

# Re-thinking approaches to labour migration

## Potential and Gaps in EU Member States' Migration Infrastructures

### Case Study Summary — **Romania**



#### KEY MESSAGES

- Romania continues to be a country of emigration showing a steady emigration growth. Romania's emigration rate has been steadily increasing for the past 15 years, with a noticeable uptick following EU accession in 2007.
- Key factors that have influenced the labour immigration policy include concerns over border security as part of Romania's bid for Schengen accession, limited experience in facilitating recruitment of workers from more distant locations, and efforts to engage the Romanian diaspora.
- Employers across Romania face significant challenges in sourcing local labour, particularly in low-skilled sectors, due to demographic declines and the migration of the workforce to Western Europe.
- To address labour shortages, especially in construction, Romanian employers have begun recruiting workers from Southeast Asia.
- Romania is expected to transition to a more digitised and service-oriented economy over the next decade. This economic shift is anticipated to increase the demand for both medium- and high-skilled labour.
- Romania's quota-based system for issuing work permits cannot keep up with the more nuanced needs of both employers and migrant workers.
- Expanding bilateral labour recruitment schemes and recalibrating labour immigration policies to support emerging economic sectors are essential steps towards ensuring Romania's competitiveness.
- EU initiatives, including both the proposed Talent Partnership and EU Talent Pool, can serve as valuable complements to Romania's national strategies.



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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Romania is at a critical juncture of its migration policy development. Until 2019, the priority was clearly the facilitation of return of Romanian nationals from the EU; however, as noted by both entrepreneurs, officials and experts, the gap in wages and terms of employment has made this strategy of limited effectiveness. The COVID-19 pandemic and Ukrainian crisis had short-term dampening effects on business; nonetheless, the current growth rates require admission of larger contingents of migrant workers, which was reflected in a significant expansion of the migrant worker quota in 2022 to continue in the coming years. Nevertheless, the country's labour immigration policy still needs to take into account the continued policy salience of the issue of return and reintegration of Romanian nationals, the concern over border security as part of Romania's bid for Schengen accession and the limited experience in facilitating recruitment of workers from more distant locations.

The current actions of the government in the area of labour migration are a reaction to the ongoing labour force crises in Romania, in an attempt to find solutions to cover the labour force deficit. The situation is aggravated by negative demographic trends, low participation of the labour force, skills mismatch on the labour market, shortage of highly-skilled professionals and depletion of economically active population in the key economic sectors. Employers across Romania have been struggling to source the labour force internally, especially in such sectors as construction, hospitality industry, transportation, manufacturing etc. In the next few years, growth in employment is expected to continue to be driven by non-marketed services, distribution and transport, and, to a lesser extent, business and other services, reflecting the gradual shift towards a more service-oriented economy.

Romania is facing a challenge of ensuring a steady supply of migrant workers and establishment of efficient and sustainable partnerships with countries of origin. Opening up and maintaining sustainable legal pathways for migrants are essential for Romania to keep up high rates of economic growth, necessary for the country's overall objective of bridging the income gap with the rest of the EU. There is an overall consensus among respondents that the annual migrant quota is likely to be raised in subsequent years to respond to the growing demand for workforce from third countries.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE LABOUR SHORTAGES

Romania is transitioning from a focus on encouraging the repatriation of its citizens from the European Union to addressing the pressing need for a more diverse and larger workforce. The initial strategy, aimed at facilitating the return of Romanian nationals, has been challenged by the reality of wage and employment disparities within the EU, diminishing its effectiveness.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in neighbouring Ukraine introduced temporary disruptions to the Romanian economy, underscoring the fragile balance between labour supply and demand. Despite these challenges, the economic recovery and growth trajectories have underscored an urgent need for the admission of larger contingents of migrant workers. This necessity was acknowledged through a significant increase in the migrant worker quota in 2022, an adjustment expected to persist in the foreseeable future.

The policy landscape in Romania is marked by several key issues: the ongoing importance of reintegration policies for returning nationals, continued concerns over border security, and the hurdles associated with recruiting workers from distant locations. These factors collectively signal a cautious yet evolving approach towards transforming the country's labour immigration policy.

