobilize the tech community to support policies that keep the American Dream achievable in the 21st century. Another example is the new programme of the US city of Pittsburgh, [Imagine Pittsburgh](#).

³ The European Commission is divided into several departments and services. The departments are known as Directorate-Generals (DGs).

To conclude, Van Hest recommends to EU Member States: “Before starting a programme for talent attraction, you need to understand the needs and wishes of your customers and stakeholders and involve them actively in your activities. Encourage your employers to develop the programme with you and keep them in the steering role. And always make sure you connect with your worldwide STEM talents and know what they want. My dream is to have a ‘STEM talents consultancy group’ in all of our focus countries.”

Highlights

- + 30% tax rule: fiscal advantages for incoming employees
- + Expat centres
- + Retain the right people, focus on what employers ask for
- + Brainport Talent Centre
- + Embrace the term brain circulation
- + Global Training Programme of Spanish Basque Country
- + FWD.US movement
- + Imagine Pittsburgh

3.3 Henrik Valentin Jensen – Denmark



Henrik Valentin Jensen
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"Denmark suffers from a mobility problem", argues Henrik Valentin Jensen, Senior Adviser at the Danish ICT and Electronics Federation. Open vacancies cannot be filled due to a mismatch between the competences employers demand and jobseekers offer. Several initiatives that contribute to tackling this problem have been implemented on the Danish labour market.

The Danish labour market is strictly regulated by the market itself rather than by government legislation. Pay and working conditions are typically defined by trade unions and employers organisations in collective agreements. This system of labour market regulation is referred to as the Danish Model. Social partners are believed to be in the best position to know what the problems on the labour market are. As a result, they are the most capable of finding quick solutions and adapting to challenges on the labour market.

The Danish Model has led to applying 'flexicurity' to the labour market. The purpose of flexicurity is to combine various kinds of labour market flexibility with different degrees of social security, thereby promoting adaptability of employees and enterprises. Flexicurity consists of three elements: 1) flexible rules for hiring and firing; 2) unemployment security in the form of a guarantee for a legally specified unemployment benefit at a relatively high level; and 3) active labour market policy. According to Jensen, the relation of the former with labour mobility is that "it is not considered as a total disaster to lose your job and employers are not reluctant to hiring people". Flexicurity has the dual advantages of ensuring employers a flexible labour force while employees enjoy the safety net of an unemployment benefit system and an active employment policy. Additionally, Jensen mentions the active labour market policy, including many agencies that focus on labour market access and help people to find a job, contributes to solving the problem of a lack of skills by offering easy access to other jobs to unemployed people. The flexible rules for employees and the support structure set up to help people find jobs can be appealing to foreign talents and therefore favours the influx of foreign workers over countries with strict and unclear rules.

"Things are moving fast in the ICT field, but people are fast learners"

To improve and upgrade people's skills, an online platform for adult vocational training has been introduced in Denmark. The short vocational training programmes offered are mainly developed for, but not limited to, low skilled and skilled workers on the labour market. The training programmes serve several purposes: they contribute to maintaining and improving the vocational skills and competences of the participants in accordance with the needs on the labour market, and to solving labour market restructuring and adaption problems in accordance with the needs on the labour market, in both the short- and long term. The online platform has been made possible by a collaboration between government, industry and labour organisations, and technical colleges.

The largest part of the funding comes from the government, while the industry pays about 20 percent of total course expenses as well as full salary to employees who are taking courses. With the vocational training programmes Denmark shows that it attaches great value to life long learning. The availability of training programmes can attract foreign labour as it allows employees to improve their (ICT) skills and work on both their professional and personal development.

Jensen explains Denmark is focusing on talent attraction from countries outside of the European Union, instead of from EU Member States. Denmark does not have specific policies targeting directly at attracting talent from the EU. Nevertheless, a lot of effort is being put in attracting knowledge migrants: foreigners who have skills that are limitedly available in Denmark or lacking. Specific programmes to welcome people in Denmark and support them in settling and living in the country have been initiated such as House of Copenhagen and Expat in Denmark. Also, it offers them the opportunity to meet other expats and local people. These initiatives are believed to contribute positively to attracting labour from other countries as they offer migrants support and helps them to get familiarised with the country quickly. Although Denmark is focusing on migrants from countries outside of the EU, the initiatives can also convince EU citizens to come and work in Denmark.

Furthermore, student exchange programmes are offered through which Danish students can study abroad and foreign students in Denmark, so as to experience what it is like to live and study in an other country. By offering these opportunities, students become more aware of the possibilities of living and working abroad, which can stimulate them to work abroad after their studies.

Denmark has implemented several policies to ensure foreign students stay and work in Denmark after graduation. Non-EU/EEA and -Swiss citizens who graduate from an institution of higher education in Denmark may remain in Denmark for up to six months to look for a job, if they have a residence permit that is valid for an additional six months after graduation. Nordic citizens of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are free to enter, reside, study and work in Denmark. If they want to stay in Denmark for more than six months, they have to apply for a civil registration number at the Citizen Service in their municipality. EU/EEU citizens and nationals of Switzerland are also free to enter, reside, study and work in Denmark, but have to apply for a registration certificate at their Regional State Administration if they want to stay for more than three months, and subsequently for a CPR number if they are planning on staying for more than six months.

Jensen argues it remains difficult to attract large numbers of migrants due to the language barrier. Foreign students who come to Denmark do not have many incentives to learn Danish at the university and courses are not always taught in English. And most companies in Denmark, including ICT companies and SMEs, have a preference for Danish speaking employees. Therefore, in the end Danish graduates are preferred by most companies. The language barrier thus interferes with the policies and initiatives implemented to attract foreign labour.

Additionally, many of the problems on the Danish labour market relate to the lack of skills. This is not just a Danish problem, but a problem the EU as a whole is experiencing. "Local initiatives are very important in this regard", argues Jensen. Each country has its own problems and focus, especially when it comes to ICT practitioners. In Denmark a lack of very specific skills is evident that can only be tackled by local initiatives.

*"Mobility is not the first thing you should look at,
focus on business challenges instead"*

"Actually, I believe we need to look at the problems and needs of SMEs in the first place", continues Jensen. Only by doing this, SMEs are able to develop and grow further which in turn leads to hiring

ICT personnel. "Mobility is not the first thing you should look at, focus on the business challenges instead". One of the problems is that many SMEs active in other sectors than the ICT sector do not see ICT as a means for growth, but rather as a cost, and thus do not see ICT professionals as an asset and resource for the development of their business.

In order to increase labour mobility of Danish people to other EU countries Jensen advocates the establishment of an organisation that has the skills to support working and living abroad. This organisation should focus on stimulating student exchanges and internships abroad, and informing people about the possibilities. The starting point should be that living abroad for a while is a great learning experience.

As a final point, Jensen recommends to establish local coalitions with relevant stakeholders to solve the problems on the labour markets, including the low rates of labour mobility. Local coalitions have the ability to thoroughly understand the problems of the local market and are capable of acting quickly and effectively upon them. Yet, argues Jensen, these coalitions need to have labour mobility on their minds, which is unfortunately often not the case. Labour mobility can be a good tool to solve the mismatch on the labour market in the short term. Jensen does not see the added value of setting up a large EU programme to coordinate the actions of the local initiatives. "Of course, local initiatives can learn from each other and this is very important, though they are able to solve local problems themselves." The EU could however play a role in easing the language barriers and make an European career more attractive – and in the longer run not in the least by offering even better opportunities for students to study in another country.

Highlights

- + Adult Vocational Training in Denmark
- + The Danish Model & Flexicurity: flexible rules for employers and employees
- + Stimulate student exchange programmes
- + Tackle language barrier
- + Focus on problems of SMEs
- + The USA seems to be able to attract all the people they want, although the rules are tough. USA offers 'projects that change the world' and do not have a language barrier which seems to be appealing

3.4 Ivan Jimenez – The Basque Country / Spain



The focus of Ivan Jimenez, Managing Director of Bizkaia:talent, is on the Basque Country in Spain. The Basque Country is very active in attracting talented students and workers to the region. Several organisations promoted by the government exist that together contribute to creating a region of excellence so as to make sure talent can be attracted and retained.

One of these organisations is Ikerbasque, an organisation promoted by the Basque Government to develop scientific research by attracting top researchers and restoring talent. The mission is to reinforce science in the Basque Country so that the region can become a European reference of excellence in the field of research. Ikerbasque offers positions for postdoctoral researchers with Basque research institutions such as universities, excellence centres and technology corporations. The fellowships are awarded to young promising researchers of which at least 75% did not live, work or study in Spain for more than 12 months in the past three years. Researchers with a permanent position in the Basque country are not eligible for these fellowships. By attracting foreign researchers, Ikerbasque wants to contribute to the internationalisation of Basque research centres and create more dynamic research, thereby making the region more attractive to (international) researchers.

