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# Link4Skills Migrant Survey Results Overview

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<http://link4skills.eu>



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## Overview

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### **Abstract**

This report presents first descriptive insights from the Link4Skills Migrant Survey (n=2,317), which examines the drivers, experiences, and future im/mobility preferences of skilled migrants living in Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland. It addresses two broad questions: which factors shape migrants' preferences regarding staying, returning, or moving onward, and what can be learned from migrants' migration and settlement experiences to inform initiatives aimed at facilitating skilled labour migration. The findings show that skilled migrants are a heterogeneous group in terms of socio-economic background, legal status, migration history, and migration drivers, and that migration decisions are shaped not only by employment-related considerations, but also by safety and security, economic conditions, family-related factors, and broader social and cultural contexts. Satisfaction with destination countries varies across domains and migrants also report important challenges after arrival, especially language barriers, housing difficulties, employment-related obstacles, and emotional strains. At the same time, most respondents express a preference to remain in their current country of residence, either permanently or at least in the medium term, suggesting relatively strong prospects of retention. These patterns have important implications for the Link4Skills concept of Migration Skill Corridors. Rather than seeing corridors simply as channels through which skilled migrants move in response to labour demand, the findings suggest that they are broader configurations of opportunities, rights, policies, and social conditions that shape both mobility and immobility over time. By offering a first descriptive overview of the survey data, the report identifies patterns that can guide future analytical work within the Link4Skills project and beyond.

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# 1. Introduction

This report summarises key descriptive findings of the restricted-access variant of the **Link4Skills Migrant Survey** (Reinold et al., 2025). The survey was conducted as part of the Link4Skills Horizon Europe project, specifically Work Package 4 on “Migration Skill Corridors: Matching Skills at Origins and Destinations” to better understand the mobility experiences and decisions of medium and highly skilled migrants.<sup>1</sup> The survey thus brings in the views of skilled migrants (i.e., individuals with post-secondary and tertiary education) who originate from non-European countries and resided in a Link4Skills destination country – Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, or Poland – at the time of data collection, which took place between January and June 2025 in EU destinations and between May and October in Canada.<sup>2</sup> The survey was implemented using a purposive, non-probability design with indicative quotas by origin, education and sector. Results should therefore be interpreted with caution as they are not representative. We aimed at collecting responses from 500 skilled migrants in each destination country. The final sample size is 2,317 spread across the Netherlands (n=644), Poland (n=546) and Germany (n=508), with smaller numbers in Canada (n=448) and Austria (n=171). For detailed information about survey design, implementation, data management, cleaning and anonymisation, and ethical safeguards, we refer to the **Link4Skills Migrant Survey Handbook**.

## *Box 1: About Link4Skills*

Link4Skills addresses the global challenge of skill shortages and mismatches through innovative, sustainable solutions that foster fair skill utilization and exchange across continents. Focusing on migration between seven origin countries (i.e., Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Ukraine) and five destination countries (i.e., Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland), and three sectors (i.e., healthcare, construction and STEM), the project seeks to bridge the gap between skill supply and demand by facilitating re/up-skilling, promoting automation, and encouraging migration as policy options. A key component of the Link4Skills project is the development of the AI Assisted Link4Skills Navigator, a knowledge-based expert system supporting decision-making processes for fair skill flows across countries, for example within talent partnerships.

The survey was designed with the following **main research questions** in mind: 1) Which factors influence migrants’ im/mobility preferences? 1) What can we learn from migrants’ experiences during the migration process and living in the destination country to inform different initiatives (e.g., state, policies, private sector initiatives, etc.) aimed at facilitating skilled labour migration? We use the term im/mobility preferences here to acknowledge that both staying in the destination country and leaving - to return to the

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<sup>1</sup> Medium-skilled migrants are defined as those having post-secondary, non-tertiary education, and highly-skilled migrants are defined as individuals with tertiary education.

<sup>2</sup> These time differences emerged as a result of separate ethics procedures for European countries and Canada. This research has been reviewed and approved by the DPAS Research Ethics Review Committee of Erasmus University Rotterdam (approval numbers: ETH2324- 0932 and ETH2425-0467) and the Research Ethics Board of Toronto Metropolitan University (approval number REB 2025- 044).

origin country or move to another country - are equally worth studying (Carling & Schewel, 2018).

Analysing im/mobility preferences and related prospects (Carling, 2019) has advantages over examining actual migration behaviour. To better understand how to increase the retention of skilled migrants, we need to find out, which factors influence migrants' perceptions that staying is preferable and feasible. Actual mobility reflects not only underlying drivers but also intervening constraints and opportunities, such as legal status, labour market conditions, and migrants' agency. In addition, onward migration does not always align with migrants' real preference (Hooijen et al., 2020). Studying im/mobility preference and perceived feasibility among migrants in destination countries thus avoids conflating desires with abilities and provides early insights into emerging retention challenges.

To be able to answer our main research questions and related puzzles, the survey consisted of five blocks, covering questions about 1) migrants' education and work; 2) their move to the destination country; 3) their experiences in the destination country; 4) their im/mobility preferences and related concepts; and 5) socio-demographic characteristics. The complete questionnaire is attached to the Link4Skills Migrant Survey Handbook (Reinold & Engbersen, 2025). The survey was designed based on an in-depth literature review on the drivers of migration in general (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022; Aslany et al., 2021; Carling et al., 2023; Snel et al., 2024) and highly skilled migration specifically (Reinold & Czaika, <sup>3</sup>2026; Reinold & Siegel, 2025). Although the literature review on drivers of medium-skilled migration is still in its infancy, except for nurse migration, we included insights from this emerging body of work as much as possible (Toyin-Thimas et al., 2023). Furthermore, the survey followed the design of previous surveys on the drivers of migration (e.g., MIGNEX, EUMAGINE, THEMIS, and surveys underlying Reinold's (2023) doctoral dissertation). For ethical reasons, we allowed respondents to skip questions, except for questions related to inclusion criteria and main dependent variables (i.e., im/mobility prospects and migration drivers). This results in missing observations for many of the variables in the dataset and explains the varying sample size of the findings presented in this report.

The aim of this report is not to answer the research questions in depth, but to provide a general overview of descriptive statistics of the main survey elements. It is a first step in uncovering interesting patterns within the data that are worth further exploration and more analytical endeavours. In doing so, we hope that it can inspire future analyses within the Link4Skills project and beyond. By giving a glimpse of the data and what could be possible with it, this report, together with the Link4Skills Survey Handbook, thus forms the perfect resource for guiding all researchers wishing to work with the open-access variant of the Link4Skills Migrant Survey (to be published in January 2027) in the future.

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<sup>3</sup> In some cases, missing values are furthermore the result of the survey logic: depending on how respondents answered certain questions, they were sometimes (not) shown a following question. For example, only respondents who indicated that they were working were asked questions about contract types.

This report is structured as follows: First, it briefly summarises socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Subsequently, it describes key information about their move to the current destination countries, focusing especially on the drivers of leaving the origin and moving to the respective destination. After that it presents detailed satisfaction scores related to different aspects of life in the destination country. It then focuses on respondent’s im/mobility prospects and related drivers. Finally, it concludes and formulates key takeaways for future analyses and the Link4Skills project overall.

*Box 2: Migration Skill Corridors*

**Migration Skill Corridors (MSCs)** are a central concept in the Link4Skills project. MSCs are defined as more or less institutionalised pathways for skilled migration and knowledge exchange between origin and destination countries (Engbersen & Reinold, forthcoming). Link4Skills zooms in on fourteen selected MSCs between seven origin countries (i.e., Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Ukraine) and five destination countries (i.e., Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland) (see below):

	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Poland</b>
<b>India</b>	X	X	X	X	
<b>Morocco</b>			X	X	
<b>Philippines</b>			X		X
<b>Indonesia</b>	X		X		
<b>Ghana</b>		X			
<b>Nigeria</b>		X			
<b>Ukraine</b>				X	X

## 2. Socio-demographic characteristics

This section briefly presents key socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents by destination country (**Table 1**). More detailed distributions can be found in the Link4Skills Migrant Survey Handbook (Reinold & Engbersen, 2025).

*Table 1: Key sample characteristics by destination country*

	<b>AT</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>All</b>
Mean age (in years)	36.9	35.6	32.6	37.8	35.4	35.6
Gender: female (%)	50.3	56.0	56.7	50.0	44.9	51.7
Number of origin countries	43	77	62	70	41	117
Skill levels: highly skilled (%)	91.8	82.6	80.3	92.6	56.2	79.3
N	171	448	508	546	644	2,317

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

### Age

Respondents are on average 35.6 years old, with similar profiles across destination countries. Respondents are the youngest in Germany (mean age 32.6 years) and the oldest in the Netherlands (mean age 37.8 years). Respondents in Poland, Canada, and Austria fall in between with a mean age of 35.4, 35.6 and 36.9 years respectively.

## Gender

Women make up a slight majority of the overall sample (51.7%, n=1,192). The gender composition differs somewhat across destination countries. In Canada and Germany, women are relatively more represented among respondents (CA: 56.0%; n=251; DE: 56.7%; n=288), while men are slightly overrepresented in Poland (54.2%; n=296). In all countries, only a very small proportion of respondents identified as “other/unknown” (1.43%; n=33).

## Skill levels

While the survey targeted medium- and highly skilled migrants, the latter dominate the sample in all countries except Poland, which has a more mixed skill profile. Around 42 per cent were educated in STEM, 11 per cent in health and 6 per cent in construction; about half of workers are employed in other sectors. Respondents come from 117 origin countries, with focus corridors such as Ukraine–Poland and India–Netherlands well represented, though some targets (e.g. India–Austria, Ghana–Canada) were not fully met. Overall, 52 per cent of respondents are women, with an average age of 35.6 years. Migrants are relatively recent arrivals: average length of stay is 6.8 years, ranging from about 4 years in Germany to over 12 years in Canada.

