



FROM SHORT-TERM
STAY TO LONG-TERM
INCLUSION

**A Multi-Situational
Report and Analysis
of Talent Retention
Factors in Denmark,
Germany, and the EU**

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.

This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The opinions expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
Marmorvej 51, 2100 Copenhagen
P.O. Box 2530
2100 Copenhagen
Denmark
Tel.: +45 45 33 53 90
Email: iom.dk@iom.int
Website: www.denmark.iom.int

This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

This publication was issued without IOM Publications Unit (PUB) approval for adherence to IOM's brand and style standards.

This publication was issued without IOM Research Unit (RES) endorsement.

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2024. *IOM Talent Hub EU Guidebook*, Copenhagen

© IOM 2024



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode) (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO).*

For further specifications please see the [Copyright and Terms of Use](#).

This publication should not be used, published or redistributed for purposes primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation, with the exception of educational purposes, e.g. to be included in textbooks.

Permissions: Requests for commercial use or further rights and licensing should be submitted to publications@iom.int.

* <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/legalcode>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
1. THE TALENT HUB PROJECT	10
1.1 Introduction.....	11
1.2 Project objective and timeline.....	12
1.2.1 Project objective.....	12
1.2.2 Target groups.....	13
1.3 Project partners.....	14
1.3.1 Copenhagen Capacity	14
1.3.2 DG REFORM.....	14
1.4 Project Methodology	14
1.4.1 Desktop research	14
1.4.2 Consultations with stakeholders	15
2. TALENT CONTEXT IN DENMARK, GERMANY, AND THE EU	16
2.1 Labour migration policies concerning mid to high-skilled Third Country Nationals in Denmark and Germany.....	17
2.1.1 Denmark.....	17
2.1.2 Germany.....	22
2.2 Skilled Third Country Nationals in the workforce in Denmark and Germany.....	28
2.2.1 Denmark.....	28
2.2.2 Germany.....	34
2.3 Putting Third Country National Talent on the EU Agenda.....	38
2.3.1 Skills and Talent Package	38
2.3.2 Selected EU legislation concerning labour migration of third country nationals	40
3. TALENT PHASES: ARRIVING, STAYING, LEAVING.....	44
3.1 The customer journey.....	45
3.2 Denmark and Germany in Talent Indexes.....	47
3.2.1 OECD: Indicators of Talent Attractiveness (2023).....	48
3.2.2 InterNations: Expat Insider 2022 – The World Through Expat Eyes.....	49
3.2.3 INSEAD: Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022.....	50
3.2.4 MIPEX: Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020	54
4. RETENTION, INTEGRATION, AND INCLUSION.....	54
4.1 Determinants of retention	55
4.1.1 Retention and Integration: Process and stakeholders.....	56
4.1.2 Retention factors – individual and context.....	57

5. RETENTION FACTORS – SYSTEMIC AND THEMATIC AREAS	61
5.1 Systemic areas.....	62
5.1.1 Coordination Support and Structures.....	62
5.1.2 Collection of Information and Data.....	66
5.1.3 Access to information and Services.....	69
5.2 Thematic areas.....	72
5.2.1 Language Training and Learning.....	72
5.2.2 Well-Being and Family Support.....	75
5.2.3 Professional Development and Opportunities.....	78
5.2.4 Digital Ecosystem and Bureaucracy.....	82
5.2.5 Residency and Branding.....	85
6. IOM TALENT SURVEY – RETENTION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ...	88
6.1 IOM Talent Survey.....	89
6.2 Comparison and analysis of data.....	90
6.2.1 Respondent profiles.....	90
6.2.2 Arriving, staying and leaving.....	92
6.3 Main takeaways from IOM Talent Survey.....	96
7.CONCLUSION	97
8.REFERENCES.....	99
8.1 Bibliography.....	99
8.1.1 Denmark.....	99
8.1.2 Germany.....	101
8.1.3 EU, other or multiple countries.....	102
8.2 Annexes.....	103

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Legend
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (EU)
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge / Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
CopCap	Copenhagen Capacity
CPR	Social Security Number (Denmark)
DI	Confederation of Danish Industry / Dansk Industri
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
EMN	European Migration Network
EU	European Union
EUMS	EU Member State / EU Member States
EURES	Réseau européen des services de l'emploi / European employment services
DG REFORM	European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
GTCI	Global Talent Competitiveness Index
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICS	International Citizen Service Center
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INSEAD	Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires / INSEAD Business School
ITA	Indicators of Attractiveness
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
KL	Kommunernes Landsforening / Local Government Denmark
LRTD	Long-term Residence Directive
MIPEX	Migration Policy Index
MS	Member State / Member States

NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (Danish: SMV, German: KMU)
SIRI	Styrelsen for International Rekruttering og Integration / Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration
STAR	Styrelsen for Arbejdsmarked og Rekruttering / Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TCN(s)	Third Country National(s)
TSI	Technical Support Instrument
VIVE	Det Nationale Forsknings- og Analysecenter for Velfærd / Danish Center for Social Science Research

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Talent Hub project, IOM provides technical support to Copenhagen Capacity and other public Danish and selected European stakeholders to develop, adapt and implement strategies related primarily to talent retention, nurturing and attraction. The project is funded by the European Union Technical Support Instrument (TSI) via the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM).

Applying a comprehensive and inclusive view on the retention topic, this **multi-situational report** analyses and synthesizes data, input, and themes from a broad range of written sources and stakeholder consultations in Denmark, Germany, and other countries to determine the central factors for retention, attraction, and nurturing of skilled and highly skilled third-country nationals (talent) in the EU with focus on **Denmark** and **Germany**. In other words, the report explores conditions that would facilitate talents' arrival and likelihood to stay longer.

[Chapter 1](#) introduces the Talent Hub project, the partners, target groups and the methodology applied in the production of this report. [Chapter 2](#) depicts the talent labour market context in Denmark, Germany, and the European Union (EU), with a focus on the mobility schemes applicable to talent as well as related EU directives and tools. [Chapter 3](#) contains an overview of the customer journey from attraction, through arrival to possible relocation, as well as a comparison of Denmark and Germany in selected attractiveness and retention related indexes. [Chapter 4](#) on retention, integration and inclusion explains the view on retention and integration as applied in the report, followed by [chapter 5](#) that takes a specific look on retention factors and areas in Denmark and Germany. [Chapter 6](#) details result from the Talent Survey implemented in 2023 under the project in order to test the project recommendations and gather data on talent in Denmark and Germany, followed by the conclusion in [chapter 7](#).

Talent retention, in Danish often referred to as “*fastholdelse*,” “*tilknytning*,” or “*inklusion*,” is in this report regarded as the creation or support to conditions that could facilitate already arrived talents' longer-term or even permanent stay. Longer-term stay constitutes a higher return on the investment of attracting talent, as well as sustainable and valuable contributions to the labour market and society at large. Talent retention is considered a positive and important thematic that is closely linked to concepts such as inclusion and integration.

This report argues that also the integration and inclusion of international workers and students needs to be considered and supported for improved retention and hence longer-term contributions to national and EU labour markets.

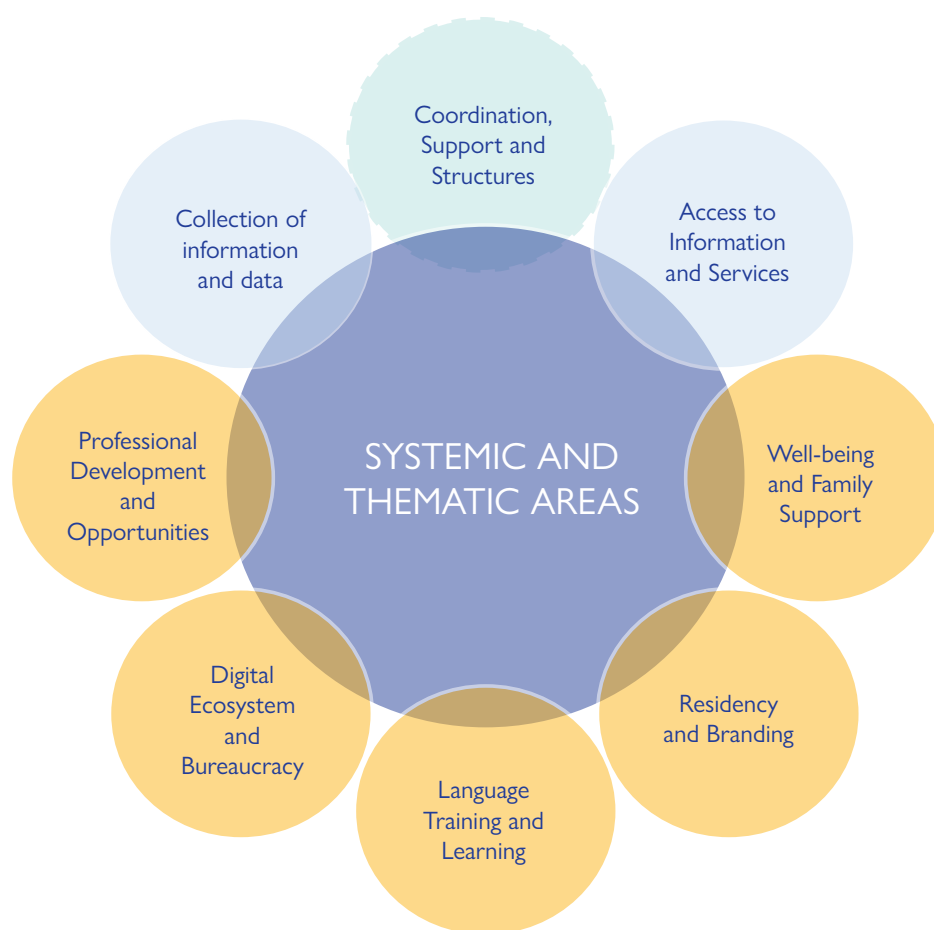
Retention of talent should not only be understood as the retention of the main applicant, who has initially been granted entry and work permit in the destination country, but also accompanying family members such as spouse/partner and children. A spouse/partner may be searching for a job and available to contribute to the labour market, which is a professional resource and development potential for states and employers to capitalize on, also for the benefit of the person concerned. The professional opportunities and personal well-being of accompanying family members is often decisive for the retention of the talent. When retention and productivity of talent is a priority, the needs and well-being of the entire family should be considered at all times and by all labour market stakeholders. It is challenging to retain talent if family members do not want to remain.

The well-being of the entire family is central for retention and should be considered at all stages of the talents' consideration of and relocation to the destination country. Information provision and family support

should be multilingual, comprehensive and begin before the actual relocation, which requires partnerships and coordination between multiple stakeholders such as the state, local government entities and employers.

The report provides the background for IOM's separate recommendations to Copenhagen Capacity (CopCap) and are meant to inform CopCap's ongoing and future efforts to support enhanced talent retention in Denmark. The recommendation areas are depicted in figure 1 and mirrored in the structure of chapter 5 but detailed in the separately published project recommendations available on <https://denmark.iom.int/talent-hub-eu> and <https://germany.iom.int/talent-hub-eu>.

FIGURE 1. SYSTEMIC AND THEMATIC AREAS WITHIN RETENTION



Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub

Literature review, stakeholder consultations with public and private organizations as well as talent, have revealed a wide variety of factors relevant for retention of international talent, be it of personal, professional, individual, societal, national, or international nature. However, due to the individualized nature of retention factors, depending also on professional and personal preferences, different retention factors apply in unequal measure to different talents. What is most important for a talent family with children may be of less relevance for a single person or an international student. Into the equation plays also factors related to international possibilities in neighbouring and other countries, intra-EU mobility prospects or immigration processes such as residence permits. Enhanced talent retention and attraction requires a broad spectrum of interventions and policy developments to boost the national capacity, as well as opportunities to flexibly learn from, adjust and cooperate with other states to become an attractive and durable talent destination in ever-changing labour market contexts.

The IOM recommendations to be presented to CopCap on the background of the current report, correspond to the headings in [chapter 5](#). The recommendations are divided into **systemic and thematic areas** that group related recommendations under the same area. Whereas systemic areas mainly signify structural and systemic factors for improved retention, thematic areas signify interventions of a more practical nature. Systemic and thematic areas, as well as the individual recommendations under each area, are however intertwined and interdependent, wherefore interventions may be needed in multiple areas to maximize retention. Despite the focus on Denmark and Germany, the report, and recommendations for CopCap are intended to function as an inspiration also to other EU Member States. For the same reason, the recommendations are generally formulated to be applicable to different stakeholders in different contexts, wherefore actual implementation or inspiration of the same recommendations may differ according to stakeholder and context.

Some recommendations can be implemented on local level by employers, municipalities, and others without direct support from the state. Even so, enhanced national and international cooperation on talent retention and attraction would benefit from systemic changes and not the least political direction defined through a **national talent management strategy and coordination mechanisms**.

A national direction, strategy, and in-country coordination mechanisms with multiple stakeholders through a nationally mandated agency may not only facilitate national exchanges on best practices and relevant programming, but also facilitate international cooperation on talent management towards a European-level **Talent Hub**. Articulating a national talent strategy and political direction to define the talent ecosystem and national cooperation structures holistically is perhaps the most important recommendation ensuing from this report.

Although the systemic and thematic areas, factors and recommendations are not consistently ranked in order of importance within the context of this report and in the separate recommendations document, systemic and structural changes, policy, and strategy developments remain crucial for enhanced talent retention, attraction, and circulation on national, EU and international level.

CHAPTER I

THE TALENT HUB PROJECT



1. THE TALENT HUB PROJECT

1.1 Introduction

In November 2022, IOM together with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) and Copenhagen Capacity (CopCap) launched the project **“Talent Hub: Supporting Copenhagen Capacity to strengthen retention and EU-mobility of skilled migrants through collaborative multi-country coordination on talent retention and circulation in the EU,”** hereinafter mostly referred to as the Talent Hub project.

In the framework of the Talent Hub project, IOM provides technical support to strengthen the capacity of CopCap and other public Danish and selected European stakeholders to **develop, adapt and implement strategies** related primarily to talent retention, nurturing and attraction. The project was developed as a response to CopCap's request to DG REFORM for support in establishing a Talent Hub for exchange of best practices on retention and attraction of talent and strengthening Denmark's capacity on same through proposals for policy reform. The recipient of the recommendations and other products under the Talent Hub project is therefore CopCap that has been consulted actively throughout.

To assure continued economic growth and to counter-act the demographic challenges of the ageing EU population, many EU member states are seeking to complement the domestic workforce with international labour migrants. Individual EU member states' needs for international labour are mirrored by the needs of other EU member states, the EU as a region as well as the needs of non-EU countries and regions in what has been termed the so-called 'global race for talent'.

While the international competition for international workforce has led both the EU and individual countries to **develop programmes for the attraction of international workforce** through labour mobility schemes, there has been comparatively **less focus on schemes or actions to retain and nurture the international workforce**. The Talent Hub project and the document at hand therefore attempt to focus primarily on (good) retention practices and intra-EU cooperation, and only secondly on attraction programming.

The Danish Thinktank Europe noted in June 2022 that the EU in 2050 will face a situation where **57 per cent of the population** would support the rest, as compared to 70 per cent currently.¹ One option to overcome this challenge, it argues, would be to recruit workforce from other EU countries, were it not for the challenge that these same countries have a similar dearth of skilled labour. The EU therefore needs to look beyond its borders for future talent and other workforce, but also inside the external borders for cooperation and intra-EU circulation.

In the context of global competition for talent, **EU Member States need to expand on existing intra-EU initiatives for foreign talent and to replicate best practices on social inclusion and retention.**² Enhancing the integration and social inclusion of migrants meets key European objectives of equality and social cohesion, essential for a dynamic economy that benefits all.

The attraction and retention of international workforce may, depending on the context, sometimes become linked to more general immigration discussion, and consequently also be impacted by general immigration policy restrictions. Such discussions may however overlook the considerable contribution to the national labour market of international workforce. According to the annually published calculations from the Danish

¹ ThinkTank Europe, [Europas fremtidige arbejdskraft kommer udefra](#), 18 June 2022.

² European Commission 2022c

Ministry of Finance (2023) on the contribution of immigrants to the Danish economy, persons who arrive to Denmark for the purpose of work or study on average had a net contribution to the state economy of DKK 120,000 in 2019.³ Figures from the Danish Confederation of Industry set the net contribution of highly educated migrants at DKK 183,000 per year on average.⁴

Although the Talent Hub project primarily focuses on retention practices in Denmark as well as Germany for comparison, it is envisaged that the **project findings may be relevant for a wider circle of EU Member States**. It is however important that the increasing focus on talent attraction and retention on both national and EU level does not lead to increased competition between EU Member States. While attraction and retention activities may be carried out on a national level, it is important to focus on cooperation, coordination, and exchange of best practices between states.

The **purpose** of this **multi-situational report** is to review and assess talent retention and attraction factors in the context of Denmark and Germany, and more broadly within the EU to better understand current trends and challenges within the field. The report can be read separately or as part of the broader series of the Talent Hub project materials.

The report can be read in its entirety but is modular and intended to juxtapose and compare selected themes in Denmark and Germany, wherefore also the different sections of the report can be accessed separately.

The report is one of a series of products being developed within the Talent Hub project, including but not limited to recommendations to CopCap, overviews and policy briefs on remote work and digital nomads and a modular guidebook. All materials will be made publicly available on the project webpages on the websites of IOM Denmark and IOM Germany.

The following sections describe the Talent Hub project in further detail by outlining the scope of the project, objectives, and target groups.

1.2 Project objective and timeline

1.2.1 Project objective

The **objective of the Talent Hub** project is to contribute to **strengthening policies and structures** to facilitate retention and to support the formulation of **future-oriented integration policies and reforms targeting talent**. Strengthened focus on retention is intended to support also intra-EU circulation (mobility) and the socio-economic integration of talent in Denmark and Europe more broadly.

The project does this through collection and analysis of best practices, stakeholder mappings and consultations, and formulating policy recommendations for enhanced talent retention.

This report is part of various materials, including the present report, a set of recommendations, as well as a modular guidebook providing more practically oriented guidance on talent retention.

While focusing primarily on **Denmark and Germany**, the **recommendations and guidebook can be applied to different EU stakeholders** seeking varied input on their challenges on talent retention, attraction, and circulation in their national contexts.

The project concludes with the formulation of a concept note on a Talent Hub EU coordination mechanism

³ Danish Ministry of Finance 2023, [Økonomisk Analyse: Indvandreres nettobidrag til de offentlige finanser i 2019 - revideret version \(september 2023\)](#), 29 September. This figure includes also EU citizens.

⁴ Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) 2023, [Højtuddannede indvandrere er en god forretning for Danmark](#). The calculation includes also the contribution of EU citizens.

(collaboration & knowledge sharing mechanism of best practices) and a final workshop by the last phase of the project implementation (2024).

FIGURE 2. PROJECT ELEMENTS



Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub brief

1.2.2 Target groups

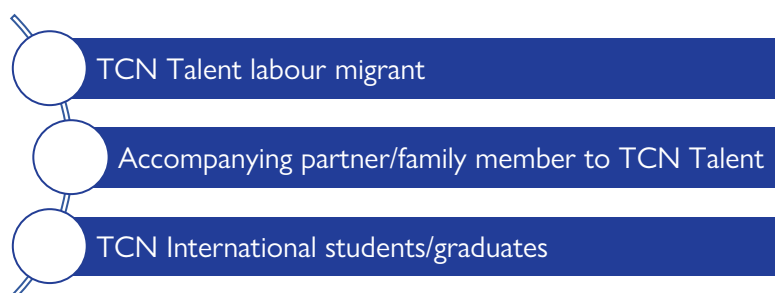
The primary target group of the project is talent, which is here defined as **mid to highly skilled Third Country National (TCN) workers in Denmark and the EU currently in the workforce**. For the purpose of this report, talent is mostly considered persons with educational level of bachelor equivalent or above, while recognizing that talent cannot be reduced to a question of academic level alone but may include also labour migrants with other skill sets.

In this report, reference to talent TCNs is to non-EU migrants that have come to the EU area for the purpose of work or studies.⁵ Although talent is often regarded solely as those who have arrived for work purposes, also **international students**, including **recent graduates**, constitute an important talent source.

International students/graduates are considered a major source of talent by many states. Not only because of their high educational level, but also because of existing knowledge of the destination country. Students have lived and studied, have recognizable skills and degrees issued by a national institution, prior exposure to work life structures through as for example internships, thesis projects with enterprises and student jobs.⁶

Last but not least, the research and consultations under the research have stressed the centrality of **accompanying family members** that should on one side be acknowledged as a potential and valuable contribution to the workforce and society in their own capacity, but also a major factor for the well-being and retention of the primary talent applicant.

FIGURE 3. TARGET GROUPS



Data source: IOM 2023

⁵ For EU's official definition of Third-Country-Nationals, please refer to European Union Migration and Home Affairs' definition accessible [here](#). Please note, according to the 'Analytical report on the legal situation of third-country workers in the EU as compared to EU mobile workers' (2018), "there is no uniform definition of TCN workers covered by the migration Directives." (p.6)

⁶ See as for example Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) et al. 2019, [Internationale studerende til gavn for Danmark](#)

The project makes a distinction between EU and non-EU nationals insofar as non-EU nationals do not enjoy the same movement and residency rights as EU nationals and are therefore subject to various labour migration schemes at both EU and national level. Even so, the project's considerations of retention factors may apply also to other migrant workers, including EU nationals, and at all skills levels. Sources used for this report do not necessarily distinguish between retention factors relevant for non-EU versus EU citizens, or between different subgroups or professions within the larger group of TCNs, which also serves to make a clear distinction more challenging.

1.3 Project partners

1.3.1 Copenhagen Capacity

Copenhagen Capacity (CopCap) is the official organisation for investment promotion and economic development in Greater Copenhagen and assists foreign businesses and talent in identifying and capitalising business opportunities in Greater Copenhagen. Established in 1994, Copenhagen Capacity has since 2012 been engaged in the Danish talent agenda, working through projects and with its partners to attract talent to Denmark.

Through a project description submitted to the **European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)**, Copenhagen Capacity requested technical assistance to build a Talent Hub. In coordination with Copenhagen Capacity and DG REFORM, IOM developed the current project to respond to Copenhagen Capacity's request for technical assistance.

1.3.2 DG REFORM

The European Commission's **Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)** assists EU countries in designing and implementing reforms, contributing to their endeavours in supporting job creation and sustainable growth.

The main financing instrument employed by the European Commission to aid Member States in implementing impactful and inclusive reforms is the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). Known as the TSI only since 2021, structural reform support programmes were prior to 2020 implemented under the Structural Reform Support Programme. Since 2015, more than 1,500 reform projects have been supported in all 27 Member States in [policy areas](#) such as Green Transition, Health and long-term care, Skills, education and training as well as Labour market, social protection and migration. Several DG REFORM projects have been [implemented in Denmark](#).

1.4 Project Methodology

1.4.1 Desktop research

During the first research phase, desktop research served to review existing literature with a focus on Denmark, Germany, and selected EU countries. A mapping exercise reviewed existing EU and national frameworks, policy developments on talent retention that target third country nationals, and intra-mobility in the view of legal requirements and possibilities for TCNs to access the local labour market within the EU. The former served to uncover existing structures and schemes, and to identify (good) practices related to talent retention in the focus countries. The first research phase had a broad focus on various European countries including EU Member States (EUMS) and non-EU countries to better grasp the current challenges concerning

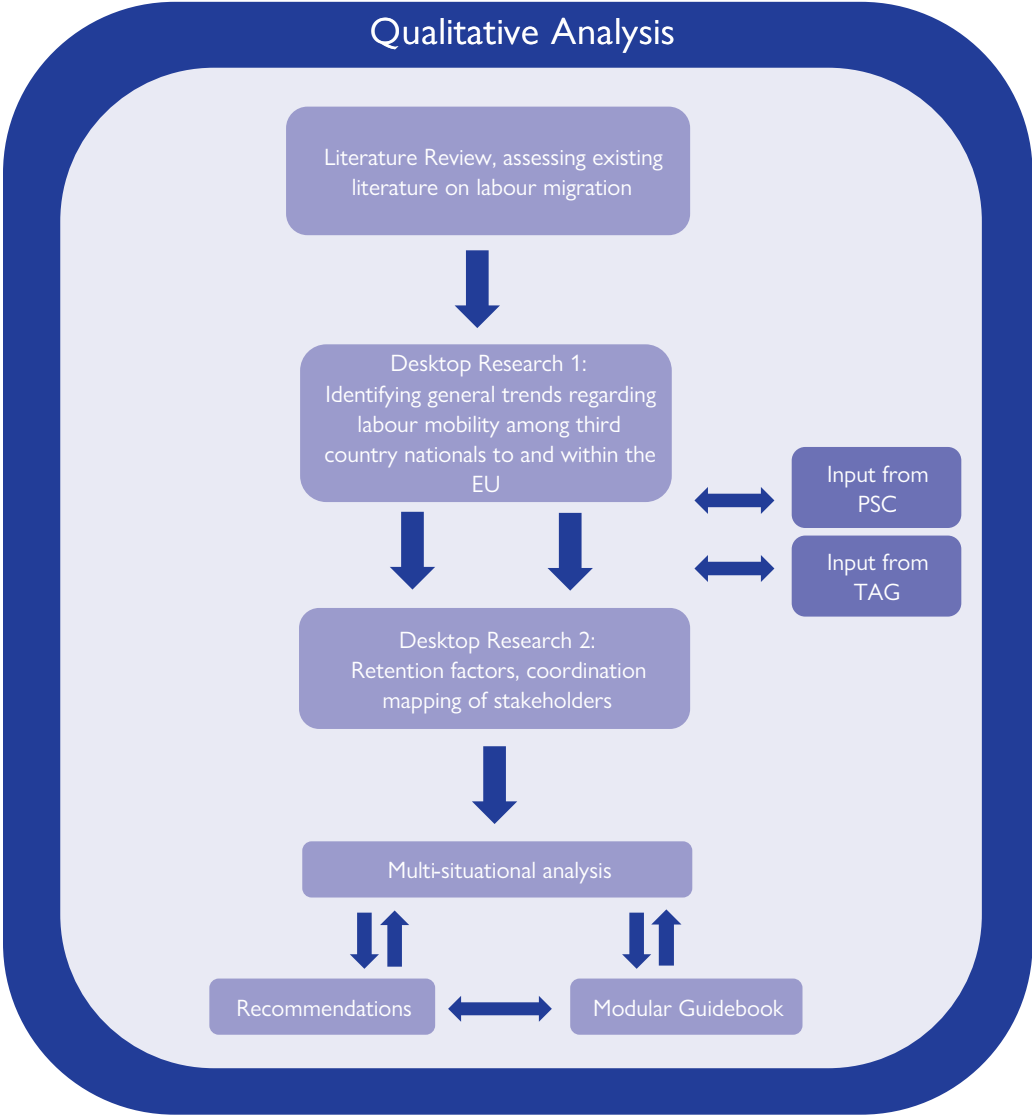
retention of TCNs and their ability to move across EUMS. The desktop research outlined identified facilitators and obstacles to talent retention also by comparing Denmark and Germany.

1.4.2 Consultations with stakeholders

During the second research phase, consultations took place with different stakeholders in both Denmark and Germany through in-person and virtual meetings. The meetings provided hands-on empirical inputs, enabling the research to unpack obstacles as well as opportunities regarding retention of skilled TCNs. The empirical inputs in combination with the existing literature were used to structure and target the next research phases. Throughout the project, inputs were collected from the project internal Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

The report is based on various inputs summarised in the figure below.

FIGURE 4. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK



Data source: IOM 2023, self-made model

CHAPTER II

TALENT CONTEXT IN DENMARK, GERMANY, AND THE EU



2. TALENT CONTEXT IN DENMARK, GERMANY, AND THE EU

2.1 Labour migration policies concerning mid to high-skilled Third Country Nationals in Denmark and Germany

The following section describes the current labour migration schemes in place for mid to highly skilled third country labour migrants in Denmark and Germany. This section explores the challenges and opportunities that the individual talent may face at the time of recruitment. It attempts to provide background information on current schemes and developments, but also to assess employment patterns and profiles among TCNs in Denmark and Germany. At the end of the section, a description of EU Directives relevant to talent retention, attraction, and intra-EU mobility is provided. The section does not aim to compare Denmark, Germany, and EU policies but to provide background information relevant to other parts of the current report.

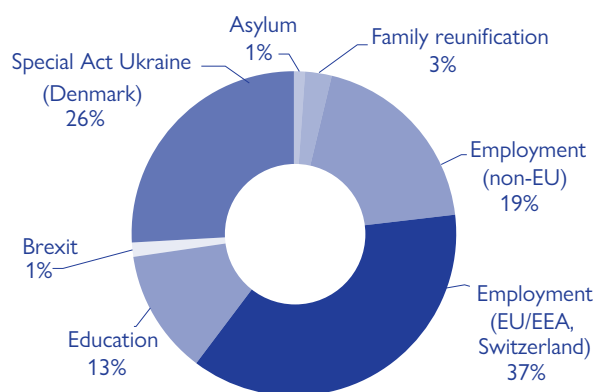
2.1.1 Denmark

Denmark offers a variety of schemes targeting skilled, non-EU nationals (TCNs) coming to Denmark for work purposes. Danish labour migration schemes for international workforce are generally demand driven and require a specific job offer for a work and residence permit to be granted. The most commonly used schemes among skilled TCNs are the Fast-track Scheme, Pay Limit Scheme and the Positive List for Skilled Work.⁷ The requirements and procedures regarding the application for residence and work permit among TCNs vary and depend on the employment scheme.

For instance, the Fast-Track scheme requires the hiring entity, that needs to be pre-certified for fast-track according to established criteria, to apply for residence and work permit on behalf of the incoming employee based on obtained consent, by filing the application via the Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI). For other schemes such as the Pay Limit, Positive Lists, or schemes applicable for researchers, doctoral candidates, students, and guest lecturers, the applicants themselves are required to apply for a residence and work permit.⁸

In 2022, almost 56 per cent of all residence permits issued in Denmark were issued for the purpose of employment.⁹

FIGURE 5. TOTAL RESIDENCE PERMITS ISSUED IN 2022 BY THE DANISH AUTHORITIES, N=126,763



Data source: Danish Immigration Service 2023, *Tal på Udlændingeområdet (Da.) 30.06.2023*
Note: In total, 126,763 residence permits were issued by the Danish authorities in 2022 of which 32,809 residence permits were granted to Ukrainian nationals under the Special Act; 47,065 for employment (EU/EEA, Switzerland); 24,580 for employment (non-EU); 15,748 for education; 3,357 for family reunification, 1,801 for Brexit, and 1,403 for asylum.

⁷ Danish Immigration Service (DIS) 2023, *Seneste Tal på Udlændingeområdet 30.06.2023*. Total residence permits issued through the Fast-track scheme, Pay Limit Scheme, and the Positive List for Skilled Labour in 2022: N=10,595. The numbers are based on official count from the Danish Immigration Service as of 30 June 2023. The numbers and percentages represented hereunder focus on selected schemes and do not refer to the totals of all schemes available for non-EU nationals and EU nationals.

⁸ New to Denmark 2023c, [portal](#). Each scheme available for skilled labour and students sets different requirements.

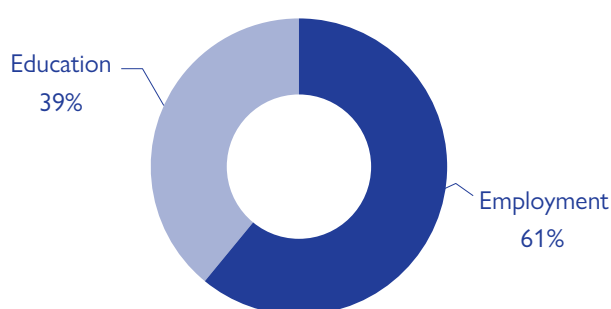
⁹ Danish Immigration Service 2023, *Seneste Tal på Udlændingeområdet 30.06.2023*. The data from DIS includes persons who obtained permits subject to the Special Act of Ukrainian Nationals (32,809), Brexit (1,801) and students and employers from the EU/EEA/Switzerland (47,065). This report however, focuses only on third country nationals who applied for residence permit for education and employment purposes.

In 2022, 24,580 residence permits for work purposes were issued representing an increase of 53 per cent compared to the number of such residence permits issued in 2020 (11,576). Out of the 24,580 permits issued in 2022, 10,595 (43%) were granted to persons recruited under the **Fast-track Scheme** (7,989), **Pay Limit Scheme** (2,221), and the **Positive List for Skilled Work** (385). While there were approximately 263,000 foreign workers in Denmark as of 2023, only around 21 per cent of these were from countries outside the EU.¹⁰

The number of residence permits issued through the Fast-Track Scheme increased rapidly from 2020 to 2022. In 2022 alone, a total of 7,789 fast-track residence permits were granted to mid to highly skilled TCNs, representing an increase of more than 200 per cent compared to 2020 where only 2,662 residence permits were granted.

Looking at the issuance of temporary permits in the context of education and employment, a total of 40,328 permits were issued in 2022. Out of these, a total of 24,580 (61%) permits were issued for the purpose of employment, while 39 per cent (15,748) were issued for the purpose of education as demonstrated in the figure below.¹¹

FIGURE 6. RESIDENCE PERMITS GRANTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN 2022, N=40,328



Data source: Danish Immigration Service 2023, *Tal på Udlændingeområdet (Da.) 30.06.2023*

Note: In total, 40,328 residence permits were granted for the purpose of education and employment by the Danish authorities, of which 24,580 were granted for the purpose of employment, and 15,748 for the purpose of education.

TABLE 1. LABOUR MIGRATION SCHEMES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF SKILLED WORKERS IN DENMARK

Fast-track scheme	Pay limit schemes	Positive list for Skilled Work
Positive list for People with a Higher Education	Researcher	Employed PhD
Guest Researcher	Guest PhD	Authorisation
Start-up Denmark	Special individual qualifications	Establishment card

Data source: IOM 2023, own elaboration based on based on website information from New in Denmark 2024, [Work Schemes in SIRI](#)

¹⁰ AxcelFuture 2024, [Hvidbog og løsningsforslag til bedre vilkår for tiltrækning og fastholdelse af internationale højtuddannede talenter og specialister fra lande uden for EU](#). (White book, only available in Danish)

¹¹ Danish Immigration Service 2023, *Seneste Tal på Udlændingeområdet 30.06.2023*. The categories in the figure represent different target groups; 'education' refers to both EU and non-EU students, while 'employment' only refers to non-EU citizens (TCNs). The figure therefore shows the approximate distribution between employment and education permits, but is not accurate for a distribution between non-EU and EU citizens.

Several other schemes are available, but these are not as commonly used as the Fast-Track and Pay Limit Schemes and Positive List for Skilled Work (see [figure 4](#)) that are the **main labour migration pathways** for **mid to highly skilled TCNs** in Denmark. The following section will therefore explain in further depth the content-specific framework of the three main schemes.

Fast-Track Scheme

The **Fast-Track Scheme** applies to mid to highly skilled TCNs who have been offered employment in a company certified by the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) to use fast-track. A certified employer can apply for Danish residence and work permit on behalf of the incoming employee.¹² The employer is therefore responsible for initiating the application based on obtained consent from the employee. The preceding certification of the employer means that the application can be processed relatively quickly by SIRI, usually within 30 days from the time of submission of a complete application.¹³

Pay Limit Schemes

The **Pay Limit Scheme** applies to mid to highly skilled TCNs, who have been offered a high-paying job in Denmark, above a predefined salary limit. The scheme applies to all industries and is not restricted to certain sectors of professions. The pay limit sets a salary requirement requiring the employee to earn at least DKK 465,000 annually to be eligible for the type of residence permit issued under this scheme.

With the recent adoption of the bill on Strengthening the International Recruitment (L46), that entered into force on 1 April 2023, a so-called **Supplementary Pay Limit scheme** (*supplerende beløbsordning*) was introduced that relaxes the salary requirement when compared to the regular pay limit scheme, but also defines additional criteria (see [section 2.1.1.1](#) here below).¹⁴

Positive List for Skilled Work and for People with a Higher Education

The **Positive List** applies to mid to highly skilled non-EU labour migrants who have been offered a job according to a predefined list of skilled professions in demand due to labour shortage.¹⁵ The Positive List has two different tracks. One track, the **Positive list for persons with a Higher Education** applies to highly skilled labour migrants with a higher education who have been offered a job according to the current list of professions in demand.¹⁶ Another track for **Skilled Workers** applies to persons who have achieved the skills level required as per the listed occupations.¹⁷

SIRI publishes updated two-track Positive Lists twice a year (January and June), listing the jobs and skills in demand in Denmark. The Positive Lists are updated based on a market analysis examining the labour shortage imbalance between supply and demand.¹⁸

Visa for Studying

To obtain a visa for studying in Denmark, students must be admitted to a higher educational programme to complete an entire education or parts of it (exchange programme). Language requirements may also have to be fulfilled depending on the specific course/education requirements. The residence permit will be issued for a minimum of six months and up to three years. Students granted a residence permit to complete a full

¹² New to Denmark 2024a, [portal](#)

¹³ New to Denmark 2024g, [portal](#). Please note that the indicated processing time may vary depending on the type of application. For further information, please refer to the link.

