



The Economic Implications of the EU Labour Migration Framework for Low- and Medium-Skilled Migrants in the Central Mediterranean Region

Project brief

Aims & Objectives –

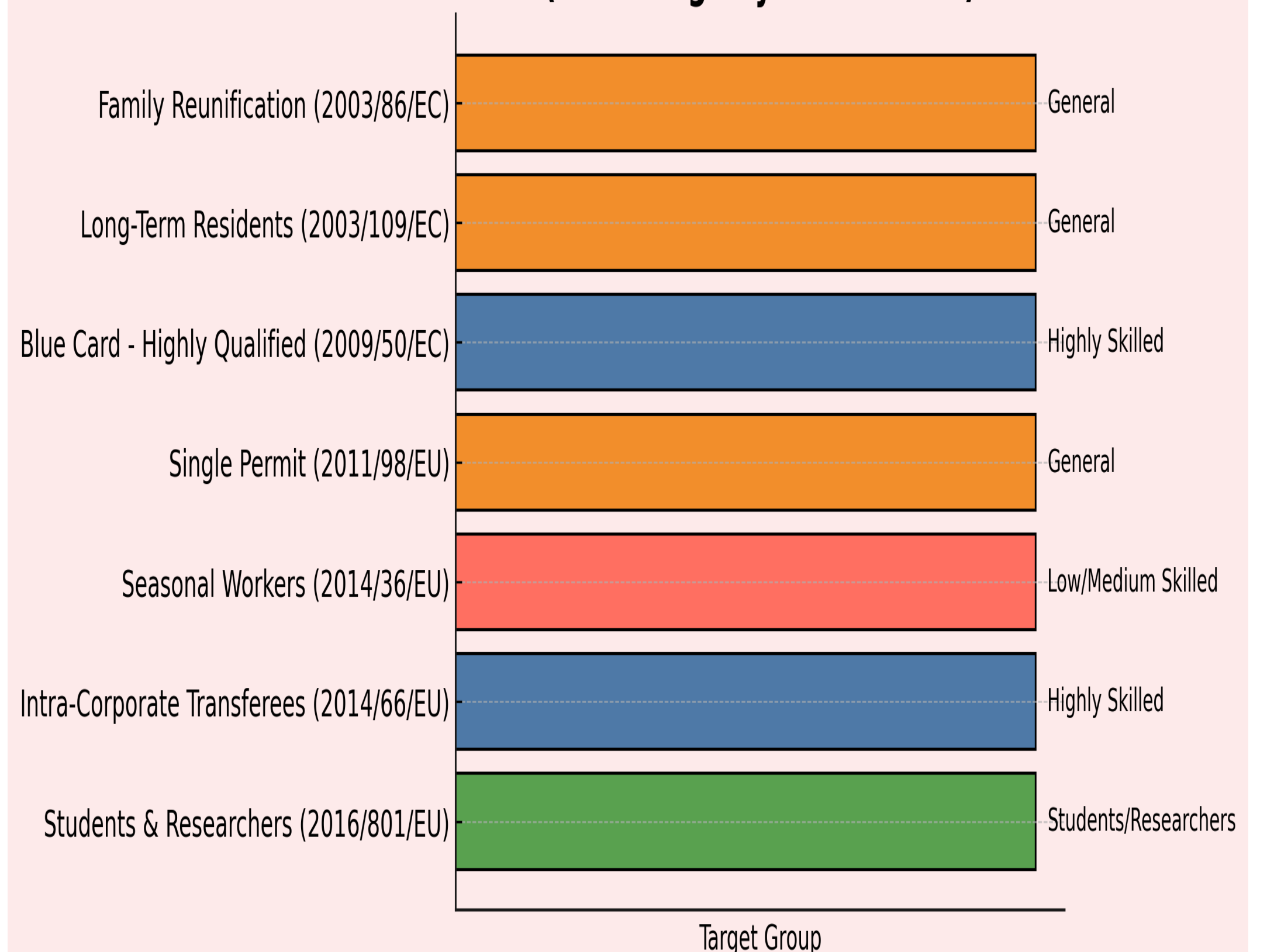
This research aims to empirically investigate the labour market implications of EU legal frameworks on low- and medium-skilled economic migrants in the Central Mediterranean. It addresses the research gap by focusing on a largely neglected cohort in EU migration policy. While several directives govern labour migration, only the Seasonal Workers Directive targets low- and medium-skilled migrants and solely for temporary stays. This study questions the economical effects of the legal channels on the labour market. It asks: How does the EU labour migration framework affect the entry and employment of low- and medium-skilled migrants? If there is a link between legal avenues for labour migration and irregular migration? And, what are the labour market implications of these migrants?

