



Summer is GS4S' "quiet" season, with some members of the team taking some well-earned time off while others continue our work leading into our final conference in October. Here are a few highlights maintaining the momentum:



Three Horizon Europe Projects – One Shared Conversation

At a time of mounting labour shortages and shifting migration dynamics, this event brings together the three sister projects to the Horizon Transformation Initiative, HORIZON-CL2-2023-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-03. All three projects examine global skills shortages, skills matching, and labour migration, from complementary perspectives:

- ▶ **Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development – GS4S** emphasizes employer and migrant experiences, sectoral shortages, and alternative policy responses.
- ▶ **Link4Skills** examines skills supply and demand, migration corridors, and skill partnerships, supported by an AI-assisted Skill Navigator.
- ▶ **Skills4Justice** focuses on fair and sustainable skill formation, matching and migration partnerships between origin and destination countries.

The conference is designed as a policy-facing event for dialogue between researchers, policymakers, employers, civil society representatives, and international organizations.

What to expect:

- Cross-project findings on skills shortages and mobility
- Joint perspectives on fair and effective migration pathways
- Practical tools, including AI-supported policy insights
- Dialogue with EU institutions, Member States, and stakeholders

Registration now open for online participation:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdpiMvqe8oOR5K1kcWAWd4K9XJm_vBOuox4mq-fz7Sjzcyrlg/viewform?pli=1

**Policy Brief – Closing Europe's Skills Gap**Radboud Universiteit **Policy Brief No. 4****Closing Europe's Skills Gap: Sector-Specific Lessons for EU Skills Policy****Authors:**

■ Ayse Saka-Helmhout (Radboud University) ■ Daniel Speldekamp (University of Groningen) ■ Albert Rutten, Arjan Heyma (SEO Amsterdam Economics) ■ Mariana Alvarado, Sandra Lavenex (University of Geneva)

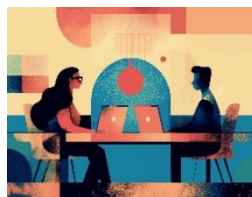
Skill shortages represent one of the most pressing structural challenges facing European businesses, with nearly half of both small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and multinational enterprises (MNEs) reporting high or very high shortages, particularly in healthcare, ICT, manufacturing, and construction. Demographic pressures and the demands of digital and green transitions show no sign of abating.

Drawing on a large-scale survey of 4,409 businesses across four countries, this brief examines how firms respond to skill shortages and under what conditions those responses succeed. The central finding is that effective responses are combinations of strategies, not single interventions, and their value depends on firm size, sector, and regulatory context.

SMEs rely predominantly on training and local labour market strategies, whereas MNEs make greater use of migration-related instruments. Sectoral analysis reveals distinct winning configurations: automation paired with talent inflow programs in IT and manufacturing; outsourcing alongside automation in healthcare; and outsourcing as the dominant lever in construction.

Key recommendations include bundling automation and talent inflow support, regulating outsourcing arrangements in health and construction, targeting skill inflow initiatives more precisely, and treating workforce training as productivity policy, particularly for SMEs, for whom it remains the most widely used response. Realizing Europe's competitiveness ambitions will ultimately require policy mixes that reflect the genuine diversity of firms navigating an increasingly constrained labour market.

Download at the GS4S.eu website: <https://gs4s.eu/policy-briefs/>
View the GS4S Skill Shortage Business Responses Database on Zenodo:
<https://zenodo.org/records/20676409>

**Skills Training / Migration Expectations****Working paper No. 9**
The relationship between skills training and migration aspirations**Authors:**

- Tony Kamninga, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, and Richard Mallet from ODI Global

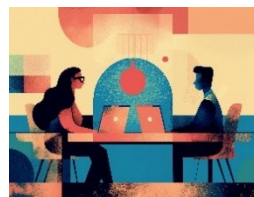
There is strong interest amongst donors in shaping the decisions of prospective migrants from the Global South – often to steer them towards regular migration pathways but also to dissuade them from leaving in the first place. Skills training programmes are one popular policy instrument in this area and are frequently implemented with the (implicit) assumption that if people participate in them then their migration aspirations are likely to diminish. Yet there is extremely limited evidence to back up such thinking. This study sets out to address this critical knowledge gap by examining whether – and in what ways specifically – skills training programmes may be associated with migration aspirations in Bangladesh, Egypt, and Nigeria, asking: *‘How do people’s experiences with skills training programmes influence their livelihood activity and migration aspirations?’* To answer this, we draw on original survey data from two sites within each of the three countries that captures the perspectives and experiences of both program participants and non-participants alike. The results from the study show a positive association between participating in a skills training program and migration aspirations, with particularly strong and consistent results for the sample from Bangladesh. Skills training participation is also positively associated with work and livelihood outcomes – in particular the likelihood of actively seeking new employment. However, the results also show that skills training participants found it difficult to find employment in their local areas. Our findings therefore show that the relationship between skills trainings, migration aspirations and work / livelihoods is far from the straightforward association that policy makers often assume when they use skills trainings as a migration management tool.

