Borderless Talent:

Building ethical and compliant pathways for global talent mobility

2026

Social Impact Report

WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFEDERATION
The Voice of Labour Market Enablers

Contents

Foreword from the International Organization for Migration

The world of work is increasingly shaped by global demographic, economic and technological change. As labour markets evolve, questions relating to skills, workforce mobility, recruitment practices and international cooperation are becoming ever more important for governments, employers, workers and other stakeholders.

Against this backdrop, Borderless Talent contributes to ongoing discussions on the opportunities and challenges associated with international labour mobility. Drawing on experiences from different regions and sectors, the report offers perspectives on how labour mobility systems can respond to changing labour market realities while seeking to support positive outcomes for migrants, employers and societies.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomes efforts that encourage informed dialogue and exchange among stakeholders engaged in labour mobility governance. Such discussions are important in helping to strengthen understanding of emerging trends, identify good practices and explore approaches that support safe, orderly and regular migration.

This report is published recognizing the growing collaboration between IOM and the World Employment Confederation (WEC) under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2026.

Through this collaboration, IOM and WEC seek to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on labour mobility, talent pathways and related policy issues, recognizing the value of engagement among governments, employers, workers, international organizations and other relevant actors.

We hope that this report will serve as a useful contribution to ongoing discussions on labour mobility and support constructive engagement among stakeholders working to address the opportunities and challenges associated with a changing world of work.

VINCENT HOUVER

Director, Department of Migration Pathways and Inclusion
The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Leadership Foreword

Message from Martin Klingen, Chair of the WEC Global Public Affairs Network and Minna Melleri, WEC Executive Director

Although technology is enabling more online and remote work, international talent mobility and truly borderless labour markets remain essential to the functioning of economies and societies worldwide. As structural labour shortages intensify—driven largely by ageing workforces across Europe, Asia, and other regions—Africa and India are emerging as major global talent hubs. At the same time, the traditional distinction between "sending" and "receiving" countries is becoming increasingly blurred. Many countries are now both destinations for international talent and sources of workers moving abroad, reflecting the growing interconnectedness of global labour markets.

The urgency of advancing international talent mobility is reflected in the work of global and regional policymakers. Recent OECD analysis shows that labour migration policies are being tailored more closely to talent attraction and specific labour market needs, while IOM, the ILO and the International Organisation of Employers are all promoting work on regular migration pathways, fair recruitment and stronger regulatory frameworks for labour mobility.

This report takes stock of current trends and issues related to talent migration at a global scale and provides an overview of the practical ways in which the private employment services industry enables fair, efficient, and sustainable cross-border labour solutions.

Ensuring compliance, enforcement, and fully lawful solutions for labour mobility that benefit companies, workers, and societies is essential to create ethical talent corridors across global labour markets. The World Employment Confederation's Code of Conduct is grounded in high industry standards and subject to regular compliance monitoring. This global framework provides a concrete benchmark for policymakers and businesses in setting international standards for quality cross-border recruitment and employment practices.

WEC and its members represent the high standards that are necessary to unlock the full potential of international talent mobility, working in close partnership with public and private organisations to deliver better labour market outcomes for all.

MARTIN KLINGEN

Chair Global Public Affairs Network, World Employment Confederation

MINNA MELLERI

Executive Director, World Employment Confederation

Executive Summary - Key Messages

Labour markets around the world are increasingly out of balance. While some economies continue to face persistently high unemployment, others are experiencing acute labour and skills shortages driven by ageing populations, declining workforce participation, and structural shifts in demand.

These shortages are not temporary, but structural. Key sectors such as healthcare, care services, construction, and parts of the digital economy are struggling to secure the workers they need to maintain operations and support future growth. At the same time, large pools of talent exist in other regions, often without access to comparable employment opportunities.

Expectations of work are also evolving. Research, including the WEC/FT Longitude Work We Want project, shows that workers place growing value on flexibility, work–life balance, and opportunities for international experience. For many, work is no longer tied to a single location or a single lifelong career.

The result is a widening mismatch between where workers are and where jobs are, one that cannot be resolved within national labour markets alone.

International talent mobility is therefore not a marginal issue but an increasingly central component of how modern labour markets function.

Legal and well-managed approaches to international talent migration help economies address critical shortages, support growth in key sectors, and enables workers to access better jobs and develop new skills.

Well-regulated international talent mobility also delivers broad benefits for economies and societies by helping to fill critical labour and skills shortages, supporting competitiveness and growth, creating opportunities for workers, and strengthening labour market resilience over the long term.

At the same time, international talent mobility is often politically contested and operationally complex. Informal and non-compliant recruitment practices continue to undermine trust, expose workers to exploitation, and weaken confidence in legal mobility systems. In a global economy where international talent mobility is no longer optional, but essential to the functioning of modern labour markets, the challenge is to ensure it is organised through legal, ethical and effective systems that deliver benefits for workers, employers and society alike.

Private employment services play a vital role in meeting this challenge by providing structured, compliant and transparent pathways to connect talent with opportunity across borders.

This report examines how labour markets are functioning in a period of global imbalance, with a focus on talent mobility and legal migration. It recognises the needs of employers, workers and society, while acknowledging that approaches to borderless talent will vary by country, political context, legal framework and labour market need. It makes the case for practical, well-managed talent mobility systems. And it concludes with the five policy priorities WEC believes are needed to support fairer, more competitive and more inclusive labour markets.

In this report, we use the term international talent mobility as defined by the IOM. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines talent mobility (or skills-based mobility) as the cross-border movement of workers matched to jobs based on their skills and competencies. It acts as an essential regular migration pathway designed to benefit migrants, destination employers, and the economic development of both origin and destination countries. (For further information, see also: Skills-based mobility | International Organization for Migration)

Five urgent priorities for global policymakers

Based on the trends and challenges outlined in this report, the World Employment Confederation calls on policymakers, employers, social partners and labour market institutions to adopt five priorities for lawful, ethical and well-managed talent mobility:

1. **Ground talent mobility policy in labour market evidence.** Decisions should reflect real skills shortages, demographic pressures and sector-specific demand.
2. **Enable circular migration pathways.** Mobility systems should create opportunities for workers while balancing the interests of countries of origin and destination.
3. **Use international frameworks to strengthen fair recruitment.** Instruments such as the Global Compact for Migration, the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative and ILO Convention 181 provide important guidance.
4. **Make legal frameworks future-proof.** Regulation should keep pace with remote work, Employer-of-Record services and other emerging forms of cross-border work.
5. **Build stronger partnerships.** Effective talent mobility requires cooperation between private employment services, employers, public employment services and civil society organisations. Closer cooperation is also required between immigration authorities and the private employment services industry to make talent mobility pathways more efficient and address the complexity of immigration procedures and the labour market integration of borderless talent.

Part 1

Mobilising Global Talent

a) Why International Talent Mobility Matters: Structural Labour Market Imbalances

Disconnected Labour Markets in an Interconnected World

Labour markets are increasingly out of balance. Some economies, such as Chile and South Africa, are grappling with high and rising unemployment while still having lower levels of employment. Others are facing a near-full-employment situation (high employment, low unemployment), such as the Netherlands, Australia and Japan, with acute skills and labour shortages driven by ageing populations and shifting work expectations among younger generations.

A recent survey from the WEC member Dekra Arbeit Group shows the important need for work mobility both within Europe and from non-EU countries to reduce unemployment rates, increase labour market participation and improve competitiveness.

The benefits are particularly visible in sectors facing persistent labour and skills shortages. Healthcare is one of the clearest examples, where growing demand, ageing populations and workforce shortages are creating significant pressure on employers and public services alike.

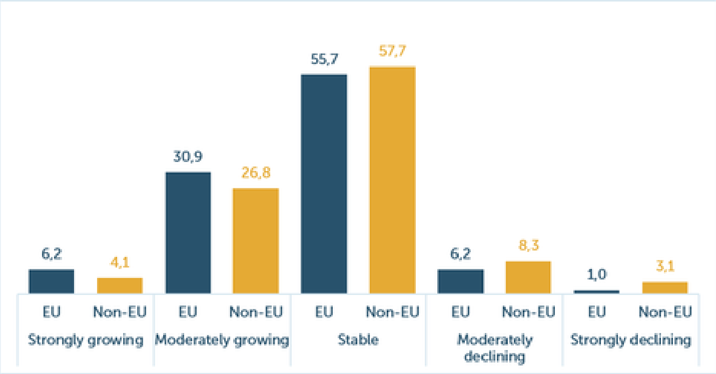
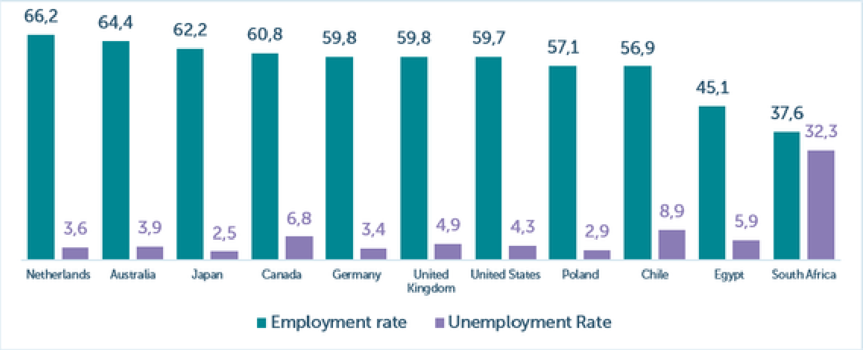


Figure 2: Client Medium-to-Long-Term HR Needs from EU and non-EU countries - 2026

Source: Dekra Arbeit und Leben HR Report 2026[2]

This matters because healthcare shortages are both persistent and socially significant. Where national regulation allows, agency work can help healthcare systems respond more flexibly to staffing gaps while maintaining legal and employment protections for workers.

Figure 1: Unemployment And Employment Rates for Selected Countries (% of working population, ILO)[1]



The WEC Economic Report 2025[3] shows that agency work already plays a significant role in supporting healthcare staffing in several markets.

This includes Ireland where 18% of the agency workers work in healthcare and Norway where 12% of the agency workers work in healthcare

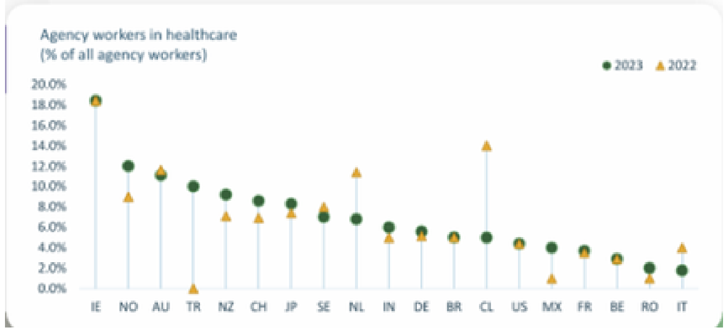


Figure 3: Agency workers in healthcare - 2023 (% of all agency workers)

Talent Seeks Global Opportunities

While employers need foreign talent to fill skill gaps, citizens in many countries are keen to seek international opportunities and experience. Employers observe different motivations and mobility patterns among international talent. Some individuals are seeking short-term international opportunities, which naturally align with high-volume temporary workforce needs in destination countries and are primarily motivated by the prospect of increasing their earnings. Others are looking for longer-term opportunities and view international mobility as a significant step in their career and personal development, often involves family considerations and is planned as a multi-year commitment.