¹⁴ New in Denmark 2024b, [portal](#)

¹⁵ New to Denmark 2024c, [portal](#)

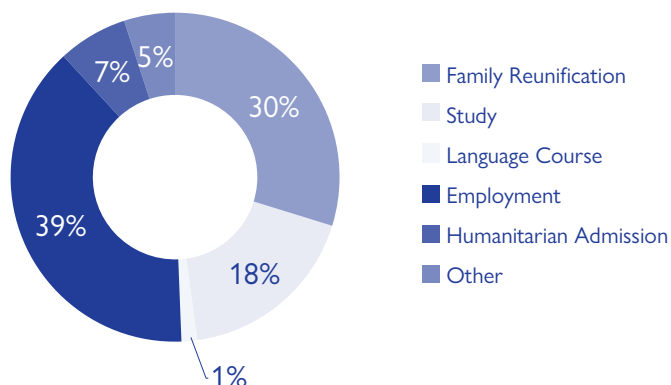
¹⁶ New to Denmark 2024d, [portal](#)

¹⁷ New to Denmark 2024h, [portal](#). Latest Positive Lists for People with Higher Education and Positive List for Skilled Work was published 1 January 2024 by SIRI, available [here](#)

¹⁸ Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023, [Positivliste for regional uddannelsespulje RAR Hovedstaden](#) online database (accessed 25 January 2024)

educational programme will also be granted a six-month or three-year job seeking permit along with the residence permit.¹⁹ The purpose of the job-seeking permit is to allow students to look for employment in Denmark after having completed the education.

FIGURE 7. NATIONAL VISAS ISSUED IN 2022 BY PURPOSE OF STAY, DENMARK, N=393,083



Data source: New to Denmark 2024, [Work Schemes SIRI](#)

Note: In total, 393,083 national visas by purpose of stay were issued in 2022 by the Danish authorities; 152,336 national visas for the purpose of employment, 117,034 for family reunification purpose, 71,018 for study purpose, 26,903 for humanitarian purpose, and 6,057 for language course purpose, and 19,735 for other purposes.

2.1.1.1 Recent Changes in the Danish Aliens Act on Strengthening the International Recruitment

On 23 March 2023, the Danish government adopted a new bill (L46), ‘Strengthening International Recruitment’ (*Styrket international rekruttering*). The bill entered into force on 1 April 2023 and provided legislative changes to the Danish Aliens Act, specifically concerning some of the existing labour market schemes for recruiting skilled labour to Denmark, but also changes to the type of permits that will be granted to international students going forward.²⁰ As indicated by the title of the bill, the goal was to strengthen international recruitment to Denmark, although more as a modification of existing regulations than through major reforms or introduction of entirely new schemes. The below sections outline the changes that were adopted through the bill.

Supplementary Pay limit Scheme

The **supplementary Pay Limit Scheme** was introduced as a supplement to the existing pay limit scheme that remained in force. The supplementary scheme lowers the salary requirement by almost 16 per cent from DKK 465,000 to DKK 375,000 and therefore broadens the eligibility. There are however additional requirements under the supplementary scheme, such as the hiring company being able to document that the job was previously advertised on the domestic job portal [Jobnet](#) and [EURES](#) for at least two weeks.²¹

Automatic job-seeking permits for international students extended

International students who have obtained residence permit for the purpose of studying in Denmark, can apply for job-seeking permits in Denmark after completing their education. Before L46 entered into force, international students could apply for work and residence permit that was valid for six months only. With the adoption of the bill, international students who have completed a bachelor, master, or doctoral degree in Denmark will automatically be granted a job-seeking permit valid for three years after completing their Danish

¹⁹ New in Denmark 2024e, [portal](#)

²⁰ Danish Parliament 2023, Recommendation to change the Danish Alien's Act, Strengthening International Recruitment (No. [L46](#)), adopted 1 April 2023.

²¹ Retsinformation, Recommendation to change the Danish Aliens' Act, Strengthening International Recruitment, [2022/LSV 46](#), adopted 1 April 2023.

degree.²² **The three-year job-seeking permit supplements the existing six-month permit** and is therefore not a replacement, but rather an addition to the existing structures. The adoption of the three-year job-seeking permit was meant to provide international students better access to the Danish labour market upon graduation. The job-seeking permit valid for either six months or three years permits the recent graduate to take up jobs from different employers without submitting a new application for permit of stay.²³

Easing requirements for the Fast-Track Scheme

The recent legislative changes of the Danish Aliens Act on Strengthening International Recruitment amended also the fast-track scheme.²⁴

The amendment changed the requirement for the minimum number of employees for fast-track certified companies from 20 to 10 full-time employees, allowing for a greater number of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to become certified to hire internationally through the fast-track scheme. As the bill only entered into force (1 April 2023), the longer-term impact of the bill is yet to be documented.

Expanding the Positive Lists for Skilled Work and Higher Education

With the new legislation, the Positive Lists for both Skilled Work and Higher Education were expanded to include more profiles and professions. The selection of the professions on the lists will depend on the labour shortage analysis carried out by the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR).

The adopted changes to the labour migration schemes will however remain valid only if the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate **does not exceed 3.75 per cent**²⁵ in average within the last three months, foreseeing that the supplementary schemes can in principle be suspended if this criterion is not met.²⁶ While the changes adopted with L46 t strive to strengthen international recruitment by loosening some requirements, there remains a limit to the flexibility.

Despite the recent changes to strengthen international recruitment, some conditions frequently quoted as challenges by Danish labour market stakeholders remain. The general requirement for salaries to be paid to a Danish bank account remains, regardless of the type of scheme, which some argue can affect the willingness of skilled labour migrants to stay in Denmark's attractiveness for skilled workers.²⁷

According to a survey conducted by the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI), 84 per cent of the companies participating in the survey responded that it was difficult for their internationally recruited workers to open a Danish bank account.²⁸ One of the major challenges stems from the case processing time. One in three companies reports that it takes more than eight weeks to process an application for a Danish bank account (ibid).

Most of the Danish labour migration schemes apply a so-called **job change rule**. The job change rule permits the worker to start a new job in Denmark without a renewal/extension of the existing residence and work permit before starting the new job. However, the worker is **still required to file a new application for residence and work permit no later than the date the worker starts the new job**.²⁹ Although the job change rule smoothens the transition from one job to another, without further delaying or hindering the worker to start the new job due to administrative procedures relating

²² New to Denmark 2023a, [portal](#)

²³ New in Denmark 2024e, [portal](#)

²⁴ KPMG 2023, [New rules effective from April 2023](#)

²⁵ The 3,75 per cent apply to schemes affected by the change enforced through adoption of L46, herein the supplementary schemes and expanded positive lists. Danish Ministry of Finance 2023. [Styrket international rekruttering](#).

²⁶ Retsinformation, Recommendation to change the Danish Aliens' Act, Strengthening International Recruitment, [2022/LSV 46](#), adopted 1 April 2023.

²⁷ Århus Stiftstidende 2023, [Dansk Erhverv opfordrer: Afskaf nu kravet om en dansk bankkonto](#), 29 January. In January 2023 the Ministry of Immigration and Integration however announced legal changes that would abandon the requirement for employees hired through fast track certified employers.

²⁸ Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) 2024, [Besværligt at oprette en dansk bankkonto for internationale medarbejdere](#). Please note that a total of 179 companies participated in the survey.

²⁹ New to Denmark 2024f, [portal](#)

to the renewal/extension of the residence and work permit, it is still a requirement to apply for a new residence and work permit.

2.1.2 Germany

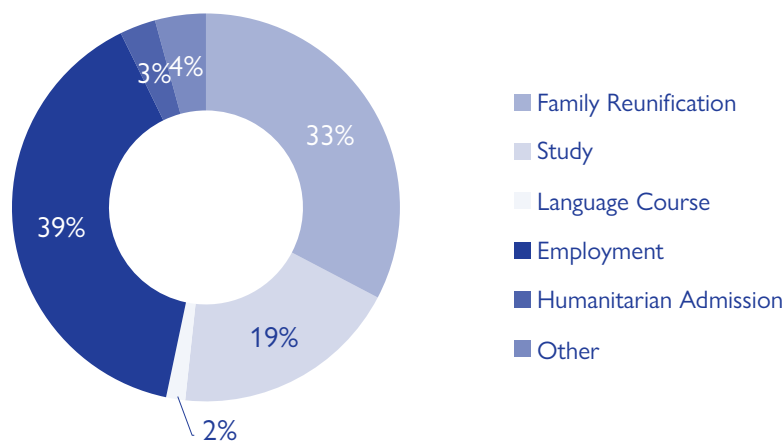
Germany offers various **employment pathways** to Germany for skilled migrants. These pathways include different types of visas which allow qualified professionals to enter Germany for employment or study purposes. Most TCNs are required to apply for a visa at the local German embassy or consulate to enter Germany. The type of visa and thus the specific admission requirements depend on the purpose of migration.

In 2023, around 39 per cent (157,924) of all visas to Germany issued worldwide (total: 400,226) were **visas issued for the purpose of employment** (including researchers, highly qualified, internships, au pair, voluntary work), followed by around 33 per cent (130,799) for the purpose of family reunification (including spouse, parents and children reunification), around 19 per cent (76,156) for the purpose of studies (including preparatory study measures and study applications).³⁰

Work Visa for Qualified professionals

In order to receive a work **visa for qualified professionals**, qualifications acquired abroad must be either recognized in Germany or comparable to those from a German higher education institute. In addition, concrete job offers, or employment contract must be available, and the approval of the Federal Employment Agency must have been obtained. Furthermore, the minimum salary limit must be taken into account for people over the age of 45. The residence permit for skilled workers is issued for a maximum of four years. After three years one may be entitled to a permanent residence permit.³¹

FIGURE 8. NATIONAL VISAS ISSUED IN 2023 BY PURPOSE OF STAY, GERMANY, N=400,226



Data source: The Federal Foreign Office 2023

Note: In total, 400,226 national visas were issued in 2023 by German missions abroad; 157,924 for the purpose of employment, 130,799 for the purpose of family reunification, 76,156 for the purpose of studies, 12,012 humanitarian admission/resettlement, 6,369 for the purpose of language training, 16,966 for other purposes (including 5,289 Spätaussiedler).

EU Blue Card

The **EU Blue Card** targets TCNs with a German degree, a recognised foreign higher education, or a foreign higher education degree equivalent to a German degree. As for the Work Visa for Qualified Professionals, a concrete job offer (of at least 6 months) must be provided, and the position must match the qualification. In addition, there is a minimum salary threshold, and in some cases approval of the Federal Employment Agency

³⁰ Auswärtiges Amt 2023, Übersicht: erteilte nationale Visa

³¹ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, Types of visa

needs to be obtained. IT professionals without a formal qualification but sufficient professional experience may be eligible for the EU Blue Card as well. The EU Blue Card will be issued for the period of the contract (max. four years), and after 27 months EU Blue Card Holders can obtain a settlement permit if they can prove German language skills at A1 level (after 21 months if proof of language skills min. B1 level can be provided).³² In 2022, the EU Blue Card represented about one third of the total number of residence permits issued for the purpose of work in Germany.³³

Visa for Jobseekers

TCNs who do not have a job contract and wish to come to Germany to search for work, can apply for a **Jobseeker Visa**. In order to receive such visa, the individual's qualification (academic or vocational) must be recognized in Germany or equivalent to a German degree. In addition, proof of sufficient financial means must be provided as well as a proof of German language (minimum level B1, compulsory for those with vocational training). During the stay in Germany, job seekers may work up to ten hours per week in trial employment as part of the application process. The visa will be issued for a period of up to six months and cannot be extended.³⁴ Thus far, the issuance of job seeking visas has been limited.³⁵

Visa for Studying

In order to receive a **visa for studying**, an acceptance to a higher education institution in Germany must be provided, as well as proof of being able to cover costs of living for the duration of the studies.³⁶ Language requirements may also need to be fulfilled. The corresponding residence permit will be issued for a minimum of one year, and a maximum of two years. An extension can be requested. International students are allowed to perform student jobs during their studies. After successfully completing the studies, a residence permit will be issued for up to 18 months to find qualified employment in Germany.³⁷

Other visa types include Visa for IT Professionals, Visa for Self-Employment and Visa for Training, Visa for the Recognition of Foreign Qualification.

On 1 March 2024, two new types of visas have been introduced within the framework of the implementation of the revised Skilled Immigration Act. The **visa for professionally experienced workers** targets experienced professionals seeking employment in non-regulated professions in Germany. To qualify for this visa, aspiring TCNs need to present a vocational qualification (at least two years of vocational training) or higher education degree recognized in the country in which the qualification was obtained. In addition, at least two years of relevant qualified work experience within the last five years is required as well as a job-offer in a non-regulated, qualified profession. Approval of the Federal Employment Agency needs to be obtained during the visa procedure. Applicants with relevant professional experience in IT are not required to provide proof of higher education or vocational qualification. A settlement permit may be granted after five years in Germany. The second visa that was introduced targets TCNs that seek to complete their recognition procedure with the support of their employer in Germany. The **visa for employment within the framework of a recognition partnership** provides the opportunity of undergoing the recognition procedure after arrival in Germany, and while working in the relevant profession. Applicants need to provide proof of a state-recognized higher education qualification or vocational qualification (of at least two years of training). In addition, a job offer needs to be presented including a written agreement on the partnership between employer and migrant worker. German language skills of at least A2 level are required. The corresponding residence permit will be issued for up to twelve months and can be extended to maximum three years.³⁸

³² [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, Types of visa

³³ Federal Employment Agency 2023, Monitoring zur Bildungs- und Erwerbsmigration 2022

³⁴ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, Types of visa

³⁵ DeZIM 2023, Hat die Chancenkarte eine Chance?

³⁶ Since January 2023 international students are expected to demonstrate funds of 934 EUR per month / 11,208 EUR per year. More information available [here](#).

³⁷ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, Types of visa

³⁸ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, Types of visa

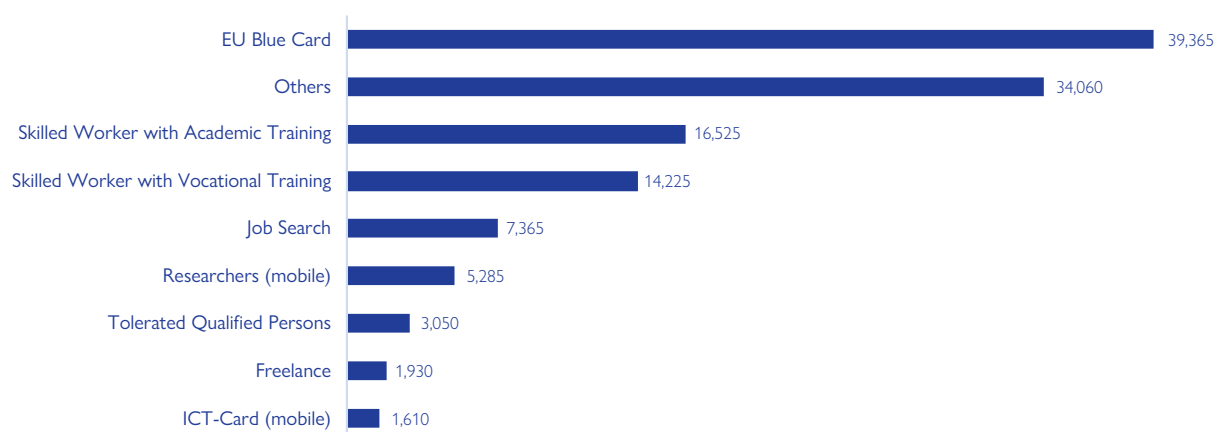
Fast-Track Scheme

Employers can initiate the visa procedure for their future TCN employees via the **fast-track scheme for skilled migrant workers** which was introduced under the Skilled Immigration Act 2020. Employers must contact the competent foreigners' office (*Ausländerbehörde*) which will conclude an agreement between the foreigners' office and employer. A processing fee of EUR 411 will be charged to the future employee. The employer, however, may choose to bear the costs. The fast-track procedure takes around four months. If a recognition decision with partial or full recognition has already been issued prior to the date of application, the procedure will be shortened accordingly.³⁹

Resident permits issued in the context of labour migration

After arriving in Germany, German residence law offers several possibilities to **obtain a residence permit** within the framework of labour migration. According to the [annual report](#) on educational and labour migration monitoring 2022 by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, a total of 123,410 temporary residence titles for the purpose of employment were issued (compared to 73,195 temporary residence titles for educational purposes). 22,170 TCNs received a settlement permit for skilled workers and self-employed persons.⁴⁰ The persons concerned received these titles for the first time.⁴¹ As illustrated in figure 9, the EU Blue Card represents about one third (39,365) of the total number of residence permits issued for the purpose of work, which underlines the importance of the EU Blue Card. Skilled professionals⁴² can apply for a **permanent residence title** (settlement permit) if they meet certain conditions. These, among others, include having held a residence permit for at least four years, being able to cover costs of living without public assistance, working in a job that adequately reflects their qualification, as well as sufficient German language skills. EU Blue Card holders and those who have completed their academic training in Germany can receive a settlement permit under facilitated conditions.⁴³

FIGURE 9. TCNS WITH A TEMPORARY RESIDENCE PERMIT ISSUED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE CONTEXT OF LABOUR MIGRATION IN 2022, BY TYPE OF TITLE IN GERMANY⁴⁴, N=123,410



Data source: The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023

Note: In total, 123,410 TCNs were granted a residence permit for the first time in the context of labour migration. 'Others' refers to other employment purposes under [Residence Act, Section 19c](#))

³⁹ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2022, Questions and answers about the fast track procedure

⁴⁰ EU Blue Card holders can apply for a settlement permit in accordance with Section 18c (2) AufenthG.

⁴¹ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023, Monitoring zur Bildungs- und Erwerbsmigration 2022

⁴² Persons with a completed vocational training (Sect. 18 on the Residence Act - AufenthG) or a completed academic training (Sect. 18 (1) on the Residence Act – AufenthG), or EU Blue Card holders) or international researchers (in accordance with the Directive (EU) 2016/801 (Sect. 18d on the Residence Act – AufenthG) are considered skilled professionals.

⁴³ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, settlement permit

⁴⁴ The residence title for skilled workers with vocational training and the residence title for skilled workers with academic training were introduced with the Skilled Immigration Act 2020. Other (Section 19c (1) AufenthG) includes all persons for whom the individual paragraphs of the Employment Ordinance (BeschV) or an intergovernmental agreement stipulates that a person can also receive a residence permit for gainful employment regardless of a recognized qualification as a skilled worker. E.g. *Westbalkanregelung*

Fifty-six per cent (69,155) of persons who received a residence title for the purpose of employment for the first time were without a previous title (presumably new immigration), 44 per cent (54,255) **changed from another residence title to one for the purpose of employment.**

TCNs with changed residence status therefore appear to be a considerable source of residence permits for employment in Germany. However, the proportion varies considerably between the different titles. While the proportion of status changes for the skilled worker titles ‘Skilled Worker with Academic Training’ and ‘Skilled Worker with Vocational Training’ is over 70 per cent in each case, the status changes for the EU Blue Card account for less than half. Notably, the proportion of people with a change of status who have received a job seeking title (first-time issuance) is 97 per cent. These were mainly **former students in Germany**.⁴⁵

TABLE 2. TCNS WITH A CHANGE OF STATUS FROM EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION OR SUBSEQUENT JOB SEEKING TO RESIDENCE PERMITS IN CONTEXT OF LABOUR MIGRATION IN 2022

Current right of residence	Change from			Total
	Course of studies	Other educational migration	Job seeking after educational measure	
Skilled Worker with Vocational Training	115	9 310	110	9 530
Skilled Worker with Academic Training	6 655	595	3 235	10 485
EU Blue Card	8 790	1 245	2 220	12 255
Researcher	790	20	105	915
Other employment	315	405	35	760
Self-employed and freelancing	250	50	260	560
Job seeking	6 695	120	-	6 815
Other residence permits in the context of labour migration	40	15	5	65
Total	23 650	11 765	5 965	41 380

Data source: The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023

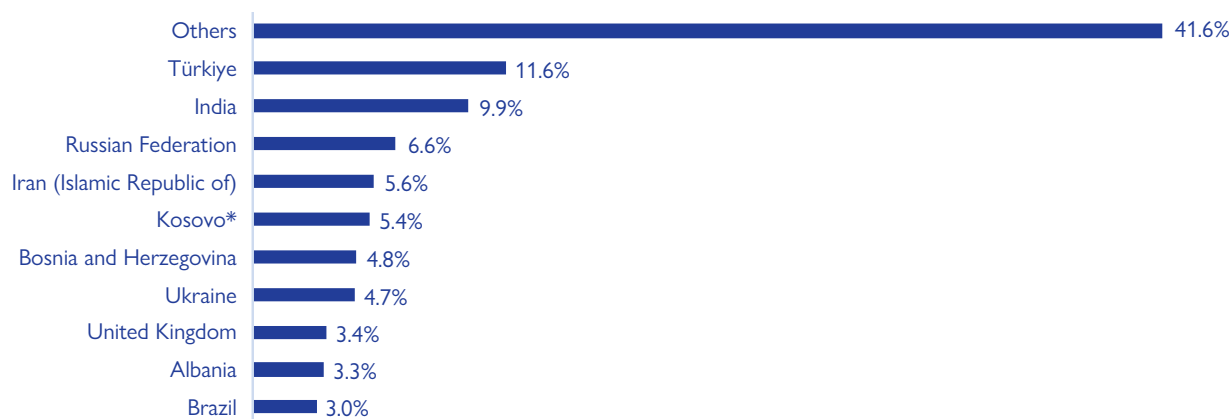
After successfully completing academic training, vocational training, or a recognition measure, it is possible to either directly obtain a residence title corresponding to the qualification acquired for subsequent employment or a temporary title for job-seeking purposes. As illustrated in [table 2](#), 41,380 persons changed from a residence title in the context of educational migration (including job seeking after an educational measure⁴⁶) to a residence permit for employment purposes. Nearly two-thirds of those who changed from a residence title related to **completing an academic program obtained a skilled worker title subsequently** such as the EU Blue Card (8,790) or the ‘Skilled Worker with Academic Training’ (6,655). Notably, only

⁴⁵ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023, Monitoring zur Bildungs- und Erwerbsmigration 2022

⁴⁶ Foreign skilled workers who wish to work in Germany but whose professional qualification has not yet been fully recognized by the competent authority in Germany can undertake additional qualification measures in order to have their qualification fully recognized.

15 persons out of 11,765 changed from other educational measures to job seeking. Educational measures such as vocational training combine theoretical training (in vocational schools) and training in a real-work environment. The former suggests that **most students are potentially hired by their training employers**.⁴⁷

FIGURE 10. TCNS WITH FIRST-TIME ISSUANCE OF A RESIDENCE TITLE FOR RECOGNIZED SKILLED WORKERS (WITH ACADEMIC TRAINING) IN 2022 WITHOUT PREVIOUS TITLE, N=4,515



Data source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023.

Note: * References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

In total, 4,515 TCNs were issued a residence title for recognized skilled workers for the first time and without a previous title.

As shown in figure 10, nationals of the Republic of Türkiye (11.6%) represent the largest group of TCNs with first-time issuance of a residence title for recognized skilled workers (with academic training) in 2022 (without previous title) (compared to those issued an EU Blue Card where the largest group is represented by Indian nationals).

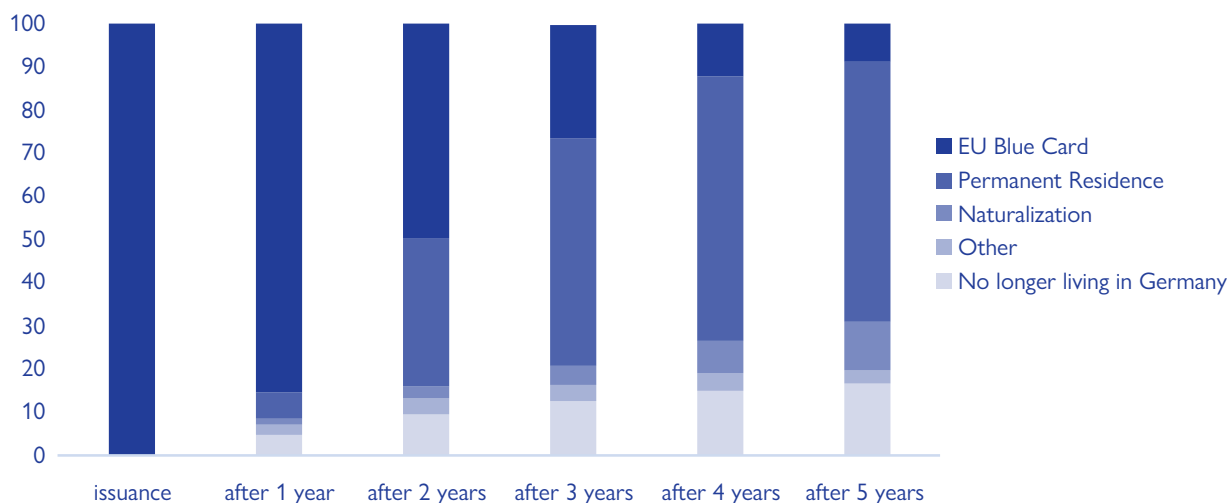
EU Blue Card

The retention rate of EU Blue Card Holders is generally high, with many holders opting to stay in Germany. Between 2012 and 2022, almost 200,000 skilled workers with academic training from third countries were issued an EU Blue Card. According to the Federal Statistical Office, 83 per cent of those who received the EU Blue Card between 2012 and 2017 were still living in Germany after five years. Between 2012 and 2017, around 68,900 people received a Blue Card for the first time. Most of them had Indian nationality (22.4%), followed by persons with Chinese (8.7%) or Russian (7.5%) nationality. A large proportion of those who received a Blue Card for the first time between 2012 and 2017 received a settlement permit after five years (59.9%). A further 11.3 per cent received German citizenship, 9 per cent continued to hold a Blue Card and 3.1 per cent had another residence title. Seventeen percent no longer lived in Germany.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023, Monitoring zur Bildungs- und Erwerbsmigration 2022

⁴⁸ DeStatis 2023, Pressemitteilung Nr. 289 vom 21. Juli 2023

FIGURE 11. ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENCE TITLES OF PERSONS WITH EU BLUE CARD IN %, GERMANY



Data source: Federal Statistical Office 2023

2.1.2.1 Recent legal changes – The new Skilled Immigration Act

Germany’s governing coalition, in power since 2021, has announced a shift on its migration policy with the aim of transforming Germany into a **modern immigration country**.⁴⁹ The change is reflected in legal reforms as part of the comprehensive migration packages, which entails opening regular pathways for the purpose of employment for skilled migrant workers to fill labour shortages in the German labour market. In July 2023, Germany adopted the **new Skilled Immigration Act**.⁵⁰ The revised law is meant to simplify immigration processes for skilled migrant workers. The law provides for a three-pillar model (skilled labour pillar, experience pillar, and potential pillar) on which skilled labour immigration is to be based.⁵¹ The provisions of the law have been gradually introduced since the beginning of November 2023.

Skilled Labour Pillar

The **skilled labour pillar** will enable TCNs with a German qualification or a qualification recognised in Germany to work in all qualified occupations. The **EU Blue Card** will be made available to even more skilled migrant workers holding university degrees. Germany is thus implementing the regulations of the reformed **EU Blue Card Directive**⁵² for highly skilled migrant workers as of November 2023. Among other things, the minimum earnings threshold for granting the EU Blue Card to academic professionals is lowered. Those without a university degree but with three years of vocational training may obtain a Blue Card if they have a concrete job offer. In addition, IT specialists are able to obtain a Blue Card under certain conditions if they do not have a university degree but can prove that they have certain non-formal qualifications. Short-term and long-term mobility in Germany can be granted to those who hold an EU Blue Card issued by another EUMS. If the holder of an EU Blue Card issued in another EUMS has stayed in Germany for at least twelve months, long-term residence in Germany is possible without a visa.⁵³

⁴⁹ The Federal Government 2023. Rede der Bundesministerin des Innern und für Heimat, Nancy Faeser, zum Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 23. Juni 2023 in Berlin – available [here](#).

⁵⁰ Zeit Online, Bundesrat billigt erleichterte Zuwanderung von Fachkräften (7 July 2023)

⁵¹ The Federal Government 2022, Attract more skilled workers from third countries

⁵² Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC

⁵³ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, The new Skilled Immigration Act

Experience Pillar

Even **without their qualifications being formally recognised in Germany, foreign professionals will be allowed to work in non-regulated professions in Germany.** The prerequisites are at least two years of professional experience and a vocational qualification recognised by the state in the country of origin with a training period of at least two years. This means significant simplifications and thus shorter procedures. However, a salary threshold must be met, or a collective agreement must be in place. Another new feature is that it will be possible to take up employment in Germany with a so-called recognition partnership if the salary threshold is not reached. The skilled migrant worker can then take up employment in Germany from day one, even though their professional qualification is not yet recognised, insofar as this is permitted under professional law. This also applies if qualifications are still necessary.⁵⁴

Potential Pillar – Opportunity Card

With the introduction of the **opportunity card**, the Federal Government will for the first time establish a points-based system for managing labour migration to Germany. TCNs who do not yet have a German employment contract but a foreign vocational qualification of at least two years' duration will be given the opportunity to search for work in Germany. With a so-called "**Chancenkarte**" (opportunity card), they receive a residence permit for an initial period of up to one year to search for work. During the job search, employment of up to twenty hours per week is permitted, including trial employment with a future employer for up to two weeks. Those who receive an opportunity card will be selected according to a points system. The selection criteria include qualifications, language skills (in addition to German, English skills also count), professional experience, connection to Germany and age. Furthermore, the 'potential' of the accompanying spouse or partner is also taken into account. The minimum requirement for German language skills is now A1 level; language skills from language level A2 onwards are given extra points.⁵⁵ The opportunity card is to be introduced from June 2024. According to estimates, an additional 30,000 applications per year are expected.⁵⁶

2.2 Skilled Third Country Nationals in the workforce in Denmark and Germany

2.2.1 Denmark

2.2.1.1 Skilled migrant workers in Denmark

According to the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR), 72 per cent of the skilled workforce in Denmark comes from the EU, while the remaining 27 per cent come from third countries.⁵⁷ As of May 2023, a total of 32,585 TCNs are currently either employed or studying in Denmark. Of those, 25 per cent (8,098) are accompanying families that are in the workforce either through work or through studies.⁵⁸ Recent numbers shows that labour migrants constitute 8.8 per cent of the total labour force in Denmark according to Novo Nordisk and Lundbeck (2024).⁵⁹

Most of the skilled TCNs in the Danish workforce have been recruited for employment (72%; 23,343) followed by studies (28%; 9,242).⁶⁰ Employment is thus the main entrance point and secondarily studies.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, The new Skilled Immigration Act

⁵⁶ Bundesrat 2023, Stellungnahme des Nationalen Normenkontrollrates

⁵⁷ Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) online database [Foreign workforce: Foreign citizens with an wage income in Denmark \(Residency, citizenship, industry](#) 2023. The data was extracted in August 2023, and refers to data up to May 2023. Third Country Nationals within the dataset from STAR are from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea, the Philippines, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, China, Nepal, Pakistan, United Kingdom, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, United States of America, and other third countries, and represent both third country nationals and stateless persons, and includes full and part-time employees. Please note all references to STAR's database made in this report is indicated as STAR Jobindsats database ([May 2023](#)) (accessed 24 January 2024).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

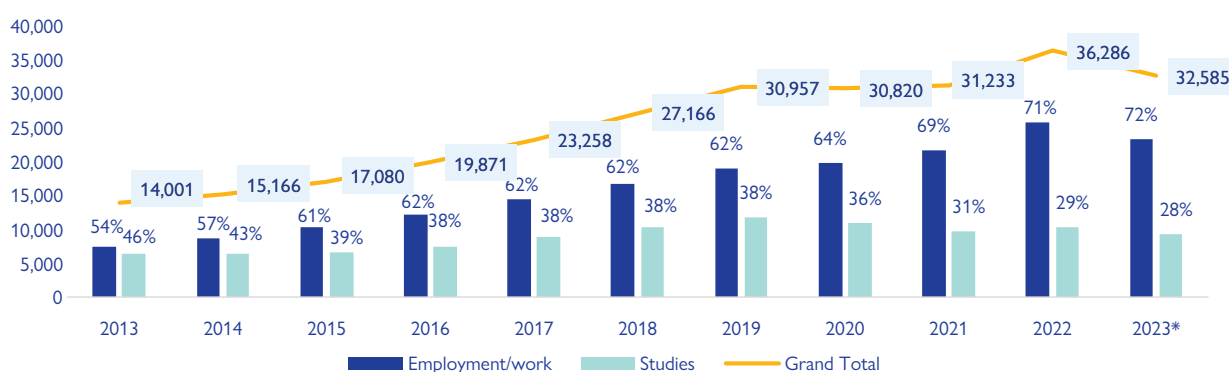
⁵⁹ Novo Nordisk and Lundbeck 2024, [Hvidbog og løsningsforslag til bedre vilkår for tiltrækning og fastholdelse af internationale højtuddannede talenter og specialister fra lande udenfor EU](#) (White book)

⁶⁰ STAR Jobindsats [database \(May 2023\)](#)

This is also the case when looking at the number of accompanying families in the workforce. Of the 8,098 accompanying families, 77 per cent are employed, while only 28 per cent are enrolled to a study programme in Denmark.⁶¹

The number of skilled TCNs in Denmark that arrived for either employment or studies more than doubled from 2013 (14,001) to 2022 (36,286).⁶² While the total number of skilled migrants from third countries increased in this period, the proportion between employment and studies changed. In 2013, 54 per cent of the skilled TCNs in Denmark were in the country for employment reasons, while 46 per cent were studying. After 2015, employment started outbalancing the study rate even more. In 2023, with an employment rate of 72 per cent, the study rate was 28 per cent. This represents a substantial difference compared to 2013, where the study rate was at 46 per cent as demonstrated in the below figure.⁶³

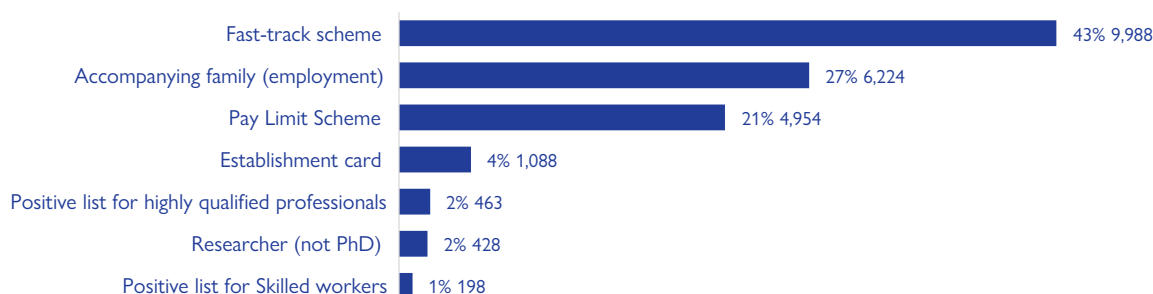
FIGURE 12. TREND OVER TIME - SKILLED LABOUR FROM THIRD COUNTRIES TO DENMARK, 2013-2023*



Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023
Note: *The figure covers the period from 2013-2023 (Jan-May 2023)

When it comes to employment, the most common pathways to enter the Danish labour market among mid to highly skilled labour migrants as of 2023 are the Fast-Track Scheme (9,988; 43%) followed by the Pay Limit Scheme (4,954; 21%).⁶⁴ While the Fast-Track and Pay Limit Schemes are common pathways to enter the Danish labour market for foreign workers for employment purposes, accompanying family is the second largest group of TCNs generating an income and participating in the labour market (figure 13).

FIGURE 13. SKILLED TCNS WITH WAGE INCOME IN DENMARK BY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME, AS OF MAY 2023, N=23,343

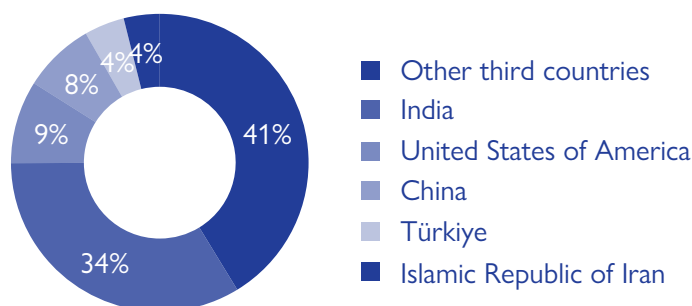


Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023
Note: The Skilled TCNs with a wage income represented in the figure refers to TCNs not working full-time. In total, 23,343 skilled TCNs with wage income in Denmark were recorded as of May 2023, which is reflected in the figure by category.

⁶¹ Ibid.
⁶² Ibid.
⁶³ Ibid.
⁶⁴ Ibid.

