

Conclusions Parallel Session 4B

1. We have agreed that no country can afford not using the skills of immigrants. This is particularly true against the backdrop of demographic challenges, facing almost all of our countries, and the growing competition for talent.
2. Further, we agreed that there is a need for targeted support, particularly regarding language and recognition of foreign qualifications. Language courses need to be adjusted to the education level of immigrants. In this regard, the growing heterogeneity, especially among the numerous refugees, represents a major challenge. However, also other groups such as family migrants deserve special attention. Generally, we need to differentiate more between migrant groups.

Above all, two things are required:

3. First of all, labour-market oriented language courses tailored to migrants' needs. We have agreed that language courses need to be better linked to the labour market.
4. Second of all, recognition of foreign qualifications in conjunction with "bridging offers" to close existing gaps. Experiences from Canada, Sweden and also Germany serve as examples in this regard.
5. A further subject we need to address is discrimination –both during the application process and with respect to education and training. Discrimination applies not only to immigrants themselves, but may also affect the native-born children of immigrants who were born and raised in our countries. With respect to this important issue, we cannot take a defensive position but should actively promote diversity in companies. We also need to make it clear that diversity is not only a gain for the economy but for society as a whole.
6. In the end, employers play the key role in labour market integration. They are the ones to hire immigrants according to their skills, which is why we need to involve employers more strongly in the future. Integration measures work best when they take place directly at the workplace. And skilled workers are most useful to a company, when they were trained by the company itself.
7. One of the key challenges is to make sure that the native population does not perceive targeted integration measures as favouring immigrants disproportionately. It is also crucial to avoid that such measures stigmatise migrants as a problematic group. In this regard, Spain provides a particularly instructive example of how to achieve a balanced discourse on migration - even in times of economic hardship.