Key findings on the shifting attitude to work and labour mobility are captured below:

1. **Today's Workers Value Flexibility**

- Employees value flexibility as much as pay. WEC's The Work We Want report, based on WEC–FT Longitude research, shows that 83% of senior executives report employees value flexibility around where and when they work as much as compensation.
- Workers now expect work to adapt to their lifestyle, not the opposite. "In the past, we had to adapt our life to fit work; today we expect work to adapt to our life stage."

2. **Flexibility Determines Talent Attraction and Retention**

- The Work We Want shows 92% of executives plan to increase use of flexible workforce models, including agency work, to stay agile.[4]
- 25% of workers are willing to sacrifice salary to secure their preferred remote work pattern; Gen Z is most willing to give up pay for flexibility.[5]

A shrinking workforce, combined with shifting attitudes toward work, requires governments and policymakers to rethink labour market strategies. To remain competitive, economies must attract the workers they need, ensure smooth labour market integration, and equip individuals with the right skills to meet local demand.

Talent mobility restrictions constrain growth

The political climate around talent mobility has shifted in recent years. Across many WEC member countries, political pressure to reduce migration has intensified. After a decade of rising migration into OECD countries, inflows have declined in recent years (see figure 4).

The migration slowdown is largely due to challenging economic and labour market conditions in several traditional destination countries such as Germany, The Netherlands and the US, as well as a changing political climate. The rise of right-wing and anti-migration political parties in countries such as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy have contributed to more protectionist policies and reduced openness to international talent mobility. A recent Boston Consulting Group analysis shows that international mobility among highly skilled workers is becoming more constrained.

For the first time since 2020, the number of highly skilled professionals moving across borders declined in 2025, reflecting weaker economic conditions, tighter labour markets and increasingly restrictive political environments.

Cross-border talent

Increasing protectionism in the U.S., Australia, UK, Germany and Italy is reversing a decade of rising migration into OECD countries.

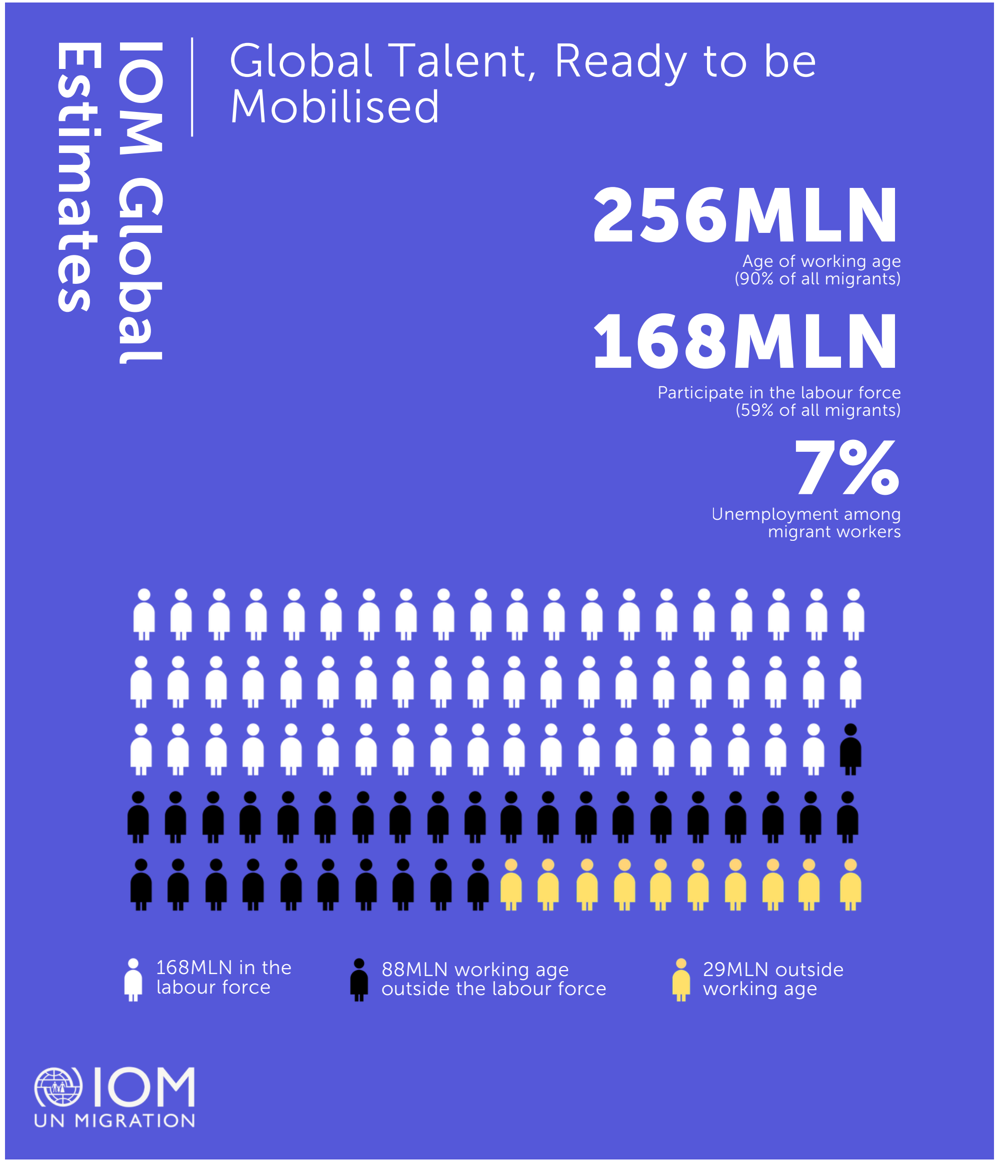
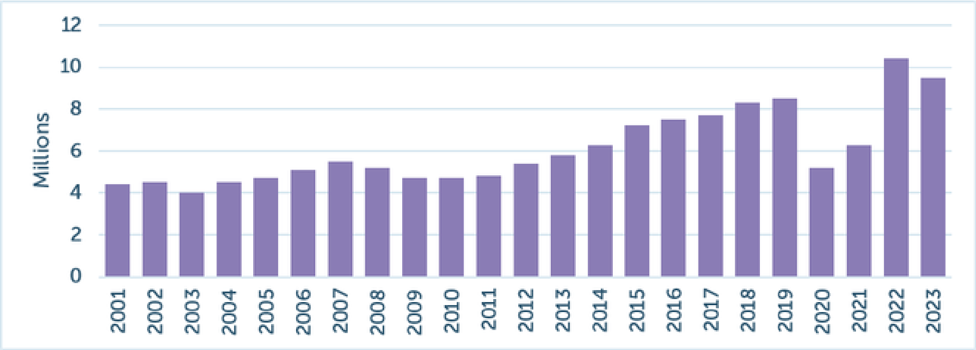


Figure 4: Inflow of Foreign Nationals into OECD Countries, Permanent Legal Migration 2001-2023 (million)



Source: OECD Data on inflow of foreign nationals as reported by IOM – World Migration Report 2026[6]

in several traditional destination countries. While around 2.4 million highly skilled workers still changed countries, the overall direction points to a less open and more fragmented global mobility landscape.

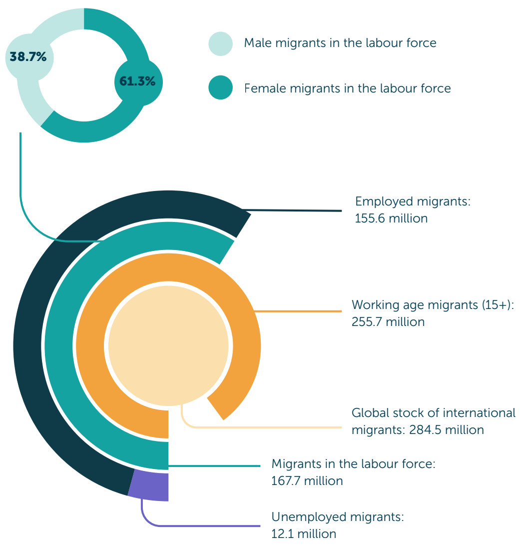
Global talent is ready to be mobilised

Many governments are focused on policies to bring more domestic workers into the labour market, but at the same time, they are also tightening access to international labour.

That creates a risk. Domestic activation is important, but it will not be enough on its own to address labour shortages in ageing economies. Many of these shortages are structural in terms of reflecting a changed labour market pattern rather than cyclical linked to periods of economic growth, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, care services, construction and parts of the digital economy. As a result, international talent mobility remains an essential part of how modern labour markets function and how economies sustain growth and competitiveness.

The failure to mobilise international talent to meet acute skill shortages represents a missed opportunity. Recent data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates a global stock of 285 million international migrants, of whom 256 million are of working age and 168 million participate in the labour force. Importantly, only around 7% of migrant workers are unemployed -- underlining the strong labour market participation of international workers and the important role migration continues to play in supporting economic activity and labour market resilience.

Figure 5: Global Estimates of the Stock of International Migrants in the Labour Force (2022)



Source: IOM Migration Data Insights: Data-driven Perspectives to Enhance Labour Migration Pathways (2025)[7]

Managing complex migration patterns

There is a need for policy solutions that reflect today's complex and shifting patterns in migration. International mobility is increasingly shaped not only by labour demand and economic opportunity, but also by conflict, climate pressures and geopolitical instability. Analysis by the International Organization for Migration highlights major migration corridors including Mexico–United States, India–United Arab Emirates and Syria–Türkiye reflecting a combination of labour market dynamics, geographic proximity and political realities.

Alongside labour-driven migration, there has also been a sharp increase in forced displacement linked to conflict and instability, including in Ukraine, Syria and parts of Africa and Latin America. These movements are distinct from labour mobility in both their causes and policy implications, but they reinforce the importance of clear, differentiated and well-managed migration systems.

The case for well-governed talent mobility

As defined at the beginning of this report, talent mobility (or skills-based mobility) refers to the cross-border movement of workers matched to jobs based on their skills and competencies. Well-designed talent mobility systems can help address critical shortages, support economic growth and create opportunities for workers, while maintaining public trust and protecting labour standards.

This is where effective legal frameworks, ethical recruitment practices and trusted intermediaries become essential. For the private employment services industry, appropriate regulation and strong compliance standards are critical both for protecting workers and for enabling fair and transparent international talent mobility pathways. The next chapter examines the legal and regulatory frameworks shaping international talent mobility and the role of private employment agencies within them.