The majority of TCNs recruited through the **fast-track scheme** as of May 2023 are nationals from India (34%; 3,362) followed by the United States (9%; 900), China (8%; 775), Türkiye (4%; 437), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (4%; 390) (figure 14). The remaining 41 per cent (4,122) are nationals of other third countries.⁶⁵

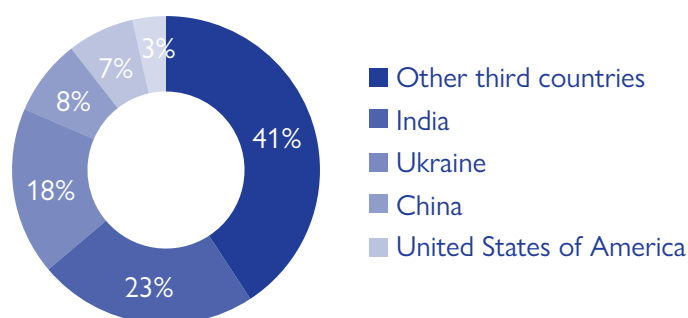
FIGURE 14. TOP 5 NATIONALITY GROUPS OF TCNS RECRUITED THROUGH THE FAST-TRACK SCHEME, AS OF MAY 2023, N= 9,986



Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023

Note: Of the total 9,986 TCNs represented in the figure, 3,362 were from India, 900 from the United States of America (US), 775 from China, 437 from Türkiye, 390 from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and 4,122 from 'other third countries'.

FIGURE 15. TOP 5 NATIONALITY GROUPS OF TCNS IN EMPLOYMENT, AS OF MAY 2023, N= 28,174



Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023

Note: Of the total 28,174 TCNs represented in the figure, 6,495 are from India, 4,968 from Ukraine, 2,253 from China, 1,977 from United States of America (US), 994 from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and 4,122 from 'other third countries'.

Across all labour mobility schemes in Denmark, Indian nationals make up the largest nationality group of incoming TCNs for work purposes accounting for 23 per cent (6,495), followed by Ukraine (18%; 4,968), China (8%; 2,253), the United States (7%; 1,977), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (6%; 994) (figure 15). The remaining 41 per cent (11,487) are nationals of other third countries.⁶⁶

Most skilled TCNs are employed within “Public Administration, Education, and Health,” “Information and Communication,” and “Industry,” accounting for 15 per cent each, followed by Knowledge Service (12%).⁶⁷

The main occupation patterns of Indian nationals to some extent follow those of the general TCNs population. For Indian nationals, the main field of work is mainly “Information and Communication” (33%) followed by

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ STAR Jobindsats [database \(May 2023\)](#). The calculations presented in the figure are based on employment rates among TCNs across the total branches covering these selected schemes: Positive Lists for Highly Qualified Professionals, Pay Limit Scheme, Fast-Track Scheme, Establishment Card, Researchers (not PhD), Positive List for Skilled workers, and Accompanying families to employment. The total TCNs includes N= 26,035.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

“Industry” and “Knowledge Service” (17% respectively), as well as “Public Administration, Education and Health” (7%).⁶⁸

The type of occupation among accompanying family members deviates significantly from the overall trend presented above. Most of the accompanying families are working within “Travel Agency, Cleaning, and Operational services” (21%), “Trade” (19%), “Hotels and restaurants,” and “Transportation” (11%, respectively).⁶⁹

FIGURE 16. SKILLED TCNS WITH WAGE INCOME IN DENMARK BY OCCUPATION, AS OF MAY 2023, N=26,035



Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023

Note: The Skilled TCNs with a wage income represented in the figure refers to TCNs not working full-time. In total, 26,035 skilled TCNs with a wage income in Denmark by occupation were recorded in 2023 (as of May) by which the percentage is based on.

2.2.1.2 International Students in Denmark

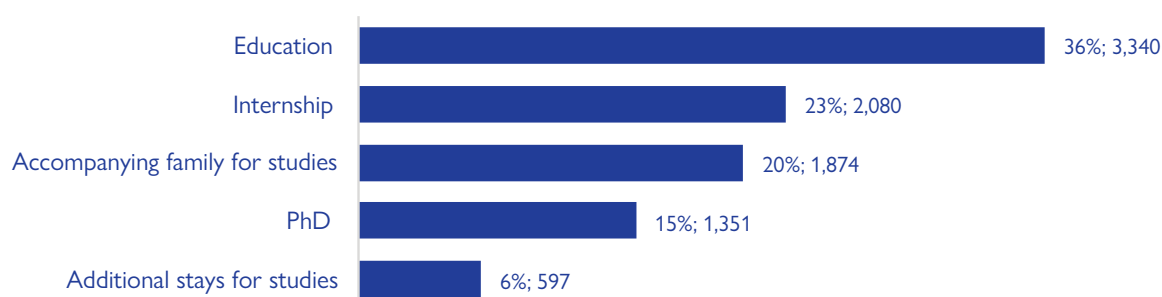
As of May 2023, 9,242 persons from third countries were engaged in education activities in Denmark according to figures from STAR. Of those, 36 per cent (3,340) were enrolled to an education, 23 per cent had an internship (2,080), 15 per cent were studying for a doctoral degree (1,351), and 6 per cent (597) enrolled to other study programmes. Accompanying family members to persons who came to Denmark for the purpose of study, themselves make up the third largest group of students undertaking studies in Denmark, representing 20 per cent (1,874) of the total share (9,242) as illustrated in figure 17 below.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ STAR Jobindsats database (May 2023). The calculations are based on employment rates among Indian nationals across the total branches covering these selected schemes: Positive Lists for Highly Qualified Professionals, Pay Limit Scheme, Fast-Track Scheme, Establishment Card, Researchers (not PhD), Positive List for Skilled workers, and Accompanying families to employment. The total is based on N= 5,252

⁶⁹ STAR Jobindsats database (May 2023). The calculations are based on employment rates among Indian nationals across the total branches covering these selected schemes: Positive Lists for Highly Qualified Professionals, Pay Limit Scheme, Fast-Track Scheme, Establishment Card, Researchers (not PhD), Positive List for Skilled workers, and Accompanying families to employment. The total is based on N= 1,679

⁷⁰ STAR Jobindsats database (May 2023). The students refer to third country nationals and stateless persons and may include part-time employment and other arrangements as well. Please note that it was not possible to disaggregate Stateless persons from the available data source, thus included.

FIGURE 17. TCN STUDENTS BY STUDIES, AS OF MAY 2023, N= 9,242



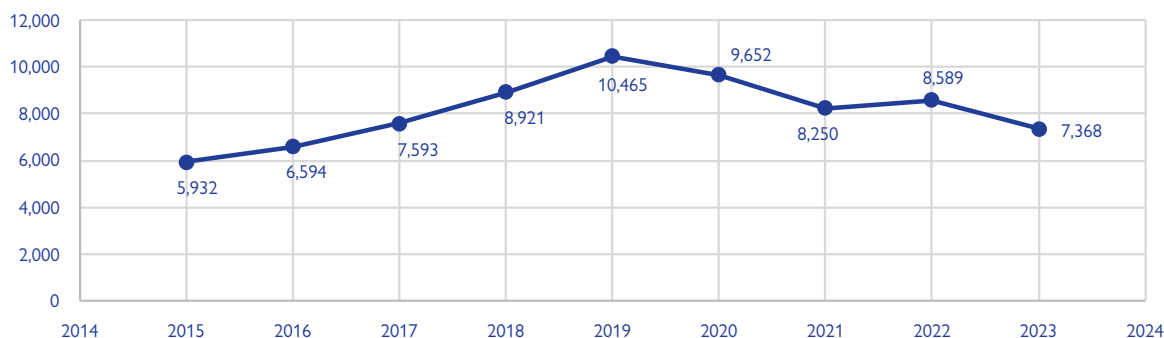
Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023

Note: The TCN students represented in the figure refers to persons not studying full-time. In total, 9,242 students from third countries were recorded as staying in Denmark for study purposes in 2023 (as of May), which is reflected in the figure by category.

The highest number of students from third countries in the period from 2015 to 2023 was recorded in 2019 (10,465). While the number of students increased annually from 2015 to 2019, it declined from 2020 to 2023. The number of international students from third countries in Denmark in 2023 was 30 per cent less than in 2019, and 19 per cent less than in 2022.⁷¹ The drop in the number of international students can be seen in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to an enforcement of travel restrictions worldwide, resulting in limited mobility, but possibly also reduced number of study places in English as implemented by Danish Governments (cf. [Chapter 4](#) in this report).

The majority of TCNs graduating from a Danish university in 2016 were from China.⁷²

FIGURE 18. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN DENMARK BETWEEN 2015-2023, N= 73,664



Data source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment 2023

Note: The figure covers the period from 2015-2023* (Jan-May)

As of May 2023, most of the students from third countries are nationals of Nepal (18%; 1,762), followed by India and the Islamic Republic of Iran (10%; 1,005, 10%; 954 respectively), China (9%; 843), and Ukraine (6%; 630). The remaining 47 per cent (4,522) represents other third country nationalities.⁷³

International students and graduates have recently gained increased attention in Denmark. According to the Danish Government's 2023 strategy on reforming the Danish educational programmes, '*Prepared for the Future*' (*Forberedt på Fremtiden*), the government plans to reform some of the existing educational programmes

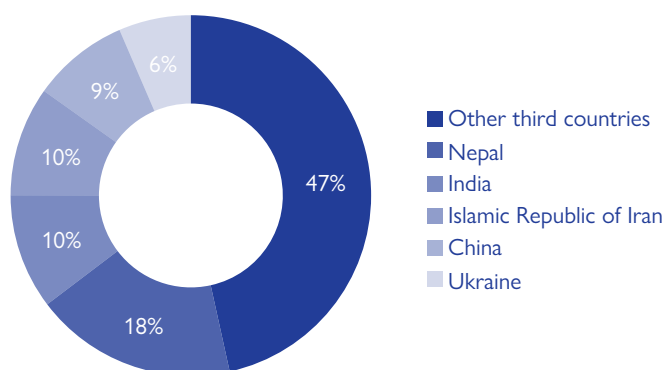
⁷¹ STAR Jobindsats database (May 2023).

⁷² IDA, Damvad 2022, [Internationale dimittenders værdi for samfundsøkonomien med fokus på tekniske og naturvidenskabelige dimittender](#)

⁷³ Ibid.

offered to international students also by increasing the number of English-language educational programmes, and in this way generating an increasing number of study places targeting international students in particular.⁷⁴

FIGURE 19. TOP 5 NATIONALITY GROUPS OF TCN STUDENTS, AS OF MAY 2023, N= 9,716



The Danish government has allocated nearly DKK 100 million to invest in international students with the goal of attracting and retaining more international students to Denmark (ibid.). With reference to the recommendations laid forward in the reform package, the Danish government is recommending to “admit more international students within areas where the demand for highly qualified labour is needed within the Danish labour market.”⁷⁵ The reform is highly centred around labour needs, specifically supply and demand mechanisms, henceforth signalling that the educational programmes must be more marked-oriented.

When it comes to the retention of international graduates, retention rates of TCNs are higher than for EU nationals.⁷⁶ This marks a difference to labour market participation rates in Denmark that are higher among EU-citizens (73%) than for non-EU citizens (27%).⁷⁷ According to a study conducted by Damvad (2022), 60 per cent of international graduates were living in Denmark one year after they had graduated, albeit with the retention rate decreasing over time. Still, nearly 30 per cent continued to stay and live in Denmark after eight years.⁷⁸

Opportunities and willingness of recent international graduates to stay after graduation can significantly impact the domestic economy. In a report published by an established Partnership on Retaining International Graduates (2019),⁷⁹ it is stipulated that the retention of students can directly impact the net contribution to the public/government finances by one billion DKK if students who graduated in 2016 will stay in Denmark the next 11 years.⁸⁰ The report argues that there is a **direct correlation between retention of international graduates and net contribution**, but also that targeting efforts to retain international graduate is societal investment that positively contributes to the economy. International students and graduates are therefore viewed as a potential source for labour market participation.

According to one of the recommendations from the Partnership for Retaining International Graduates, it is necessary to ensure that students have the opportunity to attain knowledge of the local labour market, but also that they become ‘connected’ to it.⁸¹ According to the partnership, early introduction to the labour market and the existing Danish companies is essential, but also universities could play a more active role in providing guidance and information on rules and personal stories from other international students and their way to Danish job market.

⁷⁴ Government of Denmark 2023a, [Forberedt på fremtiden I, En sammenhængende reformkurs](#)

⁷⁵ Government of Denmark 2023a, [Forberedt på fremtiden I, En sammenhængende reformkurs](#) p. 7

⁷⁶ IDA, Damvad 2022, [Internationale dimittenders værdi for samfundøkonomien med fokus på tekniske og naturvidenskabelige dimittender](#)

⁷⁷ STAR Jobindsats [database \(May 2023\)](#)

⁷⁸ Damvad Analytics, 2022. [Samfundøkonomisk regnskab for internationale dimittender I Danmark](#). The analysis is based on a sample size of 5,046 international graduates who graduated between 2007-2011. The international graduates refer to persons who obtained a master degree within the following four disciplines: humanities, technical studies, science, social sciences and health. Further to this, the international graduates had arrived to Denmark one year prior to the study’s start.

⁷⁹ The Partnership to Retain International Graduates was established in 2019. The partnership consists of Confederation of Danish Industry, Dansk Erhverv, Akademikerne, Danske Universiteter and Danske Studerendes Fællesråd. The report, [Internationale Studerende til gavn for Danmark \(2019\)](#) is [here](#)

⁸⁰ Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) et tal. 2019, [Internationale studerende til gavn for Danmark](#)

⁸¹ Confederation of Danish Industry et tal., 2019, [Internationale studerende til gavn for Danmark](#). Please refer to p. 7-21 for the partnership’s recommendations

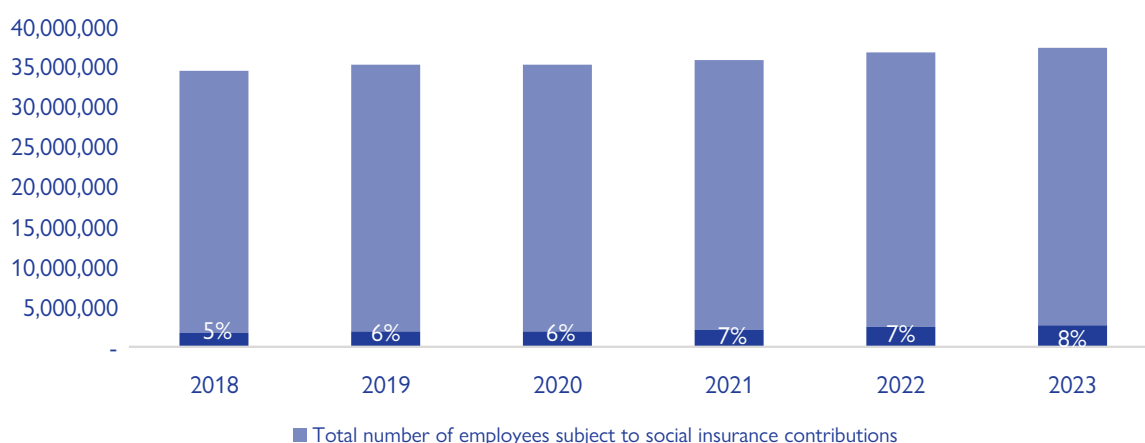
2.2.2 Germany

2.2.2.1 Skilled migrant workers in Germany

As of 30 June 2023, a total of 34,709,056 **employees subject to social insurance contributions**⁸² were registered in Germany. The total number of TCNs employed in Germany subject to social insurance contributions amounted to 2,743,602 (8%) at that time (2,486,279 in 2022).⁸³ According to numbers published by the [German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees](#), a total of 455,500 third-country nationals held a residence title for the purpose of gainful employment in Germany (reference date: 31 January 2022). It should be noted that the number of TCNs in employment subject to social insurance contributions published by the Federal Employment Agency is much higher than the figures for TCNs holding a residence permit in connection with labour migration, as presented in the previous chapter. This is due to the fact that TCNs with residence titles other than those related to labour migration also receive a work permit (e.g. titles for family or humanitarian reasons).

The proportion of TCNs in the German workforce has been rising steadily in recent years as shown in figure 20. The percentage share of TCNs in the total number of employees subject to social insurance contributions has also been increasing (2018: 5.4%; 2023: 8.0%⁸⁴):

FIGURE 20. NUMBER OF TCNS SUBJECT TO SOCIAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS IN GERMANY 2018 – 2023 (REPORTING DATE AT THE END OF JUNE OF EACH YEAR)



Data source: Federal Employment Agency 2023

Note: As at 30 June 2018, a total of 32,870,228 persons (1,774,319 TCNs) were in employment subject to social insurance contributions, as at 30 June 2019 the figure was 33,407,262 (1,959,352 TCNs), as at 30 June 2020 33,322,952 (2,031,400 TCNs), as at 30 June 2021 33,802,173 (2,196,083 TCNs), as at 30 June 2022 34,445,087 (2,486,279 TCNs) and as at 30 June 2023 a total of 34,709,056 (2,743,602 TCNs) persons were in employment subject to social insurance contributions.

Around 28 per cent (780,457) of TCNs employed in Germany and subject to social insurance contributions worked in **personal service professions** (i.a. hospitality, medical and non-medical health professions), 25.7 per cent (705,455) in **production professions**, 23.3 per cent (637,907) in **other economic service professions** (i.a. for instance security, traffic, and logistics), 17.1 per cent (470,196) in **commercial and business-related service professions** and 5.2 per cent (143,913) in **IT and natural science service professions**. Around 45 per cent of the total number (1,242,192) work as skilled worker (*Fachkraft*), followed by helper (35%), experts (12%) and specialists (8%).⁸⁵ The largest share of **mid- to highly skilled**

⁸² Trainees subject to social security contributions as well as exclusively marginal employees (*ausschließlich geringfügige Beschäftigte*) are not included.

⁸³ The Federal Employment Agency 2023, *Beschäftigte nach Staatsangehörigkeit (Quartalszähle)*, June 2023.

⁸⁴ Own calculation of the percentage share based on figures for employees subject to social security contributions in Germany provided by the Federal Employment Agency.

⁸⁵ Requirement level of an occupation – Federal Employment Agency: 1. 'helper': Helper and trainee activities; 2. 'skilled worker': Specialist activities, 3.'Specialist': Complex specialist activities, 4. 'Expert': Highly complex activities

workers⁸⁶ from third countries works in **IT and natural science service professions**, the personal service professions, and commercial and business-related service professions.⁸⁷

Nationals of the Republic of Türkiye (566,603) represent the largest group of TCNs with employment subject to social insurance contributions in Germany, followed by nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic (204,706), Ukrainian nationals (149,862), nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina (116,787) and the Russian Federation (113,564).⁸⁸

2.2.2.2 International Students in Germany

Against the backdrop of a shortage of skilled migrant workers and demographic change, students from third countries represent an important resource for the German labour market. In contrast to highly qualified workers, **Germany scores high in terms of attractiveness for international students**.⁸⁹ German universities are very popular with international students and score highly on excellent universities, a diverse range of study programs (including many that are offered in English⁹⁰), low costs for studying and living in Germany and the opportunity to work and stay after graduation. According to a study conducted by the Germany Academic Exchange Service (DAAD),⁹¹ the most important reasons for international students to choose Germany as destination, include an attractive range of courses and good study conditions (91%), the opportunity to obtain an internationally recognized degree (88%), good career prospects after graduation (81%), and the fact that (in almost all federal states) no tuition fees have to be paid (79%).⁹²

Germany is determined to hold its popular role as one of the most attractive locations for national and international students in an international comparison. Developed under the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Cabinet adopted the new **Strategy for the Internationalization of Education, Science and Research** in February 2017. The Strategy presents five target areas including the strengthening of excellence through worldwide cooperation. The aim is to further consolidate Germany's position as an internationally attractive location for science, research, and innovation, attracting more qualified foreign students and scientists by further removing barriers to international mobility of scientists.⁹³

In the winter semester 2021/2022, international students⁹⁴ at German universities (including universities of applied sciences) accounted for 11.9 per cent (349,438) of all students in Germany. Thirty-one per cent of all international students come from the Asia and Pacific regions, followed by North Africa and Middle East (19%) and Western Europe (17%). Looking at the countries of origin, China (12%) and India (10%) are the countries with the highest number of international students at German universities.

⁸⁶ This includes skilled workers, specialists and experts. More information on <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/DE/Statischer-Content/Grundlagen/Methodik-Qualitaet/Methodische-Hinweise/uebergreifend-MethHinweise/Anforderungsniveau-Berufe.html>

⁸⁷ Own calculation based on the statistics of the Federal Employment Agency.

⁸⁸ The Federal Employment Agency 2023, Beschäftigte nach Staatsangehörigkeit (Quartalszähle), June 2023.

⁸⁹ In the OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness 2023 Germany is among the top countries when it comes to international university students, ranking second after the United States – available [here](#).

⁹⁰ Fifty per cent of international students survey in the DAAD survey 2023, study exclusively in English language (66% Master's degree programmes).

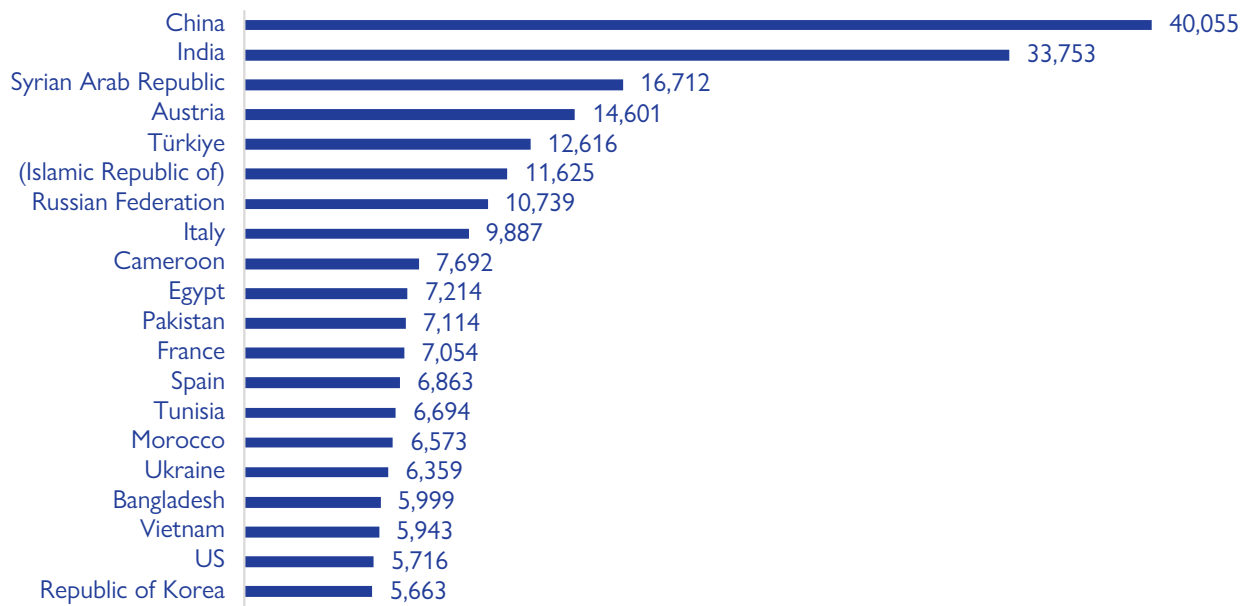
⁹¹ DAAD 2023, Internationale Studierendenmobilität in Deutschland. a total of 117,270 students at German universities were surveyed. Analyses were carried out for two groups. On the one hand, domestic students (n=86,348) and on the other hand international students at German universities (n= 13,871) were considered.- available [here](#)

⁹² Public universities usually do not charge tuition fees for Bachelor's or Master's courses. Tuition fees may apply for certain continuing education Master's programmes, but these are not particularly high compared to other countries. However, the state of Baden-Württemberg has decided to charge non-EU citizens tuition fees of EUR 1,500 per semester for degree programmes from the 2017/18 winter semester. All students at higher education institutions in Germany must pay a semester contribution (100 – 350 EUR per semester). Information provided by [DAAD](#).

⁹³ Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2019, Internationalisation of Education, Science and Research. Strategy of the Federal Government.

⁹⁴ International students are " characterised by the fact that they hold foreign citizenship and have acquired their university entrance certificate abroad or supplemented their school qualification acquired abroad by successfully completing a German preparatory course for university admission." DAAD 2023

FIGURE 21. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN GERMANY BY KEY COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN THE WINTER SEMESTER 2021/2022, N=228,872

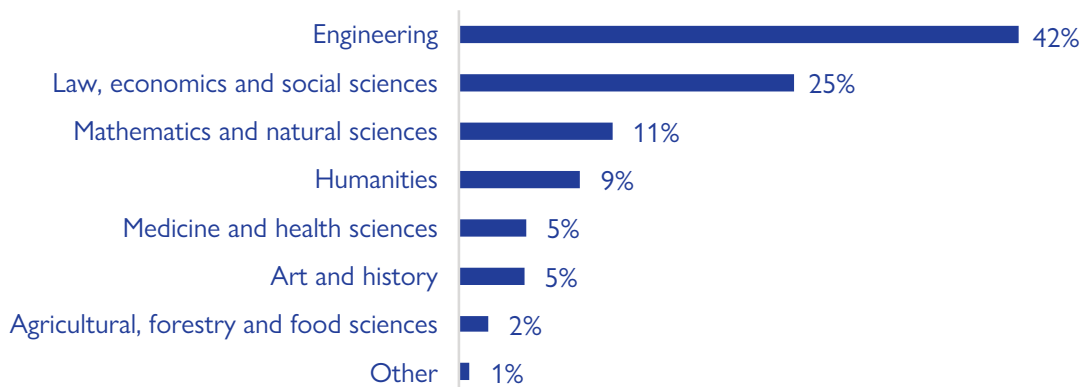


Data source: Federal Statistical Office; DZHW calculations 2023

Note: The country of origin is based on the respective citizenship. The total number of all international students at German universities is 324,729.

Engineering represents the largest subject group with a share of 41.7 per cent of all international students at German universities, followed by law, economics, and social sciences (25%) and mathematics and natural sciences (11.4%). Notably, the retention of engineering students is higher than in other subject groups: **“Students who take engineering subjects** are [also] less likely to want to leave Germany than students who have not studied a STEM subject. This could be related to the fact that the labour market prospects in Germany are particularly good in engineering.”⁹⁵

FIGURE 22. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY SUBJECT GROUP IN THE WINTER SEMESTER 2021/2022, % OF ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT GERMAN UNIVERSITIES (INCLUDING UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCE), N=349,438



Data source: Federal Statistical Office; DZHW calculations 2023f

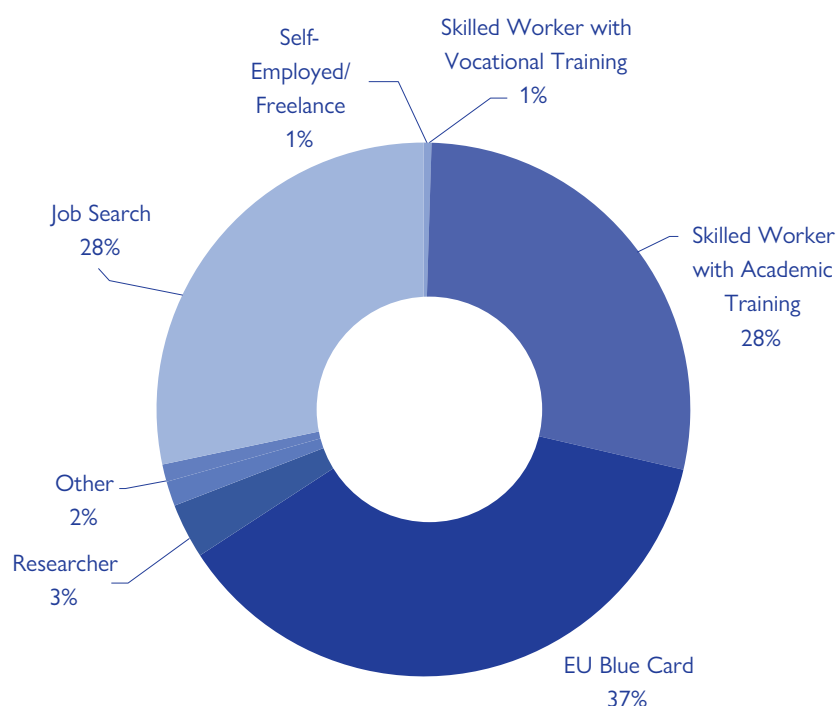
Note: Of a total of 349,438 international students, 145,707 students were enrolled in an engineering, 87,350 in law, economics and social sciences, 39,854 in mathematics and natural sciences, 31,581 in humanities, 17,470 in medicine and health sciences, 16,932 in art and history, 7,636 in agriculture, forestry and food sciences and 2,908 in other subject groups.

⁹⁵ DAAD 2022. Accompanying international students in Germany to academic success: results and recommendations from the SeSaBa project – available [here](#).

After successfully completing studies, training, or measures for the purpose of recognition of qualifications in Germany, it is possible to apply for either a residence title for a subsequent job corresponding to the qualification/education acquired, or for a temporary residence title for job search. For example, upon successful completion of their studies at a German university, international graduates are granted a period of up to 18 months to search for employment in Germany that aligns with their qualifications. During this time, they are allowed to explore various job opportunities across different sectors in Germany. According to the DAAD study,⁹⁶ close to 50 per cent of international students on regular degree courses finance their studies through a part-time job.

In 2022, around 23,650 TCNs changed their residence permit for the purpose of study to a residence permit for the purpose of employment or for job search. In addition, 11,765 TCNs changed from other educational migration purposes and around 5,965 TCNs from a residence title for job search (following an education measure) to a residence title for the purpose of employment (or job search). Ninety-five per cent of those who changed from a residence title for the purpose of job search following an education or training measure were former graduates (from German universities).⁹⁷

FIGURE 23. TCNS CHANGING FROM STUDIES TO A RESIDENCE TITLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYMENT OR JOB SEARCH 2022, N=23,650



Data source: The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023

Note: Of the total 23,650 TCNs represented in figure 23 8,790 TCNs changed from a residence permit for the purpose of study to the EU Blue Card, 6,695 TCNs changed to a job seeking residence title, 6,655 TCNs to a skilled worker with academic training residence title, 790 TCNs to a researcher residence title, 355 TCNs to other employment, 250 TCNs to a self-employment and freelancing residence title and 115 TCNs to a skilled worker with vocational training residence title.

From 2006 to 2021, a total of 612,000 international students from non-EU countries received a residence permit (first-time) for the purpose of studies in Germany. **More than one third of those who began studying in Germany between 2006 and 2011 stayed in Germany for the long term.** Forty-eight per cent of them were still living in Germany after five years and 38 per cent after ten years. The majority of those who were granted a residence title for the purpose of studies (first-time issuance) between

⁹⁶ DAAD 2023, Internationale Studierendenmobilität in Deutschland.

⁹⁷ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2023, Monitoring zur Bildungs- und Erwerbsmigration 2022

2006 and 2011 were Chinese citizens (36,000), followed by students from the United States (US) (13,000), students from the Russian Federation (12,000) and students from Türkiye (10,000). After ten years, 29 per cent still lived in Germany. Looking at the retention of these students, 29 per cent of former Chinese students still lived in Germany after ten years. Fourteen per cent of former students with US citizenship still lived in Germany after ten years, as were 28 per cent of students from Türkiye. Almost half (47%) of former students from the Russian Federation still lived in Germany after ten years.⁹⁸

According to the latest analysis by OECD,⁹⁹ 54 per cent of students who began their studies in 2010 were still in Germany after five years – and successfully completed their studies. Among students who began their studies in 2015, the figure was as high as 63 per cent. After ten years, the retention rate was still 45 per cent. With a growth in demand of labour, international students and graduates can play a crucial role in reducing the employment gaps. The different models of labour schemes can be viewed as an attempt to accommodate to the complex situation of the talent regarding employment opportunities.

The next section of the report explores recent developments in talent skills management of non-EU citizens efforts from an EU level perspective. Although Denmark due to its opt-outs to EU cooperation does not implement the relevant directives, the section is included to depict recent developments at EU level concerning labour migration, with a focus on the EU Skills and Talent Package, that provide background and context also for Danish attraction and retention efforts.

2.3 Putting Third Country National Talent on the EU Agenda

2.3.1 Skills and Talent Package

Over the past two decades, the EU has moved towards establishing a legal migration framework aimed at standardizing and harmonizing entry and residence conditions, as well as securing rights of non-EU nationals within EU member states (EUMS). While member states retain the right to determine the number of legal migrants they admit, the EU offers practical and operational support and tools to EUMS to facilitate legal migration.

In September 2020, the new [Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) was announced by the European Commission addressing the challenges of migration within the European Union and moving towards a more unified and comprehensive approach. Legal migration is part of the comprehensive approach of this proposal. In 2022 the European Commission issued a [Communication on “Attracting skills and talent to the EU”](#) outlining various legislative, operational and forward looking measures to enhance cooperation with third countries and facilitate legal migration to the EU. This section will first explore two operational measures described in the above-mentioned communication and then will focus on select directives of the EU labour migration acquis.

EU Talent Partnerships

[The EU Talent Partnerships](#) were announced in the 2020 Pact on Migration and Asylum and [officially launched](#) in June 2021, with concrete steps towards development proposed in the Talent and Skills Package in 2022. The goal of these tailored partnerships is to develop and enhance legal pathways to the EU while strategically engaging with partner countries on migration management in support of mutually beneficial international mobility schemes. The focus of the partnerships is better matching of labour market needs and skills as well as talent development. Support goes towards capacity building and investment in human capital, including

⁹⁸ DeStatis Statistisches Bundesamt 2022

⁹⁹ [International Migration Outlook 2022](#)

skills development, vocational education, and work-based exchange schemes. Funding will come from a combination of various financial instruments such as NDICI-Global Europe, AMIF, Member States' own funds and private sector funds.

The first official EU Talent Partnerships were announced to start by end of 2022 with North African partners, in particular Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. Other priority countries include Pakistan and Bangladesh Senegal, and Nigeria. Discussions on the feasibility and design of these schemes between the EU, interested EUMS and partner countries are ongoing.

The EU Talent Pool

In 2016, the OECD reported that “Europe is underachieving in the global competition for talent”.¹⁰⁰ In comparison to other OECD countries such as USA, Canada and Australia, the EU is attracting a relatively smaller share of highly qualified TCNs. At the same time, Europe has strong labour needs while facing significant demographic changes of an ageing and shrinking population. To address these shortages, the idea of a “EU Talent Pool” was first announced in 2020 and further outlined in 2022.

The EU Talent pool is the first EU-wide platform aimed at facilitating matching and international recruitment of TCN not residing in the EU. The matching tool aims to boost the EU's attractiveness to skilled workers from third countries, while assisting EUMS and employers to address certain skills shortages and labour market needs.

The [EU Talent Pool Pilot initiative](#) was launched in the middle of 2022 with Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, and Finland to address the urgent need to facilitate access to the European labour market for temporary protection holders from Ukraine. At the time of writing of this report, an impact assessment is being conducted about the pilot initiative and expected to be adopted by the European Commission after January 2024.

The Commission launched the legislative proposal of the EU Talent Pool in November 2023, further detailing its scope, voluntary nature and other features.¹⁰¹ At the time of writing this report, the legislative proposal of the EU Talent Pool was being discussed by the EU Parliament.

In addition to the two operational measures of the “Skills and Talent Package” outlined above, the year of 2023 marked the European *Year of Skills*, which highlighted the importance of promoting upskilling and reskilling, as well as attracting talent to the EU.¹⁰² The same year, the EU introduced the EU 2030 social targets in the *European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan 2030*, which entail three overarching targets to be achieved by 2030. These concerns employment, skills, and poverty reduction. Regarding employment, at least 78 per cent of people aged between 20 and 64 years should be in employment, while at least 60 per cent of all adults should participate in training every year.¹⁰³ Summing up, it can be argued that the Year of Skills is an attempt to meet the targets of both employability and strengthening the upskilling and reskilling of people based on the EU 2030 Social Targets, and therefore resonates with the social targets that needs to be met by 2030.

The Labour Migration Platform

A so-called [Labour Migration Platform](#) was launched as part of the Skills and Talent package as well. This platform brings together the European Commission with representatives from EU member states who specialize in migration and employment with the aim of advancing labour migration, operationalising the EU-level initiatives on legal migration and employment, and ensuring that migrants have the skills and support they need to be successful in the EU labour market.

¹⁰⁰ OECD 2023. [Europe is underachieving in the global competition for talent](#)

¹⁰¹ European Commission 2023, Press release [Commission proposes new measures on skills and talent to help address critical labour shortages](#), 15. November

¹⁰² European Commission 2024, European Skills of the Year, [portal](#) (accessed 25 January 2024)

¹⁰³ European Commission 2022, Press release [Commission welcomes Member State's targets for a more social Europe by 2023](#), 16 June.

In January 2023, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs and the Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights hosted the inaugural meeting of the Platform. The [minutes of the first meeting](#) showcase that the platform believes it not only has a role to play in attracting skills and talent but also in supporting their integration process, especially through skills recognition. A follow up meeting was held in June 2023, featuring ‘insightful sessions and discussions related to the upcoming EU Talent Pool.’¹⁰⁴

2.3.2 Selected EU legislation concerning labour migration of third country nationals

Migration policy is a shared competency between the EU and Member States. To regulate and harmonize conditions of entry and residence for labour migrants from non-EU countries, the EU has developed a set of rules as part of a common EU migration policy on legal migration. The policy establishes a framework for legal migration that aims to benefit migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination. [Table 3](#) below provides an overview of the EU labour migration acquis, with the exception of the Seasonal Workers Directive, as the target group of this report does not concern seasonal workers. Some Directives have been included in this report to better understand and explore the notion of intra-EU mobility and talent attraction. It is however important to note that the listed Directives are not implemented in Denmark due to the Danish EU opt-outs in Justice and Home Affairs (JHA).

