

PARTNERSHIPS FOR MOBILITY AT THE CROSSROADS **Lessons Learnt From 18 Months of Implementation** **of EU Pilot Projects on Legal Migration**

by Diana Stefanescu



Training for mobility candidates in the framework of Digital Explorers, an EU-funded Pilot Project for Legal Migration
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Executive Summary

The launch of the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and its proposed Talent Partnership framework, has brought renewed interest and attention to the role of labour migration in EU cooperation with third countries. The EU-funded Pilot Projects on Legal Migration (hereinafter referred to as Pilot Projects or Pilots), under implementation since 2019, and to a large degree financed through ICMPD's Mobility Partnership Facility (MPF), offer important insights into existing practices that can serve as fruitful ground for further development of policy and funding frameworks on skills mobility and migration.

This policy brief explores the preliminary lessons learnt from 18 months of implementation of projects that exemplify important approaches and principles at the heart of the proposed Talent Partnerships. While form and scope of mobility, and targeted stakeholders differ from one Pilot Project to another, all of them have sought to test different methodologies addressing the forming of partnerships, skills and labour market research, candidate search and selection, matching between candidates and employment or educational offers, as well as the organisation of mobility and reintegration activities.

The importance of time and flexibility to build trust between the different stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of a mobility scheme has emerged as a main point of attention stressed by all parties. Thorough preparation based on skills mapping and research, and the existence of an enabling environment where relevant stakeholders can come together to develop cooperation, was mentioned as another important prerequisite for success. Despite important efforts and advancements in breaking down sectoral barriers, cooperation between public and private stakeholders remains challenging. The coordination of actors at different levels needs dedicated time and resources to be effective.

Projects that have been able to continuously consult and update their requirements in line with developments in the labour market have proven the best equipped to ensure that the project offer can remain relevant and in demand. Careful listening to understand private sector motivations to partake in mobility schemes will help in gaining companies' interest and the creation of sustainable, productive multi-stakeholder engagement.

Different contextual factors at play have limited the number of people able to move to Europe thanks to the Pilot Projects, and direct contributions from the private sector to organise mobility schemes have thus far not materialised. There is, nevertheless, immense potential to learn from implementation of the Pilots, and recognise their importance as system diagnostic tools for cooperation on legal migration. Learnings from them can help EU and national-level decision makers to formulate strategic choices that will ultimately contribute to scaling up mobility projects for the benefit of a maximum number of EU Member States (MS) and partner countries – and ultimately migrants, companies and societies alike.

Introduction

The case for the expansion of legal pathways into the EU has been made in numerous ways. The realisation that the continent is in dire need of skilled talents and of a dependable workforce to counterbalance its widespread demographic decline is not new.¹ Nor is the assumption that developing legal pathways adds leverage to readmission negotiations and may play a role in the fight against irregular migration flows.²

Legal migration has been an important pillar in the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM). It has been part and parcel of every Mobility Partnership (MP) and Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) agreed upon between the EU, its MS and selected partner countries since 2003, and received additional attention and resources – including via the MPF – since the launch of the EU Agenda for Migration in 2015.

However, the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum presented by the European Commission at the end of September 2020 appears to be the furthest-reaching and most concrete attempt to create and expand opportunities for legal migration from non-EU citizens to date. The offer of dedicated Talent Partnerships promises an *“enhanced commitment to support legal migration and mobility with key partners”*, as they seek to:

“(...) provide a comprehensive EU policy framework as well as funding support for cooperation with third countries, to better match labour and skills needs in the EU, as well as being part of the EU's toolbox for engaging partner countries strategically on migration..”

New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

With the COVID-19 pandemic currently ravaging the EU, the economic context for an ambitious agenda on labour migration might be challenging, but at the same time the global health crisis has created important awareness of Europe's dependency and heavy reliance on migrant workers. This might be just the right time to rethink the way the EU and its MS enter into partnerships with third countries on this important topic, to ensure global competitiveness, invest in skills development, reduce skills gaps and increase the dynamism of the EU labour market.

1 Report on the Impact of Demographic Change, COM(2020) 241 of 17 June 2020.

2 Enhancing legal pathways to Europe COM(2018) 635 of 12 September 2018

At this important juncture, this policy brief seeks to provide important insights into and to present learnings gathered in the context of the EU-funded MPF Pilot Projects on legal migration, launched in 2018 and still ongoing at the time of writing this brief.

