

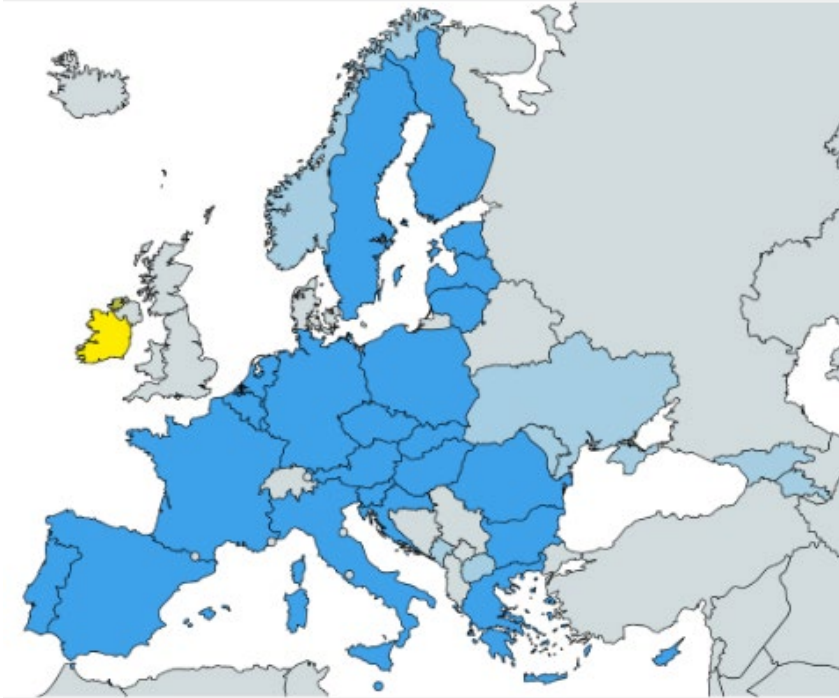
Barriers to skilled employment among third country nationals

Skills-mismatching drivers and solutions across Ireland and the EU

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European Migration Network (EMN)



A network of experts that provides **up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable policy-relevant information on migration and international protection**

Mandated to:

- Meet information needs of EU institutions and Member States in support of policymaking
- Provide the general public with information on asylum and migration

EMN Ireland sits jointly within the ESRI and the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration



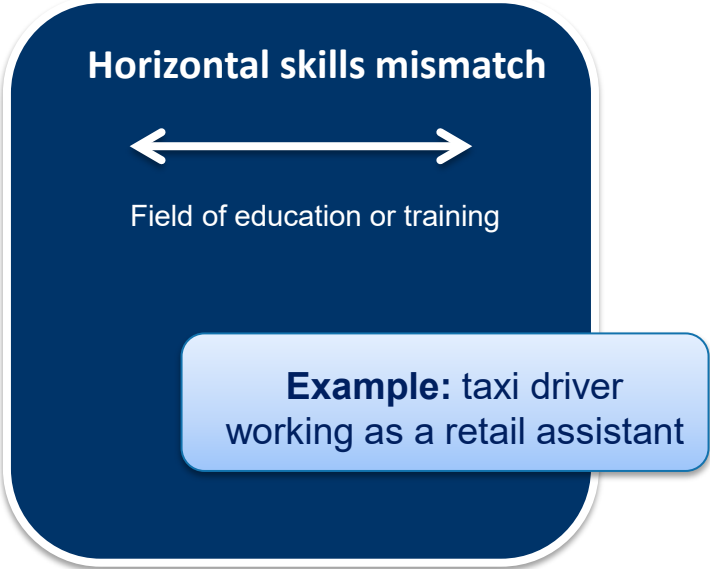
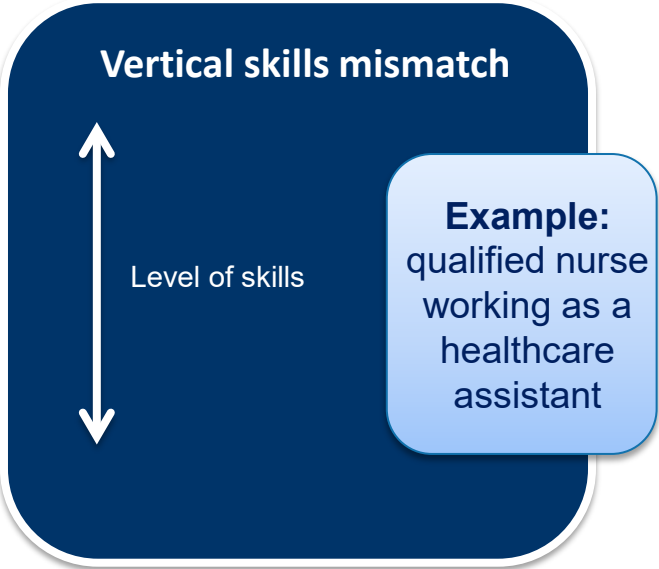
- Forthcoming EMN Study on skills mismatching among migrants
- 25 EMN countries contributed
- Included are
 - Labour migrants/ employment permit holders
 - Family members
 - Refugees/ BIP
 - BOTPs from Ukraine
- Excluded
 - Asylum seekers/ IPA
 - International students

