

COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR TRAINERS AND NON-EU DRIVERS

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REQUIREMENTS FROM THE APPLICATION FORM DELIVERABLE 1: NEEDS ANALYSIS

"Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Trainers and Non-EU Drivers" gathers data from trainers, VET providers, transport employers, and non-EU drivers to identify challenges, learning barriers, and skill gaps through structured surveys, interviews, and focus groups across partner countries. The needs assessment report highlights key areas for improving driver training effectiveness.

The first step involves gathering insights from trainers, VET providers, employers, and non-EU drivers through surveys, interviews, and consultations. This research points out skill gaps, learning barriers, and industry challenges, forming the foundation for developing targeted training solutions.

The needs assessment provides a comprehensive report outlining key training challenges and skill gaps, ensuring the training framework is relevant and targeted.

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Purpose and methodological note

This document provides a structured **comparative analysis of Czechia, Finland, France, Ireland, Romania and Switzerland** regarding **the professional integration of non-EU professional truck and bus drivers**, using a common analytical structure across all sections (migration context, labour market, access to the profession, training pathways, institutional arrangements, challenges, needs and forward-looking actions). Countries are presented **in alphabetical order** throughout the document to ensure neutrality and consistency.

The analysis is based on **official statistical, administrative and sectoral sources** produced by national statistical institutes, migration authorities, transport authorities and sector organizations (sources available in Annex 1 of this document).

An online survey was conducted with questionnaires addressed by TRAINDRV2EU partners to transport trainers, training centers, employers and authorities relevant to the sector. Complementary interviews were conducted with non-EU drivers and in some cases transport trainers, training centers managers, employers and authorities relevant to the sectors. To complement this data collection, some focus groups took place in the partners countries (Cz, Fin, Fr, Ir, Ro). Reports from these focus groups were produced to be used in this analysis.

If the data collected through the surveys, findings should be interpreted as qualitative and indicative evidence rather than statistically representative results. The purpose of the data collection was to identify recurring barriers, stakeholder needs and practical development priorities for the TRAINDRV2EU training framework.

1. General demographic and migration context

The following part gives a general picture of each country's situation regarding non-EU immigration.

Czechia

Czechia hosts about **1.1 million non-EU residents (10.3%** of the total population). Around 394,300 hold permanent residence, while 736,900 live under temporary residence permits. **This inflow is increasingly central to population dynamics**, as recent population growth, or the mitigation of population decline, has been driven mainly by positive net migration that compensates for natural decrease (deaths exceeding births). For instance, net migration added 36,845 inhabitants in 2024, while natural change remained negative in 2024 reporting periods. Migrants are required to follow an integration program “Adaptation and Integration Courses (AIK)” which combines different obligations. The employment rate for non-EU residents in Czechia aged 20–64 reached approximately **81.7%**, one of the highest levels in the EU¹.

Finland

With a total of more than 5.6 million inhabitant of which 9.2% are migrants, Finland's population growth is **almost entirely driven by migration** (net migration +47,051 in 2024). non-EU labour migration is explicitly framed as a response to demographic ageing and long-term labour shortages, including in transport. The employment rate for non-EU residents in Finland aged 20–64 was about **57.5%**, showing relatively weaker labour market attachment.

France

France hosts a **large and structurally diversified non-EU population**, with **8.8% of residents defined as non-EU nationals** (close to 6 million people over a global population of 68.4 million in 2024). Labour-market integration is structured through the **Contrat d'intégration républicaine (CIR)**², which combines civic and language obligations. The employment rate for non-EU residents in France aged 20–64 stood at around **58.7%**, indicating comparatively lower participation levels.

Ireland

Ireland has experienced sustained population growth driven primarily by migration. As of 2024, non-EU nationals represent approximately **5–6% of the total population of 5.38 million** (around 270,000 residents). Labour-market participation among non-EU nationals is comparatively high. The employment rate for non-EU residents aged 20–64 reached approximately **77%**, reflecting strong labour demand across multiple sectors.

¹ All data regarding employment rate of non-Eu residents is coming from Eurostats December 2025.

² Contract of Republican Integration

Nevertheless, despite acute labour shortages in road transport, non-EU nationals remain **under-represented in professional driving occupations**.

Romania

Romania has **transitioned from a net emigration country to a net immigration country due to acute labour shortages**. Non-EU residents represent **around 0.6% of the total resident population of 19 million people** (approximately 108,000 residence permits). Population growth linked to non-EU nationals is overwhelmingly employment-driven. The employment rate for non-EU residents in Romania aged 20–64 reached approximately **65.7%**, reflecting moderate labour market integration.

Switzerland

Switzerland's permanent resident population exceeded 9.1 million in 2025, with around **41% of residents having a migration background**, of whom approximately **30% are non-EU nationals**. Admission of non-EU workers is governed by yearly quotas and labour-market priority rules under the Foreign Nationals and Integration Act. No directly comparable Eurostat figure for non-EU residents aged 20–64 is available in the retrieved data. Switzerland is not an EU member and is not included in the Eurostat non-EU-resident employment dataset. As a proxy indicator, Swiss national statistics show that **non-EU nationals account for around 34.9% of total employment (2025)**, and **about 14.7% of the labour force are non-EU nationals**, reflecting their significant role in the labour market.

Key contrasts of national context

The six countries illustrate distinct approaches to non-EU migration shaped not only by demographic pressures and labour shortages, but also by the degree of economic selectivity embedded in their migration policies. A clearer reading of these contrasts emerges through a three-model typology:

1. Economically highly selective models (Ireland, Switzerland)

These systems are characterized by strong economic selectivity, where migration is explicitly designed as a labour market adjustment tool targeting highly employable profiles. Entry conditions are tightly linked to labour demand, skills shortages and employer needs, through permits, quotas or labour market tests. As a result, outcomes are relatively efficient: in Ireland, employment rates among non-nationals are higher than among nationals, particularly for recent migrants, reflecting the attraction of young, qualified workers aligned with labour market needs. Switzerland follows a comparable logic, combining strict quotas and labour precedence rules with a strong focus on highly skilled labour, making migration a highly controlled economic lever. While this model maximizes labour market efficiency, it limits responsiveness to lower-skilled shortages and creates strong entry barriers.

2. Hybrid regulated models (Finland, France)

These countries aim to balance economic needs with broader social and institutional objectives. Finland relies heavily on migration to sustain population growth and labour supply within a structured and inclusive education and integration system, although language remains a key practical filter. France differs more fundamentally in the structure of its migration flows: a significant share is driven by family reunification and asylum rather than economic selection, resulting in lower alignment between migration and sectoral labour demand. Integration is organized through formalized instruments such as the Contrat d'intégration républicaine, but these mechanisms operate largely independently from labour market needs, which can create mismatches in sectors facing acute shortages.

3. Pragmatic catch-up models (Czechia, Romania)

These countries have more recently shifted towards labour-driven migration in response to acute workforce shortages. Their migration systems are less structured around long-term integration strategies and more oriented towards immediate economic needs. Czechia increasingly relies on migration to offset demographic decline and has introduced initial integration measures such as Adaptation and Integration Courses (AIK), though gaps remain between integration policy and vocational pathways. Romania represents a more fragmented and employer-driven model, where migration is almost entirely employment-based, with limited institutional support and strong dependence on private actors. These models are pragmatic and reactive but often lack systemic coordination and long-term integration frameworks.

2. Education, Housing and Health: Comparative Social Conditions Affecting Integration

Evidence across the six countries shows that education systems, housing access and health coverage function as decisive enabling or constraining factors, even when vocational pathways are formally accessible.

a. Education and Learning Infrastructure

The general education structure can ease or present a barrier to a career in transport.

