

# **Connecting Higher Education and the Labor Market for Attracting and Retaining Highly Employable Students (P174528)**

## **Attract and retain international students: a remedy to skill shortages**

### **NOTE 2**

#### **- Labor market –**

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## I. Summary

### I) Background Analysis of the Russian labor market

In Russia, students face **several challenges when entering the job market**. As there is a mismatch of educational programs to labor market requirements, **the degree** is no longer an **mandatory indicator of abilities** and other factors such as **work experience** have become important for employers. However, (Dudyrev, et al., 2020) points out that many students are employed in fields unrelated to their studies and are driven by **financial rationales rather than by the motivation for a professional growth in their study field**. **The employment of foreign students** in Russia also encounters some **significant barriers** despite the **simplification of employment procedure for international students** in Russia in 2020 (Federal law N115-FZ). Indeed, there are **factors that hinder effective engagement and adaptation of international students to the Russian labor market; culture and language barriers** especially for students from non-CIS countries, the **lack of university initiatives**, and **practices of co-op programs, internships and other forms of university-industry cooperation within the curriculum are not well-developed**, with the exception of high-profile universities. However, it is worth mentioning, that in the recent years, a number of Russian universities adapted a **“project study” mode which includes compulsory internship practice**. Another barrier is the **legal status of foreign graduates** of Russian universities in terms of labor legislation which differs depending on their citizenship: **citizens of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union** (employment or civil law contract); **citizens of states entitled to visa-free entry to the territory of Russia** (applies to citizens of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Moldova and Ukraine, entitled to work in Russia on the basis of a patent); and **citizens of states who need a visa to enter the territory of Russia** (the employer must obtain a quota).

Challenges associated with the international student employment can be potentially resolved by **practically-oriented curriculum design, support from the university in building a career strategy and in job search, active engagement of regional government, engagement of industry, pathways to academic career for international students in Russian universities and attention to Russian language proficiency**.

### II) International analysis

The creation and recognition of competencies across OECD countries states that **levels of development and acquisition of competencies differ in each country as well as the demand and supply in the labor market**. It is illustrated by the **Low Skills Equilibrium (LSE)** which help explaining that a low supply of competencies is combined with a low demand for competencies creating a labor market with low wages, low productivity, poor jobs, and/or a low share of qualifications in some sectors.

The **assessment of needed competencies in a labor market is one of the main challenges** of policy makers. In Europe, the CEDEFOP highlights the need to address the **competencies mismatch** and gather data for its measurement, through tools such as OECD data collection programs such as **IALS** and **PIAAC** and European ones such as **CHEERS** and **REFLEX**. Several national programs are considered good examples: e.g., Canada, Germany, or the USA. The **Bologna process and OECD agendas** provide **common standard qualifications** enhancing students and workers mobility which could be part of the solution to fight labor and competency shortages.

The **added value of opening the labor market to international students** is often controversial since it can be a channel for “**brain drain**” or “**brain gain**” in some countries. At a macroeconomic level, mobile students contribute **to knowledge absorption, technology upgrading and capacity building. Student mobility can help facing labor market mismatches.** However, there is currently **no European common policy** on economic migration and labor market needs, making it difficult to evaluate the added value of national policies as there is no common data. A success policy tool for access to, and retention in, higher education and/or direct access to the labor market is the **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** which consists in awarding qualifications or credits toward a qualification to applicants on the sole basis of the assessment of their experiential learning outcomes, which **considerably increase employability** since a qualification is a key component of employability.

### III) Final recommendations

- Develop a long-term economic migration policy
- Creating educational programs for labor migrants and refugees
- Develop a special employment program for foreign graduates on the academic labor market (universities, research centers)
- Simplify visa regulations for international students and graduates
- Development an RPL system for access to higher education
- Stimulating cooperation between companies and higher education institutions
- Promote international student networks
- Data collection and analytics on tracks of international graduates of Russian universities

## II. Introduction

In a moving world, the concept of competency appears flexible enough to adapt to the needs of societies and economies. From a more individual perspective, the development of skills that can be valued in the labor market would be a means of increasing employability. In a context of internationalization of economies and competition between countries, skill enhancement or adapted to the needs of the labor market is a major issue. It states that levels of development and acquisition of competencies differ from a country to another, and so is the demand and supply for competencies in the labor market. However, regardless of the degree of skill development or labor market needs, skill shortages have social and individual consequences. From a macroeconomic point of view, it reduces the possibilities of economic growth, for individuals it is synonymous of difficult occupational trajectories.

The Low Skills Equilibrium (LSE) theory seems partly relevant to explain that a low supply of competencies is combined with a low demand for competencies creating a labor market with low wages, low productivity, poor jobs, and/or low share of qualifications, which can be caused by a context where education and training are not appreciated nor promoted to raise qualification levels and aspirations. Considering that it is a theoretical construct and that the Russian economy does not resemble this description, the LSE theory provides food for thought and allows **education stakeholders and policy makers to improve their approach**. The assessment of needed competencies in a labor market is one of the main challenges of policy makers in the education field. In Europe, it has been increasingly treated as a central issue as CEDEFOP highlights the need to address the competencies mismatch and gather data for its measurement (especially regarding issues such as overeducation, over-skilling and competency obsolescence). Surveys such as PISA, PIAAC, CHEERS and REFLEX have been created, among others objectives, to assess skills and competences, and in particular the ones that are necessary in the labor market. The adaptation of skills to the needs of the economy and individuals is a major issue. Several national programs are considered good examples (e.g., Canada, Germany or the USA). Promoting the international mobility of students appears to be a means of increasing the stock of human capital in economies and of responding to skill shortages. The Bologna process and OECD agendas provide common standard qualifications enhancing students and workers mobility that could be part of the solution.

At the individual level, internationalization of students improves their personal competencies, strengthens cultural awareness, and increases their understanding on global issues. At a macroeconomic level, mobile students contribute to knowledge absorption, technology upgrading and capacity building both in the host and home regions. Student mobility can help facing labor market mismatches. Nevertheless, the added value of opening the labor market to international students is often controversial since it can be a channel for brain drain in some countries.

The European Commission identifies two different approaches to retain students and mobile workers for the sake of national development. First, the “demand driven” model which consists of giving easier admission to migrants seeking employment in shortage occupations

(e.g., Sweden). Second, the “labor supply” model aims to boost the stock of human capital relying on the requirements of knowledge-based economies.

This note aims at providing food for thought for helping the stakeholders of the Russian higher education system to address the most glaring challenges, such as the existence of rigid legislation and little incentives to call on foreign graduates; with a specific focus on the added value of international policies and practice that aim at bridging higher education systems across countries. It focuses on strategies that consist of opening the labor market in a context where the creation and the recognition of competences – through a qualification – have become the focus of many approaches at the international level.