## Origin

Overall, respondents from 117 different countries of origin participated in the survey, ranging from 41 in Poland, over 43 in Austria, 62 in Germany, and 70 in the Netherlands to 77 in Canada. **Table 2** presents the ten most common origins by destination. Several of the largest origin groups come from the Link4Skills focus MSCs, such as Ukraine–Netherlands, Ukraine–Poland, and Nigeria–Canada. At the same time, other corridors featured prominently in the sample, especially Ukraine–Germany, United States–Netherlands, Belarus–Poland, and China/Hong Kong–Canada.

*Table 2: Top ten countries of origin by destination country and full sample (n=2,317)*

	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>1</b>	Ukraine (n=15)	Nigeria (n=49)	Ukraine (n=114)	US (n=103)	Ukraine (n=164)	Ukraine (n=373)
<b>2</b>	US (n=12)	India (n=48)	Turkey (n=71)	Ukraine (n=69)	Belarus (n=126)	India (n=180)
<b>3</b>	India (n=11)	China (n=42)	India (n=31)	India (n=57)	Philippines (n=46)	Turkey (n=157)
<b>4</b>	Serbia (n=11)	Philippines (n=31)	China (n=28)	UK (n=51)	India (n=33)	US (n=151)
<b>5</b>	Turkey (n=11)	Hong Kong SAR (n=19)	Syria (n=19)	Turkey (n=50)	Ghana (n=28)	Belarus (n=131)
<b>6</b>	Russia (n=9)	Pakistan (n=16)	Iran (n=17)	Russia (n=32)	Azerbaijan (n=27)	Philippines (n=109)
<b>7</b>	Philippines (n=8)	UK (n=16)	Russia (n=16)	Brazil (n=29)	Turkey (n=19)	China (n=91)
<b>8</b>	Mexico (n=7)	US (n=16)	Philippines (n=15)	Canada (n=25)	Kazakhstan (n=12)	UK (n=83)
<b>9</b>	Nigeria (n=7)	Kenya (n=12)	US (n=14)	South Africa (n=23)	Vietnam (n=11)	Nigeria (n=74)
<b>10</b>	BiH (n=6)	Ukraine (n=11)	Brazil (n=11)	Mexico (n=18)	Georgia (n=5)	Russia (n=68)

Source: *Link4Skills Migrant Survey Handbook*, p.35. Focus corridors are highlighted, based on Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

### 3. Move to the current country of residence

This section summarises key information about respondents' move to the destination country.

#### Stay in destination

Our sample consists of relatively recent arrivals overall, with an average duration of stay of 6.8 years (median 4 years). Mean length of stay differs by destination country, ranging from 4.1 years in Germany (median 3 years) to 12.5 years in Canada (median 9 years), with Austria at 5.6 (median 3), Poland at 5.2 (median 4) and the Netherlands at 6.7 (median 5). Approximately half of all respondents (interquartile range) have been living in the respective destination country between 3 and 8 years, with variations across destination countries (AT: 2–7 years, CA: 4–17, DE: 2–5, PL: 3–7, NL: 3–8). Most respondents (90.6%) have not lived in the destination country before their current stay (Reinold & Engbersen, 2025).

#### Pre-migration networks

Before migrating to the country of destination, more than two thirds of all respondents had communicated with people already living there.

*Table 3: Pre-arrival communication by country of destination*

Pre-arrival communication	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Never	42.69	31.03	30.07	41.99	12.11	30.27
Less often	29.24	29.02	31.85	23.48	20.00	25.84
Every month	5.26	14.06	9.80	8.55	27.71	14.27
Every week	9.36	14.96	10.69	10.11	30.28	16.00
Almost every day	13.45	10.94	17.59	15.86	9.91	13.61
N	171	448	449	643	545	2,256

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

*Table 4: Pre-arrival communication by focus countries of origin*

Pre-arrival communication	GH	IN	ID	MA	NG	PE	UA
Never	16.67	29.61	42.86	50.00	22.22	20.56	31.66
Less often	28.57	32.40	28.57	25.00	31.94	28.04	23.96
Every month	9.52	7.26	4.76	12.50	25.00	7.48	16.86
Every week	40.48	17.88	9.52	0	15.28	16.82	18.05
Almost every day	4.76	12.85	14.29	12.50	5.56	27.10	9.47
N	42	179	21	16	72	107	338

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Overall, communication with pre-arrival networks made respondents more interested in moving to the destination country (63.03 %, n=987). For around one third of respondents, it did not make a difference (33.78%, n=529), and for very few it made them less interested in moving there (3.19%, n=50). The low number of respondents with negative feedback is not surprising because we can assume that individuals whose communication with pre-arrival networks made them less interested in moving to a

certain destination chose ultimately decided against migrating there. To test this, we would need a counterfactual, which unfortunately we do not have (Bakewell et al., 2016).

### Pre-migration training

Following trainings in the origin country to prepare for living or working in the respective destination country is not very common, except for language training, which around one third of respondents (34.28%, n=787) engaged in.<sup>4</sup> In particular, migrants in Germany took language preparations before moving (48.49%, n=241). Also, people trained in healthcare or construction followed language training more frequently (45.88%, n=117 for health, and 41.09%, n=53 for construction).

### Current legal status

Legal status varies significantly across destination countries. Overall, work permits are the most common status among respondents (33.75%; n=777), followed by other permits (31.54%; n=726). Other permits include, for example, permanent residence, destination or other EU citizenship, aupair and working holiday, and orientation year visa. Family permits account for 11.03% (n=254) of respondents, study or training permits for 12.21% (n=281), and asylum or temporary protection statuses for 11.47% (n=264).

Table 5: Respondents' legal status

	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Permit***</b>						
Family	16.96	2.23	9.09	16.02	12.29	11.03
Work	53.22	12.95	18.38	39.81	51.56	33.75
Study/ training	11.11	6.70	32.73	3.27	8.99	12.21
Asylum/ temporary protection	2.34	2.23	24.65	6.69	15.60	11.47
Other	16.37	75.89	21.41	34.21	17.98	31.54
<b>Permanent***</b>	21.47	26.12	12.99	27.22	13.36	20.23
<b>Naturalised***</b>	7.6	48.44	14.37	20.19	10.44	21.15
<b>N</b>	171	448	495	643	545	2,302

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: Pearson chi-square tests were conducted to establish whether legal status differs significantly across destination countries. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

There are marked differences between countries. Work permits are especially common in Austria (53.22%; n=91) and Poland (51.56%; n=281), and also relatively frequent in the Netherlands (39.81%; n=256), but much less so in Canada (12.95%; n=58) and Germany (18.38%; n=91). Study or training permits are particularly prevalent in Germany (32.73%; n=162), while they are rare in the Netherlands (3.27%; n=21). Germany also stands out for its comparatively high share of respondents with asylum or temporary protection status (24.65%; n=122), followed by Poland (15.60%; n=85), whereas this category is very small in Austria (2.34%; n=4) and Canada (2.23%; n=10). Family permits are most common in Austria (16.96%; n=29) and the Netherlands (16.02%; n=1-3), and least common in Canada (2.23%; n=10). Canada is distinct in the majority of respondents fall

<sup>4</sup> We do not know what this training looked like. It's possible that respondents worked with language learning apps for which the threshold is relatively low, compared to following in-person lessons at a language school.

into the “other” permit category (75.89%; n=340), far higher than in any other country, which is largely attributed to the high share of naturalised individuals and permanent residents. Around one fifth of the sample has required citizenship of the destination country, ranging from 7.6 per cent (n=13) to 48.44 per cent (n=217) in Canada. Another fifth of all respondents has permanent residency, the share is the largest in the Netherlands (27.22%, n=147) and Canada (26.12%; n=117), and the smallest in Germany (12.99%, n=60).

## Drivers of migration to the current destination

Drivers of migration are the factors that motivate migration decisions, defined as the “forces leading to the inception of migration and the perpetuation of movement” (Van Hear et al., 2018, p.927). In this sense, migration drivers are different from more general determinants of migration, which are the factors predicting migration outcomes, but do not directly motivate migration as such. For example, although migration patterns vary by gender or age, individuals rarely cite being a woman or belonging to a certain age category, as a direct reason for migration (e.g., migration varies by gender or age) (Carling et al., 2023). Drivers thus affect different migrant groups differently based on personal characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds (Reinold & Czaika, 2026). Individual drivers can be analytically classified into separate groups, referred to as ‘driver dimensions’ (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022; Reinold & Czaika, 2026).

In the survey, we asked about how important twelve driver dimensions were in motivating respondents’ reason to leave the origin country (i.e., push factors), and move to the destination country (i.e., pull factors) (see Table 6-8). In the question about the pull factors, we distinguished an additional category, namely migration policy. In theory, the dimensions could be combined even more, for example, public policy and migration policy, and labour market conditions and professional development opportunities could be grouped together. We decided, however, to keep more nuance in order to guarantee alignment with the Link4Skills objectives and to reflect migrants’ experiences rather than abstract driver dimensions. To ensure that respondents had the same understanding of the individual dimensions, a mouseover provided definitions of each dimensions, including examples of individual driving factors falling within each dimension (see Appendix 1 and 2).

**Table 6** presents how important, on average, respondents rated the individual driver dimensions in their decision to leave the country of origin, stratified by destination country. The importance of driver dimensions was measured on a scale from 0 to 100 using slider questions. Respondents could also indicate that a driver was “not applicable”, which was coded as 0 importance, because we can assume that it was not relevant in the respondent’s decision-making process. The dimensions were framed as push factors, i.e., as unfavourable conditions or lack of opportunities in the origin country itself, ultimately deterring migrants from there. On average, the full sample ranked (lack of) professional development opportunities as most important (mean 60.20), closely followed by safety and security concerns (mean 59.45), as well as (unfavourable) economic conditions (mean 59.24).