Czechia

Czechia requires newly arrived non-EU nationals to participate in *Adaptation and Integration Courses (AIK)*, which provide basic information on rights, obligations, and everyday life, combined with introductory language exposure. However, beyond this initial step, there **is no structured or accessible pathway linking integration courses to vocational education and training (VET)**, particularly in sectors such as professional driving. Access to adult education remains fragmented, with limited publicly funded preparatory programs tailored to labour market entry. As a result, migrants face a significant **“access gap”** between initial integration measures and sector-specific qualification pathways, especially where technical language proficiency and regulatory knowledge are required.

Finland

Finland benefits from a highly inclusive adult-education and VET system. Non-EU nationals have access to publicly funded preparatory education, language courses and guidance services. However, learning effectiveness in driver training remains constrained by **high linguistic thresholds**, particularly in technical and regulatory content.

France

France provides a structured integration framework through the Contrat d'intégration républicaine (CIR), combining civic education and basic French language training during the first year after arrival. While this supports general integration, formal sequencing between the CIR and entry into vocational driver training depends on individual pathways, language progression and employment opportunities.

The CIR focuses on general integration, whereas vocational training (e.g. FIMO, titres professionnels, State diplomas) requires job-specific language and technical knowledge. The two are therefore complementary, but gaps may arise when language skills remain insufficient for immediate access to training. After the CIR, non-EU

nationals can generally access mainstream training funding (France Travail, Regions, OPCO), facilitating entry into professional pathways.

Ireland

Ireland does not provide dedicated preparatory or bridging pathways for non-EU drivers seeking access to heavy-vehicle licenses. Training pathways are formally open but presuppose sufficient **English language proficiency**, which constitutes a major barrier in theory tests, regulatory comprehension and CPC training. Public financial support for C/D/CE licences and CPC training remains limited, and **costs are largely borne by individuals or employers**.

Romania

Romania offers no dedicated public adult-education or integration-oriented learning pathways for non-EU workers. Education and learning support are **almost entirely employer- or agency-driven**, resulting in uneven quality, limited language preparation and high dependency on private arrangements.

Switzerland

Switzerland applies a universal adult-education and training framework but does not provide targeted preparatory education for non-EU drivers. Access to learning opportunities is strongly filtered upstream by **restrictive admission rules**, meaning education plays a limited compensatory role once entry is granted.

Comparative insight

Across the six countries, the main contrast lies in where the “integration effort” is positioned:

- Downstream through publicly funded learning support systems that prepare individuals after arrival, or
- Upstream through selective admission policies and reliance on private/employer-driven adaptation.

Finland represents the most developed “education-first” model, offering integrated language learning, preparatory education, and guidance embedded within a comprehensive adult learning system. However, even in this favorable context, transition into highly technical occupations such as professional driving remains constrained by linguistic and regulatory complexity.

France similarly provides a structured integration sequence through the *Contrat d'intégration républicaine* (CIR), which can function as an initial step before access to vocational training. However, this pathway is not formally articulated as a standardized prerequisite or transition into sector-specific training such as FIMO or other

professional qualifications for which there is currently no specific language training. While the CIR provides a foundation in language and civic integration, its content remains general and may not fully prepare candidates for the technical and linguistic requirements of driver training. As a result, the linkage between integration and vocational pathways depends largely on individual trajectories rather than a coordinated, sequenced system, which can create variability in readiness and progression.

Czechia occupies an intermediate but structurally incomplete position: while initial integration is mandatory and standardized (AIK), the absence of follow-on preparatory or bridging education creates a clear break between integration and vocational qualification access, limiting effective labour market entry.

Ireland and Romania represent low public scaling systems. In both cases, access to licenses and CPC training is formally open, but there are no dedicated public bridging mechanisms, making language proficiency, test preparation, and financial cost key barriers borne by individuals or employers. Romania goes further in its reliance on private or employer-led arrangements, producing uneven outcomes.

Switzerland differs structurally: although adult education and integration offers exist, the system is characterized primarily by upstream selectivity (quotas, labour market priority rules). As a result, education and training play a limited compensatory role, since access to the labour market is already tightly filtered before training becomes relevant.

b. Housing Conditions

Housing emerges as a cross-cutting determinant of training stability and retention.

Czechia

Newcomers may optionally participate in the **State integration program**, which is administered by the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with regional and municipal authorities and NGOs (network of integration centers) which include assistance with regards housing and employment. **The structure of housing conditions differs significantly** among various groups of non-EU nationals.

Finland

Access to municipal or regulated housing and social services reduces early instability for migrant workers, although shortages in urban areas still affect location-dependent training attendance.

France

Housing insecurity remains a major barrier. Temporary or overcrowded accommodation arrangements, particularly for newly arrived workers, are frequently

reported by employers and training providers as undermining participation, punctuality and learning outcomes.

Ireland

Housing availability and affordability represent a significant structural constraint. **High rental costs**, particularly in urban and logistics-intensive regions, **contribute to instability during training periods** and increase the risk of early dropout or exit from the sector.

Romania

Housing is almost entirely organized by employers or recruitment agencies. While this enables rapid deployment, it often results in collective, temporary or geographically isolated housing, increasing dependency and social isolation.

Switzerland

High housing costs constitute a structural barrier. Employers frequently provide or subsidize accommodation, but this reinforces asymmetric dependency and limits worker autonomy during training periods.

Comparative insight

Across countries, insecure or employer-dependent housing directly correlates with training drop-out risks. Systems with stronger public housing or mediation mechanisms (Finland, partly France) display greater training continuity.

c. Health Coverage and Occupational Health

Universal or near-universal health coverage exists in all six countries, but effective access during the early integration phase differs significantly.

Czechia

Over 60% of non-EU immigrants are covered by public health insurance. Public health insurance automatically applies to immigrants in the following cases: permanent residence, employment, and special status (e.g asylum seekers). Other non-EU nationals have the option to purchase commercial health insurance.

Finland

Immediate access to health services linked to residence status is complemented by occupational health coverage once employment begins, supporting training participation and medical fitness requirements.

France

Health coverage mechanisms exist but administrative delays can occur. Gaps during the first months of residence may affect medical certification, stress levels and continuity of training.

Ireland

Access to healthcare is generally effective once employment is secured. However, **administrative delays during pre-employment** phases may temporarily affect access to medical certification required for professional driving.

Romania

Access to health services is formally linked to employment registration. In practice, delays or informality can expose non-EU drivers to periods of limited coverage, with employers often acting as intermediaries.

Switzerland

Mandatory health insurance ensures coverage in principle, but **cost and administrative complexity can be challenging** for newcomers, particularly during pre-employment training phases.

Comparative insight

Health systems are robust in all six countries, yet early administrative access and affordability critically affect training readiness, especially where medical fitness certification is required.

Synthesis of social conditions affecting integration

Education, housing and health conditions function as foundational pillars for effective vocational integration. The comparison highlights that:

- Education systems must be synchronized with vocational pathways, not parallel to them.
- Housing stability is a precondition for training success, not a peripheral issue.
- Health-care access must be continuous from arrival through training and employment.

These dimensions should therefore be considered integral to trainer preparation, employer integration strategies and policy design, rather than treated as external or secondary factors.

3. Labour market and employment context in Transports

General

Czechia

In 2024, the transportation and warehousing sector employed **307,000** people (excluding temporary workers), representing 5,9% of all private-sector employees excluding temporary workers. Detailed statistical data on employment in road transport and warehousing are not available. **Among those, 61,476** workers were from non-EU countries. It is estimated that most of them are workers in road transport and warehousing. **Truck and bus drivers are estimated to be 150,000.**

Finland

The Finnish transport and logistics sector employs approximately **120,000 workers**, including an estimated **70,000–75,000 professional truck and bus drivers**. Estimates of the total driver workforce and the **5–8% share of non-EU drivers** draw on combined data from Statistics Finland, Migri residence-permit statistics, and sector-level workforce analyses referenced by transport and training organizations.