Figure 6: Top Country-to-Country Migration Corridors (2026)

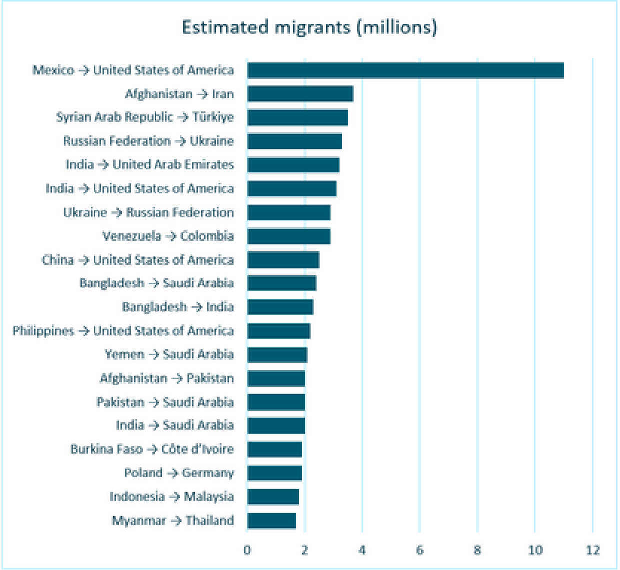
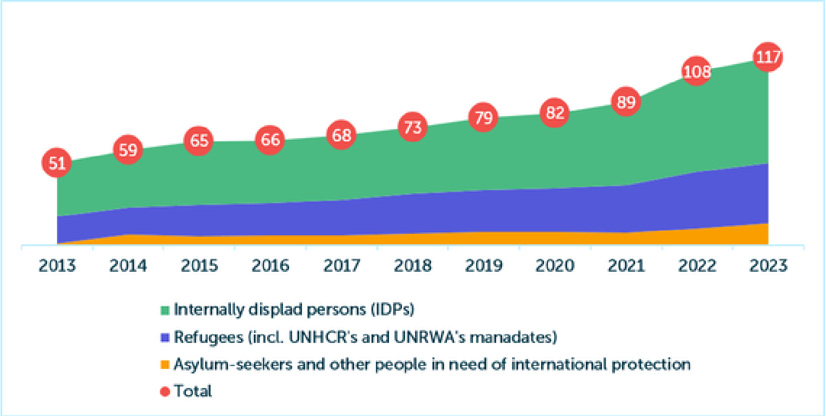


Figure 7: Number of Forcibly Displaced People Globally, millions (2013–2023)



Source: IOM Migration Governance Insights on Regular Pathways - Delivering on the Promise of Migration (2024)

b) No Borders, No Bottlenecks: Private Employment Agencies and Talent Flow

Trusted labour market

Translating demand into viable pathways, matching skills to vacancies, supporting compliance, and moving workers safely

International talent mobility does not happen automatically. It depends on practical systems that can identify labour market needs, source workers across borders, navigate legal requirements, and support both employers and workers throughout the recruitment and integration process.

This is where private employment agencies play a critical role. They are not simply recruiters. At their best, they act as trusted labour market enablers: translating demand into viable pathways, matching skills to vacancies, supporting compliance, and helping workers move into jobs safely and effectively.

Matching labour demand with available talent

Private employment agencies help employers identify and recruit workers across borders in sectors where shortages are persistent and domestic supply is insufficient. This role is particularly important in areas such as healthcare, care services, construction, digital roles and other sectors where gaps can have wider economic or societal consequences. The examples in Part II show how WEC members are already supporting talent mobility in markets including Japan, Norway, Luxembourg, Brazil and Egypt.

Turning mobility into a managed pathway

Cross-border recruitment is complex. It involves documentation, skills assessment, recognition of qualifications, contracts, onboarding and often language or vocational support. Private employment agencies help turn international mobility from an individual act of migration into a structured employment pathway. For example, the Norway case shows how private employment services can work alongside public training and integration programmes to move international talent from assessment and preparation into actual employment.

Supporting compliance and worker protection

The distinction between lawful talent mobility and exploitative recruitment matters. Professional agencies operate within legal and regulatory frameworks that define standards for recruitment, pay, working conditions and worker protection. This includes principles such as no recruitment fees for workers, transparent terms of engagement, compliance with labour laws in origin and destination countries, and access to remedy where standards are not met. WEC's Code of Conduct and ILO Convention No. 181 provide important reference points for this role.

Building trust in talent mobility systems

Public confidence is essential if international talent mobility is to be scaled sustainably. When recruitment is transparent, compliant and aligned with labour market needs, it is easier for policymakers, employers, workers and the public to see mobility as part of the solution rather than as an uncontrolled risk. Adding private employment services and employers to the migration equation places them at the heart of talent mobility programmes. Their success depends on the successful integration and retention of workers, giving them a strong incentive to provide support throughout the mobility journey. For private employment services, this can also mean creating longer-term career opportunities across multiple clients and assignments, rather than focusing on a single placement.

This is why trusted enablers matter: they help distinguish legal, ethical and well-managed mobility from informal or non-compliant channels.

Legal and regulated pathways

This role is supported in many countries by extensive regulation of private employment agencies. While approaches vary, national frameworks often cover conditions for establishment, licensing or authorisation, rules on the use of agency work, working conditions, social protection, and social dialogue or collective bargaining.

The infographic below shows that private employment agencies are not operating outside labour market systems.

In many jurisdictions, they are recognised and regulated actors subject to rules designed to ensure fairness, transparency and worker protection. National regulation of agency work is then complemented by migration and mobility rules governing cross-border recruitment.

Regulatory approaches differ significantly. Some countries, including Canada, Australia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, have created enabling frameworks for international recruitment through private employment agencies. Others, including Mexico, Brazil and France, apply stricter requirements. A limited number of countries, such as the Czech Republic, restrict or prohibit private employment agencies from engaging in some forms of international recruitment, job placement or agency work assignments.

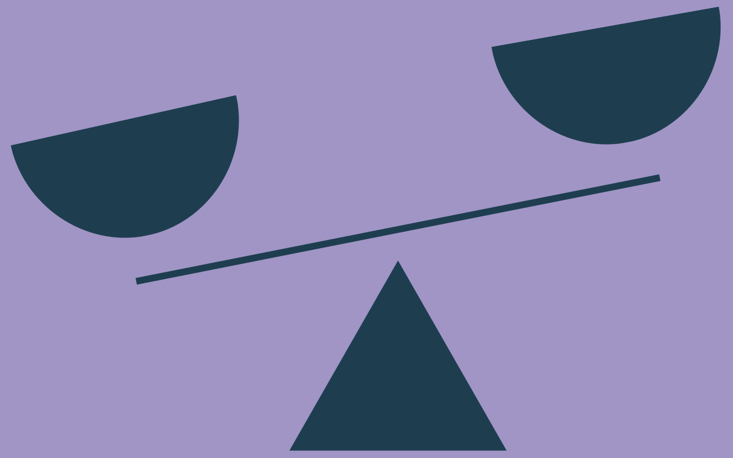
The important point is not that every country should adopt the same model. It is that international talent mobility works best when it is governed through clear, enforceable and trusted systems. Appropriate regulation is not a barrier to mobility; it is what makes lawful and ethical mobility possible. The private employment services industry and employer of record services play an important role in matching labour market demand and supply. This role is supported by appropriate regulation for the industry that meets the needs of our company clients while at the same time ensuring protection of international talent. There are many good practices among the World Employment Confederation members that illustrate this positive role of the private employment services.

Part II of this report looks at these good practices and explores some of the different approaches and best practices adopted on managing international talent mobility around the world—from structured mobility and ethical recruitment initiatives in Egypt and Brazil, to integration and training models in Norway and Luxembourg, to approaches in Asia-Pacific economies responding to rapid ageing and sectoral shortages.

Taken together, these examples reinforce the central argument of this report: private employment services can help make international talent mobility work in practice by connecting talent with opportunity through lawful, transparent and compliant pathways.

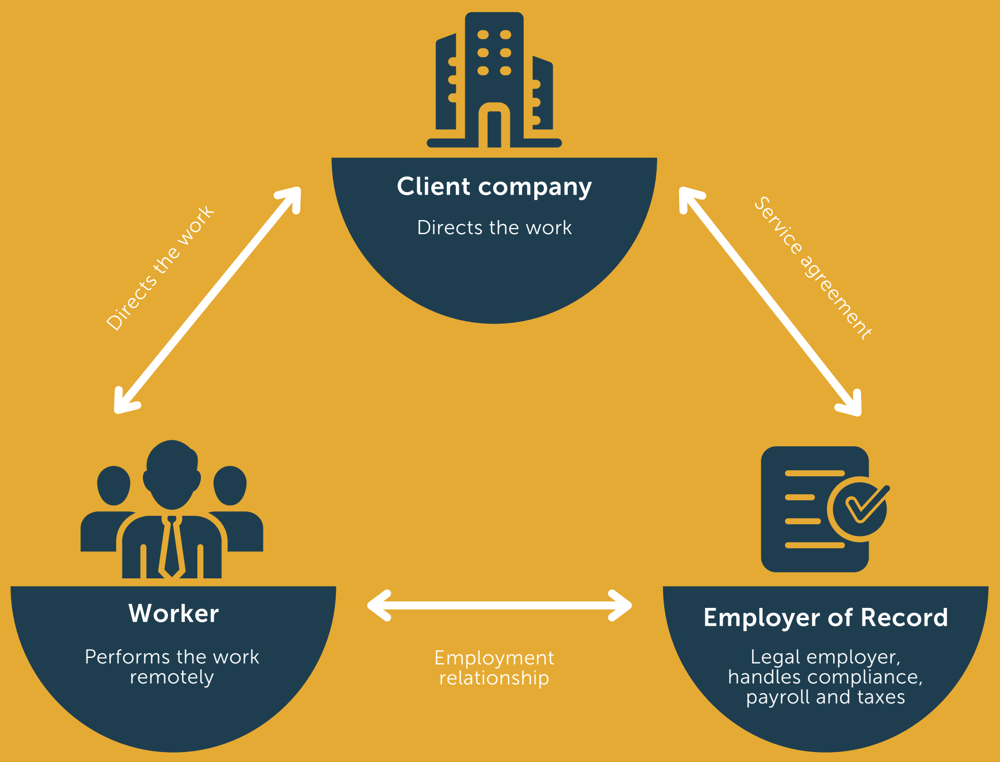
Regulations enable mobility

From enabling frameworks (Canada, Australia, Netherlands, UK) to stricter regimes (Mexico, Brazil, France) and restricted markets (Czechia)



The EOR Model

EOR services enable companies to access global talent remotely. The EOR handles employment, compliance, payroll and taxes, while the client directs the work.



Borderless talent: The role of Employer of Record Services

Organising and performing work increasingly has an international dimension due to the mobility of workers and work. Workers have been moving for decades to take up work opportunities and to meet their professional, personal and economic needs.

As labour markets are evolving and technology allows people in many jobs and professions to work remotely, new forms of work mobility have been expanding to include employer of record services. An Employer of Record (EoR) is a third-party service provider that becomes the legal employer of a worker on behalf of another company. The Employer of Record handles all employment-related compliance, taxes, and payroll, while the client company directs the employee's day-to-day tasks.

Both temporary agency work and employer of record services are based on a triangular work relationship. A WEC survey in 2025 illustrated that in many WEC member countries, Employer of Record companies operate under an agency work licence and are fully compliant with agency work law.

