



12 July 2023

## **ECEG's Written Contribution to the Dedicated hearing on EU Talent Pool**

- 1. Do you believe an initiative at EU level such as the EU Talent Pool could bring an added value in addressing labour shortages and facilitating international recruitment? What should be its key characteristics to achieve such facilitation?**

The [European Chemical Employers Group](#) (ECEG) believes that the EU Talent Pool could be a very useful instrument to successfully address current challenges in the European labour market, including labour and skills shortages in certain professions and sectors, resulting from a demographic change, lack of workforce, and other factors.

An efficient development of this tool would indeed facilitate attracting talents and skilled workforce to the EU. This would be possible if only the instrument includes key characteristics, such as:

- A **user-friendly platform**, where participation from Member States is on a **voluntary basis**;

- A **targeted approach**, where matching is established on existing **shortage of occupational lists at national/regional level**, regularly updated by Member States in close cooperation with employers' associations;
- **Admission criteria** should be determined by **national relevant stakeholders**, such as employers' organisations, chambers of commerce and social partners. These stakeholders are indeed the best ones to determine which candidates in the EU Talent Pool are suitable for employment.

## 2. Should the EU Talent Pool be open to all third-country nationals or rather limited to certain categories on the basis of predefined access criteria (e.g., level of skills or sectors/occupations facing shortages, etc.)?

The ECEG suggests a **gradual approach** for the application of the EU Talent Pool. It shall start with a focus on sectors and occupations which are identified as facing shortages. This data shall be based on shortage occupation lists produced at national/regional level, relying on input from employers and Public Employment Services (PES).

Dedicated studies on the chemical sector show that the industry will increasingly need more people with STEM background (ranging from vocational excellence to PhD-level innovation talent and researchers) and skills, if it wants to stay competitive, succeed in the twin transition and effectively deliver on the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability<sup>1</sup>.

According to the 2021 labour shortages report from the European Labour Authority (ELA), STEM and healthcare related occupations include the highest concentration of labour shortages<sup>2</sup>. If we look at young people opting for STEM education, only one in five graduates with STEM tertiary education every year, corresponding to less than two million graduates<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See ECEG – industriAll Europe joint paper “Europe needs to make its STEM strategy a reality now”, available at: [https://www.eceg.org/files/ugd/977a5c\\_41fb74335b384171bfa217e0ad22c935.pdf](https://www.eceg.org/files/ugd/977a5c_41fb74335b384171bfa217e0ad22c935.pdf) (last access: May 2023).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ela.europa.eu/en/media/725> (last access: May 2023).

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Tertiary\\_education\\_statistics#Graduates](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Tertiary_education_statistics#Graduates) (last access: May 2023).

If this issue is not timely and adequately addressed by the chemical industry, our sector will run an 11% labour shortage by 2030, all related to STEM disciplines<sup>4</sup>.

Against this background, the ECEG advocates to include the chemical sector at the initial stage of the platform functioning. As an EU recognized social partner, ECEG is willing to be involved at the development of the tool.

**3. How could the EU Talent Pool help to protect third-country nationals against the risk of poor working conditions, labour exploitation and unethical recruitment? What role could be played by appropriate checks and vetting procedures of employers, and who could conduct them?**

ECEG encourages the European Commission to speed up process of **recognition of third country qualifications**. This initiative would be beneficial both for the applicant, as well as for employers who will have a more comprehensive and accurate overview of the profile of different candidates.

The **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** should be referred to for a reference.

**4. Which components/functionalities should be integrated into the EU Talent Pool in order to adequately conduct each step of the recruitment process (e.g. CVs registration, screening of the applicants and of their skills or qualifications, automatic or semi-automatic matching tool, employers vetting procedures, support services and provision of information, integration of existing profile-building, transparency and comparability tools improving transparency and validation of skills and qualifications, specific search functionalities and filters)?**

The ECEG proposes a **two-steps screening process**, with a pre-screening of candidates while creating their profile in the EU Talent Pool platform and uploading all the necessary documents and proof of qualifications. As a second step, qualifications of candidates are

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<sup>4</sup> “The Talent Strategy to support a Thriving Chemical Industry towards 2050”, Korn Ferry (2018).

to be validated and verified, once the employer is ready to provide a job offer to a suitable candidate.

On the basis of the provided information, the EU Talent pool shall generate an automatic matching tool, as well as the possibility to contact the candidates directly, in line with GDPR rules (e.g. via email). As a point of reference, the Commission can look at the ECEG - FECCIA (EU Federation of Managerial Staff in the Chemical and Allied Industries) youth mobility platform developed in the framework of the EU funded project “Stimulating Voluntary Mobility of Young Workers in the Chemical Industry”. The platform can be accessed at the following link: [www.mobilitymentoringportal.eu/en/](http://www.mobilitymentoringportal.eu/en/). Moreover, sections of the EU Talent Pool platform shall be devoted to supporting services and provisions of information on the important steps and actions to be taken by the candidate, i.e. how to apply for work visa, information on national/EU migration schemes and pathways, etc. The European Labour Authority (**ELA**) as well as the **EURES** can play an important role in this regards, via *ad-hoc* help-desks.

**5. Taking into account the specific needs linked to international recruitment, which would be the most relevant actors to be involved at Member States’ level (e.g. migration authorities, public employment services, organisations / agencies involved in international recruitment, social partners and others)? Which responsibilities would be attached to each of the responsible actors identified (e.g. vetting procedures, pre-screening for the access to the pool, provision of additional support services)? What would be the role of the social partners?**

As mentioned above, ECEG believes that the involvement of Member States in the EU Talent Pool should be on a voluntary basis. Moreover, other stakeholders such as EU cross-industry **employers’ representatives**, **PES**, **migration authorities** and **national chambers of commerce**, shall be involved in the governance of the platform. A specific role should be devoted to the **European sectoral employers’ associations**, which can provide a sector specific overview on skills needs. In this regard, synergies with other European sectoral

initiatives, such **Erasmus+ Blueprints for sectoral cooperation** would increase the effectiveness of the platform. As coordinator of the **ChemSkills** Blueprint project, ECEG is willing to be involved in the governance of the EU Talent Pool, and therefore to provide feedback and input emerging from the Blueprint project.

We also welcome the **interoperability** with existing systems and platforms both at national and EU levels, as for example LinkedIn, EURES, CEDEFOP's Skills OVATE, Labour Migration Platform, European Labour Authority, etc. However, it should be underlined that the EU Talent Pool needs to be distinct from EURES, as their scope is different: EURES is for intra-EU mobile workers, while the EU Talent Pool has to be for third country nationals. We shall avoid situations where third country nationals without EU work permits, apply for jobs via the EURES portal.

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#### About ECEG

ECEG, the European Chemical Employers Group, founded in 2002, is a recognised European Sectoral Social Partner, representing the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber and plastics industries in Europe.

Our sector provides approximately 3.3 million direct jobs in more than 94.000 enterprises.