On a regional level, Jimenez's organisation Bizkaia:talent was established in 2005 with the support of the Department of Economic Development of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia to foster and facilitate the implementation of the necessary conditions for attracting, connecting and retaining highly qualified people in the areas of knowledge and innovation in the Province of Bizkaia. Bizkaia:talent promotes and improves human capital for the development of the region by working together with leading companies and universities of the Basque Country. Bizkaia:talent's activities range from recruitment of highly qualified people, to creating social networks and communities and deriving policy recommendations in the field of talent attraction and retention.

In order to facilitate the hosting and integration of highly qualified researchers and their families, two talent houses have been built, in Bilbao and San Sebastian. The talent houses are part of the talent attraction strategy within the framework of the Science, Technology and Innovation Plan of the Basque Government in collaboration with the municipalities of Bilbao and San Sebastian. The talent houses offer besides accommodation, complementary services that contribute to making researchers and their families feel at home and integrate in the local society. The talent houses facilitate the process of living in the Basque Country which contribute to attracting foreign labour and promoting the region.

Another initiative that contributes to mobility in Europe is the cross-border university campus in the Basque Country-Aquitaine Euroregion. The cross-border campus called Euskampus is a collaboration between the University of the Basque Country, Bordeaux University and Tecnalía technology centre, the fifth largest technology centre of Europe, with its headquarters in the Basque Country. Euskampus stimulates mobility of students, young researchers, academic staff and researchers, through offering exchanges, international training programmes and for example internships.

Furthermore, several (public) grants are available for local graduates and researchers, and foreign highly skilled people. A Global Training Grant offers recent graduates the possibility to do an traineeship abroad and gain international experience and knowledge. Also, excellence training grants are offered to graduates who want to do a highly qualified training abroad in for example universities or research centres. Additionally, Bizkaia:talent provides a financial aid programme aimed at supporting, linking, training and enhancing the professional careers of experienced (international) researchers in Bizkaia.

All these initiatives together put the Basque Country on the world map and help attracting and retaining talented students, researchers and professionals for the further development of the region.

Still additional actions are needed to attract talent to the Basque Country. "We are facing demographical challenges as our society is ageing", says Jimenez. Recently, a study has been carried out concerning the need of talent in the Basque Country in the next five years. Two scenarios related to the creation of new jobs have been analysed and both predict the same: the Basque Country needs to import talent with a technical background (including ICT) in order to safeguard its development. "The general public is hesitant to attracting foreign talent as the crisis is still in their minds and they are afraid they will not have access to jobs themselves, therefore we urgently need to send the message to society that importing talent is needed as we will lose growth otherwise", argues Jimenez. "In order for the region to stay ahead, we already need to take action now."

One of the main problems the Basque Country, and Spain as a whole, is experiencing is the language barrier. "We have no problem attracting talent from South America, but it remains difficult to stimulate mobility from non-Spanish speaking countries." The level of English is the highest in the Basque Country compared to other parts of Spain, but still below the levels of English in for example Portugal and the Netherlands. Also, Spanish people are not eager on learning other languages than English and in the past they did not always see the necessity of learning English. Fortunately, this has changed during the last years especially among youngsters. As a result the level of English is increasing. Yet, the government needs to keep on taking action in this field as it may impede the integration of foreign labour.

Another problem evident in Spain, and which can interfere with attracting foreign labour, is related to the social culture. Spanish people usually have friends who they have known for almost their entire lives and it is not that usual to establish relationships with colleagues from work.

Several programmes have already been initiated in Bizkaia to overcome this problem, such as organising meetings where professionals of different companies can meet each other. The purpose is knowledge sharing between different companies and connecting international and local professionals to each other.

"Apart from attracting talent, we should also focus on attracting investments and start ups"

Finally, Jimenez states the government focuses too much on attracting talent at the moment. "Apart from attracting talent, we should also focus on attracting investments and start ups". Jimenez admires the Brainport Talent Centre for their focus on talent attraction and retention, investments, promotion of the region and their broad network.

Jimenez then continues with introducing the recently launched international [Be Basque Talent Network](#), which is believed to have a large impact on labour mobility. The Be Basque Talent Network is the world's largest network made up of professionals who have or would like to have a connection with the Basque Country. It offers companies the possibility to contact talent all over the world, and professionals can contact each other or companies. Several services are offered such as a forum to exchange information on topics related to economy, culture and work-related issues in the Basque Country and the Basque Talent Map. For international professionals who would like to work in the Basque Country useful information can be found regarding the technological, scientific and business potential of the region, its culture and customs and quality of life. At the moment, the network exists of more than 5.000 registered professionals, of which 2.800 live in the Basque Country and over 2.500 abroad. The professionals living abroad are ambassadors for the Basque Country and (indirectly) contribute to attracting talent to the region.

"The EU has to improve the dual career system and facilitate interchanging talent between EU countries"

Jimenez has clear recommendations for both the national government and the European Commission to increase labour mobility. First of all, the dual career system has to be improved. Opportunities should be offered for couples so that they can both build their careers abroad. This will stimulate more couples to actually take the opportunity and live abroad for some years. Secondly, Jimenez recommends to analyse the availability of talent in each EU region/country in order to facilitate the process of interchanging talent. "A map should be created on which the surplus and shortages of highly qualified workers are visible, so that EU countries and regions know where to go to find specific talent." In addition, the taxation system in the EU has to be improved and simplified so that it is not perceived as a barrier for professionals in moving from one country to another. Also, tax deductions offered to companies that invest in Research & Development might trigger them to invest in the best talent of the world as well. Furthermore, Jimenez sees a role for the EU and Spanish government in stimulating universities to be more business-minded. At the moment, students are not educated according to the needs of the market. In this respect, a lot can be learned from universities in the United States, and for example Israel and Singapore. Especially in the US, universities are focused on the market and teach students to think commercially.

The EU programme [Horizon2020](#) is focused on the market as well, but the EU is running behind in this field. Collaboration, especially in the field of applied research, between EU universities and between EU and non-EU universities should be encouraged which in turn can trigger mobility. As an example, Jimenez points out the [Weizmann Institute of Science](#) in Israel. This institute is very active in conducting applied research, offers a good welcoming and hosting service to researchers and students from abroad and has a dual career system together with other institutions in Israel. The institute is

Highlights

- + [Bizkaia:talent](#)
- + [Financial Aid Programme](#)
- + [Be Basque Talent Network](#)
- + [Brainport Talent Centre](#)
- + Improve dual career system in Europe
- + Facilitate the process of interchanging talent in the EU
- + Simplify taxation system in the EU and provide tax deductions to companies
- + Stimulate universities to focus on the market
- + [Weizmann Institute of Science](#)
- + Stimulate the development of large incubators in the EU

able to attract a lot of foreign labour because of these services, especially from Germany as they collaborate together closely. Offering these kind of services at EU universities would therefore benefit labour mobility between (non-)EU countries.

Finally, Jimenez notes large incubators and accelerators such as RocketSpace and the Cambridge Innovation Centre are hard to find in continental Europe. This can be a treat to Europe as talented people leave the EU to start their business in countries where they easily have access to venture capital, connections and markets. This in turn can harm the growth of Europe and the creation of new jobs.

3.5 Ricardo Nobre & Francisco Mouraz - Portugal



Ricardo Nobre / Francisco Mouraz
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The global financial crisis has had an enormous impact on the Portuguese labour market, leading to high unemployment rates. Yet, the unemployment rate of the last quarter of 2014 was around 13,5%, an encouraging improvement compared to the last quarter of 2013 when it reached 16% (rates are taken from the official statement of the Portuguese government). Nevertheless, the situation on the labour market is still alarming as around 40% of the population under the age of 25 is currently unemployed.

Since the financial rescue in 2011 and the start of the Economic Adjustment Program effort has been put in restructuring the Portuguese labour market. The aim has mainly been to fix the inherent rigidity as this was one of the main causes of Portugal's economic stagnation. In the last four years the Portuguese government has implemented several labour market reforms in order to stimulate economic growth and competitiveness. The most important actions have been: the labour legislation reforms, aiming to increase the flexibility of contracts and labour organization; a new generation of active employment policies, to stimulate the creation of SMEs and supporting youth training, entrepreneurship and mobility; and policies related to the promotion of investments, innovation and internationalization of the economy. Although none of these policies is directly targeted at labour mobility, they do have an indirect effect on mobility (mainly within Portugal) as the market has become more flexible thereby making it easier for employers to hire and fire employees and for people to find a job, also in other sectors than the one they have worked in before.

One of the biggest challenges in Portugal is a shortage of jobs for highly skilled people as the supply is higher than the demand. Especially in the medical sector, this has led to talented professionals leaving the country to take on jobs in other countries. One of the priorities of the government is therefore to create more jobs so as to retain the most talented people.

With the end of the adjustment programme in mid-2014, the scope of government policy for 2015 has broadened, emphasizing important areas such as Innovation & Development, technology and entrepreneurship, in order for Portugal to achieve the technological average of the EU. Policies related to attracting innovative startups to Portugal (through special visas), incentives for business angles and venture capital, and fiscal benefits for newly created companies have been proposed. This can greatly contribute to labour mobility as new jobs can be created by attracting more companies, thereby making Portugal more attractive to foreign labour. Also, by attracting companies, especially ICT companies, it is possible to retain the most talented people in Portugal or to attract them again after they have left, resulting in a brain gain. Furthermore, Portugal is making progress in the attraction of nearshoring⁴ from especially central Ireland. According to Ricardo Nobre, Group Managing Director of Cross Border Talents, this can be explained by three reasons: good language skills of Portuguese

⁴ Nearshoring is the transfer of business or IT processes to companies in a nearby country

people, availability of highly skilled people and the fact that the costs in Portugal are still competitive compared to other EU countries.

