

More talent in the EU through less bureaucracy and more digitalisation

This document has been machine-translated from German. The original German version is available [here](#).

Position paper on the planned EU Skills Portability Initiative

26 February 2026

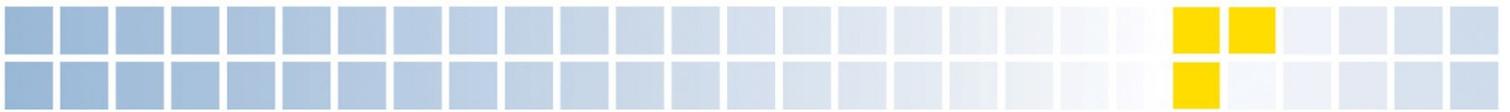
Summary

Europe needs skilled workers. Talented individuals who can work where they are needed ensure our competitiveness and prosperity – they strengthen the European single market.

To make it easier for people to use their skills across borders and to make Europe more attractive to talent from third countries, the procedures for recognising foreign qualifications must be simplified and skills made more transparent. International talent mobility must not be hindered by bureaucratic obstacles. Barriers to the employment of urgently needed skilled workers with foreign qualifications must be resolutely removed.

The planned EU Skills Portability Initiative must therefore specifically simplify professional recognition procedures across Europe and create greater transparency through digital solutions. The following points are relevant to the two main topics of 'procedures' and 'digitalisation':

- The European Commission should propose common rules to simplify the procedures for recognising qualifications from third countries. For example, there should be no difference in the Member States regarding the procedures for recognising the professional qualifications of skilled workers from other EU countries and those from third countries.
- All recognition procedures must become faster, more digital and less bureaucratic. This also means that all Member States must provide user-friendly information and advice services – both for applicants from the EU and from third countries.
- Europe-wide interoperable systems are needed for digital qualifications. As a digital identification tool, the European Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI Wallet) must make qualifications and further training easier to access in future, thereby further strengthening the mobility of skilled workers.
- The Commission should support all EU Member States in making consistent use of effective transparency tools, such as the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF/NQF). Up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive information on qualifications must be bundled on a user-friendly EU platform.
- In order to strengthen the effectiveness and scalability of EU transparency instruments, a comprehensive impact assessment is first required, as recommended in the Draghi report.
- The Commission should ensure that existing information databases for professional recognition in the Member States are linked, e.g. via application programming interfaces (APIs).



Increasing Europe's attractiveness for economic migration, simplifying professional recognition across Europe

In order to attract international talent and secure future skills, we need the right framework conditions. For a more mobile and competitive world of work, the recognition of qualifications – wherever they are required or desired – must be simpler and easier than before. Intra-European and international mobility of skilled workers strengthens Europe as a business location, makes us more resilient and creates shared opportunities.

Action 3 of the EU Skills Portability Initiative includes provisions designed to simplify the procedures for recognising the qualifications and skills of third-country nationals (TNC). As in Germany, the procedures for professional recognition should be identical throughout the EU for skilled workers from the EU and for TCN. Furthermore, recognition procedures in regulated and non-regulated professions must be simplified. This is because TCN do not only need recognition in regulated professions. In some cases, it is also required in non-regulated professions due to residence law provisions. In order to facilitate the economic migration of TNC, the Commission should review which EU requirements stipulating formal recognition as a prerequisite for immigration can be abolished. It should also call on the Member States to review their own requirements in this regard. Instead of focusing solely on optimising formal recognition procedures, the Member States should first examine whether they are necessary in the first place.

For the professional recognition of both EU skilled workers (action 2) and TCN (action 3), the Commission should ensure that Member States make recognition procedures faster, more digital and less bureaucratic. This will enable international skilled workers to enter the labour market quickly, which is a key competitive factor for companies in the EU. A package of measures is important in all Member States: procedures must be much more closely aligned with professional practice. Clear deadlines must be met. Digital solutions must facilitate the procedures, and AI-supported applications, such as automatic translations or testing aids, must speed up processes. User-friendly information and advice services must be available for applicants from the EU and third countries.

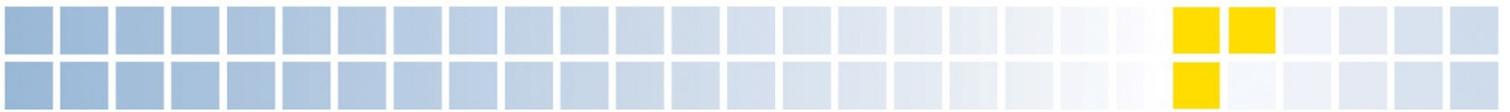
The Commission must consistently ensure that Member States do not unjustifiably hinder or impede access to and pursuit of professions. In doing so, it should strictly examine national regulations within the framework of the Directive on the proportionality test before adopting new professional regulations (Directive (EU) 2018/958).

If the list of automatically recognised professions is expanded via a 'common training framework' in accordance with Directive 2005/36/EC (package of measures 2), national quality standards must play a central reference role. This also applies to the training framework for physiotherapists currently under discussion.

Enhancing transparency through digital solutions

In order for the internal market to function fully for talented individuals, skills must be transparent and easily verifiable. Employers need this information to make hiring decisions. The Commission should submit concrete proposals to Member States to further strengthen this transparency in skilled labour mobility through digital solutions. The EUDI wallet can make an important contribution to this by making qualifications more easily accessible. Digital qualifications are helpful, provided that the systems are interoperable throughout the EU.

Transparency instruments, such as the European or National Qualifications Framework (EQF/NQF), can make it easier for workers and companies to navigate qualifications at home



and abroad and make them easier to understand. However, many EU transparency tools are largely ignored in practice, meaning that potential synergies are lost. As a first step, a comprehensive impact assessment of the existing range of EU transparency instruments is essential, as recommended in the Draghi report. Only tools that prove to be effective and useful should be further developed or scaled up.

The Commission should support Member States in systematically using effective transparency tools. This requires up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive information to be made available on a user-friendly EU platform. The Commission must also ensure that Member States make comprehensive use of European mobility tools such as the Diploma Supplement and Europass Certificate Supplements. Here, too, it makes sense to link these to the EUDI Wallet. Digital references, such as QR codes on certificates, can further speed up the verification of content.

The Commission should ensure that existing information databases for professional recognition in the Member States can be linked, e.g. via APIs, in order to exchange knowledge more quickly. The Commission should test the conceptual implementation of this approach in a pilot project.

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