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FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS: SKILLS MATCHING POLICIES AND INSTRUMENTS

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*This is the national contribution of the Netherlands to the 2025 EMN study 'Fostering sustainable labour market integration of migrants: skills matching policies and instruments'. This report reflects the legislation, policies and measures of the Netherlands, as well as good practices and challenges. Other National Contact Points (NCPs) in EMN Member and Observer Countries have produced similar reports. The national contributions have been prepared on the basis of a common EMN template with study specifications to ensure, to the extent possible, comparability between the Member States. **Please see: Onderzoeken | EMN Nederland** for the full study.*

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study deals with skills matching of migrants in EMN Member and Observer Countries. The target group of this study are labour migrants of third countries (TCNs) and TCNs arriving via family reunification, beneficiaries of international protection and beneficiaries of temporary protection.¹ Skills matching in this study refers to **education**, i.e. one's field of study and level of qualification, as well as to **skills**, i.e. the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.² The main focus of the study lies on an analysis of policies and initiatives that address mismatching and promote skills matching. Based on the analysis of policies and initiatives, the study will identify challenges, best practices and lessons learned in promoting sustainable labour market integration of migrants through skills matching.

More than half of European companies perceive skills shortages as their most pressing challenge as they cannot find workers with suitable qualifications and skills to fill vacancies.³ Skills shortages are predicted to further aggravate in the future.⁴ Developments such as automation, action against climate change and its harmful effects (green transition),⁵ and digitalisation in combination with demographic aging are transforming labour markets and are changing which skills are most urgently needed⁶ in Europe and beyond.

Whilst attracting foreign talent is one relevant avenue to address skill shortages,⁷ another key question⁸ is: How can the skills of migrants already living and

¹ When no certain group is explicitly specified, the study refers to these migrant groups.

² EC: Skill, <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/escopedia/escopedia/skill>

³ European Commission, 'The future of European competitiveness Part B | In-depth analysis and recommendations', 2024, p. 258, <https://dorie.ec.europa.eu/en>, accessed 20 January 2025.

⁴ Ibid., p. 261; European Commission, 'Flash Eurobarometer FL537 : SMEs and skills shortages', 2023, https://data.europa.eu/data/datasets/s2961_fl537_eng?locale=en, accessed 26 March 2025; European Commission, 'Flash Eurobarometer 529 - European Year of Skills: skills shortages, recruitment and retention strategies in small and medium-sized enterprise', 2023, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/api/deliverable/download/file?deliverableId=88720>, accessed 26 March 2025; Weber, T., Adăscăliței, D., 'Employment and labour markets Company practices to tackle labour shortages', Eurofund, 2024, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/2024/company-practices-tackle-labour-shortages>, accessed 26 March 2025.

⁵ Green transition refers to a process towards environmentally sustainable and fairer societies. It aims to address human-induced climate change emergencies, environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity and to build resilience and mitigate inequalities in our societies. See European Training Foundation (ETF), 'ETF Policy Briefing: Skilling for the Green Transition', 2022, p. 2, <https://www.etf.europa.eu>, accessed 20 March 2025.

⁶ Worldbank, 'Skills and Workforce Development', <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/skillsdevelopment>, last accessed on 20 January 2025; See also European Migration Network (EMN), 'Labour Migration in time of Labour Shortages – EMN study', forthcoming.

⁷ European Commission, 'Commission sets out actions to tackle labour and skills shortages', 20 May 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1507, accessed 26 March 2025; European Migration Network (EMN), 'Labour migration in times of labour shortages – EMN study', forthcoming.

⁸ ILO, 'The role of migrant skills in shaping tomorrow's workforce', <https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/role-migrant-skills-shaping-tomorrow%E2%80%99s-workforce>, last accessed 11 April 2025.

working in the EU be used effectively? This question is particularly relevant in view of the widespread evidence that the potential of migrant workers – e.g. particularly of migrants with foreign qualifications⁹ – is often underutilised in Europe, as they are working in jobs that do not correspond to their qualifications.¹⁰

Skills mismatch is costly for the affected persons as well as for businesses, the economy, and society overall as it negatively impacts on earnings and – linked to it – migrants' remittances,¹¹ state revenues, productivity, innovation and economic growth.¹²

1.1. Skills mismatch in migrant groups

1.1.1. SKILLS MISMATCH DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTS MIGRANTS

The types of mismatch this study is interested in refer to situations in which migrants are unable to put their educational qualifications and/or skills to use in their countries of residence. Put more concretely, the types of mismatches this study looks at can occur in regard to skills and levels of education (vertical mismatch) and/or in regard to the fields of education (horizontal mismatch; see definitions in Section 8). As a consequence, migrants can end up in lower-paid and lower-skilled positions than the ones they might have held in their countries of origin. These types of mismatches can also manifest itself in greater rates of unemployment or underemployment¹³ of migrants compared to similarly qualified/skilled residents without migratory backgrounds and/or foreign qualifications.¹⁴

An analysis from Eurostat based on the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) data set demonstrates that the overqualification rate for third-country nationals

⁹ Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 'Quarterly Review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) - January 2025', European Commission, 2025, https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/quarterly-review-employment-and-social-developments-europe-esde-january-2025_en, accessed 26 March 2025.

¹⁰ For example, an analysis of Eurostat's Labor Force Survey (2017 - 2022) across all EU Member States revealed that nearly half of tertiary-educated migrants in Europe are overqualified for their jobs, and are almost twice as likely to be unemployed compared to natives. See: Infomigrants, 'Unrealized potential: The challenge of 'brain waste' among Europe's skilled migrants', <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/59149/unrealized-potential-the-challenge-of-brain-waste-among-europes-skilled-migrants>, accessed 4 February 2025.

¹¹ McDonald, Ted & Valenzuela, Maria Rebecca. (2009). The Impact of Skill Mismatch among Migrants on Remittance Behaviour. SEDAP research paper no. 242, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23970170_The_Impact_of_Skill_Mismatch_among_Migrants_on_Remittance_Behaviour, accessed 4 March 2025.

¹² McGuinness, S., Pouliakas, K., Redmond, P., 'Skills Mismatch: Concepts, Measurement and Policy Approaches' (2018), *Journal of Economic Surveys*, p. 985, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322668688_SKILLS_MISMATCH_CONCEPTS_MEASUREMENT_AND_POLICY_APPROACHES_SKILLS_MISMATCH, accessed 4 February 2025.

¹³ Lighthouse Reports, 'Brain Waste Methodology – Section 2: Data acquisition and analysis', https://www.lighthousereports.com/methodology/brain_waste/#section-2, last accessed on 4 February 2025.

¹⁴ Infomigrants, 'Unrealized potential: The challenge of 'brain waste' among Europe's skilled migrants', <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/59149/unrealized-potential-the-challenge-of-brain-waste-among-europes-skilled-migrants>, last accessed on 4 February 2025.

– measured as tertiary-educated persons working in low- or medium-skilled occupations – stood at 39.4% in 2023. It further showed that it was therefore considerably higher than the overqualification rate for citizens of other EU countries (31.3%) and almost twice as high as the rate for nationals (20.8%). For female non-EU citizens, the overqualification rate was 6.7 percentage points higher than for male non-EU citizens.¹⁵ Similarly, Frattini and Dalmonte¹⁶ note in a recent study that whilst the percentage of foreign-born migrants in Europe with a university education (32%) is comparable to that of native-born (34%), they lag behind in employment probability and exhibit significant overqualification. For a migrant with a foreign university degree the likelihood of working in a highly skilled occupation is 20% lower than for a comparable native while for migrants with an educational qualification attained in the country of residence the likelihood for overqualification is significantly lower (6% compared to natives).¹⁷

These findings underline that skills mismatching is a fundamental barrier to effective labour market integration for migrant populations.¹⁸

1.1.2. MISMATCHING DIFFERS ACROSS MIGRANT GROUPS AND ACROSS COUNTRIES

Skills mismatching is more prevalent among certain migrant groups.¹⁹ Existing research suggests that skills mismatch depends on a variety of factors relating to the country of origin (e.g. education system),²⁰ the reasons for and circumstances of migration (e.g. labour migration/humanitarian reasons/family reunification),²¹ the conditions in the receiving country (migration status/visa,

¹⁵ Eurostat. 'Migrant integration statistics – over-qualification', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_-_over-qualification, last accessed on 20 January 2025.

¹⁶ Frattini, T., Dalmonte, A., '8th Migration Observatory Report: Immigrant integration in Europe'. March 2024, <https://dagliano.unimi.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/8th-rapporto-web.pdf>, last accessed on 4 February 2025.

¹⁷ Dalmonte, A., Frattini, T., Giorgini, S., 'The Overeducation of Immigrants in Europe'. 18 October 2024, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4991626#, last accessed on 4 February 2025.

¹⁸ Giorgio, B., Wruuck, P., 'Skill shortages and skill mismatch: A review of the literature' (2021), *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 35 (6), p. 1145, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351126192_Skill_shortages_and_skill_mismatch_A_review_of_the_literature, last accessed on 20 January 2025.

¹⁹ Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 'Quarterly Review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) - January 2025', European Commission, 2025, pp. 16-19, https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/quarterly-review-employment-and-social-developments-europe-esde-january-2025_en, last accessed 26 March 2025.

Broschinski, S., Heidenreich, M., 'Overeducation among EU and Third-Country Immigrants in Europe: The role of Institutions, Policies and Culture' (2025), *European Societies*, <https://direct.mit.edu/euso/article/doi/10.1162>, last accessed on 20 January 2025; OECD/European Commission (2023), *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d5020a6-en>, last accessed on 26 March 2025. Nikolov, P., Salarpour G., L. David, T., 'Skill Downgrading among Refugees and Economic Immigrants in Germany: Evidence from the Syrian Refugee Crisis', July 2022, <https://docs.iza.org/dp15426.pdf>, last accessed on 31 January 2025.

²⁰ Broschinski, S., Heidenreich, M., 'Overeducation among EU and Third-Country Immigrants in Europe: The role of Institutions, Policies and Culture' (2025), *European Societies*, <https://direct.mit.edu/euso/article/doi/10.1162>, last accessed on 20 January 2025; OECD/European Commission (2023), *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d5020a6-en>, last accessed on 26 March 2025.

²¹ Ibid., p.88.

duration of stay, challenges related to the portability and recognition of qualifications, further educational opportunities) as well as individual circumstances (e.g. age, gender, language proficiency).

The extent of skills mismatching also varies greatly across different EMN Member and Observer Countries.²² This variation is the result of different migrant integration and immigration regimes, as well as varying labour market, employment, housing and education structures (see section on drivers of mismatching below).²³

1.1.3. SKILLS MATCHING CONCEPT OF THE STUDY

Skills matching in this study (see also section on definitions below) refers to the extent that an individual's **skills and qualifications** are utilised in the labour market. The degree of a skills match is identified by looking at the compatibility between the individuals' (actual) qualification/skills and the labour market's skills/qualification needs. A skills match refers to a situation of high compatibility, while a skills mismatch refers to an imbalance.

A mismatch between a worker and their job may occur either in terms of their **(educational) qualifications and skills (vertical mismatch)** or in their **fields of study (horizontal mismatch)**; for more details see section 8).

Skills mismatching can refer both to formal educational qualification (overeducation/undereducation)²⁴ or to individuals' skills²⁵ (overskilling/underskilling) (see section 8).

A mismatch of educational qualifications can be measured²⁶ by checking whether educational qualifications exceed job requirements. It is more difficult to measure skills, as skills are multidimensional.²⁷ To operationalize skills and make

²² Eurostat, Migrant integration statistics - over-qualification, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>, accessed 20 March 2025.

²³ Riaño, Y., 'Understanding brain waste: Unequal opportunities for skills development between highly skilled women and men, migrants and non-migrants' (2021) *Population Space and Place*, Special Issue Paper, p. 11, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349599037_Understanding_brain_waste_Unequal_opportunities_for_skills_development_between_highly_skilled_women_and_men_migrants_and_nonmigrants, accessed 10 January 2025; TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch, 'D1.1 - REVIEW I – Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe', 2024, p. 44-58, https://www.trails-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TRAILS_Deliverable_D.1.1_Final.pdf, accessed 4 February 2025.

²⁴ McGuinness, S., Pouliakas, K., Redmond, P., 'Skills mismatch: concept, measurement and policy approaches' (2018), *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 32 (4), p. 985, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joes.12254>, accessed 21 January 2025.

²⁵ To operationalize skills and make them measurable, the OECD Survey on Adult Skills (PIAAC) analyzes skills, by collecting adults' proficiency in key information-processing skills - literacy, numeracy and problem solving. OECD, 'Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)', <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/piaac.html>, accessed 31 January 2025.

²⁶ For the different (four) types to measure overeducation/overqualification see e.g. Erdogan, B., Bauer, T., & Karaeminogullari, A. (2017). Overqualification in the Workplace. *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Psychology*. Retrieved 26 Mar. 2025, from <https://oxfordre.com/psychology/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.001.0001/acrefore-9780190236557-e-18>, accessed 26 June 2025.