With respect to outward mobility, Portuguese policy is in line with the priorities of the European Digital Agenda. On top of that, two additional measures are prioritised. The first relates to creating incentives for Portuguese scientific and technological talent living abroad (i.e. Diaspora), which greatly increased with the financial crisis, focused on making bridges so as to create global technological startups from which Portugal can benefit. These incentives can stimulate Portuguese talents living in Portugal to go abroad. The second measure promotes initiatives dedicated to the internationalisation of Innovation and Development and scientific integration between Portuguese ICT and STEM talents and the European research area. This will align the skills and knowledge of Portuguese ICT and STEM talents with European and international standards and makes it easier for these talents to go abroad.

Portugal is also actively stimulating its students to go abroad via for example the Erasmus+ programme so as to gain international experience. A lot of international students in turn come to Portugal to spend a semester there. "A great way to stimulate mobility of students and to let them experience what it is like to live abroad at a relatively young age", argues Nobre.

"Apart from geographical mobility, also skill mobility should be enhanced"

A lot can be gained in Portugal when labour mobility in the EU is further increased. Nobre and Mouraz, HR_Talent at CB Talents Academy, recommend to the national government to work on two dimensions in this regard, internal and external, while always taking in mind their role as a facilitator. Related to the internal market, the labour legislation reforms that have already been carried out should be pushed forward, enhancing not only geographical but also skill mobility. In this way, employment transition is stimulated which is crucial to potentiating the careers of workers in stagnant sectors as well as for unemployed looking for new challenges. In order to achieve this, partnerships should be established between the Portuguese government and private companies that provide both specialised training, especially in the ICT sector, and valuable links with the international labour market.

Additionally, initiatives aimed at promoting Portugal as an important technological hub should be further encouraged. A favourable climate for the establishment and development of both national and European startups should be created, through tax-easing and larger financial incentives. As to the external market, the growing number of Portuguese researchers going abroad should be supported in every way. "Besides the eventual gains with their return, we should also acknowledge the importance of further European integration in the fields of research, technology and innovation", argues Mouraz.

Finally, one of the major issues in Portugal when it comes to labour mobility is the general perception that it leads to a 'brain drain' and will only benefit third parties as they convince Portuguese talents to stay. The Portuguese government should attempt to raise awareness of the fact that labour mobility is positive for the economic and technological development of Portugal as part of an integrated system such as the EU. The government should therefore promote labour mobility as a future 'brain gain', caused by native talents returning to Portugal and creating their own businesses with the experience and knowledge gained abroad. "Having natives work outside of Portugal will create mobility for the benefit of Portugal", claims Nobre.

*"EU mobility can only be created through fiscal harmonisation
for expat professionals across EU28"*

On a European level, fiscal harmonisation for expat professionals working in specific sectors - such as in the ICT, Engineering and Medical sectors - has to be realised across EU28. According to Nobre, only by doing so EU mobility can be created. Countries with a surplus of workers in these sectors need to be compensated for their 'brain power loss' in the first period, while expats need to gain the same fiscal benefits in different EU countries otherwise they will not be stimulated to move to a country with less benefits although this country might experience a shortage of workers.

"The skills mismatch on labour markets has led to the creation of the CB Talents Academy", says Mouraz. At the moment, students and professionals do not have the skills the market is asking for. The academy strives to contribute to solve the global ICT skills shortage by identifying and upgrading technological professionals across the EU. The academy provides trainings on how to operate in a wide number of programmes and/or IT sectors, from Java to Ruby on Rails. The mission is to enable everyone to access the vast ICT job opportunities around the world. In order to do so the academy has partnered with the world's best tech companies. These companies share their expertise and are making the trainees more appealing to every IT company in the world. CB Talents Academy is a pioneer in solving a global skills shortage by helping professionals to quickly understand and adapt to the latest ICT trends and improving their career prospects. CB Talents Academy is committed to the Europe 2020 targets, in particular concerning employment (75% of the 20-64 years-old to be employed until 2020). Besides helping people to find a job, the academy helps companies in two ways: 1) to expand their business due to the availability of highly skilled people, 2) to retain talented employees as these employees receive less job offers from other companies due to the increased supply of highly skilled workers. Apart from the academy, Cross Border Talents also offers other recruitment support. In Portugal, one of these programmes is focused on offering support to Portuguese expats who return to Portugal. Overall, all the activities Cross Border Talents undertakes promote labour mobility, both between EU countries and worldwide.

Another best-practice in the field of labour mobility is pointed out during the interview: internet.org.

Internet.org is a non-EU coalition of technological companies that work together to bring the internet to the two-thirds of the world's population who do not have access to it. This initiative will enable mobility of STEM talents to those regions where they are needed to support implementation and train local workers.

Lastly, Nobre argues Portugal but also other EU countries can learn a lot from the United States, especially in the field of education. The universities in the US are all business-minded and promote to start your own business by teaching how to set up a company and bring ideas to the market. As a result, a lot of students start their own business after graduation and contribute to the growth of the economy. This in turn attracts companies, investments but also workers to the US as a lot seems to be happening there, ample opportunities are offered and everyone wants to be part of it.


Highlights

- + Initiate programmes to solve the global ICT skills shortage
- + Governments should work on both internal and external labour mobility
- + Promote labour mobility as a future brain gain
- + Universities need to become more business-minded
- + Fiscal harmonisation across EU28 to create EU mobility
- + CB Talents Academy
- + Cross Border Talents
- + Internet.org

3.6 Timo Berg – Germany



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In the past decade, Germany was more conservative in terms of incoming labour. In 2004, regulations were introduced that prevented people from new Eastern European Member States to work in Germany. This decision is now considered as a mistake as Germany lost out on talent from Eastern European countries that went to other countries instead. "While Germany is now increasingly opening its borders to foreign labour and is considered the most attractive EU country to work in, it still has a lot of room for improving its image as a welcoming country", argues Timo Berg, Head of Recruitment at Cross Border Talents.

Most of the incoming labour in Germany (60%) today are EU citizens. For non-EU citizens, Germany has implemented several policies to simplify the process of coming to the country. Top talents who are very valuable and have specific skills can be eligible for an immediate settlement permit. The permit is limited to a specific time period, but can be renewed and eventually replaced by a permanent residence permit.

Another initiative is the Blue Card for non-EU citizens. Similar to the Green Card in the USA, the EU Blue Card offers citizens of non- EU- States with an academic background the opportunity and the right to work and stay in the European Union, in this case Germany. Yet, the Blue Card does not have the expected uptake the government was aiming for. In 2013, the requirements were made less strict and a so-called 'positive list' of high-in-demand jobs has been created for non-academic, skilled labour positions. However, only 170 people made use of the 'positive list' rules in Germany over the course of a year. According to Berg, this can be explained by different factors. "I am not sure if the Blue Card and the 'positive list' are properly promoted abroad. On top of that, many German companies looking for IT professionals expect these professionals to already have proficient German language skills. The high expectations of German employers are one of the biggest challenges we are facing and one of the causes we are losing out on foreign talent." Partially, this is only a perceived problem especially in the IT industry, since, in many projects the de-facto project language is English – a truth often ignored by traditional German HR departments. Nevertheless, many of the talented workers go to countries where the language and cultural barriers are lower, such as Canada, the US or the UK where they can get by with English alone.

One of the actions initiated to overcome the language barrier was the introduction of job specific language training in order to increase employability of foreign workers. The language courses are supported by EU funds. The demand for these trainings has been far greater than the budget permits so the funds are running out early. The government is discussing if they can provide additional national funds to continue the initiative.

Attracting more talent to Germany and simplifying the procedures for incoming labour is currently the main focus of the government. Several debates are being held on what strategy to follow. Some

political parties are in favour of a point-based immigration law for non-EU citizens that involves a rating system in which points are given to foreign workers related to language skills, IT skills, industry experience and the current skills in demand. If the total amount of points is above a certain threshold, the workers would be allowed to come to Germany.

Another point of discussion is related to the so called skilled labour shortage. The proponents believe that a need for more highly skilled workers is indeed imminent in the near future, as the population is ageing and labour and IT skill demand is rising. Others believe that there is still enough supply of skilled workers within Germany initially, as there are for example still German engineers that are currently unemployed. Consequently, these workers should be considered for a job first before looking at bringing in workers from abroad. Some argue that the labour shortage is only a matter of perception by companies or is even used to push down salaries, so-called 'wage dumping', since it is easier to justify paying lower salaries to international workers.

