



Welcome to the Winter, 2024 edition of the GS4S newsletter. Completing our first year of operations, this Horizon Europe project has made significant strides in fostering dialogue and contributing to informed policymaking around critical issues in migration and skills shortages within the EU and beyond. Since our last newsletter, presentations have been made before the European Parliament as well as the Dutch Parliament; we have hosted a thought-provoking webinar examining the migration corridor between Bangladesh and Italy to shed light on its complexities and opportunities, and our podcast series has been launched. Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that work is underway on more working papers, surveys, Business and Cross-National Comparative Databases, and decision-making tools designed to provide actionable recommendations to policymakers, which will be released in the coming months. Stay tuned for updates as we continue to drive impactful research and engagement around our focused themes!

## Contributions to Informed Policymaking



### Assessing the PCD: EU Talent Partnerships/Legal Migration Pathways

In a presentation before the European Parliament's Committee on Development (DEVE) on December 4th, GS4S Co-Principal Investigator Prof. Tesseltje de Lange shared key insights from her analysis of the Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) assessment of legislative and non-legislative instruments regulating labor, skills mobility, and migration between the EU and third countries. At the heart of this assessment are the EU Talent Partnerships, announced by the European Commission as a flagship initiative within the new Pact on Migration and Asylum. According to the Commission, EU Talent Partnerships aim to:

1. enhance legal migration pathways to the EU,
2. strategically engage partner countries on migration management, and
3. address skills shortages in the EU.

1. Legal Migration Pathways - despite these objectives, EU Talent Partnerships do not, in themselves, facilitate legal migration. The case study offers a broader examination of the EU's legal migration framework in the context of labour and skilling. This case study demonstrates that the EU has not facilitated the PCD objectives convincingly in the framework for legal migration. Why is this the case?

- In the drafting, PCD objectives received limited attention. To address this gap, impact assessments should better engage PCD objectives.

## Assessing the PCD: EU Talent Partnerships/Legal Migration Pathways (continued)

- Policy documents talk of a triple win, serving the countries of origin, the EU and the people involved. Yet, this triple win is not translated into clear and binding EU legal norms on ethical recruitment standards that, for instance, stop recruiting from countries that face brain drain. To address this, the EU should establish standards that align with Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). Additionally, the impact of circular mobility schemes on countries of origin remains largely unknown due to a lack of data on their outcomes. Therefore, the EU should prioritize collecting comprehensive data to better assess the effects of these instruments.

2. On the Selected Countries – the case study reveals that the European Commission selects partner countries for Talent Partnerships primarily based on their utility to the EU in migration management, rather than for development objectives or suitability as human resource partners. To ensure PCD, the selection process must be transparent and guided by PCD principles, prioritizing the benefits for individuals and their countries of origin and placing development objectives at the forefront of project design. The EU's recently-launched [Talent Partnership with Pakistan](#) allocated just €3 million from the development budget, an amount likely to support only two or three projects and benefit a few hundred individuals through training and potential mobility. Talent Partnerships often serve as incentives within broader migration management deals. A true PCD approach, however, requires prioritizing training and skilling initiatives over migration management objectives.

3. Skilling for Labour Market Needs – this case study highlights that Talent Partnerships should align not only with EU legal migration and development policies but also with educational and industrial policies. Achieving this requires a whole-of-society approach, extending beyond EU policies to engage migrant workers, the private sector, and educational institutions both within the EU and in partner countries.

Given the EU's demographic decline and ongoing major transitions, collaboration between the EU and developing countries is essential. Together, they should focus on cultivating the skills and talent needed to build a sustainable and shared future. Three Horizon Europe research projects are currently examining these issues; in her address, Prof. De Lange highlighted the funding of our GS4S project as an encouraging initiative towards achieving PCD-driven talent partnerships. Read her full case-study and the EPRS report [here](#). View the Committee of Development's proceedings on the GS4S YouTube Channel [here](#).



## Strengthening EU Integration and Labor Market Stability

Addressing the Dutch Parliament's Committee on European Affairs during a roundtable on EU enlargement, Prof. de Lange emphasized the need for a forward-thinking approach, advocating for transitional arrangements as was accomplished in past enlargement phases and labor market integration processes to minimizing disruptions. She highlighted the importance of phased-in freedoms and reskilling initiatives to equip new EU workers to contribute effectively to economic growth. Her remarks also underscored the shared interests of The Netherlands with other EU Member States in addressing labor shortages and improving conditions for workers. By investing in these areas, the EU labor market can remain robust while fostering mutual prosperity.

Read the full text of the Roundtable dialogue [here](#).

