



Samaritan International (SAM.I.) welcomes the opportunity to give feedback on the Commission's call for evidence on the initiatives on maximising the potential of talent mobility. SAM.I. is a network of 20 European non-profit civil society organisations, both from within the EU, as well as from Accession Countries and Eastern Neighbourhood Countries. The member organisations are active in the areas of social services, first aid and rescue services, civil protection, humanitarian aid, youth work, and volunteer management. Labour shortages in social services, including long-term care, have been identified as a main challenge impacting the work of our member organisations in this sector.

Samaritan International, therefore, welcomes the Commission initiative to tackle the problem of labour shortages, and fully supports the facilitation of recognition of qualifications from third country nationals. However, SAM.I. emphasizes that any policy response linked to attracting talent in a strategic way, should address the problem in a comprehensive way and seek more sustainable solutions first, to avoid brain drain in the areas where talent is being sought from. As regards the social services sector, SAM.I. strongly believes that the following principles should be safeguarded:

#### **An increased attractiveness of the professions should be considered the main priority**

As stated in the Commission's Call for Evidence document, labour shortages have several root causes and measures addressing the existing EU workforce only will not be sufficient. While SAM.I. fully agrees that the challenge can only be addressed in an international dimension, the increase of the attractiveness of professions should be at the centre of the policy response. In social services in general and in long-term care services in particular, innovative solutions can and should be developed to make the job profiles and career paths more attractive. The strategic attraction of talent from third countries can help fill the gaps in the EU but will create gaps elsewhere, resulting in a zero-sum game. Raising the attractiveness of the profession, on the other hand, would lead to a better coverage with existing talent. In this regard, programs targeted specifically towards disadvantaged groups, including NEETS, is crucial to increase inclusion and to make the best use of the existing workforce potential.

#### **Avoid "brain waste" and "brain drain" – use all available present talent**

Samaritan International fully supports the objective of the initiative to ensure that migrants can best use their skills and qualifications through an easier recognition process, which should be considered the main priority of the proposal. By focusing on making better use of existing talent, both "brain waste" within the EU, as well as excessive "brain drain" from third countries, will be avoided. In addition, enabling the easy recognition of qualifications of non-EU nationals will help their integration and inclusion. At the same time, the initiative also aims at making the EU more attractive to talent from outside. This objective requires a well-developed framework in order to prevent "brain drain" and should be a secondary objective after focusing first on making professions more attractive and using existing talent.

#### **Cooperate closely with third countries**

The Samaritan International network is comprised of civil society organisations from EU countries, as well as the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Georgia. Having members from both, traditionally "sending" and "receiving" countries in the social service sector, SAM.I. emphasizes the importance of close cooperation between the EU, its member states and the third countries concerned, in order to arrive at a policy framework that avoids "brain drain" as far as possible and with a primary focus on improving working conditions everywhere.



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SAMARITAN INTERNATIONAL is a European network of 20 non-profit non-governmental organisations from 19 European countries. We are politically and religiously unaffiliated and cooperate across borders within our network, on a regional, bilateral, and multilateral basis. Our members are active in the areas of social services, first aid and rescue services, civil protection, humanitarian aid, youth work, and volunteer management. Our work is conducted with the support of about three million individual members and almost 150.000 volunteers.