TABLE 3. EU DIRECTIVE OVERVIEW APPLICABLE TO THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

DIRECTIVE	SCOPE
Directive (EU) 2021/1883 EU Blue Card	sets the conditions of entry and residency of TCN for the purpose of highly qualified employment.*
Intra-corporate transfers Directive (2014/66/EU)	sets the conditions under which non-EU nationals can enter and work in the EU for an intra-corporate transfer (i.e., a posting from a company operating in a non-EU country in a branch in the EU).*
Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU)	establishes a simplified application procedure and one single permit for both the right to work and stay in the EU.*
Students and researchers Directive (2016/801/EU)	sets the conditions of admission and rights of non-EU nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training and voluntary service.*
Long Term Residence Directive 2003/109/EC	sets the conditions under which non-EU nationals can obtain the status of long-term residents, which grant them a set of uniform rights, similar to those enjoyed by EU citizens.*
Family Reunification Directive 2003/86/EC	establishes the rules under which non-EU nationals can bring their family members to the EU country in which they are legally residing.*

Data source: *European Commission / Migration and Home Affairs 2024

¹⁰⁴ At the time of producing the multi-situational report and analysis, minutes are not yet available on the webpage of the Labour Migration Platform.

2.3.2.1 EU Blue Card Directive (EU) 2021/1883

The Directive 2009/50/EC on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, also known as the Blue Card Directive, was revised. The revised Directive entered into force on 27 November 2021 (**Directive 2021/1883**) with a view to further harmonize implementation, optimize procedures, adopt more flexible and inclusive admission criteria, and provide more extensive rights, including facilitated intra-EU mobility. The requirements for application for the Blue Card include: a valid work contract or a binding job offer for highly qualified employment for at least 6 months; documents confirming professional qualifications; valid travel, and where required visa, documents; evidence of having applied for health insurance if not covered in the contract.

The revision set a new standard period of validity for the EU Blue Card to at least 24 months. In cases where the work contract is shorter, the EU Blue Card should be issued for at least the duration of the work contract plus three months, but for a maximum of 24 months. The Blue Card also entitles holders to enter, re-enter and stay in the Member State and enjoy all the rights under the directive. Furthermore, it set standards for a lower and upper factor for the salary threshold to further harmonise admission criteria. With the revision, the period of a binding job offer for highly qualified employment to apply for an EU Blue Card is cut from one year to six months, thereby widening eligibility for EU Blue Card to TCNs with a job offer of six months as compared to twelve months previously.

EU Blue Card holders are entitled to change employer (and may have to inform authorities during the first 12 months of legal employment); enjoy equal treatment to EU nationals in areas such as employment conditions, freedom of association, educational and vocational training, mutual recognition of diplomas, social security and access to goods and services; can be accompanied by their family members, who have the right to work; may acquire long-term EU resident status, subject to certain conditions; and may, after living legally for 12 months in the Member State that issued the Blue Card, move, live and work with their family in another Member State. The prospects for permanent residence with the Blue Card can vary, as it also depends on the national legislations in the relevant EUMS.¹⁰⁵ Most EUMS (25) have applied the EU Blue Card into their national legal frameworks, except for Denmark and Ireland.¹⁰⁶

Additionally, the years of residence can be transferred to another EUMS if the last two years of the five years were spent in the EU with a Blue Card. EU Blue Card holders will be able to work for up to 90 days in another EUMS without having to obtain a work permit. Long-term EU residents and former Blue Card holders can stay outside the EU for up to two years without forfeiting their residence/EU Blue Card.

Regarding the recognition of professional experience as an alternative to higher education qualification, IT specialists will be able to obtain an EU Blue Card without a university degree, if they can prove that they have at least three years of comparable professional experience.

The revised Blue Card Directive reflects intentions to facilitate legal migration pathways to the EU and to increase the pool of eligible Blue Card applicants. Originally introduced with Council Directive 2009/50/EC, the use of the Blue Card as a legal pathway to the EU had remained limited in numbers in most EUMS and with different levels of implementation across participating EUMS. Of close to 82,000 Blue Cards issued by EUMS in 2022, less than 100 Blue Cards were granted by countries such as Estonia, Sweden and Portugal, whereas Germany alone granted more than 77 per cent of all EU Blue Cards (63,242).¹⁰⁷ Only Denmark and Ireland are not formally bound by the EU Blue Card Directive.

¹⁰⁵ European Commission 2024, [EU Immigration Portal](#)

¹⁰⁶ European Commission 2024, [EU Immigration Portal](#)

¹⁰⁷ Eurostat 2023, [Residence permits – statistics on authorisations to reside and work](#)

2.3.2.2 Long-Term Residence Directive 2003/109/EC

The **Long-term Residence Directive 2003/109/EC (LTRD)** sets out the conditions under which TCNs who have legally and continuously resided in a EUMS for at least five years can acquire a 'EU long-term resident status'. This residence status provides for equal treatment with citizens in the respective country in several areas and facilitates intra-EU mobility of long-term residents. The prerequisite for acquiring long-term residence status is a proof of a stable and regular economic resource sufficient to support themselves and their families, as well as a proof of health insurance. Long-term residents enjoy equal treatment with nationals as regards access to the labour market, education and vocational training, recognition of qualifications, freedom of association and affiliation and membership of an organization representing workers or employers, social security and protection, tax benefits, access to goods and services, free access to the entire territory of the MS concerned and family reunification.

As part of the Skills and Talent Package, the European Commission presented a proposal for a recast of the LTRD to make it easier for TCNs to acquire EU long-term resident status. The proposal foresees that TCNs are allowed to accumulate residence periods (including periods as students, beneficiaries of temporary protection, temporary residence periods) in different EUMS. In addition, the rights of long-term residents and their family members are to be strengthened. This includes *inter alia* the right to move and work in another EUMS and aligning the rights of EU long-term residents with those of EU citizens. The proposal also provides for a mechanism to ensure a level playing field between EU long-term residence permit and national permanent residence in terms of equal treatment, access to information, giving third country nationals a genuine opportunity to choose between both permits. In addition, circular migration is facilitated by the fact that long-term residents can return to their country of origin without losing their rights. At the time of writing this report the negotiations on the recast of the LTRD between the Council and the European Parliament were ongoing.

2.3.2.3 Single Permit Directive 2011/98/EU

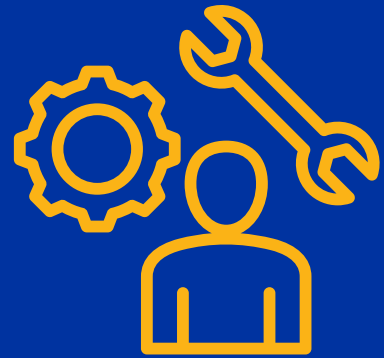
The **Single Permit Directive 2011/98/EU** aimed to simplify and harmonize the procedures for obtaining work and residence permits, thereby promoting regular migration, and ensuring equal treatment for TCNs. It sets a common application procedure for a single permit for TCNs to reside and work in the territory of an EUMS and a common set of rights for TCNs legally residing in an EUMS. Each application for this combined residence and work permit (whether new, amended or extended) must be treated as a single application procedure by the respective authorities in the individual EU countries. With the single permit, third-country nationals can enjoy a number of rights, including the right to work, reside and move freely in the issuing EUMS as well as the same conditions as nationals of the issuing country in terms of working conditions, education and training, recognition of qualifications, certain aspects of social security, tax benefits, access to goods and services, including housing and employment guidance services.

As part of the Skills and Talent Package, the European Commission presented a [proposal for a recast of this Directive](#). The recast Directive aims to make the current application procedure for the single permit more efficient to improve the EU's attractiveness to international talents and address labour shortages in the EU. The proposal provides for the possibility to apply for single permits from non-EU countries as well as EUMS. The proposal also aims to strengthen equal treatment of third-country nationals and improve protection against labour exploitation and lays down corresponding requirements. It further provides for the right to change employer while continuing to reside legally in the EUMS by removing the link between single permit and one employer. The revised directive is expected to be adopted in the first semester of 2024.

The variety of applicable talent schemes in Denmark and Germany and the recent policy updates, the major talent categories, and nationalities as well as the efforts of the EU both to attract and retain more international talent, serve to demonstrate not only the considerable national and international efforts to attract and retain talent, but also the complexity of the task at hand. While efforts may largely be focussed on attraction as well as – in the case of the EU in particular – enhancing the formal conditions for TCN talent to circulate and remain in the EU, retention and its prerequisites are diverse and consist of both structural and individual factors that will be considered in the following sections of this report.

CHAPTER III

TALENT PHASES: ARRIVING, STAYING, LEAVING



3. TALENT PHASES: ARRIVING, STAYING, LEAVING

3.1 The customer journey

The process of arriving to a new country can be complicated as it involves several phases from collection of information and decision-making, relocation preparations from a distance in the current residence country, bureaucratic processes (digital or manual), travel, arrival, and establishment in the new country. One way to describe the process is through the customer journey.

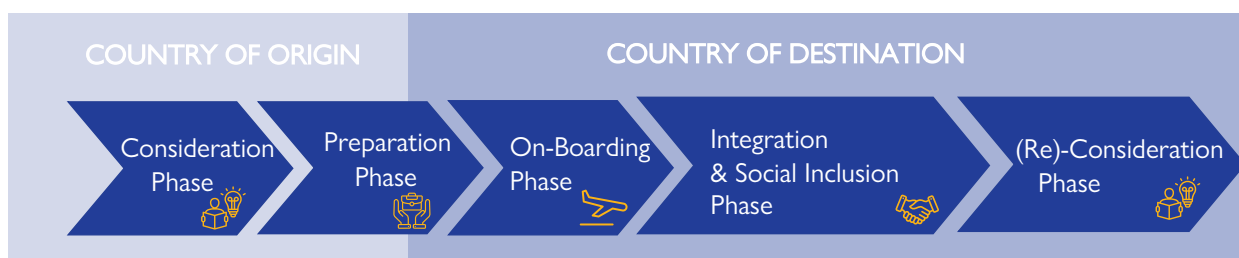
The concept of customer journey is traditionally to be found within the context of business practice and marketing. Different models exist, but usually have in common that they are divided into phases. A customer journey may help businesses and marketing to better understand the **customer's experience and behaviour** and eventually improve the company's branding efforts.

In the context of talent attraction and retention generally and the Talent Hub project specifically, creating a customer journey may help to grasp the complexity of the talent's journey and **analyse which factors and actors are relevant at which stages of the journey**. The customer journey is therefore a tool or a model serving as a guide that helps stakeholders understand the conditions and phases during which the talent may decide to move and settle. It serves to personalize the journey to identify and understand the individual needs. There are various factors to each phase that impact attraction and retention/the decision to move or to stay. Despite the linear design in [figure 24 \(Customer journey of Talents\)](#) below, it is relevant to keep in mind that the talent customer journey can be circular and repeated, with mobile talent moving not only from the country of origin but also from one destination country to the next. Migration decisions and patterns are further subject to change over time due to external as well as personal/individual factors such as family status, societal developments, professional opportunities, or restrictions etc.

The section of the customer journey has been included in the report to emphasise that the experience of the talent must be considered when developing necessary interventions to support talent with the journey of settling in a new place. While the customer journey within the context of this report has been included primarily as an illustration, the model of the customer journey can be a useful tool in the context of recruiting and retaining talents to identify at what stages different support measures provided by different stakeholders may apply.

The customer journey within the context of this report is viewed as migratory journey. The experiences of migrating can translate into five overarching stages: consideration, preparation, on-boarding, integration & social inclusion, and (re)-consideration as demonstrated in below figure ([figure 24](#)).

FIGURE 24. CUSTOMER JOURNEY OF TALENTS



Data source: IOM 2023 Talent Hub

The stages, as included below in figure 25, are only indicative and could be detailed even more, while noting that a successful talent customer journey should potentially cater for support needs in all phases. Both figure 24 and 25 are therefore **not exhaustive and may be subject to change** due to unforeseen circumstances as the experience of settling in may vary from person to person.

FIGURE 25. PHASES OF THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY OF TALENT



STAGE 4 | INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:



SOCIAL INCLUSION

- Whether the talent and accompanying family decide to stay or to move is determined by a variety of factors that affect the decision on different levels.
- At first glance it seems to be an individual decision based on individual circumstances (including whether the talent is accompanied by family members or not) but also social networks in- and outside of work can play a pivotal role.
- Building social networks and meaningful relations at the workplace as well as the local community is decisive to the well-being, and thus integration, of a talent as well as the accompanying family members.
- A talent journey may appear to be an individual journey, but ultimately it is also collective endeavour with many stakeholders at many different levels influencing the individual circumstances, including but not limited to family situation, that ultimately favour or disadvantage the decision to stay or move. This is discussed throughout this report but particularly in chapter five.

STAGE 5 | (RE)-CONSIDERATION:



DECISION-MAKING, STAYING OR LEAVING

- Legal rights to stay and work may be subject to change, lack of employment for the talent, or accompanying family, and overall well-being of the individual talent and is applicable, family can also impact the decision and willingness to stay or leave.
- Professional and personal considerations on the background of country policies and conditions that facilitate retention, or the opposite may affect the decision to stay or leave again. Leaving the country may be for another EU or third country or to return to the country of origin, in which case the customer journey begins anew.
- In the re-consideration phase, it can be decisive to receive advice and support for professional development or employment elsewhere in the country, or in another EUMS.

Viewing the phases of talents' considerations, pre-departure, arrival, integration and (re)considerations through the customer journey lens serves to illustrate that different stakeholder interventions are potentially relevant at different stages of the process. Be it through information provision or other practical support in the consideration or pre-departure phase, assistance with onboarding and settling in after arrival to integration or inclusion support, and in support for professional development opportunities inside or outside the country in the re-consideration phase. Operationalizing a smooth customer journey will also require a context favourable for attraction and retention through the formulation and implementation of relevant policies that are again informed by data and more subjective feedback from talent on the different stages of the journey. As a tool, the customer journey can help stakeholders design and target interventions for enhanced talent retention, even if not all stakeholders can or should support equally in all phases.

3.2 Denmark and Germany in Talent Indexes

To measure, score and compare the attractiveness of countries, regions and larger cities to international talent, various organizations and bodies at regular intervals publish comparisons of attractiveness and retention levels according to predefined indicators. Such comparisons may be carried out through surveys amongst talents and/or business leaders, through scores assigned to selected indicators in the country, and with different target groups. Noting the differing methodologies and focus areas, different indexes may not always be directly comparable and may even provide contradictory results, with countries being at the top in some indexes but at the bottom in others. Even so, indexes may still provide an interesting insight into factors considered of relevance to talent attraction and retention internationally and hence for the Talent

Hub project. Below is therefore included an overview of some recent publications/tools as well as the indicators considered particularly relevant for Denmark, Germany, and other countries under the auspices of this project.

3.2.1 OECD: Indicators of Talent Attractiveness (2023)

The Indicators of Talent Attractiveness (ITA) from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) attempt to measure the attractiveness of OECD member states. The ITA considers migration policy frameworks and other factors that affect the ability to attract and retain international talent.

The ITA framework measures factors across seven different dimensions for three categories of talented migrants, namely **highly qualified workers**, **international entrepreneurs**, and **university students**. The distinction between different types of talent highlights that factors of attractiveness may be different for different groups, and that a country scoring high for one group of talents may score lower for other groups.

Noting that migration policies have a strong impact on the attractiveness of a country, the ITA also attempts to measure the impact of implemented and potential migration policy reforms, i.e. to what extent a country may improve its position through reforms. OECD points out that the lack of active policies to attract and retain migrants also changes the relative attractiveness of a country if other countries with similar conditions are adopting more favourable policies targeting highly skilled migrants.¹⁰⁸ In OECD member states measured for the 2023 ITA publication, the highest overall score across all dimensions and therefore considered the most attractive countries for international talent in 2023 were New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia and Norway.

3.2.1.1 Denmark in ITA 2023

In the ITA 2023, Denmark ranks high in attractiveness indicators for both highly educated workers and entrepreneurs, but less so for university students. While Denmark scores relatively well in dimensions such as income and tax (incl. earnings and prices, taxes), skills environment (incl. IT infrastructure, English skills in the country), quality of opportunity (incl. migrant unemployment rates, employment protection, and top ranked universities), inclusiveness (incl. migrant acceptance index and gender equality) and quality of life (based on [OECD better life index](#)), Denmark belongs to the bottom 25 per cent of countries in the category **future prospects** for all three talent groups. The category 'future prospects' measures factors such as the possibility to acquire nationality and ease of status change from temporary to permanent. For the group of students, 'future prospects' also includes months allowed to stay in the country after graduation. According to OECD ITA, Denmark could in some areas gain more from implementing relevant policy reforms than as for example Sweden, Germany and New Zealand that are already well-performing in relevant policy areas.

3.2.1.2 Germany in ITA 2023

In ITA 2023, Germany falls behind in the international competition for highly educated workers compared to the previous study from 2019, while still ranking in the top half. Looking at the different dimensions within the group of highly educated workers, Germany is in the lower mid-range in the dimensions quality of opportunities, income and tax, and future prospects, in the upper mid-range in the dimensions family environment, inclusiveness and quality of life, and in the top 25 per cent of the dimension skills environment. In contrast to highly qualified workers, Germany scores highly in terms of attractiveness for international students and is one of the top three countries in the student rankings. German universities are very popular with international students and score highly with excellent universities, low costs for studying and living in Germany, and the opportunity to work and stay after graduation.

¹⁰⁸ A recent example could be the new German immigration with the points-based Opportunity Card ("Chancenkarte"), adopted in June 2023, that might affect the relative attractiveness of neighbouring Denmark if talent would find conditions for entry and stay in Germany more relevant than the Danish labour migration schemes.

3.2.1.3 ITA Summary

It is challenging to summarize the results of ITA 2023 due to the online tool having several modifiable variables across different groups of talents. It however stands out that restrictive policies on **acquisition of nationality** or **permanent residence** according to the ITA affect attractiveness **negatively**. Another important take-away for the Talent Hub project is the possible impact of policy reforms in similar/ neighbouring countries that may affect the relative attractiveness of countries with less favourable policies. Having a look at Denmark's neighbouring countries Germany and Sweden, Sweden according to ITA scores notably higher than Denmark on highly educated workers and entrepreneurs, whereas Germany has the largest comparative advantage for university students.¹⁰⁹ So while the goal of the Talent Hub project is ultimately to support cooperation and exchange best practices on talent attraction and retention, policy developments may serve to increase or decrease the attractiveness of a country to international talent.¹¹⁰

3.2.2 InterNations: Expat Insider 2022 – The World Through Expat Eyes

The InterNations annual, global study investigates the conditions for so called 'expats' to settle and live in countries and major cities around the globe.¹¹¹ Survey questions posed to such target group are related to issues such as quality of life, and ease of settling in. In the 2022 Expat Insider Survey, the top five countries as expat destinations are Mexico, Indonesia, Taiwan, Portugal and Spain. At the bottom of the 2022 Expat Insider survey list of 52 countries are countries that in other attractiveness indexes are at the top, such as Luxembourg, Cyprus, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Kuwait. With possible reservations as to differences in methodology, this indicates that the subjective experience of the target group of a country might not match the attractiveness and retention scores of other indexes. In 2022, a total of 11,970 expats participated in the survey though it is not indicated how many respondents lived in Denmark or Germany.

3.2.2.1 Denmark in Expat Insider 2022

Out of 52 countries surveyed, Denmark scores well in the main category **Quality of Life Index** (No. 8), consisting of sub-groups such as Health & Well-Being and Safety & Security. Denmark however comes in only as No. 47 on the **Ease of Settling In Index**, due to low scores on sub-groups Culture & Welcome, Local Friendliness and Finding Friends. When it comes to the main **Working Abroad Index**, Denmark scores highest of all countries (No. 1) due to high scores on sub-groups Work & Leisure (No.1), Salary & Job Security (No.2), Work Culture & Satisfaction (No.2). This is particularly due to the **favourable work-life balance** in Denmark. Only on the sub-category Career Prospects does Denmark score lower (No.30). The Career prospects sub-group covers such factors as local job market, personal career opportunities, and whether moving to the destination has improved the expats' career prospects.

In the main **Personal Finance Index**, Denmark is situated as No. 41, reflecting a high cost of living despite the high score on Salary & Job Security. In the main **Expat Essentials Index**, Denmark is located as No.29 overall despite high score on the subgroup Digital Life (No. 3). Denmark is however No. 16 on Admin Topics, No. 45 on **Housing** (ease of finding accommodation and its affordability) and No. 33 on Language. Admin Topics includes the ease of opening a bank account, getting a visa and local bureaucracy, areas where conditions in Denmark are hence not considered favourable. The **Language** subgroup reflects how easy it is to live in the destination without speaking the local language(s) and how easy it is to learn it/them, thus indicating that it for Expats in Denmark is neither easy to learn Danish nor to cope without speaking Danish. The survey states that 24 per cent of expats in Denmark inform that they do not speak Danish at all, compared to 10 per cent of all expats globally not speaking the local language.

¹⁰⁹ Although the international ranking of universities is outside the scope of the present project, Denmark's recently labour market reform that entered into force on 1 April 2023 and provides international university students with a job-seeking permit of three years in Denmark as compared to three months previously, may work to change Denmark's relative position when it comes to university students.

¹¹⁰ OECD 2023, [Indicators of Talent Attractiveness portal](#)

¹¹¹ InterNations define the term expat broadly, including as for example employees on assignment in another country, international hires as well as persons relocating for other reasons.

3.2.2.2 Germany in Expat Insider 2022

Overall, out of 52 countries surveyed, Germany scores as No. 15 in Quality of Life. Germany scores lower than Denmark in all of the Quality of Life sub-groups, and it has its best score on Safety and Security (No. 9), where Denmark is however on first place of all. Together with Denmark (No. 47), Germany scores low on the **Ease of Settling in** category, where Germany is only No. 50 out of 52 on Culture and Welcome, No. 48 on Local Friendliness and No. 46 on Finding Friends. On the main category of **Working Abroad**, Germany is No. 12. Although this is behind Denmark's overall first place, Germany scores better than Denmark on the sub-group Career Prospects (Germany No. 11, Denmark No., 30), is close to Denmark on Salary & Job Security but trails behind Denmark (No. 2) on Work Culture & Satisfaction (Germany No. 24). On the main group of **Expat Essentials**, Germany according to the 2022 Expat Insider Survey ends at the bottom as No. 52 out of 52. This is due to low scores on Digital Life (No. 48), Admin Topics (No. 36), Housing (No. 47) and Language (No. 49). Feedback from expats on the Expat Essentials in Germany covers issues such as the ease of getting high-speed internet access, lack of cashless payment options, lack of affordable housing and possibility to manage without speaking German.

3.2.2.3 Expat Insider Summary

Comparing to other EU countries depicted in Expat Insider 2022, it can be noted that Spain ranks as overall No. 1 in **Quality of Life**, whereas Portugal is considered the Easiest place to settle in Europe (No. 7 Out of 52). For **Expat Essentials**, the best placed EU country is Estonia (overall No. 4), signalling Estonia's high ranking on the subgroups Digital Life (No.1) and Admin Topics (No.1).

While results in the Expat Survey are subjective answers from expats that depend on the number of respondents and may not necessarily represent all expats, it does point towards the centrality for attraction and retention of **work-life balance, ease of settling in** (especially housing), **digitalization and language**. In the case of Denmark, the Expat study to some extent mirrors the results of the national expat study carried out in the 2020 Expat Study.¹¹² That the top countries in the Expat Insider 2020 language category are Singapore, UEA, Kenya and Bahrain, does not necessarily reflect the ease of learning the local language but that existing, large expat groups in these countries facilitate communication and managing also socially in other languages.

Not all the topics included in the Expat Insider survey 2022 as relevant for the satisfaction of expats with their life in a given country – and ultimately affecting retention – can be directly influenced by actors working on attraction and retention of talent, as for example availability and affordability of housing on the private market. However, the Expat Insider survey results speak to a variety of possible interventions that could be implemented to make countries such as Denmark or Germany more attractive to talent and ultimately to improve retention rates. Not only as regards the formal context of income, taxes, administration, and bureaucracy, but also softer values and interventions such as work culture, leisure time and opportunities to build and maintain personal networks with both other expats and the nationals of the country.¹¹³

3.2.3 INSEAD: Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022

The Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) is published annually by INSEAD Business School¹¹⁴ as a comprehensive benchmarking report to measure inter alia the policies and practices on how countries and cities attract and retain human capital. The 2022 report covers 133 countries and 175 cities from 79 economies around the world. The thematic focus of GTCI 2022 is on inequalities for global Talent and how inequalities may hamper growth. The GTCI model has a double focus on input – what countries do to produce and acquire talent – and output – the skills that will be available to the countries as a result of the input.

¹¹² Oxford Research, 2020. [The Expat Study 2020. An analysis of living and working in Denmark as an expat](#)

¹¹³ InterNations 2022, [Expat insider](#)

¹¹⁴ The acronym stands for the original name *Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires*. The following is based on GTCI 2022

The GTCI input pillar consists of the Enable, Attract, Grow, and Retain pillars. The importance of the **retain pillar** is underscored by the fact that the more talented a person is, the more global opportunities s/he may have, wherefore there is need to focus on both personal/national sustainability and quality of life. The GTCI 2022 ranking sees a high correlation between GDP per capita and GTCI scores, with 17 out of top-25 being EU countries. Denmark ranks as global number three preceded only by Switzerland and Singapore.

3.2.3.1 Denmark in GTCI 2022

Denmark is in the GTCI 2022 categorized as a high-income country with a population of 5.86 million, a GDP per capita of USD 64,651.22 and a total GDP of USD 397.10 billion. For the first time since the launch of the GTCI in 2013, Denmark ranks in the **top three** due to strong performance in most areas measured by the GTCI such as environmental performance, social welfare, access to growth, the education system, gender equality as well as a digitally advanced economy and society. With Switzerland, Denmark is the only country to achieve top 10 positions in each of the six pillars of the GTCI.

GTCI, however, notes that there is “particular opportunity to increase External Openness towards overseas investment and talent.”¹¹⁵ While Denmark’s score in the retain pillar gives the country an overall third place due to factors such as pension schemes, social coverage and environmental protection, Denmark scores lower – out of 133 countries – in some elements of the attract pillar with lower scores on **migrant stock** (No. 41), international students (No. 22) and tolerance of minorities (No. 36). Migrant stock here refers to the migrant stock population as a percentage of the total population, which in GTCI indicates external openness. The lower number of migrants in Denmark compared to other countries affects Denmark’s scores negatively.

Tolerance of minorities in the context of the GTCI refers to discrimination and violence against minorities based on the Group Grievance indicator included in the Fragile States Index published by The Fund for Peace.

3.2.3.2 Germany in GTCI 2022

Germany, with a rank of 14 out of 133 countries, has shown **strong results** in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022. As a high-income country in Europe with a population of 83.13 million, Germany boasts a GDP per capita of USD 57,927.59 and a total GDP of USD 4,223.12 billion.

One key finding from the data is the positive correlation between greater economic empowerment of women, gender parity, and higher talent competitiveness. Germany, along with countries like Norway (7) and Belgium (16), ranks high in **gender equality** and performs well in the GTCI. This underscores the importance of gender equality in fostering talent development and competitiveness. Access to growth opportunities is an area where Germany scores 63.45, highlighting its efforts in empowering individuals. The country also excels in lifestyle indicators, including **personal rights** (99.73) and **personal safety** (88.45). With a physician density score of 70.08 and high sanitation standards (99.15), Germany demonstrates a commitment to public health and well-being. Regarding **vocational and technical skills**, Germany stands out with a score of 70.94. It performs exceptionally well in mid-level skills (75.43) and has a high percentage of the workforce with secondary education (76.39) and tertiary education (82.50). Labor productivity per employee, however, is an area that could be improved, with a score of 58.37. Overall, Germany’s results in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022 highlight its strong talent competitiveness, driven by factors such as gender equality, formal education, lifelong learning, empowerment, collaboration, lifestyle, vocational and technical skills, global knowledge skills, and a favourable regulatory landscape.

3.2.3.3 GTCI Summary

Denmark is in the GTCI **the highest-scoring EU country** with an overall third place preceded only by Switzerland (No. 1) and Singapore (No. 2). Of the EU countries, Denmark is in the list followed by Sweden

¹¹⁵ GTCI 2022, p.31

(No. 5), Netherlands (No. 6) and Finland (No. 8). All Nordic countries make it into the top 10 (except for Iceland being No. 12). EU countries Spain and Portugal that in the earlier described Expat Insider survey scored high on quality of life and ease of settling in, rank lower in the GTCI with Portugal as No. 26 and Spain as No. 29.

Data for the GTCI is collected across the different variables and pillars from a multitude of data sources used to score each country. Unlike the Expat Insider survey, it is not based on questionnaires amongst expats, which likely contributes to the different results and ranking. While there are methodology differences between the GTCI attempts to measure objective and formal conditions for attracting and retaining talent on a global scale, and the Expat Insider and the Oxford Expat study for Denmark both of which register more subjective perceptions of attraction and retention conditions, both data collection exercises have their merit and may provide interesting insights.

As per the GTCI 2022, Denmark is with an excellent score one of the most attractive countries to talent in the world. However, the overall strong performance makes it relevant for development purposes to focus on individual areas with less strong performance if Denmark is to improve its relative attractiveness to international talent. Not the least because Nordic neighbouring countries as well as many EU countries score almost as high in the GTCI. Talent competitiveness elements such as migrant stock and tolerance of minorities where Denmark according to GTCI 2022 scores low, are therefore possible development points.

3.2.4 MIPEX: Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a tool which since 2007 has **measured integration policies** across six continents, including all EU Member States. MIPEX endeavours to evaluate and compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in the countries analysed. MIPEX identifies and measures integration policies and analyses the links between integration policies, outcomes, and public opinion. Countries are granted scores through indicators in **eight policy areas**: labour market mobility, education, political participation, access to nationality, family reunion, health, permanent residence and anti-discrimination. On the basis of their MIPEX scores, countries are sorted into four main approaches to integration: 1) Comprehensive integration; 2) Equality on paper; 3) Temporary integration; and 4) Immigration without integration (integration denied). A total score of 100 is the highest attainable. For the MIPEX index a high score is therefore positive.

Though recognizing that some of the measurements applied in MIPEX may not be of direct relevance to talent – **family reunification conditions may as for example be different for persons who have entered on a permit for work than for other migrants** – other policies can have an impact on all migrants alike, insofar as retention and integration are considered interlinked concepts.¹¹⁶ The MIPEX index has therefore been included in this description.

3.2.4.1 Denmark in MIPEX 2020

In MIPEX 2020, Denmark's overall score is 49, matching the EU average but behind countries such as Sweden (86), Finland (85), Norway (69) and Germany (58). Denmark is with its integration score as "halfway favourable" ranked as a country with "Temporary integration." According to MIPEX 2020, Denmark's "Temporary Integration" approach **encourages the Danish public to see immigrants as foreigners and not as the equals of native citizens**. Denmark is according to MIPEX 2020 "one of the few countries to significantly backslide on its commitments to integration."

Amongst others due to restricted access to permanent residence and citizenship, Denmark is classified as one of the most insecure of the "Temporary integration" countries. In "Access to nationality" Denmark scores 41 points out of 100. While Denmark scores well in social areas such as Access to health (56 points out of

¹¹⁶ This is discussed in the following chapter of this report

100), Denmark's 42 points score on **Permanent residence** puts the country in the bottom four in this category, equal to Jordan and with only UAE (17) and Saudi Arabia (0) being lower.

While not all less favourable policy areas of the MIPEX are necessarily directly applicable to talent in Denmark, the MIPEX Index indicates that a country's integration policies overall influences how well immigrants and the public interact with and think of each other. Despite policy differences in the approach to and understanding of international talent attraction as compared to other types of migration, the general migration and integration policies of a country may also impact labour migrants including international talent.

3.2.4.2 Germany in MIPEX 2020

While Germany's integration **policies** are considered nearly "slightly favourable" with a score of 58/100, they are primarily focused on temporary integration rather than offering long-term security to non-EU immigrants. Germany's policies on family reunification, permanent residence, access to nationality, and anti-discrimination are cited as areas where improvements can be made to ensure equal basic rights for immigrants. Additionally, Germany's restrictions on dual nationality and delays in securing the future of non-EU immigrants contribute to a sense of insecurity and have implications for political participation and a sense of belonging among immigrants. In terms of specific policy areas, Germany's labour market mobility policies are ranked favourably in the top ten internationally, with support for equal opportunities for non-EU immigrants to progress into stable quality employment. However, family reunification policies rank in the bottom ten, with more restrictions and delays compared to other Western European/OECD countries. Education policies in Germany are considered halfway favourable, though with improvements made since the large-scale migrant and refugee arrivals in 2015/2016, but still lagging top-ranking countries. The approach to migrant health and political participation is considered slightly favourable, while policies related to permanent residence and access to nationality are ranked halfway favourable. Germany's anti-discrimination policies are slightly weaker than the average European country.

3.2.4.3 MIPEX Summary

Although Denmark's integration policies in the MIPEX 2020 are ranked along the EU average score of 49, Denmark falls behind other EU countries as well as traditional immigration countries such as New Zealand (77), USA (73), and Australia (65). Countries with an average score of 75/100 or more according to MIPEX, "adopt a comprehensive approach to integration, which fully guarantees equal rights, opportunities and security for immigrants and citizens. Policies in these countries generally encourage the public to see these as their equals, neighbours, and potential citizens." It is noteworthy that Denmark with 49 points is ranked averagely together with Switzerland (50 points), both of which were in the top three in the aforementioned GTCI.¹¹⁷

The publication of new comparisons of attractiveness and competitiveness are usually well covered by media in Denmark and Germany where a good score is widely reported. As noted from this short overview, that could have included also additional indexes, there are however notable differences in both methodology and ranking from one index to the other, as well as differing needs between different groups of talent. While questions of GDP, salary and taxes, security, education, and labour market integration programmes may positively affect attractiveness and competitiveness according to the indexes, also questions of **openness, tolerance, residence opportunities** and **inclusion** play a role in attraction and ultimately retention. Faced with international competition to attract and retain talent, policy changes may affect a country's relative standing but still be impacted by policies or policy changes in neighbouring countries. It is therefore paramount to analyse and develop national attraction and retention policies with a view to neighbouring countries and the regional context, but also to seek cooperation with the same countries. Despite differences in methodologies, focus areas and target groups, international comparisons may provide benchmarks for a country's own standing and potential interventions, but also serve as inspiration for collection of national data sets and more subjective type feedback from talent to inform policy developments.

¹¹⁷ Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) 2020

CHAPTER IV

RETENTION, INTEGRATION, AND INCLUSION



4. RETENTION, INTEGRATION, AND INCLUSION

4.1 Determinants of retention

Faced with demographic changes and the need for specialized workforce for the green transition and ever more digitalized societies, there is increasing focus on the need to attract talent and other labour migrants at all skills levels to the EU and its member states. In addition to nationally designed labour migration schemes, recent actions to attract skilled workforce to the EU include the European Commission communication on the **Skills and Talent Package**, the launch of the **EU Labour Migration Platform** and making 2023 the European Year of Skills. Attempts by EU and its member states to attract skilled migrants takes place in a context of global competition for talent, where other countries and regions compete for the same skilled labour and talent can benefit from multiple global mobility opportunities.

A critical aspect of comprehensive migration policy and an important factor to make attraction measures efficient is to devote parallel efforts to foster also retention. Retention is here understood as enabling conditions that increase the likelihood of a longer-term stay in the host country including, but not limited to, enabling **policies, country context and support structures**. Retention is, as such, different from attraction but naturally linked as retention factors may also make a country or region more or less attractive to international talent. Retention factors therefore may impact attraction along the entire customer journey.

This makes attraction and retention of talent not only a question of facilitating the arrival of needed international talents, but **also creating the conditions to support longer term stay and contribution to the labour market**. The concept of retention therefore links to longer – or even permanent – stay in the host country or region.

Retention does not only refer to longer-term stay in the host country but may also apply to intra-company mobility or intra-corporate transfers. These different modalities of retention are considered in the framework of the Talent Hub project as well.

The concept of retention, '*fastholdelse*' in Danish or '*Bindung*' in German, is closely related to the concept of **integration**. That is, that talents who have arrived in Denmark – or any other EU country – and are well integrated into society are also more likely to stay in the country for a longer period of time. Although the related term "**inclusion**" may be used interchangeably with integration, and therefore also linked to retention, it marks a difference for some. When inclusion is used as being different from integration with regards to talent, it may be to differentiate that talent should at first feel included in the host society on the short to mid-term, after which they may be integrated on longer term if they decide to stay.

International talent with multiple, professional opportunities across the globe may from the beginning of stay in a given country actively decide to stay only shortly or opt to relocate if and when the host society does not offer the conditions to stay. It may however be erroneous to think that integration and (social) inclusion only become important once a talent decides to stay longer. If integration options are not available from the very beginning of the stay or even before arrival in the country, it may affect negatively the willingness to stay even before there is a conscious decision to remain or not.