France

France's transport and logistics sector employs **around 1.45 million workers**, corresponding to 7.1% of private-sector employment, including approximately **550,000 professional heavy-goods vehicle drivers**, based on employment data published by INSEE and the SDES. Out of the 869 089 drivers (all types of activities), 9.8% are of non-French nationality (the statistical sources do not allow the identification of nationalities).

Ireland

An occupation-based estimates indicate **around 34,900 truck and van drivers** (annual average, 2020, CSO Labour Force Survey) and **around 30,200 “other drivers & transport operatives”**, a category that includes **bus and coach drivers** among others. The pressure is amplified by an ageing workforce: around 30% of drivers are expected to retire by the end of 2026, the average driver age is **50+**, and under 25 years of age account for only **3,5%** of drivers. No data is available on the part of non-drivers in the workforce.

Romania

Unemployment among non-EU nationals is structurally very low because employment authorization is required prior to entry, as shown by IGI administrative data. In road transport, non-EU drivers represent only **0.27% of all CPC-attested drivers**: 1,136 out of **419,279**, based on certification data from the Romanian Road Transport Authority (ARR), while sector organizations highlight a severe demographic shortfall (ARR; UNTRR; IRU).

Switzerland

Switzerland maintains a strong labour market but employs **very few resident non-EU professional drivers**, a situation linked to restrictive admission rules. Driver shortages are structural, with approximately **5,000 drivers leaving the profession annually versus about 2,000 entrants**, according to workforce estimates published by the Swiss Commercial Vehicle Association (ASTAG) and labour-market data from the FSO.

Comparative insight into the labour and employment context

Across the six countries, the scale of the transport sector and reliance on non-EU drivers differ markedly.

France dominates in absolute size, with a very large driver workforce but unpublished official consolidated data on nationality, which limits visibility on non-EU migration's role.

Finland and Switzerland sit at the opposite end in terms of scale, with smaller labour markets where shortages are structural and increasingly pressing; Czechia and Finland already show a modest but tangible reliance on non-EU drivers, while Switzerland's restrictive admission regime keeps this share minimal despite persistent exits exceeding new entrants.

Ireland seems not to have set up a strategy in regard of the very strong upcoming shortage with the 30% workers retiring at the end of 2026.

Romania presents a distinct case: although it faces a severe demographic shortfall, non-EU drivers remain marginal due to strict pre-entry authorization, resulting in extremely low unemployment among non-EU nationals.

The comparison suggests that driver shortages are common across contexts, but national admission rules and data transparency fundamentally shape how (and whether) non-EU labour can respond to these gaps.

Overall, driver shortages in the European road transport sector have reached a structural and critical level and should justify the inclusion of professional drivers in EU-level shortage occupation lists. According to the International Road Transport Union (IRU), Europe currently faces hundreds of thousands of unfilled driver positions (around 500,000), with shortages projected to worsen significantly due to an ageing workforce and insufficient inflow of young workers.

The European Labour Authority also identifies transport occupations, including drivers, among the sectors experiencing substantial and persistent labour shortages across Member States. These shortages are increasingly addressed through recruitment of non-EU nationals, a strategy explicitly supported in European Commission-backed studies to compensate for workforce deficits. However, this approach places the EU in direct competition with other global labour markets, particularly in Asia and emerging economies, where demand for professional drivers is also growing, thereby intensifying recruitment challenges and raising the need for more coordinated EU policies. In this context, recognising professional drivers as a priority shortage occupation at European level would facilitate targeted migration pathways, harmonized qualification recognition, and more effective workforce planning.

Gender Distribution and Participation

Across all six countries, professional road transport, particularly heavy-goods and long-distance driving, remains a **strongly male-dominated occupation**, both among nationals and non-EU workers. Available quantitative data and qualitative evidence from the four national reports consistently indicate that **women represent only a marginal share of the professional driver workforce**, and an even smaller proportion among non-EU drivers.

Czechia

In 2024, of 150 000 professional heavy vehicle drivers, about 3% are women, specifically female drivers, particularly of buses. Data on employed female immigrants are not available. However, the proportion of women's employment is estimated to be relatively high because of employment of Ukrainian women. They account for almost 20% of total non-EU employment.

Finland

Women account for a limited but slowly increasing share of professional drivers overall. Among non-EU drivers, however, female participation remains **exceptional**, reflecting both global migration patterns in transport and gendered recruitment channels. Training providers note no formal exclusion mechanisms but report low female enrolment in CPC and VET driving pathways.

France

National statistics indicate that women represent **less than 5% of professional heavy-vehicle drivers**. Official data disaggregating drivers by French and non-French nationality shows that 3.3% of non-French drivers are women. Employer interviews and sector organizations consistently describe non-EU recruitment as **overwhelmingly male**. Gender is not considered in certification pathways, yet training schedules, workplace culture and housing arrangements are often implicitly calibrated for men.

Romania

The non-EU driver workforce is **almost exclusively male**, largely due to recruitment from countries where long-haul driving is a male-dominated occupation. Employers and agencies confirm that female candidates are extremely rare. No targeted measures exist to attract or support women in entry pathways or training.

Ireland

The non-EU road-transport workforce is **strongly male-dominated**, even though there are no official gender-disaggregated statistic. Although the **licensing and training pathway is not designed with gender-specific criteria**, barriers affecting non-EU entrants such as high upfront training costs, long timelines, limited tailored training capacity and workplace adaptation pressures, can **indirectly disadvantage women** when combined with existing gendered participation patterns and sectoral norms. No

targeted measures have been set up to specifically attract or support women into non-EU driver entry pathways or training, meaning gender considerations remain largely implicit rather than operationalized.

Switzerland

Women are under-represented among professional drivers in general, and non-EU women are virtually absent due to **restrictive admission rules combined with occupational gender norms**. Where women are employed, they are more often found in local transport or auxiliary logistics roles rather than long-haul international driving.

Comparative insight on gender distribution and participation

Gender imbalance is structurally reproduced across all six systems through:

- male-dominated international recruitment corridors,
- absence of gender-sensitive outreach or training design,
- working conditions (long absences, irregular hours) that disproportionately deter women,
- housing and workplace arrangements not adapted to mixed-gender cohorts.

While gender distribution is not currently a central policy focus in any of the six countries, the findings suggest that **future skills-shortage strategies could benefit from explicitly addressing female participation**, both among nationals and non-EU drivers, through adapted training conditions, mentoring and employer practices.

4. Non-EU drivers: scale and profile

General

Czechia

There are no official statistics disaggregating non-EU professional drivers by nationality. Broader migration patterns suggest that non-EU populations mainly originate from Ukraine, Vietnam, Russia and other Asian countries, though this cannot be directly linked to the driver workforce. Available sectoral data indicate that 61,476 non-EU workers were employed in transport and warehousing at the end of 2024, but their specific share among professional drivers is unknown.

Finland

non-EU drivers predominantly originate from **Russia, the Philippines, India, Nepal, Ukraine and Central Asia**, reflecting broader labour migration patterns documented by Migri, Statistics Finland, and EMN analyses.

France

France does not publish nationality-specific data on professional drivers.

Qualitative and institutional evidence nevertheless suggests that **integration challenges are less due to language barriers which are inherently less significant than in other countries, given that a share of non-EU workers is French-speaking, than to inadequate support mechanisms.** Moreover, since access to driving licenses and professional driver qualifications is largely harmonized by EU directives, certification-related barriers do not appear to be specific to France and are better understood as part of broader issues which are social and institutional.

