DESIGNING SUCCESSFUL SELECTION SYSTEMS

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17 May 2019
Washington, D.C.

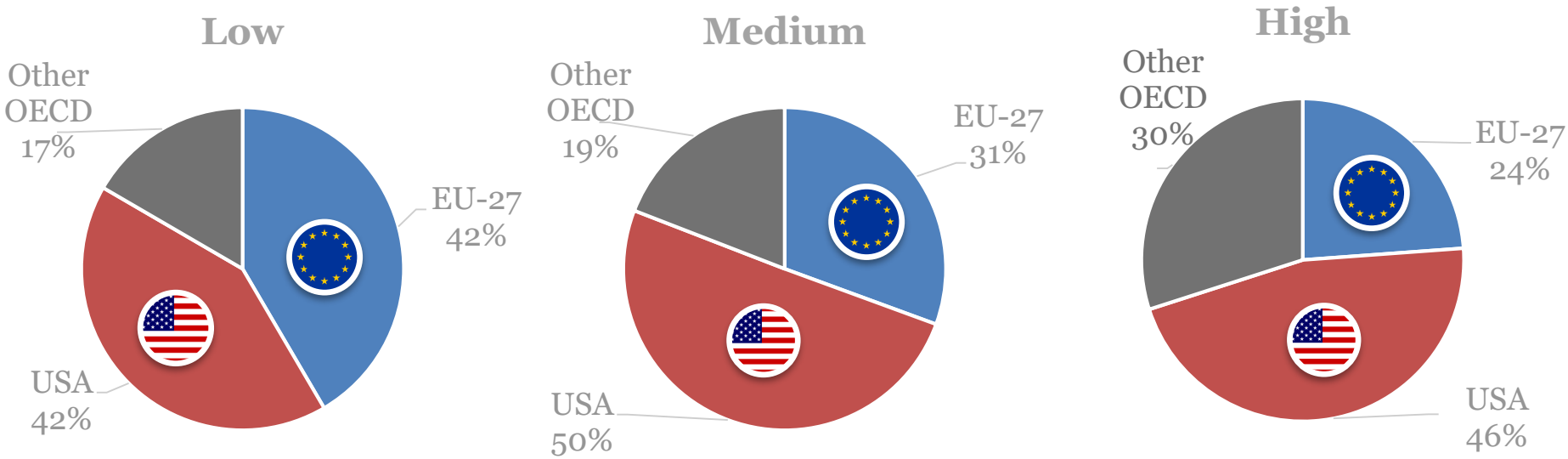
OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

All OECD countries have channels for admitting highly skilled workers

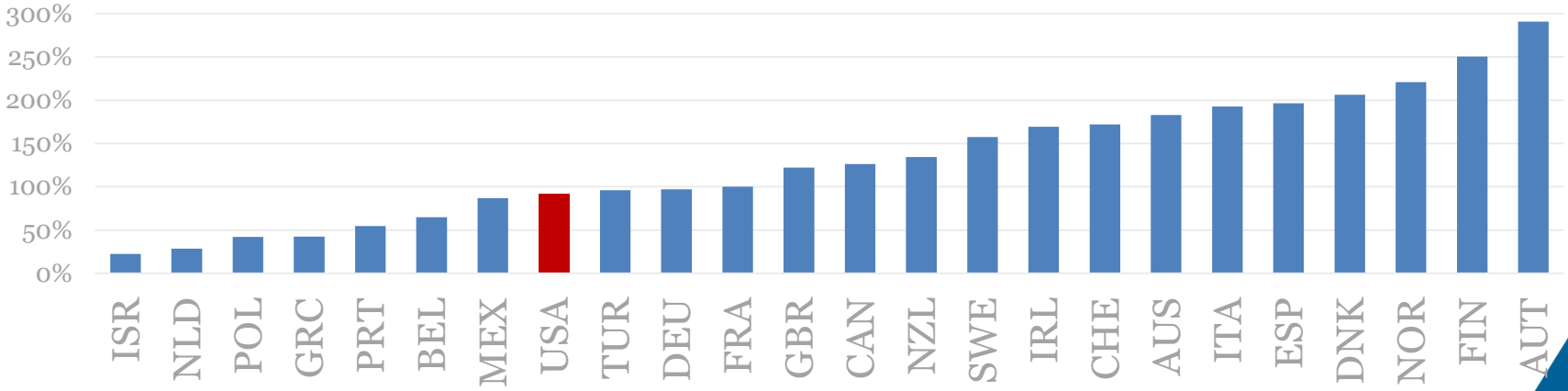
- EU Blue card
- *Passeport Talent*
- Red-White-Red Card
- Express Entry
- Skill Select
- Quebec SWP
- H-1B, O-1A; EB
- Turquoise card
- High Skilled PBS
- Tier 1 (and 2)
- Skilled Migrant Visa
- …