²⁷ Lise, J., Postel-Vinay, F., 'Multidimensional skills, sorting, and human capital accumulation' (2020), *Journal of Economic Surveys*, https://www.atlantafed.org/-/media/documents/news/conferences/2017/0921-labor-supply-sorting-wages/papers/lise_postel-vinay-multidimensional-skills-sorting-human-capital-accumulation.pdf, accessed 21 January 2025.

them measurable, the OECD Survey on Adult Skills (PIAAC) analyses them, by collecting adults' proficiency in key information-processing skills - literacy, numeracy and problem solving.²⁸ In this regard, the European Commission and EU Member States worked together in recent years to map national qualifications with skills from ESCO (the classification of European Occupations and Skills) using Artificial Intelligence.²⁹

1.1.4. LINK BETWEEN OVERQUALIFICATION AND UNDERSKILLING

The higher rates of overqualification (overeducation) among foreign-born migrants compared to native-borns tend to co-exist with their relative under-skilling, i.e. migrants tend to have higher formal education than required for their job but can be at the same time underqualified in regard to the skills that the job requires. To illustrate, an individual who holds a university degree in medicine, which is not necessary for their job as assistant at a GP office, is overeducated in terms of qualification/degree. At the same time this individual lacks a technical skill needed to deal with medical equipment needed for their job or does not meet the required language skills, which renders the person underskilled.

One reason for this co-existence could be that migrants often acquire their work experience in different languages and labour markets.³⁰ Determining the level, value and usefulness of skills that migrants have acquired through work experience and training in their countries of origin may therefore prove challenging for employers and state authorities (e.g. public employment services).

Understanding the correlation of these two forms of mismatch (skills and qualification) is an important factor for comprehending integration dynamics with relevant consequences for policy making.³¹

1.2. Drivers of and policy solutions to skills mismatching

1.2.1. REASONS FOR SKILLS MISMATCHING ARE MULTI-FACETTED AND INTERLINKED

According to existing research, generic and migration-specific drivers both impact skills matching of migrants and are therefore relevant for policy-makers to

²⁸ OECD, 'Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)', <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/piaac.html>, accessed 31 January 2025.

²⁹ See e.g. European Commission: ESCO Skills mapping pilot [Artificial intelligence for ESCO maintenance process]. <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/escopedia/escopedia/esco-skills-mapping-pilot>, accessed 26 March 2025.

³⁰ OECD, 'Do Adults Have the Skills They Need to Thrive in a Changing World?: Survey of Adult Skills 2023', 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b263dc5d-en>, accessed 4 February 2025.

³¹ Bonacci, M., Mineo, S., 'Social Integration Dynamics for Migrants: PIAAC to Measure Skill and Qualification Mismatch' (2018), *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 6 (5), p. 970, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1177836>, accessed 4 February 2025.

consider when addressing the phenomenon as outlined in the following paragraphs.

Important generic drivers include e.g. economic and labour market conditions, the design of educational curricula and their alignment with skills demands. There is also evidence that housing policies and relocation costs can impact skills mismatch as these may be a determinant for employees' ability to find affordable housing close to suitable work opportunities. In this context, remote work opportunities may promote skills matching by counteracting geographical constraints. In addition to these systemic drivers, employer-specific determinants refer to recruitment practices, on-the-job adjustments (e.g. promotions), and opportunities for skills development for employees.³² Whilst these drivers have an impact on all workers (migrant and non-migrant ones), they also can impact migrant workers differently and hence are useful to take into account in terms of policies/initiatives aiming to tackle mismatches in migrant groups.

Migration-specific causes for skills mismatch, include the compatibility of regulations and standards of country of origin and country of residence. Some combinations imply less frictions than others, for instance, because of greater disparities or similarities in educational requirements, labour market regulations, and in terms of language barriers.³³ Recognition of qualifications acquired abroad may be hindered by a lack of transferability of qualifications, e.g. due to differences in study programs/educational systems between the country of origin and the country of residence, kinds of technologies used in the country of origin and country of destination, specific (legal) criteria for practicing specific professions, including the necessity of requalification through additional studies/training, as well as high costs associated with recognition and requalification procedures. However, less institutional, i.e. non-policy-related dynamics can also be at play here.³⁴ Simply not knowing how to evaluate qualifications acquired abroad and compare them to the credentials of workers trained in the destination country might manifest itself in risk aversity by employers, leading to downgrading of migrants' credentials.³⁵ How easily skills can be transferred between countries' systems can therefore impact the scale of mismatching. To respond to this challenge, some EU countries have started for instance to implement Pre-Check-registers in cooperation with third countries that simplify these processes.³⁶ Countries in need of workforce have also used

³² TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch, 'D1.1 - REVIEW I – Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe', 2024, p. 44-58, https://www.trails-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TRAILS_Deliverable_D.1.1_Final.pdf, accessed 4 February 2025.

³³ Ibid, p. 52.

³⁴ Sanroma et al. (2015) cit. after Perry, A., 'Are over-qualified immigrants mismatched according to their actual skills? An international comparison of labor market placement in OECD countries', 2017, p. 7, <https://doi.org/10.21241/ssoar.52592>, accessed 4 February 2025.

³⁵ Bolzani, D., Crivellaro, F., Grimaldi, R., 'Highly skilled, yet invisible. The potential of migrant women with a STEMM background in Italy between intersectional barriers and resources' (2021), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18 (6), p. 2132; Sparreboom, T., Tarvid, A., 'Skills mismatch of natives and immigrants in Europe', 2017, p. 13, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/publication/wcms_548911.pdf, last accessed on 22 January 2025; Perry, A., 'Are over-qualified immigrants mismatched according to their actual skills? An international comparison of labour market placement in OECD countries', 2017, p. 6, <https://doi.org/10.21241/ssoar.52592>, accessed 4 February 2025.

³⁶ See e.g. Hadj Abdou, L. and P. Ebner (2024). *Labour Migration in Times of Labour Shortages in Austria*. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Vienna, p. 37.

Skills Mobility Partnerships to prepare workers abroad and enhance the matching of (future) migrant workers, and have established national schools abroad that teach in line with the curricula and skills needed.³⁷

Migration and asylum regulations and migrant integration policies (see section on policies below) need to be taken into account as drivers, too.³⁸ EMN research on the labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine, for example, indicated that the uncertainty about the duration of their stay - based on the temporality of their legal status - is considered to contribute, among other factors, to skills mismatch as early employment in low-skilled jobs is prioritised (by state authorities and/or beneficiaries themselves) over employment corresponding to their qualification.³⁹

Existing research also emphasises the impact of discrimination, stereotypes and negative public attitudes towards migrants on skills mismatch.⁴⁰

In addition to country-level and structural factors, skills mismatch also stems from individual factors of the migrant population. For example lack of knowledge of the language of the country of residence was found to increase the likelihood for skills mismatch (in form of overeducation), as appropriate qualifications can often not compensate for language barriers (see also the section on link of overqualification and underkilling).⁴¹ Furthermore, limited knowledge of the labour market (e.g. regarding opportunities for potential jobs and networks) is considered a key driver for skills mismatch.⁴² The individual family and financial situation may also play a role as migrants in need to support their families (either in the country of origin or in the receiving country) are likely to prioritise

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Riaño, Y., 'Understanding brain waste: Unequal opportunities for skills development between highly skilled women and men, migrants and non-migrants' (2021) *Population Space and Place*, Special Issue Paper, p. 11, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349599037_Understanding_brain_waste_Unequal_opportunities_for_skills_development_between_highly_skilled_women_and_men_migrants_and_nonmigrants, accessed 10 January 2025.

³⁹ European Migration Network (EMN), 'Labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine: Joint EMN-OECD inform', May 2024, www.emn.at, last accessed on 9 January 2025; European Network of Public Employment Services (2023): Labour market integration of displaced people and refugees. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=26990&langId=en>, accessed 4 March 2025.

⁴⁰ Bolzani, D., Crivellaro, F., Grimaldi, R., 'Highly skilled, yet invisible. The potential of migrant women with a STEMM background in Italy between intersectional barriers and resources' (2021), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18 (6), p. 2132; Sparreboom, T., Tarvid, A., 'Skills mismatch of natives and immigrants in Europe', 2017, p. 13, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/publication/wcms_548911.pdf, accessed 22 January 2025; Aleksynska, M., & Tritah, A., 'Occupation-education mismatch of immigrant workers in Europe: Context and policies', 2011, <https://ideas.repec.org/p/cii/cepidd/2011-16.html>, accessed 4 February 2025.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch, 'D1.1 - REVIEW I – Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe', 2024, https://www.trails-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TRAILS_Deliverable_D.1.1_Final.pdf, accessed 4 February 2025; Bolzani, D., Crivellaro, F., Grimaldi, R., 'Highly skilled, yet invisible. The potential of migrant women with a STEMM background in Italy between intersectional barriers and resources' (2021), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18 (6), p. 2132; European Network of Public Employment Services (2023): Labour market integration of displaced people and refugees. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=26990&langId=en>, accessed 4 March 2025.

a quick labour market entry over a job that matches their skills and/or qualifications.⁴³

Previous studies also found that gender and age impact skills mismatch, which implies that female and/or elderly migrants can be impacted even more by skills mismatch.⁴⁴ Women are generally more affected by skills mismatch than men, which is often attributed to care and family duties as well as less favourable opportunities for their career development (e.g. due to lack of childcare arrangements). These gender-specific drivers can intersect with migration specific drivers that exacerbate⁴⁵ skills mismatch in migrant women, e.g. due to a spouse residence permit; higher childcare constraints compared to native-born women.⁴⁶ Migrant women have consequently found to be the group most vulnerable to overqualification.⁴⁷ Regarding the impact of age, research shows a difference between foreign nationals and natives. Among nationals, young people (18-34 years) are more affected by skills mismatch while among third-country nationals older persons (35-64 years) are most affected.⁴⁸ Hence the age structure of the migrant population in a country may also need to be taken into account when explaining migrant's skills mismatch and taking policy action.

The migration status is another important factor as studies find that e.g. humanitarian migrants tend to be particularly affected by skills mismatch. As refugees' trajectories are marked by seeking shelter and protection, they are constrained in choosing their country of destination. As a consequence, the

⁴³ Bolzani, D., Crivellaro, F., Grimaldi, R., 'Highly skilled, yet invisible. The potential of migrant women with a STEMM background in Italy between intersectional barriers and resources' (2021), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18 (6), p. 2132.

⁴⁴ International Labour Organization, 'Skills mismatch of natives and immigrants in Europe', 2017, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/publication/wcms_548911.pdf, accessed 4 February 2025; Visintin, S., Tijdens, K., van Klaveren, M. 'Skill mismatch among migrant workers: evidence from a large multi-country dataset' (2015), *IZA Journal of Migration*, 21 (4); Birgier, D., Bar-Haim, E., 'Language Used at Home and Educational–Occupational Mismatch of Migrants by Gender' (2023), *Social Indicators Research*, 170, p. 265; Riaño, Y., 'Understanding brain waste: Unequal opportunities for skills development between highly skilled women and men, migrants and non-migrants' (2021), *Population Space and Place*, Special Issue Paper, p 1-13, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349599037_Understanding_brain_waste_Unequal_opportunities_for_skills_development_between_highly_skilled_women_and_men_migrants_and_nonmigrants, accessed 10 January 2025.

⁴⁵ Bolzani, D., Crivellaro, F., Grimaldi, R., 'Highly skilled, yet invisible. The potential of migrant women with a STEMM background in Italy between intersectional barriers and resources' (2021), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18 (6), p. 2132; Riaño, Y., 'Understanding brain waste: Unequal opportunities for skills development between highly skilled women and men, migrants and non-migrants' (2021), *Population Space and Place*, Special Issue Paper, p. 1-13, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349599037_Understanding_brain_waste_Unequal_opportunities_for_skills_development_between_highly_skilled_women_and_men_migrants_and_nonmigrants, accessed 10 January 2025.

⁴⁶ OECD, 'International Migration Outlook 2023', OECD Publishing, 2023, pp. 145ff, <https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/international-migration-outlook-2023>, accessed 26 March 2025.

⁴⁷ Akgüç, M., Parasnis, J., 'Occupation–Education Mismatch of Immigrant Women in Europe' (2023), *Social Indicators Research*, 170, p. 75; Eurostat, 'Migrant integration statistics – over-qualification', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_-_over-qualification, accessed 4 February 2025.

⁴⁸ Eurostat, 'Migrant integration statistics – over-qualification', https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migrant_integration_statistics_-_over-qualification, last accessed 4 February 2025.

likelihood that their prior educational qualifications and professional experience correspond to the labour market conditions and needs in the receiving country is lower than in other groups. They may lack preparation for the labour market - including documentation of qualification- and its requirements (such as language skills).⁴⁹ Similar observations can be made for family migrants, who also have weak attachments to the labour market of the host country upon arrival.⁵⁰

1.2.2. POTENTIAL OF POLICY ACTION

According to the existing body of research, **mainstream policy measures** can contribute to tackling skills mismatches in the overall population, including migrants (for a more comprehensive overview see e.g. the Trails project),⁵¹ for example:

Labour market information: Enhancing the availability and accessibility of e.g. online job portals and career guidance services.⁵²

Training and education: life-long learning policies⁵³ that subsidise retraining for suitable groups or incentivise on the job trainings⁵⁴ and the alignment of the educational system with the needs of the labour market by modernising the curricula and teaching methods.⁵⁵

Unemployment insurance regulations: if designed appropriately, they allow workers to search for better fitting jobs or provide incentives to acquire new skills before entering the labour market.⁵⁶

Housing policies (to reduce prices): High housing prices may force workers to relocate or to constrain their employment to specific localities with a negative impact on skill matching.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ On the effect of migrant status, see e.g. Gamble, H., Cebulla, A., Tan, G. 2023. Migrants Skills Mismatch Analysis of Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) data. Adelaide: Australian Industrial Transformation Institute, Flinders University of South Australia, <https://doi.org/10.25957/syzv-tk81>, accessed 04 March 2025.

