



# Global talent attraction and the EU Migration Strategy

Implications for corporate mobility





# Introduction

On January 29, 2026, in addition to its [first-ever EU Visa Strategy](#), the European Commission presented the European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy<sup>1</sup>. This document sets out the political priorities that will guide the European Union over the next five years and it is closely linked to the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum<sup>2</sup> from June 12, 2026.

As a whole, the new Strategy clearly shows a shift from transactional migration management to a strategic, vision-driven approach that sees migration as an opportunity to innovate, diversify, and strengthen Europe's social and economic fabric, with a clear focus on attracting and retaining global talent as a defining factor for the European Union's economic resilience and competitiveness.

While the new Strategy covers a wide spectrum, from asylum procedures to returns and readmission, the focus of this article is on the proposals that will affect corporate labor mobility.





# The EU Talent Pool and employer support

The EU Talent Pool is the European Commission's EU-level tool that can enable talent matching between EU employers with interested non-EU job seekers in specific sectors. The European Commission is prioritizing the development of the IT platform with an aim to have it fully operational in 2027, and has already identified 42 occupations in which the EU is facing labor and skills shortages that constrain the European economic potential.

To fulfil its potential, early engagement by the private sector and participation of Member States will be essential. For this, the Commission is already looking at cost and risk sharing models with the private sector, as well as support for training and pre-departure activities for job-seekers from third-countries.

## ► Our perspective

As with many EU initiatives, each country will promote the Pool and its capacities differently, which may lead to inconsistent recognition or applicability. Furthermore, because the EU Talent Pool must align candidates' skills with employers' needs across different countries, varying standards and expectations from the private sector may result in a lack of uptake. Without proper incentives, the private sector may decide that it is more efficient and cost-effective to continue its current recruitment processes. Finally, the immigration facilitations remain to be seen as even if a candidate is in the Pool, obtaining the right to work in an EU country can be slow and bureaucratic.





## Skills and qualifications: More straightforward recognition

The European Commission will also be launching a Skills Portability Initiative (SPI), which is designed to make workers' skills and qualifications more transparent, trusted, and usable across all EU Member States. It responds directly to longstanding barriers in cross-border labor mobility where employers and workers often struggle to interpret qualifications from other countries, especially when documentation is paper-based.

With simpler recognition tools and interoperability, employers could recruit from a much broader pool which, in turn, would help with the intake of the EU Talent Pool. The Commission aims to digitize the credentials to drive down paperwork, speed up hiring, and improve trust in the verification of qualifications and skills.

### ► Our perspective

From a private employer perspective, this move would support strategic workforce planning and management across locations and reduce delays in onboarding. Avoiding lengthy and costly processes such as recognition of degrees (which can take up to a year to complete through a consulate in some countries), as well as apostilles/legalizations and official translations, will speed up immigration processes and hiring and ensure that non-EU employees are not disproportionately disadvantaged in the hiring process. Moreover, by making skills more transparent and portable, employers can better match applicant strengths to real business needs (not just according to formal degrees but also verified experience and competencies, which is of particular importance in sectors such as STEM).





# Migration diplomacy and the European Legal Gateway Offices

The European Commission is actively linking its migration strategy to its wider diplomatic strategy, treating the movement of persons as part of a broader set of international partnerships rather than a standalone policy area. By reinforcing the links with other policies and using leverage and incentives (such as trade preferences or external financing), the Commission aims to move from reactive crisis management to a more structured approach in which the European objectives are clearly identified and met by the counterparts.

Two clear examples of how this is envisioned can be mentioned. The first is the expansion and strengthening of partnerships with third countries, which aims to move irregular migration to more formal and compliant routes through collaboration with those third countries. The second is through the introduction of European Legal Gateway Offices, the first of which will be in India for the STEM sector, in line with the proposals in the EU-India Trade Agreement. These offices are designed to help non-EU nationals and employers navigate immigration procedures more efficiently, with the possibility of expansion, depending on results.