According to Berg, good arguments exist for both sides of the issue. However, Berg thinks a shortage of workers, including especially IT professionals, will eventually manifest in the future due to the reduction of the national workforce resulting e.g. from up to 400,000 baby boomers retiring per year. Furthermore, there is an irrefutable increasing dependency of companies on IT. This holds especially true for Germany due to the growing IT and IT services sector: there are 80,000 companies employing 600.000 workers and freelancers turning over 80 billion Euros per year in hardware, software and services, growing at 2.5% - with cloud computing predicted at a 39% growth. But also for example the large automotive industry needs talented IT personnel as cars get increasingly more complex with electronic components and systems. Overall, there are strong indicators that especially IT and STEM labour demands will increase significantly over the next decades.

Talent retention is not being addressed to a large extent in Germany. However, Berg recognises the importance of engaging foreign workers and integrating them into the local culture and community as the market for foreign labour is becoming more and more competitive so workers (especially millennials) are demanding more from host countries and companies, for example a good work-life balance and flexibility. Berg recommends companies and countries to define a clear 'people' strategy. The strategy is needed for attracting the right talent, training, upskilling and eventually retaining them. The dilemma is that companies are sometimes hesitant to invest in people (especially foreigners) when it is uncertain if they stay. Yet, it is better to rephrase the question: what if we do not train our talent and they stay? This same question holds true for countries. It is crucial for the development and growth of companies as well countries to keep investing in people, whether foreign or local. For Berg, talent will be the 'big thing' in the next decade, since the right talent is a competitive advantage.

Berg recommends the German government to focus on two aspects of labour mobility: inbound and outbound mobility. With respect to inbound mobility, i.e. attracting foreign labour to Germany, the government can implement several incentives and initiatives to support it. In order to overcome the main obstacle of the language barrier, the government should increase the funds available for language trainings and make it available to more of the relevant people. Berg mentions industry specific language courses and individualised trainings might be of added value, as one profession or person can require other proficiencies of the language than others. Additionally, Germany needs to foster its welcoming and hosting culture. Salary is only a small part of a decision to relocate for a job. More importantly, incoming labour should feel welcome and support structures should be offered to help them to integrate into the German society. Unlike multinational enterprises in big cities, SMEs in rural areas are not able to offer the appropriate infrastructure, which hinders the attraction of talent. Apart from supporting individual talents, their families also need to be helped. At the moment, some skilled talents are leaving Germany again because they do not feel supported in the integration process or recognized for their contribution at work. This also requires a mentality change amongst Germans. They need to be made aware of the fact that skilled workers from other EU countries are

needed to sustain economic growth and that they should respect and welcome them. In the EU, countries are undoubtedly growing together, but this is not yet acknowledged by all levels of the population. Another incentive that would help companies to hire more foreign workers would be to give them tax advantages once they hire a certain amount of foreign workers, thus encouraging talent mobility. Also, Germany as a work location needs to be promoted better and more attractively abroad. This is not being done enough at the moment which leads to missing out on talents and potential for the country.

Another thing that Germany should prevent from happening is that foreign workers feel exploited by their host companies. Berg has heard several foreign talents complaining about the fact that they receive a significantly lower salary than locals in the same position with the same technical skills. The government should monitor that foreign workers receive a fair salary adjusted to a country appropriate level. This can contribute to avoiding the wage dumping discussion.

A final recommendation includes inviting young graduates from those EU countries with high unemployment rates to the country and contributing to the upskilling and employability of these people by providing them trainings. In this way, Germany offers them a chance to be taken over into a permanent position by German companies once the training is completed. Consequently, the German economy can benefit from attracting and retaining talent while unemployment is reduced in the countries of origin.

With respect to outbound mobility, Berg believes Germany can still benefit from sending people abroad to a greater extent. "We need to market international work experience better. At the moment, many of the exchange programmes are focused on academics and students from universities, but we also need non-academic exchange and internship programmes." Work-wise, Germany is one of the least mobile countries in Europe, only 52% of the German workers are willing to go and work abroad (as opposed to 95% of the French workers) and usually Germans prefer to work for German companies. Creating more awareness and offering them valuable international experience and knowledge contributes to their own development and market value and further on, to the country's welfare.

"Skilled people are the true creators of value, wealth and growth for the EU as a whole"

Likewise, Berg has clear recommendations for the European Commission to increase labour mobility in Europe. Just like the German government, the EU could for example provide incentives in the form of tax deductions for companies to take on foreign labour. Yet, it all begins with realising the importance of labour mobility. Skilled people are the true creators of value, wealth and growth for the EU as a whole. This value creation can be achieved by effective use of talents within Europe thereby gaining competitive advantage over other economic regions. It therefore makes sense to train and upskill people in the EU and to shift talent to where it is best utilized. Young unemployed people in Spain could for example be offered jobs in Germany. This is a win-win situation for all parties involved. Germany receives talents it cannot find locally and more projects can be realised than before. On the other side, unemployed people go off the local unemployment index (thus reducing the strain on national budgets for unemployment benefits) while at the same time gaining international work experience and technical skills which they might eventually bring back to their home countries. The EU in turn will benefit as EU talent is retained in the EU and not lost to the US or Canada for example, so value creation stays in the European Community. In order to facilitate this process, the EU should start with an objective overview including the location of un-utilised, surplus talent, the demand gaps and predictions of skills and future geographical demand. They then need to analyse this, develop an optimum strategy for maximum EU talent efficiency and effectiveness and then implement it.

Furthermore, more collaboration between education and training providers and industry could be stimulated so that students and workers are educated and trained according to the needs of the market. As previously mentioned, programmes for all levels of education should be developed. Many vacancies in the IT field do not necessarily require an academic education, although they are publicised in this way. The EU can provide incentives for companies to upskill its labour and to encourage them to accept labour other than only university graduates. The collaboration between education and industry also makes sure students are exposed to more entrepreneurial thinking. This can help overcome another problem related with foreign labour. Companies are sometimes hesitant to offering foreign labour a permanent position (due to the bureaucratic effort and the uncertainty if the talent fits the company culture) while home countries are hesitant to giving talents the opportunity to go abroad as they are afraid of losing them. By offering students more courses in entrepreneurship and teaching them that there are other options than a permanent job, more students might be willing to start their own company or work on a freelance basis. This lowers the threshold for people moving from one country to another as they work on a project basis, and takes away fears of permanent employment for both the home and host country.

"More collaboration between education and industry is needed to educate and train talent according to the needs of the market"

With respect to the wage dumping discussion, an EU governing body could be installed that ensures fair wages for foreign (EU) workers in EU countries. The EU could also create programmes for untapped potential by focusing on non-traditional talent such as women with families and the older population who are less mobile than young, unattached, male university graduates. In this regard, it might work to bring the job to the people instead of asking them to relocate. A Greek mother could work for a German company by programming software from home and uploading the code, thus without needing to relocate physically. And the experience of an unemployed German engineer could still be very valuable in Portugal, for example.

On a final note, Berg admires two initiatives of companies to increase labour mobility. A large bank in Germany allows its IT manager to work 5-10 days a month in Germany and the rest of the days at home in Spain, using technology such as videoconferencing and remote collaboration tools as an enabler for this concept. This is one of the examples which shows that the industry is slowly adapting in rethinking the classical work model of working 5 days a week, 8 hours per day on site. More flexibility can trigger more (foreign) workers to work for these innovative companies. Another example are temporary exchange programmes for employees. Via these programmes employees are encouraged to work abroad assisted by support with the transition and integration into a new country while at the same time securing a post when they come back. Such programmes encourage people to be internationally mobile, which is something that will be the norm in the next decade, rather than the exception.

Highlights

- + Upskilling and training people is crucial
- + Talent is a competitive advantage
- + Make an overview of skills shortage and define people strategy
- + Solve language barrier issues
- + Offer support to foreign workers and their families
- + Avoid wage dumping issue
- + Encourage entrepreneurship and collaboration between education and industry
- + Non-academic exchange and internship programmes
- + Use technology as an enabler
- + Value creation in EU through optimal use of talents

4. Analysis of best practices and policies

In this chapter, several programmes, initiatives and policies mentioned during the interviews will be further elaborated upon. The purpose is to highlight best practices that have proven to stimulate labour mobility and can easily be duplicated in or used by other countries.

4.1 Global Training Programme Basque Country Spain

4.1.1 Introduction

The Global Training Programme is an international traineeship scholarship programme funded by the Basque Government. The programme promotes transnational mobility among young people from the Basque Country by offering youngsters the possibility to carry out activities and projects related to their academic and professional background at companies/organizations in foreign countries, by means of a practical training programme. The Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness of the Basque Government launched the programme in its objective to find operative solutions for emerging realities and future challenges, both on a European and global level.