Therefore, the note analyses several national policies within European countries that develop instruments to identify their economic migrant needs, even if one of the most glaring result is that there is currently no European common policy on economic migration and labor market needs. Nevertheless, the European Commission is trying new approaches in identifying sectors with unfilled vacancies.

Another main challenge for host countries is to open their labor market to international students and graduates. European countries have different approaches which commonly base on encouraging employers hiring or offering internships to international students, advising, or promoting networks of students and graduates. Finally, international students are thought to be more easily integrated in the labor market whenever higher education and the private sector collaborate.

This note also elaborates on the success of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) approaches that consist of awarding full qualifications, partial qualifications, credits toward a qualification, exemption for access to higher education, and/or exemption of all or part of the curriculum to applicants that have been assessed and have proven that their experiential learning outcomes meet the standards used in the higher education system. RPL is very conducive for international students that may not have their home countries qualification recognized in the host country to choose a particular country because it gives direct access to higher education and provides opportunities for shortening the higher education curriculum.

Finally, European national policies vary very much in terms of incentives and exemptions for international students, and it is today hard to evaluate the added value of those policies since there is no common data of the European Union. However, national experiences show that European countries have chosen rather to control immigration than to favor the retention of international students in their territory. Russia appears more in this case.

The first part of this note identifies the obstacles that prevent international students from staying in Russia after their studies and integrating into the labor market. The regulation of the labor market and the lack of employability of these students are highlighted. These issues are rather specific to Russia and, therefore, Section III on international experiences show the added value of international students to the development of the stock of human capital and competencies.

### III. Background Analysis

There are several challenges that students face when entering the job market in Russia. Employers hiring recent university graduates face uncertainty about their productivity and since a degree is no longer the unique signal of abilities due to the relatively low average standards of education (an issue modern systems address with Qualifications Framework and Catalogue, for readability of the qualifications system; see Section III.B). Other factors, such as work experience, have become important signals of graduate abilities. The mismatch of educational programs to labor market requirements and the importance of practical and soft skills for employment also create demand for work experience before graduation (Rudakov, 2020). Thus, graduates of the top Russian universities and graduates who have acquired work experience are considered to be the most preferable for Russian employers.

Accordingly, more than a half of Russian students work during their studies, mostly due to employability and financial rationales (Rudakov & Roschin, 2019). However, research (Susyrev et al., 2020) points out that many students are employed in fields unrelated to their studies and are driven by financial rationales rather than by the motivation for a professional growth. In addition, the transition to the job market from the university still needs to be developed: students in vocational education and higher education lack reliable information about what is happening in the labor market, i.e. what prospects they will face after graduation or what skills and knowledge are in demand.

The research shows (Klyachko, 2020) that employers apply different instruments in order to engage young specialists into the labour market (Table 1). However, there is no indication that employers are looking for workforce outside of Russian market, and there are no initiatives that would target recruitment of international students.

Practice	Popularity among employers, %
Organization of internships	91
Participation in job fairs	82
Internet-recruiting	80
Recommendations form professional community	64
Education programs with universities	49
Connections with universities (employees engaging in academic activities)	44
Research and project competitions among students	40
Scholarships for students with further employment	36
Headhunting from competitors	32
Not recruiting young professionals	2

Source: Results of Employers survey, 2018; Klyachko 2020.

According to statistics, in 2018 there were about 93,200 foreign employees in Russia (Rosstat, 2020), of which 18,6% came from CIS countries, and 40% came from China. The number of

highly qualified migrants, however, is much lower: 46,700, of which 8,4% came from CIS countries, 21,7% came from EU, and 69,8% from other countries.

It is unclear whether there is an explicit demand for international graduates of Russian universities in Russian companies, which may be related to the lack of practices in hiring international graduates, as well as significant bureaucratic barriers associated with hiring an international applicant. Employers indicate that they are ready to hire students and graduates with CIS citizenship, however, speaking of non-CIS employees, Russian companies show interest in hiring them only for top positions when their unique competences matter more than the bureaucratic burden associated with employment (Klyachko, 2020).

These barriers towards international graduate employment create strategic challenges for Russian international student mobility. First, one of the core goals of international student recruitment is attraction of talent to the economy, which can be achieved only through adapting international students at the labor market. Second, while coming to Russia for Bachelor studies, international students tend to continue their Master's studies in other countries where they get employment after graduation. This supposedly makes Russia a transition destination and creates not only a loss of opportunity, but also a financial loss associated with scholarship spending and low return from state education provision for international students. Finally, this deprives the Russian market from employees with international competences.

The number of Russian students with international degrees is also relatively low: only 75,000 of Russian students study abroad, and the share of returnees is quite low (though there is no official statistics to track this dynamics in Russia, the data is obtained from statistics of other countries). The motivations of Russian students for staying abroad are related to wider career growth perspectives (even in the status of international student), higher salaries, and higher standards of living in their study destinations.

The issue of brain drain is not uncommon for developing countries, however, there is a set of initiatives (for example - retain, return and engagement practices) which proved to be effective for China, Latvia, and countries of Latin America. In conditions of a global knowledge-based economy, engagement practices and brain circulation can be a very effective response to the brain drain. Particularly for Russia, this practice can be also feasible in regards to internationalization of the university faculty.

#### **A. Role and legal status of the international students in Russia**

Proactive immigration policies are the best way to attract and retain international students. As will be shown later (see Section III, Part D), there are various incentives for international students to stay in the host country. Measures to access the labor market for foreigners are one of the tools to promote their integration. In 2020, the employment procedure for international students in Russia was considerably simplified in accordance with the changes



in the Federal law N115-FZ "On legal status of foreign citizens in Russian Federation" from 25/07/2020.

In accordance with the new regulations, in order to be legally employed in Russia, international students must provide a proof of studies in Russian universities to the employer. The employer does not have to apply for permission to hire international employees.

International students are allowed to be employed via the labor or civil contract during their free time and during vacations. In addition, they are allowed to work in any Russian region, regardless of the location of their host university.

Before the changes in the legislation, international students were allowed to work without a special permission or a patent only during their vacation, and they could be employed only by their universities or by companies founded by the universities. In all other cases, international students had to apply for a job permission which was issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The exception was given to students from the countries-members of the Eurasian Economic Union (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). This exception was established by the p. 1. article 97 of the agreement on Eurasian Economic Union, 29/05/2014.

Despite the simplification of legal employment procedures for international students, there are factors that hinder effective engagement and adaptation of international students to the Russian labor market.

