

SGI Europe joins ETUC and HAK-İŞ in Istanbul to discuss labour market integration of migrants

Brussels/Istanbul, 19 June 2026 - SGI Europe took part on 18 and 19 June in the seminar “Supporting Migrants’ Integration into the Labour Market”, organised by ETUC together with HAK-İŞ in Istanbul, Turkey, in the framework of the EU-funded LABOUR-INT III project.

Held during Refugee Week, the seminar brought together social partners, trade unions, employers’ representatives, public authorities, international organisations and civil society actors to discuss how to strengthen the labour market integration of third-country nationals, migrants and refugees.

Taking place in a country with direct experience of large-scale refugee reception, the discussions started from a clear message: humanitarian support to third-country nationals is essential, but it is not enough. Labour market integration and social integration are equally important and mutually reinforcing. Both require legal certainty, recognition of skills and qualifications, decent working conditions, and access to high-quality services, including language and cultural support, education, health and housing.

Speakers underlined that informal work, limited awareness of existing national legislation, and language barriers continue to prevent many third-country nationals from fully accessing their rights and entering quality employment. In this context, the role of public authorities, employers, trade unions, social partners, international organisations and civil society remains essential to ensure that integration pathways are both effective and rights-based.

As coordinator of LABOUR-INT III, SGI Europe stressed that integration is a pathway, not a single intervention or stand-alone initiative. Effective integration requires a multi-stakeholder approach capable of connecting different forms of support, from welcoming services and legal guidance to language learning, training, job placement and rights protection, into a coherent pathway built around the real needs of each person.

The seminar also highlighted the importance of moving from project-based cooperation to more structured partnerships, with clear roles, trust between actors and sufficient financial capacity for implementation. For SGI Europe, this is central to ensuring that labour market integration leads not only to employment, but to decent, sustainable and rights-based participation in society.

This exchange reflects the multi-stakeholder approach promoted by LABOUR-INT III, which brings together employers, trade unions, public authorities, training providers and civil society to support the integration of third-country nationals into the labour market. By strengthening cooperation across actors and levels of governance, the project aims to turn inclusion into concrete and sustainable opportunities, contributing to both social cohesion and economic participation across Europe.