Methodology -

Tools & Prototypes

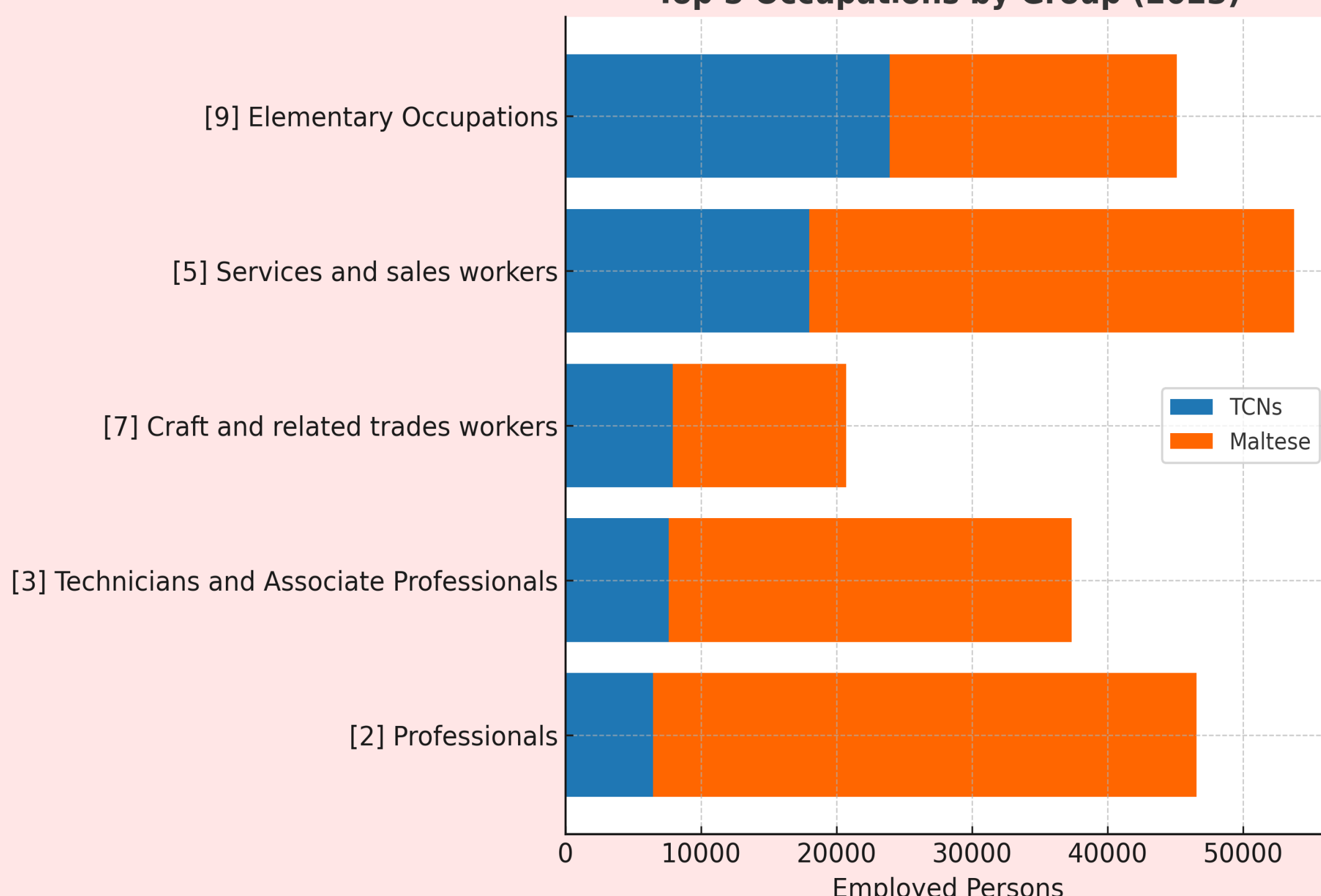
This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitatively, it employs regression analysis using secondary data from Eurostat, Jobsplus, and national statistical offices to examine the economic effects of third-country nationals (TCNs) on employment, productivity, and GDP. Qualitatively, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with policymakers, legal experts, and migrant organisations to assess the practical challenges posed by existing EU directives. This dual approach provides a comprehensive view of how limited legal pathways, especially the narrow scope of the Seasonal Workers Directive, influence migration decisions and labour market outcomes. Ethical considerations and triangulation ensure reliability, validity, and contextual depth throughout the research process.

EU Directives Related to Labour Migration (Excluding Asylum Seekers)



This chart excludes asylum-related directives. Among labour migration instruments, only the Seasonal Workers Directive (2014/36/EU) specifically targets low- and medium-skilled migrants, and only for temporary stays.

Top 5 Occupations by Group (2023)



Results & Conclusions

Results & Prototypes

This research is at an early stage and will soon undergo the transfer phase; therefore, definitive conclusions cannot yet be provided. Preliminary findings based on 2013–2023 data indicate that as employment of TCNs increased, so did Maltese employment. TCNs were predominantly engaged in low- and medium-skilled occupations, while Maltese workers remained concentrated in higher-skilled sectors. This supports the hypothesis that TCNs are complementing, rather than displacing, Maltese workers. The final dataset will span 2004–2023 to provide a more comprehensive picture.