For this discussion, it is reasonable to distinguish between students from CIS countries and other international students: the first group is much more adaptive to the Russian culture and language and encounters fewer obstacles when entering Russian job market. For non-CIS students, integration into the job market is a bigger challenge due to the language barrier and difficulties with cultural adaptation.

Study by Pismennaya et al. (2019) shows that among factors which impeded successful adaptation of foreign students in the Moscow labor market the most respondents named: lack of citizenship of the Russian Federation (62%), difficulties in obtaining a work permit (46%) and poor knowledge of the language (38%). In this respect, such factors as "demand in the labor market" (23%), "competition in the labor market" (18%), "financial difficulties" (15%), "lack of friendly contacts", "high workload in high school" are less significant (Pismennaya et al., 2019). Some of these barriers are often highlighted when it comes to retention of international students. On the labor market side, the abolition of work permits is formally one of the avenues for emancipation. On the educational side, the combined development of courses in English and in national languages is a tool for the integration of international students.

The professionalization of higher education training in general and the access of foreign students to the professionalization process is a vector of their integration on the labor market. The relations between higher education institutions and companies, the development of internships or apprenticeships are considered as "success stories" (see Section III, Part C). The practices of co-op programs, internships and other forms of university-industry cooperation within the curriculum in Russia are still actual for implementing. This practice could be

beneficial both for domestic and international students; however, for international students, it provides an important and helpful pathway to the specific industry sectors and allows them to integrate to the job market. However, it is worth mentioning, that in the recent years, a number of Russian universities adapted a “project study” mode<sup>1</sup> which includes compulsory internship practice.

## **B. Role and legal status of the international graduates in Russia**

International experiences show that the issue of international students' access to the labor market is a political issue in tension. It is as much a question of meeting the skills needs of the labor market as it is of controlling migratory flows or national preference in the labor market. These choices are a source of tension when economic actors have different objectives. National experiences show that states do not take the same paths in this area. For example, (see below), Canada is often cited as a model when it comes to encouraging the immigration of high skill workers. Thus, it manages to increase its stock of human capital while controlling migration flows. On the other hand, European countries have chosen to control access to the labor market for international students. Very few of them have implemented proactive policies regarding the reception of and access to the labor market for international students.

The legal status of foreign graduates of Russian universities in terms of labor legislation differs depending on their citizenship. There are several different approaches to state regulation for several groups of foreign citizens in relation to their employment in Russia: citizens of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union; citizens of states entitled to visa-free entry to the territory of Russia; and citizens of states who need a visa to enter the territory of Russia.

### ***Citizens of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union***

The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of May 29, 2014, signed by the heads of Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Armenia and Kazakhstan, ensures freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor in the territories of these countries. This means that the employment of citizens of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in Russia is carried out by simplified regulations. An employment or civil law contract is signed with an employee, the employer must send a notice of the employment of a foreign citizen to the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and put him on the migration register record if he will live in an apartment provided by the employer. If a foreign citizen lives in his own or independently rented apartment, then he should do a migration registration himself.

In addition, when signing an employment contract, citizens of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union are required to present a voluntary health insurance contract. A foreign worker is exempted from this obligation if his employer independently concludes an agreement with a medical organization on the provision of paid medical services to a foreign

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hse.ru/en/news/326123717.html>

employee (part 1 of article 327.3 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, clause 3 of article 98 of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of May 29, 2014).

An employment (labor) or civil contract with a citizen of a member state of the Eurasian Economic Union is the basis for extending his and his family members' stay in Russia for a period of more than 90 days. In case of early termination of the contract, the foreigner has another 15 days to conclude a new contract. If a foreign citizen did not manage to do this, then he is obliged to leave the territory of Russia.

### ***Citizens of states entitled to visa-free entry to the territory of Russia***

The visa-free entry to Russia applies to citizens of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Moldova and Ukraine. Citizens of these states are entitled to work in Russia on the basis of a patent. A patent is valid only in the territory of the region where it was issued, and only for the profession indicated in it. To renew a patent, a foreign citizen needs to make an advance payment on a monthly basis (which is the same payment as a personal income tax). In all regions, a fixed amount is established, regardless of the income of a foreign worker. For example, in Moscow in 2020 the monthly payment was 5 350 rubles (about 60 euros).

In order to obtain a patent, a foreign citizen must, within 30 days from the date of entry into the territory of Russia, apply to the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and provide the following documents:

- application
- passport or an identity document recognized in Russia, valid for at least a year
- migration card, which indicates the purpose of the visit - work
- voluntary medical insurance contract
- conclusion of the medical commission on the absence of addictions, dangerous infectious diseases
- certificate confirming that the foreign citizen has no HIV infection
- educational document
- a certificate confirming knowledge of the Russian language, knowledge of the history of Russia and the basics of Russian legislation.

A patent is issued within 10 days from the date of application. Within two months from the date of receipt of the patent, the foreign citizen is obliged to submit a copy of the labor or civil law contract to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, otherwise the patent may be canceled. The patent is valid for one year from the date of issue, then it can be renewed.

### ***Citizens of states who need a visa to enter the territory of Russia***

In order to hire a citizen of the state who requires a visa to enter the territory of Russia, the employer must obtain a quota. Every year the Government of the Russian Federation determines the number of foreign citizens of this category who can be employed in Russia. For example, for 2021, the established number of work permits for foreign citizens is 39,325. If an employer does not follow this regulation in accordance with the norms established by

the Government of the Russian Federation a fine of 800 thousand to 1 million rubles (approximately 8,900 to 11,100 euros) or suspension of activities for a period of 14 to 90 days apply.

For obtaining a quota, an employer must submit an application via the electronic service [Migrakvota.gov.ru](http://Migrakvota.gov.ru) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, obtain permission to attract and use foreign workers, and issue a work permit, invitation and visa for each foreign employee.

For obtaining a work permit, numerous documents must be submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A work visa is issued for 90 days (probationary period). After the expiry of the probationary period and signing of the employment contract, the employer has the right to submit an application for offering the employee a visa. In case of a positive decision, the employee receives a one-year multiple-entry visa.

Another category of foreign workers in Russian labor and migration legislation is *highly qualified specialists*. For this group, a simplified procedure for obtaining a work permit applies: the employer is exempted from the obligation to obtain a permit to attract foreign workers; he also does not need to apply to the employment center to confirm quotas. In addition, a permit for highly qualified foreign specialists is issued not for a year, as for ordinary foreign workers, but for three years.