⁵⁰ OECD/European Commission (2023), *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d5020a6-en>, last accessed on 26 March 2025.

⁵¹ TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch, 'D1.1 - REVIEW I - Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe', 2024, p. 59ff, https://www.trails-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TRAILS_Deliverable_D.1.1_Final.pdf, accessed 20 January 2025.

⁵² See e.g. European Commission (2023): PES Network adopts 7 recommendations to guide employment services assisting refugees and persons displaced from Ukraine, last accessed 4 March 2025, last accessed 4 March 2025; TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch, 'D1.1 - REVIEW I - Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe', 2024, p. 63, https://www.trails-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TRAILS_Deliverable_D.1.1_Final.pdf, accessed 20 January 2025.

⁵³ TRAILS - Enabling data analytics for actions tackling skills shortages & mismatch, 'D1.1 - REVIEW I - Theoretical and empirical questions for tackling skills shortages and mismatch in Europe', 2024, p. 66, https://www.trails-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TRAILS_Deliverable_D.1.1_Final.pdf, accessed 20 January 2025.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 67.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 68.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 69.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 65.

Family policies: Access to formal childcare and parental leave policies promote the labour market participation of women and can contribute to reducing (involuntary) part-time employment.⁵⁸

Reports emphasise that labour market **integration policies and initiatives, which target migrants**, potentially help reduce skills mismatch e.g. by **providing support to access suitable jobs**, providing financial support during early integration and job search, or facilitating the **recognition of foreign qualifications**.⁵⁹ A 2021 study furthermore emphasised that **integration policies** can impact skills matching indirectly by steering who migrates to a country in the first place.⁶⁰

Sustainable labour market integration efforts that tackle skills mismatching are, as experts⁶¹ highlight, no quick fixes. They take time in order to show effects⁶² and they involve multiple actors.⁶³ As the drivers for skills mismatch are found at different levels (individual, family, employer, state),⁶⁴ responses involve government agencies, educational institutions and academic credential assessment services, employers, unions, professional regulatory and licensing bodies, non-governmental organisations and skilled migrants and their associations.⁶⁵ This study will therefore look at skills matching efforts implemented by different stakeholders to provide a comprehensive policy analysis of this issue.

⁵⁸ OECD, 'International Migration Outlook 2023', OECD Publishing, 2023, pp. 145ff, <https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/international-migration-outlook-2023>, accessed 26 March 2025.

⁵⁹ Council of Europe, 'Integration of migrants and refugees: benefits for all parties involved', 2017, <https://rm.coe.int/integration-of-migrants-and-refugees-benefits-for-all-parties-involved/1680aa9038>, accessed 5 February 2025; International Labour Organization, 'Skills mismatch of natives and immigrants in Europe', 2017, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@migrant/documents/publication/wcms_548911.pdf, accessed 5 February 2025.

⁶⁰ Limitations to integration policy measures in turn may hinder migrants to find work in line with their qualifications and thereby lead to skills mismatch. See Bolzani, D., Crivellaro, F., Grimaldi, R., 'Highly skilled, yet invisible. The potential of migrant women with a STEMM background in Italy between intersectional barriers and resources' (2021), *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18 (6), p. 2132.; Aleksynska, M., Tritah, A., 'Occupation-Education Mismatch of Immigrant Workers in Europe: Context and Policies', 2011, <https://ideas.repec.org/p/cii/cepidt/2011-16.html>, accessed 4 February 2025.

⁶¹ OECD, 'Do Adults Have the Skills They Need to Thrive in a Changing World?: Survey of Adult Skills 2023', 2024, p. 128, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b263dc5d-en>, accessed 4 February 2025.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 'Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027', 2020, COM(2020) 758 final, p. 11, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/2148b15d-884c-4ac6-977a-1ffc6b5a8d59_en, accessed 4 February 2025.

⁶⁴ Riaño, Y., 'Understanding brain waste: Unequal opportunities for skills development between highly skilled women and men, migrants and non-migrants' (2021), *Population Space and Place*, Special Issue Paper, p. 12, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349599037_Understanding_brain_waste_Unequal_opportunities_for_skills_development_between_highly_skilled_women_and_men_migrants_and_nonmigrants, accessed 10 January 2025.

⁶⁵ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 'Crushed hopes: underemployment and deskilling among skilled migrant women', 2012, p. 171, <https://publications.iom.int/books/crushed-hopes-underemployment-and-deskilling-among-skilled-migrant-women>, accessed 10 January 2025.

2. STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The **core objective** of this study is to contribute knowledge on effective policy action for promoting skill matching and tackling (vertical and horizontal) skills mismatch of non-EU/EEA migrants in EMN Member and Observer Countries. To this end- as a necessary background for the analyses of policy action- the study also seeks to provide an overview of the prevalence of skills mismatch (among different groups) of migrants, and the specific drivers of this mismatch.

To provide a comprehensive insight, the study aims to analyse data from expert interviews conducted at national level, from legal and policy documents, as well as by reviewing available research, (quantitative) data, and policy debates at EU and national level.

The different objectives of the study are:

- First, providing an **overview on** how migrants are affected in EMN Member and Observer Countries by the phenomenon of **skills mismatch** with a view of outlining existing differences across migrant groups (selected categories of labour migrants from third countries, and third-country nationals that arrived via family reunification, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection), as available;
- Second, highlighting the **underlying causes for skills mismatch among (the different groups of) migrants** in EMN Member and Observer Countries.
- Third, identifying and exploring different **policies and instruments** of EMN Member and Observer Countries that specifically aim to promote skills matching and address skills mismatching for (different groups of) migrants;
- Fourth, identifying **challenges** in addressing skills mismatch/promoting skills matching;
- Fifth, pointing out **lessons learned** for overcoming the identified challenges;
- Sixth, collecting **good practices** in addressing skills mismatch/promoting skills matching.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on **vertical and horizontal skills mismatch**. Other concepts of skills mismatch such as skill shortages are not covered as skills shortages have already been covered by a recent EMN study.⁶⁶ In the following, the term 'skills mismatch' includes vertical skills mismatch (over- /underqualification regarding education and skills) and horizontal skills mismatch (mismatch regarding the field of educational qualification).

In line with the study's focus **on policies and initiatives aimed at promoting skills matching for a sustainable labour market integration of migrants** in EMN Member and Observer Countries, the study will identify and analyse the following:

- **National trends and underlying causes** of skills mismatch among migrants (i.e. prevalence of skills mismatch among different groups of migrants and the individual-level and country-context-specific drivers).
- Major **policy developments and current state of play of policies and instruments at national level** directed at countering skills mismatch/facilitating skills matching/addressing the drivers of skills mismatch.
- **Challenges, lessons learned and good practices** in tackling skills mismatch among third country nationals, including specific groups like female migrants or elderly migrants(see Section [1.2.1](#)).

The study will map the relevant **policies and instruments** in EMN Member and Observer Countries for promoting skills matching of migrants/counteract skills mismatch. In regard to **actors**, this study will look at key policies/instruments by national and sub-national public actors/institutions (including municipalities), actors/institutions acting on behalf of or in partnership with public authorities as well as the relevant key initiatives of interest organisations, employer associations, inter- and non-governmental organisations (IGOs and NGOs).

In terms of the **temporal scope**, this EMN study looks at **policies and instruments/initiatives** currently (at the point of time when the study is launched – June 2025) in place or are about to be launched, i.e. a specified scheme/measure that is very likely to be put into place as planned in the foreseeable future.

The statistical data used is based on the latest available (study) reports and data (OECD, Eurostat).⁶⁷

Given the focus of the study on skills mismatch on the labour market, this study focuses specifically on migrants working in jobs that do not match their qualification and skill profile. These are (legally residing) **labour migrants**, i.e. third-country nationals moving to an EMN Member or Observer Country for the purpose of employment - however excluding circular, short time work which is

⁶⁶ European Migration Network (EMN), 'Labour migration in times of labour shortages – EMN study', forthcoming.

⁶⁷ Eurostat, 'Overqualification by citizenship', 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_eoqgan_custom_15044941/default/table?lang=en , accessed 5 February 2025.

not related to the sustainable labour market integration focus of this study (e.g. seasonal workers and other workers falling under scheme of circular migration, posted workers, and workers hired out of labour). It further covers **third country nationals arriving via family reunification, and beneficiaries of international protection and beneficiaries of temporary protection**. Whilst this study focuses on third-country nationals, it needs to be considered that key data sources (e.g. OECD PIAAC) do not provide information based on citizenship but on country of birth.

Applicants for international protection are not included as their access to the labour market varies in EMN Member Countries and different restrictions/waiting periods apply.⁶⁸ However, countries with specific labour market integration frameworks to foster labour market integration/facilitate skills matching for applicants for international protection are invited to report on this group, as this information will be then provided in info-boxes. Seasonal workers and other forms of temporary workers (e.g. for harvesting) and posting of workers and hiring out of labour⁶⁹ are, as mentioned before, also outside the scope. The scope of this study does also not encompass international students, as their primary motivation for moving to EMN Member and Observer Countries is the pursuit of higher education degrees, and not employment.⁷⁰ If an EMN Member or Observer Country categorizes **PhD students** as young researchers rather than university students and has specific initiatives to foster their labour market integration/tackle skills mismatch for third country national PHD students, these initiatives can be included in the responses too, and as with applicants for international protection this information will be showcased in an info-box.

This study will be the first EMN output dedicated to the topic of skills mismatch. It will complement existing outputs on labour migration and (labour market) integration topics, such as the forthcoming EMN-OECD study on “Labour migration in times of labour shortages”, the EMN-OECD inform on “Labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine”,⁷¹ the EMN study on “Integration of migrant women”⁷² as well as the EMN inform on “Recognition of qualifications and skills of third-country nationals: overview of procedures and challenges in relation to regulated professions”, which will be developed in 2025.

⁶⁸ EMN (2023). Integration of applicants for international protection in the labour market – EMN Study, <https://www.emn.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/emn-study-labour-market-integration-2023.pdf>, accessed 24 March 2025

⁶⁹ International hiring-out of labour refers to a situation in which an employer wishes to employ foreign labour for one or more periods of less than 183 days and therefore recruits the foreign personnel through an intermediary established abroad who purports to be the employer and hires the personnel out to the user. See Bourguignon, J., 'International Hiring-out of Labour - A Comprehensive Overview' (2017), Jura Falconis, 2017, pp. 103-129.

⁷⁰ European Migration Network (EMN), 'EMN Study on Attracting and Retaining International Students in the EU', 2019, p. 6, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/whats-new/publications/attracting-and-retaining-international-students-eu_en, accessed 11 July 2024.

⁷¹ European Migration Network (EMN), 'Labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine: Joint EMN-OECD inform', May 2024, www.emn.at, accessed 9 January 2025.

⁷² European Migration Network (EMN), 'Integration of Migrant Women – EMN study', September 2022, <https://www.emn.at>, accessed 16 January 2025.

The involvement of relevant stakeholders is actively encouraged, both in the development of the EMN study and for the national contributions. This is also reflected in the choice that the study is conducted with the OECD.

4. EU LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

In view of the policy developments at EU level in the past few years – which were, among others, driven by efforts to respond to labour market needs and attract foreign skilled workers to the EU – the topic of skill matching has gained importance for EU⁷³ and national policy makers. For example, in regard to beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine – who to a large extent exhibit a high level of educational attainment⁷⁴ – preventing skills mismatch has been a policy priority for several EMN Member Countries.⁷⁵

Ensuring that persons have the right skills for jobs is a key component of the **European Skills Agenda**,⁷⁶ which, among other things, aims to strengthen skills and support people in their lifelong learning pathways.

Overqualification is addressed in the **Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027**.⁷⁷ In view of the skills needs in the EU, the action plan emphasises the important role of migrants in the European economy and society but also underlines the difficulties migrants often encounter with the recognition of their skills and finding employment that match their skills and qualifications. By highlighting that migrant women are more likely to be overqualified for their job, the action plan further points to the gender dimension of skills mismatch.⁷⁸ To address the issue of overqualification the action plan suggests concrete measures for EU Member States, including the use of the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals⁷⁹ and measures to prevent and raise awareness of discrimination in the recruitment process and in the workplace.⁸⁰

⁷³ See also the activities by the European Training Foundation, <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/skills-and-migration-0> , accessed 26 June 2025.

⁷⁴ European Migration Network (EMN), 'Labour market integration of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine: Joint EMN-OECD inform', May 2024, p. 11, www.emn.at , accessed 9 January 2025.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 12

⁷⁶ European Commission, 'European Skills Agenda', https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/european-skills-agenda_en , accessed 31 January 2025.

⁷⁷ The action plan refers to the overqualification rate defined as working in low or medium skilled occupations despite having a high level of education based on Eurostat data as presented in [Section 1](#). European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 'Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027', 2020, COM(2020) 758 final, [EUR-Lex - 52020DC0758 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) , accessed 5 February 2025.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 11.

⁷⁹ The EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals, developed in 2017 as part of the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#) , supports early profiling of the skills of refugees, migrants and citizens of non-EU countries who are staying in the EU and can, among others, be used for job matching. For further information see European Commission, 'EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals', https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/skills-jobs/eu-skills-profile-tool-third-country-nationals_en , accessed 16 January 2025.

⁸⁰ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 'Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027', 2020 COM(2020) 758 final, p. 2, 12f, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758> , accessed 5 February 2025.

