

# Ceemet's views on the Commission proposal for a Regulation establishing an EU Talent Pool

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## Preliminary remarks

Ceemet welcomes the proposal for a Regulation on establishing an EU talent pool published by the European Commission on 15 November 2023.

We support the fact that the proposal recognizes that EU employers are facing acute and structural labour and skills shortages in many professions and proposes a solution to tackle these problems. Indeed, when it comes to the MET sector, our industries are facing a serious challenge of labour and skills shortages. Currently, all our members across the EU highlight that labour and skills shortages are the key obstacles hindering their competitiveness and ability to innovate and thus to provide quality jobs.

It is also helpful that the proposal acknowledges the difficulties faced by the employers and third - country nationals (TCNs) related to international recruitment, such as the lack of effective channels and tools when it comes to international job matching, challenges in understanding information on recruitment processes, uncertainty with regards to the comparability of qualifications and skills obtained abroad, tedious bureaucracy to obtain the permits to live and work in the majority of EU Member States etc.

Against this background, Ceemet welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to find solutions for the highlighted challenges. The proposal envisages the creation of an EU-wide platform, a voluntary tool for interested Member States, aimed at facilitating international recruitment and offering the opportunities to low, medium and highly-skilled jobseekers from third-countries that have an interest and possess the required skills to work in EU- wide shortage occupations. The online platform will help matching the job vacancies posted by the employers in the EU with the profiles of jobseekers who reside outside the EU.

All in all, we endorse the proposed initiative and we believe that the EU Talent pool will, among other things, contribute to addressing existing and future labour and skills shortages. Still, we would like to highlight the importance of the involvement of social partners, especially when it comes to the development and update of the shortage occupation lists.

In this context, the Tech & Industry Employers put forward their views and forward-looking proposals regarding the proposed regulation.

## About Ceemet

Ceemet represents the **metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers** in Europe, covering sectors such as metal goods, mechanical engineering, electronics, ICT, vehicle and transport manufacturing.

Member organisations represent **200,000 companies** in Europe, providing over **17 million direct** and **35 million indirect jobs**.

Ceemet is a recognised European **social partner** at the industrial sector level, promoting global competitiveness for European industry through consultation and social dialogue.

## Subject matter and scope

We are happy to read that the EU Talent Pool will be open for all the jobseekers from third countries residing outside the Union as specified in Article 2 of the proposed Regulation. However, considering the text of Article 1, we believe that the Regulation mainly aims to facilitate the recruitment of jobseekers from third countries who benefit from a Talent Partnership. In our view, the proposed regulation has to equally benefit all the jobseekers and not only those whose countries are part of such a “Talent Partnership” Initiative.

## Participation

Ceemet welcomes the voluntary nature of the EU talent pool. Even though we believe that the pool will have a larger positive impact if the majority of the EU Member States become part of it, we consider that in terms of effectiveness, and in order to put it in place as soon as possible, the pool should remain a voluntary system for the Member States.

Moreover, Member States should be able to maintain any existing tools that they have in place at national level to attract third-country nationals and complement it with the new platform. If possible, the national existing tools should be connected to the EU talent pool in order to boost the success of the different tools.

An easy access to the pool should be provided to those Member States that are not part of the platform from the outset. We understand that the inclusion of the “new” Member State cannot be done immediately as the pool will require technical adaptations and the readiness of the IT platform but, we would welcome that the current notification period of 9 months that is now foreseen by the proposal is reduced.

We concur with the Commission that from the first day of participation, job vacancies of employers of a participating Member State are transferred to the EU talent pool IT platform and are made public.

## Processing of personal data

Ceemet welcomes that the proposal takes into consideration the laws on the protection of personal data and the EU data protection legislation and stipulates that personal data are processed only to the extent necessary for the performance of the tasks assigned in the public interest to competent authorities.

## EU Talent Pool Steering Group

According to the Commission proposal, one of the tasks of the **EU talent Pool Steering Group** will be to provide support to the Pool Secretariat in preparation of the list of EU wide shortage occupations. This task is of the utmost importance and a key pillar in addressing labour and skills shortages in particular in certain sectors where the need for skilled labour is critical.