Highly qualified specialists provide the same documents as citizens of states who need a visa to enter Russia. In addition, the employer must provide a written guarantee of material, medical and housing support for a foreign citizen for the period of his stay in Russia. The voluntary health insurance contract is provided at the expense of the employer.

Another condition that distinguishes highly qualified specialists from other foreign workers is the salary, which must be at least 167,000 rubles (approximately 1,850 euros).

The employer is obliged to periodically notify the Main Directorate for Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the fulfillment of the obligation to pay wages to a highly qualified specialist.

### **C. Challenges and possible solutions for international student employment**

Overall, the issue of international student and graduate employment for Russia can pursue several goals:

1. Attracting talent to the Russian job market
2. Attracting international competences to the job market (including academia)
3. Supporting education export in Russia

The biggest challenge for international student and graduate employment in Russia is that it is unclear whether there is a demand for international workers, and whether it is stronger

than the possible difficulties and barriers associated with international employment. Moreover, the data (Klyachko, 2020) shows that university employment programs are less efficient for international applicants (non-CIS countries), as employers are less interested in hiring from this group of students - 75% of students participating in the survey indicated that they were refused a job due to their international status.

At the same time, there are several tangible barriers which complicate international student and graduate employment. First, while the regulations were simplified, they are still more complex for international students than for domestic ones - even non-paid internships can be sometimes associated with bureaucratic difficulties. In addition, international status creates difficulties in job-related procedures, such as opening a bank account, medical insurance, access to facilities, problems with documentation which indicates the closed nature of the Russian job market infrastructure.

Second, the language and cultural barriers at the workplace are seen as a complication from the employers' perspective. Finally, there is little assistance from the universities aimed at career development for international students.

However, given the overall trends at the Russian job market, it is reasonable to suggest that for international student and graduates, getting the first job is the biggest challenge, and after getting tangible work experience, they can be perceived as competitive candidates.

Challenges associated with the international student employment are can be resolved to a large extent by a comprehensive approach of key actors, and includes:

- practically-oriented curriculum design (including internships incorporated in study plan, lectures from industry representatives. etc.),
- support from the university in building a career strategy and in job search (for example, by career advisory services at the university, job fairs),
- active engagement of regional government (recruiting students from particular countries and/or particular study specializations, Russian regions may consider providing them with internships in strategically relevant industries for the region),
- engagement of industry and close collaboration with Russian companies (methodological and legal support in work with international students, mentorship etc.)
- pathways to academic career for international students in Russian universities. This may include research master tracks for international students, their employment at the university departments (for example, assistantships), and engagement in research activities at the universities.
- attention to Russian language proficiency. While many international students speak Russian, in practice, the level of Russian proficiency of non-CIS students may not be sufficient for full-time work at the job market. Attention to Russian courses throughout the entire studies is vital for their smooth engagement to the job market.

## IV. International Analysis

### A. Creation and recognition of competencies – qualifications systems and framework

Education and training reforms, especially in the higher education sector, play a central role in restoring, maintaining and developing **productivity** at national, regional and local levels. Adaptation of education and training to the changing environment remains one of the challenges that face most of developed countries such as those from the OECD (of which Russia has enhanced cooperation since 2000). Increased competition, internationalization of markets, central role of innovation and knowledge (David and Foray, 2001) lead to design an effective system of education and training. In this scheme, importance is given to the **development and acquisition of competencies<sup>2</sup> to meet the needs of labor markets and the expectations of employers.**

**Competencies are unevenly distributed** across OECD countries and there are a large variety of situations in terms of demand and supply for competencies (OECD, 2007). In order to appreciate how education and training reforms could be able to fill the gap, competencies mismatch and policy implications have been studied throughout the economic literature.

#### ***The emergence of the Low Skills Equilibrium (LSE) concept to map out skills supply and demand and explore the “skills trap”***

**The Low Skills Equilibrium (LSE) concept** has been initially developed by Finegold and Soskice (1988) in their article ‘The failure of training in Britain: and prescription’. In fact, comparison of competencies supply and demand can be divided in four scenarios, where the LSE describes one where low supply of competencies is combined with a low demand for competencies. As Green (2016) illustrates, the LSE situation is characterized by: low wages, low productivity, poor jobs, low local educational achievement and competencies, low share of workers with competencies and qualification<sup>3</sup> and low corresponding needs, possible mass production employment and/or seasonal employment and finally outmigration of more workers with competencies and qualifications. In terms of education and training policy, as Wilson and Hogarth (2003) explains, LSE is characterized by a situation *“where there is little incentive to participate in education and training and raise qualification levels and aspirations”*.

Even though, there is a necessity for addressing the **competencies mismatch measurement (Froy, 2009)**, LSE theory offers an important tool for training and education stakeholders and policy makers. For example, the OECD is able to map competencies supply and demand at the sub-regional level. In 2011, in Northwest England, nine areas among thirteen were classified

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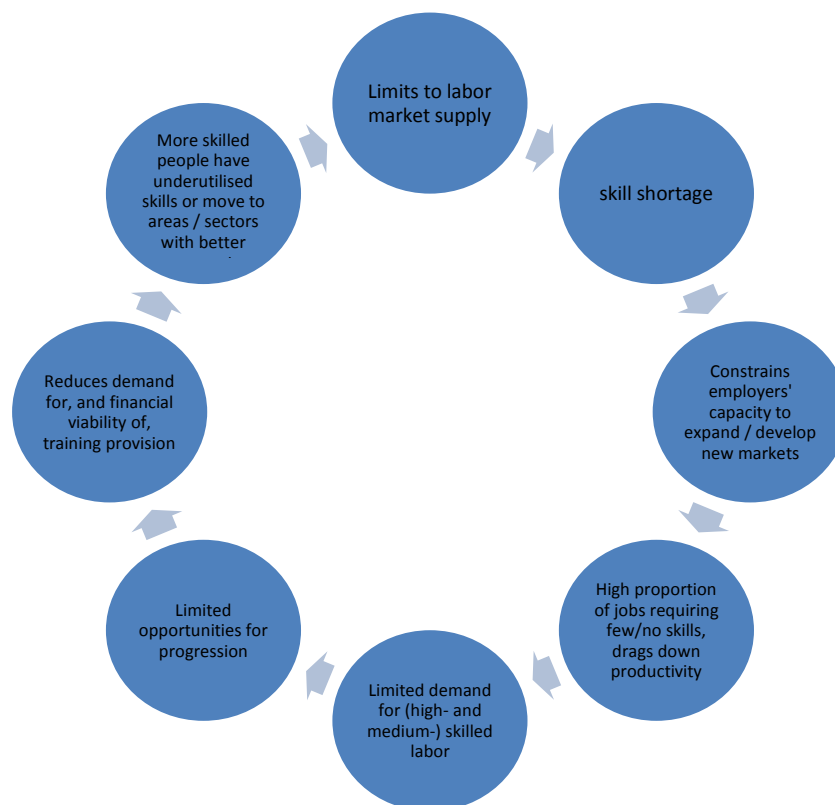
<sup>2</sup> Most policy makers and many scholars still use the term “skills” in this context. This Section opts for the more modern term “competency” (except in quotations) which encompasses skills (now often used for “hard skills”). For the sake of this Section, a competency is the ability to apply knowledge, skills and transversal competencies in a given context (Coles and Werquin, OECD, 2007). Nevertheless, for the sake of this Section “skills” and “competencies” may be taken as synonymous without loss of generality.