The current report does not conceptually distinguish between the concepts of integration and inclusion, but rather tends to view both as umbrella concepts that subsume numerous **determinants of retention**.

Integration and inclusion are in this understanding used to describe the various factors that can impact the possibility or willingness of the talent to stay.

The report also does not attempt to define the preferred or ideal length of retention but describes the retention factors that may influence talents' stay making it both **quantitatively** longer as well as **qualitatively** more rewarding for the individual, the family, and the hosting society.

Retention and the linked concepts of integration and inclusion are therefore considered quantitatively in a time perspective, understood as the duration of time after the talent has arrived at the new setting (workplace, community, society). It is the time that follows and the **interaction** of the newcomer with the **community, workplace, and social life** when integration and (social) inclusion come into play. The feeling of integration and inclusion of talent in the hosting society is considered as having a qualitatively positive effect insofar as personal well-being may also support financial productivity, professional development and engagement in society.

The importance of interaction and participation for productivity is not only valid for talent, but also for any **accompanying family members**. In 2019, the Oslo Region Alliance conducted a study on the talent management by including talents' experiences of living in Norway. The study found that accompanying partners to talents, particularly those coming from non-EU countries, tended to constitute an "unused potential" in Norway due to the often inactive status of the accompanying partner/spouse. The inability to activate the partner's potential for example through finding a suitable employment, was seen as affecting the decision of the talent/couple to such a degree that they would leave Norway again.¹¹⁸

Also, Danish studies point to the centrality of both family and typical integration elements for retention. In 2020, Oxford Research conducted an expat survey that was carried out amongst almost 2,000 expats in Denmark. The main reason for respondents to prolong their stay in Denmark was reportedly satisfaction with their life in the country (Oxford Research, 2020). That is, that both expats and their families/partners were happy with their life in Denmark. Conversely, unhappiness would make them shorten their stay. While the Oxford research noted that many different, interrelated factors apply when it comes to retention, better language skills and a better social life rank amongst the most important factors overall.

In the context of this report, integration is therefore viewed as a central concept when exploring retention and factors that influence the retention of talent in Denmark, Germany and more broadly within the EU. Integration is, therefore, a whole of society, and whole of community process, which is contextualized and involves both structural and individual factors, requiring mutual adaptation from migrants and communities. Retention is again linked to broader migration policies.¹¹⁹ While duration of stay is a central measure of retention, integration and social inclusion are considered decisive for retention mechanisms as well as the well-being and productivity of talent.

4.1.1 Retention and Integration: Process and stakeholders

As highlighted in EU's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027), integration is linked to a **long-term perspective** bringing *long-term* well-being for society, economy and migrants.¹²⁰ In line with IOM's definition and the EU Action Plan, this report considers integration as a **two-way process of mutual adaptation between talents and the host society**. Integration processes may vary depending on the **needs, expectations**, and the **migratory journey** as well as the **readiness, expectations and capacities of communities to welcome newcomers**.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Johnsen, Ingrid via Oslo Alliance 2019, [Talent Management in Greater Oslo: How to improve the reception and integration of international talents](#)

¹¹⁹ Hof, Helena. 2021. EU migrant retention and the temporalities of migrant staying: a new conceptual framework

¹²⁰ European Commission 2020. [Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#)

¹²¹ IOM 2017. [Integration and Social Cohesion: Key Elements for reaping the benefits of migration](#)

Although integration is a continuous process of adaptation between talent and society, it is supported by different measures that can help to smoothen the transition into a new society. Integration constitutes both so-called ‘instrumental measures’ (access to housing, accommodation, language learning, health services), as well as ‘soft measures’ (feeling of belonging, engagement with and of community, well-being) to lift the challenges emerging the experience of settling into a new place.

Despite differences in legal status, there is an overlap between concepts generally accepted as applicable to the successful integration of different categories of population. In Denmark, **integration policies are often focussed labour market integration**. For example, the Danish Government’s document “Samarbejde om bedre integration” (2016)¹²² stresses the importance of motivating more persons with ethnic minority background to participate actively in the Danish labour market but it does not articulate efforts to support integration and inclusion of persons admitted for work or study purposes.

This approach also translates into the mandates of Danish municipalities. Under the overall supervision of the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI), both Danish municipalities and SIRI have a defined mandate to assist vulnerable migrants in receipt of social benefits but have less clear responsibilities to assist migrants admitted for work or study purposes.

Retention and the **experiences of integration may also be linked to the efforts that employers put into the retention of international staff**. In a study rolled out among Fast-Track certified companies in Denmark from 2018, it is argued that companies can and should play a more active role in establishing retention procedures and strategies, as it determines whether employees will stay in Denmark or not.¹²³ Only thirty per cent of the Danish companies participating in the study reported that they had developed a **strategy for retention**. Although a higher number of companies reported that they had concrete procedures for retention that target foreign employees at the workplace, these were not always operational. As international recruitment and onboarding create additional administrative work for companies, some companies may have less focus on retention and by default less capacity to **operationalise and strategize retention** into their daily work.

The importance of employers engaging in the retention of their international staff points to the potential impact of **acknowledging the linkages between retention, integration, and inclusion**. Whereas employers may according to capacity support incoming talent, they might not have the capacity to become involved in integration measures per se. This points to the need of adopting multi-stakeholder approaches to retention and overall integration and inclusion bringing together complementary efforts, expertise and resources from different actors such as central and local governments, service providers, civil society, private sector partners, social partners and other stakeholders.

4.1.2 Retention factors – individual and context

While the current report and other analyses of retention by default look at general factors, **retention determinants are indeed individual and may differ depending on family status** (single or with family), background (nationality, education, age, gender, etc.), profession and opportunities elsewhere, but also the intention and motivation of migrating. As pointed out by Iacono et.al. (2021),¹²⁴ talent mobility tends to decrease with increasing age and the presence of family. Some talents known as “**career sharks**” may even at the outset have very limited interest in staying long-term and prefer to change country in search of better opportunities and first and foremost career development, but also such intentions can change over time.

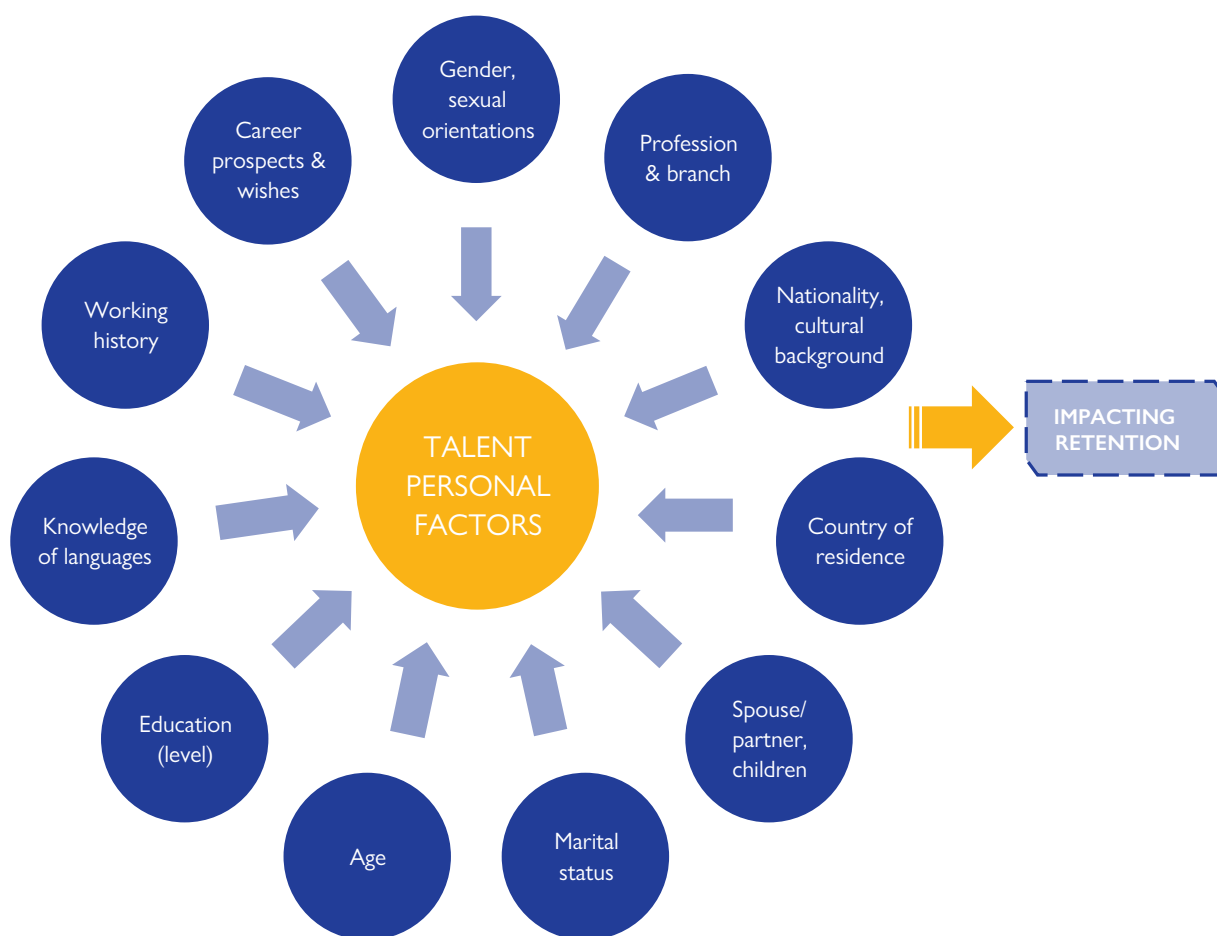
¹²² Government of Denmark 2016. [Samarbejde om bedre integration](#)

¹²³ Foreningen Nydansker 2018. [Modtagelse og fastholdelse af udenlandsk arbejdskraft i danske virksomheder](#) p.8. Please note that study includes companies that have been approved to become a part of the labour market scheme, Fast-Track scheme. A total of 20 Danish companies with international staff participated in the survey, and six in the interview conducted by Foreningen Nydansker in 2018.

¹²⁴ Dello Iacono, C., Orfao, G., & Stanek, M. 2021. The changing nature of intra-European mobility of third-country nationals. Review of institutional framework and general dynamics (Deliverable 3.1). Leuven: HumMingBird project 870661 – H2020

As such, there is **no one-size-fits-all solution on retention factors**, which necessitates a broad range of interventions on all levels supported by all stakeholders and actors involved in talent management. This also holds true when considering potential retention policy reforms, as these would not only have to consider the strictly professional dimension (labour migration schemes, residency, finding a job, salary, taxes, career development opportunities etc.), but also the personal dimension (social and family networks, feeling included, personal security etc.) as illustrated in figure 26. The individual aspects of retention also mean that what might be considered a good practice of talent retention in one country context or for specific talent groups might not necessarily be duplicated with the same effect in another setting but would have to be adapted to the context and target group.

FIGURE 26. PERSONAL FACTORS IMPACTING RETENTION

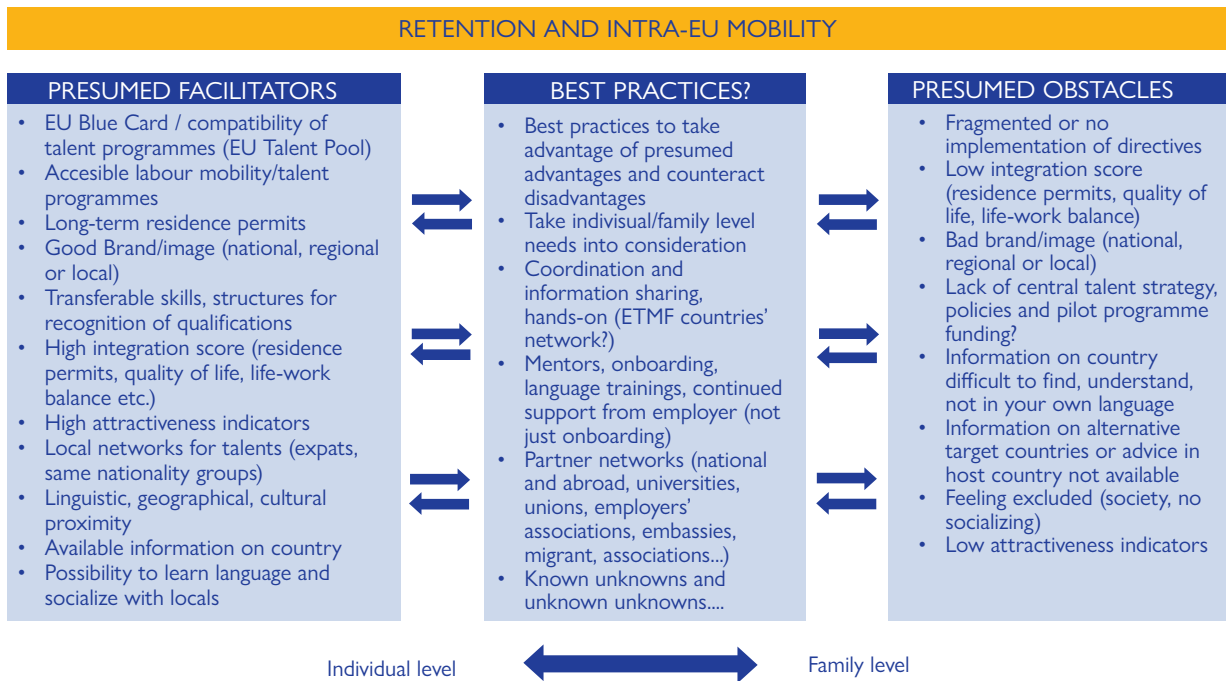


Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub Brief

Figure 27 below illustrates one of the first attempts of the Talent Hub project to map the presumed facilitators and obstacles to retention of talent (left and right column respectively), with a selection of supposed best practices in the middle column. Best practices are here understood as procedures and structures that have the potential to capitalize on the facilitators for increased retention, while counteracting the obstacles. Underwriting the model is however the natural differences between individuals and families, who have different needs and backgrounds. A major facilitator for one person or group may not have the same impact for another, which can again have an impact on retention and attraction initiatives. A Digital Hub Denmark publication from 2020,¹²⁵ dealing strictly with digital talent, has for example found that there was a need to map the preferences of specific groups of digital specialists to be able to target attraction and retention initiatives for these professional profiles.

¹²⁵ Digital Hub Denmark, HBS Economics 2020. [Digitale talenter og muligheder for at tiltrække mere talent til Danmark](#)

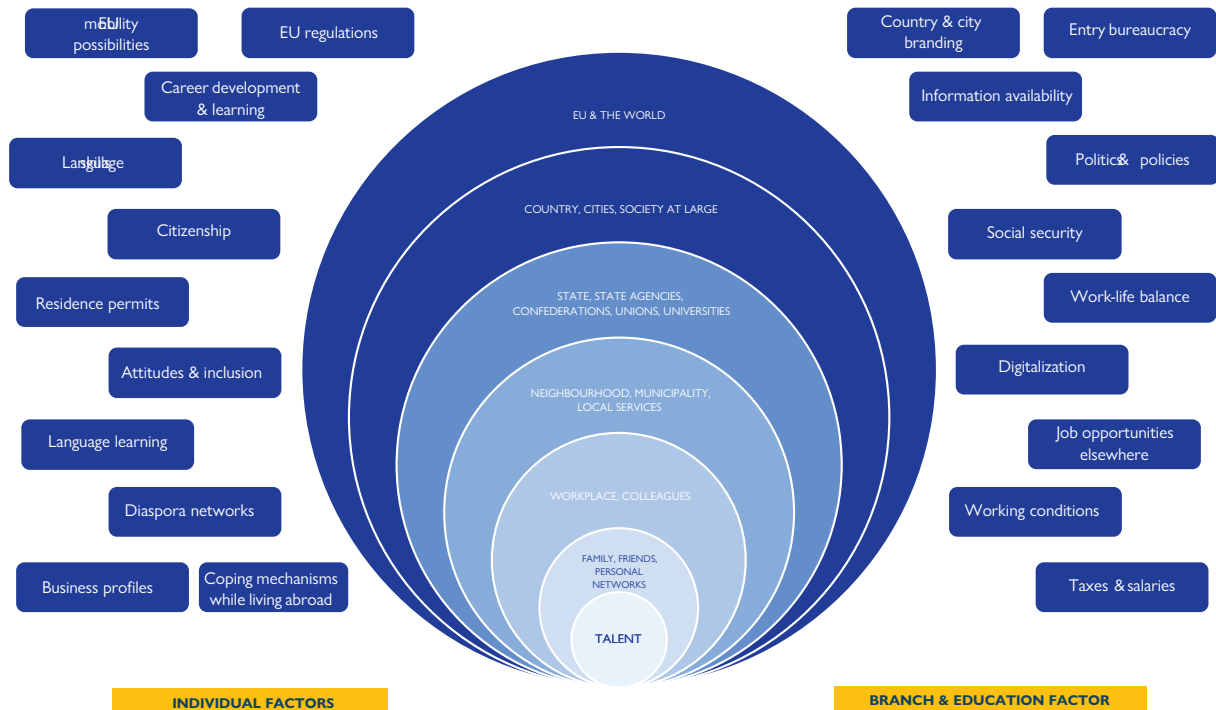
FIGURE 27. RETENTION FACTORS CHART



Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub

To further capture the complexity of retention including actors involved in sustaining retention among talents, IOM developed the model depicted here below in figure 28.

FIGURE 28. FACTORS IMPACTING RETENTION BY ACTORS



Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub

The model above (figure 28) attempts to capture several factors identified as relevant for retention of talent, while noting that the factors are not exhaustive. The factors may not only vary in relevance to talents in different ways depending on their individual situation, but they might also affect different personal and societal levels such as the talent's immediate family, friends and personal networks through the workplace, municipality, state agencies, country, and the international context. Ultimately, the attraction and retention of talent depend also on the opportunities offered elsewhere, be it in the same country, in the EU or globally. A **holistic approach** to talent attraction and retention should ideally take into consideration and capture as many of these elements as possible, also noting the importance of consultation and coordination with multiple stakeholders both nationally and internationally.

In the process of refining and structuring identified retention factors, IOM in consultation with Copenhagen Capacity grouped main retention factors into three systemic and five thematic areas that are also used to structure the recommendations flowing from the research. Retention factors in Denmark and Germany are described in the following sections, grouped into systemic and thematic areas respectively.

CHAPTER V

RETENTION FACTORS – SYSTEMIC AND THEMATIC AREAS



5. RETENTION FACTORS – SYSTEMIC AND THEMATIC AREAS

The desktop research carried out for the purpose of the current **multi-situational report** revealed a **number of factors and practices relevant for the retention of talent** and **other international workforce**, depending on individual as well as family factors, applicable legislation, country and context. The various factors are not only relevant on the level of the individual talent, but also affected by structures, practices, and persons around the talent, from the possibilities elsewhere in the EU and the world, through country level factors, cities, organizations, municipalities, and the workplace.

For the purpose of this report, selected factors considered important for retention and talent management at large have been divided into eight main areas. These include both **systemic** and **thematic areas** as illustrated in [Figure 1](#) (p. 4).

The systemic areas are represented by the blue and green coloured circles, and the thematic areas by the yellow circles. The systemic areas primarily refer to the main **systemic talent management structures and practices** in the country, whereas the thematic areas refer to topics also of **more personal relevance for talents and their families**.

The three systemic areas, **Coordination, Support and Structures, Collection of Information and Data, and Access to Information and Services** and the five thematic areas, **Language Training and Learning, Well-Being and Family Support, Professional Development and Opportunities, Residency and Branding and Digital Ecosystem and Bureaucracy** are detailed hereunder in sections 5.1 (systemic areas) and 5.2 (thematic areas). Each of the systemic or thematic areas is preceded by a short introduction, followed by a description of the situation in Denmark and Germany respectively. The side-by-side country descriptions are meant to show both differences and similarities between Denmark and Germany, but also to serve as inspiration for possible policy developments in both countries.

After the description of each of the systemic or thematic areas, IOM has included an information box referencing the related **Talent Hub recommendations**. These can be accessed in detail in the separate recommendations document. The numbering of the area and recommendations in the text boxes mirror the numbering applied in the recommendations document and not of this report. The recommendations can be accessed on the project website at <https://denmark.iom.int/talent-hub-eu> and <https://germany.iom.int/talent-hub-eu> or requested from IOM.

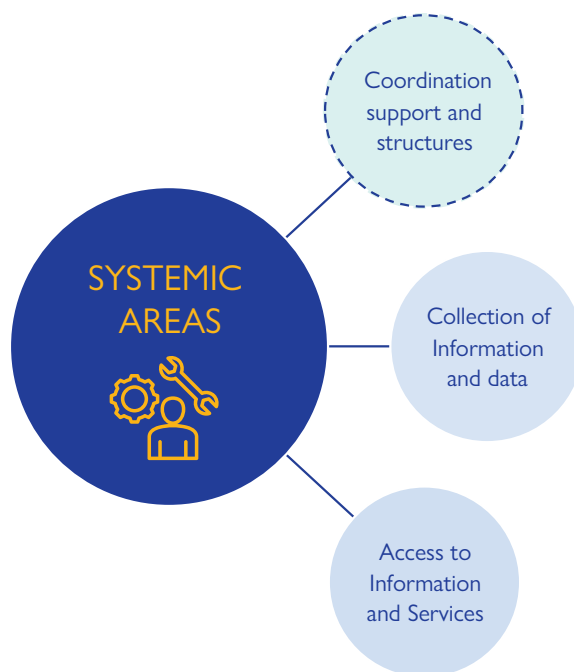
5.1 Systemic areas

5.1.1 *Coordination Support and Structures*

The systemic area “Coordination Support and Structures” is in this report the first of three, overall systemic areas that support not only the thematic areas and actions but are crucial for the entire talent management ecosystem. “Coordination Support and Structures” cover topics such as **national and local coordination mechanisms, structures for enhanced retention and attraction** as well as **overall policy changes**, based on the understanding that structural improvement happens not only through the application of good practice models but also through systemic change. While it might be challenging to change the overall system, structures, and policies on short term, and some of the related

recommendations are therefore aspirational more than practically implementable on short or medium term, it is nevertheless an area that facilitates changes in several areas and therefore with a potentially large impact on the national talent management system.

FIGURE 29. SYSTEMIC AREAS OF THE RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS



Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub

5.1.1.1 Situation in Denmark

The development and expansion of labour migration schemes in Denmark mainly take place through political negotiations in the parliament and are therefore subject to differing political interests and contexts. This means that the introduction of new schemes as well as modifications of existing schemes may not be strictly limited to the need for international labour force but also to more general migration considerations. Although it can be argued that this has led to a number of very targeted schemes corresponding to Denmark’s specific labour market needs at the time of negotiations, the ensuing changes may also be perceived as a lack of unified direction seeing that they depend on the political will and interests of the moment.

The number of English-language study places in Denmark was first reduced in 2017 and 2022 following reports that international students, including EU nationals, did not remain in Denmark upon graduation. However, in 2023, English-language study possibilities in Denmark were scheduled to increase following political acknowledgement of the need for foreign students as an important source of international talent.¹²⁶ Even if this was also known at the time of reductions in 2017.

Notwithstanding the prerogative of Danish decision makers to define the political direction at any given time, there have over the years been calls amongst stakeholders in Denmark to formulate a national talent strategy to support initiatives and provide longer-term political direction to the multitude of stakeholders and programmes in Denmark working to enhance attraction and retention.¹²⁷ A national strategy and coordination

¹²⁶ See as for example following online articles: [Opbremsning i optaget af studerende på engelsksprogede uddannelser — Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet \(ufm.dk\)](#), [Knap 4000 engelsksprogede uddannelsespladser forsvinder til sommer: Det koster vigtig arbejdskraft, frygter erhvervslivet | Østjylland | DR](#), [For halvandet år siden afskaffede S 4000 udenlandske studiepladser, nu skal der oprettes nye - TV 2](#)

¹²⁷ HBS Economics 2020, and Akademikerne 2023, [Alarmerende behov for national strategi for international rekruttering - Akademikerne](#), 5 July. Also Local Government Denmark (KL), the association of Danish municipalities in ["Udspil om International Arbejdskraft"](#) (2023)

structures in the field of attraction and retention could stimulate the creation of similar structures on local/regional level and provide a political direction for e.g. municipal level interventions. As described in the recently published “International Talent Map” publication,¹²⁸ as for example Finland and Estonia have national strategies/programmes to attract and retain international talent, whereas Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden do not. However, initiatives for defining a national strategy are on the way in Norway and Sweden.

The lack of a Danish national strategy is reflected in an apparent lack of central coordination in the field of attraction and retention. Although attraction and retention activities are implemented cross-country by a variety of stakeholders and through different programmes, no central structure holds a national coordination or at least convening role in the field of talent management. SIRI plays a central role in decision making on labour permits and coordination of municipal integration programming for non-labour migrants, but less so for integration, inclusion, and retention of talent, where there is no formal mandate. The former points to the need to strengthen recognition of the links between social inclusion, integration and retention of talent and other labour migrants, to foster the potential retention benefits of a more structured inclusion of talent and their families.

The well-defined mandate of SIRI with regards to national coordination of integration of non-labour migrants and the coordination with municipalities under the Integration Act, accentuates SIRI’s more limited role in the work on retention of talent and other labour migrants where the mandate is less well-defined.

Well-established private sector actors at national level as well as regional and municipal actors implement talent management activities and share information and best practices through personal networks across the country, such as the [State of Denmark](#) initiative. Despite recognition of the work of non-state actors on attraction and retention, there is no agency with a formal, national coordination and convening role on talent management on the side of Danish state bodies.

A centrally appointed coordination and convening role could facilitate information sharing and capacity building that, while also provided by an actor such as the Confederation of Danish Industry to its members, could be in demand particularly for SMEs wanting to engage in international recruitment. Making up most Danish businesses,¹²⁹ SMEs with at least ten full-time employees were as of 1 April 2023 afforded the possibility to make use of the Danish Fast-Track Scheme following legislative changes (compared to 20 full-time employees previously). As compared to larger enterprises, SMEs may however refrain from trying to attract international talent due to heavy administrative requirements and lack of in-house talent management capacity, wherefore capacity building, and practical support particularly to SMEs would be needed.

As described elsewhere in this report, the Talent Hub project considers retention not only from the perspective of duration of stay in the individual EU Member State, but also as **retention within the EU area**. Retention is hereby linked to **intra-EU mobility**, i.e. the possibility for talent to move within the EU to work and settle in another EU country. EU talent mobility facilitates professional, personal, and economic development in the EU area and lies behind the idea of establishing a Talent Hub.

According to A Horizon report,¹³⁰ intra-EU mobility often takes place between countries with the same linguistic and cultural background, as well between neighbouring states.

Due to the Danish opt-outs to EU cooperation on migration, Denmark is not bound by and does not implement directives aiming to facilitate intra-EU mobility of TCN talent, including but not limited to the EU Blue Card. TCN talent in another EU Member State wishing to come to Denmark must therefore apply for a work permit in Denmark through one of the Danish labour pathways similarly to applicants applying directly from a third country. Likewise, TCN talent in Denmark wanting to move to another EU Member

¹²⁸ Linköping Science Park & Future Place Leadership 2023, International Talent Map: A data driven benchmark across selected European countries

¹²⁹ According to SMVDenmark, employees in SMEs make up 38 per cent of all employees in the private sector; not including micro enterprises with less than ten employees ([De små og mellemstore virksomheder er rygraden i dansk erhvervsliv \(smvdanmark.dk\)](#) (6 January 2022))

¹³⁰ Dello Iacono, C., Orfao, G., & Stanek, M. (2021). The changing nature of intra-European mobility of third-country nationals. Review of institutional framework and general dynamics (Deliverable 3.1). Leuven: HumMingBird project 870661 – H2020.

State must apply for a permit to enter the country in question. Despite recent policy updates in Denmark to facilitate labour migration to the country, the Danish opt-outs set Denmark apart from the majority of EU countries with regards to facilitation of intra-EU mobility. This may influence Denmark's attractiveness as a career destination for talent due to limitations on moving easily to and from the country within the EU, also in the face of favourable labour migration policies of neighbouring Sweden and particularly Germany working actively to attract foreign talent.

One of the recent initiatives in Germany is the introduction of the points-based Opportunity Card that is expected to potentially attract 30,000 new labour migrants to Germany. It is possible that the introduction of favourable labour attraction programmes in neighbouring Germany could affect the relative attractiveness of Denmark to TCN talent, seeing that Denmark does not have a points-based entry system after the abolishment of the Green Card scheme in 2016.

5.1.1.2 Situation in Germany

Accompanied by various legal innovations aimed at facilitating and accelerating the access of skilled migrant workers from third countries to the German labour market, the Federal Government and relevant stakeholders developed a **comprehensive skilled worker strategy**, which includes the **recruitment of skilled workers** from third countries as one of the priority fields of action to secure skilled workers for the future.¹³¹ The strategy bundles the relevant policy measures of all relevant actors on the topics of administrative procedures, recognition of foreign professional qualifications, attracting skilled workers from abroad and German language acquisition.

While comprehensive legal foundations are in place, there is a need to further enhance **framework conditions** to enable better cooperation and coordination between all actors at the local, regional, and national levels, including non-state actors. For example, when it comes to policy on the recruitment of international skilled workers, governmental actors at different levels are involved. This includes around eight federal ministries, seven key implementation actors and four key actors at the local level, each with varying responsibilities but often overlapping portfolios.¹³² Additionally, non-state actors including the private sector and migrant organisations play a crucial role in supporting the government's efforts in the field of talent attraction and retention.

Regarding overall talent management, while a strategy and legal foundations for the attraction of international talent are in place, there is **no official strategy regarding the retention of talent**.¹³³ Governmental and/or non-governmental actors offer several opportunities to make it easier for migrant workers to arrive and settle in Germany, including language- and cultural/orientation classes. While not always specifically targeted at migrant workers or not easily accessible, particularly for people who live outside of cities, retention and integration initiatives are often offered at the local and regional level and can include onboarding initiatives, buddy systems, mentoring programmes as well as welcome centres. However, these initiatives often do not extend beyond the first weeks and months after arrival. Companies may complement such services, and some even offer their own welcome packages to talents. Various programmes offer counselling on intercultural competence development for central labour market actors.¹³⁴ The aim is to raise intercultural awareness, initiate intercultural exchange and address or counter discrimination. National and regional platforms intend to share best practices among labour market stakeholders and mostly aim at improving access to the labour market.¹³⁵

In view of recent and expanding EU initiatives to facilitate the access, **intra-EU circulation and retention of TCN talent** across the European Union, Germany generally supports labour migration and the principle

¹³¹ The Federal Government 2022. Fachkräftestrategie der Bundesregierung. 3.5. Moderne Einwanderungspolitik, Reduzierung der Abwanderung (p. 25 – 30) – available [here](#).

¹³² Steffen Angenendt, Nadine Knapp & David Kipp (2023). German Institute for International and Security Affairs, *Germany is Looking for Foreign Labour*.

¹³³ International Talent Map: A data driven benchmark across selected European countries, Linköping Science Park & Future Place Leadership, December 2023

¹³⁴ including employment agencies, municipal administrations as well as small and medium-sized enterprises.

¹³⁵ For example, the [IQ Good Practice](#) platform provides employment services, advice centers, educational service providers and companies with various good practice examples of instruments, concepts, measures and formats on labour market integration.

of mobility within the EU for TCNs under European Union regulations, while maintaining its own national regulations and requirements for labour migration, which differ from those for EU citizens.

The **permanent EU Residence Permit** (translated into the German Residence Act) is a permanent residence permit similar to the German settlement permit. Holders of the permanent EU residence permit can move to almost all EU countries¹³⁶ and obtain a residence permit under facilitated conditions.¹³⁷

Related recommendations:

I. COORDINATION, SUPPORT AND STRUCTURES

- I.1: Establish national talent coordination mechanisms and strategy
- I.2: Acknowledge commonalities between integration, inclusion and retention and adapt policies accordingly
- I.3: Offer coaching and practical guidance on international talent management to stakeholders
- I.4: Provide needs assessment and strategy development tools for the use of stakeholders
- I.5: Analyse potential to join or facilitate EU level Talent initiatives such as the EU Blue Card, Talent Pool and Talent Partnerships
- I.6: Relaunch revised Green Card pilot scheme (Denmark)

5.1.2 Collection of Information and Data

The systemic area “Collection of Information and Data” is the second systemic area covered by this report and the Talent Hub project’s recommendations. The state and its agencies hold important functions with regards to talent management insofar as nationally mandated agencies are well placed to systematically collect and analyse data on national talent management for evidence-based policy development, but also to facilitate national information sharing especially for stakeholders. Collection of Information and Data is as such distinct from the related systemic area “Access to Information and Services.” Whereas the latter denotes information sharing with existing and potential talents on as for example Danish and German labour market schemes, Collection of Information and Data here signifies data and information collected for the benefit of national stakeholders.

5.1.2.1 Situation in Denmark

A challenge for the research towards the current report has been the **lack of publicly available data** on the background, movement and motivations of talent and especially accompanying family members. Not only in Denmark, but also comparable data between EUMS to ascertain intra-EU movements. While some data is collected in Denmark for the main talent applicants as for example as a consequence of the need to officially apply through one of the Danish labour market schemes, there is less data available on accompanying family members. While there is broad consensus amongst stakeholders that the employment status of spouses and partners can be decisive for retention rates and contribute to the economy, IOM has not identified any officially available employment statistics for spouses and partners. It is therefore not known exactly how many spouses and partners find employment after arrival or if the level of employment corresponds to level of education.¹³⁸ Although a data collection exercise like the Expat Study collects some information every few years – the last Expat Study is from 2020 – it is not done at frequent intervals, and it does not distinguish between different categories of expats in Denmark such as Nordic and EU citizens or TCNs. Also, according to IOM’s information, there have been no specific recommendations or actions implemented following the last Expat Study. Definition of a data collection model would, if coordinated on a European scale, also work in favour of **comparability of talent management data** across the European Union.

¹³⁶ Except Ireland and Denmark

¹³⁷ The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2020. Mobilität nach dem Daueraufenthalt-EU (01.03.2020) – available [here](#)

¹³⁸ The earlier observation that the occupation types of accompanying family members deviate significantly from those of talent could indicate mismatch between education and employment, also known as the “Helper Trap,” although it could also mean that spouses/partners are simply qualified for other professions than the talent.

For improved talent management and particularly retention rates, it would be important to collect data systematically for **evidence-backed policies** and relevant actions. Depending on data protection regulations and the defined data format, this could be through combination of existing registries and data, but also collection of new data sets (see here below). As for example on previous residence countries, educational and professional background of talents and families, employment rates, duration of stay etc. to allow for targeted actions for enhanced talent management.

Apart from the Expat Study, that through questionnaires distributed directly to expats in Denmark to collect input on “Coming to Denmark,” “Working in Denmark,” “Living in Denmark,” and “Retention of Expats,” there is limited information available on the subjective experience of talents and their families in Denmark. The current report and other sources therefore have limited access to concrete data on which to base policy recommendations and on which to plan targeted interventions. The aforementioned International Talent Map by Linköping Science Park and Future Place Leadership is a recent example of an international information collection, whereas IOM’s Talent Survey under the Talent Hub project was focussed on Denmark and Germany on a smaller scale.¹³⁹ To **determine the motivations for talent** and their families to arrive, stay and leave, it would be important to collect input from both the talents and their families directly to be used as a feedback mechanism for policy and programme improvements.

Even if there is a wealth of reports on talent management published by different stakeholders as well as some fora for sharing of best practices, there is currently **no central portal or information site on talent management** in Denmark, where talent management stakeholders can access information on current and past programming, capacity building opportunities etc. Sites such as [Workindenmark](#) and [lifeindenmark.dk - the official guide \(borger.dk\)](#) target talent and others who aspire to live and work in Denmark, whereas [integrationsviden.dk](#) and [Det nationale integrationsbarometer — Integrationsbarometer](#) collect and provide resources related mostly to integration of non-labour migrants, such as asylum seekers and refugees. The previously existing site ‘[expatviden.dk](#)’ that collected information on reception and retention of international talent, has been discontinued as of 2020.

Denmark implements as many as **10-15 different schemes for attraction of international labour**, depending on how the schemes are counted and defined. The schemes have been introduced and revised over the years in response to labour market needs and subject to political negotiations. The **Pay-Limit Scheme** was as an example originally introduced in 2008, revised in 2017 and again in 2023 with the introduction of the Supplementary Pay-Limit Scheme. The supplementary scheme is implemented in parallel to the ordinary pay-limit scheme but is subject to extra conditions such as the seasonal gross unemployment rate not exceeding 3,75 per cent. The **Fast-Track Scheme** came into force in 2015 and was revised again as of 2023, allowing businesses of a smaller size to become certified for fast-track. The **Positive Lists** of professions in high demand are not stable but updated twice a year, whereas the Green Card was introduced in 2008 and abolished again by law in 2016. Some labour market stakeholders have called for the re-introduction of the Green Card in face of current labour market needs. There are further special schemes for researchers, people with specific individual qualifications, trainees, and others.