The next most important driver dimension is (lack of) education and training opportunities (mean 56.27). This is followed by (unfavourable) political conditions (mean 53.66) and (unfavourable) labour market conditions (mean 53.12). The next batch of driver dimensions includes public policy and institutions (mean 49.51), closely followed by social and cultural conditions (mean 47.48), environmental conditions (mean 44.24), and family reasons (mean 41.13). AI-related drivers are, on average, the least important in our sample's decisions to leave the origin country.

Overall, unfavourable perceptions of “hard” locational factors such as education, employment, career and the economic situation seem to be most influential across countries, while “softer” factors like socio-cultural conditions and the environment come second. AI- and automation-related factors are currently rather unimportant, but do play a role for some, especially in the case of migrants in Poland. Average ratings are higher among respondents in Poland across the board, which suggests a distinct response style rather than being motivated by different drivers. Accordingly, AI differences cannot be interpreted as Poland-specific AI effects without adjusting for response style and sample composition. At the same time, there are destination-specific differences in the reported reasons for leaving the origin: respondents who moved to Canada place education and training at the very top, those who moved to Germany and Austria give especially high priority to safety/security (together with career-related considerations), while those who moved to the Netherlands show comparatively lower ratings for education/training relative to other destination groups.

*Table 6: Mean importance of different reasons for leaving the origin country, by destination country (scale 0-100)*

<b>Driver</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Labour market &amp; employment conditions ***</b>	50.42	50.96	51.67	49.04	61.91	53.12
<b>AI-integration into workplace ***</b>	6.91	10.69	12.28	4.65	38.75	15.69
<b>Economic conditions ***</b>	57.54	61.24	56.93	52.34	68.42	59.24
<b>Education and training opportunities ***</b>	54.27	62.14	60.18	44.32	62.54	56.27
<b>Professional development opportunities ***</b>	61.53	60.75	59.87	54.63	66.22	60.20
<b>Access to AI-related training &amp; development ***</b>	9.77	12.44	13.57	5.35	38.53	16.67
<b>Environmental conditions ***</b>	44.24	48.95	40.17	37.93	51.61	44.24
<b>Political conditions ***</b>	56.85	51.20	53.34	52.93	56.58	53.66
<b>Public policy and institutions ***</b>	50.95	47.54	45.35	47.92	56.45	49.51
<b>Safety and security ***</b>	60.71	59.22	61.60	55.49	61.90	59.45
<b>Social and cultural conditions ***</b>	45.86	47.46	43.12	47.63	51.89	47.48
<b>Family reasons/ partner ***</b>	35.54	50.54	29.33	35.86	53.61	41.13
<b>N</b>	171	448	508	644	546	2,317

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: People move for many different reasons. Thinking about your situation before you moved, please rate how important each of the following reasons was in deciding to leave your country of origin on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more important the reason was, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less important the reason was. Please note that you are making these ratings

separately for each reason, meaning that all could be rated high or low, or any combination that best reflects your experience; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

The descriptive analysis suggests that the importance of driver dimensions significantly vary by destination country, although it is important to underline that this significance can be driven by one country alone. For example, migrants in Poland on average attached a higher importance to labour market conditions (mean 61.91), while the importance was rated as similarly important among respondents in the other destinations (mean AT: 50.42; CA: 50.96; DE: 51.67; NL: 49.04). It is also striking that across all driver dimensions, mean importance scores are the highest among respondents in Poland and the lowest in the Netherlands, which could be attributed to response-style (e.g., more acquiescent or extreme reporting). Finding out why these differences persist would require further assessments, which are beyond the scope of this descriptive report. This pattern is important to keep in mind when conducting more elaborate statistical analyses in the future. Across all destination countries, rankings of driver dimensions are very similar, although slight differences exist.

*Table 7: Mean importance of different reasons for leaving the origin country, by focus origin countries (scale 0-100)*

<b>Driver</b>	<b>GH</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>NG</b>	<b>PE</b>	<b>UA</b>
<b>Labour market &amp; employment conditions ***</b>	60.64	57.14	65.38	68.18	66.50	63.74	41.64
<b>AI-integration into workplace ***</b>	6.07	15.48	6.14	5.76	18.47	26.23	21.57
<b>Economic conditions ***</b>	81.91	56.94	69.43	72.88	81.30	70.00	51.27
<b>Education and training opportunities ***</b>	85.09	59.71	75.00	76.94	73.53	66.48	44.22
<b>Professional development opportunities ***</b>	85.82	66.36	36.71	77.65	76.77	65.76	48.73
<b>Access to AI-related training &amp; development ***</b>	13.82	16.31	5.14	5.71	22.50	24.94	21.64
<b>Environmental conditions ***</b>	43.48	53.88	66.57	29.88	59.61	55.18	36.14
<b>Political conditions ***</b>	34.41	41.12	40.48	30.71	62.78	48.87	55.43
<b>Public policy and institutions ***</b>	54.39	47.48	54.95	33.88	66.07	57.39	43.39
<b>Safety and security ***</b>	27.25	55.51	51.71	30.41	81.35	71.17	68.63
<b>Social and cultural conditions ***</b>	27.84	45.44	46.38	30.29	42.35	54.17	41.85
<b>Family reasons/ partner ***</b>	45.59	33.13	52.10	20.29	37.89	67.61	39.99
<b>N</b>	44	180	21	17	74	109	373

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: People move for many different reasons. Thinking about your situation before you moved, please rate how important each of the following reasons was in deciding to leave your country of origin on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more important the reason was, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less important the reason was. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each reason, meaning that all could be rated high or low, or any combination that best reflects your experience; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

We next examine into why respondents left the seven Link4Skills origin countries (**Table 7**). Important statistically significant differences emerge depending on the origin countries. Unfortunately, corridor specific analyses are not possible because of the limited sample size for most corridors (see Link4Skills Migrant Survey Handbook). Across the seven origin countries, the rankings are broadly consistent in that “harder” driver dimensions dominate: economic conditions and (lack) of education and training opportunities, often alongside professional development, tend to occupy the top tier, while the two AI-related drivers are consistently ranked at the bottom across all origins. At the same time, there are clear origin-specific departures from this general pattern, most notably for Ukraine, where safety/security and political conditions rank highest. This is not surprising, given that many Ukrainians migrated following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. A similar pattern is observed for Nigeria, where safety/security and economic conditions jointly top the hierarchy. Other differences are more moderate and largely concern the mid-ranked “soft” driver dimensions (e.g., environmental or family-related drivers), which should be interpreted cautiously for origins with smaller sample sizes.

**Table 8** summarises the average importance of pull factors, that is driver dimensions that attracted respondents to the destination country. In contrast to the push factors, these were framed as positive, for example in terms of favourable conditions and available opportunities. We see statistically significant differences depending on respondents’ destination countries. A similar picture emerges as in the case of the examined push factors with the “harder” driver dimensions dominating. On average, safety and security are ranked as most important (mean 60.69), closely followed by economic conditions (mean 58.83), professional development opportunities (mean 59.81), education and training opportunities (59.58), and labour market and employment conditions (mean 56.36).

The second group of driver dimensions which was ranked as similarly important in motivating migration to the destination includes socio-cultural conditions (mean 50.42), public policy and institutions (mean 48.53), migration policy (mean 47.32), environmental and political conditions (mean 46.03 and 44.94, respectively), as well as family reasons (mean 42.59). As with the push factors, AI- and automation related factors played a limited role in decisions to move to the destination country. Overall, the hierarchy of pull-factors is largely consistent across destination countries, although some differences exist. Poland again appears distinctive, with consistently higher mean importance scores across virtually all pull dimensions, including markedly higher AI-related items and relatively strong migration-policy and family-related pulls, suggesting either a different destination-choice context and/or systematically different scale use among respondents selecting Poland.

Disaggregating the push–pull hierarchies by respondents’ field of education and sector of employment reveals largely consistent patterns. Respondents in construction place the greatest emphasis on labour market conditions (with safety/security close behind), respondents in healthcare prioritise safety/security and education/training, whereas respondents in STEM are most strongly oriented toward professional development and economic conditions (with family/partner comparatively less salient). These differences

underscore the heterogeneity of skilled migrants and related drivers of migration, which implies future analyses should not only control for country, but also for sector differences, among other factors.

*Table 8: Mean importance of different reasons for choosing the destination country (scale 0-100)*

<b>Driver</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Labour market and employment conditions***</b>	54.91	53.88	55.43	52.69	64.03	56.36
<b>Integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the workplace***</b>	8.61	12.65	12.23	4.52	40.05	16.45
<b>Economic conditions***</b>	57.43	59.65	57.63	53.94	65.74	58.83
<b>Education and training opportunities***</b>	55.87	60.75	58.09	55.11	65.97	59.58
<b>Professional development opportunities***</b>	59.67	60.29	61.19	54.28	64.70	59.81
<b>Access to AI-related training and development***</b>	9.63	14.58	15.23	5.34	39.73	17.71
<b>Environmental conditions***</b>	49.30	51.13	41.38	39.92	52.37	46.03
<b>Political conditions***</b>	41.77	47.56	41.56	40.49	52.18	44.94
<b>Public policy and institutions***</b>	50.07	49.76	43.58	45.94	54.70	48.53
<b>Migration Policy***</b>	30.01	56.17	42.45	43.19	54.89	47.32
<b>Safety and security***</b>	62.22	63.79	60.43	54.98	64.63	60.69
<b>Social and cultural conditions***</b>	47.27	51.67	45.45	50.85	54.50	50.42
<b>Reasons related to family/partner***</b>	41.25	50.68	31.06	37.86	52.68	42.59
<b>N</b>	171	448	508	644	546	2,317

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: In addition to the reasons that made you leave your country of origin, there may have been reasons related to your current country of residence that influenced your decision to move there. Please rate how important each of the following reasons was in choosing your current country of residency as your destination on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more important the reason was, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less important the reason was. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each reason, meaning that all could be rated high or low, or any combination that best reflects your experience; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

## 4. Experiences and satisfaction living and working in the destination country

In this section, we zoom into migrants' experiences and satisfaction living and working in the destination country. The factors examined here can be linked to the driver dimension (i.e., groups of push-and pull factors) described earlier. It is important to consider migrants' satisfaction with these factors in the destination country, as these “do not only motivate migrants in selecting a specific destination but also play a pivotal role in their ongoing motivation to remain living and working in that destination country” (Reinold & Czaika, 2025, p.127). Satisfaction could thus retain migrants in destination countries, while dissatisfaction could deter them. At the same time, one has to be aware, that satisfaction scores can be subject to different biases such as response style, or timing (e.g., whether respondents had a good or bad day when taking the survey). While divided into broader driver dimensions, the factors covered here go into more detail in line with the many driving factors within each dimension that have been identified by the migration literature.