More research will be needed into the impact of the first cohort of projects upon their completion in 2021. However, it is an opportune moment to shed light on some preliminary lessons learnt and good emerging practices from the first 18 months of their implementation, with a view to launching a further reflection on the funding and policy framework underpinning the Talent Partnerships.

The information in this brief is based on reports and consultations carried out by ICMPD in its role as the secretariat for the MPF, funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration for Home Affairs (DG HOME).

What are Pilot Projects on Legal Migration?

In line with the priorities proposed to deliver the European Agenda on Migration, the MPF has been tasked by the European Commission's DG HOME with the co-financing of Pilot Projects on Legal Migration.

These Pilots aim at testing the modalities of cooperation in the area of legal – and in particular labour – migration between EU MS and selected partner countries. Under the leadership of designated EU MS authorities, they seek to offer legal pathways contributing to address labour and skills shortages in countries of origin and destination alike, and enable both sides to reap the benefits of labour migration.

Financial support granted in the framework of a dedicated call for proposals has allowed EU MS to receive targeted, flexible and tailor-made assistance to organise different stages of the legal migration process, including mobility.

To date, four Pilot Projects have been supported with MPF funding (led by Belgium, France, Lithuania and Spain), all launched in 2019. All of them are realising a form of mobility, in their respective target countries, at bilateral level. While form and scope of mobility and targeted stakeholders differ from one project to another, all of them have sought to test different and innovative methodologies, addressing skills and labour market research, candidate search and selection, matching between candidates and employment or educational offers, and partnerships, as well as the organisation of mobility and reintegration activities.

Two further mobility projects financed through other EU funding mechanisms (run by GIZ and IOM respectively) have similar goals, and have been consulted and included in reflections around these preliminary lessons learnt.

The importance of time, flexibility and an enabling environment to build trust

The MPF Pilot Projects on Legal Migration have addressed different policy, practical and institutional dimensions of legal and labour migration. The ongoing projects cover mobility for higher education, internships, entry-level graduates and mid-level professionals. Each of these comes with a set of distinct challenges and opportunities, yet they share important characteristics that originate in the unique place of labour migration in the evolving migration policy landscape. By its very nature, a mobility scheme will involve a multitude of actors unaccustomed to working with each other. Not only do projects have to connect EU MS and third country actors and systems with different traditions, capacities and levels of experience, they also include a great variety of stakeholders in each national context and all with different interests.

As one staff member of the Belgian Pilot Project PALIM put it, actors speak “different languages”, project leads therefore play a key role as “interpreters” and facilitators who need to mediate and support effective communication between private and public stakeholders, such as different ministries and other national administration sectors. In the case of Belgium, there are also multiple governance levels (local, regional and national) that are competent on migration and that need to be carefully involved with due respect to individual political and administrative dynamics.

Actors at times speak “different languages”, and project leads therefore play a key role as “interpreters” and facilitators who can mediate and support effective communication between private and public stakeholders. Multiple governance levels competent on migration need to be carefully involved with due respect to contextual political and administrative dynamics.

Depending on the country context, Pilot Projects have shown that these relationships can be highly conflictual, politicised or, at the very least, complicated. A high degree of administrative skill, and a broad political and institutional support base are therefore required to break down communication barriers, mediate interests and expectations, and effectively navigate the tensions of multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships.

The most successful initiatives have been those that could rely on well-grounded political and administrative support networks prior to the start of the project, and were able to invest an important amount of time and resources in preparatory research, stakeholder mappings and the building of trust between participating entities in the inception phase of the project, or

even at incubation stage. Time is an important component and prerequisite in building the necessary trust that will lead to success, meaningful engagements and sustainability.

Even where partnerships appear very well prepared and have sufficient time on their hands, the reality of implementation requires an important level of flexibility. Being able to reshuffle budgets and activities, or change selection methodologies and targeted skills profiles, can allow project implementers to stay responsive to shifting dynamics in the labour market and changing political alliances following elections, or to enable procedural changes that may deeply affect timelines and planning of candidate arrivals. This also frequently has important

consequences for the start of reintegration activities for migrants upon return.