In 2022, the European Commission published a **Communication on attracting skills and talent to the EU**⁸¹ proposing a number of legislative and operational policy initiatives,⁸² announcing the establishment of **Talent Partnerships** with third countries and the **EU Talent** as an international recruitment platform. The **European Commission's Skills and Talent Mobility Package**⁸³ from November 2023 included a proposal for a regulation establishing the EU Talent Pool⁸⁴ and proposed measures to simplify and expedite the recognition of third-country qualifications and skills at national level.⁸⁵ The Talent Partnerships and the EU Talent Pool aim to match skills needs in Member States with foreign talents that have these skills and can therefore be considered as instruments targeted to addressing skills shortages.⁸⁶ The **European Commission's Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals** explicitly refers to the issue of overqualification and stresses that it can lead to economic losses for the individuals concerned as well as for the EU. The recommendation encourages EU Member States to reduce the gap in the overqualification rate⁸⁷ between third-country nationals and nationals by 2030 and advocates for a 'skills first' approach in qualification procedures prioritizing the assessment of skills and experiences.⁸⁸

In March 2024, the European Commission published an **Action plan to tackle labour and skills shortages**⁸⁹ as key deliverable of the European Year of

⁸¹ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 'Attracting Skills and Talent to the EU', 2022, COM(2022) 657 final, p. 6, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0657>, accessed 11 July 2024.

⁸² The proposals are based on three pillars: 1. legislative pillar (revision of Single Permit and Long-term residence Directive), 2. operational pillar (introduction of talent partnerships and talent pool), 3. forward looking measures (long-term care workers, youth mobility, entrepreneurship).

⁸³ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 'Skills and Talent Mobility', 2023, COM(2023) 715 final, https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/COM_2023_715_1_EN.pdf, accessed 11 July 2024.

⁸⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU talent pool {SEC(2023) 716 final} - {SWD(2023) 716 final} - {SWD(2023) 717 final} - {SWD(2023) 718 final}, COM(2023) 716 final, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d74d42e8-96b7-416b-b5b7-b3b7334317d8_en?filename=Regulation%20establishing%20an%20EU%20Talent%20Pool_en.pdf, accessed 16 January 2025.

⁸⁵ European Commission, 'Commission Recommendation of 15 November 2023 on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals', COM(2023) 7700 final, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C\(2023\)7700](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C(2023)7700), accessed 16 January 2025.

⁸⁶ See [Section 1](#) on the terminology and concepts for skills mismatch.

⁸⁷ The recommendation refers to the overqualification rate defined as working in low or medium skilled occupations despite having a high level of education based on Eurostat data as presented in [Section 1](#). European Commission, 'Commission Recommendation of 15 November 2023 on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals', COM(2023) 7700 final, p. 2, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C\(2023\)7700](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C(2023)7700), accessed 16 January 2025.

⁸⁸ European Commission, 'Commission Recommendation of 15 November 2023 on the recognition of qualifications of third-country nationals', COM(2023) 7700 final, p. 10, 18, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C\(2023\)7700](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=PI_COM:C(2023)7700), accessed 16 January 2025.

⁸⁹ European Commission, 'Commission Sets Out Actions to Tackle Labour and Skills Shortages', 20 March 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1507, accessed 11 July 2024.

Skills⁹⁰ as part of the EU's strategy to boost its competitiveness and enhance its economic and social resilience.⁹¹ It takes stock of existing initiatives by the EU, Member States and social partners, announces new EU initiatives and calls on Member States and social partners to take further actions in five different areas.⁹² The action plan underlines the important role of third-country nationals in addressing domestic labour and skills shortages, reaffirms the 'skills first' approach proposed in the European Commission's aforementioned recommendation and calls for effective job matching and integration policies as well as equal and fair working conditions for migrants.

In March 2025, the European Commission launched the Union of Skills as an overarching strategy to quality education and skills policies.⁹³

⁹⁰ The European Year of Skills was started on 9 May 2023 and covered a period of 12 months during which a number of different actions and initiatives were launched and promoted. The main objective of the European Year of Skills were (1) promoting investment in training and upskilling, enabling people stay in their jobs or find new ones, (2) ensuring skills match the needs of employers, by closely cooperating with social partners and companies, (3) matching people's aspirations and skill sets with opportunities on the job market, especially for the green and digital transitions and the economic recovery and (4) attracting people from outside the EU with the skills needed. European Commission, 'European Year of Skills', https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/index_en, accessed 16 January 2025.

⁹¹ European Commission, 'A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness', https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029/competitiveness_en, accessed 16 January 2025.

⁹² These areas are: (1) supporting the activation of underrepresented people in the labour market, (2) providing support for skills development, training and education, (3) improving working conditions in certain sectors, (4) improving fair intra-EU mobility for workers and learners, (5) attracting talent from outside the EU. European Commission, 'Commission sets out actions to tackle labour and skills shortages', 20 March 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1507, accessed 16 January 2025.

⁹³ European Commission, Union of skills, Investing in people for a competitive European Union, https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/union-skills_en, accessed on 26 June 2025.

5. PRIMARY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE STUDY

This EMN study provides an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of skills mismatch in form of vertical skills mismatch (over-/underqualification regarding skills and education) and horizontal skills mismatch (mismatch regarding field of education; in the following both referred to as **skills mismatch**) of migrant groups in EMN Member and Observer Countries. It further explores policies and instruments aimed at promoting skills matching for a sustainable labour market integration. In light of existing evidence on skills mismatch disproportionately affecting migrants (see section 1), the study thereby seeks to answer the following primary research questions: How and why are different groups of migrants affected by skills mismatch and how do policies in EMN Member and Observer countries respond to this?

To answer this question the following sub-questions are asked:

1. Based on available data (Eurostat, EU-LSF, OECD PIAAC) how, if at all, are (different groups of) migrants affected by skills mismatch in EMN Member and Observer Countries?
2. What are the main underlying causes for skills mismatch among (different groups of) migrants in your country?
3. Which policies and initiatives are in place in your country aimed at countering skills mismatch and/or promoting skills matching of (different groups of) migrants?
4. Which challenges in regard to the implementation of policies aimed at countering skills mismatch/facilitating skills matching for (different groups of) migrants exist in your country?
5. What are lessons learned and good practices in regard to overcoming the identified challenges, tackling skills mismatch and facilitating skills matching in your country?

6. AVAILABLE STATISTICS

- **Eurostat** offers data on “Over-qualification rates by country of birth” ([lfsa_eoqqan](#)) measured as tertiary-educated persons working in low- or medium-skilled occupations in different EU Member States, which is disaggregated by sex, age, time and regions of birth (nationals, EU citizens, third-country nationals).
- **The European skills and jobs survey (ESJS) by Cedefop** ([www.cedefop.europa.eu](#)) is a periodic EU-wide survey aimed at collecting information on the skill requirements, skill mismatches and initial and continuing learning of adult workers in EU labour markets. The ESJS is carried out in all EU Member States. The first wave of the ESJS was carried out in 2014 and focused on the collection of comprehensive contextual information about the incidence and reasons underlying the emergence of skill mismatches in EU job markets. The second wave was carried out in 2021 and focused on the relationship between technological change, changing job-skill requirements and skill mismatch of EU adult workers and their adaptiveness to such trends via remedial vocational education and training.
- The **OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)** ([www.oecd.org](#)) was designed as part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) to provide insights into the availability of some key skills (literacy, numeracy and problem solving). It also gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home and at work. The 1st cycle of the Survey of Adult Skills was conducted over three separate rounds between 2011 and 2018 in 39 countries. During the 1st cycle, about 245.000 adults were interviewed, representing 1.15 billion people. The 2nd cycle of the Survey of Adults Skills has been conducted in 31 countries and economies so far. A first round of data collection took place in 2022-2023 with results released on 10 December 2024. Only permanent residents are part of the target population of the Survey of Adult Skills. In some countries recent migrants who are considered to be temporary residents are excluded from these statistics.
- The **European Skills Index (ESI)** ([www.cedefop.europa.eu](#)) is Cedefop’s composite indicator measuring the performance of EU skills systems. The ESI consists of three pillars; skills development, activation and matching, each of which measures a different aspect of a skills system. Basis of the ESI are 15 individual indicators from various international datasets. The scores are calculated across countries at the indicators’ level.
- The **adult education survey (AES)** by Eurostat ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat](#)) collects data on self-reported language skills, which is used for the area on skills supply, and on adult participation in education and training in the last 12 months prior to the survey. The AES covers formal, non-formal, and informal learning activities. It also provides information on training activities paid for by the employer, which is used for the area on skills development. Up to 2016, the survey was carried out every 5 years, from 2016 onwards it takes place every 6 years.
- The **Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS)** carried out by Eurostat ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat](#)) collects information on enterprises' investment in the continuing vocational training of their staff.

This is used for the area on skills development and demand. The indicators cover education and training activities financed completely, or at least partly, by the enterprise, including vocational training during working hours. The CVTS takes place every 5 years. The most recent CVTS was carried out for the reference year 2020.

- The **(EU-LFS)** (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>) is the main data source for Eurostat's skills-related statistics. The data covers: skills supply, for example data on the population by educational attainment or by formal qualifications, including young people, as well as early leavers from education; skills demand, for example indicators on employment by educational attainment, occupation, and economic sector. The EU-LFS provides several indicators on the participation in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 4 weeks before the reference week in which the survey took place. This information is used for the area on skills development.
- The **EU-LFS modules** (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>) provide statistics on a particular topic concerning the labour market by adding each year a set of variables to supplement the core EU-LFS. These include: the 2022 module on job skills providing, among other things, information on the utilization of skills at work; the 2021 module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants providing information on the level of language proficiency of foreign-born people in the language of their current host country, the level of skills in this language before the migration, the skill equivalence between current job and the job before migrating, i.e. a comparison between the skill levels required for the current job and the job before migrating.

7. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise specified, and with the exception of terms relating to skills, the definitions refer to the **EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary**, online version.⁹⁴ The definition of skills in turn are mostly based upon **CEDEFOP**.⁹⁵

Beneficiary of international protection: A person who has been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection status.

Beneficiary of temporary protection: A person who enjoys temporary protection.

Employment: The exercise of activities covering whatever form of labour or work regulated under national law or in accordance with established practice for or under the direction and / or supervision of an employer.

Labour market integration: The extent to which migrants will achieve the same range of labour market participation as nationals of EU Member States by using their skills and realising their economic potential.

Labour matching: The process by which the skills and qualifications of a worker is compared with the requirements of a particular job vacancy, to establish whether they match wholly or partly.

Migrant: In the EU/EFTA context, a person who either:

- (i) establishes their usual residence in the territory of an EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another EU/EFTA Member State or a third country; or
- (ii) having previously been usually resident in the territory of the EU/EFTA Member State, ceases to have their usual residence in the EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months.

N.B.: For more information on the specific groups of migrants covered in the context of this study, please refer to the section 'Scope of the study'.

Migrant worker: A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which they are not nationals.

Qualification: The formal outcome of an assessment and validation process by a competent body determining that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.⁹⁶

Refugee: In the EU context, either a third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of

⁹⁴ European Commission, 'EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary', https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en, accessed 11 July 2024.

⁹⁵ CEDEFOP, 'Skills matching', <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/european-skills-index/skills-matching>, accessed 20 January 2025.

⁹⁶ European Commission, 'European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations', <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/escopedia/escopedia/skill>, accessed 24 March 2025.

nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom Art. 12 (Exclusion) of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) does not apply.

Skill: The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. Skills can be described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).⁹⁷ The term skills covers generic (skills that are not specific to a particular job or industry, such as problem-solving or communication skills) and specialised (e.g. technical expertise required for certain professions) skills.⁹⁸

Skills matching: A process by which individuals' skillsets are aligned with organisations' skill needs.⁹⁹ In the context of this study skills matching also includes when the educational qualification and/or field of study is aligned with the job performed/recruited for.

Skills mismatch: A situation of imbalance between the skills and/or (educational) qualifications possessed by the workforce (supply) and those needed by the labour market (demand).¹⁰⁰

The term as used in this study includes mismatch in terms of skills and educational qualification, as well as of one's field of study:

Vertical skill mismatching: when an employee's **skills or education level** is either higher (overqualification) or lower (underqualification) in relation to their occupation, e.g. a nurse working as a nursing assistant.¹⁰¹

Vertical skills mismatching can manifest in the following ways:¹⁰²

- **Overskilling:** the individual has more skills than required to perform a job adequately;
- **Underskilling:** the individual has less skills than required to perform a job adequately.
- **Overeducation:** the individual has a level of education and training higher than that required to perform their job.

⁹⁷ European Commission, 'European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations - Qualifications', <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/classification/qualifications>, accessed 24 March 2025.

⁹⁸ Lise, J., Postel-Vinay, F., 'Multidimensional skills, sorting, and human capital accumulation' (2020), *Journal of Economic Surveys*, https://www.atlantafed.org/-/media/documents/news/conferences/2017/0921-labor-supply-sorting-wages/papers/lise_postel-vinay-multidimensional-skills-sorting-human-capital-accumulation.pdf, accessed 21 January 2025.

⁹⁹ Joss, S., Collings, D. G., McMackin, J., Dickman, M., 'A skills-matching perspective on talent management: Developing strategic agility' (2024), *Human Resource Management*, 63 (1), p. 141, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/hrm.22192>, accessed 5 February 2025.

¹⁰⁰ The definition of skills mismatch and the following forms of this phenomenon are based on the definition of CEDEFOP, 'Glossary – Skills mismatch', <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-glossary/glossary?search=mismatch&letter=S>, accessed 5 February 2025.

¹⁰¹ Albert, C., Davia, M. A., Legazpe, N. (2021). Educational mismatch in recent university graduates. The role of labour mobility. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 26(1), p. 119.

