



Brussels, 13 June 2023

European Network of Migrant Women

Contributions to development of the Talent pool

According to Eurostat, the labour shortage in the EU is increasing.¹ One of the reasons, among many others, is the aging native population in Europe, which has created a need for a larger labour force. Although the Global North is typically the most attractive labour market destination for migrants from the Global South, compare to other labour market destinations, Europe offers better labour rights and worker protections. Many migrants, including asylum seekers, come to the EU in search of work and a better life. Entering the European Union with employment already secured, thus utilizing legal pathways, has the benefit of ensuring that migrants are not exposed to irregular labour markets. This is particularly important for migrant women and girls, as it not only prevents them from being subjected to undignified work conditions but also helps combat human trafficking and reduce the risks of sexual exploitation.

Entering the EU through opportunities in the labour market can be a good solution for those in need of international protection. Based on our experience working on the ground with migrant and ethnic minority women, we have observed that many of those seeking international protection possess high qualifications and years of valuable experience. This presents an opportunity for Europe to benefit from their skills and expertise without requiring significant investments in their training.

There is a significant demand for professionals in the medical sector, research and innovation, and the IT and technology industry. Therefore, the talent pool should primarily target these sectors. Additionally, it is crucial to address the gender gap within the talent pool, particularly for third-country national women.

The employment gap for third-country national women is considerably higher compared to men.² Hence, it is important to encourage employers to hire more women and promote the pool to qualified and professional third-country national women.

The main challenges faced by women third country nationals when trying to access the labour market and apply for a job in the EU are:

1. Lack of awareness and information about the overall job market in Europe and within each member state.
2. Lack of information about how and which structures to apply.

¹ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/is/publications/report/2021/tackling-labour-shortages-in-eu-member-states>

² https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Main_characteristics_of_foreign-born_people_on_the_labour_market#Country_of_birth.2C_sex_and_education:_key_factors_for_employment

3. Difficulty in reaching out to potential employers. It is crucial that this information reaches all, including hard-to-reach populations such as women.
4. Unharmonized recognition of qualifications in each European member state, which also poses challenges for employers when assessing qualification requirements.
5. Limited access to information for people in need of international protection in camps.

Although the usage of existing EU recruitment tools are acknowledged, there is however a need for new tools that can encompass:

- Clear and precise information on immigration procedures in the country where the vacancy is based. As part of the talent pool scheme its vital that the embassy/consulate staff are trained and aware about the talent pool procedures and immigration requirements by the member state countries.
- Job permit procedures for the applicants and their spouses (allowing highly skilled and qualified spouses to continue their careers once in Europe).
- Information about the education system for individuals coming with their families and children.
- Guidance and links to navigate accommodation options.
- Information about the specific qualifications accepted in different member states for various jobs.
- A platform for connecting and communicating with others who have experienced similar situations and can provide advice.
- A platform for reaching and communicating with potential employers.
- Encouraging employers to provide childcare opportunities would enable more qualified women to apply.

Side notes:

1. Regarding our continuous work with migrants, particularly migrant women, it is crucial that the Talent Pool is not overtaken by private agencies and turned into a profit-making business. If this happens, there will be a high risk of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and smuggling. We strongly recommend that recruitment takes place through an online platform and is conducted directly between the employer and the job applicant.
2. It's also worth mentioning that those recruited through the talent pool have the same employment rights as European citizens.
3. Employers should consider the potential and expertise of migrants in countries of transit, even within European countries where there is migration influx, rather than their migration status. If individuals secure a job, negotiations with the host country should be pursued to allow their exit. For example, there are many highly qualified Afghan and Syrian refugee women currently residing in neighbouring countries like Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran without valid visas. It is important to support and consider these migrants for international protection through a Talent Pool approach.