Romania's labour market is in crisis, strained by negative demographic trends, a low labour force participation rate, mismatches between available skills and market demands, and a shortage of highly-skilled professionals. This crisis is particularly acute in sectors vital to the national economy such as construction, hospitality industry (hotels, restaurants, cafes, etc.), transportation, and manufacturing. These challenges are set against the backdrop of a gradual but steady shift towards a more service-oriented economy, which is expected to further drive employment growth in non-marketed services, distribution, transport and business services.

In response, the Romanian government is actively seeking solutions to bridge the labour force deficit through the establishment of sustainable and working partnerships with countries of origin for migrant workers. The creation of sustainable legal pathways for migration is deemed essential for maintaining Romania's economic growth rates and for achieving

the overarching goal of narrowing the income gap with the rest of the European Union.

## LABOUR MIGRATION POLICY IN ROMANIA

Throughout both the EU pre-accession and post-accession periods, Romania has predominantly been an emigration country. The initial surge in emigration occurred in 2002, coinciding with the lifting of visa requirements for the EU, enabling Romanians to exercise their right to free movement. A subsequent peak followed Romania's EU accession, with 2008 witnessing the highest number of temporary emigrants recorded at 302.796 individuals. Only Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Portugal have a higher percentage of their nationals living abroad. Additionally, Romania ranks among the top 20 global destinations for receiving foreign remittances, underscoring the continued trend of outward labour migration.

Since 2007, Romania has established annual quotas for the entry of foreign workers, determined through tripartite negotiations among the government, trade unions, and employers' associations. In 2022, the quota was set at 100.000—over thirteen times the number issued five years earlier—reflecting the acute struggle of Romanian employers to source labour domestically, particularly in low-skilled sectors. Facing negative demographic trends and a diminishing economically active population due to migration to Western Europe, sectors like construction have increasingly turned to Southeast Asian markets, including India and Sri Lanka, to fill labour shortages.

Law No. 247/2018, implementing the EU Students and Researchers Directive 2016/80, significantly reduced salary thresholds for standard work permits and the EU Blue Card by at least 50%. This adjustment, from the average to the minimum gross wage, aims to facilitate Romanian employers' recruitment of foreign labour, notably in sectors experiencing domestic workforce shortages, such as construction and agriculture.

The National Strategy on Immigration, ratified in August 2021 for the 2021–2024 period, outlines the principles and guidelines for national migration policies. Shifting from a strictly security-oriented focus, the strategy now also prioritises labour force considerations. To address labour shortages unmet domestically or within the EU, Romanian authorities have adapted work permit quotas for third-country

nationals (TCNs). In 2020, the majority of work permits, 95,7%, were issued to permanent workers, totaling 26.267. Other categories include seasonal workers, trainees, intra-corporate transferees (ICTs), secondments, highly-skilled workers/EU Blue Cards, and au pairs. Additionally, specific provisions for Ukrainian citizens, introduced following the onset of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, illustrate less restrictive regulations.

## LEGAL LABOUR MIGRATION PATHWAYS

Romania offers a comprehensive framework for legal labour migration, addressing both the domestic labour market's demand for foreign workers and the integration of migrants through various pathways and quotas.

### Annual Quotas and Adjustments

The Romanian government annually establishes quotas for foreign workers to fill labour shortages across different sectors, reflecting a commitment to managing labour migration both effectively and responsively.

For 2023, the government set a significant quota of 100.000 foreign workers, indicative of Romania's substantial demand for labour. This approach allows for flexibility; for instance, the 2021 quota was initially set at 25.000 but was later doubled to accommodate increased demand, showcasing the government's responsiveness to labour market dynamics.

In 2023, the Romanian Government established a quota of 100.000 foreign workers newly admitted to the labour market under Government Decision no. 1448/2022, encompassing all work permit types. This quota system, subject to increase by government decision upon exceeding demand, reflects a strategy to manage labour market inflow in alignment with economic needs and labour demands. This system operates amid diverse assessments of its effectiveness, balancing economic strategies, local employment protection, and sector-specific needs against criticisms of rigidity and the challenges of social integration and wage impact posed by labour immigration.

The quota system's reception varies among stakeholders, with government and policymakers advocating its necessity for labour market regulation, while employers and business associations call for greater adaptability to rapid market changes and

specific industry requirements. Trade unions and workers' rights organisations emphasise the need for protective measures for foreign workers, advocating for balanced immigration policies that consider both economic benefits and social integration challenges. The debate over the quota system underscores the complex interplay between economic objectives, labour rights, and the social implications of immigration, highlighting the need for a more nuanced, flexible approach that accommodates the evolving demands of the labour market and the rights of all workers, fostering a sustainable labour market equilibrium.