<sup>3</sup> « Qualification » invariably means having a paper certificate, used in the labor market and the society at large, as a proof of competencies (e.g., Bachelor, Master or Doctorate are qualifications)

as LSE zones. In order to escape the low skill equilibrium trap (OECD, 2020), a possible option is to provide learners, especially in the higher education system, with career guidance so that they make informed choices in relation to their studies and their aimed occupation. Another option is to make the higher education system more conducive to upper secondary education graduates so that they enroll more massively in higher education. More generally, education and training reforms are related to the school-to-work transition of young people, as well as training of adults with a low level of qualification, technical vocational education and training (TVET), as well as lifelong learning (LLL). In particular, TVET has recently massively reached higher education.

On the labor market side, this makes the case for promoting job and competency planning instruments. They could be organized at the enterprise level, and more effectively for a start at the sectoral level, and possibly also at the territorial level. Such instruments deliver precise information on employee competencies and have the power to help actors and other stakeholders to anticipate the need for competencies.

**Figure 1: The low skill trap and economic development (Green, 2016)**



***Developing competencies that will meet the needs is a key challenge for all actors and stakeholders.***

Defining competencies demand, supply, shortage, and mismatch is a central issue for experts, the scientific community at large and policy makers.

For several decades, many **incentives** have been provided to actors and other stakeholders to foster competencies in the entire workforce.

**In Europe**, a special attention has been given to low-competency workers and young Europeans with a low level of qualification. In fact, low levels of competencies are devastating for individuals and, as European Council recommended in 2013, CEDEFOP (European Center for the Development of Vocational Training) launched a program to enhance young people and adults' competencies (CEDEFOP, s.d.). Several objectives are set such as helping young people stay in, or return to, education or work, upskilling adults or preventing action to improve basic competencies.

In a changing environment, this debate has been repeatedly addressed for many years and several institutions have set **programs in motion in order to assess which competencies are now needed**.

As an example, in the mid-2000s, European Commission funded the **REFLEX** (The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society) project which involved sixteen countries (Austria, Belgium/Flanders, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK) (Allen et al., 2007) The project focused on the demands that the modern knowledge society places on higher education graduates, and the degree to which higher education equips graduates with the competencies in order to meet these demands. Built on both qualitative interviews with employers and the views of graduates, the project shows that five core competencies are in demand: professional/occupational expertise, functional flexibility, innovation and knowledge management, mobilization of human resources and international orientation.

**Assessing which competencies are now needed remains a real challenge for policy makers** in order to fight the competencies mismatch and to develop a standard qualification framework. As the CEDEFOP (s.d.) recommends, there is a **need to address the competencies mismatch and to gather data for measuring it. Measuring overeducation, over-skilling or competency obsolescence are considered central issues**.

The issue of skills/competencies remains a central focus of international development policies. As of 2012, the OECD will put in place tools to meet the skills needs of knowledge-based societies (OECD, 2012). In 2020, the OECD, as part of their skills strategies 2019, would consider *“Skills are vital in enabling individuals and countries to thrive in an increasingly complex, interconnected and rapidly changing world”* (OECD, 2020). Digitalization, globalization, demographic changes and migrations appear to be the factors that affect the evolution of skills within economies. Three actions are considered central to this strategy: 1) developing relevant skills over the life course; 2) using skills effectively in work and society; and 3) strengthening the governance of skills systems.

Acquiring the skills that matter, i.e. those that will improve the employability of individuals but also enable economies to meet the challenges of knowledge societies, is a lifelong process. We can note that the issue of skills is proving to be a central point of education and training policies, and tools have been developed to assess them according to the different levels of education. PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) measures whether children *« are able to acquire both cognitive and non-cognitive skills during early ages, before starting compulsory education »*. PIAAC (Survey of Adult Skills) is a tool that aims to assess the



skills of young graduates. More specific studies also make it possible to evaluate the acquisition and use of skills, such as the **CHEERS** (Careers after Higher Education: a European Research Study) and **REFLEX** surveys of graduates from higher education in Europe. The VET (Vocational Education and Training) system is also affected by skill needs. Traditionally, the system was aimed at employable youth in low-skill sectors, but nowadays it is aimed at young people who are employable in low-skill sectors, today *“even workers in technical fields require higher levels and broader sets of skills.”*

The OECD has developed recommendations to govern the skills system effectively. The method called “whole-of-government approach” is based on four pillars: *“1) promoting co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration across the whole of government; 2) engaging stakeholders throughout the policy cycle; 3) building integrated information systems; and 4) aligning and coordinating financing arrangements.”* At the European level, many initiatives exist, for example, Germany has a long experience of policies aiming at involving major stakeholders in decision-making processes. Outside of Europe, the Canadian, Australian and American experiences are considered as good practices. In 2018, Canada has launched its “Future Skills” program *“to ensure that Canada’s skills development policies and programs are prepared to meet Canadians’ changing needs.”* In Australia, *“the government has produced a toolkit that helps the public sector engage stakeholders in different domains, including skills policies”*. In the U.S., the program “Next Generation Engagement” allows stakeholders to adapt public agendas to *“industry-determined priorities”*.

In practice, all these aspects should **help designing curricula, qualifications and qualifications frameworks** that could be recognized in the labor market at international, national, regional and local levels. Most EU countries have now established a **national qualifications framework** – i.e., a classification device (Coles & Werquin, 2007) – and the European Commission has established a meat framework: the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The development of common institutional and program accreditation that could *“enhance the labour market relevance and outcomes of the higher education system by imposing labour market relevant criteria or minimum standards on institutions”* but also *“ensure good quality skills development”* are at stake (OECD, 2017). Considering the Bologna process or OECD agendas, development of **common standard qualifications is also a lever to enhance students and workers international mobility** which could be a solution to fight labor and competency shortages.

