European Parliament resolution on impacts of EU rules on the free movements of workers and services: intra-EU labour mobility as a tool to match labour market needs and skills

The European Parliament,

– having regard to Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union,

– having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas labour market and employment policy is and must be an exclusive competence of the Member States;

B. whereas the Member States should take all measures necessary to ensure social progress, economic prosperity, the creation of stable jobs, access to social security, a high level of education and sufficient training, including life-long training;

C. whereas there is a great disparity in living standards in the EU, which has been exacerbated by the 2004 enlargement round; whereas the mostly unfettered movement of labour within the EU, as provided for by the Treaties, contributed to Brexit;

D. whereas there is a role for cross-border seasonal workers; whereas unregulated seasonal work could give rise to social dumping in certain cases and Member States;

E. whereas labour shortages and the brain drain rate, triggered by current economic and social imbalances between the Union’s regions, especially after the financial crisis, have reached critical levels in certain Member States, leading to further problems such as demographic imbalances, shortfalls in care provision and medical staff, and overall increased inequalities between regions; whereas rural and remote areas are particularly affected by these phenomena;

F. whereas very small (VSEs) and small and medium-sized (SMEs) enterprises are the first to suffer from unfair competition and social dumping, particularly in the field of road transport;
G. whereas more than 8% of mobile workers work in the healthcare and social work sectors, more than 7% in transport, and more than 10% in accommodation and catering;

H. whereas at least 80 million workers in Europe are mismatched in terms of qualifications and more than 5 out of 10 jobs that are hard-to-fill are found in high-skilled occupations1;

I. whereas the COVID-19 outbreak has exposed and exacerbated the difficult and often deplorable working and living conditions of hundreds of thousands of seasonal workers, the vast majority of whom are mobile workers, and of some of the over one million posted workers in the EU;

1. Stresses that labour market and employment policy is and must be an exclusive competence of the Member States; considers that a Member State should be able to give priority of employment to its own citizens; notes that the principle of non-discrimination amounts to favouring foreign citizens; calls, therefore, for a change to the Treaties to enable the Member States to choose their national policies with regard to prioritising their own citizens;

2. Encourages the Member States to prioritise reducing the unemployment rate of their own citizens;

3. Encourages the Member States to pay particular attention to workers living in the outermost regions, and to facilitate their intra-state mobility to and from the mainland and within the outermost regions themselves;

4. Notes that the employment of both seasonal and mobile workers correlates with the economic model that a Member State chooses for itself; calls on the EU not to interfere with the social, economic and labour models of the Member States; notes that Member States could consider boosting strategic industries; considers that this could, under certain circumstances, reduce the number of mobile workers and increase wages in certain Member States;

5. Calls on the Commission to analyse the effects of intra-EU labour mobility, with particular regard to a possible brain drain in certain sectors, regions and Member States;

6. Encourages the Member States to coordinate their efforts and to work together to combat fraud and step up the exchange of practices between their national labour inspectorates; recalls that the internal organisation of the labour market and the conditions of remuneration must remain the responsibility of the Member States;

7. Encourages the Member States to cooperate more closely in order to improve health conditions for seasonal workers;

8. Urges the Member States to improve the status and employment conditions of health professionals and carers, in view of the ongoing demographic challenges and any future

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1 OECD Skills for Jobs Database, [https://www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org/#FR/_](https://www.oecdskillsforjobsdatabase.org/#FR/_).
health crises;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.