



## Supporting Migrants' integration into the Labour Market

*CSC Building, Industry & Energy, Rue Royale 45*

Brussels, Belgium

22 and 23 October 2025

Day 1: 09:30 – 17:00 | Day 2: 09:30 – 13:00

### Seminar Summary

The first day was structured with presentations from various speakers and time for questions from the audience after each contribution.

Contributions included setting the scene on migrants' labour market integration in Belgium. Dries Lens (University of Antwerp) talked about addressing labour shortages by developing a coordinated, evidence-based migration policy that simplifies procedures, strengthens worker protection, and enhances the attraction and retention of qualified talent. Frederic De Wispelaere (KU Leuven HIVA) focused on TCNs posted workers, highlighting the sectors where posting is growing in Belgium and also in other European countries, as well as the legal ambiguities and the risks of workers' exploitation, urging stronger oversight and fair mobility measures. These allowed an improved understanding of migrants' integration challenges and legal complexities.

Germana Viglietta (ELA Brussels Liaison Officer) and Karel De Ridder (former ELA National Liaison Officer, Belgium) presented on the European Labour Authority, current work and mandate and ways and channels for social partners to cooperate with the authority, underlining that this is key to improve ELA's actions' effectiveness.

Given the important role of labour inspection services in protecting migrant workers, Bart Stalpaert, Director of Social Information and Investigation Service (SIOD) in Belgium, explained the importance of this coordination body in Belgium and Ludovica Banfi (EU Fundamental Rights Agency) presented FRA's training manual on how workplace inspectors can protect third-country workers' rights.

The Borealis case has been introduced through the short documentary "Qatar In Belgium - exploitation in the heart of Europe". This is a case of human trafficking and economic exploitation at a construction site of the chemical company Borealis at the port of Antwerp. Jan Buelens (Progress Lawyers Network) presented how the case has evolved in the last three years and Bart Vannetelbosch (ACV/CSC), highlighted the role played by trade unions in supporting the victims and has put forward some proposals on how to fight workers abuse including the appointment of



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specialised investigating judges for cases of social dumping; empower the FSO (Compensation Fund for dismissed workers in the event of business closure) to grant victims back pay and the Fedris (Federal Agency for Occupational Risks) to recognise work accidents more quickly; introduce joint liability measures to prevent abuse and the shifting of fraud-related costs onto the victims.

The second day started with the presentation of practical experiences of support to migrant workers' integration by representatives from trade unions, NGOs, and employers, in a more interactive exchange. Local speakers included Jan Knockaert (Fairwork Belgium), Didier Vanderslycke (ORBIT), Gianni Duvillier (VOKA) and project partners coming from abroad Eliane Friess (Arbeit und Leben, Germany), Sonja Šarac (ZRSZ, Public Employment Services, Slovenia). The discussion explored different initiatives, tools and partnerships, trying to understand how to replicate or adapt local initiatives that have been proved useful into other realities and how cooperation can be expanded across Europe, also thanks to the interventions of other participants. Closing remarks were delivered by Marie-Hélène Ska (ACV/CSC General Secretary), who highlighted Belgium's long tradition of welcoming migrants, reaffirmed the principle of "*same work, same pay*", underlined trade unions' key role in informing and supporting migrant workers, and called for stronger cross-border cooperation and effective use of ELA to improve labour inspection and integration.