4.1.2 Aims

The aims of the programme are:

- To promote internationalisation among youngsters by offering international traineeships directly linked to a professional activity
- To promote economic and social cohesion through cooperation between different agents and the generation of mutual benefits for both youngsters and the host company
- To reinforce the role of practical international learning as a generator of citizenship, knowledge, intercultural dialogue and an opening towards foreign people and cultures

4.1.3 Eligibility criteria

The participants that opt for a traineeship grant must meet the following requirements:

- Be in the possession of a university degree or a technical study degree, completed prior to the closing of the call for applications
- Certify that they have been registered in the corresponding municipality in the Basque Country for at least one year on 1 January of the year in which the call for applications is held
- Be under the age of 30 in the year in which the call for applications is published
- Not have received other grants to do traineeships abroad for a period exceeding six months
- C1 / Advanced level of English for university graduates and B2 for technical/VET graduates, other languages are highly valued
- A candidate profile in compliance with the requirements of the receiver firm or organisation abroad

The following selection criteria are adhered to:

- A professional profile appropriate for the tasks the host company offers
- Specialist background in the field the host company works in

- Knowledge of the language spoken in the destination country or the working language of the host company
- Willingness and motivational factors to take part in the programme and activities required

The selection processes will be based on the type of each grant offered and will include the following phases:

- Shortlist by CVs and language tests
- Selection via personal interviews with a grants panel (selection committee from the programme) in the Basque Country
- Final selection will depend on the match between the candidate's professional profile and the host company.

4.1.4 Grants specifications

The grants have a duration of 6 months. The actual period is determined based on the characteristics of each traineeship, the availability of the host company, or any other factor that might influence this aspect. Grant recipients need to complete a preliminary training period (50 class hours) before the start of the traineeship. The training consist of amongst other the following courses: intercultural communication, emotional intelligence, business and ethics, teamwork and innovation.

The money awarded for each grant is determined according to the destination country to ensure that housing, living and/or travelling expenses are covered. The Basque Government Department of Industry and the Basque institutions co-financing this programme provide the grant money. The grant also includes payment of medical and civil liability insurance for the duration of the traineeship.

4.1.5 Relation with labour mobility

The Global Training Programme offered by the Basque country is an excellent opportunity for graduates to gain international experience and to discover the possibilities of living and working abroad. This in turn can trigger more graduates to choose for a job abroad, especially when their home country faces a shortage of workers and high unemployment rates. The programme contributes to the internationalization of the region and makes valuable connections with companies and institutions abroad. The programme puts the Basque Country on the world map and can help attracting foreign companies and talents which contributes to the creation of jobs in the region. On the other side it helps the employers in the 'receiving' country to have young people work at their premises with the intention that they can stay there for some years to gain experience and help the company grow by use of their labour skills.

4.1.6 Results

The Global Training Programme was launched in 2012, and since then the programme has been able to offer 370 grants to trainees every year. The trainees receive about 1125 Euros per month during a maximum period of 6 months to cover for travel and subsistence and their own social security costs as a trainee. Most of the trainees go to Europe, Latin America or the United States. Within Europe, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany are the preferred host countries. The Spanish Basque government has a total budget of € 3,200,000 for the programme per year.

4.1.7 What can other EU countries learn from this?

The Global Training Programme is a tool to stimulate labour mobility and internationalisation which is rather easy to implement and duplicate by other countries. The largest drawback is the costs involved. In this example, the Spanish Basque Government covers all the costs for a trainee for 6 months. If other governments have the intention to do the same, this is a best practise easy to copy. A possible new model can be introduced in which the government from the home country pays one third, the employer in the host country pays one third and the European Commission pays one third.

4.2 Cross Border Talents

4.2.1 Introduction

Cross Border Talents (CBT) is a specialist recruitment consultancy with a global network of public and private recruitment partners across Europe, Americas, Africa, Middle East and Australasia. CBT provides permanent recruitment solutions for the Engineering, IT, Medical and Contact Centre sectors. By facilitating talents mobility worldwide and keeping the recruitment process short and simple, CBT contributes to solving the global skills shortage challenge.

4.2.2 Aims

CBT aims to solve the skills shortage challenge through consistently facilitating employment transitions in increasingly volatile and complex labour markets. CBT strives to be recognised as the skills shortage specialists by helping talents to find the best jobs and companies to boost their productivity.

4.2.3 Activities

CBT's main activity is innovative international sourcing. They listen to clients' needs and develop tailor-made solutions for their recruitment 'pains'.

CBT launched the following three solutions to contribute to solving the skills shortage challenge:

- **Global Recruitment Partners Network**
More than 1.000 recruitment partners across 50 countries are looking for the skills CBT's clients describe in their job descriptions. A Global Recruitment Coordinator is allocated to each client and the single point of contact to a unique Talent's database. Clients do not have to access any recruitment platform, they only need to tell what they need and CBT replies with a suitable offer.
- **CB Talents Academy**
CB Talents Academy helps people acquire the knowledge, skills and self-confidence they need to succeed and find a suitable job. Every week hundreds of applicants worldwide contact the Academy to acquire the skills needed to build, design and maintain computer networks, gain hard and soft competences, improve their career prospects while filling the global demand for networking professionals.
- **CBT IT Nearshore Outsourcing Solutions**
The expert partners of CBT offer locations for IT nearshoring activities adjacent or near the country of the company.

Many of the success stories of CBT are a result of personal referrals from the candidates CBT already works with. People who think that one of their friends or colleagues could benefit from the personalised service the company offers can recommend that person to CBT. If in the next 12 months the recommended candidate secures a position (doctor, engineer, nurse or IT specialist) through CB

Talents, the person who recommend him/her will receive 500 Euros. This incentive has led to many people recommending talents who were eventually hired by the clients of CBT.

4.2.4 Relation with labour mobility

CBT is committed to the Europe 2020 targets, specifically to the target related to employment: 75% of the 20-64 years old to be employed until 2020. CBT recruits talents worldwide, thus also in Europe in which it has a wide network of companies and talents.

CBT is focusing on balancing the labour markets in countries by placing talents from country A with high unemployment rates in country B with a skills shortage. In this way, CBT directly affects labour mobility. Also, CB Talents Academy contributes to labour mobility as people are trained with specific skills which makes it easier for them to find a job and for CBT to place them at an (international) company.

4.2.5 Results

In CB Talents Academy, three trainings are currently ongoing with 10 persons per class each providing a different level of knowledge in the required programming language (Java Script in these cases). The trainees are based in different EU countries and are trained via webinars in the first 150 hours of the training. Afterwards, intermediate assessments are conducted with each trainee in order to assess if the trainee qualifies for the second half of the training, which takes place at the facilities of CB Talents' clients. At this stage, the trainees are already offered a signed contract as CB Talents strives to integrate ICT professionals in the labour market. All trainees are placed in a company after the successful accomplishment of the training programme. Currently, the CB Talents Academy focuses on the EU and 5 new training programmes are being prepared for Q1 and Q2 of 2015, which amounts to 80 ICT professional being placed across companies in Europe.

4.2.6 What can other EU countries learn from this?

Countries that are not yet part of CB Talents could easily become a partner thereby benefitting from the services CBT has to offer. CBT is able to recruit talents from all over the world thereby tackling labour market shortages. Also, CB Talents Academy can offer local people the possibility to develop themselves and to get the skills needed for the jobs offered on the (global) market.

4.3 Brainport Talent Centre

4.3.1 Introduction

The Brainport Talent Centre (BTC) is a unique, independent collaboration of companies, education and knowledge institutes and governments in the Brainport Eindhoven Region and the Netherlands. The BTC sources and matches tech and IT professionals through an online platform, the talentBOX, by means of a 'shared talentpool', communities and intelligent matching.

4.3.2 Aims

The aim of the BTC is to jointly attract, share and retain both national and international tech and IT talents. Furthermore, the BTC aims to stimulate advanced collaboration in the field of talent mobility between the partners – which are currently 28 regional and national large, medium and small employers – and to serve as an expertise centre for the partners and other stakeholders in the broad range of topics concerning talent attraction and retention.

4.3.3 Activities

In order to achieve its objectives BTC undertakes several activities, which are shown in Figure 1. The activities include: 1) Brainport TalentBOX, 2) Brainport communities, 3) advanced collaboration, 4) live and online marketing, and 5) Erasmus+ internships.



Figure 1: Structure of the Brainport Talent Centre

Brainport talentBOX

The Brainport talentBOX is an online platform through which tech and IT professionals and employers can find each other. They can connect with each other and automatically be matched based on vacancies, internships and assignments. The talentBOX also offers the following opportunities:

- Partners can manage their own employer brand through their private dashboard page and publish an unlimited number of vacancies, internships and assignments in a fully automatic way
- Partners can use the Brainport talentBOX as an applicant tracking system (ATS) where they can manage application procedures
- Candidates can manage their own digital profile, which can be uploaded automatically
- A quick, semantic way of intelligent matching brings the best matching candidates and employers together

Referral as a new, unique way of collaboration

A unique aspect of the talentBOX is that all partners agreed to refer applicants with a relevant tech or IT profile to the Brainport talentBOX in case they do not have any suitable vacancies for these candidates themselves. This means that all the 28 large, medium and small employers collaborate in order to increase the talentpool for the region.

Brainport Communities

Brainport Communities are worldwide online communities with specific technological subjects that attract dedicated people who have the desire to share knowledge and build networks with like-minded people. The partners are highly committed in the communities and can start communities themselves. One of the goals of the communities is to trigger potential job seekers to use the talentBOX through sharing in-depth information on topics that are relevant for the partners.