### *Satisfaction with labour market and employment conditions*

First, we look at labour market and employment related conditions in the destination country. Specifically, we asked respondents about their satisfaction with 14 different factors (see **Table 9**). Labour market conditions were explicitly separated from other economic and financial factors (see **Table 10**).

Looking at the total sample, respondents are most satisfied with the working environment and workplace relationships in destinations, especially relationships with international colleagues (mean 69.80), work–life balance (mean 65.46) and working environment (mean 64.42). Relationships with international colleagues is the factor that respondents in every destination country are most satisfied with, although in Canada respondents are almost as satisfied with their relationships with Canadian colleagues. Satisfaction is lowest for entrepreneurship conditions (starting business mean 46.82; running business mean 45.69), while job opportunities (mean 52.48) and career prospects (mean 55.21) sit in the lower middle of the distribution. Again, there are statistically significant differences across countries. The Netherlands stand out on satisfaction with work-life balance (mean 73.27) and working environment (mean 68.14). While Poland consistently records the highest satisfaction across items, respondents in Canada tend to report the lowest satisfaction on several core labour-market dimensions, including job opportunities (mean 42.58), career prospects (mean 48.11), job security (mean 49.70), and recognition of qualifications (mean 49.14).

Overall, the results suggests that while workplace climate is evaluated positively across contexts, perceived opportunities and especially conditions for entrepreneurship vary substantially by destination. It will therefore be important to disentangle whether this is actually the result of different satisfactions with labour market factors or the result of different response styles. Satisfaction is also likely shaped by previous labour market experiences in the origin or other countries, as existing research shows that perceptions of the destination often depend on how it compares to previous situations (Reinold &

Siegel, 2025), which can be linked to the concept of ‘perceived geographical opportunity structures’ (De Haas, 2014).

Table 9: Satisfaction with labour market and employment conditions in the destination country (scale 0-100)

Satisfaction	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Job opportunities (e.g., in your field, jobs matching your qualifications)***</b>	47.73	42.58	50.20	51.50	64.69	52.48
<b>Professional development opportunities ***</b>	50.91	51.72	56.87	54.83	65.08	56.89
<b>Training opportunities (e.g., vocational, academic, further training) ***</b>	55.59	54.75	60.96	53.41	65.40	58.43
<b>Employment conditions ***</b>	65.68	52.20	60.04	67.71	63.96	62.01
<b>Job Security ***</b>	57.2	49.70	58.59	60.12	64.02	58.42
<b>Career Prospects ***</b>	50.09	48.11	55.07	53.46	64.59	55.21
<b>Working environment ***</b>	67.11	61.34	61.11	68.14	64.23	64.42
<b>Relationship with colleagues from the country of residence ***</b>	64.79	64.38	55.03	59.72	63.10	61.14
<b>Relationship with international colleagues ***</b>	77.12	64.98	66.28	76.10	66.75	69.80
<b>Work-life balance ***</b>	70.31	58.25	63.58	73.27	62.35	65.46
<b>Skill utilization ***</b>	64.61	51.92	55.55	62.36	61.91	59.06
<b>Recognition of diplomas/ qualifications/ skills ***</b>	62.58	49.14	54.33	61.79	64.51	58.59
<b>Conditions for starting own business***</b>	31.96	43.73	34.09	49.14	56.71	46.82
<b>Conditions for running own business ***</b>	29.47	43.96	33.45	46.13	55.51	45.69

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: Please indicate how satisfied you are with these labour market and employment conditions in your current country of residence on a scale from 0 to 100. Please note that these aspects are not about financial aspects. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any combination that best reflects your experience; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

### *Satisfaction with economic conditions in destination countries*

**Table 10** presents satisfaction scores related to seven aspects of economic conditions in destination countries. Overall, respondents are most satisfied with the standard of living (mean 65.28), followed by economic stability and prospects (mean 57.99), returns to education (mean 56.36), income levels/wages (mean 54.85), income equality (mean 54.43), and opportunities for economic advancement (mean 53.82). Living costs received the lowest satisfaction rating across the full sample (mean 44.83). Scores differ significantly across destination countries for all seven dimensions, although these may again be attributed to different response styles of respondents depending on the destination rather than actual country differences. The hierarchy of satisfaction scores is consistent across destinations.

*Table 10: Satisfaction with economic conditions in the destination country (scale 0-100)*

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Standard of living ***</b>	75.35	52.18	64.92	71.86	65.45	65.28
<b>Economic stability and prospects ***</b>	60.62	45.50	59.26	60.44	63.69	57.99
<b>Income levels/ wages ***</b>	58.85	42.66	56.05	56.32	61.16	54.85
<b>Returns to education ***</b>	58.57	48.68	59.23	53.61	62.48	56.36
<b>Opportunities for economic advancement ***</b>	49.42	45.94	54.88	51.34	63.58	53.82
<b>Living costs ***</b>	48.42	27.22	50.02	38.43	61.75	44.83
<b>Income equality***</b>	56.85	43.27	54.01	57.14	60.21	54.43

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows Please indicate how satisfied you are with these economic conditions in your current country of residence on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any combination that best reflects your experiences; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

### *Satisfaction with AI-related factors in destination countries*

**Table 11** presents satisfaction scores related to six AI-related factors in destination countries. The inclusion of these factors is an innovation of the Link4Skills Migrant Survey and was deemed important given the project’s focus on AI and automation. Respondents are most satisfied with the integration of AI into the workplace (mean 48.06), followed by the availability of AI/automation training programmes and development (mean 47.08), recognition of AI skills from the country of origin (mean 43.82), and competition with local workers for AI-related positions (mean 43.59). Satisfaction is somewhat lower for wage differences between AI-enhanced and traditional jobs (mean 42.59), while job security in AI-transformed sectors received the lowest rating across the full sample (mean 42.25). There are statistically significant differences across destination countries, which may again reflect variation in respondents’ response styles. Rankings are similar across destinations.

Table 11: Satisfaction with AI-related factors in the destination country (scale 0-100)

Satisfaction	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Integration of AI into the workplace ***</b>	44.77	43.25	43.96	45.43	56.45	48.06
<b>Availability of AI/ automation training programmes and development ***</b>	40.44	43.44	43.45	42.48	56.10	47.08
<b>Wage differences between AI-enhanced and traditional jobs ***</b>	36.34	37.11	38.41	31.98	53.01	42.59
<b>Job security in AI-transformed sectors ***</b>	38.41	33.59	39.22	35.92	52.89	42.25
<b>Recognition of AI skills from your country of origin ***</b>	39.20	34.84	43.24	35.88	52.00	43.82
<b>Competition with local workers for AI-related positions ***</b>	37.44	37.17	40.47	35.75	52.35	43.59

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: Please indicate how satisfied you are with these AI-related factors in your current country of residence on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any combination that best reflects your experiences; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

#### Satisfaction with education and training opportunities in destinations

**Table 12** summarises respondents' satisfaction with five factors related to education and training opportunities in destination countries. Looking at the full sample, respondents are most satisfied with access to education and training (mean 66.32), followed very closely by the quality of education and training (mean 66.05). Satisfaction is somewhat lower for the availability of language training (mean 61.14) and diversity and inclusion in educational institutions (mean 61.10). The cost of education and training received the lowest satisfaction rating across the full sample (mean 52.48). Respondents in Canada and the Netherlands are especially dissatisfied with the costs (mean 38.25 and 43.07 respectively), but more satisfied with diversity compared to the other destinations.

Table 12: Satisfaction with education and training opportunities in the destination country (scale 0-100)

Satisfaction	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Access to education and training ***</b>	68.59	65.09	71.19	61.91	67.27	66.32
<b>Quality of education and training **</b>	68.48	63.91	68.93	64.47	66.37	66.05
<b>Cost of education and training ***</b>	62.89	38.25	64.82	43.07	61.02	52.48
<b>Availability of language training ***</b>	56.56	61.34	67.24	56.60	62.59	61.14
<b>Diversity and inclusion in educational institutions ***</b>	56.97	66.62	64.02	58.00	57.58	61.10

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: Please indicate how satisfied you are with these education and training opportunities in your current country of residence on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any

combination that best reflects your experiences; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

Scores differ significantly across destination countries for all five dimensions, although these differences may again reflect variation in response styles across destination groups rather than actual country differences. The hierarchy of satisfaction scores is relatively consistent across destinations.

#### *Satisfaction with public policies and institutions in destinations*

**Table 13** provides an overview of respondents' satisfaction with public policies and institutions in destination countries. Here the rankings are less consistent across countries than in the previous tables. In Austria, Germany and Poland, public transport received the highest scores (mean 87.89; 66.54 and 70.58 respectively). In Canada and the Netherlands, respondents are most satisfied with infrastructure and services (mean 58.41 and 74.43 respectively). In all countries, the healthcare system receives the lowest score, which is also reflected in the mean of the full sample (55.47).