## ► Our perspective

Legal Gateway Offices can be an effective way to manage recruitment and an improved flow of information on required documentation and criteria for the immigration process, helping to reduce administrative friction. However, it remains unclear whether corporate labor migration will benefit from any fast-track processes or facilitations, as many businesses already understand the requirements yet still struggle to secure timely entry for their employees. The Recommendation clearly proposes that approved employers and certain organizations should benefit from documentation requirements, even at the cost of increased ongoing compliance monitoring to maintain the prerogative. This proposal would have a meaningful impact and would be welcomed. Furthermore, companies should be aware that linking migration with other policy areas and the use of different diplomatic incentives may influence their ability to sponsor talent and should therefore monitor developments beyond the migration framework.





# Digitalization, start-ups, and innovation: Attracting the companies of the future

The Commission is driving a significant push towards the digitalization of immigration procedures, including short-term visas through the [EU Visa Strategy](#), as well as work and residence permits and the case management of these procedures. The Commission understands it needs to speed up decision-making to attract and retain the talent.

The Recommendation directly states that Member States should implement fully digital, simplified, and fast-track processes for certain groups of people or areas of work (researchers, STEM professionals, start-up founders, and innovative entrepreneurs), with a 30-day processing target for many long-stay applications.

The Migration Strategy clearly refers to the potential of digital tools and artificial intelligence to provide Member States with secure, modern, and efficient systems that improve the quality, consistency, and timeliness of decisions. The focus is not only on the corporate or governmental sides but also on user experience, with the objective of making the EU more attractive than other countries before they even arrive in the area.



## ► Our perspective

This shift should call for closer collaboration with digital and technology providers, as well as specialist immigration service partners and private corporate sponsors who can offer valuable insights into where current processes fall short and how they can be improved. For companies, the parallel focus on equipping law enforcement authorities with advanced tools (such as AI-enabled analytics) to process and connect large datasets will imply higher enforcement, inspections, and audits. As these capabilities expand, organizations will need to understand the compliance implications of a more technologically integrated migration landscape and plan for them in advance.

On processing times and facilitations, a 30-day processing target for long-stay applications would be highly advantageous and significantly shorter than the current standard of 90-day processing times in most EU Directives (which, in practice, often take even longer). It remains to be seen if governmental authorities in the EU Member States have the necessary manpower and capabilities to manage such workload and processing times, as theoretical processing times without any practical impact would be of no use for private corporations and their prospective employees.



Introduction

The EU Talent Pool and employer support

Skills and qualifications: More straightforward recognition

Migration diplomacy and the European Legal Gateway Offices

Digitalization, start-ups, and innovation: Attracting the companies of the future

Conclusion

## Conclusion

With this Migration Strategy, the EU is trying to balance simplified access for trusted employers and skilled migrants with stronger security and enforcement. By leveraging the single market and the freedom of provision of services, the EU is strongly setting itself as a competitive force for talent. In order to make this possible, EU employers must move faster, recruit more strategically, and design roles around genuine business needs rather than administrative constraints. In line with the Recommendation, reducing bureaucracy, increasing flexibility, and strengthening existing instruments such as the EU Blue Card and ICT Directives will be essential. Introducing or facilitating short-term work permit options for cross-border assignments, alongside better alignment of EU-wide mobility arrangements, would further enhance the EU's competitiveness in attracting and deploying talent.

Employers with mobile workforces, and the individuals they engage, would be well advised to monitor developments across the EU in the years ahead. From a compliance perspective, while many of these measures aim to streamline processes, they will also require more robust governance frameworks and forward planning from multinational corporations to benefit.

From an enforcement perspective, the European Commission is expected to review and potentially strengthen the Employers Sanctions Directive, with increased inspections and enforcement at national and EU-wide levels. This is likely to have implications for both immigration and labor law compliance, including areas such as the Posted Workers Directives.

### Contact us



#### Scherezade Maestre

Director, UK Solicitor & Spanish Lawyer

[scherezade.maestre@vialto.com](mailto:scherezade.maestre@vialto.com)

### Sources and references

<sup>1</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/european-asylum-and-migration-management-strategy\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/european-asylum-and-migration-management-strategy_en)

<sup>2</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en)