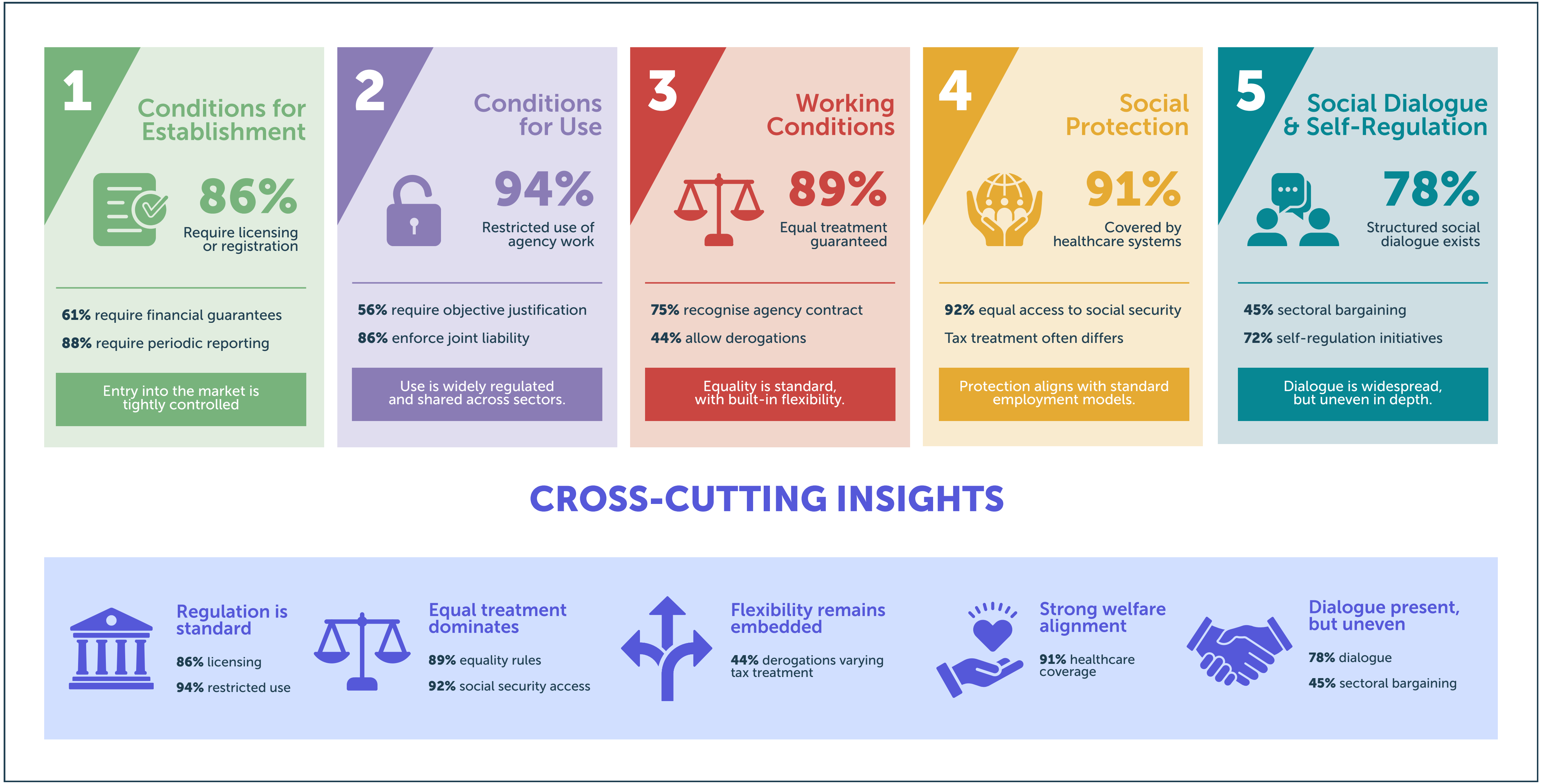
There is an important difference between international talent mobility via private employment services and employer of record companies, which is that in the context of international work assignments via the private employment services, the worker is becoming mobile and performs work in another country, which is also the focus of this report.

Within the Employer of Record context, the "work is becoming mobile", as workers are performing work in a triangular work relationship for company remotely. Employer of Record companies are particularly prominent in sectors such as technology and software development, pharmaceuticals, medical device firms, financial services and e-commerce. A main precondition to engage borderless talent via an Employer of Record is that work can be performed remotely and does not require a physical presence of the worker at the premises of the client.

Based on public business research insights, the global EOR market is valued at USD 5.97 billion in 2026.[8]

As the business model of EOR services is mostly focused on remote work and the mobility of work, rather than the mobility of talent, the remaining part of this Social Impact Report will focus more on the borderless talent in the traditional, agency work context.

Figure 8: Main elements of agency work sector specific regulation that impact international talent mobility



Source: World Employment Confederation (WEC) Agency Work in Focus: Global Overview Report 2024. Shares refer to reporting countries

Five priorities for making international talent mobility work

The evidence presented throughout this report points to a clear conclusion. Labour shortages, demographic change and shifting workforce expectations mean that international talent mobility will play an increasingly important role in the functioning of labour markets and the competitiveness of economies.

At the same time, international talent mobility is becoming more politically contested and operationally complex. The challenge is therefore not whether mobility should take place, but how it can be organised in a way that is lawful, ethical, well-managed and aligned with labour market needs.

Against this backdrop, the World Employment Confederation believes that international talent mobility policies and practices should be guided by the following priorities.

1. **Anchor international, regional, and national debates in labour market realities and enable circular migration pathways**. A positive agenda for legal migration and talent mobility must be grounded in facts.

2. **Use international instruments to ensure fair, ethical, and compliant talent mobility.** Frameworks such as the Global Compact for Migration and the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative provide essential guidance for organising international talent mobility in a transparent and responsible way.

3. **Promote fair and ethical recruitment through stronger policy action and social dialogue.** Policymakers, employers, and social partners should invest in measures that support ethical talent mobility, including the ratification of ILO Convention 181 and the creation of a stronger business case for compliant international recruitment based on robust enforcement of national law. Cases of non-compliance, such as charging fees to migrant workers for work assignments, must be effectively addressed and eliminated.

4. **Ensure that legal frameworks for international talent mobility are future-proof and holistic.** Such a holistic approach should consider access to housing for borderless talent and labour market integration support measures. Regulations should also consider emerging forms of work and mobility. Discussions on international remote work and Employer of Record services should be linked to broader debates on remote work rather than treated in isolation.

5. **Strengthen partnerships for international talent mobility.** Effective cooperation between private employment services, employers, public employment services, and civil society organisations active in legal migration is essential for building fair, efficient, and sustainable talent mobility systems.

International talent mobility is no longer a peripheral labour market issue. It is becoming an essential part of how countries address skills shortages, support economic growth and connect people with opportunity. The challenge is to ensure that mobility is organised through systems that are lawful, ethical and effective. Across the world, policymakers, employers and labour market actors are responding to this challenge in different ways.

The following section examines examples of talent mobility policies, partnerships and recruitment models from different regions, highlighting lessons that may help shape future approaches to international talent mobility.

Part 2

Global Practices Enabling International Talent Mobility

a) An international perspective on talent mobility

The principles and approaches to international talent mobility are translated and embodied in policies, initiatives and industry practices of the private employment services industry globally and in the different geographies of the world. This section presents a selection of innovative and proven successful practices of the private employment services industry to ensure fair working conditions and a better matching of labour demand and supply in ethical and compliant ways.

WEC Code of Conduct: Ensuring quality standards and compliance for borderless talent[9]

> "Ensuring that talent can move across borders in ethical and compliant ways requires all actors to follow strong quality standards and compliance, and the Code of Conduct of the World Employment Confederation is the infrastructure in place to do this at scale."

The WEC Code of Conduct sets out key principles for responsible, and quality focused agency work and HR services, based on several key principles, respecting:

- Laws
- Ethical and professional conduct
- Free-of-charge provision of services to jobseekers
- Transparency of terms of engagement
- Health and safety at work
- The principle of non-discrimination
- Workers' rights
- Confidentiality
- Quality of services
- Competition
- Access to remedy.

To further strengthen compliance with the Code of Conduct, since 2025, the WEC Quality Standards Group surveys its members every two years to ensure the quality of services and the full respect of the Code of Conduct, both in national and cross-border contexts.

Member of the World Employment Confederation, aligned with WEC Quality Standards.
2026/2027

WEC member involvement in the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative

The World Employment Confederation believes that the best way to promote ethical recruitment is by creating an appropriate regulatory framework for private employment services in both countries of origin and destination. They should be based on the framework provided by the ILO Convention on Private Employment Agencies No. 181. Proper enforcement and the existence of rule of law in general are essential to ensure effective implementation of this framework.

The World Employment Confederation is also directly involved in the Fair Recruitment Initiative.[10]

Members and executives were closely involved in drafting the ILO Guiding Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment as well as in the Definition on Recruitment Fees and Related Costs. This Guide was established in 2019 and will be updated by the ILO in the coming years.

WEC contributed to an updated ILO Guide on Private Employment Agencies

Closely linked to the ILO's work in the Fair Recruitment initiative, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2025, is the joint work of the World Employment Confederation and the ILO on the updated Guide on Private Employment Agencies. The Guide, published by the ILO in 2026, focuses on the following key elements:

- The legal framework of private employment agencies
- The relationship between public and private employment agencies
- The role of private employment agencies in labour migration
- The importance of the freedom of association
- The evolving role of private employment agencies.

Regarding borderless talent, the ILO Guide on Private Employment Agencies highlights that the industry often plays a central role in international labour migration. The guide explores regulatory options to manage cross-border recruitment, protect migrant workers and prevent discriminatory or abusive practices through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

A business perspective on international talent mobility from the HR services industry

The corporate members of the World Employment Confederation operate globally and therefore possess deep insight into labour-market needs, economic conditions, and the opportunities and challenges associated with international talent corridors and legal migration pathways. The private employment services industry, particularly its large multinational members, is committed to making labour mobility work by matching the workforce needs of client companies with meaningful opportunities for workers.

International talent mobility is, in this context, one important component of a broader policy approach to addressing labour and skills shortages and fostering inclusive labour markets. Global trends such as climate change, digitalisation, and geopolitical uncertainty are reshaping national and local labour markets and influencing both international mobility and legal migration patterns.

The private employment services industry calls for a strong labour-market-driven focus in discussions on international talent mobility. Such a perspective is essential to ensure that mobility systems are sustainable, fair, and compliant. International frameworks, including the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative, provide an appropriate and up-to-date foundation for organising international talent mobility in an ethical and effective manner.

The Adecco Group, one of the WEC corporate members, developed a vision on international talent mobility based on three main points:[11]

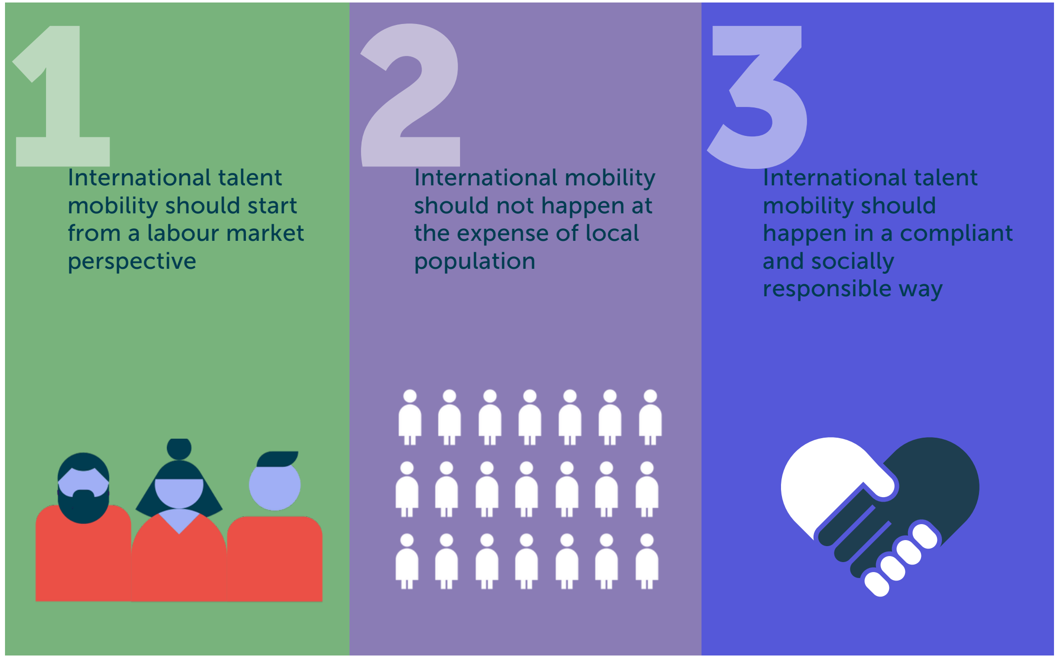


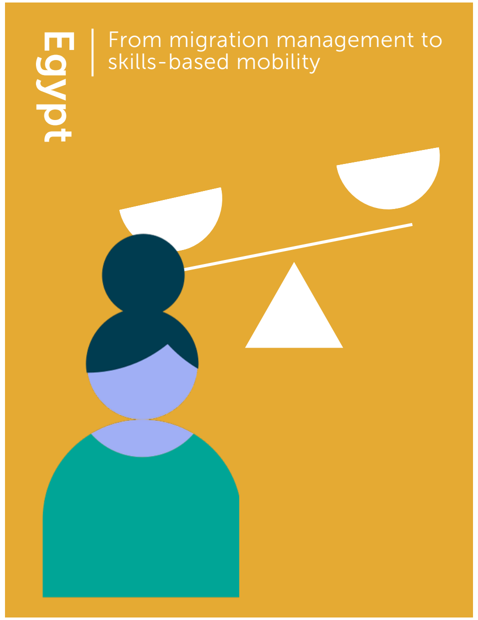
Figure 9: Talent Mobility Vision, Adecco Group

b) A Regional Focus on Africa and the Middle East - Economic opportunities for people and societies

Examples of WEC members in Africa and the Middle East show the potential and value of international talent mobility. Africa and the Middle East are important international talent hubs with growing and well qualified workforce coupled with an openness to international talent mobility in many countries.