¹⁰² The following definitions were developed by EMN Austria for the purpose of this study based on existing research.

- **Undereducation:** the individual has a level of education and training lower than that required to perform their job.

Horizontal skills mismatching: when the individual's **field of education or (vocational) training** does not relate to field of the occupation they work in ('out-of-field employment'),¹⁰³ e.g. a nurse working as a marketing manager.¹⁰⁴ Horizontal mismatch is usually measured by comparing an employee's attended field of study and the field required for the job the employee holds.¹⁰⁵

Third-country national: Any person who is not a citizen of the European Union within the meaning of Art. 20(1) of Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and who is not a person enjoying the European Union right to free movement, as defined in Art. 2(5) of the Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code).

¹⁰³ Redmond, P., Brosnan, L., 'Skills mismatch in Europe', <https://www.trails-project.eu/skills-mismatch-in-europe/>, accessed 20 January 2025.

¹⁰⁴ Albert, C., Davia, M. A., Legazpe, N. (2021). Educational mismatch in recent university graduates. The role of labour mobility. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 26(1), p. 119.

¹⁰⁵ Somers, M. Cabus, S., Groot W., Maassen van den Brink, H. (2019), 'Horizontal Mismatch Between Employment And Field Of Education: Evidence From A Systematic Literature Review' *Journal of Economic Surveys* 33(2), 567-603.

8. NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE NETHERLANDS

Disclaimer: The following information has been provided primarily for the purpose of contributing to a Synthesis Report for this EMN Study. The EMN NCP has provided information that is, to the best of its knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of the EMN NCPs' Member State.

8.1. TOP-LINE FACTSHEET

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

Section 1: Drivers of Skills Mismatch

In the Netherlands skills mismatches or untapped labour potential is prevalent among different groups of migrants. Especially beneficiaries of international protection have a high percentage of skills mismatch. Research shows that 54% of beneficiaries of international protection work low-skilled jobs and there is a mismatch with their education level, work experience and skills.¹⁰⁶ Although many factors play a role in skills mismatches, there are a few key drivers that are deemed as especially noteworthy. The (lack) of Language skills, limited information about the labour market, Workplace and societal discrimination and the need for many certifications for jobs in the Netherlands, especially for recognised professions. It should also be noted that among younger migrants there is less untapped labour potential, because they might have followed education in the Netherlands. Untapped labour potential also decreases the longer migrants stay in the Netherlands as integration into society increases. Some structural elements also play a huge role in causing skills mismatches among migrants. Notable are the lack of housing in affluent areas, the limited knowledge of tools to get foreign certification evaluated, the lack of diversity policies among employers and integration policies which do not (yet) have the intended effect. Other slowing factors such as long waiting times for bureaucratic processes, or the placement from a reception centre into a permanent home might also play a role.

Section 2: National policies in the EMN Member and Observer Countries for promoting sustainable labour market integration through countering skills mismatch/facilitating skills matching

In the Netherlands various actors are responsible for addressing skills mismatches. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), is primarily

¹⁰⁶ Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on 9 September 2025.

responsible for labour market and labour migration policies, including policies regarding the integration of migrants into the labour market. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is responsible for policies related to education, including policies regarding the internationalisation of education and the evaluation of qualifications obtained abroad, as well as the recognition of diploma's (for a limited set of regulated professions in teaching, child care and archival work). Other ministries and professional organisations are also responsible for recognition of diploma's for regulated professions, such as the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) for medical professions. Policies and instruments to promote skills matching of the Dutch government focus on both employees and employers. Policies targeting employees consist of measures to facilitate skills matching such as providing child care for workers who are enrolled into a recognized educational institution, as well as providing information platforms containing information for newcomers into the Dutch labour market and possibilities for further training. Policies targeting at employers include subsidies that support employers who offer long term employment to beneficiaries of international protection. Next to government initiated policies there have also been programs initiated by both civil society and public-private partnerships. Examples include a program by the Groningen medical centre matching migrants to nursing jobs, with a particular focus on female beneficiaries of international protection, or the CompetentNL common language to standardize skills on the labour market.

Section 3: Skills Matching Challenges

Various challenges have been reported with policies addressing skills mismatches in the Netherlands. Some pertain to difficulties in the official recognition of professions and/or the certificates indicating them, which is often perceived as a difficult process and can be costly. It is thought that in the Netherlands in particular, many jobs require such certificates and official recognitions. Also, perceived (and real) discrimination are reported as reasons for not being hired to jobs that some people seek. Prejudice based on religion or heritage may be the reasons.

Section 4: Skills matching Lessons Learned & Good Practices

Good practices on the other hand, are mostly found in the combination of mandated integration courses with different types of work placement. There is room for involved actors (municipalities and integration agencies) to tailor jobs to people's skills and needs. Although the tailoring process requires effort, these programs have the potential to serve two critical purposes at once, especially regarding skills matching.

There were also some lessons learned when addressing skills mismatches. It was namely noted that there was a need to understand the coherence between the different driving factors and that addressing this requires policies that focus not only on labour market integration but also on factors such as: language, education, professional development, discrimination, housing and overall migration and integration policies as a whole. Specific policies might be needed for migrants with different migration motives (eg. asylum, study and labour). Special attention might also need to be given to women when designing policies to address skills mismatches as their specific needs might differ.

8.2. ANSWERS OF THE NETHERLANDS

Section 1: Drivers of Skills Mismatch

1. Based on available literature and expert opinions, what are migrant-specific drivers for skills mismatches, i.e. drivers related to the migrant populations in your country? ¹⁰⁷ Please explain, using the table below. *The mentioned drivers below are derived from the literature (see Section 1) and are meant as orientation to help NCPs in their data collection/analysis. If some drivers do not fit the situation in a country, they can/should be disregarded.*

Driver	Applicable (YES/NO)	Explanation (including information on source)
Country of origin related drivers (e.g. lack of documentation of qualifications)	YES	Research shows that the country of origin matters for the percentage of underutilised labour potential under migrants in the Netherlands. ¹⁰⁸ This can have many reasons such as regulatory barriers, migration motive and occurs mostly in combination with other drivers named in Q1 and Q2.
Disparities in education system between country of origin and receiving country (e.g. strong vocational focus in receiving countries not present in countries of origin)	YES	Certain skills or methods may not have been included in the curriculum in the country of origin. This may lead to a gap in knowledge for certain jobs. This can result in a skills mismatch. Of course this is not the case in all jobs and is very dependable on the skills required. ¹⁰⁹ In the Netherlands for example there is a lot of focus on safety regulations in technical jobs. ¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ This question addresses drivers for skills mismatches that are specifically related to certain features of migrants.

¹⁰⁸ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', june 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migranten>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹⁰⁹ Tijana Prokic-Breuer, Patricia A. McManus, 'Immigrant Educational Mismatch in Western Europe, Apparent or Real?', *European Sociological Review*, Volume 32, Issue 3, June 2016, Pages 411–438, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcw005>; Didactief, 'Mismatch onder arbeidsmigranten', [Didactief | Mismatch onder arbeidsmigranten](#), last accessed July 22, 2025.

¹¹⁰ Information provided by Dutch Council for Refugees on 25 August 2025.

Disparities in skill requirements for specific professions between country of origin and receiving country	YES	There are sectors in which the skill requirements or qualifications are a driving factor. Different qualifications may apply compared to the country of origin. ¹¹¹ Extra attention by the employer also needs to be paid to learning certain jargon to the migrants. On top of that in the Netherlands there is a lot of focus on having the right certifications. (see also Q2 on recognition of diploma's for regulated professions and the credential evaluation of foreign certifications). ¹¹²
Extent of regulated professions in country of origin- as opposed to receiving country- (i.e. regulations for the practice of certain professions)	YES	For regulated professions a migrant has to get permission in order to start working this job in the Netherlands. For certain professions (physiotherapist, pharmacist and nurse) a European Professional Card (EPC) can be applied for. ¹¹³
Age-related drivers (that in combination with migrant status interact on skills mismatch, e.g. age at time of arrival could impact skills mismatch, since younger migrants tend to have less difficulties in learning the language of the receiving country- see below)	YES	Age is a driver in skills mismatches. Research shows that among migrants aged 45 and over, there is a large untapped labour potential. ¹¹⁴ This can be explained by the fact that skills and qualifications from the country of origin are not always recognised, especially under beneficiaries of international protection. Younger migrants (4 to 18 years old) often have the ability to follow Dutch education. Making it easier to find work later in life. The group 19 to 28 years old often follow education after arriving, thus getting a Dutch diploma, thus experiencing less skills mismatches. ¹¹⁵ On top of that a recent research report also shows that international graduates (with a Dutch degree) offer

¹¹¹ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹¹² Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on September 9 2025.

¹¹³ Nuffic, 'Werken in Nederland met een buitenlands diploma', <https://www.nuffic.nl/study-and-work-in-the-netherlands/werken-in-nederland-met-een-buitenlands-diploma#je-beroep-is-beschermd-wat-nu>, last accessed July 24 2025.

¹¹⁴ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', June 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migrant>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹¹⁵ Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on 9 September 2025.

		employers additional advantages over other international employees. ¹¹⁶
Gender-related drivers (that in combination with migrant status interact on skills mismatch)	YES	Research shows that gender can be a driver for skills mismatches for certain groups of migrants. Differences can mostly be seen among men and women in migrants applying for asylum. This can be related to perceived gender roles and family focus ¹¹⁷ , lack of work experience in the country of origin and wanting to work in the social sector (education, healthcare etc.) which often requires language skills or certain certifications. ¹¹⁸
Language proficiency of language of receiving country	YES	The lack of language skills can be seen as one of the <u>main drivers</u> for skills mismatches within the Netherlands for all migrant groups. It should be noted that beneficiaries of international protection especially often have a non-sufficient command of both English and Dutch. For them language is one of the main drivers for skills mismatches. ¹¹⁹ Higher paying and specialised jobs often require knowledge of the Dutch language. ¹²⁰ A recent report about international graduates shows that language is an obstacle for finding a job after graduation and a reason to leave the Netherlands. ¹²¹ Another report shows that Dutch language

¹¹⁶ Nuffic, 'Hiring international graduates', <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/onderzoek-en-cijfers/onderzoeken/hiring-international-graduates>, last accessed September 12 2025.

¹¹⁷ Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen (HAN), Arbeidstoeleiding van vrouwelijke statushouders, <https://www.han.nl/projecten/2024/arbeidstoeleiding-vrouwelijke-statushouders>, last accessed July 21 2025.; Roos van der Zwaan, Araa al Jaramani & Nella Geurts, 'Syrische vrouwen en de hordes op weg naar werk en succes', *Demos: bulletin over bevolking en samenleving* 40.1 (2024) 4-7.

¹¹⁸ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹¹⁹ Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on 9 September 2025.

¹²⁰ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹²¹ Nuffic, 'Staying after graduation', <https://www.nuffic.nl/onderzoek-en-cijfers/onderzoeken/staying-after-graduation>, last accessed September 12 2025.

		requirements in vacancies is less of a challenge for staying in the Netherlands for graduates with a technical degree opposed to other graduates. And that Dutch is needed especially in social sciences, government and client facing positions.¹²² Technical sectors such as IT and engineering offer more English speaking opportunities, but in other fields like manufacturing Dutch is still very much needed. Employers see language barriers as the main obstacle when hiring international graduates.¹²³ On top of that, for recognised professions such as medical professions, childcare and education, Dutch at B2/C1 level is required. This creates a high barrier. (see also recognised professions).¹²⁴
Length of stay (considering that the longer a migrant lives in country, the more the extent of skills mismatch tends to be reduced)	YES	For all migrant groups, their labour participation increases and untapped potential decreases the longer they stay in the Netherlands. However, among beneficiaries of international protection even after a long stay (ten years or longer), there remains considerable untapped potential.¹²⁵ This is also connected to previous policies in the Netherlands where applicants of international protection were very limited in their ability to work. Thus causing a career gap for many people part of this group and influencing their labour market position for years after. Statistics from this period might still reflect

¹²² Nuffic, 'Staying after graduation. Spotlight on technical talent', <https://www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2024-03/staying-after-graduation-spotlight-on-technical-talent-factsheet.pdf>, last accessed September 12 2025.

¹²³ Nuffic, 'Hiring international graduates', <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/onderzoek-en-cijfers/onderzoeken/hiring-international-graduates>, last accessed September 12 2025.

¹²⁴ Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on 9 September 2025.