Unique Collaboration

Advanced collaboration between the partners involved in the field of labour mobility is being stimulated through the talentBOX, but also through other initiatives that will be developed together. The BTC provides support in idea and project creation. Additionally, partners and other stakeholders can easily find relevant information on a broad range of topics related to talent attraction and retention, thereby keeping them engaged with BTC.

Live and online Marketing

BTC undertakes worldwide activities, online as well as live, in order to provide a continuous flow of talent to the Brainport talentBOX and the Communities. The BTC focusses on regional and cluster marketing, building and maintaining worldwide networks.

- Online marketing: online platform www.talentbox.nl with own employer page for each partner; highly committed use of social media with employer branding for all partners; connecting with various online networks and communities
- Live marketing: attending and facilitating at least seven career events in target countries and regions such as: Spain, Ireland, Leuven (BE), Aachen (GE), Poland, Boston (USA), Turkey and the Netherlands

Erasmus+ internships

Each partner is offered the opportunity to submit an application for an international trainee (medium & higher vocational and university level) through the European Erasmus+ Program or the Global Training Program of the Spanish Basque Country. BTC takes care of the welcoming, housing and mediation between the trainees, the educational institutes in Europe, and the partners. This is a very successful part of the BTC as currently the number of trainee requests exceeds the number of available trainees. As a result, the BTC team is now expanding collaborations with other countries than Spain, such as Greece, Portugal and Poland.

4.3.4 Relation with labour mobility

BTC greatly contributes to labour mobility, in the EU and worldwide. The BTC actively approaches and engages with STEM and ICT talents abroad in order to attract them to the Netherlands, in particular to the Brainport Eindhoven Region. The so-called 'triple helix collaboration' – the collaboration between industry, knowledge and education institutes and governments – makes sure joint actions are taken to attract and retain talents. Also skills mismatches are effectively acted upon by initiating mutual new projects and programmes. A constant benchmarking with other EU and non-EU countries and regions is an important factor for success and innovation. The international network of the BTC team is large, many people worldwide help the team and the Brainport Region with their branding, such as the Dutch embassies and consulate generals abroad.

Moreover, the BTC offers each partner to apply for an international trainee via the Erasmus+ programme or the Global Training Programme in the Basque Country. This directly affects labour mobility in the EU. Highly skilled talent is invited to come and work for a partner of the BTC, thereby offering them the opportunity to personally and professionally develop in an international context with the potential prospect of being hired by the partner after the end of the internship.

4.3.5 Results

Brainport Talent Centre programme

The Brainport Talent Centre programme started in January 2014 and currently (after one year) has 28 partners, which are all regional and national companies and educational institutes with tech and IT vacancies that want to collaborate in order to enlarge the talentpool and help the region grow. The 28 partners include big employers like ASML (over 8,000 employees in Veldhoven), TNO and Vanderlande, but also SME's like the 3-D printing company Shapeways and the machine factory Smits Machinefabriek. The number of partners is growing every month. The target is to have 35 to 40 partners by the end of 2015. The current partners are almost all based in the Southeast of the Netherlands, but since the Netherlands is a very small country, and there are not many programmes like this on tech and IT talent attraction & retention, the BTC will also expand their activities with larger employers that want to join from other parts of the Netherlands, like the Rotterdam region or the province of Twente.

The BTC is run by the BTC team, together with a steering committee that consists of 6 of the 28 partners. The BTC is partly financed by a temporary provincial and regional subsidy, but mainly by the 28 partners.

TalentBOX tool

The talentBOX was launched in October 2014. In the period October 2014 to February 2015, 635 candidates were registered, 135 vacancies were published and 299 candidates applied for a vacancy. Furthermore, on average the talentBOX received 100 unique views per day. The 6 countries with the most unique views over the 5-month period included the Netherlands, the United States, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain. The talentBOX received visitors from all over the world, including India, Brazil and China, yet most of the visitors were located in EU countries. The EU countries included mainly neighbouring countries and Southern European member states. 25% of the visitors reached the talentBOX via referrals of partners and external parties, and 75% was reached via own sourcing activities, such as career fairs, events and social media.

Trainees

Most of the international trainees placed in Dutch companies had their origin in the Spanish Basque Country due to the good relations between the Brainport region and the Basque Country. 60% of the international trainees stayed with the host company after the end of the internship, while 40% returned to their home country. In the coming months, the BTC will expand its collaborations in the Erasmus+ programme to other EU regions so trainees from other EU countries can be placed in Dutch companies as well.

Communities

In March 2015 the BTC will start with building the Brainport Communities. Actually, the Communities will be used as an online and live tool for setting up an Ambassador's network of people living & working or studying in the Brainport Eindhoven Region. These people are important ambassadors to tell the whole world about the region and involve their network in the Communities.

Settling In & Living In

The BTC team is also involved in the steering committee of the Holland Expat Center South, based in Eindhoven. Besides this, the team is actively involved in the 'Living In' coordination for the city of Eindhoven and the region, which enhances a.o. housing, international school, leisure, facilities in English, spouse jobs programme, etc. *Settling In* and *Living In* are very important factors for talent attraction and retention, this is acknowledged by the 'triple helix' and they all work together to achieve the goals set. Even: the region now is shifting from the term 'triple helix' to 'multiple helix', because besides companies, governments and knowledge and education institutes, of course the international knowledge workers (and family) and the students themselves play a crucial role in this collaboration.

4.3.6 What can other EU countries learn from this?

The Brainport Talent Centre shows that collaboration between 'triple helix' and even 'multiple helix' partners is of utmost importance for the creation and execution of a clear vision and strategy on the attraction and retention of talent. It also shows the importance of keeping engaged with all partners and stakeholders involved and the provision of support structures. In addition, making use of existing EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and the involvement of Brainport in EU funded project Digital Jobs and other EU programmes and collaborations can offer companies easier access to highly educated students and graduates and provides a cost-effective tool to mutually attract and eventually retain talent in the region.

Many of the experts admired the US for being able to attract and retain a lot of talent to the country. Therefore, two US initiatives related to labour mobility will be touched upon below.

4.4 FWD.US

4.4.1 Introduction

FWD.us is an organisation founded by leading innovators, entrepreneurs, job creators, and business owners from the tech community, of which a.o. Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook. The mission of the organisation is to mobilise the tech community to support policies that keep the American Dream achievable in the 21st century. With teams located across the US, FWD.us brings together a diverse group of organisers, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Together they develop and deploy online and offline direct advocacy tools to engage at the district, state, and national levels.

4.4.2 Aims

The primary goal of FWD.us is to realise comprehensive immigration reform in the US. Besides, FWD.us aims to improve the quality of American education and encourage more investments in scientific innovation. FWD.us tries to achieve its goals by building a grassroots movement in the US.

The movement wants to achieve the following immigration reforms:

- **Secure the Borders:** providing law enforcement the tools necessary to secure the border will allow them to focus resources on enforcement priorities such as violent criminals and terror threats
- **Family & Economy:** reform would create millions of jobs, reduce the deficit, and allow for innovation to keep the US globally competitive. Reform would also strengthen millions of American families
- **Provide a Pathway:** create a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States who do not have legal status

- E-Verify: develop a simple and effective employment verification system. Establish a streamlined process for admitting future workers to ensure that we continue to promote innovation and meet our workforce needs

By undertaking these reforms, the US can create millions of jobs, reduce the federal deficit and add billions of dollars to the economy.

4.4.3 Activities

FWD.us exists of several local affiliates located all over the US. The local affiliates build networks, innovate advocacy and share stories. They bring together passionate, talented people, and offer opportunities to engage in innovative advocacy that educates elected decision makers and changes the terms of public debate. The affiliates offer a membership programme to US citizens. This programme brings together dedicated supporters in a political accelerator which offers FWD.us resources and guidance to fuel advocacy and engagement. Furthermore, US citizens can engage by sharing their personal stories, attending events and for example volunteering. On top of that, FWD.us is asking renowned innovators, entrepreneurs, job creators, and business owners from the tech community to contribute to the movement thereby creating support for their goals and increasing their influence on political decisions.

4.4.4 Relation with labour mobility

The immigration reforms influence labour mobility as it becomes more easy for non-US citizens to apply for citizenship in the US, which will provide easier access for more foreign, highly skilled, (mainly STEM) workers to come to the US. Especially, the proposed e-Verify reform - the development of a simple and effective employment verification system - contributes greatly to labour mobility. The reform establishes a streamlined process for admitting future workers, which ensures innovation continues to be promoted and the workforce demand of tech companies is met.

4.4.5 Results

FWD.us was founded in 2013 by 15 renowned innovators and entrepreneurs from the tech community and it has been able to engage with 50 other leading people from the tech community until now. Currently, the FWD.us movement consists of 9 local affiliates located all over the US, which have been able to attract donations, members and volunteers and thus created support for immigration reform in their states. Subsequently, they have contacted local representatives in Congress so as to let them know the citizens support immigration reform that will strengthen the economy, communities and families across the nation and are now making sure the representatives act upon it.