Download at the GS4S.eu website:

<https://gs4s.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/WP-9.pdf>

View the accompanying skills survey database here:

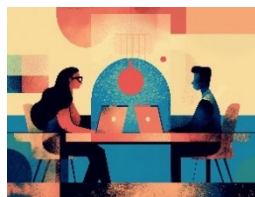
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20406539>


GS4S AT IMISCOE


The 23rd Annual Conference sponsored by the International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE) was held from 29 June to 2 July 2026 under the theme “Strengthening Migration Studies through Community Engagement”. Participants were invited to reflect critically on how migration research can be more deeply connected to the communities, places, and social actors with whom we engage as scholars. Moving beyond purely academic or Western-centric perspectives, the conference was aimed at fostering dialogue between research, lived experience, and public debate, highlighting participatory, collaborative, and reflexive approaches to the production of knowledge on migration.

Presenting at this year’s conference, GS4S researchers delved into digital inclusion, skilled migration governance, and the role of community engagement in shaping more participatory and equitable approaches to migration research:

- “Digitalisation and social and labour market inclusion of migrants: Opportunities, risks, and community engagement”, where Colleen Boland presented: “Obstacles and opportunities in digitalization and care labour: migration research in community”;
- “Skilled Migration Dynamics in Europe: Policies, Skills, and Lived Realities”, where GS4S PI Tesseltje de Lange presented “Corporate Governance of Skilled Migration for the Green Transition”;
- “Situating community engagement in EU-funded research: The case of the Horizon GS4S Project”, where Pascal Beckers (Radboud University) and Dina Abdel Fattah (American University in Cairo, Egypt) chaired a thoughtful discussion that included presentations from Shakirul Islam (OKUP, Bangladesh), Tesseltje de Lange and Colleen Boland (Radboud University) on “Reframing Skills and Migration Pathways: Exploring Bangladesh–EU Labour Mobility through a Decolonial and Participatory Lens”, with a third country perspective presented by Jessica Botros (AUC) and insights provided by Ksenija Ivanovic (RU).



On June 29th, GS4S joined forces with fellow Horizon Europe projects Link4Skills, and Skills4Justice to co-host a community engagement roundtable on skills mobility at IMISCOE. Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs) between origins and destinations are gaining ground as policy tools for addressing global skills shortages while promoting fair migration

shortages while promoting fair migration pathways, with the EU already advancing such partnerships with Bangladesh, Egypt, and Ghana. But their success hinges on genuine engagement from the full range of stakeholders involved — from migrant workers and trade unions to employers' organisations and civil society — and on confronting the ethical dilemmas that arise when policy is co-produced across such different interests. That tension sat at the heart of the roundtable's three guiding questions:

- *how SMPs can be designed and governed to be fair, inclusive and sustainable;*
- *what role trade unions, employers and civil society play in shaping skill recognition and protection for migrant workers;*
- *how migration research can feed evidence-based policymaking while staying honest about the ethics of co-production.*

Rather than a conventional panel, the 90-minute session was built as a moderated roundtable, pairing brief research findings with direct testimony from the field: civil society perspectives on migrant rights and representation, social partners on skills recognition, trade unions on collective bargaining within mobility partnerships, and policy practitioners reflecting on what fair mobility governance looks like in implementation. Speakers were drawn deliberately from across the three sister projects, with strong representation from origin-country and policy/institute voices, alongside a contribution from ICMPD. The panel's composition of contributors spanned geography (Europe, Africa, Asia), academia, civil society, policy, employers and trade unions, and a range of career stages, reflecting IMISCOE's commitment to interdisciplinarity, antiracism and inclusion, and ensuring that Global South voices sat alongside those from the North rather than after them.