Ireland

There are no statistics available on non-EU drivers' origins. Employers are actively exploring international recruitment. Some companies already rely on drivers from countries such as South Africa, though this has become increasingly more difficult since 2025 due to more complex administration processes. **Precise up-to-date statistics on non-EU participation are limited, but the sector is increasingly dependent on non-EU labour.** Despite this, growth is constrained by immigration and licensing barriers, and hiring from abroad can take over a year due to the administration.

Romania

Non-EU drivers are predominantly male and significantly younger than the Romanian driver average (estimated 28–40 vs ~48 years), according to age-profile analyses by UNTRR, ARR and sector studies. Main origin countries include **Georgia and Armenia**, with increasing inflows from Pakistan and Central Asia (IGI; IRU).

Switzerland

No official statistics disaggregate professional drivers by nationality. Available evidence from FSO and ASTAG indicates that the resident non-EU HGV workforce is very small, with labour demand largely met through EU/EFTA mobility and cross-border arrangements.

Comparative insight of non-EU drivers scale and profile

Finland and Romania display clearly identifiable source countries aligned with broader labour migration routes, with Romania also standing out for the younger age profile of non-EU drivers.

Czechia, France, Ireland and Switzerland, by contrast, lack easily accessible officially published nationality-disaggregated statistics. In Ireland, administrative complexity appears to constrain access, while Switzerland relies predominantly on EU/EFTA mobility and cross-border labour, resulting in a limited presence of resident non-EU drivers.

Access to the profession

Czechia

Access to the profession is governed by standard regulatory requirements: non-EU drivers must exchange or re-take their license depending on recognition frameworks, obtain a Certificate of Professional Competence through initial training (140–280 hours), complete periodic training (35 hours every five years) and meet medical and psychological fitness requirements. **Access is constrained by administrative procedures, qualification recognition and language requirements**, with practical expectations around B1-level Czech for workplace communication.

Finland

Access requires a valid residence permit, license exchange or recognition, CPC qualification and medical fitness. **Functional Finnish or Swedish language competence** is a decisive practical requirement, as evidenced by VET regulations, training-provider practices and labour-market.

France

Access is governed by **highly standardized national certification pathways** aligned with EU regulations. Entry into the profession can be achieved through several routes, including course attendance and a test (titres professionnels or State diplomas) but also accelerated initial qualification (FIMO). All examinations and certifications are delivered exclusively in French, with a de facto B1 level required in practice.

Ireland

Licenses C and D are not recognized. For drivers who want to drive trucks or buses commercially, training follows a similar pathway for everyone, regardless of nationality. The high costs are often a major barrier, particularly for young candidates, and migrants without access to finance or sponsorship.

Romania

Access is **formally open but procedurally complex**, involving pre-arrival work authorization, residence permits, driving-license exchange or reexamination, CPC certification and tachograph card issuance, as documented by IGI, ARR and transport authorities.

Switzerland

Access remains **structurally restrictive** due to quotas, labour-market precedence and immediate requirements for Swiss licenses and CPC certification, as defined in federal legislation and documented by **FSO** and cantonal authorities.

Comparative insight of access to the profession for non-EU drivers

Across the six countries, access to the profession is shaped less by nationality-specific regulatory barriers than by differences in how EU qualification frameworks are implemented at national level, combined with procedural and practical constraints. Access to the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) is governed by European directives that define several possible pathways (CPC awarded on the basis of course attendance and a test, CPC awarded on the basis of tests, CPC certifying an accelerated initial qualification).

However, national implementation of these rules varies significantly, creating mixed access conditions. For example, Romania allows all multiple pathways. Conversely, in countries such as France, Ireland, Finland and Czechia, it is not allowed to award CPC on the basis of tests.

Within this shared regulatory framework, the main barriers are therefore indirect. Language requirements act as a key practical filter in Finland and France, where training and assessment are conducted in national languages. In Czechia, Czech remain the predominant language for trainings. In Romania, administrative complexity remains the dominant constraint, with multiple sequential procedures delaying access. In Ireland, financial costs constitute the main barrier, while Switzerland stands apart due to strong upstream selectivity (quotas and labour market precedence), which restricts access before training pathways become relevant.

These differences highlight that access is shaped not only by formal regulation, but also by how national systems operate EU frameworks and combine them with implicit filters such as language, cost and administrative procedures. They also suggest that the inclusiveness of access pathways may vary depending on the diversity of available certification routes, an aspect that warrants further analysis in relation to training outcomes and labour market integration.

5. Training pathways and availability

Czechia

Training pathways for professional drivers in Czechia follow the standard EU-regulated framework (CPC initial qualification and periodic training), with no dedicated or adapted pathways for non-EU nationals. Access to training is formally open but practically constrained by Czech-language requirements, as both instruction and examinations are conducted almost exclusively in Czech. Training provision is delivered by licensed private and public training centers, under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport. However, preparatory or bridging courses (language and technical content) are largely absent from the public system, leaving migrants to rely on employers or private arrangements for preparatory support. Financing is mixed but predominantly private. Employers often cover CPC or license-related training costs to address labour shortages. In some cases, costs are advanced and later recovered through employment arrangements. Public funding for adult learning is limited and not specifically targeted to migrant drivers. As a result, **the system is characterized by formal openness but low institutional scaffolding, with uneven access depending on employer involvement.**

Finland

Non-EU trainees access the same publicly regulated VET pathways as nationals. Language proficiency is the main barrier to effective participation, as shown by vocational-training data, migration statistics and training-provider reporting.

Training is predominantly publicly financed through the national VET funding system, based on state budget allocations administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture and channelled to licensed VET providers. Training is generally **free of charge for learners**, including adult and migrant trainees, with limited employer cost-sharing mainly in apprenticeship-type arrangements.

France

De facto, access to vocational driver training requires sufficient French language proficiency, as training and assessment are delivered in French. Complementary language and integration modules may be offered through public–private initiatives, although they are not systematically embedded in sector-specific pathways.

For entry-level professional training (initial access to the profession), **funding is primarily driven by public procurement mechanisms (State, Regions, France Travail), which play a central role.** This is **complemented by sector-based mutualization schemes** (notably through apprenticeship and operational preparation for employment – POE), **as well as employer contributions. Individual funding (CPF) remains limited in this context.**

Ireland

Non-EU drivers encounter substantial barriers to accessing the profession in Ireland. Professional license categories obtained outside the EU are not recognized, requiring candidates to complete the **full national licensing and testing pathway**.

Administrative timelines are often lengthy, frequently exceeding 12 months. Language proficiency is also a difficulty.

Training costs are high, ranging from **€5,000 to €8,000**, with limited systematic financial support. In parallel, employment-permit regimes residence status closely to a specific employer, increasing dependency and reducing labour mobility.

Romania

Only the standard CPC curriculum exists. No formally differentiated training pathways are established for non-EU drivers; preparatory measures are largely employer-financed, as documented by ARR, INSSE and sector organizations.

There is no systematic public financing for CPC training for non-EU drivers. Training costs are typically borne by employers or recruitment agencies, and in some cases advanced by drivers and later recovered through employment contracts or retention clauses (ARR; UNTRR; Ministry of Transport).

Switzerland

A single national training system applies to all drivers, with no tailored public schemes for non-EU nationals. This is documented by FSO, cantonal training authorities and sector organizations.

Training and continuing education (OACP) are mainly financed by employers and drivers themselves, due to mandatory continuing-training obligations. Public involvement is largely indirect, through regulation, certification and quality assurance at cantonal and federal level rather than direct subsidies (FSO/BFS; ASTAG; ASA).