## Key National Labour Migration Pathways - various skill levels

Romania's legal framework for labour migration encompasses several categories, catering to a wide range of employment needs and migrant worker profiles. Both employers and prospective labour migrants need to obtain necessary permits and authorizations from Romanian authorities listed below.

An interesting feature of the application process is that together with obtaining employment/work permits, applicants first need to apply for a long-stay visa, allowing them a 90-day entry into Romania for employment. Then upon arrival in Romania, TCNs are required to apply for a residence permit, ensuring their legal stay throughout the work contract duration. Change of employer is generally not possible, with the exception for part-time employment with a second employer.

### The main permit categories include

#### Permanent workers

A permanent worker is a foreigner employed on the territory of Romania with an individual employment contract of indefinite or fixed duration, concluded with an employer on the basis of the employment notice.

#### Highly-qualified workers

A highly-qualified worker refers to a foreign national employed in Romania in specialised positions, through either a permanent or a fixed-term employment contract of at least one year, pursuant to an official employment notification. This policy is designed to attract top-tier professionals to Romania, thereby augmenting the country's proficiency in key sectors. For highly-skilled workers to remain in Romania beyond 90 days they will have to apply for the EU Blue Card (see section below).

#### Trainee workers

Trainee workers in Romania are international individuals employed through an employment permit, either possessing or currently pursuing higher education abroad. They participate in Romanian internship programs to enhance their professional skills, gain qualifications, and broaden their linguistic and cultural understanding. These engagements are temporary, aimed specifically at professional and personal development.

#### Seasonal workers

A seasonal worker is a non-resident foreign national who temporarily resides in Romania for employment under a fixed-term contract with a local employer, based on an employment notice. This employment is specifically for performing tasks in sectors with seasonal demand, aiming to meet the variable labour needs of these industries (see section on EU legislation below for further discussion)

#### Self-employed workers

A self-employed worker is a non-EU citizen wishing to work as a self-employed person in Romania.

#### Cross-border workers

A cross-border worker is a citizen from a country sharing a border with Romania, residing near this border, and employed in Romania's border towns under an employment contract that may be indefinite or for a fixed term. This is based on an employment notice from an employer. This arrangement facilitates cross-border employment on a daily or weekly basis for residents of neighbouring countries, streamlining the work commute for those living and working across the border.

#### Au pair workers

An au pair worker is a non-resident temporarily employed by a Romanian host family, aiming to enhance their cultural and linguistic proficiency through engagement in light housework and childcare tasks.

Between January and July 2022, **Romania issued most work permits for the construction, restaurant, and security sectors**, with construction alone receiving 22.649 permits. In terms of breakdown of work permits by profession for the same period, **most work permits were issued for low-skilled workers** in the demolition of buildings, low-skilled workers in assembling and mounting parts activities as well as workers in breaking and cutting building materials. Other occupations included trade workers, merchandise handlers, security agents, locksmiths, and kitchen assistants. This trend underscores a high

demand for low-skill labour in construction and trade, indicating targeted sector-specific needs for foreign workers.

## Pathways following European legal directives and initiatives

Romania has effectively integrated essential EU labour migration regulations, including the Seasonal workers Directive, EU Blue Card provisions, and intra-corporate transfer rules, into its national laws.

### EU Blue Card

The EU Blue Card scheme specifically targets highly-skilled professionals from outside the EU, offering them an opportunity for temporary residency in the EU for employment purposes, occasionally exempting them from visa obligations. The EU Blue Card scheme is only modestly used in Romania, with only 1.271 cards issued from 2013 to 2021. It is predominantly granted to professionals in the fields of ICT, science, engineering, and management. However, it is notably absent for entry-level positions in ICT and business administration.

### Seasonal workers

Romania has successfully integrated Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 February 2014, facilitating the entry and stay of third-country nationals for seasonal employment. The work authorization for seasonal work is valid for up to six months within a 12-month period, tied to an individual labour contract and specific to a seasonal sector. The right of residence is extended to match the employment contract's duration plus an additional five days, ensuring the total stay does not surpass 180 days within any 365-day period for seasonal workers in Romania. Key sectors that benefit from this arrangement include agriculture, tourism, and hospitality – areas where the demand for labour fluctuates with the seasons. These permits are contingent on providing detailed employment offers that comply with both the Labour Code and any applicable collective labour agreements, covering work conditions, schedules, salaries and other essential terms.