Background



Skills-mismatching is defined as:

A gap or imbalance between the skills and qualifications an individual hold and those required by their job





Issue: Skills-mismatching is much more prevalent among migrants than natives

- Overeducation
 - Overqualification
- What drives skills mismatching among migrants specifically?
- What policy solutions are in places across the EU to counter skills mismatching among migrants?

Drivers of skills mismatching

Most critical drivers

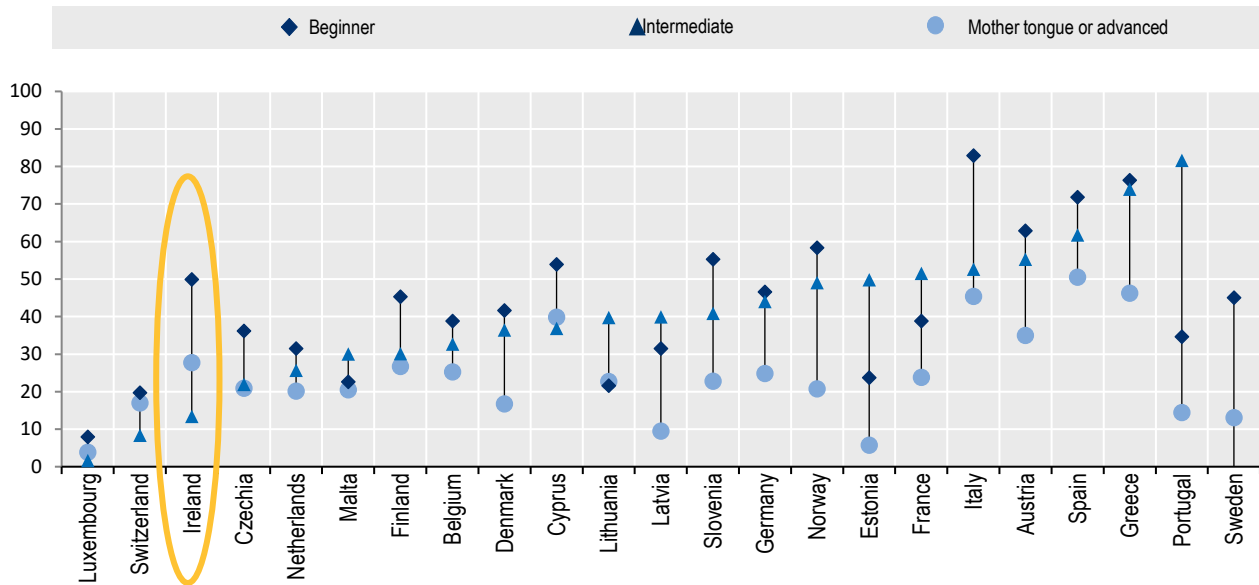
1. Limited language proficiency
2. Recognition of foreign qualifications
3. Employer-related factors

Other drivers

- Gender-related factors
- Limited knowledge of the labour market
- Discrimination
- Indirect drivers incl. access to adaptation measures
- ...and more

1. Limited language proficiency

Figure 1: Share of foreign-born highly educated workers aged 16-64 in a low- or medium-skilled job, by language proficiency, 2021



- Overeducation of foreign workers strongly correlates with low language proficiency
- In almost all EU countries, higher proficiency leads to lower overeducation rates
- In Ireland
 - Beginner English-learners have one of the highest overeducation rates EU-wide
 - But: much better outcomes for intermediate learners