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Effective funding and policy frameworks for mobility schemes should allow for sufficient room and flexibility to implement necessary changes and adapt budgets, and for the planning of activities, tools and methodologies in non-bureaucratic ways.

The creation of formal advisory bodies or committees for the purpose of coordination with a wider range of impacted stakeholders have proven effective in fostering ownership for the different stakeholders in the process, in addition to close contact and collaboration between project coordinators and relevant counterparts bilaterally.

The Lithuanian project, Digital Explorers, for example, established a successful practice of regular consultations with an advisory board made up of relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors in Lithuania that led to fruitful exchanges and important impulses for the success of the project.

Setting up and regularly consulting an advisory board made up of relevant stakeholders from public and private sectors can lead to fruitful exchanges and important impulses for the success of the project.

Local coordination in the countries of origin, especially where many different projects and EU stakeholders interact with few partner country interlocutors, is of particular importance to ensure policy and institutional coherence, credibility and efficiency on the ground, and effectively address persisting capacity building needs in partner countries.

Creating opportunities for exchange, and formal structures for multi-stakeholder engagement, can help to develop the enabling environment in which projects can strive to achieve sustainable impact. If initiatives are embedded in a wider policy framework and part of relevant actor networks, they can

Digital Explorers

Led by the Lithuanian government agency Enterprise Lithuania – an entity affiliated to the country’s Ministry of Economy – in cooperation with partners from the private sector and civil society, Digital Explorers is a temporary labour migration scheme bringing young specialists working in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) from Nigeria to Lithuania. The programme aims at enhancing their skills while addressing labour shortage gaps, as well as contributing to the growth and development of the digital economy in both the host country and the country of origin. Following the end of the mobility phase, reintegration support will be provided to those participants who return, to facilitate adjustment and productive use of their human and social capital acquired in Lithuania.

make best use of synergies and jointly work towards efficient and effective pathways for legal migration and mobility of skills.

At the same time, we see that conditions and capacities remain disparate across different regions, both in Europe and in partner countries. Labour market shortages and private sector needs can create pressure on national governments to act and take steps towards opening legal pathways, but the ensuing tasks are complex and the identification of stakeholders and opportune next steps can be daunting.

The European Commission has room to play a facilitating role with the help of partners, such as ICMPD, by creating and sustaining frameworks for meaningful engagement and exchange. Regional or sectoral approaches, or groupings of stakeholders by their level of experience or capacity, could help MS or partner countries obtain the targeted support most appropriate in their context, and help partners build networks and knowledge, and design sustainable solutions that best fit their context.

The role of private and public actors

Though mobility schemes are frequently set up at the initiative of public actors, or a combination of public and non-profit actors, it has been noted that the interests of the companies these schemes are seeking to serve should be built into initiatives from the start. Projects that take the time to consult with the private sector at the project design stage – through

more than one channel – have the highest chances to create a relevant scheme with sufficient potential for scale-up and sustainability.

Experiences from the MPF Pilot Projects have shown that flexible tailor-made approaches lead to success – getting length of employment and targeted skills profiles ‘right’ in the local context are crucial for productive cooperation and matching.

Here, too, it is important to remain flexible and in tune with the evolving reality on the ground. Needs might change over the lifetime of a project (as in the Belgian project, where the skills training curriculum was adjusted halfway through to reflect the latest developments in the sector). Projects that have been able to continuously consult and update requirements in line with developments in the labour market have proven best equipped to ensure that the project offer can remain relevant and in demand. Careful listening to understand private sector motivations to participate will help in gaining companies’ interest and the creation of sustainable, productive engagement.

Projects that have been able to continuously consult and update requirements in line with developments in the labour market have proven themselves best equipped to ensure that project offers can remain relevant and in demand.

In Lithuania, for example, the driver for companies to recruit through the Pilot Project turned out to be eagerness to internationalise more than the desire to fill an actual skills shortage – despite its existence. Such hidden motivations can be decisive for successful engagement and for the stakeholders to remain engaged in a productive way.

Still the most attractive pull-factor for the private sector to join a mobility project appears to be the need for support to manage the administrative burden of organising international mobility.

In this way, it has been shown that the mobility projects funded under MPF have added most value for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Pilots have opened up avenues for hiring migrants for actors who would otherwise not have been able to benefit from international talent.