4.4.6 What can other EU countries learn from this?

The main takeaways from FWD.us for EU countries are to listen to the needs of the market and to realise incoming labour is not a threat to the country. Involving the industry and other relevant parties in political decisions on labour market development will contribute to decreasing skills shortages and unemployment rates, and promoting innovation, development and growth for the country as a whole.

4.5 Imagine Pittsburgh

4.5.1 Introduction

The main challenge the city of Pittsburgh experiences today is the fact that there are more open jobs than people with the skills to fill them. With almost 30.000 open jobs across a diverse economy in 2013 and thousands more to come until 2020, a new talent attraction and retention initiative, Imagine Pittsburgh, was launched in 2013 to tackle the skills shortage.

4.5.2 Aims

The aim of Imagine Pittsburgh is to position Pittsburgh as the place to advance your career and build a life you will love. Therefore, Imagine Pittsburgh wants to be an inclusive programme that apart from promoting the jobs Pittsburgh has to offer to foreigners and people living outside of the region, also highlights the benefits of living in Pittsburgh.

4.5.3 Activities

The website imaginepittsburgh.com is the core of the talent attraction and retention initiative. The website offers an upgraded job search engine that provides a searchable database of every job posted online in the 10 counties surrounding Pittsburgh. The website provides information about industry sectors and profiles of employers in the region. In addition, a special 'meet the neighbours' page is added to engage people with the life in Pittsburgh and its people. People of Pittsburgh share their personal stories on what Pittsburgh has to offer so as to help others recognize the value of living and working in Pittsburgh.

A benefit to employers is the ability to connect with job seekers.. Employers can also access data analysis about site users and the job search engine. For human resources professionals, ImaginePittsburgh.com is part of a solution for presenting Pittsburgh and acclimating professionals who are relocating to the region for work.

4.5.4 Relation with labour mobility

The initiative's main focus is on talent attraction and retention. Pittsburgh wants to fill its skills gap by attracting people to the region, which enhances labour mobility.

4.5.5 Results

The initiative was developed in part with the support of large regional companies. Up until now, dozens of other regional employers sponsor the initiative as well, which proves its success. ImaginePittsburgh.com has already succeeded in attracting workers to the region. Currently, 24,456 job openings are published on the website, as opposed to 30,000 at the launch of the website. This reduction is partly realized through ImaginePittsburgh.com.

4.5.6 What can other EU countries learn from this?

Apart from making visible to foreign workers what job openings are offered, countries should also focus on promoting living in the country and developing support structures for incoming labour. As the market for talent is becoming more competitive, talents will demand more in terms of amongst others facilities offered and living standard, which entails that the focus on settling in and living in the country will become even more important in the future.

5. Analysis of existing EU initiatives on labour mobility

The EU has already launched several initiatives to stimulate EU labour mobility. Two of these initiatives will be further explored below including the results achieved. EU countries could easily take advantage of these programmes by attracting students, graduates and professionals from other EU countries or offering its citizens the opportunity to go abroad to acquire new skills.

5.1 Erasmus+

5.1.1 Introduction

Erasmus+ is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport that runs from 2014-2020. The programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising Education, Training, and Youth work. The seven year programme will have a budget of €14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to current spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas. Erasmus+ will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Erasmus+ brings together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training, and Youth; it will for the first time provide support for Sport. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation across the education, training, youth and sport sectors and is easier to access than its predecessors, with simplified funding rules.

Erasmus+ focuses on three key actions:

- Key action 1: Learning mobility of individuals
- Key action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
- Key action 3: Support to policy reform

Besides the key actions, the programme supports activities in the field of Sport and Jean Monnet activities.

5.1.2 Activities

Erasmus+ provides grants for a wide range of actions and activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The programme gives opportunities to students, trainees, staff and volunteers to spend a period abroad to increase their skills and employability. It supports organisations to work in transnational partnerships and to share innovative practices in the fields of education, training and youth. The new sport action will support grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

The European Commission DG Education and Culture is in charge of the policies related to the fields of Education, Training and Youth. The other actions of the Erasmus+ programme are divided into decentralised actions and centralised actions. The decentralised actions are managed in each programme country by National Agencies that are appointed by their national authorities. The centralised actions are managed at a European level by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) located in Brussels. EACEA is in charge of the complete life-cycle management of projects, from the promotion of the programme, the analysis of the grant requests, the on-the-spot monitoring of projects, up to the dissemination of the projects' and programme's results.

5.1.3 Applications

The application process for the centralised actions is initiated in one of the following ways:

- Certain centralised actions are included in the [General Call for proposals](#) and the details of these actions are outlined in the [Erasmus + Programme Guide](#).
- Specific Calls for proposals are published on this website.
- Restricted Calls for proposals are relevant only to bodies nominated by the national authorities in E+ programme countries to undertake specific work (studies, management of strategic initiatives etc.).
- Calls for tenders are published when services are required to provide a limited number of highly specific services.

Application processes for the decentralised actions differ per EU country and can be consulted via the National Agencies.

5.1.4 Relation with labour mobility

In September 2014, the European Commission launched an [Erasmus impact study](#) on the effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalisation of higher education institutions. One of the questions was whether the investments made in the Erasmus programme had a positive impact on the skills and competences of students and thus whether mobility ultimately has positive effects on employability. In the report, several studies are mentioned that show that experience abroad not only enriched students' professional and academic lives, but could also contribute to openness, adaptability and flexibility, or enhance language learning, intercultural skills, self-reliance and self-awareness (European Union, 2014). Staff mobility or exchanges were also regarded as having similar positive effects both for the individuals involved and for the home and host institutions in terms of internationalization (European Commission 2012a).

Moreover, the effects of student mobility and its relationship with employability were touched upon in the report. Amongst others a study was shown which revealed that former Erasmus students associated their experience of mobility with improved international competences and facilitated access to the labour market. In addition, their self-assessment in terms of international competences was much higher than that of students who did not participate in Erasmus mobility programmes. The study concluded that students both mature during their stay abroad and improve their competences in terms of soft or key skills (European Union, 2014).

Overall, it was shown that Erasmus students have a more international life, are more likely to live abroad and are in a better position to find their first job and to enhance their career development due to the skills and experiences gained during their exchange or internship. Therefore, the Erasmus+ programme directly contributes to labour mobility in the EU.

5.1.5 Results

In 2012-2013 nearly 270,000 students and more than 52,000 professionals from 33 European countries spent time abroad with an Erasmus grant. Work placements in companies abroad supported through Erasmus since 2007 had accounted for the largest increase in the number of students in the years 2012-2013 and grants had already been awarded to more than 210,000 students to undertake placements. Over 30% of them received a job offer from their host companies. In 2013, Erasmus counted over 4,600 higher education institutions as members. For the vast majority of these institutions, taking part in Erasmus had led them to innovate in key areas such as teaching and

learning, recognition of study periods abroad, student support services, cooperation with business, and institutional management.

5.1.6 What can other EU countries learn from this?

EU countries should stimulate their students to experience a period abroad, whether during an exchange or internship. The Erasmus+ programme supports students in doing so. Gaining international experience contributes to the personal and professional development of students and enhances their employability both in the home country and abroad. Besides students, also staff and for example volunteers can be offered the opportunity to go abroad via Erasmus+, thereby benefiting from the same advantages in terms of skills and employability. Apart from individuals, the country as a whole will benefit as international experience and knowledge will flow back to the country once students or staff are coming back, students will have less trouble in finding a job and companies have access to skilled and internationally-minded labour.

5.2 Youth on the Move: Your first EURES job

5.2.1 Introduction

Youth on the Move was a comprehensive package of policy initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe. The package was launched in 2010 in light of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and ended in December 2014. The focus of youth on the move was on young people due to three reasons:

- Around 5.5 million young people are unemployed in the EU, which means that 1 in 5 people under 25 who are willing to work cannot find a job
- The unemployment rate among young people is over 20% – double the rate of all age groups combined and nearly 3 times the rate of over-25s
- 7.5 million people aged 15 to 24 are currently neither in a job nor in education or training

5.2.2 Aims

Youth on the Move aimed to improve young people's education and employability so as to reduce high youth unemployment and increase the youth-employment rate – in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years). Youth on the move achieved its goals by:

- Making education and training more relevant to young people's needs
- Encouraging more young people to take advantage of EU grants to study or receive training in another country
- Encouraging EU countries to take measures to simplify the transition from education to work

5.2.3 Activities

Youth on the move coordinated policy to identify and stimulate action at EU and national level and introduced specific actions designed for young people. One of these actions was the introduction of '[Your first EURES job](#)' for labour market mobility within the EU. Your first EURES job has continued to exist after the end of the Youth on the move package.

Your first EURES job

Your first EURES job includes a job mobility scheme to help young Europeans find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in other EU countries. The 2015 target for Your first EURES job is to help 5000 people find jobs in EU countries other than their home country.

Your first EURES job is testing a new way of providing customised job mobility services to young people and employers. Under this scheme, national employment services provide support – information, recruitment, matching, placement and funding – for both young jobseekers and businesses interested in recruiting from outside their home country. Funding is subject to these services' conditions and procedures.