# EU Migration Policy Insights: EU Talent Partnerships

## Panelists



Dr. Jasmijn Slootjes  
MPI Europe  
Moderator



Dr. Ferruccio Pastore  
FIERI IT  
Discussant



Shakirul Islam  
OKUP BD  
Discussant



Dr. Jessica Hagen-Zanker  
ODI UK  
Rapporteur



Prof. Tesseltje de Lange  
Radboud University NL  
Policy Expert Contributor

Listen to the webinar on the GS4S YouTube Channel [here](#)

### EU/Bangladesh Bilateral Initiatives for Migration and Labor Mobility

Key takeaways from GS4S's inaugural webinar on November 12th, 'Migration More Important Than Ever', shed light on the critical challenges facing the Bangladesh-Italy migration corridor. These include irregular migration, unethical recruitment practices, and mismatched labor market demands. The webinar explored solutions for creating more efficient, skill-based legal migration pathways.

Discussants from both EU and Bangladeshi perspectives addressed the systemic inefficiencies fueling irregular migration, emphasizing the need for stronger regulatory mechanisms, improved labor-market matching systems, and greater investment in legal migration frameworks; they also highlighted the high costs and risks tied to fraudulent recruitment systems. To address these challenges, the panel advocated for transparent, skill-based migration processes to build trust and achieve better outcomes for migrants and destination countries alike.

Highlighting the relevance of the GS4S project in shaping a global strategy for skills, migration, and development, participants also discussed the role of EU initiatives: the Talent Pool and Talent Partnerships aim to address labor shortages, promote ethical recruitment, and foster cooperation between EU countries and migration-origin countries like Bangladesh. The central challenge, however, remains in meaningfully scaling these initiatives while addressing the pitfalls of unethical recruitment, as noted earlier.

The webinar underscored the importance of integrating skill development, ethical recruitment, and forward-looking policies to create sustainable migration pathways that benefit both host and origin countries. Upcoming GS4S research will explore how skills training influences migration decisions with insights from Egypt, and Nigeria.

We thank our panelists Dr. Ferruccio Pastore (FIERI) and Shakirul Islam (OKUP), Rapporteur Dr. Jessica Hagen-Zanker (ODI), Policy Expert Prof. Tesseltje de Lange (Radboud University) and Moderator Dr. Jasmijn Slootjes (Migration Policy Institute), as well as guest speakers from the Directorate General offices of the European Commission, Michalis Moschovakos and Barbara Banuskova.

Read the webinar proceedings report [here](#).



Michalis Moschovakos  
European Commission Directorate  
General, of Research and Innovation  
Guest Contributor



Barbara Banuskova  
EU Talent Partnerships Coordinator,  
EU Migration & Home Affairs  
Guest Contributor



# Inaugural Podcast Explores the Role of Skills Shortages



Dr. Colleen Boland  
Radboud University NL  
Podcast Moderator



Ksenija Ivanović  
Radboud University NL  
Podcast Contributor



Dr. Mahdi Gohdsi  
Vienna Institute for  
Economic Studies AU  
Guest Speaker



## Spotlight on the Western Balkans

In this episode of our inaugural podcast, Mahdi Gohdsi, an economist at WIIW, the [Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies](#), offers valuable insights on how labor shortages, particularly in sectors like digital, care, and construction, are shaping migration decisions. His exploration of labor market dynamics highlights the multifaceted nature of migration, with economic factors playing a central role. The podcast discusses findings from GS4S' recently-published working paper: 'Skills-oriented migration in the Western Balkans: Linking workers' migration aspirations to skill shortages in destination and origin countries' around the need for evidence-based policies to address labor shortages, and the vital role of data in shaping such policies. Gohdsi's research team at WIIW also emphasizes the need for improved data availability, particularly in tracking migration flows and understanding the mismatch between skills offered by the education system and the needs of the labor market.

## How Labor Shortages Are Shaping Migration Aspirations

GS4S' working paper takes a closer look at how labor shortages influence migration aspirations and destination preferences among individuals in the Western Balkans, particularly Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The findings reveal a significant connection: labor shortages play a key role in driving decisions to migrate, especially to more advanced economies like those in the European Union.

Labor shortages happen when there aren't enough skilled workers to meet the needs of specific industries—think manual labor or assembly line work, for example. Labor is fundamental to economic stability and growth. When certain industries grow rapidly but lack enough workers with the right skills, it creates challenges for both businesses and economies as a whole.

~ Dr. Mahdi Gohdsi, Vienna Institute for Economic Studies

## The Migration Factor

Mahdi continued his discussion. For individuals in the Western Balkans, he said, labor shortages often open doors to opportunities abroad. These workers are drawn to advanced economies where their skills are in high demand. While this offers promising prospects for migrants, it also highlights critical issues for both regions: a potential 'brain drain' for sending countries and an urgent need for policies to address labor gaps in receiving economies like the EU. GS4S' working paper's findings provide valuable insights for policymakers. Addressing labor shortages at home could reduce migration pressures, while host countries might use these insights to better anticipate labor supply from specific regions. As migration continues to play a key role in the global economy, understanding these dynamics is crucial for creating balanced and sustainable labor policies.