Institutional pathways and governance

Country	Governance model	Pathways to profession	Language of training & exams	Main effective constraints	Funding structure (entry-level training)
Czechia	Moderately centralized but operationally fragmented; strong reliance on employers	CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of course attendance and a test	Czech (primarily)	Language barrier; recognition procedures; limited institutional coordination	Mixed system, largely employer-driven; limited structured public funding for migrants
Finland	Strongly coordinated system with high public involvement (education-led model)	• CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of course attendance and a test • CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of tests only	Finnish / Swedish	Language requirements (high threshold); integration into regulated VET system	Predominantly public funding through VET system; training generally free for learners

Country	Governance model	Pathways to profession	Language of training & exams	Main effective constraints	Funding structure (entry-level training)
France	Hybrid governance system: strong national regulation with multi-level implementation (State / Regions / social partners)	• CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of course attendance and a test • CPC certifying an accelerated initial qualification	French	Language requirement for training completion	Mixed public/private funding depending on status: • jobseekers: mainly public funding (State, Regions, France Travail); • employees or pre-employment: OPCO/employers; frequent co-financing (e.g. POE, OPCO and France Travail); AFT (funded by a tax on heavy vehicles) contributes to sector training
Ireland	Market-driven system with limited public structuring	CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of course attendance and a test	English	High cost; limited financial support; dependency on employer sponsorship	Mostly private or employer-based funding; limited public financial support
Romania	Fragmented multi-agency system with	CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of tests only	Romanian (primarily)	Administrative complexity; sequential	Mixed but largely employer or agency-funded; limited structured public support

Country	Governance model	Pathways to profession	Language of training & exams	Main effective constraints	Funding structure (entry-level training)
	strong administrative layering			procedures; institutional navigation burden	
Switzerland	Highly selective and regulated system (quota-based, federal structure)	CPC certifying an initial qualification awarded on the basis of tests only	National languages (DE/FR/IT)	Strong upstream selection (quotas, labour market tests); access restrictions before training	Mainly employer-funded within a selective system; limited public training support for non-EU nationals

Key challenges identified

Common challenges

- Language barriers across training and employment pathways
- Complexity of EU transport regulation comprehension
- Administrative fragmentation or rigidity
- Cultural and workplace integration challenges

Country-specific emphases

- **Czechia:** absence of bridging pathways, strong reliance on employers, and Czech-language-only training creating access bottlenecks
- **Finland:** language proficiency and recognition of prior skills
- **France:** standardized and structured certification framework, with strong linguistic requirements
- **Ireland:** language proficiency and costs of training
- **Romania:** administrative fragmentation and limited trainer preparation
- **Switzerland:** restrictive legal entry framework

Conclusions

Despite structural differences, all systems converge on a shared requirement: **language-aware, practice-oriented training combined with coordinated employer engagement** is indispensable for the sustainable integration of non-EU professional drivers. Across the six countries, successful integration depends on a combination of:

- Language aware training,
- Early skills assessment,
- Prepared trainers,
- Employer led induction,
- Contextualized pedagogy,
- Coordinated administrative and social support.

6. Racism, Discrimination and Unequal Treatment of Non-EU Drivers

This section synthesizes findings from the national reports, focusing on documented or implicit forms of racism, discrimination, stigmatization and unequal treatment experienced by non-EU professional drivers. The analysis covers both explicit discriminatory practices and indirect or structural mechanisms that lead to unequal outcomes. If the data collected through the surveys, the interviews and the focus groups is not statistically relevant, it provides elements to illustrate the experiences of non-EU professional drivers and feeds the reflection on the training framework content.

Czechia

The Czech national context shows limited explicit reporting of discrimination, but significant indirect and structural inequalities affecting non-EU professional drivers.

Barriers mainly stem from language and institutional design: Czech proficiency is required for licensing, training and work, yet no targeted linguistic support is provided, disadvantaging non-EU nationals. Access to employment and administrative processes also depends heavily on employers, creating power imbalances that can restrict mobility and discourage reporting of unfair treatment.

There are indications of implicit job segmentation and slower integration due to cultural and communication gaps, but these remain poorly documented. Overall, discrimination appears indirect and structural, driven by language requirements, limited institutional support and employer dependence rather than explicit exclusion.

Finland

No explicit references to racism or discrimination affecting non-EU drivers were collected. The survey and interviews emphasize strong anti-discrimination legislation and formally equal access to education, healthcare and vocational training.

However, highlights can be brought on implicit exclusion mechanisms. Finnish language proficiency is essential for both training and employment in the transport sector, yet no dedicated or adapted pathways are described for non-EU drivers. As a result, equal formal access does not guarantee equal effective access. In addition, the absence of nationality-disaggregated occupational data renders potential discrimination difficult to detect, measure or address.

In Finland, unequal treatment, where present, operates primarily through neutral institutional requirements, rather than through explicit stigmatization or exclusion.

France

Discrimination based on nationality, origin or ethnicity is strictly prohibited under French labour law and criminal law. Anti-discrimination policies formally cover the entire employment trajectory, including recruitment, working conditions and career progression.

Nevertheless, surveys and interviews (which are qualitative data) collected for this desk research from the French context suggest that social isolation and workplace stigmatization affecting non-EU drivers may occur, linked to names, accents and perceived cultural background.

Ireland

Temporary permits with renewal uncertainty, limited long-term residency pathways, and risk of job loss tied to their visa status create a pattern of institutional and pre-labour-market discrimination. Upfront training costs, limited access to credit, and a lack of subsidized programs also prevent opportunities for non-EU candidates to driving positions. For those who get to the position, insurance barriers can exist, where an employer is refused cover for non-EU license holders. While this type of discrimination is not allowed in Ireland, it nevertheless happens. Employers will often face higher premiums.

Romania

In Romania, discrimination affecting non-EU drivers is mainly indirect and systemic, driven by vulnerability rather than overt racism. Non-EU drivers depend heavily on employers or recruitment agencies for residence permits, work authorizations, license recognition and access to training. This creates strong power imbalances, increasing exposure to unequal treatment and limiting drivers' ability to assert their rights.

Language barriers constitute a central source of inequality. Most non-EU drivers arrive with very limited Romanian language proficiency, while training, examinations and administrative procedures are largely conducted in Romanian. Although rules are formally identical for all drivers, this produces structural disadvantages in practice. However, it should be noted that training courses and examinations are also available in English and Spanish, which partially improves accessibility for some non-EU drivers

Employers and trainers also report doubts regarding non-EU drivers' competence, leading to closer monitoring and reduced autonomy. National authorities explicitly warn of risks of exploitation and "modern slavery" in road transport if protective measures are not reinforced.

Switzerland

The pattern of discrimination is primarily institutional and pre-labour-market. Strict residence quotas and labour-market precedence rules strongly favor Swiss and EU/EFTA nationals, making access to the profession structurally difficult for non-EU drivers. Exclusion thus occurs largely before workplace entry. Language also functions as a practical barrier. Although not formally required for work permits, training and examinations are conducted exclusively in Switzerland's national languages, and training institutions may refuse applicants with insufficient comprehension. The report further notes discrimination in access to housing based on nationality or origin, concerns about wage dumping, and the absence of a comprehensive federal anti-discrimination law.

In Switzerland, unequal treatment is embedded mainly in legal and administrative structures, rather than in interpersonal workplace relations.

Comparative Insights of racism, discrimination and unequal treatment of non-EU Drivers

Across the six national contexts, available evidence suggests that non-EU drivers may face differentiated forms of challenges or unequal situations, shaped by national institutional arrangements and labour market dynamics. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, given the limited quantitative evidence and the qualitative nature of the data collected.