Even if the different schemes offer a variety of options to gain a work permit in Denmark in accordance with political agreements and can be considered flexible insofar as they may be adapted to changing needs, the multitude of schemes with different and changing requirements could also be considered a complication. Despite changes, the administratively light Fast-Track Scheme has been regarded as an enviable scheme also by stakeholders outside Denmark. Without prejudice to the political negotiations and motivations for prioritizing some labour schemes over others, there seems to be room to carry out an **analysis of current international labour migration schemes** in Denmark to determine if these are fit-for-purpose and fulfill the requirements of the Danish labour market and its stakeholders.

¹³⁹ IOM’s survey is described in Chapter 6 of this report

5.1.2.2 Situation in Germany

Data collection is crucial for improving talent management as it provides insights into dynamics, guides the development of effective retention strategies, and allows stakeholders to make **evidence-based and data-driven decisions** that support their overall talent management objectives, addressing the needs and challenges of international talent, while securing fundamental **privacy rights and safety** of the latter.

With the increasing need for recruiting international talent to boost the current situation in the German labor market and the recent political and legal reforms to facilitate and accelerate the access of migrant workers from third countries, more attention has been paid to **information and data on the background, mobility, and motives of international talent**. Different stakeholders have launched surveys targeting international talent to shed light on their journeys and the challenges they face. General data and information on the purpose and duration of residence is being collected and published by various government entities. However, there is still a lack of insights regarding certain aspects, namely the **potential of accompanying family members** and partners/spouses as well as specific aspects of mobility such as **retention and mobility within the EU**.

The Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and the Federal Employment Agency provide general information on the purpose and duration of residence:

The Federal Foreign Office publishes annual statistics on Schengen and national visas issued by purpose of stay.¹⁴⁰ The statistics thus also provide information on the number of visas issued by the respective German diplomatic mission abroad (174 visa offices in total) for the purpose of employment and/or study.

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees provides information on the topics of asylum, migration and integration and regularly produces accompanying reports and brochures. In 2008, the [EU Regulation¹⁴¹](#) gave the Federal Office the status of a national data provider for the European Commission (Eurostat). The regulation created extended statistical reporting obligations for the Federal Office in the fields of asylum (Article 4) and the residence of third-country nationals (Article 6). In this way, the collection of statistical information on migration-specific topics is to be improved overall and, above all, the international comparability of the statistics is to be established. BAMF also regularly publishes the “Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring”¹⁴² report which provides information on current developments regarding the migration of TCN to Germany for the purpose of education and employment. Among other things, the report shows status changes in the context of labour and educational migration. For example, in 2022, around 35,400 people switched directly from a residence permit for educational migration (e.g. study program) to a residence permit for (seeking) gainful employment. This statistic allows conclusions to be drawn about the retention of international students in Germany.

In 2020, the **Federal Employment Agency** commissioned the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IAW) to carry out a study on **emigration**.¹⁴³ The study sheds light on the reasons for return to origin countries and onward migration of foreign workers after a work stay in Germany. In the first round, a total of 1,900 workers were surveyed via social media channels. Identifying and understanding emigration patterns among international talents may provide valuable insights into retention factors, and ultimately serve to better inform targeted measures.

In September 2022, the **OECD**, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, launched the survey “**Your Way to Germany**”¹⁴⁴ among professionals abroad that are interested in moving

¹⁴⁰ Auswärtiges Amt, Statistik zu erteilten Visa – available [here](#).

¹⁴¹ VERORDNUNG (EG) Nr. 862/2007 DES EUROPÄISCHEN PARLAMENTS UND DES RATES vom 11. Juli 2007 zu Gemeinschaftsstatistiken über Wanderung und internationalen Schutz und zur Aufhebung der Verordnung (EWG) Nr. 311/76 des Rates über die Erstellung von Statistiken über ausländische Arbeitnehmer

¹⁴² The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Monitoring zur Bildungs- und Erwerbsmigration – available [here](#).

¹⁴³ Institut für angewandte Wirtschaftsforschung der Universität Tübingen (IAW), Abschlussbericht, Vorstudie zur Abwanderung von ausländischen Fachkräften (31. Oktober 2023) – available [here](#).

¹⁴⁴ OECD 2022, Your Way to Germany: Ergebnisse einer Onlinebefragung unter Fachkräften im Ausland – available [here](#).

to Germany. The survey aims to shed light on reasons for Germany's low attractiveness to international talent by accompanying potential candidates during parts of or the entire immigration journey.

A study conducted by the **German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM)** in 2022 on '[potential of partners who join their spouses for the German labour market](#)'¹⁴⁵ shows that partners frequently face difficulties accessing the labour market, which is often due to language skills, recognition of their qualifications, the length of their stay in Germany and, in some cases, access to childcare.

Related recommendations:

II. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION AND DATA

- II.1: Consistently collect and analyse national and EU data on talent management and retention for evidence-based policies
- II.2: Establish publicly accessible portal with information and updates on talent management programming for stakeholders
- II.3: Evaluate existing labour schemes and stakeholder mandates to identify needs and gaps
- II.4: Implement feedback mechanism for migrant workers for adaptation and improvement of policies and measures

5.1.3 Access to information and Services

The third systemic area "Access to Information and Services" signifies targeted information provision to talent and their families on relevant international labour schemes and requirements both in and outside the European Union. Implemented on- and offline, such information services can be both public and private but would benefit from a centralized approach and systemic efforts.

5.1.3.1 Situation in Denmark

Persons considering relocation to Denmark through one of the existing labour schemes, or persons who already relocated, may consult a variety of sources to learn more about living and working in Denmark. Work in Denmark ([Workindenmark](#)), the national public employment service for qualified international candidates looking for a job in Denmark and under the Ministry of Employment, provides services to both employers and potential employees through their website, participation in job fairs in Denmark and abroad. Other relevant sources include the website of the Danish Immigration Service, [New to Denmark \(nyidanmark.dk\)](#), [lifeindenmark.dk - the official guide \(borger.dk\)](#), [Welcome to the official website of Denmark](#) or public or private sources such as those provided by the [University of Aarhus](#), [InterNations](#) or [Copenhagen International School](#). The list is not exhaustive. The [SIRI website](#) is primarily available in Danish and refers to the New To Denmark website for permit related information.

Despite the government information sources, those offered by private or public organizations or through social media channels, the **single largest recruitment channel** for coming to Denmark was according to the 2020 Expat Study **personal and professional networks** that were used by 37 per cent of the Expat Study respondents.¹⁴⁶ While the information provided by personal and professional networks is ultimately linked to the preferences of others recommending Denmark as a good place to work and therefore other thematic areas in this report (place and city branding, well-being of talents already in Denmark, pre-existing diaspora networks, etc.), it remains a question what could be done to enhance information provision to potential and existing talent in and outside the European Union, as well as in Denmark.

¹⁴⁵ Maciejewski, Linda und Harder, Niklas (2022): Überqualifiziert und un(ter)beschäftigt: Potenziale nachziehender Partner*innen für den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt, DeZIM Briefing Notes, Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM) – available [here](#).

¹⁴⁶ Oxford Research 2020, p.31

There is currently **no single portal** collecting all relevant information on coming to and living in Denmark, nor do existing sites to any large degree make use of possibilities for apps, multilingual setup, virtual counselling, video and sound, or greater interactivity to help applicants navigate the complexities of the application and relocation process to Denmark. **Facilitating the navigation** would however require the website(s) to be designed in a user-friendly manner, potentially preceded by a user and customer survey providing input to the future design. While direct assistance in relation to application and arrival may be provided by the prospective employer, and applicants are expected to be able to have some English language proficiency, **multi-lingual accessibility** could facilitate reach also to talent looking for information in their native languages. Curated information on **Danish labour market conditions** in more languages might also help counteract potentially incorrect immigration advice offered by sub-standard recruitment agents in countries of origin.

With regards to outreach to TCNs on labour pathways, Denmark is in a special situation compared to most other EUMS insofar as, due to the **opt-outs to EU JHA cooperation**, it currently does not partake in or implement most EU labour migration related directives and programming. Denmark is part of the European cooperation network of employment services EURES that however has its main focus on EU citizens and long-term residents but not on TCNs. The Danish opt-outs provide a peculiar set of challenges to persons who might want to relocate to Denmark from another EUMS insofar as they would need to apply through one of the Danish labour schemes in the same way as if they were outside the European Union. Specific, more harmonized, multilingual information channels and guidance consistently provided to TCN applicants in other EUMS considering coming to Denmark, facilitated through **coordinated efforts could that facilitate intra-EU mobility of TCN talent** leveraging Danish information portals.

A well-known information source for talent already arrived in Denmark is the **International Citizen Service Centres (ICS)**, physical information centres or one-stop-shops established in a cooperation between relevant authorities and targeting newcomers staying for more than three months. The ICSs gather into one location different support services for registration of newcomers, career and events information, and other needed procedures. Although the ICSs may have websites and other virtual services, they are fundamentally **off-line services** facilitating the administrative requirements around arrival to and living in a new country. Beginning with the establishment of [ICS West](#) in Århus and [International House Copenhagen](#), the model has since spread to other cities in Denmark with recent opening of an ICS in the South Jutland town of Sønderborg in 2022. The various ICSs provide services to talent and other foreign nationals living in municipalities under their purview.

5.1.3.2 Situation in Germany

Germany has implemented significant measures to provide information and services to international talents interested in studying or working in the country. Persons interested in working or studying in Germany, or those who have already moved to Germany, will find an array of sources by public and private providers about working and/or studying and living in Germany. **Make it in Germany** ([make-it-in-germany.com](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com)), launched in 2012, is the official website of the German government for qualified professionals globally. For those interested in moving to Germany, the portal offers information in different languages¹⁴⁷ on the preparations in the country of origin (including e.g. visa information), moving to Germany and the first weeks/months after the arrival (including information on e.g. housing, family life, language learning, among other topics). The website also offers various job listings for international professionals across different sectors. Employers in Germany can consult the website to obtain information and guidance on how to recruit and integrate international talents.

Further additional **online sources for information and support** for international talents interesting in working, studying and living in Germany offer guidance on immigration, language learning, labour rights, health, among others, such as the Federal Office for Migration and Refugee's Hotline [Working and Living in Germany](#), the [Federal Office for Migration and Refugee's website](#), [deutschland.de](https://www.deutschland.de). Handbook Germany

¹⁴⁷ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) is available in 4 different languages (German, English, Spanish, French), more comprehensive information in additional 15 languages. Two country pages (Brazil, Mexico) offer detailed country-specific information.

(handbookgermany.de) – a website offering information in nine different languages on topics related to immigration to Germany, language, rights and law, family, work and health, among others. Together in Germany (together-in-germany.de) - part of Handbook Germany - is a community platform that provides a digital space for newcomers in Germany to seek support and exchange with others. The German Federal Employment Agency's website ([Living, studying, working in Germany | Bundesagentur für Arbeit \(arbeitsagentur.de\)](https://www.arbeitsagentur.de)) offers a separate section for migrant workers that provides information on the recognition of qualifications, admission to the German labour market, financial support, consultations and job placement. The mobile application [Ankommen](#) is a joint project by the Goethe Institute, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and the Federal Employment Agency. *Ankommen* accompanies new arrivals in the first few weeks after their arrival in Germany. The expat run website [I am Expat](#) is a platform for internationals in Germany that provides up-to-date information as well as job listings. The [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) as well as the international offices at various universities serve as a valuable resource for international students, offering comprehensive information about studying in Germany, scholarships, university programs, and research opportunities.

Welcome Centres established at various locations throughout Germany have different organisational forms and are usually funded by municipalities or federal states. The aim of the Welcome Centers is to support skilled workers and their families on arrival in a new region or a new federal state directly on site with a wide range of services. In addition to the Welcome Centres, there are numerous specialised services for migration and integration that offer general migration counselling. The specialised counselling center [Faire Integration](#) offers in-person counselling on employment law and social legislation at various locations throughout Germany. These services play a crucial role in helping international talents navigate the German labour market and understand their rights and responsibilities.

Both personal networks and **diaspora organizations** in Germany play a crucial role in providing information and support new arrivals. Through their understanding of the German context and the country of origin, they can act as a bridge between international talents and local communities and offer practical guidance on living in Germany. Diaspora organizations can facilitate the exchange of information and help newcomers navigate their transition. The support they offer may include providing information on essential aspects of life in Germany (including housing and healthcare), facilitating network opportunities and platforms, offering cultural orientation and providing community support. For example, the Diaspora organization [Kenyan Women in Germany e.V. \(KWIG\)](#) provides Kenyan women the opportunity to join a community of support while building their new lives in Germany.¹⁴⁸ Another example is the Diaspora organisation Giving Africa a New Face e.V. (GAANF), which developed a 12-point-program on the modernisation of skilled migration to Germany based on input provided by migrant workers. With the 12-point program, migrant voices are included in the discussion on immigration and integration of skilled migrant workers contributing to setting the framework for joint participation in government measures.¹⁴⁹

Some issues persist in the **accessibility of information and services** for international talents in Germany. One challenge is the language barrier, particularly for individuals who do not speak German fluently. While efforts have been made to provide information in English and other languages, there is still a need for more comprehensive multilingual support, particularly considering the complexity of bureaucratic procedures in Germany. Accessible and accurate information in different languages would ensure that all international talents have equal opportunities to understand the processes and requirements. Furthermore, competencies should be bundled further to provide services from a single source. Simplifying and streamlining information and providing clear guidelines greatly enhances the experience for international talents. Another issue lies in the limited availability of offline information and services in more rural areas. National disparities due to regional differences resulting in different talent offers need to be further addressed to ensure maximum provision of services for talents.

¹⁴⁸ IOM Germany 2023. A Conversation with Jacky Kuhn, the Founder of Kenyan Women in Germany. – available [here](#).

¹⁴⁹ GAANF 2023. 12-Punkte-Programm. Aus Sicht der MigrantInnen.

Related recommendations:

III. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES

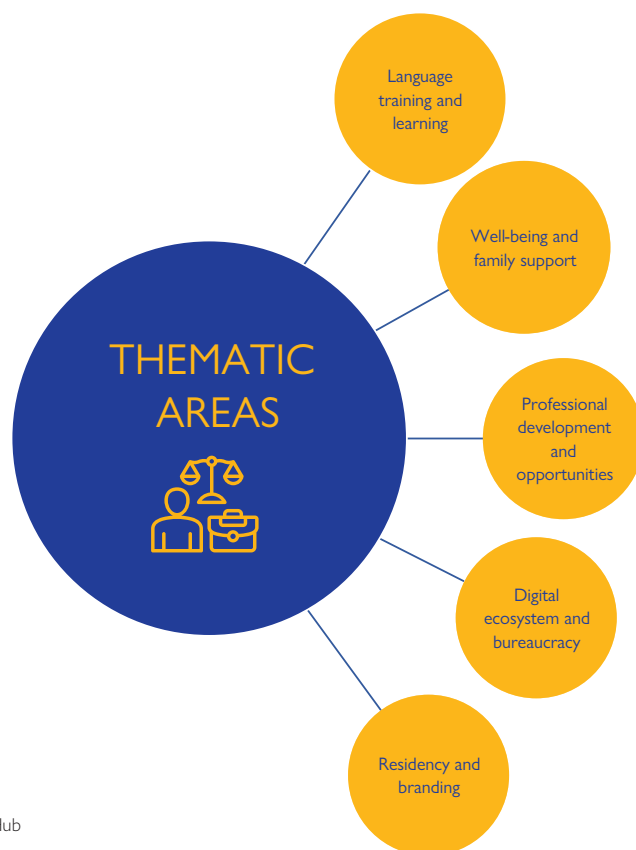
- III.1: Enhance outreach efforts to TCN talent in the EU on national labour pathways
- III.2: Redesign digital portals with talent relevant information for enhanced, multilingual accessibility (website, app, videos)
- III.3: Establish and expand International Citizen Service (ICS) centres / offline one-stop-shops across the country

5.2 Thematic areas

5.2.1 Language Training and Learning

Language training and Learning is one of five thematic areas of recommendations proposed by IOM for enhanced retention of international talent. While different countries have different structures and eligibility rules for offering training in the local languages to migrants – if any – there is broad consensus that knowledge of the local languages is an important retention and inclusion factor for talent and their families.

FIGURE 30. THEMATIC AREA OF THE RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS



Data source: IOM 2023, Talent Hub

5.2.1.1 Situation in Denmark

Learning Danish is considered central for integration and retention by most Danish actors in the field of integration and retention. Enterprises that employ international talent may have English as working language due to the company profile and orientation towards international markets, but **knowledge of Danish is**

central for understanding and participating in society. According to the 2020 Expat Study, better mastery of Danish was considered one of the prime reasons expats would opt to stay in Denmark longer. This can be compared to the Expat Insider 2022 insight (reported in section 3.2.2.1 of this report), that one in four expats in Denmark reported that they do not speak any Danish.

Regular migrants in Denmark, including talent, other international labour migrants and international students, have access to **free-of-charge language training** offered by local language schools in cooperation with municipalities. The training is mostly available after the arrival to Denmark as the offer is tied to the issuance of a Danish social security number (CPR) issued by the resident municipality. Talents and other labour migrant are therefore only eligible to receive free language training once the CPR has been issued, which restricts the possibilities to offer free language training to the incumbent and family before the relocation to Denmark.

State funded language training is often provided by teachers specialized in Danish as a second language and is such considered of high quality and according to set standards, even if there can be differences in local practices due to the **decentralized structure where language training is handled at municipal level.** According to local context, municipalities and language schools coordinate with local businesses on the provision of business specific language training such as language classes at the workplace. Classes may also be made available during evenings and weekends. It has however been observed that municipalities, that according to legislation have the formal responsibility for the provision of free language classes¹⁵⁰, **tend to focus more on language training for migrants** and refugees (“I-students”) rather than other groups (“S-students”).¹⁵¹ For the latter group, the challenge may not so much to learn Danish to enter the labour market, but to learn Danish while being in the labour market.

Danish language training is mandatory for I-students such as refugees and persons arrived through family reunification to a refugee, but a voluntary offer for S-students.

The **right to free language training in Denmark expires after five years of stay**, which can be an obstacle to learn Danish. Newcomers may spend the first years in Denmark getting settled with their new job, family, and the practicalities of moving into a new country, without having the capacity for extra-professional activities. Some may not be properly informed or aware of the possibility of language training or may decide at a later stage after arrival that they would like to stay longer, by which time the right to free language training can have expired.

It has been argued that talent and other labour migrants, who have arrived in Denmark on their own account to work and earn a salary, should have the motivation and capacity to pay for their own language tuition.¹⁵² However, a Rambøll evaluation of the **2017 reform of Danish tuition** indicates that fewer labour migrants and international students followed Danish classes after the reform that introduced language tuition fees.¹⁵³ A requirement to pay for tuition therefore had a negative effect on the number of labour migrants and students that followed Danish classes. The same report indicates that the motivation to learn Danish is to be able to manage in Danish society and to become part of it. The tuition fee was cancelled by a legal change that came into force on 1 July 2020.¹⁵⁴

Main actors in Denmark are local language schools and municipalities, but also **employers play an important role** in encouraging arriving staff to benefit from language training, and in coordinating with local language schools on provision of language training. As for example allowing language classes during working hours where feasible, either on or outside the business location. However, also NGOs and private language schools are offering language training for free or against a fee, in the form of traditional class training, language cafes, and other.

¹⁵⁰ Rambøll Management Consulting 2020, Evaluering af danskuddannelsesreformen 2017

¹⁵¹ The Danish term “I-kursist” denotes a student subject to integration measures, whereas “S-kursist” denotes that the person is self-providing (“selvforsørgende”)

¹⁵² See as for example “[Aftale om lavere skat på arbejdsindkomst og større fradrag for pensionsindbetalinger](#)” (Danish Government 2018) or “[Alarm: Brugerbetalt danskundervisning kan koste samfundet arbejdskraft](#)” (Akademikerbladet 2018)

¹⁵³ Rambøll 2020.

¹⁵⁴ [Fleere udlændinge får danskundervisning efter afskaffet brugerbetaling](#) (UIM 2022)

5.2.1.2 Situation in Germany

Teaching the **German language is fundamental to the federal government's integration policy strategy**. Knowing the language is considered key to participating in almost all areas of society such as communicating with local authorities or institutions like day care and establishing social networks outside of work. In larger cities like Berlin with a larger international community, it may be easier to get by without knowing German, but in most parts of the country, the German language is still indispensable to participation in everyday life. Sufficient knowledge of the German language is generally considered to be an essential prerequisite for successful integration into the German labour market.

Recent studies confirm the importance of German language skills from the perspective of international talent, starting in the country of origin. In the first survey wave of the **OECD online survey 'Your Way to Germany'**, the German language is named as a major obstacle that hinders or delays the decision of participants to move to Germany. Consequently, nearly three in five respondents¹⁵⁵ indicated that they would like to see further support with German language training. In a subsequent survey wave with persons already residing in Germany, respondents were asked what advice they would give to a friend considering moving to Germany. Knowledge of the German language was frequently mentioned. The **InterNations Expat Insider** reveals that 50 per cent of respondents find it difficult to get by without knowledge of the German language.¹⁵⁶ As described in the **International Talent Map**, the German language is perceived as a decisive factor in the decision to stay in Germany.

German language classes in Germany (up to level B1) are part of the legally regulated **integration courses**, which are available throughout the country and are partly compulsory. Integration courses are official **language and orientation courses** in Germany. More in-depth or supplementary courses are usually offered on a voluntary basis. In 2016, **occupation-specific language courses** geared towards improving opportunities in the labour market were added to the regular language offerings.¹⁵⁷ In addition, subject-specific vocational language courses for individual occupational groups or in combination with vocational recognition procedures, are offered in cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency. Job-related language courses are primarily aimed at job seekers, trainees, and low-income earners to help improve their chances on the labour market. Talents may attend such courses, but they are not free of charge. If the employer does not reimburse the costs, an application for reimbursement of 50 per cent of the cost contribution can be submitted.¹⁵⁸ General German language courses from B2 may need to be financed by international talents themselves.

Language training before entering Germany is also offered to prepare international talents for life in Germany and to help them settle upon arrival. Additionally, German language proficiency is often a prerequisite for the issuance of a visa for employment purposes.¹⁵⁹ The most important German language education actor abroad is the Goethe-Institute. The **Goethe-Institute** holds a prominent position in providing German language education abroad. Their offerings include pre-integration programs, online and face-to-face courses, as well as free online courses. The Goethe-Institute also offers German language classes for partners/spouses. Depending on the residence permit or visa of the partner who wishes to work or is already working in Germany, basic German language skills (level A1) may be required for the spouse. These initiatives provide international talents as well as their partners/spouses with diverse opportunities to enhance and expand their German language skills. However, not everyone can afford a language course. The costs depend on course intensity, duration and location. Financial constraints can thus pose a significant barrier in accessing such courses. In addition, demand is high in many places and spots are limited.

¹⁵⁵ Total number of respondents: 28,776. Participants at the time of the first survey were living abroad and are planning to come to Germany for work-related purposes, to carry out vocational training or pursue doctoral studies. OECD. Your Way to Germany. Ergebnisse einer Onlinebefragung unter Fachkräften im Ausland (2022) – available [here](#).

¹⁵⁶ InterNations. Expat Insider 2023 – *The World Through Expat Eyes* – available [here](#).

¹⁵⁷ The Federal Government. Darstellung der Maßnahmen der Bundesregierung zur Sprachförderung und Integration. Aktualisierung 2019. (April 2019). – available [here](#).

¹⁵⁸ The Federal Employment Agency. Deutsch lernen - available [here](#).

¹⁵⁹ With the implementation of the new Skilled Immigration Act, as of March 2024 proof of German language skills is no longer required for IT professionals when applying for a visa (<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act>).

Proof of **German language is not required** when applying for an EU Blue Card visa. This also applies to spouses of EU Blue Card holders. With the implementation of the new Skilled Immigration Act, the language requirements for some groups of international talent have been reduced or removed entirely. IT specialists also no longer need to provide proof of language skills for the visa. Requirements for German language skills will be lowered to level B1 (CEFR) for TCNs who wish to enter the country for the purpose of seeking an apprenticeship.¹⁶⁰

Recent developments in language courses include the **increased use of technology and digital platforms**. Online language learning platforms and mobile applications have become more prevalent, offering self-paced learning options. These developments have expanded access to language courses, allowing individuals to learn conveniently and at their own pace in Germany as well as already in the country of origin.

Numerous stakeholders, including governments, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and employers, play important roles in ensuring access to language courses. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, along with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Home Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, coordinate and implement general and job-related German language support. Approved integration course providers and certified providers collaborate with NGOs and private language schools to offer a comprehensive range of language programs.

Related recommendations:

IV. LANGUAGE TRAINING AND LEARNING

IV.1: Remove or extend the five-year limit for free language classes (Denmark)

IV.2: Revise administrative restrictions on free language training

IV.3: Diversify tuition and inform coherently on language training offers

5.2.2 Well-Being and Family Support

Family well-being is crucial for enhanced retention of Talent, which makes it paramount to look at factors and structures that support well-being. While there is considerable focus on labour migrant schemes and the countries' attractiveness for specific international talent, talents are often accompanied by partners and children, whose well-being and potential career development are central not only for the retention but also the contribution of talent to the labour market and in society.

5.2.2.1 Situation in Denmark

According to the 2020 Expat Study, approximately half of all expats in Denmark **bring a spouse/partner with them or is joined by the spouse later**,¹⁶¹ while a third have children living in Denmark attending either international schools or the Danish public school system. The **well-being of spouses**, partners and children and overall **work-life** balance therefore have a considerable **impact on the retention of talent and the attractiveness** of Denmark as a destination. Not only in facilitating the arrival and stay of arrived family members through pre- and post-arrival assistance, but also the possibilities to bring your family with you through accessible and comprehensible regulations for family reunification.

In Denmark, **family reunification**, is easier for persons who have obtained permanent residency, or residence title for employment or studies. Family reunification processes via the latter option, allows the primary applicant to bring their family to Denmark as 'accompanying' family/partners. Under the auspices of the existing labour schemes in Denmark spouses, registered partners, fixed cohabitation, or home living

¹⁶⁰ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, The new Skilled Immigration Act.

¹⁶¹ Oxford Research 2020, p.6

children up until the age of 18 can be granted permit of stay.¹⁶² Residence permit may be granted to persons above 18 years of age if certain conditions and criteria are met.¹⁶³

The well-being and opportunities of family members is important for retention, but can be a decision factor already in the consideration phase of the talent journey: the expected work-life balance in the destination under consideration, support in finding employment for the partner, opportunities for accompanying children and young people to gain access to school and education, etc. "Significantly more women than men would stay longer if they had better career opportunities; whereas significantly more men would stay longer if their spouse/partner had better career opportunities [...] this indicates that there could be potential for retaining expats by increasing the focus on finding relevant jobs for their spouses."¹⁶⁴ HBS Economics points out that the employment of partners of digital specialists has a direct impact on the retention rate. If the partner has a job, 80 percent of the specialists will stay for at least five years, whereas it is 31 per cent if the partner is not in employment.¹⁶⁵

Across all expats with spouses in the Expat Study, approximately 64 per cent of the respondents indicated that their spouse/partner was working. Although this is more than half, there still seems to be potential for retention in assisting spouses in finding work, but also in providing the structures to allow both spouses to pursue a professional career, such as necessary childcare.¹⁶⁶

The Expat Study also found that 63 per cent of school-aged children of expats attended Danish schools whereas 37 per cent attended international schools. The finding indicates a continued need not only for international schools in Denmark for the retention of talent in a given area, but also to **facilitate onboarding into the Danish school system** for both children and parents, especially if there is limited knowledge of the Danish language upon arrival.

The role quality of life and family well-being however also extends to **free time activities** and creation of **personal networks** outside of work. Considering the strong role of volunteer organizations, sports clubs, and similar associations in Denmark as points of meeting and social contact (popularly termed *Foreningsdanmark*), it can be important to also facilitate the access of talent and their families to both migrant and local Danish associations for the improved social contact.

An improved **social life and socialising with Danes** would according to the Expat Study make expats stay longer.¹⁶⁷ However, in Expat Insider 2023 survey Denmark ranks last (53 out of 53) in the Finding Friends subcategory, and only two in five expats are happy with their social life in Denmark.¹⁶⁸

Even if the importance of assisting partners in finding employment and/or studies should not be disregarded, other retention factors such as a **functioning health system** and other **social support structures** are equally important, especially for families. This includes the **availability and affordability of housing** that, while subject to the general housing situation in the country, as well as market structures outside the influence of most municipal and employer stakeholders, is crucial for the decision to arrive and remain.

5.2.2.2 Situation in Germany

Family well-being is a critical factor in attracting and retaining talent in the context of labour migration to Germany. The well-being of a talent's family has a direct impact on their quality of life. If the family is thriving and welcome in Germany, the talent and their family are more likely to stay in Germany for the longer term, as emphasised in the key issue paper on Skilled Migration from Third Countries published by the Federal government

¹⁶² New to Denmark 2024i: [Medfølgende familie til arbejdstager](#).

¹⁶³ If the person is relying on support from the primary applicant, due to different reasons such as vulnerability in form of disability, age etc. according to SIRI. For more information about the criteria, visit New To Denmark [here](#).

¹⁶⁴ Oxford Research 2020. [The Expat Study 2020. An analysis of living and working in Denmark as an expat](#) p. 66

¹⁶⁵ HBS Economics 2023, p.11

¹⁶⁶ The Expat Study does not distinguish between nationalities and regions of origin wherefore employment figures could be different for EU versus non-EU expats etc.

¹⁶⁷ Oxford Research 2020, pp.60-61.

¹⁶⁸ Expat Insider 2023, p.31

in 2022. Talents who choose Germany as their destination should not only have clear career prospects, but should also be able to identify opportunities and obstacles for their family members at an early stage.¹⁶⁹

Recognizing the importance of **family well-being**, Germany has introduced specific initiatives and legal aid to promote the integration of accompanying family members and facilitate family reunification for migrant workers. As part of the new Skilled Migration Strategy, the Federal Government aims to strengthen pre- and post-departure support services in the areas of language support, employment prospects, including for accompanying partners, childcare, housing and health care.¹⁷⁰

In Germany, **family reunification** tends to be more feasible for persons holding residence title for employment. Furthermore, under the New Skilled Immigration Act, it will also be possible to grant a residence permit for family reunification to the parents of a skilled worker. The new Skilled Immigration Act provides for easier family reunification for people in possession of an EU Blue Card: For EU Blue Card holders who have already lived with their family in another EU member state, family reunification will be regulated on a privileged basis. If these family members require a visa, they are entitled to enter and reside in Germany as family members of an EU Blue Card holder with the residence permit issued in the previous member state without having to go through a visa procedure beforehand. When a residence permit is issued in Germany, the requirements of sufficient living space and securing a livelihood no longer apply. In addition, they can also bring their parents and - if the spouse is also a permanent resident in Germany parents-in-law to join them if they receive their residence permit for the first time on or after 1 March 2024.¹⁷¹

Many migrant workers arrive in Germany as part of dual-career couples. The challenge is to provide **employment opportunities for both partners**, especially if they require specific language skills or professional qualifications. A study conducted by the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) in 2022 on “potential of partners who join their spouses for the German labour market” shows that partners frequently face difficulties accessing the labour market, which is often due to language skills, recognition of their qualifications, the length of their stay in Germany and, in some cases, access to childcare.¹⁷² In Germany, there are existing structures and services aimed at assisting accompanying spouses/partners with labour market integration. However, the current structures necessitate that the target group proactively seeks out educational or employment opportunities. It is thus important to raise awareness among partners about available counselling services and points of contact, such as during initial consultations with registration offices.¹⁷³

In the IOM Talent Survey, many of the respondents residing in Germany report that they live with their partner/spouse. Out of the total responses given majority indicated that following their partner/family was among the factors contributing to the decision to move to Germany, hereby ranking as the second most common factor contributing to their decision to move to Germany. **Initiatives have been designed for women specifically**, particularly those with childcaring responsibilities, to help families reduce the tensions caused by settling into a new community. Courses like Germany’s “Migrant Women Simply Strong in Daily Life,” which are offered by women for women, are designed to provide a safe space to address sensitive topics and encourage mutual empowerment. Germany has a well-developed childcare and education system, including state-funded kindergartens and schools. However, access to affordable and quality childcare can be challenging, especially in urban areas where demand often exceeds supply.

In terms of **housing** and cost of living, high housing costs and the limited availability of affordable housing are a challenge for individuals as well as for families, especially in larger cities like Berlin, Munich, Hamburg and Frankfurt. The cost of living in Germany can also put a strain on the family budget. Although there is a large supply of rental housing, demand is high. It can be time-consuming and cost-intensive to find a flat. Rents are particularly high in large cities such as Munich, Frankfurt or Stuttgart. In 2022, around 54 percent

¹⁶⁹ The Federal Government 2022. [Eckpunkte zur Fachkräfteeinwanderung aus Drittstaaten](#).

¹⁷⁰ The Federal Government 2022. Fachkräftestrategie der Bundesregierung.

¹⁷¹ [Make-it-in-Germany](#) 2024, The new Skilled Immigration Act.

¹⁷² Maciejewski, Linda und Harder, Niklas (2022): Überqualifiziert und un(ter)beschäftigt: Potenziale nachziehender Partner*innen für den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt, DeZIM Briefing Notes, Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM) – available [here](#).

¹⁷³ BMFSFJ 2020. Zugangswege und Unterstützungsbedarfe von Migrantinnen und ihren Familien aus dem EU-Ausland und aus Drittstaaten – available [here](#).

of households lived in rented flats in Germany.¹⁷⁴ According to the Federal Statistical Office, rents represent a significant expenditure item for many households.¹⁷⁵ The level and development of rental housing is therefore particularly important for the cost of living of households.

In a [survey](#) by the **Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency** of 2020, every third person with a migrant background who had been looking for housing in the last ten years stated that they had already experienced racial discrimination. Other surveys among people with a migration background even come to the conclusion that almost 70 per cent of people looking for housing feel discriminated against.¹⁷⁶

Related recommendations:

V. WELL-BEING AND FAMILY SUPPORT

- V.1: Provide pre- and post-arrival establishment support to incoming talent and families
- V.2: Increase the places available for international students and pupils in Danish schools and support school onboarding
- V.3: Provide practical job and study seeking guidance and networking opportunities for accompanying family members
- V.4: Support talent and family engagement in local communities and organizations

5.2.3 Professional Development and Opportunities

Closely linked to family well-being and support is the thematic area on Professional Development and Opportunities. Attention should be given to the fact that international talent and accompanying families often travel not only in the pursuit of higher salary and improved living conditions, but also to learn and develop professionally and therefore see **international relocation as a development opportunity** also in dual-career couples. For **international students** the primary goal may be the professional development and only secondarily or later a question of income and work. Professional development opportunities, sometimes referred to as “nurturing,” are therefore important for both talents and accompanying family members such as partners and children. Limited opportunities for professional development might reduce retention rates or even keep talent from selecting the country in the first place.

5.2.3.1 Situation in Denmark

In Denmark, the [Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science](#) is the main body responsible for offering assessment of foreign qualifications, which might be needed e.g. to pursue further education in Denmark.

However, contrary to the situation in other countries where TCNs can be granted a work permit based on an assessment of their formal qualifications, as for example recognition of an education diploma earned abroad, **recognition of qualifications** is not considered a major bottleneck or delaying factor in Denmark. Due to Denmark not implementing point-based entry systems, acquisition of work permit does not depend on formal recognition of qualifications but on a job offer from a Danish employer prior to the arrival. As such, the responsibility of assessing whether a future employee is qualified to fill a position rest with the employer, whether it is based on education or actual experience.

While recognition of qualifications and professional experience is generally not a delaying factor with regards to arrival to Denmark, the recognition of qualifications can be considered important for retention insofar as these may allow for continued education and professional development, or for documentation purposes attesting that a qualification earned abroad corresponds to a Danish diploma. Recognition of qualifications can, even if not formally required for issuance of work and residence permit, **facilitate future professional**

¹⁷⁴ The Federal Statistical Office 2024. [Deutschland ist Mieterland Nr. 1 in der EU](#).

¹⁷⁵ The Federal Statistical Office 2022. Housing costs: 10.7% of the population regarded as overburdened in 2021.

¹⁷⁶ Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency 2020. Rassistische Diskriminierung auf dem Wohnungsmarkt. Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Umfrage – available [here](#).

development, but also contribute to a personal feeling of inclusion and recognition by documenting correspondence to diplomas and qualifications of the destination country.

Under the Green Card scheme, abolished since 2016, Denmark offered the possibility to enter the country to search for employment based on i.e. level of formal education. The Green Card scheme was cancelled through political agreement to avoid *inter alia* that TCNs with higher-level education worked in professions not commensurate with their level of education.

Even if the recognition of formal qualifications is not considered an obstacle in Denmark due to Danish labour market schemes, it may be a factor for **accompanying spouses** trying to find work or access education in Denmark after arrival to the country. Without concrete supporting data being identified by IOM, it has been reported that accompanying spouses risk ending up in the “**Helper Trap**” where they work in professions not matching their actual level of education. This because the foreign diploma has not been recognized or at least not considered as being on level with the corresponding Danish education. Lacking recognition may also be an issue for already arrived talent wanting to access continued education in Denmark in view of professional development.