The Lithuanian pilot project Digital Explorers has supported young professionals from Nigeria to take up employment in a majority of small- and medium-sized organisations in Lithuanian IT companies, the majority of which had never previously recruited from abroad.

Despite apparent important interest and vocal support from the private sector to open up legal pathways for labour migration, the MPF-funded initiatives have not yet seen direct financial contributions towards the funding of the schemes (apart from salaries). Financial contributions towards training or mobility management costs from the private sector remain the goal in all contexts where Pilot Projects have operated, but such contributions only appear

PALIM (Pilot Project Addressing Labour Shortages through Innovative Labour Migration Models)

The project seeks to facilitate cooperation between Belgium and Morocco in the management of regular migration, by offering a safe and lawful alternative to young professionals willing to gain qualified working experience in the ICT sector. With a view to boosting their employment potential, a group of Moroccan graduates are offered technical and soft skill training in Morocco. Approximately half of them are subsequently coached to find employment in Morocco, whereas the other half prepares to find employment in Belgium. Implemented by the Belgian development agency Enabel, the project also includes capacity building activities to help improve service delivery in Morocco and help all stakeholders reap the benefits of labour migration.

realistic on a basis of established trust, and demonstrated results that will take time to obtain. The private sector appears to expect public actors and project coordinators to first show that they are indeed able to serve companies' needs effectively before they will consider contributing.

It also appears that there is still a lack of dedicated space and time for engagement between public and private actors to develop meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships on labour migration. The initiative of the European Commission to further stimulate exchange and practical cooperation between the private sector, social partners and

MS, and create an enabling environment for cross-sectoral cooperation on legal migration, is therefore welcomed. Based on its important experience fostering partnerships on migration and through the knowledge management on the Pilot Projects on legal migration, the MPF is ideally placed to play an extended role here.

The art of matching

The matching between companies and candidates is a complex process that cannot be underestimated. Even if ICT tools are increasingly used to support pre-selection, experience in the MPF Pilot Projects have shown that, at the latest in the final phases, there is usually the need for resource-intensive selection methodologies, such as face-to-face interviews or selection committees, which need to be catered for.

Most importantly, it is crucial to separate hiring decisions from private sector interest and commitment to participate in a Pilot Project. Some Pilots struggled to ‘close the deal’ with companies in the final stages of recruitment where the match with an individual candidate had to be confirmed. Cost-benefit considerations, actual needs and the quality of the match may outweigh declared commitment to the process as a driver for success. This needs to be taken into consideration in the planning and estimations of matching targets.

Recognition of skills and qualifications can be critical, depending on the partner country and targeted sectors. Where institutional relations allow, the negotiation of simplified procedures for the recognition of specific country diplomas should be considered at the outset of the project. Activities that influence and ideally improve the formal structural frameworks for recognition could be envisioned to maximise impact on legal pathways for a particular segment of labour migrants.

HOMERe (High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment)

Led by the French University of West Bretagne, HOMERe is an internship programme based on a network of academic and private sector organisations (universities, business associations, chambers of commerce, professional organisations). The objective of the project is to boost the mobility of talented young students and graduates from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia by offering internship opportunities in companies in France.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

One cannot write about mobility schemes at this moment in time without recognising the important impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on international mobility as a whole, and on the implementation of the Pilot Projects in particular. This impact has depended strongly on the moment in the project lifecycle in which the crisis hit. Where candidates had not yet moved, the consequences have been important. Variations also appeared depending on targeted sectors, stakeholders and local context. Internship and entry-level graduate schemes, such as those implemented by the French and Belgian projects, have seen the biggest impact on mobility itself, as companies grew reluctant to invest in such appointments as a priority at the beginning of an economic recession.

Crisis impact on labour markets in the economies of origin also affect reintegration outcomes upon candidate return. The Spanish Pilot Project had originally planned to seek local contributions towards graduates’ reintegration initiatives in Morocco, but these ambitions ended

up heavily curtailed by COVID-19. For the Lithuanian project, where local impact of the pandemic was lighter and where candidate profiles were quite specialised, demand seems to have withered during the crisis for the time being.

With the ICT sector (and other sectoral crisis ‘winners’) still in high demand in most EU economies, there is hope for further scope for well-prepared, targeted mobility schemes. It has also been observed that the more markets a project has sought to serve (e.g. the more countries are involved and the more diverse they are), the better possible risks related to the crisis could be spread.