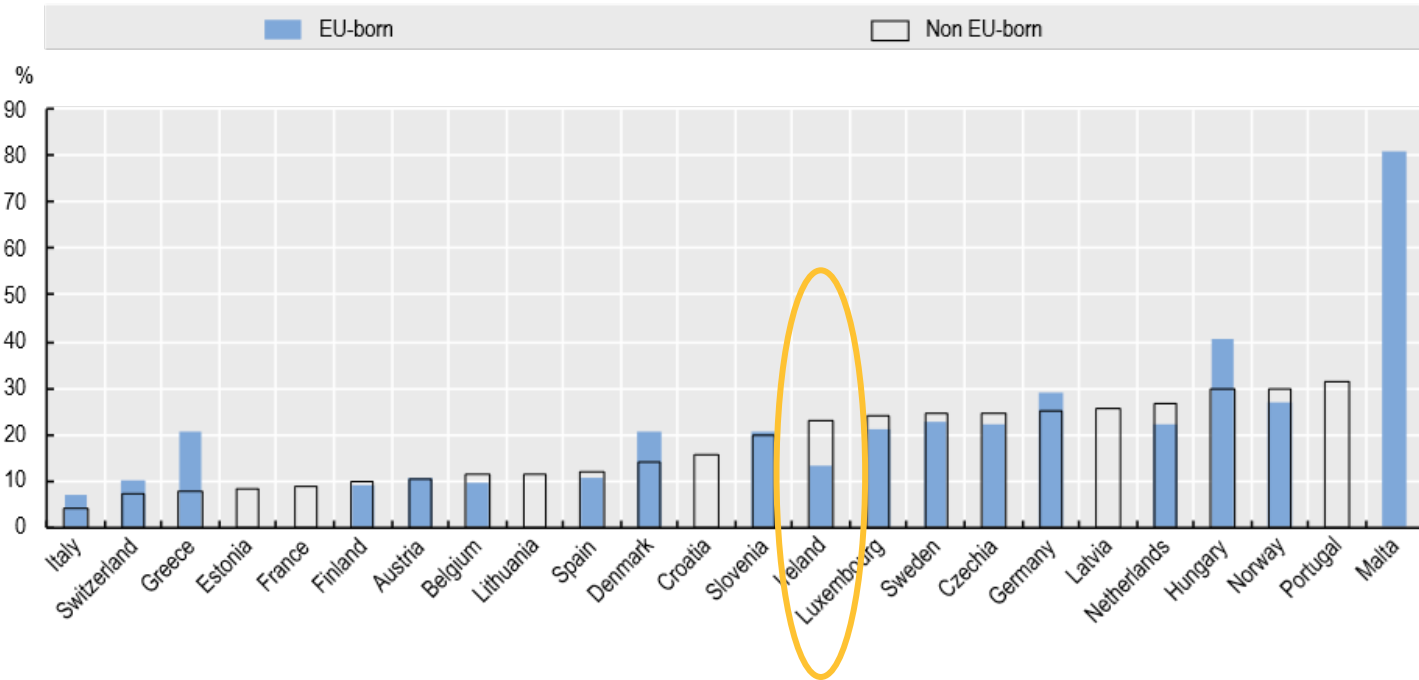
1. Limited language proficiency

Most countries in the EU (incl. IE) offer free, public language supports to migrants, but:

- Training may not be sufficiently advanced or job-specific
 - Where funding is limited, language schools may prioritise beginner learners
 - Language training that is tailored to occupation-specific vocabulary works well
- Indirect barriers persist
 - Language support is only as effective as it is accessible:
 - Not always reconcilable with work and care responsibilities
 - ‘Hidden costs’ such as transportation or learning materials

2. Recognition of qualifications

Figure 2: Share of foreign-born workers aged 15-64 educated abroad who applied and had their qualifications recognised, 2021 (OECD)



- Many foreign qualifications are not automatically recognised in destination countries
 - This leads to skills mismatching
- OECD data shows that very few migrants engage with recognition processes
- In Ireland
 - Just over 20% of foreign-born workers applied to have their qualifications recognised
 - Rate for EU-born migrants even lower

2. Recognition of qualifications

Why is migrants' engagement with formal recognition processes so low?

- Lack of assistance and information: recognition processes can be complex and difficult to navigate
- Time and financial concerns
 - Compensation measures are only a realistic option where reconcilable with work and care responsibilities
 - Migrant women are particularly negatively affected by this
- Competent authorities
 - Have to deal with evaluating qualifications from a wide range of countries
 - Little streamlining and information-sharing across the EU (in contrast to EU qualifications)

3. Employer-related barriers

- Employers are crucial in shaping migrants' labour market outcomes
- Stereotyping and discrimination neg. affect recruitment chances
 - E.g. migrant women become overrepresented in care work despite actual qualifications
- Lack of knowledge of the immigration system and permissions
- Informal preference for Irish work experience and Irish qualifications
 - Migrants pushed into 'survival jobs' / low-skilled employment early upon arrival
 - Even where no formal recognition barriers exist, migrants' work experiences and skills may not be equally valued if obtained abroad

Concluding takeaways

- Skills-mismatching is a severe problem within Ireland's migrant community
- Many factors drive this issue, including:
 - Limited language proficiency
 - Difficulties in achieving qualification recognition
 - Employer-related barriers
- Policy solutions should
 - Engage employers directly and understand their awareness gaps and needs
 - Facilitate language training that is accessible, sufficiently advanced, and job-related
 - Assist migrants in navigating recognition procedures and offer alternative means of skills recognition



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