According to the 2020 Expat Study, **better career opportunities** is one of the main reasons that would entice expats to stay longer (49%), only preceded by Danish language skills (51%) and followed by better social life (45%). Reflecting this data, stakeholders have towards IOM suggested a need for more comprehensive offers of English-language study opportunities for both talent and accompanying families, including both academic bachelor-level opportunities and vocational training in English.

A distinction, however, should be made between the **recognition** of as for example diplomas and the **authorization** needed to carry out **regulated professions**. For the latter, a separate agency with responsibility for groups of professions grants the authorization and the right to work in Denmark. Particularly authorization to work as a nurse, in Denmark issued by the Danish Patient Safety Authority, is reported to be a delaying factor at a time when the Danish health sector is in dire need of nurses. Authorization requires formal recognition of education, evaluation employment as well as knowledge of Danish. Following an agreement from 23 February 2023 on the emergency plan for the hospital system,¹⁷⁷ the Danish language requirements for nurses from third countries was aligned with the language requirement for healthcare professionals from the EU/EEA. Following this agreement, it is no longer necessary for nurses from third countries to pass a language test before the evaluation employment, although the employer must ensure that the applicant demonstrates Danish language proficiency at sufficient level.

International students that have obtained a degree from a Danish institution may benefit from having a diploma recognized by Danish employers and, as such, combine both an international background and language skills with recognition. International students may however have had limited exposure to Danish working life and structures unless they have had relevant student jobs, internships or engaged with private or public employers through study projects, master’s thesis projects or similar. International students may be unfamiliar with the workings and job search habits of the Danish labour markets unless guided by their educational institution or offered access to student jobs and internships through partnerships and programming between the institution and employers.

Professional development and opportunities are not only a question of recognition of education, but also opportunities to **nurture existing staff** – including talent – to access other tasks within the enterprise, and to move between employers in the country or within a region such as the European Union. Lack of opportunities with the same employer, complicated bureaucracy for changing in-country employers caused by national legislation or lack of options to move within the European Union may affect both attraction and retention. In the case of retention within the EU, in the Talent Hub project referred to as intra-EU circulation, less opportunities for TCN talent to move between Denmark and other EU countries might ultimately affect their willingness to come to Denmark.

¹⁷⁷ Danish Ministry of Interior and Health 2023, [Aftale om en akutplan for sygehusvæsenet](#), 23 February.

A particular situation occurs if a talent **unwillingly loses her/his employment** and only has a short time to find a new job before losing the residence permit, meaning that also accompanying family members would have to leave unless they have personal residence rights. While such a situation might also fall under the concepts of family well-being or residency, perceived restrictions on possibilities to change employers either voluntarily or forced, might ultimately lead talents and their families to consider other destinations with more conducive and stable condition for career development and family unity.

5.2.3.2 Situation in Germany

Professional development opportunities play a significant role in attracting and retaining international talent in Germany. Access to ongoing learning and skill development is often considered by international students and professionals when choosing a destination for their career growth. The availability of professional development opportunities, such as training programs, workshops, and certifications, enables international talent to enhance their skills and stay competitive in the job market. These initiatives not only contribute to international talent retention but also foster a diverse and innovative workforce in Germany.

Employers play a crucial role in providing professional development opportunities to international talent. Many employers invest in employee training and development programs to enhance their workforce's skills and capabilities. International students or graduates who participated in professional development activities during their studies, such as internships, are more likely to stay as they could already establish valuable networks with future employers.

Changing employers can provide international talents with a wealth of new professional experiences, challenges and opportunities for growth, ultimately contributing to their professional development. Initially, EU Blue Card holders were required to apply for an amendment to their labor market access if they wanted to change employers within the first two years of work. The revised EU Blue Card directive foresees that Blue Card holders only need to notify the immigration authorities about a change of employer if it occurs within the first 12 months of employment. After working under an EU Blue Card for 12 months, they are permitted to change employers without needing to notify the immigration authorities. If an individual has already worked for at least two years with a residence permit for the purpose of employment or has resided continuously in Germany for at least three years with a residence permit, they can move to another skilled employment without prior approval, provided there is no legal time limit fixed for their type of employment.¹⁷⁸

However, access to these opportunities or even to the labour market as such often requires that the **qualifications and skills acquired in the country of origin are recognized**. This applies particularly to accompanying spouses/partners. A study conducted by the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) in 2022 on '[potential of partners who join their spouses for the German labour market](#)' shows that partners frequently face difficulties accessing the labour market, which is often due to a lack of recognition of their qualifications.

Recognition of qualifications and professional experience is essential for retention as it affects the integration and employment prospects of individuals who have obtained their qualifications and professional experience in another country. Recognizing these qualifications and experiences is crucial for ensuring that skilled professionals can fully utilize their expertise and develop professionally.

The labour market and vocational system in Germany is highly formalized. The recruitment and admission of TCNs is often only possible if qualifications received abroad are recognised as equivalent to German standards.¹⁷⁹ A distinction is made between regulated and non-regulated professions with the type of profession being the decisive factor. Thus, one of the main challenges is the complex and sometimes lengthy recognition process, which can vary depending on the profession and the specific requirements set by the

¹⁷⁸ Service Portal Berlin. [Beschäftigung – Wechsel des Arbeitgebers](#).

¹⁷⁹ With the implementation of the new Skilled Immigration Act (2023), under certain conditions, recognition of qualification acquired abroad will no longer be required for employment in Germany. Anyone who has at least two years of professional experience and a professional qualification with at least two years of training (recognised by the state in which the qualification was obtained) may work in non-regulated professions in Germany. See [The new Skilled Immigration Act \(make-it-in-germany.com\)](#)

competent authorities. This process often involves verifying and assessing foreign qualifications, which can be time-consuming and bureaucratic. As a result, many skilled migrant workers face difficulties in finding employment that matches their qualifications and experience, leading to underemployment or unemployment. Navigating multiple steps and documentation requirements leads to delays and frustrations during visa procedures. Furthermore, lack of transparency and standardized criteria for the recognition of qualifications makes it difficult to understand and meet expectations. Certain professions may have stringent requirements or additional hurdles that make the recognition process more challenging. Examples include regulated professions such as healthcare, teaching, or engineering, which may have specific licensing or certification requirements.¹⁸⁰

Recent developments in this area include ongoing efforts to further **improve and streamline the recognition process**. Germany has been working on harmonizing recognition procedures across different federal states and professions. The aim of many of these efforts is to achieve greater transparency and consistency. Germany has implemented diverse measures to facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications, such as the establishment of recognition centres and the introduction of legislation to simplify the process. Additionally, digitalization and online platforms have been introduced to facilitate the recognition process, making it more accessible and efficient. The new Skilled Immigration Act provides for further relaxation and acceleration in terms of recognition of qualification and professional skills.¹⁸¹

In relation to the mobility of TCNs within the EU, Germany applies the **EU Blue Card**. EU Blue Card Holders may be issued a settlement permit under facilitated conditions. Those who have been in possession of an EU Blue Card in another EUMS for at least 18 months may enter Germany without a visa and apply for a Blue Card in Germany within one month after arrival. The implementation of the legislative revision of the Blue Card (EU Directive 2021/1883), as described in section 2.1.2.1, will lead to a number of simplifications for EU Blue Card holders (e.g. in regard to short- and long-term intra-EU mobility in Germany for holders of an EU Blue Card issued by another EU Member State).

Related recommendations:

VI. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES

- VI.1: Facilitate qualification and skills validation of accompanying family members
- VI.2: Lower admission threshold to Denmark for selected occupations and support post-arrival upskilling
- VI.3: Promote internship opportunities and study relevant jobs for international students
- VI.4: Expand vocational and academic Bachelor level English language education opportunities
- VI.5: Implement flexible policies for changing employer and nurturing existing, international staff
- VI.6: Review existing policies and practices for recognition of high-demand and regulated professions

5.2.4 Digital Ecosystem and Bureaucracy

The importance of a well-functioning digital ecosystem in today's labour market, facilitating not only application processes and information sharing but also remote work options and flexibility, is expressed by a variety of sources and stakeholders (see as for example [chapter three](#) of this report). It is also reflected in the results of the "Remote Work & Digital Nomad survey" carried out by IOM and described in chapter six. Digital infrastructure and services may facilitate mobility for talents across borders, including through digitalized skills recognition and application processes, but may also support information provision, remote work as well as talents' continued connection to family, friends, and news and therethrough personal well-being and retention.

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php>

¹⁸¹ Anyone who has at least two years of professional experience and a professional qualification with at least two years of training (recognised by the state in which the qualification was obtained) may work in non-regulated professions in Germany ([The new Skilled Immigration Act \(make-it-in-germany.com\)](#))

The same importance can be ascribed to reduced and transparent bureaucracy, where complex and lengthy procedures might either cause talent to avoid a specific destination or to leave sooner than expected if bureaucratic rules affect life negatively. Digital Ecosystem and Bureaucracy have in this section been combined into one thematic area to reflect and accentuate the need for accessible, up-to-date, and efficient procedures.

Due to the digital revolution increasingly also impacting talent management and mobility, the talent Hub project developed and issued four separate documents. The two overviews “Domestic and Cross-Border Remote Working Modalities in the EU” and “Digital Nomad Policies in the European Context” with two corresponding policy briefs including recommendations for CopCap “Cross-Border Remote Work & Intra-EU Labour Mobility” as well as “Embracing the Potential of Digital Nomads.” These specific aspects of talent management are therefore covered in more detail in the separate documents.

5.2.4.1 Situation in Denmark

As depicted in chapter three of this report on international indexes and scores on talent attraction and retention, Denmark generally scores high on topics of **IT infrastructure, digital life** and similar services that signal **innovation** and **modernity**. In the 2022 [European Digital Economy and Society Index \(DESI\)](#), Denmark ranks 2nd out of 27 EUMS, only preceded by Finland. Digitalized societies may, when the digitalization translates into accessible online information on the country, be more visible to international professionals seeking information on career destinations.

According to OECD figures, Denmark has a comparatively high coverage of both fixed and mobile broadband subscriptions amongst the population.¹⁸² Denmark has various digital, national services and portals such as borger.dk, digital mail for communication with authorities, and the Danish national identification system MitID.¹⁸³ While electronic applications and other digital services may contribute to the **digital life profile** of Denmark as a talent destination, challenges in setting up the systems for the newly arrived or navigating both them while living in the country – particularly if detailed information and assistance is available in Danish or selected languages only – can lead to a feeling of exclusion or even essential communication from the authorities being missed. Information on as well as the digital communication itself should therefore be accessible also language-wise to talent and other internationals.

A strong digital infrastructure may, in combination with existing **remote work policies** at local or national level, also work in favour of remote work. Depending on the individual situation, remote work possibilities can add flexibility to the work-life balance and hence enhance **employee well-being**. Both when working remotely from home domestically, but also if allowing remote work internationally. Allowing international talent to work from previous residence countries in periods may help them feel attached to family and friends and ultimately support well-being and thus retention in their current residence country.

Another aspect of remote work modalities is the possibility to employ international talent on **remote work contracts**. Cross-border remote work offers new options to fill labour market gaps, but also presents a range of challenges not solvable under current labour market schemes, relating amongst others to immigration regulations, bureaucratic requirements, and tax regulations, which would require further investigation into cross-border remote work and digital nomadism.

Bureaucratic obstacles may appear mostly related to attraction and lack of understanding of the arrival process, especially if available labour market schemes are not transparent or subject to change. HBS Economic has reported that businesses experience administrative difficulties and slow bureaucracy, connected to *inter*

¹⁸² OECD 2024, Broadband Portal: <https://www.oecd.org/digital/broadband/broadband-statistics/> (accessed 25 January 2024)

¹⁸³ For Digital Public Services in DESI 2022, Denmark is number eight out of 27 EUMS. Estonia is number one and Finland number two.

alia issues of getting a Danish CPR and continued tightening of Danish immigration law.¹⁸⁴ However, also **post-arrival bureaucracy** can serve as an obstacle for settling in and ultimately lead to lower productivity or for talent and their families to leave the country earlier than expected.

A bureaucratic impediment for international labour migration often mentioned in the Danish debate is the requirement to have salary paid to a **Danish bank account**,¹⁸⁵ because applications for a Danish bank account from workers from abroad are either delayed or in some cases rejected. Stakeholders such as DI have therefore advocated for the removal of the Danish bank account requirement.

On the other hand, an example of a **good, non-bureaucratic Danish practice** mentioned to IOM by various international stakeholders is the Danish **Fast-Track Scheme**. The Fast-Track Scheme provides a shortened procedure for the hiring process for Fast-Track approved businesses according to preset criteria. Figures from the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration available as of November 2023 show that more than 80 per cent of fast-track cases are generally decided within one month.¹⁸⁶ Bureaucratically, lighter solutions are considered attractive by labour market stakeholders and talent alike.

5.2.4.2 Situation in Germany

In many of the international indexes and scores, Germany scores comparatively low when it comes to **digital infrastructure and services**. In the InterNations Expat Insider 2023,¹⁸⁷ Germany is among the bottom three in the subcategory 'digital life'. High-speed internet is not available everywhere, and many locations still require paying in cash. Thirty-seven per cent of respondents indicated that online admin services are not sufficiently available online. As far as **bureaucracy** is concerned, 56 per cent find it difficult to deal with German bureaucracy in general. The fact that Germany's bureaucracy largely remains in German contributes to the fact that many international talents find it difficult to navigate the German bureaucracy. In the [European Digital Economy and Society Index \(DESI\)](#), Germany ranks 13th out of 27 EU MS. In terms of digital services provided by public authorities, Germany only ranks 18th.

Bureaucratic obstacles may present significant challenges in attracting international talents who are considering moving to Germany for employment purposes, and future employers may shy away from the complexity of the bureaucratic processes involved in international recruitment. Recent legislative changes aim to facilitate access to the German labour market for TCNs by i.a. dismantling bureaucracy and accelerating processes overall. However, the **visa process** is currently still a major bottleneck. By lowering the hurdles for the recognition of qualifications, reducing bureaucracy and speeding up procedures in general, the aim is to accelerate the issuing of visas and promote digitalization. According to a [study](#) on international skilled workers and SMEs published by the *Kompetenzzentrum Fachkräftesicherung* (KOFA) in 2023, companies generally feel positive about recruitment and employment of international skilled workers, however, various barriers exist to do so. Long and cumbersome recruitment processes are mentioned as one of the main obstacles to recruiting workers from abroad. By embracing digitalization, bureaucratic procedures can become more user-friendly, responsive and effective in meeting the needs of international talents as well as future employers, ultimately contributing to the attractiveness. Simplifying and digitalising administrative procedures, offering multilingual support and providing clear guidelines, e.g. on access to permits and services **after arrival**, will create a welcoming and supportive environment and help international talent to settle in.

Initiatives such as the project **Partizipation Digital** by the Berlin Senate for Integration and Migration and its project partner are leading by example, supporting the integration and social inclusion of Berliners from third countries by improving digital information management in Berlin. To this end, the project partners are developing a digital information system that contains all relevant information for the target group and

¹⁸⁴ HBS Economics 2020, p.27

¹⁸⁵ On 24 January 2024, the Danish Government however announced [planned legislative changes to relax the bank account requirement for employees arriving under the Fast-Track Scheme or researchers](#) (UIM 2024)

¹⁸⁶ Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) 2023, [Udviklingen i SIRIs sagsbehandlingstider de seneste 12 måneder \(November 2023\)](#), 7 December.

¹⁸⁷ Nearly 1,000 expats participated in the Expat Insider 2023 survey in Germany.

makes it easier for them to access digital services. An inter-institutional editorial network will coordinate the flow of information and organise the provision of multilingual information and services. To ensure that the digital services can be used at a low threshold, the team will work closely with the administration, the business community and civil society organisations. The digital services will be developed in a participatory process in order to optimise them to meet the needs of Berliners from third countries.¹⁸⁸

The **digital strategy** launched by all ministries and the Chancellery in 2022 aims to advance Germany digitally, including comprehensive coverage with high-speed internet and expansion of digital administrative services.¹⁸⁹ As part of the digital strategy, the Federal Foreign Office is developing a digital platform for visa and passport applications. Applications were previously submitted on site in paper form, which involved enormous effort and sometimes long waiting times. With the foreign portal, the Federal Foreign Office is gradually simplifying the process for both applicants and diplomatic missions abroad.

A **strong digital ecosystem** and **efficient bureaucracy** are essential for enhancing international talent attraction and retention. Digital platforms can connect international talents with employers, universities, and support services across borders, transcending geographical limitations. Such an environment enables global connections and contributions, fostering international labour mobility and retention.

Related recommendations:

VII. DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM AND BUREAUCRACY

VII.1: Promote digitalization in access to public sector information and services

VII.2: Review bureaucratic impediments for employing international talent

VII.3: Review current legislation and policies related to cross-border remote work and digital nomads

5.2.5 Residency and Branding

In this report, the thematic area “Residency and Branding” indicates the effects **the overall branding and image** of countries, cities and regions may have on attraction and retention. Branding is not understood only as the positive impact built actively through targeted city, region or country branding, but also unintended negative side effects caused by legislation, procedures or attitudes that may be of consequence also for talent, such as residency legislation or perceived negative attitudes towards migrants. The overall brand may also be impacted by possibilities for gaining permanent residence status or citizenship.

5.2.5.1 Situation in Denmark

As indicated earlier in relation to the OECD “Indicators of Talent Attractiveness” (2023), regulations on labour pathways cannot be seen as disconnected from the **general migration policies** of a country. Even if a country may have favourable and attractive schemes for skilled migrants and in particular for specific professional and income groups discernible from those applied to other migrant groups, general migration regulations may affect directly or indirectly the overall attractiveness and image of the country. This could be regulations pertaining to **residence and citizenship** relevant for talent wanting to stay longer, but also more broadly the image amongst the foreign-born population already living in the country, which may again be conveyed through media and personal networks to potential talent abroad. Deterrence policies such as strict immigration and residence regulations can therefore, while being a political choice or compromise to target broader groups of migrants, be counterproductive to attempts to attract and retain international workforce.

¹⁸⁸ More information on <https://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/partizipation-digital/>

¹⁸⁹ More information on <https://digitalstrategie-deutschland.de/>

According to the 2020 Expat Study, 65 per cent of the respondents feel welcome in Denmark. The study is based on answers from expats already in Denmark, including Nordic and EU citizens, and therefore reflects the sentiments and experiences of those currently in the country, albeit not of those who may have decided to leave or not to arrive. The **feeling of being welcomed** is to some extent mirrored in the Talent Hub project's recent survey amongst talent in mainly Denmark and Germany, where 50 per cent of respondents from Denmark expressed that they felt welcomed in the country (see also chapter 6 here below), with the corresponding figure for Germany being 29 per cent.

Nevertheless, a recent report from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), "Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants – Denmark Country Profile" (2022), finds that Denmark has maintained a commitment to attract highly skilled foreign labour but has also adopted deterrence centered policies as regards asylum seekers. While "attitudes [towards migrants] have, overall, remained consistently more positive than negative, with positive attitudes generally increasing" (p.13), the ODI report (2022) finds that "there is certainly much work to be done to restore a more tolerant and inclusive approach that could harness the multiple benefits of immigration and promote a more cohesive society."¹⁹⁰

While not always being a political focus point in the context of labour migration profiled on mobility and temporariness rather than permanence, the possibility for talents and their families to **acquire permanent residency or citizenship** may endow talent with a sense of stability and belonging in support of retention. Talents may from the beginning of their journey consider long-term prospects for themselves and their families when contemplating the complex process of international relocation. The option of permanence naturally extends to residence permits of accompanying family members, who in Denmark may lose their residence if the main applicant becomes unemployed and is unable to find suitable employment on short notice.¹⁹¹ In Denmark, children of talent following education may not have earned the right to permanent residence and thus be compelled to leave both education and the country if the main applicant/talent becomes unemployed. Talents have indicated this to IOM to be a determining factor for some talent with children when choosing to remain in Denmark or not, where other countries may offer better opportunities for residence for the entire family.

Denmark has some of the strictest criteria for residence and citizenship amongst EUMS¹⁹² with a **naturalization rate** below the EU average and below as for example the other Nordic countries, Portugal, Spain, Luxembourg and Ireland, and Germany.¹⁹³ Therefore, while Denmark in the ITA ranks high in a number of attractiveness indicators, Denmark's score on factors such as acquisition of nationality or change from temporary to permanent status puts the country amongst the bottom 25 per cent of the surveyed countries in the ITA.

A particular set of residence and entry regulations in the case of Denmark relate to the Danish opt-outs to EU cooperation as Denmark unlike most other EUMS does not implement labour migration related EU directives and initiatives, including the "Directive on the status of non-EU nationals who are long-term residents" For talent looking for career opportunities within countries in the EU, the lack of interoperability between residency periods in other EU countries and Denmark might work against Denmark as a primary destination as it is legally set apart from the majority of the EU countries as regards residence.

General migration regulations and reported attitudes towards migrants might affect the attractiveness of a country negatively, even when the country as a whole – or its major cities and regions – have built up internationally recognized brands. In the case of Denmark's brand, the renowned **work-life balance** is generally acknowledged, but also a climate-friendly profile, as well as a high level of domestic security, gender balance and democracy. The Danish national brand is further supported by regional and city brands, as for example the work of Copenhagen Capacity whose branding work of Copenhagen has received international recognition.¹⁹⁴ Less attention has however been paid to the **branding of smaller cities**, municipalities or even specific sectors that, while not necessarily reaching the size and impact of the brand of bigger

¹⁹⁰ ODI 2022, [Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants: Denmark country profile](#), p. 18

¹⁹¹ See as for example [New to Denmark](#) for the regulations or KL 2023

¹⁹² See as for example ["Denmark tightens rules for citizenship once again."](#) European Website of Integration (2021)

¹⁹³ Eurostat 2023, [Citizenship granted to 827 000 people in 2021](#)

¹⁹⁴ See i.e. [Digitale talenter og muligheder for at tiltrække mere talent til Danmark](#), HBS Economics, September 2020

cities, might still brand themselves towards international talent on topics specific to the local setting. As for example local employment possibilities, available and affordable housing, socially accessible societies, digital infrastructure allowing for remote work and/or digital nomadism, etc.

A distinction might be made or intended in the **public migration debate** between talent attraction schemes and the need for international workforce as compared to other migration aspects such as irregular migration and reported integration challenges. Even so, an unbalanced migration narrative bears the risk of influencing also the perception of talent in the general public and how talents understand their contribution to society being perceived on both public and political level. In terms of perception and country image, the strict Danish permanent residency and naturalization requirements applicable also to migrants in professions in high demand may send a signal also to talents that their contribution in Denmark is ultimately not wanted longer term and therefore work against retention rates.

The thematic area of Residency and Branding includes the relative branding and standing vis-à-vis the **immediately neighbouring countries**. A HumMingBird report “The Changing Nature of Intra-European Mobility of Third-Country Nationals” (2020),¹⁹⁵ finds that **geographical proximity** is one of the most decisive factors to understand intra-European mobility of TCN, together with cultural and linguistic similarities and historical relations. Although the HumMinBird report does not consistently distinguish between TCNs (i.e. highly skilled versus other migrants) it is a general observation that intra-EU mobility frequently takes place between neighbouring states. Seen in the light of the earlier mentioned ITA 2023 report about migration policies having a strong impact on the relative attractiveness of a country, there appears to be good reasons to further analyse, compare, and seek cooperation in the field of labour migration with neighbouring states such as Sweden, Germany and UK, but also the Nordic and the EU at large.¹⁹⁶

5.2.5.2 Situation in Germany

In the Federal Government’s coalition agreement from November 2021, the government announced a shift in German **migration and integration policy** to transform Germany into a modern immigration country. The shift primarily entails expanding regular pathways for skilled migrant workers from third countries, regularising migrants in irregular status as well as making it easier to acquire German citizenship. As described in the policy brief “[The political economy of migration policies in Germany](#)” published by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, “German society is increasingly discussing cultural changes that are needed to make the country a more welcoming place that is able to not just attract workers, but also keep them in the country permanently.”¹⁹⁷

Recent surveys among international talents show that settling in presents a major challenge to talents who have moved to Germany for employment or study purposes. As described in the recently published “[International Talent Map](#)”, while Germany seems to have a strong international appeal to talents, it is among the **bottom countries to settle in** according to international talent residing in Germany.¹⁹⁸ In 2020, the Federal Employment Agency commissioned the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IAW) to carry out a **study on emigration**. The study sheds light on the reasons for return and onward migration of foreign workers after a work stay in Germany. A total of 1,900 workers were surveyed via social media channels. The study shows that the reasons given by emigrants for leaving the country are manifold and point to an important need for action. Around a quarter of those surveyed left Germany for professional reasons (unemployment, no suitable employment, lack of recognition of professional qualifications), another quarter left for reasons related to residency. A **lack of social integration** is also frequently cited as a reason. Two out of three international talents surveyed in Germany indicated having experienced discrimination based on their origin,

¹⁹⁵ Dello Iacono, C., Orfao, G., & Stanek, M. 2021. The changing nature of intra-European mobility of third-country nationals. Review of institutional framework and general dynamics (Deliverable 3.1). Leuven: HumMingBird project 870661 – H2020 (p.44, 53)

¹⁹⁶ The 2023 Expat Insider Survey specifically compares the expat life of the four Nordic countries and ranks them with Finland as the highest scoring (number 16 out of 53 countries globally), followed by Sweden (24 out of 53), Denmark (41 out of 53) and last Norway (52 out of 53).

¹⁹⁷ Rietig, V. (2023). The Political Economy of Migration Policies in Germany. Clear goals, stony path, uncomfortable realities. Policy Brief November 2023. Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), p- 7 – available [here](#).

¹⁹⁸ International Talent Map: A data driven benchmark across selected European countries, Linköping Science Park & Future Place Leadership, December 2023 – available [here](#).

half of them in public authorities and a third in the workplace.¹⁹⁹ In the IOM Talent Survey 2023,²⁰⁰ 44 per cent of respondents residing in Germany indicated that, if they were to leave Germany, the challenges to **adapt socially and culturally** would be one of the main reasons to do so.

By further fostering a **welcoming culture**, Germany can position itself as a desirable destination for international talent. Civil society organisations can play a crucial role in creating a welcoming culture that celebrates diversity and promotes social cohesion. For example, the [Welcome Alliance](#) is an alliance of civil society organizations, foundations, state institutions and companies initiated by [Project Together](#) (a non-profit organization that aims to drive social transformation). The Alliance's goal is the humane, needs-oriented, and sustainable integration and participation of all newcomers in Germany by facilitating synergies, building cooperations and connecting civil society and the state.²⁰¹

Access to permanent residence and citizenship can affect a talent's decision on whether to stay or to leave if the talent intends to relocate permanently. The opportunity to obtain permanent residence or citizenship can lead to increased stability and security, and a sense of belonging, which can impact talents' decision to stay in a country long-term. In the Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020²⁰², Germany lags significantly behind its neighbours in terms of naturalisation: while the EU average naturalisation rate²⁰³ was 2 per cent in 2022, it was only 1.1 per cent in Germany.

In May 2023, the Federal Ministry of the Interior published a draft law on the **modernization of the citizenship/nationality law**. The German parliament passed the new law on 19 January 2024. The law provides for the possibility of multi-citizenship and eases the path to acquiring German citizenship. Naturalisation will be possible after five years instead of the previous eight years. Under certain circumstances, the duration of previous residence can be shortened to up to three years (for those considered well integrated – fulfilling amongst other things German language skills C1, outstanding performance on the job, securing livelihood without recourse to public funds). For those who, despite serious and sustained efforts, are unable to acquire German language at level B 1, it is also possible to prove a lower language level. In cases of hardship, it is also possible to provide evidence of a lower language level. The law also enables multiple nationality and thus dual citizenship. Dual citizenship was previously only possible in exceptional cases. In the future, children born in Germany to foreign parents will automatically receive German citizenship.²⁰⁴

Related recommendations:

VIII. RESIDENCY AND BRANDING

- VIII.1: Promote durable conditions for obtaining permanent residence and citizenship
- VIII.2: Facilitate entry and residency access for intra-EU mobile talent
- VIII.3: Actively promote country and place branding for attraction and retention.
- VIII.4: Counteract xenophobic narratives and promote the positive contribution of talent
- VIII.5: Analyse and review the destination country's relative policy standing and attractiveness vis-à-vis neighbouring countries

¹⁹⁹ Institute for Applied Economic Research at the University of Tübingen (IAW), Abschlussbericht, Vorstudie zur Abwanderung von ausländischen Fachkräften (31. Oktober 2023) – available [here](#).

²⁰⁰ For further information on the IOM Talent Survey 2023, please refer to section 6.1, chapter 6 in this report.

²⁰¹ Further information on the WelcomeAlliance available [here](#).

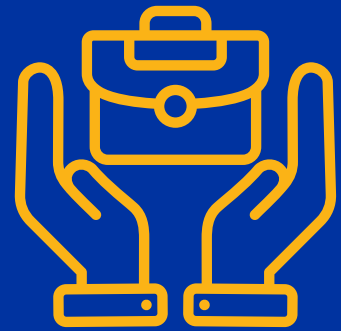
²⁰² Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020. Germany – available [here](#).

²⁰³ calculated as the ratio of the total number of citizenships granted over the stock of non-national population in a country at the beginning of the year

²⁰⁴ The Federal Government 2024. Modernes Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht – Für mehr gesellschaftliche Teilhabe (19 January 2024) – available [here](#).

CHAPTER VI

IOM TALENT SURVEY – RETENTION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



6. IOM TALENT SURVEY – RETENTION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 IOM Talent Survey

From 5 to 19 December 2023, IOM Denmark and IOM Germany conducted an **online International Talent Attraction & Retention Survey** targeting **talent and talents' spouses/partners in Denmark and Germany**. The survey was developed to collect practical insights and personal experience of how it is to live and either work or study in Denmark/Germany and what factors are important for talent's/expat's ability and willingness to stay. The survey also tested the validity of selected recommendations of the project.

Compared to the various indexes and expat surveys mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Talent Attraction and & Retention Survey had a **specific target group focusing on international talents and their personal experience during their journey to Denmark/Germany, exploring aspects related to arriving and staying/leaving**. The survey also served to create contact to talent in Denmark and Germany to collect input through personal interviews with interested talent.

The survey was implemented through an online questionnaire created with **Kobo Toolbox** and distributed via multipliers such as diaspora organisations and talent associations in Denmark and Germany, but also promoted through X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn social media postings. The survey consisted of **20 main questions** and was on purpose designed to be relatively short to support accessibility and interest rather than comprehensive data on the composition of the respondents. For some questions, respondents could also leave personal comments.

A total of **110 persons participated in the survey, 69 per cent** of whom lived in Germany and **29 per cent** in Denmark. Nearly **80 per cent** of the sample identified as **women**. While the target group of the survey was TCNs residing in either Denmark, Germany, or another EU country, two individuals, making up 2 per cent of the total sample reported that they lived outside of the EU by the time the survey was conducted (see [table 4](#) and [figure 7](#) below). These cases formally fall out of the target scope wherefore their answers are excluded from most results except the respondent profiles.

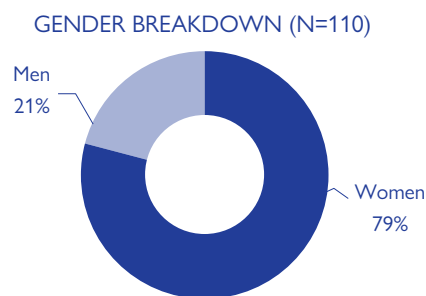
TABLE 4. RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE IOM TALENT SURVEY BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 2023

Place of residence	No. of respondents	In %
Denmark	32	29%
Germany	76	69%
Other	2	2%
Grand Total	110	100%

Data source: IOM Talent Survey 2023

Note*: The data is based on N= 110 respondents.

FIGURE 31. GENDER BREAKDOWN – RESPONDENTS' PROFILE, 2023



Data source: IOM Talent Survey 2023

Note*: The data is based on N= 110 respondents.

As the survey sample is not randomly drawn and is limited in the number of responses, also due to the two-week response period, the results cannot be considered statistically representative of all third country national talents residing in an EU country. All reported numbers may be considered valid for this specific sample of respondents. The small sample size should be carefully considered as a limitation of the analysis, especially regarding results that focus on certain sub-groups of interest. Nonetheless, the results of this survey can provide insights into the individual perceptions of the journey to and stay in Germany and Denmark for study or work purposes.

Moreover, because the survey was implemented also to test the validity of IOM's research and draft recommendations under the Talent Hub project, the results are highly relevant for the project in providing confirmation of initial findings and direction. The survey results should therefore be considered **directional** more than **representative**.

Several questions allowed the respondents to select multiple answer options. Thus, total percentages may exceed 100 per cent for these questions.

The analysis presented in this report constitutes a summary of the most intriguing results with respect to IOM's main interests in the topic of TCN talents in Germany and Denmark. However, this analysis does not fully exhaust the comprehensive complexity of even the limited data set. Two data briefs have been consolidated representing the key figures from the two online surveys. The documents can be requested from IOM Denmark or IOM Germany.

6.2 Comparison and analysis of data

6.2.1 Respondent profiles

6.2.1.1 Gender and family composition

A vast majority of all survey respondents identifies as women (80%), whereas the share of female respondents is larger in Germany (84%) compared to Denmark (70%). While the survey targeted both talents as well as their spouses/partners, there was no single question in the survey meant to make a clear distinction between answering as either talent or spouse/partner.²⁰⁵

Most of the work permits for talent in Denmark and Germany²⁰⁶ are seemingly issued to men, whereas in our sample female talents may be overrepresented compared to the overall population of TCN talents in these countries. Another interpretation of the composition of our sample may be that it includes a large share of female partners/spouses of male talent. In any case, the survey reached predominantly female respondents, regardless of whether these are considered talent, spouses/partners, or both.

The majority of the respondents particularly those residing in Germany indicated that following their partner/family was one of the main reasons they came to Germany. Following a partner/spouse was ranked as the second most common factor contributing to their decision to move (factor selected 30 times among 76 respondents, 39%).²⁰⁷ This figure mirrors data from other sources such as the Danish Expat Study,²⁰⁸ confirming that many talents do not arrive alone but with spouse/partner and possibly children.

²⁰⁵ If the main reason for coming to Denmark/Germany was family reunification and/or following a spouse/partner, the respondent can in principle be considered accompanying family. However, also accompanying family members may be talent in their own right.

²⁰⁶ In 2022, 69,155 first-time residence permits for the purpose of employment (without previous title) were issued in Germany. Of these, 30 per cent were female. (BAMF 2023). IOM has not identified statistics in Denmark on labour permits granted to women and men respectively. However, figures from jobindsats.dk on full-time employed TCNs in Denmark indicate that approximately 45 per cent are women.

²⁰⁷ IOM Talent Survey 2023. Note: The question is a multiple-choice question, therefore the percentages presented in the figures for both Denmark and Germany are based on the number of times the respondent answered the question by selecting one or more answers. The base calculations are thus not based on the number of participants participating in the survey (32 for Denmark, 76 for Germany).

²⁰⁸ Oxford Research 2020

The centrality of family is apparent throughout the survey data, where 84 per cent of respondents in Denmark and 80 per cent in Germany consider the overall well-being of their family as important for their intentions to remain in the respective country, and thus more important than questions of permanent residence or citizenship. Only 1 per cent in Germany and none in Denmark consider the issue of family well-being “not important.”

6.2.1.2 Education

With respect to the educational attainment of individuals in our sample, talents in Denmark have on average obtained higher levels of formal education than talents in Germany. In Denmark, half of the respondents have a master’s degree (50%), and around one quarter has obtained a bachelor’s degree (25%) or a Post Doctoral Degree (PhD) or higher (23%). Correspondingly, of the talents in Germany, only thirty-eight per cent have a master’s degree and merely four per cent have a PhD or higher, whereas around one third have obtained a bachelor’s degree (30%).

Overall, there was a larger variety of educational degrees amongst respondents in Germany where the highest level of formal education for 17 per cent was a high school or secondary degree, and nearly 11 per cent indicate that they obtained another type of degree (‘other’), including e.g. vocational training and state exam (“Staatsexamen”).

Respondents in Denmark generally had longer academic education than respondents in Germany. Although this reflects the formal education of the survey respondents, it does not necessarily represent the main profiles of all talent and spouses/partners in the two countries. Even so, it is possible that the eligibility criteria of different labour mobility schemes and hence the talent population in both countries are reflected in the results insofar as Denmark can be said to have a more exclusive approach to labour migration with several targeted labour mobility schemes, cf. chapter 2 of this report.

6.2.1.3 Nationality and previous countries

The survey targeted TCNs currently living in either Denmark or Germany. Because it was an option to select more than one nationality if a respondent had dual citizenship, the survey also did not exclude answers from persons with citizenship only in an EU country.²⁰⁹ Of all 110 respondents, 79 per cent indicate that they have a non-EU citizenship with the largest groups of non-EU respondents being from Türkiye (25), Kenya (22), the United Kingdom (13), United States of America (11) and India (5).

Approximately 23 per cent of all respondents state that they (also) have citizenship of an EU/EEA country with the largest EU citizenship group being German citizens (58%). Other EU nationalities represented were Bulgaria, Poland, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Malta, Denmark, and Italy.