*Table 13: Satisfaction with public policies and institutions in the destination country (scale 0-100)*

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Social security/ welfare system ***</b>	70.38	58.02	64.46	64.53	60.98	62.76
<b>Healthcare system ***</b>	68.28	51.10	56.23	49.79	61.18	55.47
<b>Infrastructure and services***</b>	81.02	58.41	61.32	74.43	67.23	67.50
<b>Public transport ***</b>	87.89	53.24	66.54	71.32	70.58	67.92

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: please indicate how satisfied you are with public policies and institutions in your current country of residence, on a scale from 0 to 100. The number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any combination that best reflects your experiences; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

#### *Satisfaction with destination countries' migration policies*

**Table 14** turns to respondents' satisfaction with migration policies in destination countries. In the full sample, post-entry rights received the highest rating (mean 60.16), followed by opportunities for family reunification (mean 56.29) and pathways to citizenship (mean 56.32). Satisfaction was somewhat lower for immigration procedures (mean 54.45), while integration policy received the lowest overall rating (mean 51.75). The ranking, however, is not fully uniform across destination countries. In Austria, respondents were most satisfied with opportunities for family reunification (mean 62.64), whereas in Canada the highest score was recorded for pathways to citizenship (mean 62.82). In Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland, respondents are most satisfied with post-entry rights (mean 58.05, 64.62, and 60.32, respectively). Satisfaction scores differ significantly across destinations.

Table 14: Satisfaction with migration policies in the destination country (scale 0-100)

Satisfaction	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Immigration procedures ***	46.43	49.14	51.58	61.72	55.29	54.45
Post-entry rights ***	54.61	58.10	58.05	64.62	60.32	60.16
Opportunities for family reunification *	62.64	53.30	56.73	55.00	57.82	56.29
Integration policy ***	44.11	52.11	54.39	48.95	54.54	51.75
Pathways to citizenship ***	38.34	62.82	53.76	59.82	54.46	56.32

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: Please indicate how satisfied you are with migration policies in your current country of residence, on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any combination that best reflects your experiences; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others.

Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

### Satisfaction with destination countries' migration policies

Table 15 provides an overview of respondents' satisfaction with social and cultural conditions in destination countries. In the full sample, freedom to practice religion and culture received the highest rating (mean 71.52), followed by gender and social norms (mean 67.60), availability of amenities (mean 65.82), and cultural offers and leisure (mean 62.97). Cultural and ethnic diversity (mean 61.32) and tolerance of locals (mean 60.51) were also rated relatively positively. By contrast, respondents were clearly less satisfied with dimensions related to social incorporation, especially integration into local society and community (mean 49.97) and ease of connecting with locals (mean 50.11). This suggests that social embeddedness remains more challenging than broader evaluations of diversity, norms, or cultural freedoms. Overall, scores differ significantly across destination countries for all dimensions, although these differences may again partly reflect variation in response styles rather than actual country differences.

Table 15: Satisfaction with social and cultural conditions in the destination country (scale 0-100)

Satisfaction	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Tolerance of locals ***	54.13	64.96	55.60	62.83	59.91	60.51
Cultural and ethnic diversity ***	54.65	68.01	58.70	62.41	58.67	61.32
Ease of connecting with locals ***	39.13	58.80	46.79	41.88	58.63	50.11
Integration into local society and community ***	39.94	60.81	44.81	42.45	57.06	49.97
Welcoming culture ***	39.50	63.82	47.00	49.71	57.65	53.23
Cultural offers and leisure ***	69.67	64.06	57.84	64.16	62.48	62.97
Availability of amenities ***	68.00	66.84	58.38	69.04	66.07	65.82
Freedom to practice religion and culture ***	70.94	78.95	67.63	76.87	62.86	71.52
Opportunities for social advancement ***	54.70	63.79	55.55	55.75	61.00	58.68
Gender and social norms ***	66.53	72.46	65.99	73.71	58.04	67.60

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: Please indicate how satisfied you are with these social and cultural conditions in your current country of residence on a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more satisfied you are, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less satisfied you are. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each factor, meaning that all could be rated high, all could be rated low, or any combination that best reflects your experiences; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$ .

### *Destination-specific patterns in satisfaction ratings*

Across the different domains, some destination-specific patterns emerge in respondents' satisfaction ratings. Poland often records comparatively high scores across labour market, economic, AI-related, and several migration-policy dimensions, suggesting that respondents there tend to evaluate many aspects of the destination context relatively positively. Canada, by contrast, tends to receive lower ratings on material and labour-market conditions, especially job opportunities, career prospects, job security, wages, and living costs. At the same time, respondents in Canada report comparatively favourable assessments of social and cultural conditions, including cultural diversity, tolerance of locals, welcoming culture, and freedom to practice religion and culture. The Netherlands stands out particularly with regard to workplace quality, work–life balance, and several institutional and migration-policy dimensions, while also scoring relatively highly on infrastructure and amenities. However, respondents in the Netherlands appear less satisfied with living costs, the costs of education and training, and some aspects of social incorporation, such as ease of connecting with locals and integration into local society. Austria receives especially positive evaluations of public transport, infrastructure and services, standard of living, and work–life balance, but comparatively low ratings on entrepreneurship conditions and certain migration-policy dimensions, particularly pathways to citizenship. Germany tends to occupy a more intermediate position across most domains, with relatively positive scores for education and training opportunities and more moderate ratings on labour market, institutional, and social dimensions. These patterns should be interpreted with caution, however, as some of the observed cross-country variation may reflect differences in response styles rather than substantive differences between destination contexts.

## Challenges

Table 16 provides an overview of the extent to which respondents experienced different types of challenges in destination countries. Looking at the full sample, emotional and psychological challenges received the highest rating (mean 55.46), followed by housing challenges (mean 54.33) and language barriers (mean 53.08). Employment challenges (mean 51.45), legal and administrative challenges (mean 50.56), social integration (mean 50.17), and financial challenges (mean 49.53) occupy the middle of the distribution, suggesting that these were also important obstacles for many respondents. By contrast, cultural adjustment was rated as the least important challenge overall (mean 42.13).

There are statistically significant differences across destination countries. In Austria, Germany, and Poland, language barriers are perceived as the most important challenge (means 65.39, 68.40, and 67.17, respectively). In Canada, respondents rated employment challenges as most important (mean 54.32). In the Netherlands, housing is identified as most challenging (mean 59.03). Cultural is perceived as the least challenging across countries.

Table 16: Importance of challenges in the destination country (scale 0-100)

Challenges	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Legal and administrative challenges (e.g., obtaining visas and permits, long procedures) ***</b>	59.53	44.23	55.15	37.36	64.24	50.56
<b>Financial challenges (e.g., visa costs, travel expenses, loss of income during the transition) ***</b>	47.97	51.60	49.42	38.31	61.66	49.53
<b>Language barriers ***</b>	65.39	26.50	68.40	44.25	67.17	53.08
<b>Employment challenges (e.g., finding work, recognition of qualifications) ***</b>	47.65	54.32	53.69	42.62	58.61	51.45
<b>Cultural adjustment (e.g., adapting to different cultural norms, values and practices) ***</b>	36.56	38.93	39.02	38.28	53.95	42.13
<b>Emotional and psychological challenges (e.g., stress, anxiety, homesickness, distance from loved ones) ***</b>	49.37	52.73	57.13	52.20	61.90	55.46
<b>Housing challenges (e.g., finding affordable and suitable housing, issues with landlords) ***</b>	46.22	49.67	53.54	59.03	55.89	54.33
<b>Social integration (e.g., difficulties making friends) ***</b>	49.16	44.27	46.88	52.38	55.78	50.17

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: You may have faced different challenges since leaving your country of origin. On a scale from 0 to 100, please indicate how much you experienced each of the following factors as challenges. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more difficult it was for you, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less difficult it was. Please rate each challenge separately, meaning that all could be rated high, all low, or any combination that best matches your experience; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

## 5. Prospects of retention and related drivers

The Link4Skills Migrant survey includes two measures related to the possible retention of respondents in the host country. The first is a single-response question capturing preferences regarding where to live in the future: “Ideally<sup>5</sup>, where would you prefer to live in the future?” with six mutually exclusive answer possibilities: (1) stay in the current country of residence permanently or long-term; (2) stay in the current country of residence for the next 2-5 years; (3) return to my country of origin permanently; (4) return to my country of origin for some time and then move elsewhere; (5) move to another country; and (6) live and work partly in two countries.

<sup>5</sup> Adding “ideally” here to remove potential obstacles and constraints (Carling, 2019). Asking about such a hypothetical scenario seems less problematic/ abstract in the case of highly skilled migrants in the destination country, as they already migrated.

For the second measure, respondents were asked to indicate how likely they considered each spatial option to be realised using sliders from 0 to 100, with higher numbers indicating higher likelihoods. Respondents could also indicate that an option was “not applicable”, which was coded as a likelihood of 0. The question was formulated as follows: “More realistically<sup>6</sup>, how likely is it that you...” followed by the same six options: (1) stay in the current country of residence permanently or long term; (2) stay in the current country of residence for the next 2–5 years; (3) return to the country of origin permanently; (4) return to the country of origin for some time and then move elsewhere; (5) move to another country; and (6) live and work partly in two countries.<sup>7</sup> The use of continuous measured to capture the likelihood of future im/mobility outcomes is especially innovative as it allows to capture that migrants often weigh multiple options simultaneously and for various intertwined reasons, rather than fitting neatly into a single category (Reinold & Siegel, 2024; Rodriguez-Pane, 2024). The combination of the two measures furthermore has the potential to show to what extent skilled migrants are able to follow their ideal im/mobility preferences, which has important implications about discussions about migrant agency.

