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## **EMN ITALY NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

### **SUPPORTING LEGAL MIGRATION FOR BETTER INTEGRATION AND IMPROVED DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES. EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES IN DIALOGUE.**

In light of the conferences, events and all the activities conducted in person or remotely in which EMN Italy has taken part, the attraction of international talent and skilled labour have been identified as the main topics for the EMN Italy National Conference, from a co-development perspective between Member States and third countries, based on concrete standards and experiences.

The availability of skilled labour and international talent<sup>1</sup> is fundamental in order to promote the competitiveness of Italy's economy and that of the EU, without overlooking the growth of the countries from which the greatest migration flows come.

This challenge is made even more complex by the ageing of the European population, already facing the risk of labour shortages in various production sectors, including healthcare, construction, manufacturing, transport and logistics, hotel and catering services, technical and scientific activities and telecommunications. Moreover, the new challenges that Europe must tackle, such as the ecological and digital transitions, are expected to create new demand for highly skilled workers.

At the centre of the national and European strategies, there is first and foremost a commitment to upskill the national workforce and to promote the participation of less active members of the population in the labour market. However, the future competitiveness of Italy and Europe will also be influenced by the ability to attract and retain international talent and skilled labour. Indeed, the scale of the challenges that must be tackled regarding the labour market requires the mobilisation of all the available measures.

The responses that the several countries affected by this phenomenon must seek to offer have to provide various support mechanisms: on the one hand, to the young generations through the development of skills that can facilitate access to the labour market and accommodation at affordable prices; and, on the other hand, to a controlled legal migration, taking into account the territorial dimension of demographic changes both within and outside of Europe, so as not to exacerbate the outgoing mobility of local young workers ('skills and brain drain').

Today, third-country citizens already contribute to the EU labour market and economy. In 2022, in Europe, around 1.6 million first residence permits were issued for work-related reasons to third-country citizens, the highest number since Eurostat began to

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<sup>1</sup>A debate is underway at the EU level on what is meant by the term 'talent', tending towards a 'comprehensive' view of 'highly skilled' people and people with specialisations and qualifications who can be considered "average" in key fields and sectors.



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collect data in 2009<sup>2</sup>. As regards Italy, between 2021 and 2022, new work permits increased by 32.2% and made up 15% of new permits issued in 2022<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that third countries are also experiencing skills shortages in certain fields and sectors, such as in the ICT, digital or healthcare sectors. Some experiments by individual Member States provide training courses in key sectors in both contexts, through which the recipients can enter the local labour market and, in part, on courses of international mobility. For that precise reason, the strategies regarding the international circulation of talent and personnel who meet the needs for a skilled workforce, from the perspective of limiting the risks of a brain drain, must value the migration processes as strategic not only for the socio-economic wellbeing of the people involved but, at the same time, from the perspective of co-development, promoting the socio-economic wellbeing of both the countries of the European Union and the countries of origin.

The aim of the conference is to outline the theoretical and legal framework and the concrete challenges identified above through a comparison of experiences and practices.

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<sup>2</sup> 2023, Employment and Social Developments in Europe report.

<sup>3</sup> ISTAT, Non-EU citizens in Italy – Years 2022/2023.