For our industries, for example, the demand for various types of skilled workers, including mechanics, electric and electronic technicians, boilermakers, maintenance workers, welders, draughtsmen, electricians, and those with vocational backgrounds, such as maintenance workers, remains pressing.

In addition to workers with vocational backgrounds, the rapid transformation of our industries underscores the growing demand for professionals in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Our companies are now requiring roles such as data analysts, engineers, cybersecurity specialists, and ICT professionals, system design experts etc. This demand extends to emerging fields like electric-vehicle production which is critical to the success of the green transition.

However, when it comes to the composition of the Steering Group, the Commission stipulates that only the Member States participating in the Pool shall be members of the Steering Group and that EU cross-sectoral social partners shall participate as observers in the meetings of the Steering Group. Even though the Commission specifies that additional representatives of two participants from the trade unions and two participants from the employers shall be ensured, we firmly call for the involvement of the EU sectoral social partners, and in particular, of the EU employers' federations in the Steering Group.

Indeed, the active engagement of the sectoral employers' federations is the only way to ensure that the EU-wide shortage occupation list is developed on the basis of the correct and adequate information and data. Along these lines, we would like to highlight that it is the sectoral social partners and more concretely the employers' federations that hold the information regarding labour market shortages. Therefore, their participation as observers should be fully guaranteed. Only in this way, we will be able to ensure the success of the pool as an effective tool to address labour and skills shortages.

## **EU Talent Pool National Contact Points**

Regarding the **EU talent pool national contact points**, we agree with the Commission that relevant authorities from the field of employment and immigration are appointed as national contact points. As a matter of fact, the successful deployment of the pool necessitates the cooperation of both labour and migration experts especially as the Single Permit Directive and the Long-Term Residents Directive are in the process of being negotiated. For us, these directives will simplify the legal framework regarding the access of TCNs to the EU and we thus call for their fast adoption and for the Pool to build upon them once they come into effect.

In addition to migration and labour experts, we call for the inclusion of the authorities dealing with skills policies at national level. Dealing with the increasing challenge of labour and skills requires a combination of measures that address migration, skills, employment and labour market issues. Therefore, national authorities responsible for skills policies should also be appointed as national contacts.

Under this chapter, the Commission proposal also stipulates that the national contact points are responsible for notifying to the Pool Secretariat the national list of shortages occupations as well as for keeping a registry of employers participating in the talent pool.

Again here, we call on Member States to involve the national sectoral social partners, and in particular the employers' representatives, in the development of the list of shortages occupations and its adjustments. As stated above, we hold the information regarding the shortage occupations in different Member States as well as the evolution of these lists.

Moreover, employers' federations can also support the national contacts in putting together and keeping the registry of employers participating in the pool.

In a nutshell, we advocate for the sectoral social partners and in particular the employers' federations to be involved in the governance, implementation and monitoring of the Talent Pool, in particular the Steering Group and the national contact points.

## **Registration and access of jobseekers from third countries**

Article 11 of the proposed Regulation foresees that the jobseekers from third - countries may create their profiles via the Europass profile builder in order to register on the EU Talent Pool IT platform. We understand the idea of using the common standard when building the profiles for the jobseekers; however, we believe that it would be better to facilitate also that jobseekers use different profile builders due to the potential lack of familiarity with the Europass.

## **Profile registration and access of jobseekers from third countries in the context of Talent Partnership**

The purpose of this pool is to develop an EU-level tool for facilitating international recruitment and creating opportunities for qualified third-country nationals to work in sectors of interest within the EU. We thus agree that the pool facilitates the recruitment of jobseekers whose skills were developed or validated in the frame of the talent partnerships and certified by an EU talent partnerships pass.

Having said that, this should not act as a disincentive for jobseekers who are not part of the talent partnerships or have not been titled through a partnership pass. This can limit the function of the talent pool and reduce the number of job seekers. As already mentioned, Article 2 of the proposed regulation explicitly states that the regulation applies to job seekers from third countries residing outside the EU. We share the Commission's views of encouraging the participation of TCNs that are part of the Talent partnerships, but we fear that the pool will end up excluding TCNs jobseekers whose countries do not participate in Talent partnerships. Furthermore, we would like to highlight that for us these partnerships should promote circular migration and avoid brain drain.