- **Czechia:** indications of indirect and structural challenges, linked to language barriers, limited integration pathways and strong employer dependency.
- **Finland:** potential for implicit exclusion through formally neutral systems, where equal legal access does not always translate into equal effective access, particularly for recent migrants.
- **France:** reported experiences of workplace stigmatization and social isolation, although these occur within a strong legal framework prohibiting discrimination.
- **Ireland:** constraints related to administrative procedures, training costs and insurance conditions, which may indirectly affect access opportunities.
- **Romania:** vulnerabilities linked to dependency on employers, language barriers and risks of unequal treatment in practice.
- **Switzerland:** structural constraints primarily located upstream, through migration and labour-market access rules.

A key cross-cutting observation is the role of language, which appears as a major factor influencing access to training, certification and employment across all countries. In addition, several contexts illustrate that **equal formal access does not necessarily result in equal effective access**, particularly where specific needs of newly arrived migrants (language support, administrative guidance, integration mechanisms) are not fully addressed.

While these elements point to potential disparities in access and integration conditions, the available evidence does not allow for definitive conclusions regarding systematic discrimination or structural marginalization. Further quantitative analysis and broader evidence would be required to substantiate such claims.

7. Trainers' needs

This section is based on the needs expressed through the online survey answers and the interviews collected with trainers, VET training centers managers and directors.

Czechia

- **Lack of trainer preparation for migrant learners**

Trainers report no formal training on how to work with linguistically diverse or non-EU adult learners. Identified needs include:

- Teaching technical driving content in simplified Czech
- Managing heterogeneous groups with varying educational backgrounds
- Adapting instruction without lowering regulatory standards

- **Strong need for language-adapted training tools**

Czech is required across training and examinations, yet no integrated language support exists within CPC or license training. Trainers highlight the need for:

- Bilingual or multilingual glossaries (technical vocabulary, regulations)
- Visual and practice-based materials
- Step-by-step pedagogical supports for low language proficiency learners

- **Absence of pre-training assessment mechanisms**

Training providers lack structured tools to assess linguistic and technical readiness before entry into training. This leads to mismatches between trainee level and course difficulty and increased risk of failure or dropout

- **Dependence on informal or employer-led solutions**

In the absence of institutional support, trainers rely heavily on employer mediation, peer translation or ad hoc solutions, resulting in uneven training quality across providers.

- **Limited coordination and knowledge sharing**

There are no formal platforms or networks for trainers to exchange practices related to non-EU learners. Trainers express a need for shared methodologies, practical case-based guidance and institutional recognition of emerging challenges.

- **Need for better understanding of administrative pathways**

Similar to Romania and Switzerland, trainers indicate difficulties in navigating and explaining residence and work permit conditions, license exchange or recognition processes and constraints linked to trainees' legal status.

Finland

- **Enhanced language support within VET pathways**

Trainers operate in a system where Finnish (or Swedish) proficiency is essential, yet no adapted language-supported training pathways exist for non-EU drivers. VET providers need integrated vocational language support aligned with driving-specific terminology.

- **Pedagogical tools for linguistically diverse learners**

The absence of differentiation mechanisms means trainers must deliver standard curricula to learners with highly uneven language and educational backgrounds, highlighting a need for simplified, visually supported and practice-oriented teaching resources.

- **Better data and feedback mechanisms**

The lack of nationality-disaggregated occupational data limits trainers' ability to design evidence-based adaptations or argue for program changes, indicating a need for improved monitoring tools.

France

- **Training for trainers on how to teach learners with language difficulties**

All trainers responding indicated they had received no specific preparation for working with non-EU trainees and expressed a strong need for training on:

- teaching technical content to learners with limited French,
- adapting assessments (oral, practical, simulation-based).

- **Adapted training materials**

Trainers identified the need for:

- simplified and visual materials (road signs and regulation, vehicle systems, tachographs),
- modules focused on professional communication (with employers, clients, colleagues),
- culturally adapted safety content.

- **Intercultural and trauma-aware training**

Trainers stressed the importance of training on:

- Cultural differences,
- Psychological vulnerability,
- Cooperation with refugee or migrant support organizations.

- **Pre-training assessment tools**

VET providers reported a need for **systematic pre-training evaluation** of linguistic and technical readiness to reduce dropout and training failure.

Ireland

- **Trainer upskilling for multilingual delivery (interpretation, language, comprehension)**
Training providers report they are not equipped to work with non-EU drivers, especially regarding interpretation support, language barriers, and ensuring learner understanding, indicating a need for structured trainer preparation in multilingual pedagogy and communication
- **Increased trainer capacity and protected support time**
Providers highlight limited trainer capacity and strong pressure to achieve candidate success within a mandatory pathway, which reduces the time trainers can dedicate to non-EU learners; this points to a need for additional staffing and protected tutoring/coaching time for candidates who require more support.
- **Addressing the trainer shortage to relieve bottlenecks in training and testing**
The report notes an overall trainer shortage in Ireland, which further constrains the system and adds pressure on training and testing for non-EU drivers, suggesting the need for measures to recruit, retain, and upskill trainers to expand throughput.
- **English proficiency as a key determinant of non-EU trainees' success,** affecting theory-test performance, understanding of regulations, and workplace safety, which makes language support a foundational requirement rather than an “add-on.”

Romania

- **Formal preparation of trainers for non-EU publics**
100% of trainers surveyed reported having received **no prior training** to work with non-EU drivers. They identified strong needs in:
 - Adult learning and low-literacy pedagogy,
 - Simplified technical instruction without lowering standards,
 - Multilingual classroom management.
- **Language mediation capacity**
Trainers identified language as the primary obstacle and called for:
 - multilingual glossaries and illustrated reference tools,
 - strategies for teaching when no shared language exists,
 - support materials in major source-country languages.
- **Culturally aware road-safety teaching**
Trainers emphasized the need to adapt safety instruction to account for:
 - Different driving cultures,
 - Previously acquired habits that may conflict with EU rules.
- **Regulatory and administrative knowledge**
Trainers reported a need to better understand and explain:

- Immigration procedures,
- Licence recognition pathways,
- Trainees' rights and obligations.
- **Cross-organizational knowledge sharing**
Trainers highlighted the absence of mechanisms to exchange good practices and requested **structured platforms or networks** for sharing methodologies.

Switzerland

- **Improved linguistic readiness of trainees**
Trainers and centers reported that poor language proficiency creates major difficulties in training and examinations, indicating a need for:
 - Pre-training language preparation,
 - Clearer minimum comprehension standards.
- **Adaptation of teaching to low-literacy adult learners**
Similar to Romania and France, Swiss trainers identified the utility of:
 - Adult-learning approaches,
 - Simplified and practice-oriented explanations.
- **Training in cultural sensitivity and safeguarding**
VET providers recognized the relevance of:
 - culturally aware teaching,
 - safeguarding and trauma-informed approaches.
- **Clarification of legal and administrative frameworks**
Trainers expressed a need for clearer guidance on how migration and employment rules apply to non-EU trainees, to avoid misinformation during training.

Consolidated needs across the six countries

Across Czechia, Finland, France, Ireland, Romania and Switzerland, trainers and VET providers consistently identify **five core categories of needs**:

1. Trainer upskilling and professional development

- Training on teaching non-EU / migrant learners
- Adult education, low-literacy pedagogy
- Trauma-informed and intercultural teaching

2. Language-adapted training solutions

- Integrated vocational language support
- Multilingual or visually supported materials
- Sector-specific professional vocabulary training

3. Adapted pedagogical tools and methods

- Simplified technical content without lowering standards
- Practical, scenario-based and simulation-based learning
- Flexible assessment methods (oral, practical, staged)

4. Better understanding of administrative and legal pathways

- Immigration status implications
- Licence and certification recognition processes
- Trainees' rights and obligations

5. Structural support for knowledge sharing and coordination

- Platforms to share good practices between VET providers
- Institutional recognition of the specific challenges involved
- Data and feedback systems to inform training adaptation

Across the six national contexts, trainers and VET providers report being **on the frontline of integration without adequate preparation or tools**. Their expressed needs converge around **language adaptation, pedagogical support, intercultural competence and institutional coordination**. Addressing these needs is a precondition for improving the quality, equity and effectiveness of non-EU driver training across Europe.

