

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002370/26
to the Commission
Mihai Tudose (S&D)
(9 June 2026)**

Subject: European labour and skills shortage

The latest Eurobarometer shows that 46% of SMEs in the EU report difficulties in finding employees with adequate skills. The survey highlights companies' complaints about bureaucratic obstacles in the process of recruiting workers from outside the EU.

The fact that European SMEs are seeking workers outside the Union for construction, healthcare, cleaning, public catering and transport is a warning sign. Before we boost international recruitment, it would make more sense to prioritise education for young people and retraining for adults in the Member States as a solution to the skills shortage.

The European Commission's 2025 report on the labour market and the social situation shows that we have 51 million citizens who are unemployed even though they are of working age. There are 13 million unemployed people in Europe. Nearly 1 in 10 young people drops out of school, with a sad record in Romania — 15.5%. These figures reflect European human resource potential that should not be overlooked. Especially since these people are among the 93 million European citizens at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

What measures is the Commission considering to solve the problem of the EU labour and skills shortage by mobilising the European workforce?

Submitted: 9.6.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(12 August 2026)**

Maximising the potential of the EU workforce is a top priority for the Commission. The Union of Skills Communication ⁽¹⁾ addresses mismatches via human capital development, from basic skills to lifelong learning.

The recommendation on Human Capital ⁽²⁾ urges Member States to closer align education and labour market needs ⁽³⁾. The forthcoming Education Package envisages supporting basic skills, European school alliances, and the EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda.

The Commission will consult social partners on the possible direction of EU action to support the activation of persons excluded from the labour market and gender equality regarding labour market opportunities ⁽⁴⁾.

The European Network of Public Employment Services facilitates exchanges of best practices and uses bench learning to help improve the functioning of such services, which are important in supporting access to employment ⁽⁵⁾.

It is envisaged that the upcoming Fair Labour Mobility Package will provide for improvement in information access and support for mobile workers, modernise EUROpean Employment Services (EURES) and remove barriers related to skills and qualifications ⁽⁶⁾.

Under the European Social Fund+ (ESF+), the EU and Member States are investing EUR 139.1 billion ⁽⁷⁾ in 2021-2027 to strengthen the EU's employment, social, education and skills policies ⁽⁸⁾. In Romania, EUR 4 billion is invested in the labour market, education and skills, and preventing school dropouts.

While the EU's shrinking working-age population means that recruiting non-EU workers for key shortage occupations might be necessary ⁽⁹⁾, the Commission encourages Member States to prioritise skills development and training, support EU workers outside the labour market, and improve working conditions.

⁽¹⁾ Adopted in March 2025, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0090>.

⁽²⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202601687.

⁽³⁾ With the 2026 Spring Package.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52026DC0538>.

⁽⁵⁾ More information on https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/learn-more-about-pes-networks-updated-benchlearning-methodology-2022-04-05_en and https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/coordination-employment-and-social-policies/european-network-public-employment-services-pes-network/pes-practices_en.

⁽⁶⁾ The Targeted Mobility Scheme gives financial support to help unemployed citizens take up jobs in other Member States.

⁽⁷⁾ As of 23 June 2026. More info on the ESF+: <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/what-esf>.

⁽⁸⁾ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-sets-out-actions-tackle-labour-and-skills-shortages-2024-03-20_en.

⁽⁹⁾ Including through the future EU Talent Pool, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023PC0716>.