Egypt – Borderless talent

Egypt is undergoing its most significant labour market transformation in decades, driven by three major trends:



1. Addressing the Talent Challenge: Retention and Strategic Balance

Egypt has shifted from a traditional migration management mindset toward a skills based mobility strategy. The government is now seeking to balance outward mobility with domestic labour market needs through several key reforms:

- **New Labor Law (No. 14 of 2025).** In force since 1 September 2025, the law modernises the work environment to improve talent retention. It introduces flexible work arrangements such as remote work and part time work for the first time, and significantly strengthens worker protections, including stricter anti harassment and anti bullying provisions.
- **National Wage Policy.** As of 1 March 2025, the National Council for Wages increased the private sector minimum wage to 7,000 EGP (€110). This measure aims to enhance the domestic "retention pull" in the context of global inflation and rising living costs.
- **Sector Specific Incentives.** The government is prioritising the Green Transition and the Digital Economy. The Ministry of Labor has launched specialised vocational training funds—financed by a 0.25% levy on social insurance wages—to upskill the local workforce for high value domestic roles.

2. Data and Trends (CAPMAS and ILO Insights)

Recent data from the CAPMAS Labour Force Survey (Q4 2025 / Jan 2026) and ILO Cairo highlight several important dynamics:

- **Mobility Volume.** Egypt remains a major country of origin for migrant workers, with an estimated 11.1 million Egyptians abroad, 62% of whom (7.1 m) reside in the Arab region.
- **Unemployment Stability.** The unemployment rate for 2025 remained stable at 6.2%–6.6%, indicating a resilient domestic labour market despite high outward mobility.
- **Return Migration and Circular Mobility.**[12] Circular mobility is increasing, particularly in the tech and engineering sectors. The Shabab Balad (Generation Unlimited) platform supports reintegration of returning talent into the Egyptian private sector, strengthening domestic skills ecosystems.

3. Ethical Recruitment and Private Sector Partnerships

Egypt is emerging as a regional leader in operationalising ethical and structured international talent mobility, particularly through cooperation with the European Union:

- **EU–Egypt Talent Partnership: THAMM Plus Programme.** Launched in early 2025, the second phase of the Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance (THAMM Plus) programme, implemented with the ILO and the EU, focuses on fair recruitment and the creation of regular migration pathways to Germany, Italy, and other European countries.
- **Private Employment Agency Governance.** Under the 2025 Labour Law, the Ministry of Labor has strengthened licensing requirements for private employment agencies. Agencies must now align with the World Employment Confederation's Code of Conduct and ILO fair recruitment standards, helping eliminate fraudulent operators and ensuring ethical practices.
- **Pre Departure Orientation (PDO).** A dedicated unit within the Ministry of Labor now provides mandatory pre departure orientation for workers migrating abroad. These sessions ensure workers understand their rights, contractual obligations, and the legal protections available in destination countries.

c) Experience from the Asia-Pacific region – Talent mobility in rapidly ageing societies

Evidence and examples of WEC members in the Asia-Pacific region show that talent mobility is still below its potential, even though it has an important role in addressing important labour market trends, especially linked to an ageing society.

International Talent Mobility as a growing sector[13]

CHINA

Evidence from our Chinese member CAFST shows that the number of Chinese workers employed abroad remains very small compared to China's vast domestic workforce. In 2024, approximately 409 thousand Chinese workers were dispatched overseas—an increase of 17.9% compared to the previous year. By the end of 2024, a total of 585 thousand Chinese workers were working abroad.

These workers fall into two main categories:

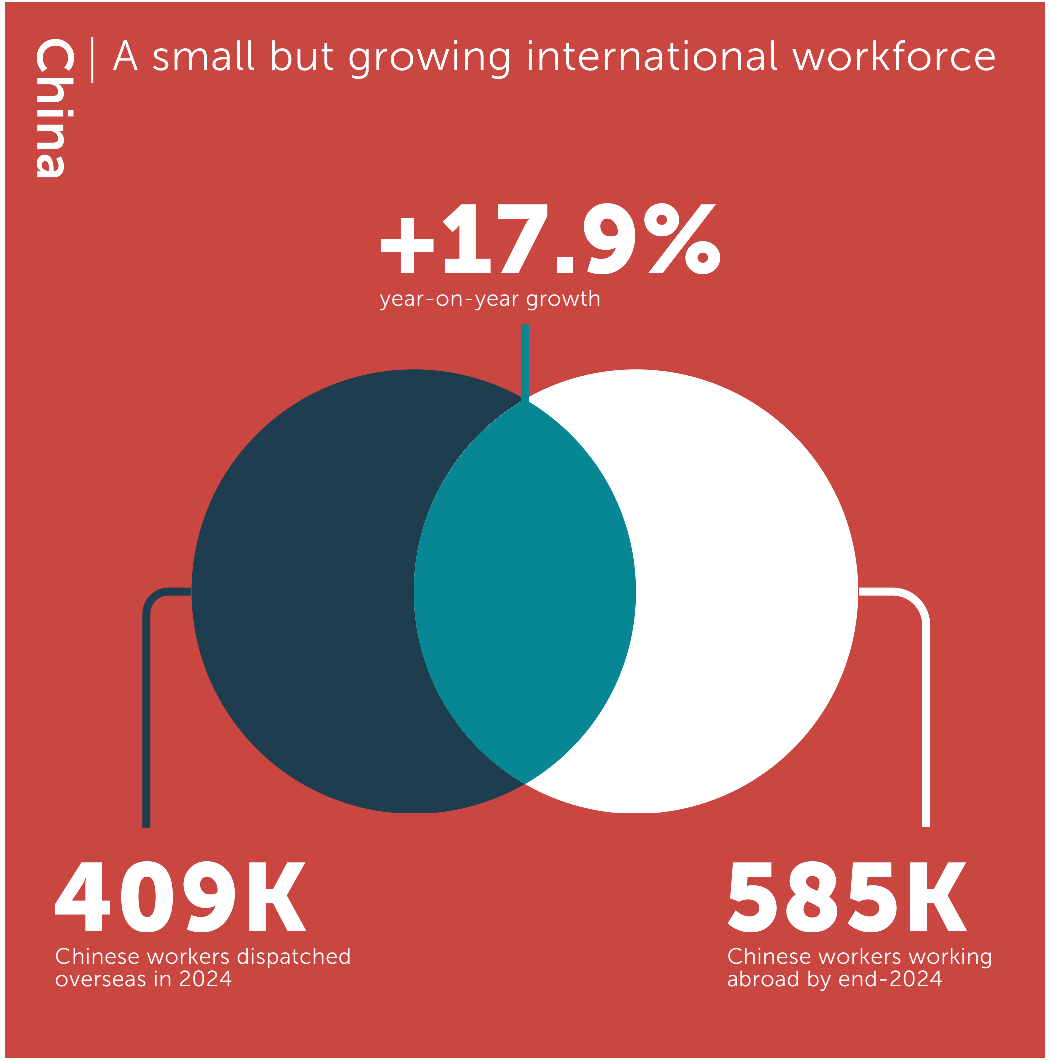
- Workers dispatched by agencies to foreign employers
- Workers employed on Chinese contracted projects abroad, particularly in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

The main destination countries and regions include Japan, Singapore, the Middle East, Africa, Hong Kong, and Macao.

Key sectors employing Chinese workers abroad are construction and infrastructure, manufacturing, transportation, accommodation and catering, healthcare, seafaring, and new energy technology.

Chinese policymakers have not yet developed specific policies or programmes aimed at retaining domestic talent, largely because China continues to have a sizeable working age population. However, outward mobility is slowing, driven in part by the rising labour costs of Chinese workers, which reduces their competitiveness in some international markets.

Like all World Employment Confederation members, CAFST China enables international talent mobility in an ethical and compliant way, fully respecting the World Employment Confederation Code of Conduct. For both categories, workers dispatched by agencies to foreign employers and workers employed on Chinese-contracted projects abroad, principles such as the respect for and compliance with the laws, transparency in the terms and conditions of engagement and the principle not to charge fees to job seekers for work assignments are upheld.



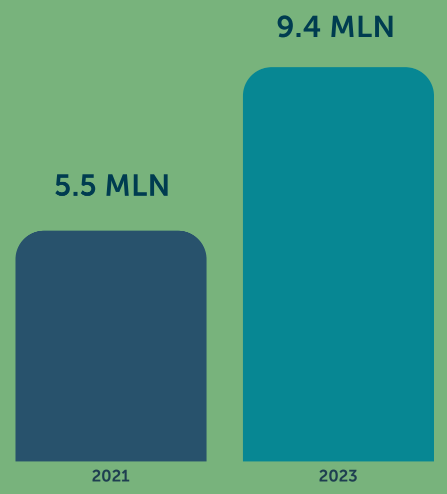
Japan | Priority Professions for Skilled International Talent

- Academics
- Legal and accounting specialists
- Medical and research professionals
- Educators
- Care workers

719K

People benefited from Japan's talent schemes to date, including 86,000 in nursing, care, legal and accounting roles

India | Circular Migration on the rise



Returning talent fuels domestic opportunity across India's labour market

International talent to serve high-demand sectors such as medical and care[14]

JAPAN

Japan is also taking active steps to attract skilled international talent to meet its economic and labour market needs.

Immigration rules and residence statuses have been adjusted to prioritise the recruitment of highly qualified professionals, eligible for Japan's international talent schemes, in particular:

- Academics
- Legal and accounting specialists
- Medical and research personnel
- Educators
- Care workers.

Approximately 719 thousand people have benefited from these schemes to date. Within this group, 86 thousand individuals have participated in specific programmes focused on priority occupations such as nursing and care work, as well as legal and accounting services.

The HR services industry in Japan plays a central role in this strategy. It is actively involved in matching international talent with suitable job opportunities, supporting labour market integration, and providing essential integration services to help workers settle and succeed in Japan.

Enabling circular labour mobility in response to technology and demography[15]

INDIA

India's labour market is undergoing a profound restructuring as global forces, including technological disruption, demographic shifts, and geopolitical uncertainty, reshape the global workforce. In this context, India is uniquely positioned to leverage its large and increasingly skilled labour force as a strategic asset. If implemented effectively, the new migration bill could significantly enhance India's role in shaping circular migration pathways that benefit workers, employers, and both sending and receiving countries.[16] India consolidated its immigration pathways under the Immigration and Foreigners Act 2025, which streamlined visa processes and introduced new categories like Startup, Skilled Talent, Digital Nomad, and Investor visas.