Despite the formalised process, stakeholders, including employers and industry associations, advocate for reducing bureaucratic hurdles and shortening processing times to better align with the urgent needs of the sectors reliant on seasonal labour. The current framework, while comprehensive, is seen as potentially cumbersome, with an average

permit acquisition timeline that can impact the timely commencement of seasonal activities.

### Intra-corporate transfers (ICTs)

An intra-corporate transferee is a foreigner who lives in a third country on the date of submitting the application for the secondment notice and who is the subject of a transfer within the same company.

Romanian national authorities regard ICTs as instrumental in enhancing foreign direct investment attractiveness, facilitating the transfer of expertise, and fostering innovation while ensuring transferred workers' rights are safeguarded and local labour laws are upheld. From the corporate viewpoint, ICTs are essential for sharing expertise, maintaining international operational standards, and fostering innovation. However, concerns about bureaucratic challenges and processing delays persist. Transferred employees' experiences hinge on the transfer process's ease, clarity of legal status, and the protection of their rights and benefits, while local workforce and trade unions emphasise protecting local jobs, advocating for measures to ensure ICTs complement rather than replace the local workforce.

### Researchers and scientific workers

Romania has transposed into national law the Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of TCN for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, student exchange schemes or educational projects and au pair (GII, 2021a). Researchers and other scientific workers constitute one of its main target groups. This framework is designed to streamline the process for obtaining a long-stay visa for scientific purposes, requiring approval from the Ministry of Research and Innovation, a hosting agreement within a scientific research project between the researcher and the receiving institution and the GII (GII, n.d.). This collaborative effort between research institutions and government bodies aims to simplify the pathway for researchers, eliminating the need for a separate work authorization and providing the option to extend their stay through a temporary residence permit for activities exceeding 90 days. The perceptions of key national actors towards this structured pathway are generally positive, viewing it as an efficient means to enhance Romania's position as a hub for research and innovation.

### EU Talent Partnerships and EU Talent Pool

Romania has expressed interest in EU Talent Partnership initiatives, supporting international

cooperation in talent mobility and skill enhancement, and aligning with EU migration management goals. Romania's participation will focus on sectors with acute labour shortages, such as ICT, healthcare, engineering and manufacturing, agriculture, and construction, leveraging the skills available in the partner countries.

The proposed EU Talent Pool could help streamline recruitment and migration processes, making skill validation and information provision more efficient for both employers and third-country nationals. The Talent Partnerships and proposed EU Talent Pool can benefit economic sectors, protect against unfair recruitment practices, and align with Romania's labour market and European visa policies.

### Special Provisions for Ukrainian, Moldovan and Serbian citizens

In 2020, Romania changed procedures for admission and legal residence that exempt citizens of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine from the need to obtain work authorisation (Prague Process, n.d.). This policy shift has been strategically implemented to streamline the entry of these nationals into the Romanian labour market. By removing barriers to employment, Romania aims to attract workers of various skill levels from these countries, offering significant benefits to sectors in immediate need of labour, such as agriculture, construction and services. These sectors, often marked by seasonal and short-term demands, can now more easily access a diverse talent pool, ranging from lower-skilled to highly specialised workers, thereby enriching the Romanian workforce's diversity and capabilities.

The exemption policy is also a nod to the shared cultural, historical, and economic ties that Romania has with Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine. By facilitating easier access for workers from these nations, Romania seeks to address labour market shortages, particularly in areas where local labour is scarce. In the case of Ukraine it reflects the country's solidarity in response to the current crisis since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and until 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022, 851.035 Ukrainian citizens entered Romania. The occupations range from IT to workers in the textile industry, engineering and sales.

Employers have largely welcomed this policy, appreciating the reduction in bureaucratic procedures and the expansion of the candidate pool for vacancies. This streamlined hiring process is

especially crucial in sectors facing labour shortages, where the swift integration of foreign workers can markedly boost productivity and adherence to project deadlines. Beyond the immediate benefits to the labour market, the policy carries broader social and economic implications. It underscores the importance of developing supportive measures to facilitate the integration of incoming workers and their families, ensuring they can adapt to and positively contribute to their new communities.