The roundtable's value extends beyond the event. It produced a collective reflection on the opportunities and challenges of co-producing SMPs, concrete input toward a joint Policy Brief and the sister projects' Final Conference, and a further strengthening of the working relationship between Horizon Europe sister projects GS4S, Link4Skills, and Skills4Justice, three projects that, together, are building a shared evidence base on skills mobility governance across Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Skills Mobility Partnerships Gaining Ground As Policy Tools



**GS4S Video Explores Skills Shortages**

“What happens when companies need skilled people, but cannot find them?” animated video was produced by Krabmedia B.V. (KvK: 77093895) with input from GS4S researchers. Production of the video was led by Prof. Ayse Saka-Helmhout (Radboud University). We gratefully acknowledge Hilla Tuominen for her valuable input, suggestions, and feedback during the development of the video. Access on Zenodo <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22658679>



View Online
<https://framerate.tv/watch/y9q52pzD>



GS4S Webinar
After the Vote - The EU Talent Pool in Europe's Labour Mobility Strategy

Participants

 Moderator: Jasmijn Shootjes, Deputy Director, Migration Policy Institute (MPI) EuropeQ	 Anna Strölenberg, Member of the European Parliament
 Tesseltje de Lange, Director, Centre for Migration Law at Radboud University and Principal Investigator of GS4S	 Mauro Testaverde, Senior Economist, World Bank

 Funded by
The European Union

WEBINAR: “After the Vote - The EU Talent Pool in Europe's Labour Mobility Strategy”

 <https://youtu.be/wSozDMUYunc?si=TC5MeOCYVI7zCof>



GS4S HYBRID EVENT

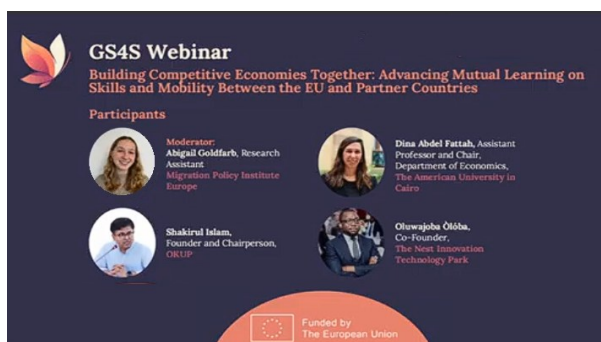
How do MNEs and SMEs tackle skill shortages?
A deep dive into the GS4S large scale survey
of 2025

Nijmegen and online
13 May 2026

 Funded by
The European Union

WEBINAR: “How MNEs and SMEs Tackle Skills Shortages”

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-jL13fuNuw>



GS4S Webinar
Building Competitive Economies Together: Advancing Mutual Learning on Skills and Mobility Between the EU and Partner Countries

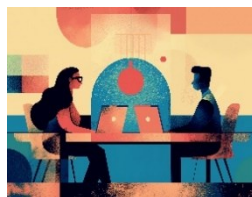
Participants

 Moderator: Abigail Goldfarb, Research Assistant, Migration Policy Institute Europe	 Dina Abdel Fattah, Assistant Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, The American University in Cairo
 Shakirul Islam, Founder and Chairperson, ORUP	 Oluwajoba Oloba, Co-Founder, The Next Innovation Technology Park

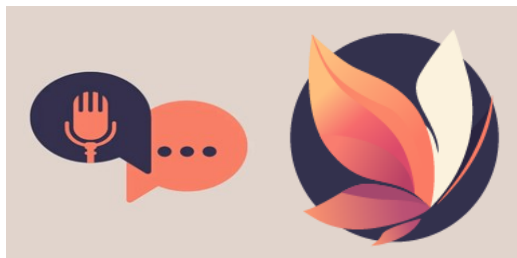
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The European Union

WEBINAR: “Building Competitive Economies Together”

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eExZrLeHKM>



Podcast #5
“MNE/SME Responses to Skills Shortages”



How do European companies respond to growing skills shortages? In this episode of the GS4S mini-series, researchers from Radboud University and the University of Geneva discuss new survey findings on how industry addresses workforce gaps through talent development, labour migration, and other strategic solutions. In this fifth episode of the GS4S mini-series, we explore how Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Europe address their skill shortages, drawing from the GS4S business survey. The related Policy Brief 3, “Closing Europe’s Skills Gap: Sector-Specific Lessons for EU Skills Policy” draws on a large-scale survey of 4,409 businesses across four countries to examine how firms respond to skill shortages and under what conditions those responses succeed. The central finding is that effective responses are combinations of strategies, not single interventions, and their value depends on firm size, sector, and regulatory contexts. The policy brief is available for download at the GS4S web-Site (https://gs4s.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/D2.3-WP4_Policy-brief.pdf). Access the corresponding database at <https://zenodo.org/records/20676409>.

Listen to the podcast [Radboud University’s Centre for Migration Law](#), [Spotify](#) and [PodBean](#)

About GS4S

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



Global Strategy for Skills, Migration, and Development

In three focused industries:

IT/Digital * Construction * Care

<https://gs4s.eu> - Subscribe to our newsletter: info@gs4s.eu