The crisis has made EU MS painfully aware of the sensitivity of their dependence on foreign labour in certain high-demand, so-called ‘essential’ sectors such as (health) care or agriculture. None of the EU-funded pilot mobility schemes has targeted these sectors so far. It will be important to further diversify the skills levels targeted by new initiatives to ensure that important labour market shortages in the low- and medium-skills sectors can be addressed systematically, sustainably and in full respect of migrants’ rights.

Most Pilot Projects also have important capacity building components seeking to foster exchange and learning among public institutions in countries of origin and destination. These, too, have suffered during the crisis as capacity building support often relies heavily on in-person contact. Not all activities are easily transferable into online formats. Programmes had to be carefully redesigned or postponed to meet complex needs and shifting priorities on the ground.

Remote working has become a promising solution to overcome or bridge temporary mobility restrictions. Incubation or start-up phases, with initial remote work from countries of origin before actual relocation, appear to emerge as attractive hybrid models for recruitment – during the pandemic and beyond.

The experiences in the MPF Pilot Projects during the crisis also showed that the effective use of digital tools and the modernisation of migration-related administrative procedures have become more important than ever. Digital infrastructure needs dedicated efforts and funding – among

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others to create labour market information systems and skills matching platforms that are compatible and allow for meaningful collaboration to the mutual benefit of partners in countries of origin and destination.

Research, monitoring and evaluation

In light of the exploratory spirit of the MPF Pilot Projects, all project coordinators have included some form of research and evaluation mechanism into their methodology to enable them to document their processes, reflect on practices and generate lessons learnt. ICMPD has also played an important role in accompaniment, to connect, analyse and ‘make sense’ of the Pilot Project portfolio.

However, as the scope and political importance of the Pilot Projects grow, it will be of crucial importance to create a dedicated monitoring and evaluation framework for mobility initiatives with specific and measurable qualitative objectives and indicators. This would contribute to fostering learning, demonstrating impact and added value of the Pilot Projects at both EU level and globally.

Young Generation as Change Agents (YGCA)

The Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education (SEPIE) leads on the implementation of a mobility scheme between Morocco and Spain for studying purposes, enabling Moroccan students to enhance and strengthen their skills through a Masters degree in Spain. A selection of students have the opportunity to subsequently launch tailored projects upon their return to Morocco, through which they will contribute to the development of specific key social and economic sectors and positively affect their communities of origin.

It must be acknowledged that a combination of the contextual factors touched upon in this brief have contributed to a relatively low number of mobilities supported through this first round of Pilot Projects. Nevertheless, it

would be shortsighted to focus attention on this limited number of candidates who were able to move in the first 18 months of implementation. The Pilot Projects have fulfilled an important function of diagnostic tools for bilateral and regional cooperation on legal migration. They have allowed to test assumptions, explore methodologies for cooperation, build capacities, and point national and international stakeholders down avenues for fruitful and sustainable engagement on legal migration.

An important next step as scale-up is prepared would be to clearly define what success looks like for the next policy and funding framework, looking beyond mere numbers of mobility beneficiaries as a measurement of success. In this way, the EU could recognise and make

visible the important functions of Pilot Projects as relationship builders, and system diagnostic tools that highlight policy, institutional, administrative and legislative challenges to be addressed in both countries of origin and destination.

Policy recommendations and next steps

The Talent Partnership framework proposed in the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum provides for a unique opportunity to reboot and update EU practices in the areas of legal and labour migration. It calls for dedicated efforts to bring relevant actors around the table and create space for meaningful engagements, and the formation of new and mutually beneficial partnerships. At the same time, the European Commission can make the most of the promising work already begun through the Pilot Projects, and make strategic choices to strengthen and upscale what has worked, and learn important lessons from what has not.