In this regard, Ceemet calls on the Member States to follow the guidance of the Commission Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications of TCNs as the latter gives specific advice on how to best simplify and accelerate the recognition of qualifications gained in non-EU countries, including by reducing processing times, facilitating the access to electronic procedures and reducing burden for applicants.

We also welcome the 'Skills First' approach, set in this recommendation, where individuals' skills are understood and valued whether acquired in formal, non-formal or informal settings and where vacancies can be filled relying on skills rather than formal qualifications or job titles. The pool should also take this approach into consideration.

## **Participation of employers in the EU Talent Pool**

Member States should facilitate that employers interested in participating in the EU talent pool request their national contact points to transfer their job vacancies. This procedure should be made easy and with no red tape. Furthermore, we would like to highlight that SMEs are the backbone of the European economy and in this vein, we ask policymakers to deploy targeted communication

campaigns to inform companies, in particular SMEs about the existence of the pool and the modalities in which they can transfer their job vacancies to the pool.

As representative of the tech & industry employers we encourage the national contact points to liaise with sectoral employers at the national level to jointly work together towards raising awareness amongst SMEs.

As expressed in different occasions, we strongly oppose and condemn unfair recruitment procedures or unlawful working conditions for TCNs. Third-country nationals must be entitled to the working conditions that comply with EU and national labour law. We thus fully concur with the Commission provision that states that employers participating in the pool comply with relevant Union and national law and practice to ensure TCNs protection against unfair recruitment and inadequate working conditions as well as non-discrimination.

### **List of EU wide shortage occupations and National adjustments**

Once more we would like to call on Member States to involve employers' representatives in the update or removal of shortage occupations within the EU wide list so that they correspond to the labour market evolving needs.

### **Search and Matching**

As for the organizational aspects of the EU talent pool, Ceemet is of the opinion that interoperability with national recruitment portals and other private and sectoral portals such as LinkedIn or others could be developed as possible. In order to ensure its success, the pool has to facilitate automatic matching in a user-friendly manner.

Ceemet would like to stress once more that the pool will only be a successful initiative if it is easily accessible for SMEs and TCNs as well as designed in a user-friendly manner and easy to navigate.

Last but not least, we call on the Commission as possible, to connect the EU immigration portal to the talent pool as it could certainly act as support tool. For that, policy makers should work towards upgrading and modernising the EU immigration portal in order to provide with accessible, updated, interactive and user-friendly information to TCNs interested in moving and working in the EU.

### **Information provision and support service**

It is very important to ensure that the jobseekers from third countries and employers receive an easy access to the information regarding their rights, conditions and procedures for the participation in the EU Talent Pool. Thus, we are pleased to read that the proposal foresees the role of Member States, the EU Talent Pool Secretariat, as well as the EU Talent Pool National Contact Points in this respect. Having said that we insist that social partners be involved in this process also.

### **Accelerated immigration procedure**

The Tech and Industry employers welcome Article 19 of the proposed Regulation which introduces the possibility for participating Member States to put in place accelerated immigration procedures, particularly in relation to the obtention of visas and residence permits for work purposes and the exemption from the principle of preference for the citizens of the European Union. Immigration procedures often involve long waiting times which create barriers for both the employers and the employees. Therefore, the introduction of faster immigration procedure is a positive development.

## List of shortages occupations -ANNEX

Ceemet is pleased to see that the Annex covers many of the occupations that our industries require.

However, we call that the following occupations be added to the list:

2149 Engineering Professionals Not Elsewhere Classified

2152 Electronics Engineers

3114 Electronics Engineering Technicians

7232 Aircraft Engine Mechanics and Repairers

7311 Precision-instrument Makers and Repairers

7421 Electronics Mechanics and Servicers

8121 Metal Processing Plant Operators

8122 Metal Finishing, Plating and Coating Machine Operators

8211 Mechanical Machinery Assemblers