## **B. Economic gains of opening labor market for international students and graduates**

In Russia, the social benefit of integrating students into the labor market is not agreed upon by economic market actors. In a context of competition of young people for access to privileged positions in the labor market, being a foreign student graduated from a Russian university does not seem to be a good signal for employers. Employers consider international students to be unsuitable for the requirements of the labor market, not very employable and prefer Russian students with higher education (See Section II, Background).

### ***The added value of experience abroad from the individual and the labor market perspectives.***

The question of mobility during the course of studies refers to that of the migration of qualified workers and therefore, by extension, to that of 'brain drain' and 'brain gain'. As pointed out by Ennafa and Paivandi (2008), studying abroad is directly related to the brain drain, as it is one of the channels for the migration of highly qualified workers in the world. At the macroeconomic level, the literature on this topic is abundant and is summarized in the question by Vinokur (2008): 'who loses, who wins and how much?'. Since the 1960s, much has been written to respond to the question of which countries win or lose in this international competition to attract the best students? The question is still being debated and receives particular attention in social science research.

There are two ways of looking at the added value of experience abroad, the individual and the labor market perspectives.

- **At an individual level**, there is a lot of pieces of evidence to prove the added value of worldwide mobility. It improves transversal competencies such as communication and foreign language. It strengthens cultural awareness as well as citizenship competencies and it influences the understanding of complex global issues and the civic competencies of participants. On the other hand, there is no evidence that mobility abroad would increase their integration into the labor market (Teichler, 1996).
- **At macroeconomic level**, mobile students can contribute to knowledge absorption, technology upgrading and capacity building not only in the host region but also in their home country provided that they return home after studies or maintain strong linkages with nationals at home. Student mobility is one of the alternatives for attracting global talent in order to enrich the stock of human capital available in a country. Considering competencies scarcity as a major issue for countries, international student mobility is a real option to face labor market mismatches.

### ***Approaches for retaining students and mobile workers for the sake of national development***

Reports from European Commission pinpoint two different approaches to link international migrations with labor market shortages: 'demand driven' and 'labor supply model'. In reality, these two channels are not mutually exclusive but should be rather combined.

- **The "demand driven" model** involves *granting accelerated or simplified admission to migrants seeking employment in previously identified shortage occupations*' (EMN, 2015). Within Europe, three groups of countries with this type of policy emerge.
  - **Sweden** is one of them and since 2008, the employers have the right to recruit third-country nationals to fill vacancies if they cannot find suitable Swedish or European Union workers. There are no quotas and the policy stresses flexibility for employers in order to respond to changing realities on the labor market. As a consequence, *"the system is open to labour migrants of all skills levels and*

*nationalities and does not set any priorities as to whether migrants stay for short term periods or permanently”*. In order for this to work, the state has developed statistical tools to identify the demand and supply of labor. Within this framework, sector, skills, qualifications, occupations and geographical dimensions are taken into account.

- Another group is composed of countries (e.g., Luxembourg, the Netherlands or Austria) for whom third country foreign workers are an important source of labor force. Their needs are structural and they do not use punctual migration policy instruments to try to match third-country national workers with occupational shortages.
- Finally, the third group is composed of other European Member States which prefer to address labor shortages by developing better links between the educational system and labor market needs rather through labor migration. However, in that case, economic migration exists but the admission of third nationals is left to market forces, in particular individual employers. Considering other experiences explained above, links between economic migration and economic needs appear to be indirect and not policy-driven.

**The ‘labor supply’ model** is oriented toward a ‘human capital’ or ‘labor supply’ model and is adopted by the majority of European Member States as it appears more connected with innovation and high skilled workforce needs. The goal of this policy is to enhance the stock of human capital within the country. This model is strongly linked to the requirements of knowledge-based economies and appears in line with the different agendas of the European Commission or the OECD. Consequently, it concerns more specifically a qualified workforce and in particular that of higher education graduates. In fact, in this case, *“most Member States see labor migration as an important source of highly-skilled labor (defined in terms of their educational attainment and/or level of remuneration) as well as entrepreneurs.”* Compared to the demand driven model, the ‘labor supply’ model *“is not seen as a tool for addressing labor market shortages but rather as an instrument for encouraging innovation and the move toward a “knowledge economy”*.

***Encouraging labor migration in order to meet labor market needs assumes that countries identify their job vacancies***

Within Europe, there is no common policy addressing the link between economic migration to labor market needs. However, it is important to note that some countries have developed instruments to identify their economic migrant needs, but it is targeted to certain subsets of labor migrants:

- Some countries *“reserve the use of such instruments for attractive low-skills workers to elementary occupations for seasonal workers”*. That is the case of Spain, Portugal and Greece.

- In other countries, such instruments *“are used in order to select workers in high-skilled occupations and are closed to low-skilled workers.”*.
- In some Belgium’s regions there is a draft of labor market regulation focused on some labor market shortages.

Initiatives to harmonize economic migration policies in Europe are not completed. This question is a real issue and there is no real common method in order to identify economic shortage within European Countries. Recently, European Commission has investigated this issue and identified the six sectors with the highest number of unfilled vacancies. This initiative can be considered more as an experimentation rather than the implementation of a common policy.

It is interesting to broaden the spectrum of experiences and to look at countries that have a long history of economic migration. Canada turns out to be in this case. In fact, Canada *“has not only the largest in terms of numbers, but also the most elaborate and longest-standing skilled labour migration system in the OECD” (OECD, 2019)*. Recently, an OECD note explains how Canada has developed instruments that allow for enhance labor-market integration of immigrants (Carey, 2018). We find here the same problems related to the development of knowledge economies. Thus, the immigration policy in Canada aims to promote economic development by selecting immigrants with high levels of human capital and economic immigrants are by far the largest group, they are selected for their skills. The central objective of the Canadian labor migration policy is *“to help meet those labor market needs which cannot be satisfied through tapping domestic labor market supply in a reasonable timeframe”*. Economic migration in Canada can be considered as a “success story” as indicators and researches suggest that labor market migration has been beneficial to Canada. In order to achieve this, Canada has developed one of the most policy-based research and consistent monitoring of outcomes. The system is based on the development of tools to promote economic migration while controlling it. At the federal level, programs are put in place to assess labor market needs, and employers are heavily involved in the implementation of these tools. For example, in the Atlantic Provinces, Canada initiated the Atlantic Immigration Pilot where *“local employers apply to a province to become designated under the pilot and then can offer jobs to eligible candidates”*. However, the heart of the success is based on a strong selection, an efficient reception and follow-up system for economic migrants. In summary, the OECD reports highlight the fact that *“Canada has arguably the most elaborate labor migration system in the OECD, and it is widely perceived as a benchmark for other countries. Its success is evidenced in its good integration outcomes and high levels of public acceptance of migration, as well as its strong appeal to potential migrants. Core to this success is not only the elaborate selection system itself, but also the entire infrastructure it is based on, which ensures constant monitoring and adaptation of its parameters;”*

### C. Challenges of Opening Labor Market to International Students and Graduates

***The ways host countries promote and facilitate access to the labor market is a major issue.***

While international student mobility might be instrumental to foster human capital accumulation, the ability of host countries to retain graduates remains a challenge. The **conditions of student integration into the labor market appear crucial**. From a legal point of view, in Europe, *“a main vehicle for retaining international students was found to be providing them with an opportunity to stay in the Member State and seek work after graduation. Pursuant to article 25 of the Students and Researchers Directive, the vast majority of Member States provided for a **residence permit** for the purpose of seeking employment or self-employment/starting a business after completion of studies”*.