¹²⁵ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', June 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migranten>, last accessed July 21 2025.

		this previous policy and should be seen in this light. Among study migrants, the difference with the national population is smaller after some time. Research shows that five years after graduation 79.6% of international graduates have paid employment against 89.6% of Dutch graduates.¹²⁶
Limited information about the labour market/employers, migrants might exhibit in comparison to natives/locals	YES	Limited information about the labour market may lead to missed opportunities as the migrant may not know where to look for opportunities.¹²⁷ A recent report found that communicating about “rights and obligations” is important for participating in society. In order to (re)build knowledge of rights and obligations, support from your employer, the presence of a social network in the Netherlands, digital skills and proficiency in English and/or Dutch are of great importance. These factors help someone to obtain the desired information and, if necessary, support.¹²⁸ Research also shows that employers experience that international graduates are not adequately informed about the Dutch labour market and inadequate support is rendered during their first year after graduating (orientation year)¹²⁹
Discrimination/Stereotypes in public against (certain groups of)	YES	Research shows that discrimination plays a major role in skills mismatches for migrants in the

¹²⁶ Nuffic, 'Stay rate and labour market position of international graduates 2013-2022', <https://www.nuffic.nl/onderzoek-en-cijfers/onderzoeken/stay-rate-and-labour-market-position-of-international-graduates>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹²⁷ Didactief, 'Mismatch onder arbeidsmigranten', [Didactief | Mismatch onder arbeidsmigranten](#), last accessed July 22, 2025; Tijana Prokic-Breuer, Patricia A. McManus, 'Immigrant Educational Mismatch in Western Europe, Apparent or Real?', *European Sociological Review*, Volume 32, Issue 3, June 2016, Pages 411–438, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcw005>;

¹²⁸ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Investeren in samenleven', April 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2025/04/08/investeren-in-samenleven>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹²⁹ Nuffic, 'Hiring international Graduates. The employers' perspective', https://www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2025-06/hiring_international_graduates_0.pdf, last accessed September 12 2025.

migrants (e.g. colour, ethnicity/origin, status)		Netherlands. ¹³⁰ For example it has been found that people with a migration background are discriminated against when applying for internships. ¹³¹ Research into international students (also including students from inside the EER) found that 29.8% of international graduates see discrimination on the work floor or during the application process as a challenge while staying in the Netherlands after graduating. ¹³²
Career gaps of migrants (e.g. due to migrant journey)	YES	Research shows that for applicants of international protection their time in the reception centre while not being able to work or working lower paid temporary jobs can lead to a career gap which makes it more difficult to find suitable work afterwards. ¹³³
Other (please specify)	YES	The <u>lack of a network</u> within the receiving country has been shown to be a factor in skills mismatches for migrants, as there is less local knowledge of labour opportunities. Having personal and professional connections within the Netherlands can lead to better work opportunities. ¹³⁴ <u>Trauma's inflicted in the country of origin and/or during the journey</u> to the country of destination can result into trauma-related symptoms such as PTSD, irritability, flashbacks and/or depressive feelings. This can influence the ability to work and result in the ability to only work a

¹³⁰ Het Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten, 'Barrières op de werkvloer', [423143 Barrières-op-de-werkvloer.pdf](#), last accessed July 21 2025.

¹³¹ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹³² [Staying after graduation - Why international students decide to make the Netherlands their new home](#)

¹³³ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹³⁴ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

		limited amount of hours and/or in less demanding positions. ¹³⁵
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2. **Based on available literature and expert opinions, what are country-/employer-specific drivers for skills mismatching of migrants in your country? Please explain, using the table below. *The mentioned drivers below are meant as orientation and are derived from the literature (see Section 1). If some drivers do not fit the situation in a country, they can/should be disregarded.***

Driver	Applicable (YES/NO)	Explanation (including information on source)
Economic and labour market conditions (e.g. economic recession, which might affect migrants' skills mismatch more than non-migrants)	YES	There are indications that if the unemployment rate is high and the economy is in recession the labour market participation of migrants declines in the Netherlands. ¹³⁶
Structure of housing markets (e.g. housing policies with no rent caps, shortage of affordable housing in areas with available matching jobs for migrant)	ES	In the Netherlands shortages in the housing market play a major role in skills mismatches. Beneficiaries of international protection are for example placed in areas where there is housing available. Due to the limited availability they are often not placed in areas what match their preference or where there are suitable jobs available. Although the policies are in essence based on placing them in areas with the best personal and professional match, current shortages are more prominent in dictating the placement of beneficiaries. ¹³⁷ Housing shortages also causes many migrants to have to relocate more often (due to temporary available houses). Moving often can cause

¹³⁵ ARQ Nationaal Psychotrauma Centrum, 'Vluchteling en trauma. Diagnostiek en behandeling bij complexe psychotraumaklachten', <https://arq.org/behandeling/vluchteling-en-trauma>, last accessed July 21 2025; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹³⁶ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', June 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migranten>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹³⁷ WODC, 'Kansen en uitdagingen rond het toewijzen van huisvesting aan statushouders', April 2024, <https://www.wodc.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/04/11/kansen-en-uitdagingen-rond-het-toewijzen-van-huisvesting-aan-statushouders>, last accessed July 21 2025.

population's profiles)		them to not be able to build experience in the job market or gain stable employment.¹³⁸ Beneficiaries also have to wait longer in reception centres because they cannot move to a permanent house. Staying longer in the reception centre impacts their ability to find suitable and long lasting work.¹³⁹ On top of that, not finding suitable housing is an important driver for international graduates to leave after graduation, with 37% of leavers indicating that not finding suitable housing was an important or extremely important reason to leave.¹⁴⁰
Limited accessibility/availability of social assistance	NO	
Limited access to formal childcare (for migrants based on their status, as opposed to non-migrants)	YES	Recent research into Syrian beneficiaries of international protection in the Netherlands found that for women in this group household and childcare tasks came before work (see also Q1 gender drivers). Although they have the same access to formal childcare and childcare subsidies as non-migrants, little use was made of these options. This can be explained by the high cost related to formal childcare and the bureaucracy in attaining childcare subsidies.¹⁴¹
Employer-specific conditions (e.g. no diversity and inclusion strategy from which particularly migrants would benefit from in terms of skills mismatch)	YES	The lack of diversity policies can lead to bigger mismatches as it is more difficult for migrants (or people with a migration background) to get traineeships or jobs. Research also shows that a lack of diversity policies can lead to less promotion and training opportunities for this group.¹⁴² Diversity policies can be seen as a form of positive discrimination, it should be noted that discrimination in the workplace and in society also has a huge effect on skills mismatches (see Q1)
Migration laws, policies, and practices (e.g. recognition processes of foreign	YES	In the Netherlands, people who are required to integrate have the right to one free diploma assessment during their integration process (credential evaluation). This allows them to demonstrate to a potential employer or educational institution the level at which their foreign education is comparable in the Netherlands.¹⁴³ One of the issues however is that

¹³⁸ Information provided by Dutch Council for Refugees on 25 August 2025.

¹³⁹ Information provided by Dutch Council for Refugees on 25 August 2025.

¹⁴⁰ Nuffic, 'Staying after graduation Why international students decide to make the Netherlands their new home', <https://www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2023-12/staying-after-graduation.pdf>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹⁴¹ Roos van der Zwaan, Araa al Jaramani & Nella Geurts, 'Syrische vrouwen en de hordes op weg naar werk en succes', *Demos: bulletin over bevolking en samenleving* 40.1 (2024) 4-7.

¹⁴² Het Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten, 'Barrières op de werkvloer', [423143 Barrieres-op-de-werkvloer.pdf](https://www.kenniscentrumarbeidsmigranten.nl/423143-Barrieres-op-de-werkvloer.pdf), last accessed July 21 2025.

¹⁴³ Information provided by the Foundation for cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) on 15 August 2025.

qualifications, insecure status)		many migrants do not make use of this tool, or are not familiar with this opportunity. The information and system are also only available in Dutch and English, which might be a barrier. On top of that, results of the evaluation may sometimes be disappointing to the migrant due to mismatches in education systems.¹⁴⁴ Research also shows that 14.7% of employers questioned in the study reported regularly or always having difficulties with comparing the level of education of international employees with the corresponding Dutch level.¹⁴⁵ If a migrant wishes to work in a protected profession in the Netherlands, the procedure is different because they must first obtain permission from a competent authority to work in that profession (see Q1 recognised professions).
(Lack of) integration policies, and practices (e.g. no tailored, subsidized language trainings, no job guidance for migrants, no early facilitation of labour market access) ¹⁴⁶	YES	Although the Netherlands has a comprehensive integration policy for beneficiaries of international protection, the execution of this policy does not always work as well as intended. In the Netherlands the aim of integration is to combine everything (language, work, societal knowledge), but this does not always seem to work well in practice. Policies are well formulated, but in practice it is complicated. This fragmented execution can lead to skills mismatches.¹⁴⁷ The fact that migrants are not always properly informed about the labour market (see Q1) and have limited language skills (see Q1), indicates that integration policies might not work as well in practice as envisaged.
Others (please specify)	YES	<u>Wait times in bureaucratic procedures</u> can influence the ability of newcomers to start work in the Netherlands. This is especially the case for applicants of international protection. They sometimes have to wait a long time to receive a Citizen Service Number (BSN) that is needed to start working.¹⁴⁸ There are also long wait times for getting approval to start working in a recognised profession.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Information provided by the Foundation for cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) on 25 August 2025.

¹⁴⁵ Nuffic, 'Hiring international Graduates. The employers' perspective', https://www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2025-06/hiring_international_graduates_0.pdf, last accessed September 12 2025.

¹⁴⁶ See e.g. recommendations by [PES Network to have an idea about labour market integration policies](https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/pes-network-adopts-7-recommendations-guide-employment-services-assisting-refugees-and-persons-2023-07-07_en), https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/pes-network-adopts-7-recommendations-guide-employment-services-assisting-refugees-and-persons-2023-07-07_en, accessed 6 March 2025.

¹⁴⁷ Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on 9 September 2025.

¹⁴⁸ COA, 'Basisregistratie personen', <https://www.coa.nl/nl/basisregistratie-personen>, last accessed July 21 2025.

¹⁴⁹ Information provided by the Foundation for cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) on 15 August 2025.

Section 2: National policies in the EMN Member and Observer Countries for promoting sustainable labour market integration through countering skills mismatch/facilitating skills matching

In this section, NCPs are asked to give an overview of the responsible actors for addressing skills mismatch/promoting skills matching and to provide a policy analysis of the available policies and initiatives in their country that aim to:

- address skills mismatch among migrant groups; and/or
- promote skills matching of migrant groups.

Who are the key actors in your country responsible for addressing skills mismatch/promoting skills matching of migrants?

The ministry for Social Affairs and Employment (SZW) is primarily responsible for labour market and labour migration policies in the Netherlands, including policies regarding the integration of migrants into the labour market.

Part of the ministry of SZW are executive bodies such as The Netherlands Employee Insurance Agency (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen, UWV).

The UWV supports individuals in retaining or finding work. In order to do this, UWV looks at the personal situation of the individual, including health and labour prospects, and uses a customised approach catered to the needs of the individual. Furthermore, UWV supports employers in respect of work and income and reintegration into the labour market.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is responsible for policies related to education in the Netherlands, including policies regarding the internationalisation of education and the evaluation of qualifications obtained abroad, as well as the recognition of diploma's (in case of protected jobs). Nuffic is the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education and has statutory tasks for the ministry of OCW for providing information and performing the evaluations of foreign academic qualifications. Also part of Nuffic's statutory task is to provide information on internationalisation of education, including data publications on study migration. The Foundation for cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (*Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven*, SBB) is the organisation in the Netherlands responsible for evaluating diplomas in technical and vocational education, as well as diploma's obtained in (pre-)vocational education and training. SBB and Nuffic jointly form the structure for International Credential Evaluation (IDW). IDW has been commissioned to perform this service by the Dutch government Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Social Affairs and Employment. Migrants coming to the Netherlands and who are required to participate in integration schemes are eligible for one free diploma evaluation by IDW. The evaluations of diploma's for regulated professions are executed by the responsible competent authorities such as branch organisations or branch associations

such as bar associations (for lawyers) or the Civil-Law Notaries (for notaries).

Furthermore, both the ministries of SZW and OCW are part of the Interdepartmental Projects on Labour Migrants (*Interdepartementale Project Arbeidsmigranten*, IPA). This is a cooperation platform initiated by the Dutch government and offers an actual and integral overview of measures that are taken to improve the position of labour migrants in the Netherlands. Other bodies in this platform are the ministries of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Economic Affairs, Justice and Security, Health Welfare and Sport, the Netherlands Labour Authority as well as unions, federations of employers and local government branches¹⁵⁰.

The Netherlands Point of Entry is an operational unit of the Dutch Ministry for Economic Affairs and supports migrants by advising them on legal procedures and schemes related to employment. Though the Netherlands Point of Entry is not directly involved with the process of skills matching, it aims at connecting labour migrants who are interested in either working or setting up a business to the Netherlands by informing them about their possibilities and facilitating migrants in finding suitable employment in the Netherlands¹⁵¹.

3. Have there been policy debates on skills (mis-)matching of migrants in your country between January 2023 and June 2025? YES/NO. If yes, please elaborate on the policy debate, including their understanding of/perspective on migrants' skills mismatch, and focus (e.g. educational qualifications, language skills, etc.) and the issues the policy actors seek to tackle (e.g. GDP loss, productivity loss, financial losses for migrants). Please limit your answer to policy debates in the past 2,5 years. 2023 is selected as a start year given that this was the EU Year of skills, and a relevant, national policy debate might be likely during that year.

Yes.

Debates within Dutch politics regarding skills (mis-)matching have often included discussing measures on how to activate the labour potential of migrant groups for specific shortages within the Dutch labour market. Examples of this include parliamentary debates on the possibility of supporting migrants with a teaching background to battle the shortage of teachers in the Netherlands¹⁵². Another example includes the discussion on the possibility of simplifying procedures and a quicker skills assessment and recognition of qualifications of migrant groups with a background in

¹⁵⁰ Arbeidsmigratie in goede banen, <https://www.arbeidsmigratieingoedebanen.nl/over-deze-website> , last accessed on 30 July 2025.

¹⁵¹ Netherlands Point of Entry, 'About the Netherlands Point of Entry', <https://www.netherlandspointofentry.nl/about/> , last accessed on 9 September 2025.