### Bilateral Labour Agreements

Over the years Romania has engaged in multiple bilateral labour agreements with various EU and non-EU countries to enhance workforce mobility, safeguard workers' rights, and address labour market shortages. These arrangements aim to regulate migration, protect workers' rights, and address labour market needs efficiently. However, these agreements were concluded predominantly when Romania was preponderantly a source country for emigration. Overall, these agreements proved to be a good and efficient instrument aiming at regulating and managing the movement of Romanian workers and respective countries. They contributed to the protection of the rights of migrants, and provided legal channels for migration, reduced irregular migration, and promoted safe and mutually beneficial labour mobility.

Given the labour shortages and trends in Romania, there is a need to consider agreements with other labour migrant source countries, particularly in Asia, with Romania now as the country of destination rather than of origin. The Romanian government has already taken steps in this direction. In 2018, Romania signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Vietnam to collaborate on labour and social protection, aiming to promote bilateral cooperation in labour and employment, workers' rights and health and safety. The agreement also covers exchanging experiences and information on social security, pensions, unemployment insurance and social benefits. Additionally, in October 2023, Nepal authorised its Ministry of Labour to sign a bilateral labour agreement with Romania.

These strategic partnerships, including recent initiatives with Vietnam and Nepal, underscore Romania's commitment to international labour cooperation and adapting to global labour market demands.

## Cross-border workers

Cross-border workers in Romania, operating across the borders with countries like Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine, and Moldova, embody a significant dynamic within the Romanian labour market, especially in border regions. Cross-border workers do not need permits as many of Romania's neighbouring countries are either EU members or fall under special bilateral agreements.

Cross-border work presents both opportunities and challenges that various stakeholders navigate with diverse perspectives. Government and regulatory bodies in Romania view cross-border workers as vital for filling labour shortages, particularly in agriculture, construction and services sectors, where local workforce in bordering regions may not meet demand. Employers in border regions value the flexibility and expanded labour pool provided by cross-border workers but often express concerns about the administrative complexities and the need for harmonised tax and social security policies. For cross-border workers, the advantages of higher wages and better opportunities in Romania are weighed against the challenges of long commutes, family separation and navigating different legal systems. Meanwhile, local communities appreciate the economic contributions of these workers but are wary of potential impacts on local wages and social integration.

## Integration and Incentives for Returning Romanian Migrants

Romania's integration measures, including language courses and social support, alongside incentives for returning Romanians through entrepreneurship grants, underscore a holistic approach to labour migration, aiming at economic growth and social cohesion.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE ADAPTATIONS TO LABOUR MIGRATION POLICY AND THE USE OF EXISTING PROVISIONS

### *Engage in active labour market engagement*

Local labour market strategies should prioritise activating domestic labour resources, as Romania has some of the lowest EU participation rates among youth (15–24) and seniors (over 64). Women's participation is also notably lower than men's (54,4%

vs. 71,5%). Other concerns include low work-based learning exposure for graduates (7,1% vs. 60,7% EU average) and poor digital skills among adolescents. Despite these challenges, Romania's current labour resources aren't sufficient to meet market needs. With only 46% of immigrants economically active in 2021, there's significant potential for their inclusion, especially international students. Targeted programs, including language training, career counselling, and easier access to work permits, could help integrate these groups into the workforce.

### *Improve Labour Market Information System at the regional level*

Central to regional development strategies is the targeted attraction of the necessary workforce to economically underprivileged areas. This endeavour necessitates a comprehensive assessment of immigration patterns, encompassing both registered and unregistered migrants, to fully understand their contribution to local labour markets. It also involves evaluating the impact of these migrants on productivity and wage dynamics. The integration of labour market information systems, including digital job databases, promises to improve mobility for nationals and foreign residents alike, facilitating informed decisions about job locations and types. By adopting this strategy, Romania can enhance its capacity to attract and retain skilled workers, including migrants, thereby optimising the allocation of existing resources for improved economic and social outcomes.

### *Diversify Labour Mobility Management Beyond the Quota System*

Romania's management of labour migration, heavily dependent on a quota-based system for issuing work permits, encounters significant shortcomings. These challenges include the lack of provision for multi-year employment, the unpredictability introduced by late quota announcements which disrupts long-term planning, and the absence of regional considerations in quota allocations. These limitations not only hinder the flexibility and efficiency of Romania's labour market but also its ability to meet the nuanced needs of both employers and foreign workers. Romania could consider introducing multi-year work permits which could also help in reducing administrative burdens and improve the attractiveness of Romania as a destination for skilled labour. Regional authorities could also be involved more strongly in the quota-setting process to allow for region-specific labour demands to be reflected.