18 months of MPF-funded Pilot Project implementation on legal migration have seen recommendations and practices emerge that can support the design and set-up of a coherent, updated funding and cooperation framework with partner countries on labour migration:

- Time and flexibility are key to building sustainable public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships on labour migration. Three-to-five years of implementation time are recommended for mobility initiatives to ensure thorough preparation and solid formation of partnerships, as well as sufficient time for delivery and adaptation. Such timeframes allow to foster the development of trust between actors unused to working with each other, and ensure consistency between different policy areas (e.g. employment, visa, integration, etc.).
- Skills mobility schemes with circular movements and additional practical elements of support (such as internships, vocational training, mentoring, business development, diaspora engagement) can help leverage more positive effects in both countries of origin and destination. Nevertheless, simplicity of design is often key to ensuring that pilot initiatives can be scaled up, replicated and transformed into permanent legal pathways that can be sustained without public funding. Careful and further experimentation on this will be needed to offer partners the options and balance that best fit their respective context and purpose.
- Expansion of Pilots to new countries and regions to test and understand the conditions for scale-up and achieve bigger geographical impact is desirable. A diversification of approaches concerning stakeholders and methodologies will be crucial to make the most of the new funding available, including by addressing low- and medium-level skills profiles. The political value of a mobility project as a tool to facilitate more effective discussions with a partner country may need to be balanced against the number and sustainability of those who move within it.

- The matching of skills offers to the demands in both EU and partner country labour markets remain complex and challenging. Competencies often formally lie with public employment services which have insufficient capacities. A mixed approach, based on well-founded research on skills, and making the most of the breadth of available technological tools, should be encouraged to help systematise approaches.
- Many partner countries do not (yet) have the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks and infrastructure in place to implement and pilot fully-fledged mobility schemes with EU MS. In these cases, dedicated opportunities for research, preparation and incubation of pilot partnerships should be offered that could help create an enabling environment for the development and implementation of sustainable legal pathways. Initiatives could be bilateral or group countries according to defining characteristics or joint interests to best adapt to existing capacities and policy priorities.
- Coordination of EU-funded interventions at local level, in countries of origin, should be strengthened to ensure strategic engagement with partner countries across policy or project boundaries. Governance structures within projects or at local level should be used to ensure and make the most of multi-stakeholder dialogue and participation.
- There remain untapped opportunities to find inspiration and generate learning beyond the usual suspects in the private and public sectors. Less visible actors such as private recruitment agencies, offer the potential to gain insight into practices across projects and countries, to continue to develop missing links and reach economies of scale. Dedicated research could shed light on these practices and results could be fed into the policy and practice of mobility initiatives.
- Private sector engagement remains a key aspect that makes or breaks the success of a Pilot Project. More structural engagement and exchange with relevant bodies (such as chambers of commerce, employers' associations and others), and investment into trust building, are needed in both national and international contexts. Here, too, dedicated initiatives that allow for exchanges and opportunities to explore and incubate cooperation may be most effective to create an environment where stakeholders 'dare' to engage in mobility schemes at bilateral or regional levels.
- A dedicated monitoring and evaluation framework for mobility initiatives with specific and measurable qualitative objectives and indicators is indispensable to foster learning, and demonstrate impact and added value of the talent partnerships – looking beyond mere numbers of mobility beneficiaries as a measurement of success. This would help highlight the important functions of Pilot Projects as relationship builders and system diagnostic tools that can help overcome policy and legislative challenges on both sides.

Despite fears around a potential political instrumentalisation of the pandemic, and possible shifts towards closure of pathways and economic protectionism in some EU MS, the crisis may offer opportunities to frame legal migration as a pathway towards economic recovery, as part of the solution rather than a challenge.

The considerable funding committed by the European Commission to MPF's next phase will further contribute to fostering innovative partnerships on migration between the EU and partner countries, thus building on the practices and lessons learnt presented in this brief. A combination of direct grants to EU MS, with dedicated initiatives that help prepare, incubate, accelerate and optimise collaboration on legal migration, will help the EU to deliver a comprehensive policy framework for inclusive Talent Partnerships, grounded in cooperation between national governments, the private sector and social partners.

The European Commission, with support from EU MS and key partners such as ICMPD, has a historic chance to offer a fresh perspective on the topic of legal migration that is grounded in thoughtful reflection on the past. The Pilot Projects have helped in the understanding of both limitations and opportunities of labour migration practices in Europe. Building on lessons learnt during their implementation will help EU MS to improve them to stay responsive to the evolving needs of economies and societies. This will not only make the EU a more credible cooperation partner, but can also help it rise to its ambitions to become and remain globally competitive.

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