Access to the labor market for international students – as for nationals – may be promoted by a whole set of measures implemented in training courses. Preparing students to enter the labor market appears to be the most effective way to retain them. Generally speaking, preparing students for entry into the job market has become a mission of most higher education institutions in Europe. In France, this idea is presented under the term of **“professionalization” of training**, it refers to the set of devices, tools that improve graduate’s employability (Teichler, 2014). The development of career-oriented qualification, participation in training related to job search, development of competencies transferable to the labor market, internships, apprenticeships all are schemes and measures that promote the integration of young people in the labor market. Several initiatives highlight the links developed between businesses and higher education institutions to promote the integration of students into the labor market. In a number of Member States, HEIs set up career centers to provide advice and counselling to students and in many cases assisted with finding internships and employment.

- In Germany, local employment agencies often provided special counselling services for higher education graduates.
- In Estonia, a broad program to encourage employers to offer internships and jobs to international students has recently settled. The original contribution of this initiative is to federate all the actors such as Estonian Employers Confederation, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- In Greece, *“the private sector provided support to students allowing the completion of their studies, for example via the provision of counselling, the implementation of internships programs and the organization of careers forums”*.
- Results from Erasmus Mundus survey shows that **“Networks between students and graduates provide helpful devices for students (e.g., job offers, contacts) and coordinating personnel (e.g., feedback on employability, required competences and current labor market needs), for Erasmus Mundus students and graduates the Erasmus Mundus contacts are a very important source of professional networking”** (Calmand et. al, 2011). The development network of students’ alumni is often considered as a manner to enhance employability.

***Intertwining higher education and to the private sector is a lever for the integration of international students into the labor market.***

Initiatives aimed at bringing higher education institutions closer to the private sector exist in most member countries and make it possible to federate the different actors around a

common project and to link the issue of international mobility to the needs of the labor market. They bring together all the labor market players: e.g., the state, higher education institutions, employment intermediaries and the Public Employment Service, companies, consular chambers.

Beyond the cooperative aspect, these practices are a real asset for students to prepare their occupational integration. They often involve a strong acculturation of students to the needs of the job market of the host country. They also promote their professionalization through internships or apprenticeships. France, Germany, Estonia and Sweden have succeeded in implementing such a policy favoring the creation of networks to meet the needs of both students and private companies.

### ***Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a policy tool for access to and retainment in higher education and/or direct access to the labor market***

Among the approaches that have recently been put at the top of the policy agenda – together with technical vocational education and training, higher education, and qualifications Framework – there is recognition of prior learning outcomes (RPL). It is a process by which any set of consistent learning outcomes, however acquired – i.e. formally, non-formally or informally – are given currency through the awarding of an officially recognized document clearly stating what the applicant knows and is able to do, and the extent to which they are mastered by the applicant; after a thorough assessment process against predefined [preferably widely agreed] standards (Werquin, 2010).

Most countries implementing RPL use it to deliver full or partial qualifications to successful applicants, which considerably increase employability because most qualifications lead to the license to practice. In addition, RPL is in fact one of the most flexible instruments that exists in the field of education and training. It is a real policy tool. Other outcomes are indeed possible such as: exemption of academic prerequisite to access higher education and resume formal studies without academic prerequisite in the country of study; exemption of all or part of the curriculum in a formal program; credits toward a qualification. It gives a second chance of studying in the higher education system to individuals – young people and adults – that could not hold the upper secondary education qualification in the country they want to study.

This is of course of extreme relevance to **international students** who may find it difficult to have their home qualifications fully recognized. As a consequence, they may be asked to resume formal studies from scratch, and this is not very conducive to engage in education and training. RPL is basically an assessment that provides evidence of knowledge and competencies that higher education institutions usually accept for access. For advanced RPL applicants – with lot of experience, competencies or qualifications in their home countries that are not accepted in the country of destination – it may even lead to a **shortening of the higher education programs**, which is a strong incentive to enroll in the higher education system to achieve a qualification that would have currency in the labor market they are in. There even are some examples of Doctorate delivered on the sole basis of an RPL assessment (e.g., Ireland).

In a nutshell, **direct access and shorter *curricula*** have the power to considerably increase the pool of potential “customers” for higher education institutions in any country, and to quickly strengthen the qualifications distribution of a country at the top end. Examples are given by Canadian universities (e.g., in Saskatchewan) or French universities that use RPL to reach out to talented [young] adults. They assess them in relation to the legal framework and official process – for quality assurance – and formally authorize them to enter their university if successful at the assessment, organized against national standards, for societal recognition. Oftentimes they even get to skip parts of the program of study. It is a win-win situation and smart universities have started to realize the potential of RPL.

#### **D. Successful national strategies of opening labor market for international students and graduates**

International students in Russia face difficulties in entering the labor market. Therefore, the development of their employability during their education has become an issue. The evidence highlighted in Section II part A points to the lack of arrangements for developing students' transferable skills within Russian universities. Thus, the experiences of acculturation of students to the labor market (internships, apprenticeships), the links between companies and higher education institutions are missing and remain to be developed. They appear to be central to the transition process in the labor market. There is therefore a wide range of schemes to promote the mobility of international students. This section highlights a few initiatives that have recently been developed in Europe for retaining international students. Five measures are often identified as a way to retain international students after their studies: exempt from labor tests, exempt from work permit, exempt from lower salary threshold, supported for family reunification and exempt from immigration quotas. Within the European Union, experiences show that the 12 Member States do not have common policies in this area. The most frequently adopted measure was the exemption from the labor market test for international graduates. In a number of Member States, international graduates were also exempt to obtain a work permit.

