



## Introduction

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European employers are facing growing and persistent challenges in accessing the skills they need, with labour and skills shortages now affecting all EU Member States and a wide range of sectors. Structural factors such as an ageing workforce, high levels of inactivity, limited intra-EU labour mobility and ongoing skills mismatches are reducing the available talent pool. At the same time, the green and digital transitions are accelerating changes in skills demand, increasing the need for highly specialised profiles, particularly in STEM and ICT, while contributing to job polarisation. As a result of tighter labour markets, many companies are compelled to recruit workers who only partially meet job requirements and to invest more heavily in training, while also becoming increasingly open to exploring third-country migration as a means of addressing their skills needs. These challenges are constraining business growth, productivity and Europe's overall competitiveness.

Against this backdrop, BusinessEurope works to strengthen links between national and European social dialogue and to address shared challenges through cooperation and evidence-based analysis. A central focus of this work is to conduct a Study on Access to Skills from the employer's perspective, with the objective of capturing companies' experiences, identifying key barriers to skills access and highlighting effective approaches to improve it. The Study aims to provide concrete insights to inform policy discussions and support the development of measures that help employers secure the skills required for today's and tomorrow's European economy.

## Questions

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The following survey has been designed to gather relevant data on access to skills. Participation is voluntary, and the survey is designed to be completed in approximately 15 minutes. Responses will be treated confidentially and analysed in aggregated form, meaning that no individual companies or persons will be identified in published results. **Participants of the survey will be invited to the final dissemination workshop in October 2026**, where results will be presented - you may provide your email to receive the online invitation.

**Section 1. Contact information** (*not mandatory, only if want to receive invitation to the dissemination workshop*)

- **Name and Surname**
- **Email address**

### Section 2. Company profile

- **Select your country** from a drop-down list
- **In which sector does your company operate?**
- **Company size.** Selection of a size category (micro, small, medium, large)

### Section 3. Talent Acquisition and Skills Needs

- **Over the past 12 months, how difficult has it been for this company to find employees with the required skills?** Answers to be provided on scale 0–10 (0 = Not difficult, 10 = Very difficult)
- **Please rank the main difficulties/barriers to find the skills required in your company (from most to least influential).** Rank from the following list: Labour scarcity; Difficulty attracting candidates to your sector, occupation, location, working conditions...; Low labour mobility; Skills mismatch: available workforce's skills don't match skills needed; Qualifications provided in the education and training systems don't suit the skills needed; Difficulties in the recognition or portability of qualifications and certificates (e.g. from other countries, private providers...); Other (please specify)
- **Which types of profiles have been the most difficult to recruit?** Select all that apply from these options: Non-skilled workers; Skilled trade and manual workers; Middle management and corporate functions; Sales, marketing and customer; STEM professionals; Health, education and public services; Workers with specific soft skills; Other (please specify)
- **Is there a specific difficulty in recruiting women in STEM profiles? If yes, does your company apply any specific practices to address this?**
- **How does your organisation identify its skills needs?** Select all that apply from these options: Internal HR tools, such as training plans / workforce planning / dialogue with workplace representatives; Discussions with managers / performance reviews; Vacancy and turnover data; Sectoral reports / employer associations; Public employment services or private recruitment firms; We do not have a formal methodology; Other (please specify)
- **If your company develops training plans, could you briefly describe them or share an example?**

### Section 4. Training, Upskilling and Reskilling

- **How does your company usually react to skills needs?** Select all that apply from these options: Continuous staff training; Recruitment of new staff with the required skills; Recruitment of new staff, including hiring candidates lacking some required skills and provide training upon entry to the company; Internal reorganisation to better use the existing skills
- **Would you consider using the EU Talent Pool to match third-country workers with job opportunities?**
- **Over the past 12 months, did your company provide internal or external training actions?**
- **What types of training does your organisation use most often?** Select all that apply from these options: On-the-job training; Self-guided learning / online training; Classroom-based training; Professional certifications / micro-credentials / partial qualification; External training providers; Apprenticeships for adult workers or work-based learning programmes
- **Does your company use AI to support training provision?**

### Section 5. Barriers to provide training

- **Please rank the following barriers to organise/provide training in your organisation (from most to least influential).** Rank from the following list: Lack of capacity to organise/provide training; Workload/lack of time; High training costs/lack of resources; Lack or limited training offer suitable to the skills needed; Lack of information about available learning opportunities; Uncertainty about which skills to invest in (limited information/skills intelligence); Difficulties in access to funding/organisational support to training (e.g. training funds, subsidies, tax incentives, free training offer...); Low motivation of workers to take up training offers; Other (please specify)

- **Has your company benefited from any financial or organisational support to provide training to your employees?** Select all that apply from these options: Bi-partite/tripartite training funds; Government subsidies; Tax incentives; EU funding programmes (e.g. ESF+, RRF); Other, please identify. If NOT, please specify the reason (e.g. No support available or not eligible, bureaucratic burden...)
- **Has your company used state aid or tax incentives to finance training?**
- **Have EU or national state aid rules created difficulties in accessing this support?**
- **Do you see room for improvement to simplify training support at national level (e.g. individual learning accounts)?**

#### Section 6. Practical Solutions

- **Which actions have been most effective in improving access to skills in your organization?** Select all that apply from these options: Collaboration with training providers; Collaboration with universities / VET centres; Internal upskilling or reskilling programmes; Improving recruitment processes; Retention measures (benefits, career development, etc.); Automation / digitalisation of tasks; International recruitment; Other (please specify)
- **What additional support (at national or EU level) would help your organisation provide or improve training for employees? Have any EU policies or programmes already influenced your approach to training?**

#### Section 7. Open Questions

- **What actions (internal or external) would help your organisation access the skills it needs more effectively?**
- **Do you have any specific examples or good practices to share related to training, recruitment or talent management?**
- **Are training courses in your company or sector certified? If yes, how is this certification carried out?**

#### Closing

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We would like to thank you for your contribution to this Study. Your experience and expertise are essential to better understand the real challenges faced by employers across Europe; design solutions that are better aligned with the needs of companies, associations and workers; and promote policies and programmes that contribute to a more competitive, inclusive and resilient labour market.