8. Employers and stakeholders' needs

This section is based on the needs expressed through the online survey answers and the interviews collected with employers, unions, authorities and other stakeholders.

Czechia

- **Reduction of administrative complexity and faster access to the profession**
Stakeholders identify lengthy and fragmented procedures (residence permits, license exchange, qualification recognition) as a primary barrier delaying recruitment and entry into employment.
- **Drivers with sufficient Czech language proficiency**
Language is consistently highlighted as the key obstacle to integration, affecting training comprehension, safety, workplace communication and regulatory understanding.
- **Better assessment of candidates' real skills and preparedness**
Employers report difficulties in evaluating the actual competence and readiness of non-EU drivers, as prior experience and licences do not guarantee adaptation to EU standards.
- **Training adapted to non-EU drivers' needs**
Stakeholders point to gaps in training approaches, including lack of standardized methods, limited integration of soft skills and insufficient support for linguistic and cultural adaptation.
- **Stronger integration and workplace support mechanisms**
Employers emphasize the importance of mentoring, human support and gradual onboarding, as well as better internal understanding of administrative statuses to improve retention and integration.
- **Improved coordination and simplification of institutional frameworks**
Authorities and stakeholders highlight fragmented responsibilities and inconsistent approaches across agencies, calling for a more coherent system for labour migration and integration of non-EU drivers.

Finland

- **Access to a sustainable driver workforce**
Employers face a long-term structural shortage of professional drivers due to ageing and low entry rates. Stakeholders stress the need to mobilize non-EU drivers as a stable labour pool.
- **Improved language readiness of recruits**
While formal requirements are limited, employers expect functional Finnish (or Swedish) for safety, documentation and workplace communication, indicating a need for better language preparation before and during employment.

- **Streamlined access to training and certification**
Employers would benefit from simpler and faster pathways for non-EU drivers to enter training and complete certification, reducing delays before productive employment.
- **Better matching between migration and labour-market policy**
Stakeholders highlight the need for closer alignment between immigration systems, training provision and labour-market demand in transport and logistics.

France

- **Drivers with sufficient French language proficiency**
Employers consistently identify language as the main barrier to recruitment and integration. They need drivers who can understand safety procedures, documentation, client interactions and internal communication.
- **Reliable assessment of practical driving competence**
Employers express difficulty in evaluating the actual operational skills of non-EU candidates, even when formal licenses or equivalences exist. They call for standardised, pre-recruitment competence assessment mechanisms.
- **Structured integration and onboarding frameworks**
Employers report the need for **formalized integration processes**, including mentoring, gradual productivity targets and cultural induction.
- **Better prepared managers and supervisors**
Stakeholders stress the importance of training managers in intercultural communication and awareness of non-EU administrative statuses to reduce misunderstandings and discriminatory practices.
- **Reduced administrative complexity and delays**
Employers highlight the burden created by license exchange procedures, certification requirements and residence formalities, which slow down hiring and increase costs.

Ireland

- **Reduction in recruitment delays and slower time-to-productivity**
Employers report that recruitment delays undermine the economic viability of hiring, while onboarding costs increase due to constraints in language, culture and understanding; as a result, full productivity takes longer to achieve.
- **Impact of the controlled migration via quotas and limited “critical skills” coverage**
The policy approach relies on controlled migration through permit quotas, with limited inclusion of drivers in critical-skills lists; quota adjustments are often reactive (for example increases for related roles only once severe shortages are evidenced by industry).

- **Alignment between migration and licensing, financial support and testing**

The report identifies misalignment between migration and licensing systems, lack of financial support for training, and insufficient testing capacity, all of which continue to constrain entry and scaling of the drivers' workforce.

Romania

- **Reduction of bureaucratic and immigration delays**

Employers consistently identify immigration procedures, residence permits and license recognition as the single greatest obstacle to employing non-EU drivers.

- **Drivers with adequate communication skills**

Language deficits (Romanian or operational English) are cited as a major operational risk, affecting dispatch communication, control procedures and client interactions.

- **Training aligned with real operational needs**

Employers stress that current training does not sufficiently cover:

- Tachograph use in real conditions,
- EU driving and rest time rules,
- Workplace communication and documentation.

- **Mandatory induction and mentoring systems**

Stakeholders repeatedly call for **compulsory post-arrival induction and mentoring periods** before non-EU drivers operate independently.

- **Two-stage training models**

Employers strongly support training partly in the country of origin (EU rules, language, soft skills), followed by practical adaptation in Romania.

- **Safeguards against exploitation and reputational risk**

Authorities and social partners underline the need to prevent exploitative practices and protect companies from legal and reputational damage.

Switzerland

- **Easier access to non-EU drivers amid acute shortages**

Stakeholders recognize that the current quota and precedence system severely limits access to non-EU drivers, despite growing shortages, and express a need for **more flexible admission mechanisms**.

- **Drivers able to operate safely in a high-compliance environment**

Employers emphasize strict adherence to Swiss regulations (driving bans, LSVA, alcohol limits), requiring **high safety awareness and regulatory competence**.

- **Language proficiency tailored to operational needs**

Although not legally required, employers need drivers with **sufficient command of local languages** to pass training, exams and interact with authorities.

- **Protection against wage dumping and unfair competition**

Industry stakeholders highlight concerns that unequal conditions for non-EU

drivers may distort competition, creating a need for **clear enforcement of equal working conditions**.

- **Clearer guidance on legal and administrative frameworks**

Employers and training actors need **greater clarity and predictability** regarding migration, training and employment rules for non-EU drivers.

Comparative insights of employers and stakeholders' needs

Across the six national contexts, employers' and stakeholders' needs show **strong convergence**, despite differences in institutional systems:

1. Labour supply pressure is universal

All countries face driver shortages and recognize non-EU drivers as an increasingly necessary workforce, though access mechanisms vary significantly.

2. Language competence is a central requirement everywhere

Employers in all four countries identify **language proficiency as critical** for safety, communication and productivity, even where it is not a formal legal requirement.

3. Mismatch between training and operational reality

Employers consistently report that existing training pathways do not sufficiently prepare non-EU drivers for **real-world operations**, particularly regarding EU regulations, tachograph use and workplace communication.

4. Administrative and immigration complexity is a major cost factor

Romania and France emphasize this most strongly, but all countries report that **bureaucratic delays and uncertainty** hinder recruitment and increase financial risk.

5. Need for structured integration, not just qualification

Across countries, stakeholders stress that recruitment success depends on:

- Induction programmes,
- Mentoring system,
- gradual integration into full productivity.

Employers and sector stakeholders across Czechia, Finland, France, Romania and Switzerland converge on a core message: **recruiting non-EU drivers is no longer the main challenge; integrating them effectively and lawfully is**. Their needs extend beyond certification to include language readiness, operational competence, administrative simplification and structured integration frameworks. Addressing these needs is essential both for labour-market stability and for preventing exploitation and reputational risk in the transport sector.

Executive Summary and resulting recommendations based on the Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Trainers and Non-EU Drivers

1. Context and Purpose

Europe faces persistent driver shortages while increasing reliance on non-EU (non-EU) drivers. In this context, TRAINDRV2EU aims to improve the **integration, training effectiveness, and long-term retention** of non-EU drivers by strengthening training approaches, trainer competencies, and the relevance and accessibility of learning tools.