***Compared to policies directed at attracting international students, those aimed at integrating them into the labor market have not been successful.***

Considering attraction and retention measures, the retention of graduates appears to be less coordinated than in the area of student attraction. At the national level, retention measures are mostly policy-related and seek to facilitate access to the labor market by eliminating certain restrictions in place for international graduates. It is very difficult to know the added value of national student retention policies within the European Union since there is no statistical data on the subject. The issue of student retention is a sensitive one since it relates to the thorny question of countries' migration policies. It is also the competition between foreign and international students when it comes to access to the labor market in a context of

job scarcity that is at stake. Finally, difficulties to adopt effective retention measures can be seen as a result to prevent irregular migration and to control migration routes.

**Figure 2. Incentives for retention**

	A	B	B	C	C	D	E	E	E	F	F	H	H	I	I	L	L	L	M	N	P	P	S	S	U
	T	E	G	Y	Z	E	E	L	S	I	R	R	U	E	T	T	U	V	T	L	L	T	E	K	K
Exempt from labor market test					Y	Y	Y		Y		Y			Y		Y					Y		Y	Y	Y
Exempt from work permit					Y				Y		Y			Y		Y				Y				Y	
Exempt or lower salary threshold						Y			Y					Y						Y					
Incentives for family reunification						Y			Y																
Exemption from immigration quotas									Y																

Source: *Attracting and retaining international students in the EU report.*

Some countries are emerging and have managed to stand out and could be considered as good practices:

- **Spain**, for example, is characterized by a proactive policy in this area. In fact, foreign graduates are:
  - exempt from labor tests,
  - exempt from work permit,
  - exempt from lower salary threshold,
  - supported for family reunification and
  - exempt from immigration quotas.
  
- In **Estonia**, a third national who has completed a PhD from any country may be granted a temporary residence permit for settling permanently in Estonia.
  
- In the **Netherlands**, there are also some interesting incentives such as the “Orientation Year” program. In this scheme, the international graduates may, for example, first return to their country of origin for a certain period and return to the Netherlands within three years to seek a job.
  
- There are also initiatives aimed at **upgrading the life of international students** in mobility within European countries. In fact, as there is no common regulation among Europe about family reunification, only 17 states have established such proactive policy. For many years, **Sweden** has allowed the families of mobile students to join them. This regulation is crucial when countries set themselves the goal of keeping graduates in the country in order to improve their workforce of highly qualified personnel.



- In view of domestic situations, initiatives to bring spouses together are not the norm and can be identified as a weak point in the migration guideline of member countries.

## V. Recommendations

The following recommendations were proposed considering the identified challenges for attraction of foreign graduates to the Russian labor market and the experience of foreign countries.

### 1. Develop a long-term economic migration policy

Successful migration policies are based on both proactive reception initiatives and the control of migration flows. It therefore goes through a whole set of instruments and tools that make it possible to meet these objectives. It presupposes the adhesion of all the actors and other stakeholders in society but also that of the populations who experience international mobility, as well as development of friendly infrastructure and opportunities for international employees.

### 2. Establishing educational programs for labor migrants and refugees

In addition to international students, there is another group which is usually overlooked – labor migrants. It would be beneficial for the economy to provide this group with more advanced skills and competencies so that they could engage in more complex occupations. In addition, such education programs can provide better adaptation for labor migrants and refugees. Such programs can be implemented mainly in the format of short-term training and include both professional disciplines and the study of the Russian language and other humanitarian courses.

In addition, while the demand for international graduates is a subject of research, educating migrants can be a very good solution for their adaptation and integration into Russian society as currently these groups are perceived as somewhat marginal and they live in rather isolated communities.

### 3. Develop a special employment program for foreign graduates on the academic labor market (universities, research centers)

The development of exchange of scientists and academics is a major opportunity in knowledge-based economies. They help to improve the stock of human capital within countries. They concern students, teaching staff as well as researchers in companies. They promote international mobility in the academic sphere and in the private sector. A special grant support program may be initiated for talented international graduate and PhD students to retain them as research fellows at Russian universities.

In addition, universities can help international students start their research career in Russian institutions by encouraging research projects, publications, teaching assistantships and other academic activities during their studies.

As for international Ph.D. students, the research shows that this group is comparatively small (only 10,000 students in 2020), and there are no university practices for engaging this group to the research community – in opposite, due to the lack of language skills, these students often remain excluded from academic and social life of the institutions (Terentev et al., 2021).

#### **4. Simplify visa regulations for international students and graduates**

Despite the simplification of the procedure for admitting foreign students to work, some legal barriers still remain and need to be overcome. The current procedure for employment can only be used by foreign students of universities with state accreditation. This puts in an unequal position the students who have chosen a university as their place of study, which has decided not to undergo the state accreditation procedure. It is necessary to extend the rule about providing only a certificate from the university and to students studying in educational institutions that have not passed state accreditation.

#### **5. Establish an RPL system for access to higher education**

Among other positive externalities, recognition of prior learning (RPL) will allow access to higher education for individuals without the academic prerequisite, and therefore motivate international potential students to come to Russia. It will also provide a rationale for shortening study time (through exemption of part of the curriculum based on the experiential learning outcomes of individuals), which is very conducive to engage in higher education. This will significantly expand the supply of labor by improving the qualifications of workers.

#### **6. Stimulating cooperation between companies and higher education institutions**

Within the professionalization policy, the intervention of private actors in higher education will be very desirable. It concerns both the intervention of professionals in courses and easier access to internships and apprenticeships for students. Also, it will require a change in the regulatory framework to attract industry representatives to teaching at universities.

In addition, this policy allows to promote the development of skills to meet the needs of companies. An increased relationship between businesses and higher education institutions would devalue the skill needs that could be met by foreign graduates. The government can encourage private companies to engage more extensively. The government and industry can jointly provide funding for talented students and then employ them. In addition, methodological and legislative support from institutions in work with international students can have a positive effect of perception of international graduates by employers.

#### **7. Promote international student networks**

The development of an alumni network is a means of promoting the attractiveness of higher education systems. It fosters the employability of graduates and offers resources that can be mobilized when they enter the labor market. It highlights individual experiences and promotes "success stories". A similar program can be implemented in the context of national programs of social lifts supportance (for example, "the Leaders of Russia", projects of "Russia is a country of opportunities", etc.)

## **8. Data collection and analytics on tracks of international graduates of Russian universities**

Surveys on the future of international students in Russia will improve the knowledge of their situation in society and in the labor market. These studies will make it possible to identify the obstacles related to staying in Russia. They would relate to their personal, family and professional situation as well as their prospects and satisfaction. In relation to the issue of competency needs, a specific analysis could be developed on the development and use of competencies.

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