## Prospects of retention

Table 17 summarises respondents im/mobility preference by destination country. Across the full sample, most prefer to stay in their current country of residence permanently (50.93%; n=1,180), followed by staying for the next 2–5 years (25.08%; n=581). This suggests that most respondents see their future, at least for the medium term, in the host country. Smaller shares express a preference for moving onward to another country (9.24%), returning permanently to the country of origin (5.78%), living and working partly in two countries (5.74%), or returning temporarily before moving elsewhere (3.24%). This distribution is rather surprising as (highly) skilled migrants are usually very mobile, whereas our sample seems to prefer immobility over mobility.

There is some variation across destination countries, but the general pattern remains similar. In all destination countries, staying permanently is the most common preferred option, although this share is especially high in Canada and comparatively lower in Poland. Poland also stands out for a somewhat higher preference for staying only temporarily and for onward migration. Overall, however, the results indicate that most respondents ideally prefer remaining in their current destination rather than returning or moving elsewhere.

This raises the question of whether our convenience sample is biased towards the immobile (e.g., more mobile individuals may have already left the destination) or whether skilled migrants are actually becoming less mobile. A recent representative survey among migrants from EU and non-EU countries with different educational levels in Germany, shows that 57 per cent intend to stay in Germany permanently, 12 per cent

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<sup>6</sup> Adding “more realistically“ brings in conditionality, so this time taking into account possible constraints (Carling, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> One limitation here, is that not for all answer categories, timeframes were specified. It is possible that the options will be realized sequentially, e.g., first stay temporarily, then return temporarily, then move onward or live transnationally.

intend to ultimately leave Germany and 30 per cent are undecided<sup>8</sup> (Kosyakova et al., 2025). Among the highly educated the share of those intending to leave is slightly higher with 15 % of migrants with a Master’s degree or higher intending to leave Germany (ibid). This suggests that our sample is not that unusual, although direct comparisons should be made with caution due to different measurements (Carling, 2019) and different sample characteristics.

*Table 17: Preferences regarding future im/mobility*

Preference	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Stay permanently</b>	53.80%	64.51%	53.35%	50.78%	36.81%	50.93%
<b>Stay 2-5 years</b>	23.98%	18.53%	23.82%	25.78%	31.14%	25.08%
<b>Return permanently</b>	2.34%	4.02%	7.28%	3.88%	9.16%	5.78%
<b>Return temporarily</b>	1.75%	2.68%	4.33%	2.02%	4.58%	3.24%
<b>Move onward</b>	11.70%	4.69%	5.31%	9.01%	16.12%	9.24%
<b>Transnational living</b>	6.43%	5.58%	5.91%	8.54%	2.20%	5.74%
<b>N</b>	171	448	508	644	546	2,317

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

## Drivers of retention

Next, we look at the factors driving these preferences. After respondents indicated their ideal preference in the survey, they were asked how important different reasons were in determining their im/mobility preferences using slider questions (scale 0-100). The reasons were again in line with the driver dimensions linked to original migration and satisfaction with living and working in the destination country. Table 18 summarises the average dimension of each driver dimension by im/mobility preference. More detailed tables summarising the drivers by destination country and im/mobility preference can be found in Appendix 3.

The strongest drivers of retention (i.e., ideal preference to stay permanently) are safety and security (mean 76.81), economic conditions (mean 70.76), and family reasons/partner (mean 70.58), followed by social and cultural conditions (mean 66.71), labour market and employment conditions (mean 65.11), and professional development opportunities (mean 64.14).

Those who prefer to stay temporarily are mostly driven by economic conditions (65.24), safety and security (mean 64.36), labour market and employment conditions (60.53), and family reasons/partner (mean 60.39). Compared to permanent stayers, their ratings are generally lower.

Among those who prefer to return permanently to the country of origin, family reasons/partner (mean 69.51) and social and cultural conditions (mean 66.62) stand out most clearly, followed by safety and security (mean 53.00) and professional development

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<sup>8</sup> We suspect that in the Link4Skills survey the undecided clustered in the temporary stay category as this is an answer they could give with certainty even if they were not sure exactly about what the future would bring.

opportunities (mean 52.23). Economic and institutional factors appear less central for this group than for those preferring to stay. Results are similar for those preferring to return temporarily. This suggests that return is more strongly associated with social, cultural, and relational attachments than with labour market or policy considerations. In turn, dissatisfaction with socio-cultural factors in the destination country may deter migrants. Future analyses could test this by correlating preferences and satisfaction scores rather than direct reasons for im/mobility preferences.

Those who prefer onward migration are mostly driven by economic conditions (mean 69.92), labour market and employment conditions (mean 68.27), and professional development opportunities (mean 67.65). This suggests that onward movers are especially driven by opportunity-seeking considerations and are evaluating destinations in terms of career prospects and economic returns, rather than socio-cultural or relational drivers.

Finally, respondents who prefer transnational living (i.e., living in two countries at the same time) attach greatest importance to social and cultural conditions (mean 70.62), followed by economic conditions (mean 66.10), family reasons/partner (mean 65.53), safety and security (mean 62.10), and labour market conditions (mean 57.47). This suggests that transnational preferences are shaped by a combination of social embeddedness, family ties, and continued access to opportunities across places. Living in two countries at the same time may therefore be a way of getting the best of two worlds, which may be linked to economic and career-related factors in one country and socio-cultural and family related factors in the other.

Table 18: Drivers of im/mobility preferences

Driver	Stay p.	Stay t.	Return p.	Return t.	Move onward	Live transn.	All
<b>Labour market &amp; employment conditions ***</b>	65.11	60.53	47.63	52.40	68.27	57.47	62.39
<b>AI-integration into workplace</b>	22.24	21.30	19.49	25.08	23.84	16.41	21.75
<b>Economic conditions ***</b>	70.76	65.24	46.72	57.37	69.92	66.10	67.21
<b>Education &amp; training opportunities ***</b>	59.22	52.08	38.34	41.33	54.41	47.66	54.53
<b>Professional development opportunities ***</b>	64.14	61.13	52.23	53.44	67.65	58.02	62.32
<b>Access to AI-related training &amp; development *</b>	23.49	22.62	19.34	25.00	26.19	16.43	22.92
<b>Environmental conditions ***</b>	63.20	52.06	42.97	48.47	53.24	59.42	57.62
<b>Political conditions ***</b>	61.15	52.73	45.40	42.71	58.09	57.32	57.03
<b>Public policy &amp; institutions ***</b>	63.33	51.42	44.79	40.69	61.18	53.89	57.80
<b>Migration policy ***</b>	52.35	50.77	31.49	39.99	59.55	49.18	50.83
<b>Safety and security ***</b>	76.81	64.36	53.00	51.55	65.68	62.10	69.62
<b>Social &amp; cultural conditions ***</b>	66.71	56.68	66.62	62.27	65.26	70.62	64.14
<b>Family reasons/ partner ***</b>	70.58	60.39	69.51	66.27	55.34	65.53	66.13
<b>N</b>	1,180	581	134	75	214	133	2,317

Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: Note: The precise survey question read as follows: Please indicate how important the following reasons are in determining your preference in the current country of residence permanently, using the sliders below. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more important the motivation is, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less important the motivation is. Please note that you are making these ratings separately for each motivation, meaning that all could be rated high or low, or any combination that best reflects your experiences.; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

## Im/mobility likelihoods

Table 19 summarises the perceived likelihood of different future im/mobility outcomes by destination country. Across the full sample, respondents consider staying in the current country of residence for the next 2-5 years the most likely outcome (mean 72.41), followed by staying permanently (mean 63.19). When it comes to more realistic expectations, it thus seems that many are rather uncertain about whether they will be able to implement their ideal preference of staying permanently. This has important implications for discussions about the retention of skilled migrants, as many would prefer to stay in the destination but for some reason are constrained in realising this preference. By contrast, the average perceived likelihood of more mobile futures is substantially lower, including returning temporarily (mean 40.82), returning permanently (mean 31.91), moving onward to another country (mean 28.02), and living transnationally between two countries (mean 20.74).

There is again some variation across destination countries. Respondents in Canada report the highest likelihood of both staying for the next 2-5 years (mean 80.28) and staying permanently (mean 72.86), suggesting comparatively strong prospects of retention. The Netherlands also records relatively high likelihoods of staying but stands out with a noticeably higher likelihood of returning permanently (mean 48.90) than the other destination countries. Poland shows the most mobile profile: it records the highest likelihood of returning temporarily (mean 54.32), moving onward (mean 49.37), and transnational living (mean 36.39), while its likelihood of staying permanently is lower than in the other destinations. Overall, the results suggest that remaining in the current destination temporarily is generally considered the most realistic outcome, but that the strength of this expectation varies across countries, with Poland in particular appearing more associated with onward, temporary, or transnational mobility trajectories.