Circular mobility already plays an important role in India's labour-market dynamics. Whether through knowledge spillovers, research collaborations, remittances, or the growth of start-up ecosystems, returning Indian workers bring back skills, networks, and capital that fuel domestic opportunities. This trend is accelerating: 9.4 million Indians returned home in 2023, up from 5.5 million in 2021, signalling a growing pattern of return and reintegration.

d) Borderless talent in in Europe

In Europe and specifically in the single market of the European Union, we need to differentiate clearly between the free movement of workers within the EU, a right granted under article 45 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union and international talent mobility from third countries.

The patterns and policies of international talent mobility in Europe are quite diverse. While the European Union is following a dual path of enabling economic talent migration while at the same time acting against illegal migration, the national approaches to international talent mobility in Europe vary significantly. There are different national traditions, political preferences, and political contexts across these countries. Some of these countries have high unemployment rates, while others have persistent labour and skills shortages.

Current economic challenges are having a direct impact on demand. Armed conflicts for example are stimulating economies that were already experiencing talent shortages, resulting in a growing need for a high volume of skilled candidates. In a longer-term perspective, international talent mobility will therefore be essential for European economies and labour markets to remain competitive.

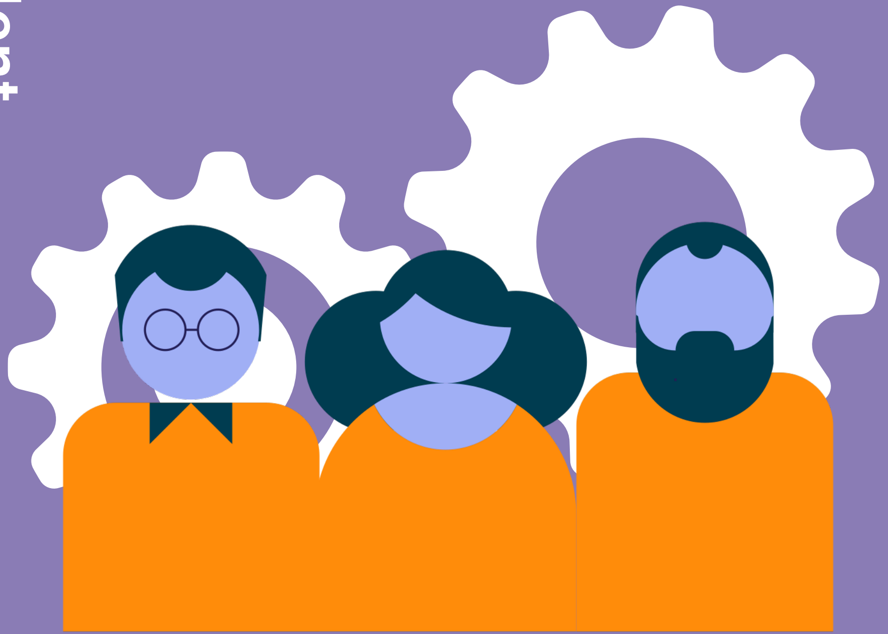
The EU Talent Pool – a promising European-level initiative with a global reach[17]

One promising example of efforts to strengthen lawful international talent mobility is the EU Talent Pool initiative. Building on the experience gained from labour mobility within the European Union, the Talent Pool aims to improve international recruitment and job matching by creating a centralised platform that connects employers with job seekers from outside the EU. Importantly, private employment agencies are recognised as key partners in the initiative, helping to identify talent, match skills with labour market needs, and support the development of legal and transparent pathways into employment across Europe.

Following the formal adoption of the EU Talent Pool Regulation in early 2026[18], the European Commission and EU Member States will now need to establish the necessary technical infrastructure to operationalise the system. Once implemented, the EU Talent Pool will stand as a strong example of public policy that supports borderless talent, promotes fair recruitment, and integrates private employment agencies into a transparent and well-regulated framework for international talent mobility. World Employment Confederation members, who are bound by our global Code of Conduct are ideal partners for the EU Talent Pool, as they uphold high quality standards based on its Code of Conduct.[19]

Bordless talent

Adopted in early 2026, the EU Talent Pool connects employers with job seekers outside the EU, with private agencies as key partners.



Luxembourg

Nearly three-quarters of Luxembourg's workforce has an international background

Norway

Comprehensive introduction programmes that include skills assessments, career guidance, language training, and vocational training

47K
Workers in national introduction programmes in 2023

65%
Of migrant workers completing programmes are in employment or education one year later

A view from a small, open economy[20]

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg is a small, highly open economy with a skilled and internationally diverse workforce. To further enable international talent mobility and attract borderless talent, the Luxembourg government cooperated with the national federation of private employment services, FEDIL Employment Services, to launch several initiatives, including a dedicated mobility website, informational brochures and flyers for international talent, and specialised support services provided by the public employment service.

Nearly three quarters of Luxembourg’s workforce has an international background, underscoring the country’s strong openness to attracting and retaining global talent. The HR services industry plays a central role in this ecosystem by supporting the integration of international workers into the labour market, offering training and upskilling programmes, and matching companies’ needs for flexible labour.

Training and integration measures include language courses, employee upskilling programmes tailored to local labour-market needs, and a special programme to support the integration of displaced workers from Ukraine. The HR services industry is an active partner in Luxembourg’s borderless-talent strategy and invests significantly in training for agency workers through a bipartite training fund, ensuring that international talent can contribute effectively to the country’s economy.

Opening up international talent mobility through training and matching labour demand[21]

NORWAY

Norway, like many European countries, is facing significant labour and skills shortages, making international talent mobility an important strategy to address these gaps. National policies focus strongly on preparing international talent for successful labour market integration through comprehensive introduction programmes that include skills assessments, career guidance, language training, and vocational training. In 2023 alone, 47,000 workers participated in these programmes. Empirical evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach: 65% of migrant workers completing these programmes are in employment or education one year later.

The private employment services industry in Norway plays a crucial supporting role in this integration process. HR services companies provide employer-focused skills assessments for newly arrived talent, short job-specific training and skills enhancement, and “place-and-train” pathways that combine onboarding with immediate work experience.

This role is essential in translating the skills acquired through public employment-service programmes into concrete employment opportunities, particularly in sectors experiencing acute labour and skills shortages.

The private employment services industry also supports the integration of international talent arriving directly from abroad. It acts as an intermediary between workers and public training schemes and often serves as the employer of international talent. Its main contributions include skills assessment, recruitment into work pathways, workplace onboarding, and facilitating the transition from training into employment. These functions are especially important in sectors where shortages are most pronounced, ensuring that international talent can contribute effectively and sustainably to the Norwegian labour market.

Building labour market integration through private employment services

ITALY

Italy illustrates why international talent mobility is becoming an economic necessity rather than simply a migration policy debate. The country's workforce is ageing rapidly.

Over the next decade, around 6.1 million workers are expected to leave the labour market, while far fewer young people will enter it. By 2060, Italy's working-age population is projected to shrink by more than a third. These demographic trends threaten labour supply, economic growth and the long-term sustainability of public finances, particularly pensions and healthcare.

Against this backdrop, international recruitment is becoming an increasingly important part of Italy's labour market response.

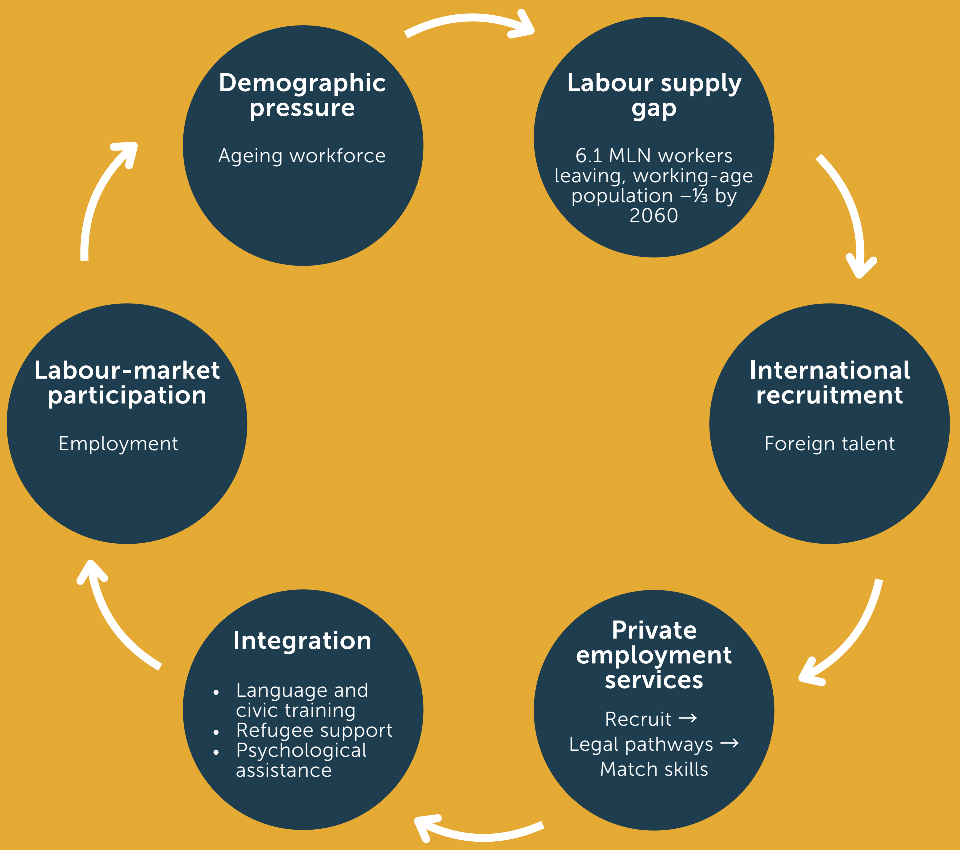
Private employment agencies already play a significant role. Around 165,000 foreign workers—approximately 32% of all agency workers in Italy—are employed through the sector. Agencies support employers throughout the recruitment process, helping workers enter the country through legal pathways, navigating immigration procedures and matching skills with labour market demand.

Italy's private employment services sector is also working closely with government to improve labour market integration. Through Assolavoro, the national federation of private employment agencies, the sector contributes to the implementation of the government's Mattei Plan, supporting overseas training programmes designed to prepare workers for employment in Italy. According to the Ministry of Labour, Assolavoro members are involved in almost half of these projects.

The sector also places strong emphasis on integration after arrival. Initiatives include language and civic training, financial support for refugees, psychological assistance and partnerships with UNHCR.

Italy

International recruitment isn't just about migration. It is part of Italy's labour-market strategy.



Since 2022, more than 30,000 refugees have found employment through private employment agencies, while over 7,000 have received training through programmes jointly developed by Assolavoro and the sector's trade unions.

Italy demonstrates how private employment services can help countries respond to demographic change—not only by connecting employers with international talent, but also by supporting lawful recruitment, workforce integration and long-term labour market participation.

An employer- and demand-driven international talent mobility policy[22]

ROMANIA

Romania is in the process of modernising its public international talent-mobility policy with the aim of moving toward a more employer-demand-driven system for attracting and integrating highly skilled workers. Planned reforms include a revised reference-salary system for international talent, set at least at the level of the national average gross salary, and the extension of the initial work-permit duration from two to three years, with the option for renewals.

For mobile workers and international talent, Romania already provides several mobility-related incentives through its national social-security legislation. These include placement bonuses, installation bonuses for young workers, and relocation bonuses, particularly targeted at young people moving within the country. These measures support both internal and international mobility by reducing the financial barriers associated with taking up new employment opportunities.