Read the associated working paper [here](#). Listen to the podcast [here](#).

## Podcast #2 - The Overeducation of Immigrants in Europe



Dr. Colleen Boland  
Radboud University NL  
Podcast Moderator



Ksenija Ivanović  
Radboud University NL  
Podcast Contributor



Dr. Tommaso Frattini  
Migration Research  
Coordinator  
Guest Speaker



### Policy Implications / Integration Measures

In the second episode of the GS4S mini-series of podcasts, Colleen Boland and Ksenija Ivanović have a conversation with Prof. Tommaso Frattini, a labor economist specializing in economics of migration. Frattini coordinates the Migration Research area at the [Centro Studi Luca d'Agliano](#), a non-profit research institution in the field of international and development economics based at the Fondazione Luigi Einaudi in Torino, and a GS4S partner. He is also Professor of Economics at the University of Milan, co-director of the Global Migration Information Hub at Rockwool Foundation Berlin, and a Research Fellow at CEPR, Dondena and Institute of Labor Economics in Berlin.

In this episode, Frattini discusses the overeducation of tertiary-educated migrants (coming from both EU Member States and third countries) in European labour markets, and explores the immigrant-native gap in over-education levels. He elaborates on policy implications of this research, and in particular, the importance of improved procedures for recognition of foreign qualifications, better facilitation of language learning, and other types of integration measures to improve labor market entry.

Read the associated working paper [here](#). Listen to the podcast [here](#).

## News from the Horizon Transformations Sister Projects



### Focusing on Europe, Africa, Asia, America

The [Link4Skills.eu](#) project seeks to bridge the gap between skill supply and demand by supporting re/up-skilling, promoting automation, and encouraging migration as policy options. Their Navigator state-of-the-art platform is designed to empower EU decision-makers, recruiters, and training providers with actionable insights that helps tackle skill shortages and migration challenges across global labour markets. By focusing on evidence-based policymaking, the Navigator aims to support stakeholders with tailored tools for data analysis, visualization, and dissemination.

At its core, the Navigator is a knowledge-based expert system that combines robust data analytics with a user-friendly interface. Interactive Dashboards allow Users to create and customize visualizing data through maps, charts, and tables. An AI-Driven chatbot interface offers contextualized support, answering questions with real-time insights derived from integrated datasets. Data Exploration and Visualization based on advanced filtering and export options enable users to tailor analyses for reports and presentations. Interactive maps showcase migration flows, policy impacts, and skill dynamics across migration corridors. Read the full report [here](#).

## About GS4S

Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development

In three focused industries:

IT/Digital \* Construction \* Care

<https://gs4s.eu> - Email: [info@gs4s.eu](mailto:info@gs4s.eu)



From January 1st 2024 to December 31st 2026, the Horizon Europe project 'Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development' (GS4S) will seek to better understand global skills shortages in Digital, Care, and Construction sectors. GS4S proposes multi-level policies on labour migration governance, and develops alternative ways for addressing skills shortages in six regions: EU, EEA, Western Balkan, Middle East and Northern Africa, West Africa, and South/South-East Asia. To achieve these ambitious objectives, the interdisciplinary GS4S consortium led by senior researchers at Radboud University (The Netherlands) conducts innovative analyses using mixed-methods research. A particular emphasis in the project is paid to capturing business strategies for filling skills shortages, and skilled (migrant) workers' experiences with skilling, upskilling and reskilling in EU and non-EU regional contexts.

During the first year of the project's operations, GS4S has published several deliverables:

- [The Impact of Migration to the EU on labor shortages in the Western Balkans](#), our first policy brief, highlights incentives that encourage (i) emigration from the WB region and (ii) immigration to EU countries. In particular, it examines the impact of emigration on labour shortages in the WB and proposes timely policy recommendations for WB and EU policy makers.
- [Skills-Oriented Migration in the Western Balkans](#) examines the understudied impact of labour shortages on migration aspirations and destination preferences among individuals from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. Also available in Serbo-Croatian [here](#).
- [The Overeducation of Immigrants in Europe](#) explores the background of tertiary-educated migrants in European labour markets, underscoring the need for policies that better align immigrants' skills with labour market demands in Europe. The working paper is accompanied by an interactive dashboard on skill waste across EU member states, accessible at the *European Migration Observatory* website [here](#).
- [Locating Shortages in Migrants' Origin Countries: A Big Data Approach](#) documents a data collection on vacancies published online, which is being implemented by web scraping online platforms in selected non-EU countries. The data collection aims at locating labour or skill shortages in important origin countries of migration to the EU, and the paper outlines how the data collection can be transformed into measures of shortages at the level of occupations and skills.

All project deliverables are accessible on Zenodo and the GS4S website [here](#).

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