Europe is lacking talent. The European Commission (EC) is warning that a lack of basic coding skills could result in Europe facing a shortage of up to 900,000 information technology (IT) professionals by the year 2020. According to the EC, currently more than 90% of professional occupations require some IT competence. The number of graduates in computer science education trajectories is however not keeping pace with demand. As a result, many open vacancies for IT practitioners cannot be filled. At the same time, refugees in Europe face many challenges to access the labour market. Several European NGOs are addressing this foreseen talent shortage by fostering the early stage access of refugees into IT vacancies.

The Dutch organization Hack Your Future teaches refugees coding and web-development skills in a six-month program. Participants are also provided soft skill training tailored to the Dutch working culture. Upon completion of the pilot in 2016, 65% of the participants secured a job in the IT sector.

Inspired by the success of this program, the initiative Code Your Future was launched in the UK. In October ten refugees, of whom four were women, commenced a six-month intensive coding program in London. Looking ahead, both initiatives are looking to expand their programs to ensure that a greater number of refugees can take the opportunity to learn coding skills. Similar projects in Germany and Finland have recently emerged to cater to the high demand for IT skills.

Good practices, like these ones will be promoted on the Skills2Work Pathfinder to encourage information sharing and replication across the European region.

Roundtable discussion IOM UK and PwC
The IOM office in the United Kingdom and Price-waterhouseCooper (PwC) organised a roundtable discussion in October with national stakeholders representing the UK government, civil society organizations, business and the private sector, refugee communities, academics and international organizations. The goal of this event was to examine the challenges, barriers and gaps faced in fostering the early access of refugees into the labour market, to find creative solutions that address these challenges and to facilitate cross sector interaction, as part of the Skills2Work project.

Upcoming Event
The Skills2Work project partners will meet in Bratislava in January 2017 for the third regional coordination meeting. The digital platform is currently under development and will be presented to all partners in Bratislava.