Although a more detailed analysis of the survey results focusing on group comparisons between TCNs with and without EU citizenship is beyond the scope of this report, it is worth recalling that the conditions for intra-EU mobility and for remaining in an EU country are more flexible for persons who have acquired citizenship in an EU country than for those who have not. This might have affected the provided answers.

Of respondents in Denmark, almost half (47%) had lived in another EU/EEA country before coming to Denmark. For half of these individuals, the previous EU/EEA country was a neighbouring country to Denmark. The difference to respondents in Germany is notable, where only 14 per cent had lived in another EU/EEA country prior to coming to Germany, of which only three persons came from a neighbouring country.

²⁰⁹ The survey could potentially have been answered also by persons who had lost their original citizenship when obtaining EU citizenship but still answered like TCN talent. One of the points of critique raised in comments by respondents from Germany was the limitation on having double citizenship.

Despite the Danish opt-outs from intra-EU labour migration programming, there seems to have been incoming intra-EU mobility to Denmark, in particular from neighbouring countries. Even if this observation supports the perception that intra-EU mobility is often between neighbouring countries, it goes against the understanding that Denmark might be less receptive to intra-EU mobility due to the opt-outs. It is therefore a mobility pattern that could require further investigation. The finding may also speak in favour of support measures and increased cooperation with Denmark's neighbouring states on labour migration to capitalize on such mobility. The neighbouring countries are not specified in the answers, but one may assume that these are mainly Sweden and Germany unless other Nordic countries or the UK are implied. The German data could conversely indicate greater success on the side of Germany to attract TCNs from outside the EU.

6.2.2 Arriving, staying and leaving

6.2.2.1 Length of stay

In our sample, respondents in Germany have on average been living there for a longer period, compared to talents in Denmark who by a majority moved there within the past two years. More than half of the respondents in Denmark have arrived within the past two years (63%). Only six survey participants (19%) had lived in Denmark for 10 years or more. This marks a difference to respondents from Germany, where 46 per cent had been in Germany for 10 years or more and 20 per cent had arrived within the past two years.

Again, with reservations as to statistical representation and the reach of the survey, the respondents in Denmark have generally been in the country for a much shorter period than those in Germany. This might indicate that the talents and partners/spouses in Denmark remain for a shorter duration than those in Germany as the survey did not reach respondents that had left Denmark again. Even if this is not a certain conclusion, it needs to be kept in mind that the Danish respondents had had shorter exposure to life in the residence country than those in Germany, including but not limited to integration and inclusion issues, language learning, professional development opportunities, etc.

6.2.2.2 Remaining in the country or residence

Over three in four respondents residing in Denmark (78%) would like to stay in the country as long as possible/permanently. The proportion of those wanting to stay was highest for those who had arrived within the past two years (68%). Four respondents (13%) answered that they would like to leave Denmark and go to another EU country. This would appear to indicate that respondents in Denmark were generally satisfied with their stay and would remain in Denmark (or the EU) if conditions allowed.

In Germany, slightly more than half of the respondents (51%) would like to stay in Germany as long as possible/permanently. Almost 19 per cent of the respondents did not know whether they would like to stay or leave. The respondents who did not know whether they would stay or leave Germany again had either arrived 10 years ago or more, or between five and seven years ago. Eleven respondents (14%) would like to leave Germany and return to their home country with the proportion being highest among those who came to Germany more than 10 years ago (64%). Respondents from Germany, while still in majority wanting to stay in the country, therefore appear less satisfied with their stay as compared to those in Denmark and being more undecided on continuing life in Germany the longer they had stayed.

As concerns the overall feeling of inclusion and integration, 47 per cent of respondents in Denmark and 42 per cent in Germany agree that they feel included at the workplace and in society. Even so it is perhaps concerning that only 20 per cent of German respondents agree that their needs and opinions are being listened to by their employers and authorities, with 41 per cent amongst respondents in Denmark.

As mentioned above, well-being of family is one of the main factors that respondents consider important for a decision to stay in the country (Denmark 84%; Germany 80%). However, also possibilities for permanent

residence or citizenship (Denmark 78%; Germany 75%) as well as own professional development and opportunities (Denmark 92%, Germany 81%) are important factors for respondents from both countries.

6.2.2.3 Arriving

Of respondents in Denmark, 56 per cent state that they had arrived to the country because they were offered a job. Twenty-two per cent because they followed their partner/family and 13 per cent were offered a place to study.

For Germany, the reasons for arriving were more evenly distributed, with 26 per cent having received a job offer and 25 per cent a place to study. For 10 of the respondents in Germany, the spouse/partner had been offered a job (13%) or a place to study (7%). Twenty-nine per cent and hence the largest group of respondents from Germany answered “other” as reason for arriving, providing reasons such as “marriage/spouse”, “au pair”, “family reunion” or “internship,” some of which also indicate family reasons.

In a related question concerning the main reasons for moving to Denmark/Germany, respondents could select amongst different factors that affected their decision to arrive by selecting multiple answers.

For respondents in Denmark, the main factor contributing to their decision to move to Denmark was a good work-life balance (72 per cent of respondents chose this answer), followed by better working conditions, which was important to 63 per cent. Ten out of 32 respondents (31%) residing in Denmark indicated that following their partner/family was among the top factors contributing to the decision to move to Denmark, which was in the top five factors. Among respondents in Germany, career/professional development (47%) was also a main factor for moving to Germany with ‘following a partner/family’ on second place (39%).²¹⁰

Comparing Denmark and Germany, the reputed Danish brand of work-life balance therefore stands out as an attraction factor, whereas for Germany it is rather opportunities for professional development. In this sense, it is positive that both respondents living in Denmark (69%) and Germany (61%) find that they currently have opportunities to develop professionally.

The responses seem to reflect the nature of labour migration schemes in both countries and particularly the student mobility opportunities for international students in Germany that is a popular study destination. The centrality of accompanying spouses/partners and families is also supported by the data, although more for Germany than for Denmark.

An interesting insight into the arrival phase in Denmark and Germany was the perceived difference in digitalization of the application processes. Whereas 66 per cent of respondents from Denmark found that the application process was sufficiently digitalized, only 18 per cent of respondents from Germany responded the same. Indeed, more than half of German respondents (54%) directly disagreed with the statement that the application process for coming to Germany was digitalized enough. Even though the respondents in Germany had obviously managed to navigate an analogue application process (seeing that they were in Germany and answered the survey), it appears to be an area with room for improvement.

6.2.2.4 Possible reasons for leaving

The survey inquired about the main drivers for talents to potentially leave Denmark or Germany: “If you were to leave Denmark/Germany again, what would be the main reason(s).” The question was phrased as a multiple-choice item which allowed the respondents to select several reasons.

For talents in Denmark, the most commonly reason that would lead them to leave Denmark again were limited opportunities to obtain permanent residence permit (47% of respondents chose this answer). This

²¹⁰ Please note that the respondents could select more than one answer for this question (multiple-choice question).

was followed by challenges to adapt socially and culturally (44%), the language learning barrier (41%) and their partner/spouse not being able to find employment (38%). Noting that the majority of talent and spouses/partners would prefer to stay in Denmark if conditions allow, the answers again highlight the importance of **residence permit regulations, integration/inclusion measures, language learning** and focus on **spouses/partners** when working to improve retention.

German respondents prioritized different factors which would contribute to them potentially leaving the country. In Germany, challenges to adapt socially and culturally rank as number one reason for leaving (for 45% of respondents this was one of the answers they chose), followed by the language barrier (29%), limited opportunities for learning and career development (29%), family reunification difficult/impossible (26%) and better opportunities for either work or studies abroad (24%). The results indicate that this sample of talents find it more difficult to adapt to German society and in getting family to Germany (family reunification) when compared to talents in Denmark, but also that retention is impacted by both push and pull factors, i.e. better options elsewhere.²¹¹

Even though small differences in the number of responses reflect in large percentual changes because of the small sample size, it is remarkable that the main reasons for talent for potentially leaving again Denmark are consistently indicated by 40 per cent or more of all those respondents, whereas they for Germany – except for cultural adaption – are shared by less than 30 per cent of the respondents. Amongst the respondents to the survey in Denmark there appears to be more agreement on the retention challenges than in Germany. It is however unclear if this is caused by a shared understanding of difficulties in staying in Denmark, or because the Danish sample is just more homogeneous than the German sample.

6.2.2.5 Recommendations and needs of respondents

As part of the survey, IOM also attempted to test the validity of the project's draft recommendations by asking respondents to select between different support interventions that they would consider relevant for themselves and their families. Both in their current situation and at the time of preparation of and arrival to the country.

Respondents were asked to indicate what initiatives they thought they and their families would benefit from if implemented. While answers generally indicate a need for both pre- and post- arrival support to incoming talents, responses from Denmark seem to lean more towards **support after arrival**, such as having a designated contact person/mentor from the municipality as illustrated in the below figure. Increased post-arrival support by the municipality was important for more than half of respondents living in Denmark (56%). The results of the analysis indicate that such municipal support to the talents had apparently not been available at the time of their arrival.²¹²

The situation was slightly different for respondents' preferred assistance in Germany, where **pre-departure** guidance on admission to school, social security, taxation, finding housing etc. was granted greater importance: 57 per cent of individuals would have wished for support in this area. The same topics (guidance on admission to school, social security, taxation, finding housing) were regarded as central also for post-arrival for 54 per cent of interviewees living in Germany.

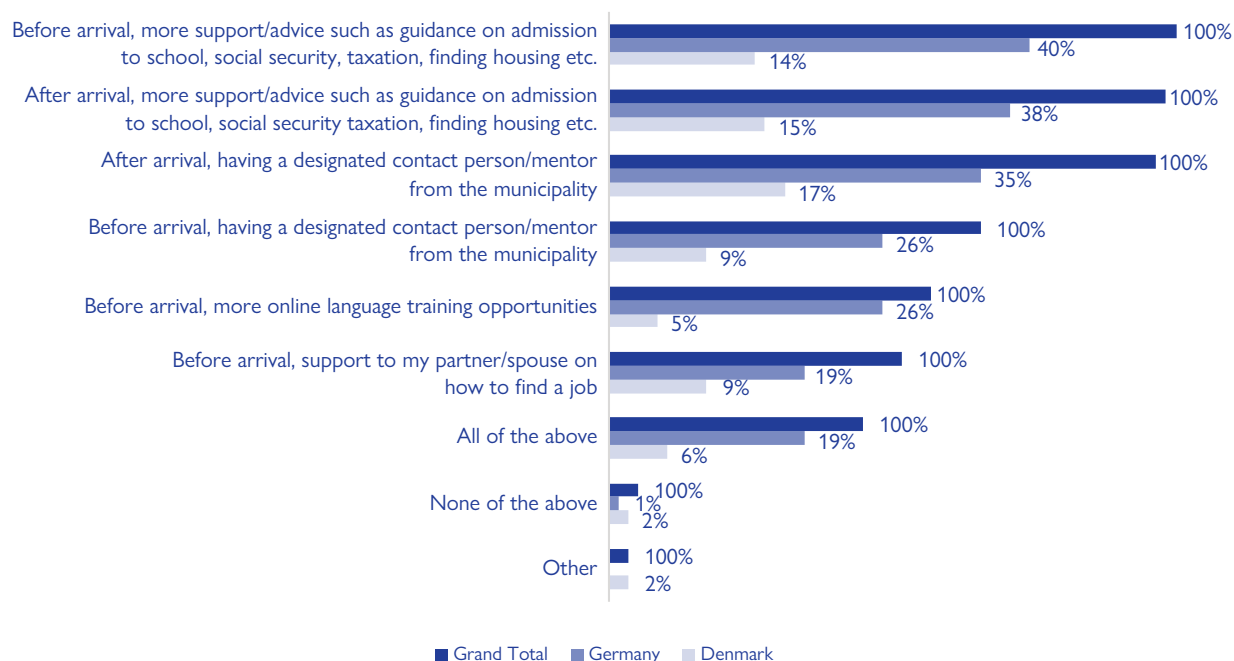
Thirty-four per cent of all respondents residing in Denmark and forty-one per cent of those residing in Germany disagreed with the statement that their municipality was welcoming and providing them with the information they needed, indicating a need for improvement in terms of support from municipalities.

²¹¹ Please note that the respondents could select more than one answer for this question (multiple-choice question).

²¹² Please note that the respondents could select more than one answer for this question (multiple-choice question).

Nevertheless, the role of the municipalities was seen as important by respondents in both Denmark and Germany with regards to i.e. family support and job search/matching.

FIGURE 32: PRE- AND POST ARRIVAL SUPPORT TO INCOMING TALENTS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILIES (N=108)*



Data source: IOM Talent Survey 2023

Note*: The calculation in per cent is based on the total number of responses from both Denmark (32) and Germany (76), representing a total of 108 responses. The question is a multiple-choice question wherefore the percentages presented are based on the number of times the respondent answered the question by selecting one or more answers (84 answers for Denmark, 219 for Germany).

6.2.2.6 Learning the local language - Danish/German

On the specific topic of **learning and mastering the local language**, 70 per cent of respondents in Germany found that their current knowledge of German helped them in their daily life, whereas only 25 per cent of surveyed talent found their Danish language skills to be helpful to them on a daily basis. Indeed, amongst Danish respondents, 38 per cent directly disagreed that their knowledge of Danish was sufficient. Here it can be recalled that respondents in Germany had generally spent longer time in the country than respondents in Denmark, which could be one reason for the – self-perceived or actual – better mastery of the local language.

As previously indicated, language is considered essential for integration/inclusion and in extension retention. Only 25 per cent of Danish respondents found that they were provided with sufficient time and options to study Danish, even if 66 per cent agreed that they had been sufficiently informed of the possibility to learn Danish for free. For Germany, 34 per cent had the time and option to learn and 43 per cent had been sufficiently informed of their options to learn German.

Regarding language learning initiatives, respondents in Denmark most frequently stated that they think that they would benefit from free language lessons also after five years of stay in Denmark (59% of respondents chose this answer), followed by intensive classes shortly after arrival (41%). Respondents in Germany most

frequently opted for German basic language courses (54%) as well as job specific language courses (45%), both shortly after arrival.²¹³

6.3 Main takeaways from IOM Talent Survey

The International Talent Attraction & Retention Survey was deployed **to collect practical insights and to test the validity of the project's research and recommendations**. As it can be seen from the comparison of selected data above, the survey results largely corroborate the findings of the research and the recommendations, albeit with some reservations as concerns the statistical representation flowing from the number of responses. As the survey intended to explore talent's personal experiences and selected project recommendations, it did not attempt to cover as for example more systemic areas of talent retention such as described in the project's recommendations to CopCap.

The survey's data mirrors IOM's findings through desktop research and stakeholder consultations as regards the **importance of professional development and career** for both the **talent and accompanying family members, family well-being, residence permits and citizenship, work-life balance, and language learning**.

On language learning, Danish respondents seem to indicate through the answers and personal comments that they are aware of the possibility to learn Danish for free, but **do not feel they have sufficient options to study Danish** within five years due to their professional and family engagements. Because most of the Danish respondents had been in Denmark less than two years and would have up to five years of free Danish lessons, this could indicate difficulties of accommodating language learning and professional/personal life under current language learning structures.

The survey results naturally depend on the actual respondents reached, which might have been different for a longer or more comprehensive survey or even covering multiple countries. Even so, IOM found it interesting to have a relatively large share of responses from females. Although data has not consistently been analysed specifically based on the gender of the respondents, it can be noted that women compared greater willingness to remain as long as possible/permanently compared to the men. For Denmark, 68 per cent of the female respondents who answered the question wanted to as compared to 32 per cent of the men.²¹⁴ For Germany, the corresponding figures were 92 per cent for women and 8 per cent for the men.²¹⁵ Regardless of whether the respondents are considered talents or spouses/partners – or both – it highlights the importance of family, gender and other individual factors in retention and data collection efforts.

Another tendency highlighted by the survey data is the difference in respondent profiles possibly caused by the country's **labour mobility schemes**, hereunder in particular **Germany's apparent success in attracting talent directly from outside the EU**.

Despite any shortcomings of the survey as well as the data analysis included here, the data collection exercise has in itself proven an insightful tool to learn more about the profiles, intentions and experiences of talent and their families in Denmark and Germany. It therefore continues to be a recommendation to regularly collect and share data and feedback on talent management in Denmark, Germany, and other countries for **continued development of evidence-based policies** and **targeted talent management**, including also the **personal feedback of talent**.

²¹³ Please note that the respondents could select more than one answer for this question (multiple-choice question).

²¹⁴ The percentage is based on number of respondents based in Denmark that responded to the question "I would like to stay in Denmark as long as possible/permanently" (25 out of 32). IOM Talent Survey, 2023. For respondents based in Denmark, 22 out of 32 respondents identified as women (69%), and 10 out of 32 as men (31%). For respondents based in Germany, 64 out of 76 identified as women (84%), and 12 out of 76 as men (16%). In total, 108 persons responded to the survey of those based in Denmark and Germany.

²¹⁵ The percentage is based on number of respondents based in Germany that responded to the question "I would like to stay in Germany as long as possible/permanently" (39 out of 76). IOM Talent Survey, 2023. For respondents based in Denmark, 22 out of 32 respondents identified as women (69%), and 10 out of 32 as men (31%). For respondents based in Germany, 64 out of 76 identified as women (84%), and 12 out of 76 as men (16%). In total, 108 persons responded to the survey of those based in Denmark and Germany.

7. CONCLUSION

The report “From Short-Term Stay to Long-Term Inclusion – A Multi-Situational Report and Analysis of Talent Retention Factors in Denmark, Germany, and the EU,” produced under the Talent Hub project, has strived to provide a multi-situational, comprehensive and systematic overview of factors influencing retention but also attraction, nurturing and intra-EU circulation in Denmark, Germany, and the EU. The overview was done through analysing and synthesizing input from a broad range of written sources, stakeholder consultations in Denmark, Germany and selected EU countries, and beneficiary surveys. The report incorporates insights from other materials produced under the Talent Hub project, such as the separately published overviews and policy briefs on digital nomads and cross-border remote work options as well as the recommendations to be presented to CopCap. The report will feed into the finalization of the recommendations as well as the production of new materials such as a more practically oriented, modular guidebook on talent retention.

The report and analysis are intentionally comprehensive in trying to provide an inclusive picture of systemic and thematic retention factors rather than a detailed focus on fewer themes. Even so, the factors included in the report are not exhaustive of all factors that may be decision for retention of talent on both individual and societal level. The attempt to systemise knowledge and assessing the field of retention has shown that it is valuable to study the factors that impacts retention to better identify possible interventions to foster conditions for retaining talents in an ever-changing world.

The divisions into systemic and thematic factors were developed by IOM during the work on the report and could in principle be considered counter-intuitive to the holistic approach to talent management otherwise proposed. However, IOM nevertheless found it useful to categorize the identified retention factors into main areas to facilitate the overview. In support of a holistic view of talent management, the report however also stresses the connections between different factors that might appear separate. I.e. family well-being is not a stand-alone area but linked to other areas and the recommendations and topics of these, such as professional development opportunities and jobs, language learning, social life, and residence permits.

It emerges from the description and analysis of retention factors that successful and sustainable talent retention, particularly in Denmark and Germany but potentially also broader in the EU, depend on the development of multi-faceted strategies for implementation a broad spectrum of interventions. Strategies should holistically and ideally address both systemic and thematic factors, while recognizing the diversity of talent needs – including migrant workers, their families, and international students - and involve multiple stakeholders. Talent data and feedback should be regularly collected and analyzed for evidence-based policy development and better impact. Change does not come about only through replication and implementation of good practices, but also through structural and policy changes for enhanced retention.

Amid differences in national migration policies and talent management setups, eligibility of talent for integration and inclusion measures, overall country branding, coordination structures as well as labour market structures, needs and schemes, there remains a need for individual EUMS and the European Union to attract and retain talent. In the so-called global race for talent, it would be superficial to consider the potential to receive talent only a question of the attractiveness of one country over the other according to attractiveness scores on salaries, accessibility, and work-life balance etc. Attractiveness is closely linked to and impacted by individual retention factors, where retention factors can contribute to the attractiveness of a country or region. Retention, integration, attraction and nurturing need to be considered together and from the very beginning.

Retention and integration should not be regarded as a one-direction journey but represent an ongoing process that requires constant adaptation from the talent themselves and the actors in society. Integration and inclusion may start even before the settling in process in the new residence country, where pre-departure orientations, language learning in the pre-phase can play an integral role in establishing the experience of the talent in the integration into the new country.

Retention is not limited to retention in a specific state alone but may also be impacted by regional factors and opportunities that offer personal and professional development through further relocations. The talent customer journey should therefore not be regarded as a one-direction journey where the last and full stop aims as maximum retention in one state, but as potentially circular or repeated, where like-minded states and stakeholders can cooperate towards interoperability and facilitation of regional talent mobility.

8. REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

8.1.1 Denmark

- Akademikerne 2023. Alarmerende behov for national strategi for international rekruttering.
- Axcelfuture 2024. [Hvidbog og løsningsforslag til bedre vilkår for tiltrækning og fastholdelse af internationale højtuddannede talenter og specialister fra lande uden for EU \(White book\)](#).
- Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) 2024. [Besværligt at oprette en dansk bankkonto for internationale medarbejdere](#).
- Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) 2023. [Højtuddannede indvandrere er en god forretning for Danmark](#).
- Confederation of Danish Industry (DI), Dansk Erhverv, Akademikerne, Danske Universiteter, Danske Studerendes Fællesråd 2019. [Internationale studerende til gavn for Danmark](#)
- Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) 2022, [Sådan hjælper kommuner med at skaffe international arbejdskraft](#)
- Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (SIRI) 2023, [Udviklingen i SIRIs sagsbehandlingstider de seneste 12 måneder](#), March 2023
- [Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment \(STAR\)](#). Online database: [Positivliste for regional uddannelsespulje – RAR Hovedstaden \(rar-bm.dk\)](#) (accessed 25 January 2024)
- [Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment \(STAR\)](#). Online database: [Foreign workforce: Foreign citizens with an wage income in Denmark Residency, citizenship, industry](#) (accessed 24 January 2024).
- Danish Board of Business Development 2019, [Talent til Danmark. En national indsats for talenttiltrækning](#)
- Danish Center for Social Science Research (VIVE) 2021, [Kortlægning af integration i kommunerne: Kommunernes indsatser for at bringe ikkevestlige indvandrere i beskæftigelse](#)
- Danish Ministry of Finance 2023. [Økonomisk Analyse: Indvandreres nettobidrag til de offentlige finanser i 2019 - revideret version \(september 2023\)](#), 29 September.
- Danish Ministry of Finance 2023. [Styrket international rekruttering](#).
- Danish Parliament 2023. [Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven, Styrket International Rekruttering](#), (No. L46), adopted 1 april 2023.
- Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration (STAR) 2023. [Udviklingen i SIRIs sagsbehandlingstider de seneste 12 måneder](#), 7 December.
- Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science 2017. [Opbremssning i optaget af studerende på engelsksprogede uddannelser](#).
- Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science 2022. [Beretning for 2021 om vurdering og anerkendelse af udenlandske uddannelseskvalifikationer m.v.](#)
- Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration 2024. [Regeringen vil øge fleksibiliteten for certificerede virksomheder](#), 24 January.
- Danish Ministry of Interior and Health 2023. [Aftale om en akutplan for sygehusvæsenet](#), 23 February.
- Damvad Analytics, 2022. [Samfundsøkonomisk regnskab for internationale dimittender I Danmark](#).
- Digital Hub Denmark, HBS Economics 2020. [Digitale talenter af muligheder for at tiltrække mere talent til Danmark](#).
- [Folketingets Ombudsmand 2022](#). [Sagsbehandlingstiden for udenlandske lægers ansøgninger om autorisation er alt for lang](#).
- Foreningen Nydansker 2018. [Modtagelse og fastholdelse af udenlandsk arbejdskraft i danske virksomheder](#).

- Government of Denmark 2016. [Samarbejde om bedre integration.](#)
- Government of Denmark 2023a. [Forberedt på fremtiden I, En sammenhængende reformkurs.](#)
- Government of Denmark 2014. [Lettere adgang til højt kvalificeret arbejdskraft – udspil til en reform af international rekruttering.](#)
- HBS Economics 2020. Digitale talenter og muligheder for at tiltrække mere talent til Danmark.
- HBS Economics 2023. Kortlægning af den digitale talentmasse i Danmark.
- Halkjær, Peter, 2023. [Dansk Erhverv opfordrer: Afskaf nu kravet om en dansk bankkonto](#), *Århus Stiftstidende*, 29 January.
- IDA 2020. IDAs politik for rekruttering og fastholdelse af udenlandsk teknisk og naturvidenskabelig arbejdskraft.
- IDA, Damvad 2022. [Internationale dimittenders værdi for samfundsøkonomien med fokus på tekniske og naturvidenskabelige dimittender.](#)
- KPMG 2023. New bill adopted to strengthen international recruitment, how will the new rules impact your business? (accessed 23 January 2024)
- Kjeldtoft, S. Sebastian 2017, [Internationalt anerkendt forsker er meldt til politiet: Når jeg deler min viden med danske myndigheder, bliver jeg straffet](#), *Politiken*, 17 November.
- Local Government Denmark (KL), [Udspil om International Arbejdskraft](#) (2023)
- Lyngby-Taarbæk Kommune, Science City Lyngby, 2023. [Vidensby: Strategi 2020-2025](#)
- Lyngby Park Lonie 2023. [I Sønderjylland har udenlandske ingeniørstuderende jobgaranti](#), *PeopleTech*, 20 March.
- Lyngby Park Lonie 2022. [Tyskland truer dansk adgang til udenlandsk arbejdskraft: 'Helt oplagt at rykke på'](#). *PeopleTech*, 3 October.
- New to Denmark 2024. [Work Schemes SIRI.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024a. [Fast-track scheme.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024b. [Supplementary Pay Limit Scheme.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024c. [Positive List for Skilled Work.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024d. [Positive List for People with Higher Education.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024e. [Higher Educational Programmes.](#)
- [New to Denmark 2024f. Job Change Rule.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024g. [Case processing times SIRI](#)
- New to Denmark 2024h. [Positivlisterne bliver opdateret pr. 1.januar 2024.](#)
- New to Denmark 2024i. [Medfølgende familie til arbejdstager.](#)
- New to Denmark 2023a. [Nye Regler for opholdsordninger på erhvervs- og studieområdet.](#)
- Novo Nordisk and Lundbeck 2024. [Hvidbog og løsningsforslag til bedre vilkår for tiltrækning og fastholdelse af internationale højtuddannede talenter og specialister fra lande udenfor EU.](#)
- ODI 2022. [Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants: Denmark country profile](#), 30 November.
- Oxford Research 2020. [The Expat Study 2020. An analysis of living and working in Denmark as an expat.](#)
- Rambøll Management Consulting 2020, Evaluering af danskuddannelsesreformen 2017.
- Radikale Venstre 2023, [En ny tilgang til international arbejdskraft](#), 30 April.
- Retsinformation 2024, Forslag til Lov om ændring af udlændingeloven, Styrket international rekruttering, [2022/2 LSV 46.](#)
- Rosenberg A., Nielsen, F. 2022, [Knap 4000 engelsksprogede uddannelsespladser forsvinder til sommer: Det koster vigtig arbejdskraft, frygter erhvervslivet](#), *DR Østjylland*, 20 January.
- SMV Danmark 2022, [De små og mellemstore virksomheder er rygraden i dansk erhvervsliv](#), 5 July.
- ThinkTank Europe 2022, [Europas fremtidige arbejdskraft kommer udefra](#), 18 June.
- Villumsen, Tania; Jens-Kristian Lütken 2023. Drop fordømmene, vi skal have flere udenlandske studerende, *Politiken*, 16 February. Available at: www.politiken.dk.
- Wismann, L. M. Ida 2023, [For halvdelen af siden afskaffede S 4000 udenlandske studiepladser, nu skal der oprettes nye](#), *TV Nyheder*, 2 March.

8.1.2 Germany

- Angenendt S., Knapp N. & Kipp D. (2023). [German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Germany is Looking for Foreign Labour](#). SWP Research Paper 2023/RP 03, 27.03.2023.
- Berlin for Integration and Migration. Partizipation Digital. [Partizipation Digital - Berlin.de](#) (last accessed 21 February 2024).
- Bundesrat (2023). [Stellungnahme des Nationalen Normenkontrollrates gem. § 6 Abs. 1 NKRKG, Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Weiterentwicklung der Fachkräfteeinwanderung \(April 2023\)](#).
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (2023). [Internationale Studierendenmobilität in Deutschland: Ergebnisbericht zum ersten Benchmark internationale Hochschule \(BintHo\) im Wintersemester 2020/21](#). Bonn.
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). [Cost of Education and Living](#). (last accessed 22 February 2024)
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (2023). Wissenschaft weltoffen kompakt. [Facts and Figures on the International Nature of Studies and Research in Germany and Worldwide](#).
- Giving Africa a New Face e.V. (GAANF) (2023). 12-Punkte-Programm. Aus Sicht der MigrantInnen.
- Graf, J. (2023). [Educational and Labour Migration Monitoring. Issuance of Residence Titles to Third-Country Nationals. Annual Report 2022](#) (Reports on Migration and Integration, Series 1). Nuremberg. Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.
- Institute for Applied Economic Research at the University of Tübingen (IAW), [Abschlussbericht, Vorstudie zur Abwanderung von ausländischen Fachkräften](#) (31. October 2023).
- InterNations 2023. [Expatriate Insider 2023 – The World Through Expatriate Eyes](#)
- Maciejewski, L. & Harder, N. (2022): [Überqualifiziert und un\(ter\)beschäftigt: Potenziale nachziehender Partner*innen für den deutschen Arbeitsmarkt](#), DeZIM Briefing Notes, Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM).
- Make-it-in-Germany 2024, Types of visa: <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types> (last accessed 29 January 2024).
- Make-it-in-Germany 2024, The new Skilled Immigration Act: <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act> (last accessed 29 January 2024).
- Make-it-in-Germany 2022, [Questions and answers about the fast-track procedure for skilled workers](#).
- Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020 (MIPEX). [Germany](#).
- OECD 2022. Your Way to Germany – [Ergebnisse einer Onlinebefragung unter Fachkräften im Ausland](#).
- Palop-García, P. & Engler, M. (2023): [Hat die Chancenkarte eine Chance? Eine Analyse des neuen deutschen Punktesystems zur Steuerung der Erwerbsmigration](#). DeZIM Briefing Notes 11, Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM).
- Pineda, J., Kercher, J., Falk, S., Thies, T., Yildirim, H. H., & Zimmermann, J. (2022). [Accompanying international students in Germany to academic success: results and recommendations from the SeSaBa project](#) (DAAD Studies). Bonn: DAAD. <https://doi.org/10.46685/DAADStudien.2022.07>
- Rietig, V. (2023). [The Political Economy of Migration Policies in Germany. Clear goals, stony path, uncomfortable realities](#). Policy Brief November 2023. Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS).
- The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency 2020. [Rassistische Diskriminierung auf dem Wohnungsmarkt](#). Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Umfrage.
- [The Federal Employment Agency 2024, database: Beschäftigte nach Staatsangehörigkeit](#) (Quartalszahlen), Deutschland, Länder und Kreise. (30 June 2023).
- The Federal Employment Agency. [Deutsch lernen](#). (last accessed 30 January 2024)
- The Federal Foreign Office 2022, [database: Erteilte nationale Visa 2022 \(January 2022\)](#).
- The Federal Government. [Fachkräftestrategie der Bundesregierung](#) (October 2022).
- The Federal Government 2024. [Modern citizenship law. Promoting social participation](#). (19 January 2024)
- [The Federal Government 2023. Rede der Bundesministerin des Innern und für Heimat, Nancy Faeser, zum Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 23. Juni 2023 in Berlin](#).

- The Federal Government 2022. [Eckpunkte zur Fachkräfteeinwanderung aus Drittstaaten](#). (06.12.2022)
- The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2019), [Internationalisation of Education, Science and Research. Strategy of the Federal Government](#).
- The Federal Ministry of Education and Research. [Anerkennung in Deutschland](#). (last accessed 22 February 2024).
- The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 2020. [Zugangswege und Unterstützungsbedarfe von Migrantinnen und ihren Familien aus dem EU-Ausland und aus Drittstaaten im Hinblick auf Qualifizierung und Erwerbsarbeit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Familiennachzugs](#).
- The Federal Statistical Office (DeSTATIS). [Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2022 stark gestiegen](#). Press release no. 165 on 27. April 2023
- The Federal Statistical Office (DeSTATIS). [83% der Personen mit Blue Card leben nach fünf Jahren weiterhin in Deutschland](#). Presse release No. 289 from 21 July 2023.
- The Federal Statistical Office (DeSTATIS). [Ein Drittel der internationalen Studierenden bleibt langfristig in Deutschland](#). Press release No. 435 from 12 October 2022.
- The Federal Statistical Office (DeSTATIS). [Deutschland ist Mieterland Nr. 1 in der EU](#). 2024.
- The Federal Statistical Office (DeSTATIS). [Housing costs: 10.7% of the population regarded as overburdened in 2021](#). Press release No. N 054 of 26 August 2022.
- The Federal Government (2019), [Darstellung der Maßnahmen der Bundesregierung zur Sprachförderung von und Integration](#). Aktualisierung 2019.
- Zeit Online (2023). [Bundesrat billigt erleichterte Zuwanderung von Fachkräften](#) (7 July 2023).

8.1.3 EU, other or multiple countries

- Dello Iacono, C., Orfao, G., & Stanek, M. 2021. The changing nature of intra-European mobility of third-country nationals. Review of institutional framework and general dynamics (Deliverable 3.1). Leuven: HumMingBird project 870661 – H2020.
- European Commission 2024, [definitions third-country nationals](#).
- European Commission 2024a, [EU Immigration Portal](#) (accessed 25 January 2024)
- European Commission 2024b, European Skills of the Year, [portal](#) (accessed 25 January 2024)
- European Commission 2023, Press release [Commission proposes new measures on skills and talent to help address critical labour shortages](#), 15. November
- European Commission 2022a, Intra-EU Labour Mobility at a glance. Main findings of the Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility 2021
- European Commission 2022, Press release [Commission welcomes Member State's targets for a more social Europe by 2023](#), 16 June.
- European Commission 2020, [Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#)
- European Commission 2022b, [Legal migration: Attracting skills and talent to the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)
- European Commission 2022c, [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Attracting skills and talent to the EU](#)
- European Commission 2023, [Labour migration: Commission and Member States enhance cooperation to tackle shortages in the EU labour market](#), 10 January
- European Commission 2018, [Analytical report on the legal situation of third-country workers in the EU as compared to EU mobile workers](#), 2018.
- European Migration Network (EMN) 2013, Intra-EU Mobility of third-country nationals
- European Migration Network (EMN) 2022, Summary of EMN Ad-hoc Query 2022.64. Municipal level initiatives in TCN soft-landing
- Helene Garmann Johnsen, Ingrid. Oslo Alliance, 2019, [Talent Attraction Management in Greater Oslo: How to the reception and integration of international talents?](#)
- Hof, Helena; Simon Pemberton, Emilia Pietka-Nykaza, 2021: EU migrant retention and the temporalities of migrant staying: a new conceptual framework, Comparative Migration Studies.
- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) 2022, Re-thinking approaches to

labour migration. Potentials and gaps in four EM member states' migration infrastructures. Case study summaries: Estonia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal

- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Labour Organisation (ILO) 2021, India-EU Migration and Mobility. Flows and Patterns
- INSEAD 2020, [Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022](#) (GTCI 2022)
- INSEAD 2023, Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2023. [portal](#)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2017. [Integration and Social Cohesion: Key Elements for reaping the benefits of migration](#)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2023. Talent Hub Brief
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2023. Talent Hub project materials
- InterNations 2022. [Expatriate Insider 2022 – The World Through Expatriate Eyes](#) (accessed 31 January 2024)
- InterNations 2023. [Expatriate Insider 2023 – The World Through Expatriate Eyes](#)
- Linköping Science Park & Future Place Leadership 2023, International Talent Map: A data driven benchmark across selected European countries
- Mazzeschi Marco 2017, Workers mobility within Schengen: A comparative study of 17 countries requirements, in Global Journal of Human Resource Management Vol.5, 2017
- Migrant Integration Policy Index ([MIPEX](#)) 2020
- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, Business Finland 2020, Talent Boost Cookbook 2.0
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2023, [Indicators of Talent Attractiveness portal](#)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2024, [Broadband Portal](#)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2022, [International Migration Outlook](#)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2019, How do OECD countries compare in their attractiveness for talented migrants?, in Migration Policy Debates No.19, May 2019
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2023, What is the best country for global talents in the OECD?, in Migration Policy Debates, No.29 March 2023
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2023, [Europe is underachieving in the global competition for talent](#)
- Oxford Research 2023, Language Training Services for Adult Immigrants in the Nordic Countries – A Comparative Study
- US Citizenship and Immigration Services 2024, [online portal](#)

8.2 Annexes

Please refer to the websites of [IOM Denmark](#) or [IOM Germany](#) for access to Talent Hub documents mentioned in this report.

This document was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union



COPENHAGEN
CAPACITY



Funded by
the European Union

For more information visit:
<https://denmark.iom.int/talent-hub-eu>
<https://germany.iom.int/talent-hub-eu>