¹⁵² Parliamentary Papers II , https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/plenaire_verslagen/detail/2022-2023/47#8eb666ed, last accessed on 15 July 2025.

health care, in order to combat labour shortage in the Dutch health care sector.¹⁵³

Besides parliamentary debates on the activation of migrant groups in specific sectors with labour shortages, other subjects discussed within the parliament involved issues regarding labour migrants who are fulfilling job positions for which they are overqualified. In 2023, the ministry of SZW has deployed 37 million euros for combatting this issue by supporting municipalities as well as employers through improving regional cooperation as well as the creation of new job positions that could be fulfilled by BIP.¹⁵⁴ Other discussions in the parliament involved the lengthy procedures for vetting health care workers resulting into the proposal of an Act from the parliament to simplify procedures in order to better facilitate migrant workers in finding a job in the health care sector.¹⁵⁵ Lastly, discussions and the possibility for childcare allowances for beneficiaries of temporary protection as well as people with a partner from outside the EU/EEA were discussed.¹⁵⁶

As the discussions in the parliament are often focused on policies regarding better facilitating access to the labour market, rather than addressing the underutilisation of labour potential of migrants groups.

However, the economic as well as societal need for addressing these skills mismatches have been mentioned in various reports by the Advisory Council of Migration (Adviesraad Migratie). The Advisory Council of Migration is an independent council that advises the Dutch Government and Parliament on migration issues. The council reports on migration policy and legal issues.

In its report '*Labour Migration: Solution for economy and demographics?*' of 2023, one of the research questions entailed whether labour migrants attribute to the average wealth growth in the Netherlands. This question could be answered positively because by definition an addition to the working population increases the overall wealth. However, whether the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) also increases heavily depends on the kind of labour migrants that come to the Netherlands, and in which economic sector they will work. A large group of incoming low paid labour migrants could decrease the GDP while high paid labour migrants will increase the GDP. 'Migrant workers also contribute positively to the welfare level if their talents and skills complement those of incumbent workers, whose

¹⁵³ Parliamentary Papers II , https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/plenaire_verslagen/detail/2022-2023/71, last accessed on 15 July 2025.

¹⁵⁴ Parliamentary Papers II https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/plenaire_verslagen/detail/2023-2024/12, last accessed on 15 July 2025.

¹⁵⁵ Parliamentary Papers II , https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/plenaire_verslagen/detail/2023-2024/14, last accessed on 15 July 2025.

¹⁵⁶ Parliamentary Papers II, https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/plenaire_verslagen/detail/2023-2024/54, last accessed on 15 July 2025.

productivity is also raised as a result. This applies especially to specialised positions for which qualified supply is lacking in the Netherlands.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, in the report '*Investing in living together*' of 2025, the Council underlined the importance of language acquisition and professional development among others as key actors for a successful integration of migrants into the labour market and the Dutch society. Continuous professional development contributes to a situation of sustainable employment and benefits not only the migrant worker but society as a whole, thanks to a better match between supply and demand on the labour market and thanks to lower social costs due to reduced dropout of workers and lower pressure on social services. Therefore, the Council's recommendations to the Dutch government included a guarantee of language education for migrant workers and making special arrangements with employers (such as collective labour agreements) with employers to contribute to the costs of language acquisition activities as well as encouraging employers to support the career development of migrant employees more proactively.¹⁵⁸

According to the study '*Talenten benutten: het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten*' of the Advisory Council dating from June 2025, there are 1,7 million people residing in the Netherlands between 25 and 65 years old who have a migration background themselves or whose both parents have a migration background. The Advisory Council compared this to the 6,5 million people between 25 and 65 years old *without* a migration background. The difference in the labour participation between these specific age groups of migrants and citizens without migration background is called the underutilised labour potential. The Advisory Council calculated that there would be around 333,000 more migrants aged 25 to 65, one fifth of the total group, in work if their labour participation were equal to that of corresponding Dutch people without a migration background. Therefore, if the amount of employed people with a migrant background could become on par with the group of people without migration background, there would be a substantive amount of extra workers into the labour force reducing staff shortages as well as reduced costs for the government due to less welfare benefits that need to be paid out. Furthermore, if this underutilised labour potential could be used, there would be less need for attracting new labour migrants into the Netherlands. The Council lists in their report the importance of education and knowledge of the Dutch language as the most important factors to diminish the underutilised labour potential. Also the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad are a tool. It should be noted, however, that these figures refer to the year 2022. Since November 2023, asylum seekers have been permitted to work throughout the year after six months

¹⁵⁷ Advisory Council on Migration, 'Labour migration: Migration: Solution for economy and demographics?', [Labour + Migration Solution for Economy and Demographics Summary Exploratory Study A Advisory Council on Migration 02012024 \(1\).pdf](#), last accessed on 17 July 2025.

¹⁵⁸ Advisory Council on Migration, 'Investing in living together', [Investing in living together- Summary-Advisory Council on Migration April+2025.pdf](#), last accessed on 17 July 2025.

in the asylum procedure, whereas previously they were restricted to only 24 weeks a year. Their participation may therefore already be higher. ¹⁵⁹

- 4. Does your country have policies and instruments in place to counter skills mismatching and/or promote skills matching? YES/NO. If yes, please explain how, using the table below, choosing the driver(s) addressed by the policy/instrument, indicating the form(s) of mismatch the policy/instrument aims to address, specifying the target group of the policy/instrument, and adding rows for additional policies/instruments as needed. The mentioned drivers below mirror the ones from Questions 1 and 2 are meant as orientation. Please find examples of how to fill out the table below in the grey column.**

Policy/instrument (please explain, indicate the actor and the information source)	Driver(s) for skills mismatch addressed (if possible to identify)	Describe form(s) of mismatch targeted if any/if possible (vertical, horizontal, both)	Target group of the policy/instrument (jobseekers, employees, employers, institutions, other (please specify))	Beneficiaries of the policy/instrument in case policies are targeted (labour migrants, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection; TCNs that arrived via family reunification; others - please specify – e.g. female migrants; elderly migrants (please specify); etc.)
Programme 'Further Integration into the Labour Force' (Voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt, VIA)¹⁶⁰: The VIA programme (since	- Country of origin-related - Gender-related - Language proficiency - Limited labour market information		Not specified	Not specified

¹⁵⁹ Advisory Council on Migration, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', june 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migranten>, last accessed on 17 July 2025.

¹⁶⁰ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Programma Verdere Integratie op de Arbeidsmarkt', last accessed on 29 July 2025.

2018) of SZW aims at diminishing disadvantages at the labour market of people with a non-western migration background as well as creating equal opportunities for this group. VIA consists of 8 pilot programmes that are methodically being assessed and evaluated. Some of these pilots have been mentioned in this study in Q6.	○ Stereotypes/Attitudes ○ Migration laws, policies, and practices			
Subsidies aiming at employers that are hiring asylum holders (Subsidieregeling Ondersteuning Inzet Statushouders, SOWIS) ¹⁶¹ : This subsidy from SZW aims at supporting employers who offer long-term employment to beneficiaries of international protection (BIP). Employers can use this subsidy to financially support the extra guidance BIP might need and to support measures that can reduce linguistic and cultural differences. The annual amount of	○ (Lack of) Integration, policies, and practices ○ Employer-specific conditions ○ Language proficiency ○		Employers	Beneficiaries of international protection

¹⁶¹ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Subsidieregeling Ondersteuning Werkgevers Inzet Statushouders (SOWIS)', <https://www.uitvoeringvanbeleidszw.nl/subsidies-en-regelingen/algemene-informatie/subsidieregeling-ondersteuning-werkgevers-inzet-statushouders-sowis>, last accessed on 22 July 2025.

this subsidy ranges between €8.000,- (for one BIP), to a maximum of €24.000,- for 4 BIP.				
Access to childcare: ¹⁶² people who are working and/or are enrolled into a recognized educational institution are eligible for child care. This applies to labour migrants as well as static citizens.	○ Limited access to formal childcare		Employees	Not specified
WorkinNL ¹⁶³ : 'WorkinNL' is an information platform from the Ministry of SZW that aims at providing information for newcomers into the Dutch labour market (and the Netherlands). This website provides information on legal issues such as contracts, wages, labour rights as well as integration and possibilities for further training.	○ Limited labour market information ○		Jobseekers, employees	Not specified
Welcome-to-NL ¹⁶⁴ : 'Welcome-to-NL' is an information platform as well as a job portal aiming at higher	○ Limited labour market information		Jobseekers	Higher educated migrants

¹⁶² Rijksoverheid, 'Wanneer heb ik recht op kindertoeslag?', <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/buitenlandse-werknemers/vraag-en-antwoord/wanneer-heb-ik-recht-op-kinderopvangtoeslag>, last accessed on 27 July 2025.

¹⁶³ Rijksoverheid, Work in NL, <https://workinnl.nl/home/default.aspx>, last accessed on 27 July 2025.

¹⁶⁴ Rijksoverheid, Welcome to NL, <https://www.welcome-to-nl.nl/>, last accessed on 11 September 2025.

educated migrants. Furthermore, the platform provides information on living in the Netherlands and on residence possibilities.				
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5. Are there any initiatives to counter skills mismatching and/or promote skills matching implemented by municipalities, interest organisations, employer associations, IGOs or NGOs? YES/NO. If you answer yes, please provide up to a maximum of three initiatives. Please explain, using the table below, choosing the driver(s), indicating the form(s) of mismatch addressed, indicating, if applicable, whether they differentiate between different groups of migrants, and adding rows for additional key initiatives as needed. The mentioned drivers below mirror the ones from Questions 1 and 2 are meant as orientation. Please find an example of how to fill out the table below in the grey column. For another example, see the project 'Talent-based matching of newcomers to employment opportunities'.¹⁶⁵

Initiative (please explain the initiative, indicate by whom it is implemented and indicate information source)	Driver(s) addressed (if possible, to identify)	Form(s) of mismatch (vertical, horizontal, both)	Target group (labour migrants of third countries, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection; migrants/TCNs that arrived via family reunification; others: female migrants; elderly migrants (please specify); etc.)
NewBees: An organization focusing mainly on building integration programmes,	○ (Lack of) Integration, policies, and practices ○ Employer-specific conditions	Both	Beneficiaries of international protection (mainly), other migrants participating in

¹⁶⁵ For an example for such an initiative see e.g. Global Compact on Refugees, 'Talent-based matching of newcomers to employment opportunities', <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/talent-based-matching-newcomers-employment-opportunities>, accessed 5 February 2025.

including labour market integration and skills matching. It caters mainly to municipalities, which are responsible for offering formal integration trajectories to newcomers under the law. ¹⁶⁶ It also caters to employers and newcomers directly. ¹⁶⁷ NewBees is a social enterprise, meaning it aims to create positive societal impact.	○ Economic and labour market conditions ○ Stereotypes/Attitudes ○ Limited labour market information ○ Language proficiency		formal integration programmes, other migrants who choose to seek assistance.
Nieuwkomers in hun kracht (<i>'newcomers in their strength'</i>): a program matching migrants with nursing skills to nursing jobs, with a particular (but not exclusive) focus on female beneficiaries of international protection. Originating from the UMCG (Groningen medical centre), it is since supported by additional partners and has been implemented in Amsterdam,	○ Country of origin-related ○ Gender-related ○ Language proficiency ○ Limited labour market information ○ Stereotypes/Attitudes ○ Career gaps ○ Disparities in education system between country of origin and receiving country	Both	Female beneficiaries of international protection with nursing skills.

¹⁶⁶ Regeling inburgering 2021, <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0045574/2022-01-01>, last accessed 15 July 2025.

¹⁶⁷ NewBees, 'Wat we doen', see <https://new-bees.org/wat-we-doen/>, last accessed 15 July 2025.

Haarlem and Leiden. ¹⁶⁸			
CompetentNL: a common language to standardize skills on the labour market and in education in order to improve matching between job seekers and vacancies. CompetentNL standardizes hard skills, soft skills and language competencies to reduce the necessity of seeking suitable candidates or vacancies.¹⁶⁹ It also helps job seekers gain insight in what type of additional schooling or additional skills opens up new opportunities in terms of available jobs. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment wants to research in what ways CompetentNL can be applied to beneficiaries of	○ Country of origin-related ○ Gender-related ○ Age-related ○ Language proficiency ○ Limited labour market information ○ Stereotypes/Attitudes ○ Career gaps ○ Disparities in education system between country of origin and receiving country ○ Disparities in skill requirements for specific professions between country of origin and receiving country	Both	Job seekers in general. Specifically, it is noted that migrants, due to their relative disadvantage on the labour market, can benefit thanks to a focus on standardized skills rather than diplomas or self-described competences.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ UAF, 'Nieuwkomers in hun kracht' zorgt voor handen aan het bed', <https://www.uaf.nl/verhalen/nieuwkomers-in-hun-kracht/#:~:text=Vanuit%20het%20Universitair%20Medisch%20Centrum,vaker%20operaties%20uitstellen%20door%20personeelstekort.>, last accessed July 17, 2025

¹⁶⁹ CompetentNL, 'Wat is CompetentNL?', <https://competentnl.nl/page/view/f031678c-db60-47d7-9738-c5eb59cb0281/over-competentnl>, last accessed July 17 2025

¹⁷¹ TNO, 'Zó ziet het grootste Nederlandse experiment met skills-paspoorten eruit', <https://www.tno.nl/nl/newsroom/insights/2025/02/grootste-experiment-skillspaspoorten/>, last accessed July 17 2025

international protection. ¹⁷⁰			
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¹⁷⁰ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', p. 11, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2025/03/25/werkagenda-voor-een-inclusieve-arbeidsmarkt-via>, last accessed July 21 2025

Section 3: Skills Matching Challenges

6. Does your country face any challenges in addressing skill mismatching of migrants? Please explain, if you face any, and indicate the information source (according to whom this is a challenge).
7. What are the underlying causes for these challenges? Please explain and indicate the information source (according to whom this is an underlying cause).