EU nationals aged between 18 and 30 who live in an EU country and all legally established employers in EU countries offering contracts of at least 6 months' duration, provided that pay and conditions comply with national labour law, can qualify for your first EURES job.

For young people the scheme funds language courses or other forms of training. It also covers travel expenses for young people applying for jobs or work-based training, enabling them to attend job interviews and settle in other EU countries to take up employment. Furthermore, they can be eligible for a relocation allowance once being hired by foreign companies and declare costs made for having his/her academic and professional qualifications recognized. Companies with up to 250 employees can in turn apply for financial support for the costs incurred of training newly-recruited workers, trainees or apprentices and helping them settle in the company and country.

Currently, the database of your first EURES job includes amongst others profiles of 229 computing professionals, 41 electrical and electronic equipment mechanics and fitters and 829 of architects and engineers.

5.2.4 Relation with labour mobility

Your first EURES job simplifies the international recruitment of talent for employers, as they only have to choose a suitable candidate for the database and gain financial support in hiring them. Young people are in turn offered the opportunity to spend a period abroad and gain international experience with the possibility of finding a permanent job position in an EU country.

5.2.5 Results

The first two years of your first EURES job were evaluated in 2014 and on the basis of this evaluation it was decided to continue managing the initiative on EU level, even after the end of the Youth on the Move package. The report evaluated the initiative based on 6 evaluation criteria: relevance, complementarity, added value, organisation and governance, effectiveness and efficiency. One of the main conclusions related to mobility was that your first EURES job adds value to youth labour mobility, given its package of recruitment, matching and placement activities combined with financial support incentives. Also, it responded to the labour market needs by focusing on youth unemployment, skills mismatches and mobility obstacles and complemented the EURES network, other EU mobility schemes as well as other national cross border schemes and initiatives.

5.2.6 What can other EU countries learn from this?

EU countries can take advantage of the opportunities the Youth on the Move package offers by promoting it to local companies and citizens. In this way, the countries contribute to diminishing youth unemployment both in their own countries and other EU countries and companies can attract international talent relatively easy and at low costs.

Although the programmes launched by the EU to promote labour mobility offer potential and contribute to solving challenges on the labour market, reality remains that the mobility rate in the EU only reaches 3%. In order to increase this rate, more programmes and initiatives are needed that have a broader focus than merely young people who study or are recently graduated. Every citizen needs to have the opportunity to find a suitable job, whether in their home country or abroad. The experts interviewed recommended several actions to implement on an EU level so as to achieve actual EU labour mobility.

6. Recommendations from best practices and policies

A few conclusions can be derived from the previously described best practices and policies.

1. Offer exchange programmes for students and professionals

Student exchange programmes are a great way for students to get to know other cultures and to develop both personally and professionally. Students experience what it is like to live and study abroad, improve their language skills and get to know people from all over the world. This in turn can stimulate students to be more open to international job offers in the future. Exchange programmes should also be offered to recent graduates and experienced professionals as they can benefit from acquiring new skills and contribute to the internationalization of the region and country once they come back.

2. Involve all relevant stakeholders

The best practices showed that it is of utmost importance to include all relevant stakeholders in the development of new programmes focused on increasing labour mobility. It is essential to listen to the needs and wishes of the market and incorporate this in new programmes before they are implemented. Only by doing so, the problems the market is facing can be tackled effectively. Also, counterproductive actions can be avoided if all parties collaborate and decide on the same strategy to follow and execute.

3. Make use of existing EU programmes and initiatives

EU Member States should make better use of existing EU initiatives on labour mobility. At the moment, these initiatives do not have significant impact on mobility partly caused by the fact that not enough citizens are aware of the opportunities these initiatives offer to them. EU Member States could play a role in this by better information provision and supporting citizens with grant applications.

4. Provide support structures to foreign workers

As the market for STEM professionals is becoming more competitive, the provision of support structures to foreign workers becomes more important. As EU Member States are increasingly recruiting professionals from the same pool of talent by offering them similar job openings, these talents will decide on what country to live in based on the facilities offered, standard of living, and for example climate. Therefore, besides showing which vacancies are on offer, EU Member States should also provide information on other aspects and support 'settling in' and 'living in' initiatives in order to attract and retain talent in the country.

7. Recommendations to the European Union

The experts on labour mobility recommend several actions to the European Union to undertake in order to increase labour mobility in Europe. The most frequently cited and promising recommendations will be outlined below.

1. Promote brain circulation

All experts agreed the EU needs to promote labour mobility as a brain gain instead of a brain drain. The EU should be a role model in this movement and embrace labour mobility as a positive thing for both the individual as well as the economy of the countries involved and the EU as a whole. The knowledge and experience of the workers going abroad will eventually flow back to the country and region either once they come back and establish businesses themselves or via their role as ambassador of their home country. Host countries in turn have more resources available and can perform more projects thereby doing more business.

2. Simplified tax systems for knowledge workers across EU28

EU knowledge workers who are going to work in another EU country experience difficulties when it comes to paying taxes, wages, etc. This can withhold people from going abroad for example in case they earn more money or gain more favourable tax benefits in their home country than abroad. Also, companies hiring foreign employees from other EU countries experience a lot of bureaucracy which can hinder them from hiring them in the first place. Fiscal harmonisation for knowledge workers across EU28 would be the ideal case, but hard to implement in practice. Yet, increasing transparency of tax systems and stimulate countries to offer tax advantages to knowledge workers and companies hiring these workers would greatly contribute to labour mobility. The EU could for example initiate programmes on this topic in order to get input from EU Member States on related best-practices and to stimulate them to collaborate in the field of fiscal issues for knowledge workers.

3. Larger EU programmes on labour mobility

The experts were clear about the importance of EU programmes on labour mobility. Yet, the impact and focus of the programmes could be improved. At the moment, not enough EU citizens are aware of the opportunities EU programmes offer to them and the majority of the programmes focuses on students and recent graduates. The EU misses out on potential here as not only part of the youth but also experienced professionals are unemployed and experience difficulties in finding jobs.

Furthermore, the importance of life long learning was repeatedly touched upon by the experts. When it comes to making people more aware of EU funds, the EU should collaborate more with EU Member States in order to spread the message to their citizens and to support them in applying for grants.

4. Increased focus on families instead of solely on individual talents

The importance of facilitating and supporting families of incoming talents is increasingly being recognised. The market for talents is becoming more competitive and incoming labour is demanding more from host countries than just the offer of a good and suitable job. The availability of spouse programmes, welcoming and hosting support and for example international schools are a few of the factors contributing to attracting talent to region and countries. The EU can help countries become aware of the fact that investing in good infrastructures and support programmes contributes to attracting and retaining talent. Furthermore, Europe has to improve the dual career system, which involves offering couples jobs in a country. This will facilitate the process of relocating talent.

5. Create a dashboard with the availability of skills in EU regions and countries

Many of the experts recommended the EU to develop an overview in the form of a dashboard of the availability of talent and their skills in EU regions and countries, including predictions on the demand and skills needed in the future. The dashboard will give a clear overview of skills shortages and surpluses in regions and countries. This will facilitate the process of interchanging talent between EU countries, as one can easily see where the skills needed are located and available and thus where talent should be attracted from. Also, it will give job seekers the possibility to see where shortages of skills exist and where they can apply for jobs. The European Commission could do a benchmark on the existence of such dashboards in regions or countries throughout Europe and through this research find out which of these initiatives might possibly be upscaled to a European level.

6. Upskilling and training people is crucial

With the ageing population and growing IT needs, the skills shortages in the EU will only become more prevalent in the future. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to train and upskill EU citizens according to the (current and future) needs of the market. This will contribute to the growth of the European economy and the employability of workers thereby reducing unemployment rates. One of the actions the EU can undertake is to stimulate more collaboration between educational institutes and the industry. The Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs is a step in the right direction in this regard.

Through closer collaboration, the industry can give insights into their needs now and in the future so that the educational institutes can educate its students accordingly. This will make sure students can find jobs after graduation as they have the skills demanded by companies. It is not a task easy done, since experience learns that industry and education do not always 'speak the same language'. Therefore it is important that government interferes and makes sure relationships and collaboration between education and industry are and will be improved.

Furthermore, one of the experts expressed the urgency of training employees by asking the question: "what if we do not train employees and they stay at the company?". The same question can be asked in terms of regions and countries. Investing in the personal and professional development of people will eventually lead to growth and value creation for the EU as a whole.

7. Collaboration between DGs for value creation for Europe

One final point of attention the experts expressed is that the previously mentioned recommendations and actions can only be successfully implemented through inclusive collaboration between the different DGs of the European Commission involved. Labour market and labour mobility affect the daily activities of several DGs as it touches upon amongst others the topics employment, digital agenda, growth and education. Only if the different DGs work together in creating a clear vision and strategy on labour market and labour mobility, while closely involving both EU member states and triple and multiple helix partners, vast mobility rates for the EU can be achieved, thereby solving skills shortages on the short term, leading to value creation and competitive advantage for the European Union as a whole.