An effective strategy to address these deficiencies involves the expansion of bilateral labour recruitment agreements and to review the quota scheme based on labour market needs. Such agreements should be tailored to prioritise the developmental needs of regions most affected by labour and skill outflows, thereby ensuring a more equitable distribution of the workforce. Additionally, it is essential to undertake a comprehensive revision of Romania's labour immigration policies. This revision should aim to better align with the developmental trajectories of key economic sectors poised for growth, such as hospitality, construction, transportation, and energy.

#### ***Provide opportunities to change employer***

Allowing TCNs to change employers can reduce the risk of exploitation and abuse. When they are tied to a single employer, they may feel compelled to endure poor working conditions or unfair treatment out of fear of losing their legal status.

#### ***Capacity development of public servants working on migration related topics***

In terms of capacity-building, capacity should in particular be built in government institutions dealing with migration issues (equipment provision, training workshops, elimination of bureaucratic impediments, build-up and exchange of local practices and expertise, etc.). The effectiveness of state institutions is also dependent on their ability to coordinate the key processes of labour migration management (monitoring of the scale and directions of the flows, forecasting the demand for additional workforce, enforcing the standards of labour legislation and controlling the compliance by employers and intermediaries) through maintaining and exchanging data, running joint field operations and formulating and revising long-term policy measures.

#### ***Design a National Framework for Migrants' Cultural Integration in Romania***

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, Romanian authorities have implemented an Emergency Ordinance facilitating Ukrainian citizens' employment in Romania. This ordinance allows them to work under a full-time individual work agreement without needing a work permit and bypasses the usual nine-month annual limit for employment contracts. The significant flow of Ukrainians seeking refuge from war marks a pivotal moment in Romania's transition to a host country for migrants. However, compared to other EU Member States, Romania has seen a relatively lower number of Ukrainian migrants

choosing to stay. This observation underscores the need for Romania to extract valuable insights from this trend.

Due to cultural barriers and the migrants' preference for relocating to other destinations, it is crucial for Romania to lay the groundwork for an effective migrant integration system. This system should be inclusive of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, a necessity that becomes even more pressing as Romania experiences increased migration from more distant and culturally diverse countries. Efforts to promote harmonious relations between migrant and host communities will require the collaborative engagement of multiple stakeholders, including the ombudsman, various governmental ministries (such as Education), local governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and both national and local media outlets.

This approach not only aims to address the immediate needs of Ukrainian migrants but also prepares Romania for the broader challenges of integrating a diverse migrant population, ensuring a cohesive and inclusive society.

#### ***Make Use of Existing Instruments Such as the EU Talent Partnership to Foster Bilateral Cooperation in the Field of Labour Mobility***

The proposed EU Talent Partnership framework presents an opportunity for Romania to address its challenges in attracting a workforce from targeted countries, leveraging its nascent experience in this domain. Romania can enhance these efforts by solidifying bilateral cooperation with nations whose citizens have already been successfully integrated into the Romanian workforce. Essential to these agreements should be the integration of robust mechanisms for handling complaints and resolving disputes, alongside commitments to ethical recruitment principles.

Furthermore, EU initiatives, including both the proposed Talent Partnerships and proposed Talent Pool, can serve as valuable complements to Romania's national strategies. These efforts can include the activities of Romanian consular services and the regulation of recruitment companies, among others. By encouraging the development of new partnerships, these EU instruments can significantly bolster Romania's capacity to attract and retain international talent, aligning with both national interests and broader EU objectives.



### ***Disseminate Information About Romania as a Labour Destination Country***

The modest utilisation of permits for highly-skilled workers (e.g. EU Blue Card) underscores the necessity for enhanced promotional efforts to position Romania as a desirable destination for skilled professionals and technical staff. Stakeholder feedback highlights several of Romania's appealing attributes, such as its relatively low living costs, diverse geographical locations and sustained foreign investment. These factors contribute to a robust demand for qualified personnel across various sectors, including manufacturing, energy, trade, communications and shipping. This scenario suggests a significant opportunity for Romania to amplify its appeal and attract a broader spectrum of international talent by improving awareness and perception of the benefits it offers to skilled migrants.



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