

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001538/24
to the Commission
David McAllister (PPE)
(21 August 2024)**

Subject: Ensuring a sufficient number of skilled workers

The transition to a digital and green economy can only succeed in cooperation with the skilled trades sector. All across Europe, there is a strong need for skilled trades workers — a need which is compounded by demographic change. At the same time, workers in the field are making increasing use of technology and require appropriate training.

The skilled trades need well-trained, experienced professionals who intend to pursue a long-term career in the sector. With extensive initial, further and ongoing training, the sector provides demanding, sustainable and locally based employment that is conducive to social and economic change. Qualified tradespeople are key to the economic success of European industry, in particular the export industry. They are essential for the EU's competitiveness.

Job profiles in the skilled trades need to be preserved and the career path should be made more attractive in all EU Member States. The trend towards academisation needs to be reversed by promoting the equal value of vocational and academic education, in order to ensure resilience, innovation and competitiveness at a regional level.

1. Does the Commission agree that well-established national training systems should be preserved without the need to implement European regulations or create parallel structures?
2. What measures are being taken to promote the equal value of academic and vocational training, for example through enhanced careers guidance in practice?
3. How does the Commission plan to facilitate the immigration of skilled workers?

Submitted: 21.8.2024

**Answer given by Mr Schmit on behalf of the European Commission
(3 October 2024)**

The Commission fully respects the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education and training systems, in line with Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The Commission actively promotes vocational education and training (VET) as an attractive choice needed for an agile labour market.

This is reflected in the Council Recommendations on VET ⁽¹⁾ and on Europe on the Move ⁽²⁾, the latter setting an ambitious target for VET learner mobility.

With the European Vocational Skills Week ⁽³⁾ and the European Year of Skills ⁽⁴⁾ the Commission has actively promoted VET as an attractive career and learning pathway across Europe in the past years.

Through programmes like the European Social Fund Plus, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and Erasmus+, the Commission funds projects that modernise VET systems notably in view of the green and digital transitions, enhance career guidance, and foster collaboration between education providers and employers to ensure high-quality vocational training, as for example with the Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence ⁽⁵⁾.

The Commission has adopted several initiatives to facilitate the immigration of skilled workers and to make the EU more attractive for non-EU citizens, such as the Skills and Talent package ⁽⁶⁾ from 2022, the Skills and Talent Mobility package ⁽⁷⁾ from 2023, and the recently adopted Action Plan to tackle Labour and Skills Shortages ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/08b9af27-3465-11eb-b27b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁽²⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202403364

⁽³⁾ https://vocational-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Vocational%20Skills%20Week%2028EVS%29%20is%20a,VET%20opportunities%20and%20inspiring%20best%20practices%3A%20%23DiscoverYourTalent%20%23EuropeanVocationalSkills

⁽⁴⁾ https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/index_en

⁽⁵⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1501>

⁽⁶⁾ COM(2022) 657 final.

⁽⁷⁾ COM(2023) 715 final.

⁽⁸⁾ COM(2024) 131 final.

Once in place, the EU Talent Pool will help employers to attract skilled third-country nationals when the talent they need cannot be found on the EU labour market.