*Table 19: Likelihood of individual im/mobility outcomes (scale 0-100)*

Likelihood	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Stay permanently ***</b>	63.88	72.86	61.77	61.72	58.09	63.19
<b>Stay 2-5 years ***</b>	76.67	80.28	60.51	78.47	68.53	72.41
<b>Return permanently ***</b>	27.29	24.72	29.88	48.90	25.34	31.91
<b>Return temporarily ***</b>	34.70	43.01	35.54	33.65	54.32	40.82
<b>Move onward ***</b>	24.25	16.42	19.36	25.80	49.37	28.02
<b>Transnational living ***</b>	18.64	14.03	15.63	16.73	36.39	20.74
<b>N</b>	171	448	508	644	546	2,317

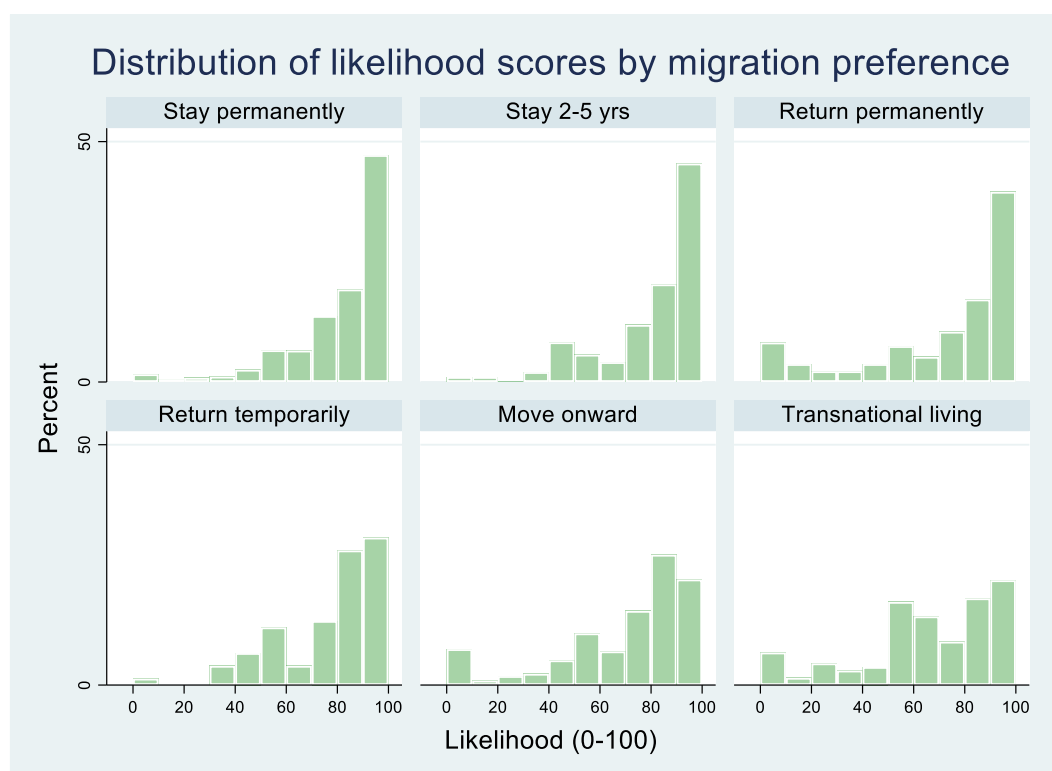
Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant

Note: The precise survey question read as follows: More realistically, how likely is it that you realise the six im/mobility outcomes? Using the sliders below, please indicate how likely it is that you will realise the different options. The higher the number (closer to 100), the more likely it is that the option will be realised, the lower the number (closer to 0), the less likely it is that the option will be realised.; One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to establish whether at least one country mean differs significantly from the others. Significance levels: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

## Relationship between preferred and likely im/mobility

The preference and likelihood variable allow us to disentangle mismatches between what migrants would ideally prefer to do and what they expect to happen more realistically. One way of doing this is to analyse to what extent respondents expect their ideal preference to occur, in other words, the expected realisation of their preferred im/mobility scenario. The histogrammes in Figure 1 below visualizes the distribution of likelihood scores by migration preference. Many respondents perceive their preference as likely, however, there are also many for whom the realization seems uncertain or even completely out of reach. Staying permanently seems most likely and transnational living the least likely. These differences across groups are statistically significant. The more "mobile" or complex the preference, the less respondents expect it to actually happen. These findings indicate that more complex or mobile migration preferences are associated with greater perceived constraints to realisation, even among skilled migrants who are generally perceived as being rather free in choosing where to live.

Figure 1: Distribution of likelihood scores by migration preference



Source: Link4Skills Migrant Survey restricted-access variant.

## 6. Main takeaways

This report provided key descriptive insights into the Link4Skills Migrant Survey dataset with tentative answers to the research questions that guided the design of the Survey. In that sense, the report is a first step towards uncovering how highly skilled migrants experience migration, evaluate destination contexts, and think about their future im/mobility, with a focus on retention in the current destination. Together with the Link4Skills Survey Handbook, the report is intended as a resource for researchers who may wish to work with the open-access version of the survey in the future.

Several important patterns emerge from the descriptive analysis. First, the data clearly shows that skilled migrants are a heterogeneous group. Respondents differ in their socio-economic backgrounds, legal statuses, migration histories, and migration drivers. Migration to destination countries was often preceded by communication with networks already living there, while participation in pre-migration training was comparatively rare. Across the sample, the main migration drivers are closely related to safety and security, professional development and employment opportunities, and economic conditions. Migrants' future im/mobility preferences are shaped by a combination of economic, institutional, social, and relational factors, and different constellations of factors are associated with different preferences. Retention, for example, is especially driven by safety and security, economic conditions, and family-related considerations, combined with labour market and professional development opportunities. Return preferences, by contrast, are more strongly associated with family reasons and social and cultural drivers dimensions. These results already suggest that skilled migration is shaped by a much wider set of drivers than economic or labour market factors alone.

Most respondents indicate that they would ideally prefer to remain in their current destination in the medium- or long-term and many do indeed see this as the most likely outcome. At the same time, preferences do not automatically translate into likely outcomes, highlighting that even skilled migrants who are usually perceived as relatively privileged and free in choosing their place of residence face considerable constraints in realizing their im/mobility preferences. This is an important insight for retention policies.

The report furthermore highlights the importance of migrants' lived experiences in destination countries. Satisfaction ratings show that destination contexts are evaluated differently across domains and across countries. Canada tends to receive lower ratings on economic and labour-market conditions, but more favourable assessments of social and cultural conditions. The Netherlands stands out especially with regard to workplace quality, work-life balance, and several institutional dimensions, while also scoring relatively highly on infrastructure and amenities; at the same time, respondents there are less satisfied with living costs, educational costs, and some aspects of social incorporation. Austria receives particularly positive evaluations of public transport, infrastructure, standard of living, and work-life balance, but lower ratings on entrepreneurship conditions and certain migration-policy dimensions. Germany often occupies a more intermediate position, with relatively positive views of education and training opportunities and more moderate ratings elsewhere. Poland often records comparatively high ratings across labour market, economic, AI-related, and several

migration-policy dimensions. These patterns suggest that destination countries differ not only in objective opportunities, but also in how migrants experience and evaluate them. The findings on challenges add another important layer. Although the nature of difficulties varies by destination, language barriers, emotional challenges, housing problems, and employment-related obstacles all emerge as relevant, which can likely deter migrants.

These findings have direct implications for the Link4Skills project and for the central concept of Migration Skill Corridors (MSCs). The results suggest that migration skill corridors should not be understood simply as channels through which skilled migrants move in response to labour demand. Rather, they appear as broader configurations of opportunities, rights, institutions, and social conditions that shape both mobility and immobility over time. Migrants' im/mobility preferences are driven not only by employment-related factors, but also by safety and security, economic stability, migration policies, family considerations, and broader social and cultural conditions. Destination countries also differ in whether they function more strongly as places of long-term settlement, temporary stay, onward migration, or transnational living. This means that MSCs vary not only in their attractiveness for initial entry, but also in their retention capacity and in the mobility trajectories they generate.

From a broader Link4Skills perspective, these results also underline that MSCs need to be understood relationally, from the perspective of both destination and origin countries. Origin countries remain relevant not only because return is one possible future outcome, but also because migrants assess destination contexts in relation to prior experiences, family ties, and opportunities across multiple places. In this sense, MSCs are not one-directional, but dynamic and multi-sited, and shaped by changing attachments, constraints, and opportunity structures. Corridor dynamics are shaped not only by admission channels, but also by what happens after arrival: recognition of qualifications, professional development opportunities, family rights, housing, social incorporation, and more predictable pathways for settlement, circulation, or return. To the extent that such conditions reduce uncertainty and better align migrants' aspirations with what they are actually able to do, MSCs may help narrow the gap between preferred and realised im/mobility outcomes.

Overall, the report points to the value of moving beyond simplified views of skilled migration as either permanent settlement or straightforward labour matching. The descriptive findings suggest a more dynamic picture in which migrants weigh multiple possible futures and in which preferences are shaped by a combination of opportunities, constraints, and attachments across places. Further research will be needed to examine these relationships more systematically, but the descriptive patterns presented here already demonstrate the potential of the Link4Skills Migrant Survey to contribute to a richer understanding of skilled migration and retention in the context of MSCs.

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## Appendix 1: Push factors mouseover

Examples for **labour market and employment conditions** are unemployment, employment dissatisfaction, poor employment opportunities, poor employment conditions, career stagnation or decline, underemployment or overqualification, etc.

Examples for **integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the workplace** are limited AI-driven job opportunities, access to advanced AI tools and technologies, collaborative AI work environments, AI integration in diverse sectors.

Examples for **economic conditions** are economic hardship, deteriorating economic conditions, lack of economic opportunities, high living costs, poor living standards, poverty and inequality, etc.

Examples for **education and training opportunities** are limited access to education and training, poor quality of education and training, poor education infrastructure, limited availability of higher education programmes, high tuition fees, lack of financial aid to education, disruption of education due to conflict, etc.

Examples for **professional development opportunities** are lack of activities, programmes, or resources that help workers improve their skills, lack of career advancement opportunities, etc.

Examples for **environmental conditions** climate change, environmental degradation, food insecurity, natural disasters and environmental shocks, etc.

Examples for **political conditions** are lack of civil, political and democratic rights, corruption, political developments, political instability, restricted rights for women, etc.

Examples for **public policy and institutions** are poor welfare system, limited access to the healthcare system, poor healthcare, poor infrastructure and services, etc.