Please answer to questions jointly by filling out the table below, explaining the challenge, indicating according to whom this is considered a challenge, indicating the group that is mostly affected, indicating the relevant form(s) of mismatch of this challenge, explaining the underlying cause(s) for this challenge and indicating according to whom this is considered as underlying cause(s):

Challenge (please explain and indicate information source)	Group this challenge mostly affects, if applicable (labour migrants, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection; persons that arrived via family reunification; others: female migrants; elderly migrants; etc.)	Form(s) of mismatch (vertical, horizontal, both)	Underlying cause(s) for this challenge (please explain and indicate information source)
Difficult procedures for professional recognition. ¹⁷² Whereas there are different opportunities for credential evaluation, recognition of regulated professions (such as a doctor, nurse or teacher) requires extra steps, often making the process lengthy and difficult.	Beneficiaries of international protection, persons that arrived via family reunification, beneficiaries of the temporary protection directive	Both	Regulated professions necessitate certain verification procedures. ¹⁷³

¹⁷² Tijana Prokic-Breuer, Patricia A. McManus, 'Immigrant Educational Mismatch in Western Europe, Apparent or Real?', European Sociological Review, Volume 32, Issue 3, June 2016, Pages 411–438, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcw005S>

¹⁷³ Nuffic, 'Diplomawaardering biedt al tien jaar nieuwe kansen', <https://www.nuffic.nl/nieuws/diplomawaardering-biedt-al-tien-jaar-nieuwe-kansen>, last accessed July 24 2025

High costs of diploma and certificate evaluation. Diploma and certificate evaluation might require official translation of original documents, which is costly.	Beneficiaries of international protection, persons that arrived via family reunification, beneficiaries of the temporary protection directive	Both	Diplomas and certificates are relatively frequently required for job access in the Netherlands. ¹⁷⁴ People enrolled in integration courses have the right to one credential evaluation for free, but it is possible that many in the target group are not aware of this opportunity. ¹⁷⁵
Travel distance to vacant jobs. Once beneficiaries of international protection are assigned to housing, they cannot refuse the offer given to them, tying them to a specific area, which may not offer the type of jobs that match their skills. ¹⁷⁶	Beneficiaries of international protection	Both	Tight housing market, making it difficult to tailor assigned housing to labour market opportunities.
Difficulties in combining work with integration courses. Integration courses are often mandatory, straining people's resources (especially time) that they temporarily cannot use for job searching. ¹⁷⁷	Beneficiaries of international protection, persons that arrived via family reunification	Both	Integration curricula are often strict in learning outcomes, leading to a lack of flexibility in some cases, for instance in requiring language skills that are in practice not needed for a job.
Disadvantages in application and selection procedures. ¹⁷⁸ Although principles of non-discrimination are legislated on a	Migrants born outside Europe, people with Islamic sounding names or women wearing a headscarf	Both	Prejudice and discrimination may be a cause for this challenge. Cultural differences, simply, may add to difficulties in finding suitable work

¹⁷⁴ Information provided by Dutch Council for Refugees on 25 August 2025

¹⁷⁵ Information provided by the Foundation for cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB) on 25 August 2025

¹⁷⁶ Information provided by Dutch Council for Refugees on 25 August 2025

¹⁷⁷ Information provided by Dutch Council for Refugees on 25 August 2025

¹⁷⁸ Statistics Netherlands, 'Kansenongelijkheid in Nederland 2024: Opvattingen en ervaringen', <https://longreads.cbs.nl/kansenongelijkheid-in-nederland-2024/ongelijke-kansen-op-de-arbeidsmarkt/>, last accessed July 22 2025.

national level (on top of EU-legislation) and translated into various collective agreements, many still perceive bias in selection procedures.			from a migrant's perspective.
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Section 4: Skills matching Lessons Learned & Good Practices

- 8. Are there any good and implemented practices to counter the identified challenges or to counter skills mismatching and/or promote skills matching for migrants in your country that have been identified by your country? YES/NO. If yes, please explain, using the table below, indicating the information source (according to whom this is a good practice), choosing the cause(s)/challenges addressed by the good practice, indicating the form(s) of mismatch addressed, indicating, if applicable, whether they differentiate between different groups of migrants, and adding rows for additional good practices as needed.**

Good practice (please explain the practice and how it has affected/ameliorated the skills matching; indicate information source)	Cause (s) /Challenges addressed (if possible, to identify)	Form(s) of mismatch (vertical, horizontal, both)	Target group (labour migrants, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection; third country nationals that arrived via family reunification; others: female migrants; elderly migrants (please specify); etc.)
The possibility for municipalities to create integration curricula based on work (such as apprenticeships, voluntary work or regular paid work). This possibility is embedded in the Integration Act of 2021. ¹⁷⁹ Many municipalities have followed through by creating 'starting jobs', allowing participants to gain work experience and fulfil integration needs (including language skills) simultaneously. ¹⁸⁰	Narrowing cultural and linguistic distance among the target audience to the labour market, addressing a potential lack of work experience.	Both	Beneficiaries of international protection

¹⁷⁹ Divosa, 'Wet inburgering in vraag en antwoord', <https://www.divosa.nl/publicaties/wet-inburgering-vraag-en-antwoord/uitvoering/duale-trajecten>, last accessed September 12, 2025.

¹⁸⁰ KIS, 'Monitor Arbeidstoeleiding 2024', p. 27-29, <https://www.kis.nl/sites/default/files/2024-09/KIS-Monitor-Arbeidstoeleiding-2024.pdf>, last accessed September 12, 2025.

Development of learn-and-workplaces. These are initiatives supported by various public actors working to connect job seekers to workplaces in a manner that facilitates their labour market integration as much as possible. ¹⁸¹	Narrowing cultural and linguistic distance among the target audience to the labour market, addressing a potential lack of work experience	Both	People with a background of migration in general, mostly with little Dutch language skills
Creating a community of professionals among municipality representatives charged with facilitating labour market accession for recent beneficiaries of international protection. ^{182 183}	Cultural differences between social servants and target group	Both	Beneficiaries of international protection, in particular female migrants

9. Are there any lessons learned (i.e. insights that are not necessarily put into practice yet, but are important to consider for future policymaking) regarding effective measures to counter skills mismatching of migrants and/or promote skills matching for migrant groups? YES/NO. If yes, please elaborate and indicate the information source (according to whom this is a lesson learned).

Yes, a better understanding of the coherence between different policy measures is something that experts indicated as a lesson learned. It must be noted that all different drivers combined factor into the existence of untapped labour potential and skills mismatches among migrants. Experts noted for example that available housing, healthcare, discrimination on the work floor, migration motive and the provision of information all factor into the possibility of migrants to integrate into the labour market. Integration policies should be considered within this light.¹⁸⁴

On top of that, the recent report from the Migration Advisory Council¹⁸⁵ has also identified a few lessons learned and focus areas for future policies as extrapolated from the results of the study on the underutilised labour market potential of different groups of migrants in the Netherlands. Below a few conclusions of the study;

¹⁸¹ SER and Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, '<https://www.ser.nl/-/media/ser/downloads/overige-publicaties/2021/leerwerktrajecten-personen-migratieachtergrond.pdf>', last accessed September 12, 2025

¹⁸² Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 'Werkagenda voor een Inclusieve Arbeidsmarkt', p. 10.

¹⁸³ HAN, 'Arbeidstoeleiding van vrouwelijke statushouders', <https://www.han.nl/projecten/2024/arbeidstoeleiding-vrouwelijke-statushouders/>, last accessed July 22 2025.

¹⁸⁴ Information provided by expert panel on 25 August.

¹⁸⁵ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', june 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migranten>, last accessed July 21 2025.

1. Make use of talents

- Reducing the unutilised labour potential pays off on several fronts; It is desirable in policy terms to pay more attention to reducing the unutilised labour potential among migrants: this improves the social position of migrants, can help reduce staff shortages in companies and institutions, benefits society through lower social spending and higher tax revenues, and there is less need to attract labour migrants.
- Extra focus on large and high underutilised labour potential; The untapped labour potential varies widely between migrant groups, depending on age, gender, migration motive and country of origin. It is therefore desirable to pay special attention to migrants aged 45 and over, women and asylum and family migrants from outside the EU/EFTA.
- Focus on asylum and family migrants; Most of the untapped labour potential consists of asylum and family migrants from outside the EU/EFTA. Policies targeting these groups potentially deliver the most.

2. Education

- Language skills as key to participation; Investing in migrants' language skills is essential to increase their labour market opportunities.
- Education and training increase labour market opportunities; Education is also crucial for labour market opportunities. Migrants without a starting qualification run an increased risk of long-term unemployment or low-paid work. Education and (re)training pathways contribute to reducing unused labour potential.
- Recognition of foreign diplomas; A diploma obtained abroad is associated with a lower employment rate than when a corresponding diploma was obtained in the Netherlands. Recognition of foreign diploma's and credential evaluation has a positive effect on the labour participation of migrants, especially female migrants.

3. Invest in Work

- Number of hours worked is generally not a bottleneck; Most working migrants do not work fewer, but rather more hours than corresponding Dutch nationals without a migration background. Therefore, there is generally no underutilisation in the number of hours worked. Therefore, no special attention is needed in policy for this.
- Qualitative underutilisation requires focused attention; There does seem to be significant qualitative underutilisation of working migrants in terms of pay and form of contract. Although pay and job security improve over time, the utilisation of working migrants' skills deserves more attention. As a result, more migrants can end up in jobs that are a good match for their preferences and talents as well as beneficial for the Netherlands.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Adviesraad Migratie, 'Talenten benutten. Het onbenutte arbeidspotentieel van migranten', June 2025, <https://www.adviesraadmigratie.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2025/06/26/talenten-benutten-het-onbenutte-arbeidspotentieel-van-migranten>, last accessed July 21 2025.

Section 5: Conclusions

In the Netherlands skills mismatches or untapped labour potential is prevalent among different groups of migrants. Especially beneficiaries of international protection have a high percentage of skills mismatch. Research shows that 54% of beneficiaries of international protection work low-skilled jobs and there is a mismatch with their education level, work experience and skills.¹⁸⁷ Although many factors play a role in skills mismatches, there are a few key drivers that are deemed as especially noteworthy. The (lack) of Language skills, limited information about the labour market, Workplace and societal discrimination and the need for many certifications for jobs in the Netherlands, especially for recognised professions. It should also be noted that among younger migrants there is less untapped labour potential, because they might have followed education in the Netherlands. Untapped labour potential also decreases the longer migrants stay in the Netherlands as integration into society increases.

Some structural elements also play a huge role in causing skills mismatches among migrants. Notable are the lack of housing in affluent areas, the limited knowledge of tools to get foreign certification evaluated, the lack of diversity policies among employers and integration policies which do not (yet) have the intended effect. Other slowing factors such as long waiting times for bureaucratic processes, or the placement from a reception centre into a permanent home might also play a role.

Debates within Dutch politics regarding this topic have often included discussing measures on how to activate the labour potential of migrant groups for specific shortages within the Dutch labour market. The economic as well as societal need for addressing these skills mismatches have been mentioned in various reports by the Advisory Council of Migration. Various reports of the Advisory Council underlined the importance of language acquisition and professional development as key actors for a successful integration of migrants into the labour market and Dutch society.

In the Netherlands various actors are responsible for addressing skills mismatches. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW), is primarily responsible for labour market and labour migration policies, including policies regarding the integration of migrants into the labour market. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) is responsible for policies related to education, including policies regarding the internationalisation of education and the evaluation of qualifications obtained abroad, as well as the recognition of diploma's (for a limited set of regulated professions in teaching, child care and archival work). Other ministries and professional organisations are also responsible for recognition of diploma's for regulated professions, such as the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) for medical professions.

Policies and instruments to promote skills matching of the Dutch government focus on both employees and employers. Policies targeting employees consist of measures to facilitate skills matching such as providing child care for workers who are enrolled into a recognized educational institution, as well as providing information platforms containing information for newcomers into the Dutch labour market and possibilities for further training. Policies targeting at employers include subsidies that support employers who offer long term employment to beneficiaries of international protection.

Next to government initiated policies there have also been programs initiated by both civil society and public-private partnerships. Examples include a program by the Groningen medical centre matching migrants to nursing jobs, with a particular focus on female beneficiaries of international protection, or the CompetentNL common language to standardize skills on the labour market.

¹⁸⁷ Information provided by Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment on 9 September 2025.

Various challenges have been reported with policies addressing skills mismatches in the Netherlands. Some pertain to difficulties in the official recognition of professions and/or the certificates indicating them, which is often perceived as a difficult process and can be costly. It is thought that in the Netherlands in particular, many jobs require such certificates and official recognitions. Also, perceived (and real) discrimination are reported as reasons for not being hired to jobs that some people seek. Prejudice based on religion or heritage may be the reasons.

Good practices on the other hand, are mostly found in the combination of mandated integration courses with different types of work placement. There is room for involved actors (municipalities and integration agencies) to tailor jobs to people's skills and needs. Although the tailoring process requires effort, these programs have the potential to serve two critical purposes at once, especially regarding skills matching.

There were also some lessons learned when addressing skills mismatches. It was namely noted that there was a need to understand the coherence between the different driving factors and that addressing this requires policies that focus not only on labour market integration but also on factors such as: language, education, professional development, discrimination, housing and overall migration and integration policies as a whole. Specific policies might be needed for migrants with different migration motives (eg. asylum, study and labour). Special attention might also need to be given to women when designing policies to address skills mismatches as their specific needs might differ.