Romania regulates international talent mobility through Emergency Ordinance No. 32/2026, which overhauled the non-EU/EEA employment framework. The system requires all private employment agencies and employers to register on the "Work in Romania" hub. Private employment agencies must be specifically authorized to recruit from abroad and are strictly prohibited from charging foreign workers any fees, commissions, or financial deposits for work assignments. All service costs must be borne by the employer. This reflects again key quality standards principles as included in the World Employment Confederation Code of Conduct.

Romania has also long been a major country of origin for labour migration within Europe. More recently the country is trying to retain more of its own talent and potentially slowing down the legal migration flows to meet domestic demand.

Sector-focused routes and growing competition[23]

UNITED KINGDOM

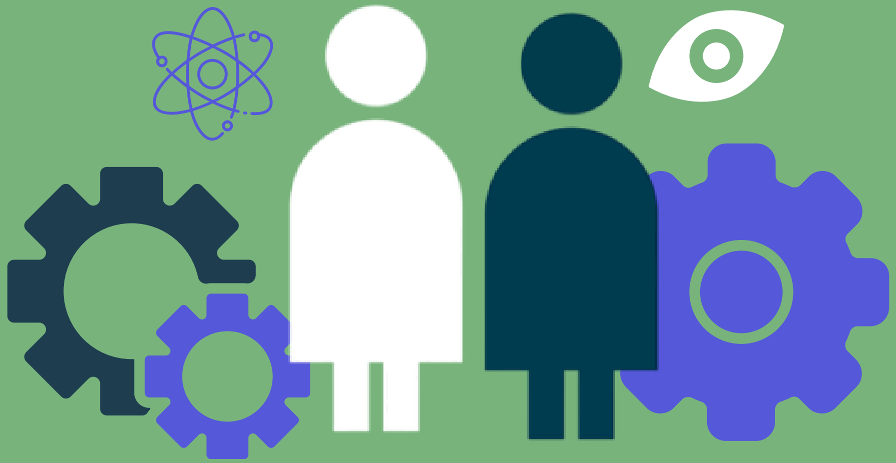
The UK has developed a relatively comprehensive approach to attracting international talent, including specialist visa routes for medium- and high-skilled workers and sector-focused pathways in areas such as finance, life sciences, technology and the creative industries. Recent developments include visa simplification measures and the 2025 industrial strategy.

However, the UK also faces challenges in remaining attractive to global talent. High immigration costs, including visa fees and the health surcharge, can make the UK a more expensive destination for workers and employers.

At the same time, countries such as France and the Netherlands are competing actively for international talent, increasing pressure on the UK to ensure that its mobility system remains efficient, affordable and responsive to labour market needs.

Romania & UK

Romania modernises with employer-demand reforms; the UK offers sector pathways but faces cost pressure



e) International Talent Mobility in Latin America: Supporting Employers and Workers

Practices and case studies of the private employment services industry in Latin America showcase the economic and labour market value of well-managed international talent mobility, but also the close link between labour mobility, migration flows and the political context or instability. In the case of Brazil for example, access to talent from abroad is critical to meeting the growth ambitions of local companies and the national economy.

Managing ethical labour mobility in turbulent political times[24]

CHILE

Following the political instability in Venezuela, beginning in 2018, Chile experienced a significant influx of Venezuelan migrants: approximately one million people entering a country of 20 million. Shared language and cultural proximity supported relatively smooth labour market integration, and businesses initially welcomed Venezuelan workers for their strong service orientation. However, the rapid inflow also led to substitution effects, with local workers facing increased competition, disrupting a labour market that had previously been in equilibrium.

The national private employment services federation, Emplea, was among the first organisations to collaborate with the Chilean government to address these challenges.

Emplea launched a campaign promoting fair recruitment practices and a balanced approach that considered the needs of domestic workers, displaced Venezuelan workers, and international talent more broadly. A series of awareness-raising activities, including webinars and mutual-learning sessions, helped ensure that the private employment services industry responded in a compliant, socially responsible, and inclusive manner.

A particular focus was placed on ensuring that the recruitment of displaced workers and international talent was conducted legally and ethically in line with the World Employment Confederation Code of Conduct. Emplea and several of its member companies were recognised and awarded for their commitment to fair migration, demonstrating practices that went beyond legal requirements.

As political conditions in Venezuela stabilised, the number of migrant workers in Chile declined and returned to pre-crisis levels. This development illustrates the effectiveness of the private employment services industry in responding quickly, responsibly, and inclusively to sudden labour market pressures, supporting both employers and workers during periods of rapid change.

Chile

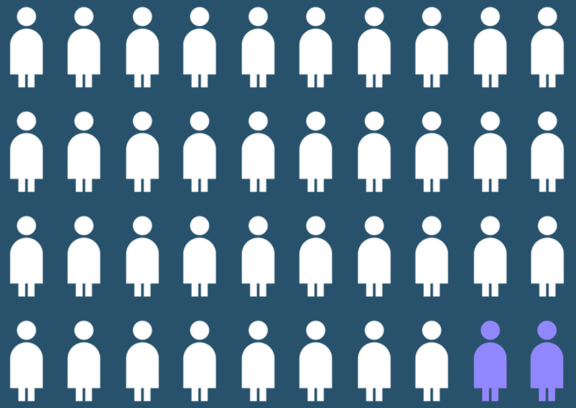
Emplea led fair-recruitment campaigns balancing domestic, displaced Venezuelan, and international workers - migrant numbers have since returned to pre-crisis levels

1 MLN

Venezuelan migrants entered Chile, a country of 20 million inhabitants

5%

of population



Each dot represents 500,000 people
2 highlighted are the Venezuelan migrants

Brazil

Brazil is strengthening international talent mobility by combining regular migration pathways, formal labour-market access and fair recruitment practices.

1.2MLN
Net formal jobs created in Brazil in 2025

48.5MLN
Total formal employment stock

Brazil's model for fair international recruitment

REGULARISATION

Clear pathways to regular migratory status

LABOUR-MARKET ACCESS

Ability to work formally while status is being processed

FAIR RECRUITMENT

Private employment services supporting lawful recruitment and quality standards

Ensuring fair recruitment and international talent mobility practices[25]

BRAZIL

Brazil offers a strong and increasingly structured example of a pro-immigrant labour market, combining regularisation pathways, labour-market access, skills-recognition tools, worker-protection mechanisms, and multi-stakeholder employment partnerships. These developments have taken place against the backdrop of a growing formal labour market: Brazil closed 2025 with a net creation of over 1.2m formal jobs, added more than 100,000 formal jobs in January 2026, and reached a total formal employment stock of 48.5m jobs in January 2026.

Within this environment, migrant workers recorded a net positive balance of 78,000 formal jobs in 2025. The trend was consistently positive: migrant employment posted net gains in 11 out of 12 months of 2025, with the strongest monthly result in January 2025 (11,000 net jobs). Migrants also outperformed the market average in relative terms.

Although they represented only 1.5% of all formal hires, they accounted for 6.2% of national net formal job creation, with a hire-to-separation ratio of 1.25, compared with approximately 1.05 in the formal labour market overall.

From a migration-governance perspective, Brazil’s main strength lies in its ability to convert regular residence status of migrant workers into employment quickly. Refugee applicants are allowed to remain in regular migratory status while their claims are pending and may obtain a work permit, open a bank account, and access formal employment before a final asylum decision is issued. For other migrant profiles, residence authorisation compatible with work serves as the legal basis for formal hiring. This legal-administrative design significantly shortens the time between arrival, documentation, and productive labour market participation.

The private employment services industry in Brazil plays a significant role in allowing for regularisation pathways and international talent mobility. Fair recruitment practices and the respect of quality standards for borderless talent are an essential pillar in this context.

f) North American perspectives on borderless talent

The private employment services industry practices and framework conditions for international talent mobility show a diverse picture with some innovative practices on talent mobility from WEC members.

International Talent Mobility[26]

UNITED STATES

Even within a challenging political environment for international talent mobility in the United States under the Trump II administration, the HR services industry continues to support international talent within the boundaries of national policy. Across the country, Staffmark Group, part of Recruit, is actively working to reduce barriers to employment through targeted initiatives designed to support underserved communities.

Through the RGF Connect programme, the company has launched two new partnerships that are expected to make a meaningful impact. These initiatives provide tailored support to former foster youth and low-income families, helping them access employment opportunities, build skills, and strengthen their long-term economic prospects. By focusing on groups that often face structural barriers to labour-market participation, the HR services industry demonstrates its ongoing commitment to inclusive employment and socially responsible talent mobility.

Grow with Talent – Key takeaways from the World Employment Conference 2026[27]

CANADA

In May 2026, the World Employment Confederation and its Canadian member ACSESS hosted the World Employment Conference in Toronto. Held under the theme "Grow with Talent", the conference brought together industry leaders and experts from across the globe to address the most pressing challenges facing labour markets today.

A dedicated session examined Ethical Labour Corridors as Accelerators of Growth, featuring contributions from the European Commission's DG Employment, The Adecco Group Germany, the founder and chair of Quess Corp, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Discussion centred on three interconnected forces reshaping international talent mobility: the structural skills shift driven by rapid technological change and evolving labour market demands; demographic decline reducing working-age populations and intensifying pressure on labour supply; and the growing influence of political debate on how countries approach migration and talent attraction.

The session affirmed that well-managed talent mobility is both achievable and essential. Across Canada, at the EU level, and in WEC member countries worldwide, meaningful initiatives are already in place. Effective regulation of talent mobility and the private employment services industry — alongside international instruments such as IOM cooperation frameworks and EU tools including the EU Talent Pool — are critical to matching labour demand with supply, expanding opportunity for workers, and strengthening economic competitiveness.

The session also demonstrated that the private employment services industry is firmly committed to making international talent mobility work for all. Participants identified the following as the most effective tools and approaches:

- The EU Talent Pool as a central matching platform
- Codes of Conduct and robust enforcement mechanisms to protect workers
- Trade agreements that integrate mobility and skills cooperation
- Private sector partnerships that align training with real labour market needs
- Better workforce planning and improved organisation of work, moving beyond vacancy-filling to strategic talent development
- A shift in public narrative — recasting mobility as an economic imperative rather than a politically contentious issue

Part 3 Conclusions

Conclusions

International talent mobility is becoming central to how modern labour markets function. The evidence in this report shows that labour markets are becoming more structurally connected across borders, driven by persistent skills shortages, demographic imbalances, geopolitical disruption and unequal economic opportunity.

At the same time, talent mobility requires effective governance, compliance and integration if it is to bring benefits to workers, employers and national economies. Without clear rules and trusted systems, mobility can become fragmented, informal or vulnerable to abuse.