Examples for **safety concerns and security situation** are crime, conflict, war, violence, gender-based violence, human rights violations, political repression, persecution, etc.

Examples for **social and cultural conditions** are discrimination and exclusion of minority groups, cultural and religious, repression, rigid cultural norms and expectations around family, marriage, and gender roles, lack of social networks, lack of cultural offers and leisure opportunities, etc.

Examples for **reasons related to family and/ or your partner** are family separation, following relatives, following one's partner, starting a family, lack of opportunities for children, escape from family conflict, weak familial support networks, care burden, migrate to support family financially, etc.

## Appendix 2: Pull factors mouseover

Examples for **labour market and employment conditions** are better employment opportunities, better employment conditions, better career prospects, etc.

Examples for **economic conditions** are better economic opportunities, higher wages, lower living costs, higher living standards, higher returns to skills/ education, etc.

Examples for **integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the workplace** are limited AI-driven job opportunities, access to advanced AI tools and technologies, collaborative AI work environments, AI integration in diverse sectors.

Examples for **education and training opportunities** are access to education and training, better quality of education and training, international education, reputation of education and training institutions, etc.

Examples for **professional development opportunities** are activities, programmes, or resources that help workers improve their skills, advance in their careers, and stay updated with industry trends, etc.

Examples for **access to AI-related training and development** are specialised AI education opportunities, access to AI research and innovation hubs, professional AI-focused conferences and workshops, collaboration opportunities with leading tech companies and knowledge institutions, support for AI entrepreneurs, etc.

Examples for **environmental conditions** are favourable weather and climate conditions, low pollution, minimal environmental hazards and natural disasters, clean energy and sustainable living.

Examples for **political conditions** are civil, political and democratic rights, political stability, rule of law, etc.

Examples for **public policy and institutions** are the welfare system, healthcare system, infrastructure and services, public transport, etc.

Examples for **migration policy** are immigration procedures, post-entry rights, integration policy, and pathways to citizenship, etc.

Examples for **security** are peace, absence of conflict, and low crime rates, etc.

Examples for **social and cultural conditions** are tolerance and diversity, welcoming culture, cultural offers and leisure opportunities, availability of amenities, freedom to practice religion and culture, etc.

Examples for **reasons related to family and/ or your partner** are family reunification, being with relatives, following or joining one's partner, starting a family, better opportunities for children, caring for family members, etc.

## Appendix 3: Drivers of im/mobility preferences by destination

### Preference: Stay permanently

Driver	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Labour market &amp; employment conditions **</b>	68.83	62.93	62.48	64.39	71.26	65.11
<b>AI-integration into workplace ***</b>	18.30	22.97	18.52	45.13	11.71	22.24
<b>Economic conditions ***</b>	76.07	67.64	65.45	74.52	73.88	70.76
<b>Education and training opportunities ***</b>	55.64	62.44	65.09	46.71	68.66	59.22
<b>Professional development opportunities ***</b>	66.92	63.28	65.22	58.74	71.41	64.14
<b>Access to AI-related training &amp; development ***</b>	16.65	24.53	21.14	45.56	12.88	23.49
<b>Environmental conditions ***</b>	71.66	66.58	54.78	62.84	66.40	63.20
<b>Political conditions ***</b>	62.48	63.48	51.17	64.88	64.56	61.15
<b>Public policy and institutions ***</b>	65.50	64.68	53.98	68.03	65.39	63.33
<b>Migration policy**</b>	49.49	48.26	50.78	50.16	65.16	52.35
<b>Safety and security</b>	80.45	78.32	73.92	77.00	76.58	76.81
<b>Social and cultural conditions ***</b>	66.43	69.46	55.94	71.39	69.81	66.71
<b>Family reasons/ partner ***</b>	76.20	76.76	59.41	70.30	74.62	70.58
<b>N</b>	92	289	271	201	327	1180

### Preference: Stay temporarily

Driver	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
<b>Labour market &amp; employment conditions ***</b>	58.32	55.31	62.24	63.01	59.96	60.53
<b>AI-integration into workplace ***</b>	15.63	15.63	14.83	8.13	42.91	21.30
<b>Economic conditions</b>	63.15	60.90	67.40	65.89	65.68	65.24
<b>Education and training opportunities ***</b>	47.76	48.28	65.62	41.61	55.55	52.08
<b>Professional development opportunities *</b>	63.29	56.84	67.95	59.27	59.68	31.16
<b>Access to AI-related training &amp; development ***</b>	11.93	19.76	17.19	8.81	43.94	22.62
<b>Environmental conditions</b>	52.73	52.45	51.10	48.63	55.73	52.06
<b>Political conditions</b>	47.41	47.80	54.65	53.60	54.22	52.73
<b>Public policy and institutions</b>	49.51	48.06	53.01	51.22	52.59	51.42
<b>Migration policy***</b>	47.29	42.12	54.69	57.48	46.23	50.77
<b>Safety and security *</b>	65.98	55.53	67.40	65.83	64.70	64.36
<b>Social and cultural conditions</b>	54.20	56.46	57.50	56.75	56.74	56.68
<b>Family reasons/ partner ***</b>	66.68	60.95	59.06	65.43	54.64	60.39
<b>N</b>	41	83	121	166	170	581

### Preference: Return permanently

Driver	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Labour market & employment conditions	45.00	37.78	45.24	53.94	46.04	47.63
AI-integration into workplace ***	1.50	14.00	15.73	0.40	35.24	19.49
Economic conditions	63.00	53.28	39.49	53.02	37.52	46.72
Education and training opportunities **	4.50	37.50	40.89	23.48	46.88	38.34
Professional development opportunities	47.50	45.67	47.89	45.40	61.60	52.23
Access to AI-related training & development ***	1.50	8.33	20.59	2.00	32.46	19.34
Environmental conditions **	66.52	53.78	31.57	32.64	50.82	42.97
Political conditions	37.25	40.50	41.35	44.56	51.24	45.40
Public policy and institutions	26.25	47.44	46.16	49.32	34.76	44.79
Migration policy	1.75	25.56	32.16	27.68	37.42	31.49
Safety and security*	39.50	54.00	51.79	36.48	62.90	53.00
Social and cultural conditions	80.25	73.83	65.65	63.08	65.42	66.62
Family reasons/ partner *	24.25	81.83	68.92	58.44	74.68	69.51
N	4	18	37	50	25	134

### Preference: Return temporarily

Driver	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Labour market & employment conditions	77.67	50.50	55.77	51.15	47.6	52.40
AI-integration into workplace ***	30.00	18.75	18.86	4.46	43.72	25.08
Economic conditions	75.00	67.08	50.27	59.54	55.72	57.37
Education and training opportunities	68.00	39.42	46.09	21.08	45.40	41.33
Professional development opportunities ***	76.33	47.33	53.18	53.23	53.96	53.44
Access to AI-related training & development ***	27.67	22.50	19.45	2.15	42.64	25.00
Environmental conditions *	58.00	53.67	61.45	32.54	41.68	48.47
Political conditions	59.00	39.08	43.23	48.38	39.03	42.71
Public policy and institutions	33.33	31.33	47.23	33.62	44.00	40.69
Migration policy	42.33	23.83	41.95	30.46	50.68	39.99
Safety and security	33.33	43.33	55.32	53.31	53.44	51.55
Social and cultural conditions	44.33	64.42	64.73	55.54	64.72	62.27
Family reasons/ partner	53.00	71.83	63.64	73.54	68.72	66.27
N	3	12	22	25	13	75

### Preference: Onward migration

Driver	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Labour market & employment conditions ***	73.05	63.81	70.04	54.09	77.06	68.27
AI-integration into workplace ***	8.50	16.52	22.89	7.17	40.35	23.84
Economic conditions ***	67.25	69.71	67.26	56.00	80.56	69.92
Education and training opportunities ***	48.60	52.76	58.56	34.69	67.85	54.41
Professional development opportunities ***	68.05	65.62	67.07	50.83	79.31	67.65
Access to AI-related training & development ***	16.85	14.90	28.22	7.50	42.70	26.19
Environmental conditions	54.70	48.71	42.07	50.09	59.50	53.24
Political conditions **	56.60	52.81	73.67	50.26	60.08	58.09
Public policy and institutions ***	69.35	43.76	68.78	49.86	68.61	61.18
Migration Policy***	68.30	49.57	62.96	43.52	69.45	59.55
Safety and security ***	61.10	59.29	72.04	52.45	75.02	65.68
Social and cultural conditions *	69.65	58.10	74.30	58.02	67.98	65.26
Family reasons/ partner	47.55	49.00	52.89	54.59	59.88	55.34
N	20	21	27	58	88	214

### Preference: Transnational living

Driver	AT	CA	DE	NL	PL	All
Labour market & employment conditions	63.00	63.56	62.87	48.51	67.33	57.47
AI-integration into workplace ***	5.82	29.16	9.67	10.20	44.92	16.41
Economic conditions	72.82	66.60	66.90	61.75	76.83	66.10
Education & training opportunities ***	54.36	60.16	62.80	28.45	65.67	47.66
Professional development opportunities **	63.91	62.88	68.17	46.91	68.08	58.02
Access to AI-related training & development ***	4.18	26.12	12.30	9.11	51.33	16.43
Environmental conditions	54.18	65.40	58.90	58.05	59.33	59.42
Political conditions	66.36	54.96	63.00	53.31	58.17	57.32
Public policy & institutions	68.09	62.92	52.03	46.75	59.42	53.89
Migration policy *	59.73	58.96	54.17	38.82	54.17	49.18
Safety and security	62.55	63.44	68.13	55.07	76.00	62.10
Social & cultural conditions	73.91	70.80	69.67	70.67	70.38	70.62
Family reasons/ partner	50.64	71.92	68.30	64.53	63.50	65.53
N	11	25	30	12	55	133