Within WP2, Deliverable A2.1 (“Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Trainers and Non-EU Drivers”) is designed as the **evidence base** for subsequent project outputs. As defined in the project’s delivery requirements, this needs analysis gathers insights from **trainers, VET providers, transport employers, relevant stakeholders, and non-EU drivers** to identify **learning barriers, skills gaps, and industry challenges**, and to ensure the training framework developed in later activities is **relevant, targeted, and transferable** across partner contexts.

This deliverable therefore supports three strategic aims:

1. **Diagnose** barriers and gaps affecting non-EU drivers’ access to and success in training and employment;
2. **Identify** trainers’ and organizations’ capacity needs to deliver inclusive, effective learning;
3. **Inform** a harmonized training framework and the design of multilingual, practice-oriented training materials and digital tools in subsequent work packages.

2. Methodological Note

The needs assessment uses a **comparative, multi-source approach** across partner countries (Czechia, Finland, France, Ireland, Romania and Switzerland), structured with a shared analytical grid (migration/labour context; access to profession; training pathways; institutional arrangements; challenges; needs; best practices). Evidence combines:

- **Official statistical, administrative and sectoral sources** (national statistical institutes, migration authorities, transport authorities, sector organizations) to frame the structural context;
- A **partner-led online survey** targeting trainers, training centers, employers and relevant authorities;

- **Complementary interviews** with non-EU drivers and key actors (trainers, VET managers, employers, authorities and migrant-support organizations), used to contextualize barriers and training needs.

The report acknowledges that the primary data collected may not be statistically representative; however, it provides sufficient qualitative and indicative evidence to define the main training challenges and skill needs and to guide the development of targeted solutions within TRAINDRV2EU.

3. Synthesis

3.1. Cross-cutting barriers for non-EU drivers

Language proficiency emerges as the dominant barrier across training and employment pathways: it affects comprehension of regulatory content, theory testing, CPC/FIMO-style training participation, and safe workplace communication.

Regulatory complexity (such as EU compliance requirements, operational rules, tachograph practices and related procedures) creates high cognitive load for newcomers, especially when delivered in a single national language with limited scaffolding. Employers also report gaps between formal training and **real operational demands**, affecting time-to-productivity and safety confidence.

Administrative and structural constraints (such as fragmented processes, delays, costs, or restrictive pathways depending on national context) increased risk of dropout and hinder scaling recruitment and training pipelines.

Finally, **social conditions**, notably housing stability and early access to health/administrative support, significantly influence training continuity and retention, meaning integration outcomes are shaped as much by “life stability” as by curriculum content.

3.2. Trainers’ needs

Across participating contexts, trainers and VET providers report being **on the frontline of integration without adequate preparation or tools**, resulting in consistent needs for:

- **Language-aware pedagogy** and strategies for mixed-language groups;
- **Simplified, visual and practice-oriented materials** that preserve standards while increasing comprehension;
- **Flexible assessment methods** (more oral/practical, staged, scenario-based) where permissible;
- **Intercultural competence and safeguarding/trauma-informed awareness** to better support diverse learners;

- **Pre-training diagnostic tools** to identify language/skills gaps early and reduce failure and attrition;
- **Clearer understanding of legal/administrative pathways** impacting trainees' eligibility, rights and obligations.

3.3. *Employers' and stakeholders' needs*

Employers converge on four priorities:

1. recruits with **functional language competence for safety and operations**;
2. more reliable **assessment of practical competence** beyond paperwork;
3. **structured onboarding/mentoring** (induction, progressive autonomy, follow-up checkpoints) to secure retention;
4. reduced **administrative uncertainty and delays**, which raise costs and slow time-to-productivity.

4. Resulting Recommendations

Based on the assessment of needs, the following recommendations directly inform the design of the WP2 harmonized framework and the WP3 training materials/digital tools:

1. **Embed job-specific language support inside vocational training (not as a parallel track).**
Integrate profession-oriented language (safety, regulations, tachograph vocabulary, workplace documentation, enforcement interactions) into technical modules to reduce the “hidden gatekeeping” effect of language requirements.
2. **Introduce systematic pre-entry and early-stage diagnostics.**
Implement a structured assessment of language baseline, driving competence, regulatory readiness and learning support needs before full training. This reduces costly failure, improves matching, and supports targeted learning pathways.
3. **Professionalize trainer preparation through a targeted capacity-building package.**
Deliver training-of-trainers content on adult learning for diverse groups, language-aware instruction, inclusive/visual teaching methods, intercultural competence, and adapted assessment strategies, supported by practical templates and ready-to-use tools.
4. **Shift pedagogy toward scenario-based, practice-oriented learning aligned with operational reality.**
Prioritize real-life scenarios (dispatch communication, compliance decisions,

tachograph handling, safety incidents) to bridge gaps between formal learning and workplace demands while maintaining regulatory standards.

5. **Extend “integration design” beyond certification via employer-led induction and mentoring.**

Provide structured onboarding frameworks (30–90 days), mentoring guidance, and follow-up mechanisms to reduce early attrition and support safe autonomy and inclusion.

6. **Recognize stability factors (housing, administrative guidance, early health/fitness procedures) as training success conditions.**

Include referral pathways and basic support checklists so that non-training barriers do not undermine learning continuity and retention.

5. Implications for Next Steps

The assessment confirms that successful integration requires **language-aware, practice-oriented training combined with prepared trainers and coordinated employer engagement**. These findings should be translated into:

- a structured **gap analysis** focused on language, regulation comprehension, administrative bottlenecks and pedagogical adaptation;
- a **harmonized training framework** codifying the principles above;
- and the development of **multilingual, accessible training materials and digital learning tools** that operationalize these principles for trainers and non-EU drivers.

Annex 1: Sources

- **Czechia:** Czech Statistical Office (CZSO); Ministry of Transport; Ministry of the Interior; Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences; CESMAD Bohemia; IRU.
- **Finland:** Statistics Finland; Finnish Immigration Service (Migri); European Migration Network; national VET and transport authorities.
- **France:** INSEE; Service des données et études statistiques (SDES); Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration (OFII); AFPA; sector training bodies.
- **Ireland:** Road Safety Authority; Irish Road Haulage Association (IRHA); CSO (Central Statistics Office); Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
- **Romania:** Institutul Național de Statistică (INSSE); Inspectoratul General pentru Imigrări (IGI); Autoritatea Rutieră Română (ARR); UNTRR; IRU.
- **Switzerland:** Federal Statistical Office (FSO/BFS); Swiss Commercial Vehicle Association (ASTAG); cantonal authorities; federal migration framework (FNIA).

Methodological note: Where nationality-specific occupational data are unavailable (Finland, Switzerland, France), figures rely on official aggregates, administrative permit data and sector-level estimates, as documented by the sources listed above

Annex 2: Surveys and interviews

Online survey

SELECT IF YOU ARE :	LANG_SAISIE						
	RO	CZ	FR	FL	EN	IT	TOTAL
A trainer or VET provider	13	10	13	9	4	2	51
A transport company or industry stakeholder	9	7	5	2	2	2	27
A representant of Ministry of education or any other national authority responsible for training, employment agency, placement agency	5	2	0	1	2	0	10
TOTAL	27	19	18	12	8	4	88
Under-represented elements				Over-represented elements			
The relationship is not significant. p-value= 0.6 ; Chi2= 8.7 ; dof= 10.							

Interviews

	Czechia	Finland	France	Ireland	Romania
Non-EU driver	7	10			25
Trainer or VET provider	10		4		
Transport company or industry stakeholder	6		2		
Authority responsible for training, employment or placement agency	1		2		
Organization working with migrants	1		4		