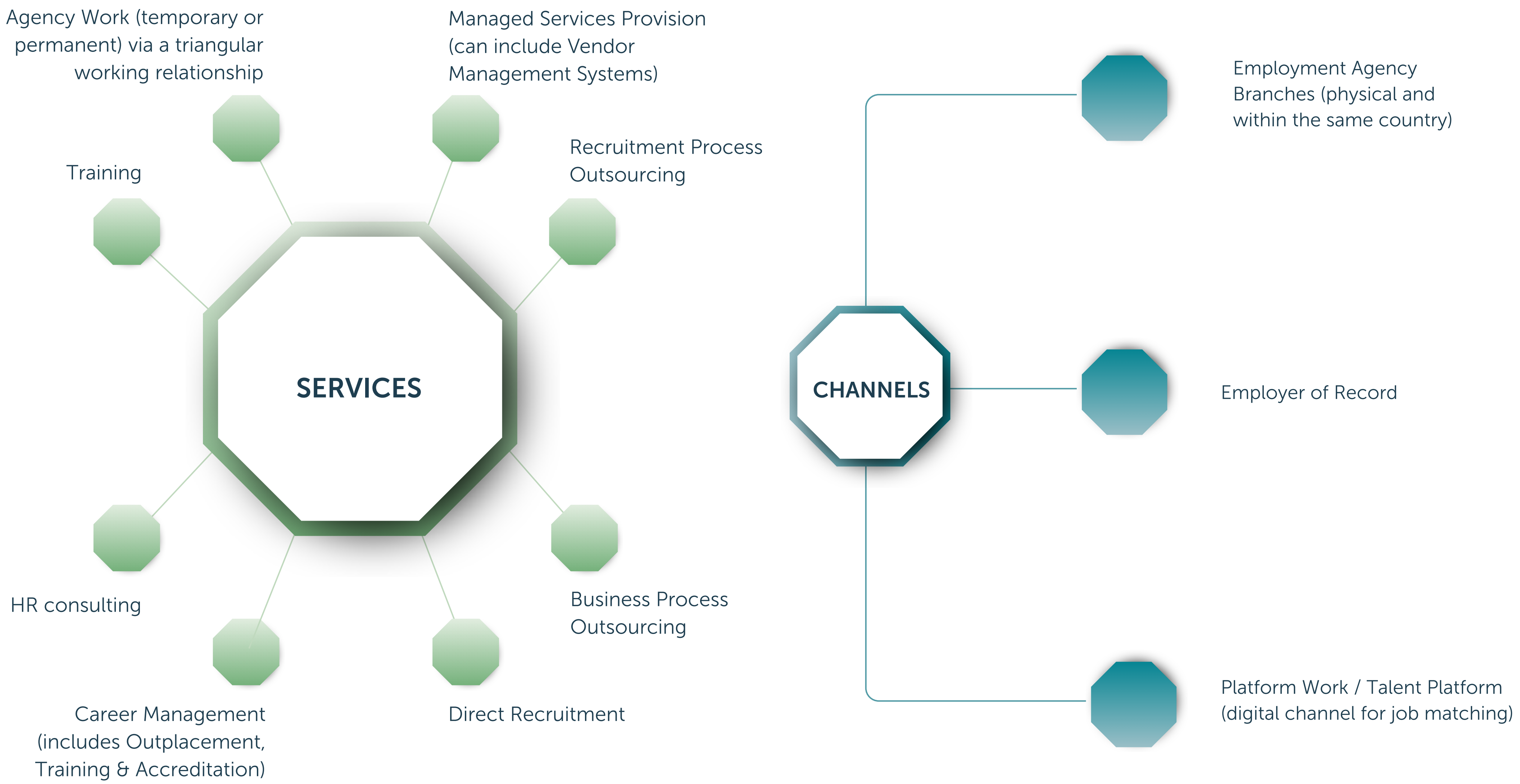
Across regions, private employment agencies have emerged as critical market makers in this system. They translate labour demand into viable migration pathways, operationalise fair recruitment standards, align skills with vacancies, and support integration through training, onboarding, and compliance mechanisms grounded in ILO Convention No. 181 and related frameworks. This role is evidenced both in the discussion of appropriate regulation for the private employment services industry and in the national case studies presented throughout this report.

The case studies demonstrate that the most successful models for borderless talent combine regulated private intermediation with public infrastructure for ethical recruitment, skills recognition, training and job matching.

Well-managed international talent mobility supports economic growth, addresses structural labour shortages, and creates meaningful opportunity for workers, while ensuring fairness and sustainability for all parties involved.

To further facilitate the placement of talent into work, countries should scale public–private partnerships, accelerate the recognition of foreign qualifications, expand place-and-train pathways, strengthen bilateral mobility agreements, and invest in pre- and post-departure support for workers. Borderless talent works best not when mobility is left to chance, but when it is actively governed, labour-market-led, and delivered through trusted private actors operating within clear and enforceable rules.

The HR services industry: Services and Channels



References

01 ILO, Research and Publications | International Labour Organization

02 Dekra Arbeit und Leben HR Report: HR-Report 2026 der DEKRA Arbeit Gruppe – Trends, Prognosen & Insights aus 100+ Personalabteilungen | DEKRA Arbeit Gruppe

03 IOM World Migration Report 2026: World Migration Report | International Organization for Migration, IOM

04 International Organisation of Employers (2024) 'The Work We Want'. Industrial Relations and Labour Law

05 MIT Sloan Management Review. 'Three Things to Know About Employee Attitudes Toward Flexible Work'.

06 IOM, World Migration Report 2026: World Migration Report | International Organization for Migration, IOM

07 IOM, Migration Governance Insights on Regular Pathways: Delivering on the Promise of Migration | IOM Publications Platform

08 Business Research Insights (2026) 'Employer of Record Market Size, Share, Growth and Industry Analysis, By Type (Aggregator Model, Wholly Owned Infrastructure Model), By Application (SMEs, Large Enterprises) and Regional Forecast to 2035'. Business Research Insights.

09 Code of Conduct - World Employment Confederation

10 Information on the Fair Recruitment Initiative: Fair Recruitment Initiative | International Labour Organization

11 The Adecco Group: https://www.adeccogroup.com/-/media/Project/Adecco-Group/AdeccoGroup/Public-affairs/TAG-Position-labour-mobility-Final-2024.pdf

12 The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines circular migration as the fluid, repetitive movement of individuals between two or more countries, primarily for employment. It involves multiple border crossings back and forth, allowing migrants to live and work in host countries while maintaining strong economic and social ties to their country of origin.

13 This case study was provided by our WEC member CAFST: China Association of Foreign Service Trades

14 This case study is based on information provided by our WEC member JASSA: 一般社団法人日本人材派遣協会

15 This case study was provided by our member ISF: Indian Staffing Federation

16 While the terminology of sending and receiving countries is used in this case study, WEC is aware that a classification into sending and receiving countries is becoming challenging as several countries are simultaneously sending and receiving countries.

17 EU Talent Pool Initiative: EU Talent Pool - Migration and Home Affairs - European Commission

18 The Talent Pool Regulation is available here: Regulation establishing an EU Talent Pool - Migration and Home Affairs

19 The WEC Code of Conduct is available here: Code of Conduct - World Employment Confederation

20 This case study was provided by our member FEDIL Employment Services: FES

21 This case study was provided by our member NHO SH: NHO Service og Handel

22 This case study was provided by our member AFRSRU: AFSRU | Asociația Furnizorilor de Servicii de Resurse Umane

23 This case study was provided by our member REC: REC | Recruitment and Employment Confederation

24 This case study was provided by our member Emplea Chile: Emplea Chile | Agest es Emplea Chile

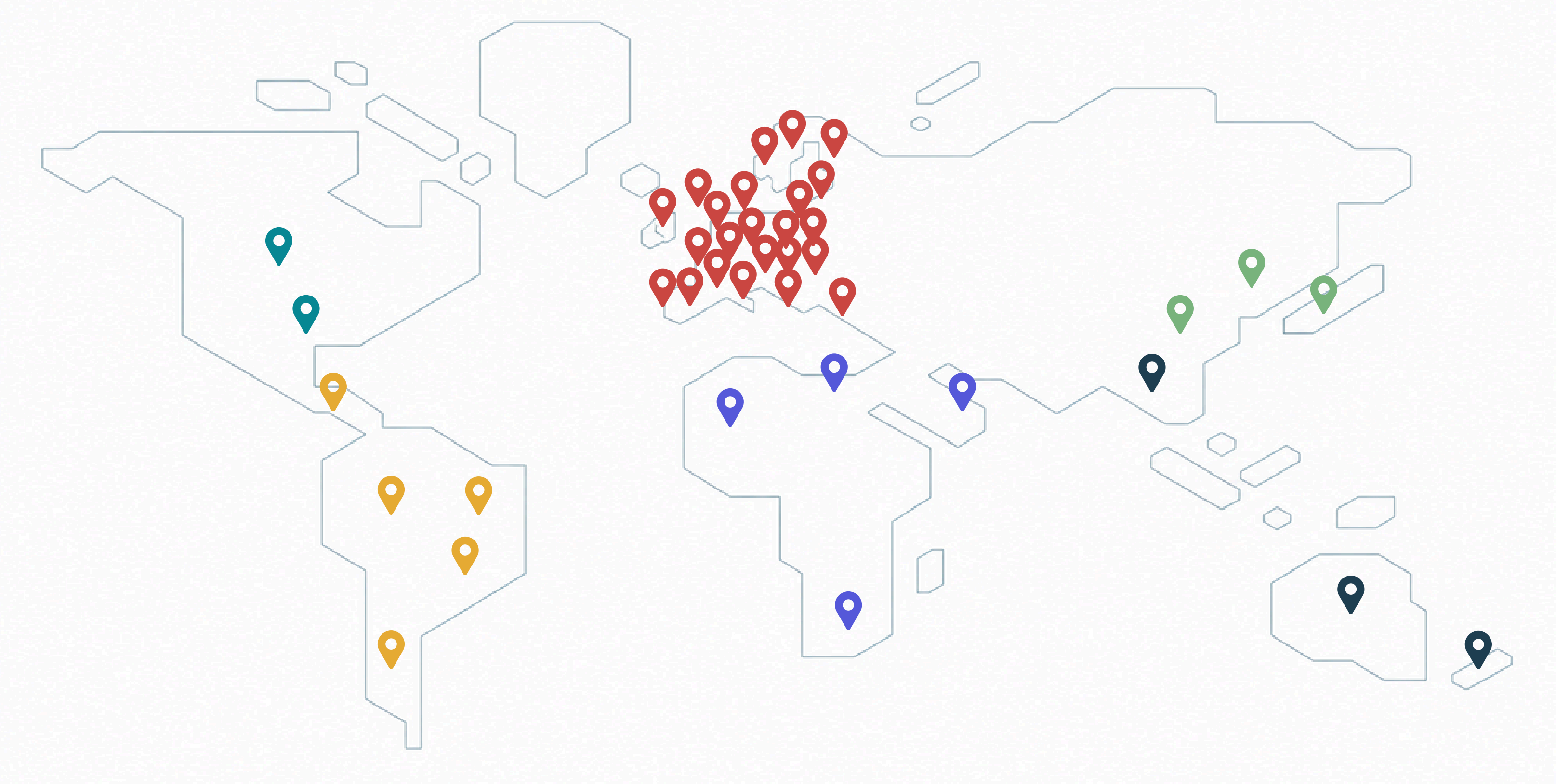
25 This case study was provided by our member FENASERHTT: home • FENASERHTT

26 This case study was provided by our member RGF Staffing: Home | RGF Staffing | A leading global network of HR service providers

27 Information on the World Employment Conference is available online: World Employment Conference 2026

Our National Federations

A membership representing approximately 90% of the global sales revenue of the industry



WEC North America
- Canada
- USA

WEC Latin America
- Argentina
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Mexico

WEC Europe
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Turkey
- UK

WEC Africa
- Dubai
- Egypt
- South Africa
- Tanzania

WEC North East Asia
- China
- Japan
- South Korea

WEC APAC Southern
- Australia
- India
- New Zealand

Our Corporate Members

Global Corporate Members

THE ADECCO GROUP

ManpowerGroup

randstad

Engma

RGF Staffing

Gi Group HOLDING

Regional Corporate Members

ARCH STAFFING & CONSULTING

BaytonGroup

DEKRA
DEKRA Arbeit Group

HAYS

HOUSE OF HR
WE CHANGE LIVES

parakar

QUESS
WINNING TOGETHER

Pure-Player Corporate Members

Kelly

Let's Stay in Touch!

Website

www.wecglobal.org

Email

info@wecglobal.org

YouTube

World Employment Confederation

LinkedIn

World Employment Confederation

WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFEDERATION
The Voice of Labour Market Enablers