

Brief Summary: ethical labor migration in health care services from non-EU nationals - position statement association of Flemish cities and communalities (VVSG), March 27, 2024

Enough employees

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find enough employees in Flemish cities and towns, such as public en private rest homes and childcare centers. In care services, for example, the continuity of the service provision is already under threat. Labor migration seems to be a long-term solution for occupations with a high shortage.

Look local first

All efforts should be maximized to help job seekers and inactive workers living and residing in Flanders and Belgium to find work. The shortages should be further addressed through ongoing actions to get more people into our sectors, for example through training. Also labor migration members are increasingly proposing as a solution. In addition we need to start working and organizing differently in the future with the scarce personnel resources at hand.

Coordination on central level

For labor migration of bottleneck occupations in healthcare, an overall integrated and coordinated approach at the central level is necessary. This central (public) labor intermediary should coordinate ethical migration with fine selected countries (WHO-list); so that exploitation and human trafficking are excluded and labor market needs are strategically and effectively addressed. Integration and integration aspects and knowledge of the regional language are critical success factors for labor migration to succeed. The procedures (e.g. recognition and assimilation of the foreign diploma) should be as short as possible. The integration process, equivalence of diploma, additional training, onboarding in the workplace,... should be more aligned so that labor migration can happen smoothly. The profession of nurses in public health services is a good case to take a position around ethical labor migration among local governments for bottleneck occupations.

Who we are?

The Association of Flemish Cities and Communalities is the umbrella organization of all Flemish municipalities, social services, local police zones, autonomous municipal companies, care en welfare associations, fire and safety zones, waste collection and sorting, and regional development. It is committed to both political mandataries and professional staff. The VVSG organizes itself around three core tasks: representation, sharing of knowledge and networking.

The VVSG is also the employers' federation for the more than 160.000 employees at local governments.

Together with the “Union des Villes et Communes Belges” (UVCB) in Wallonia and Brucalis for the Brussels Region we are member of the Belgian Union of Cities and Municipalities (VBSG).

The full position statement of the VVSG can be found at (Dutch only)
<https://www.vvsg.be/kennisitem/vvsg/standpunten-2023>