The USA beats Europe but not Canada and Australia in the global competition for talent

Distribution of (non-EU) migrants by education level and destination, stock 2015/16

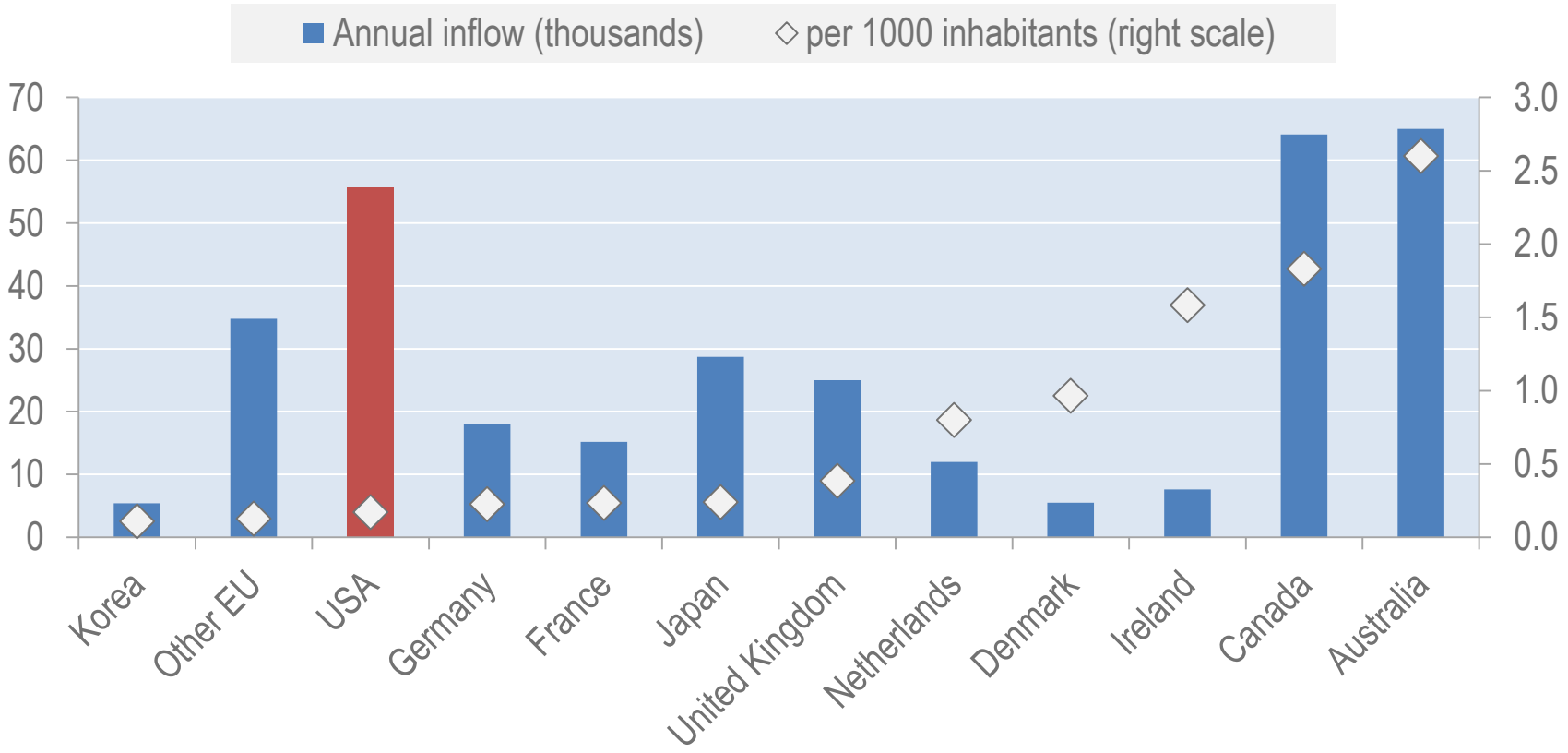


Growth rate of high-skilled migrant population (non EU, 15+) between 2001 and 2016



The US admits fewer permanent-type skilled economic migrants than many OECD countries

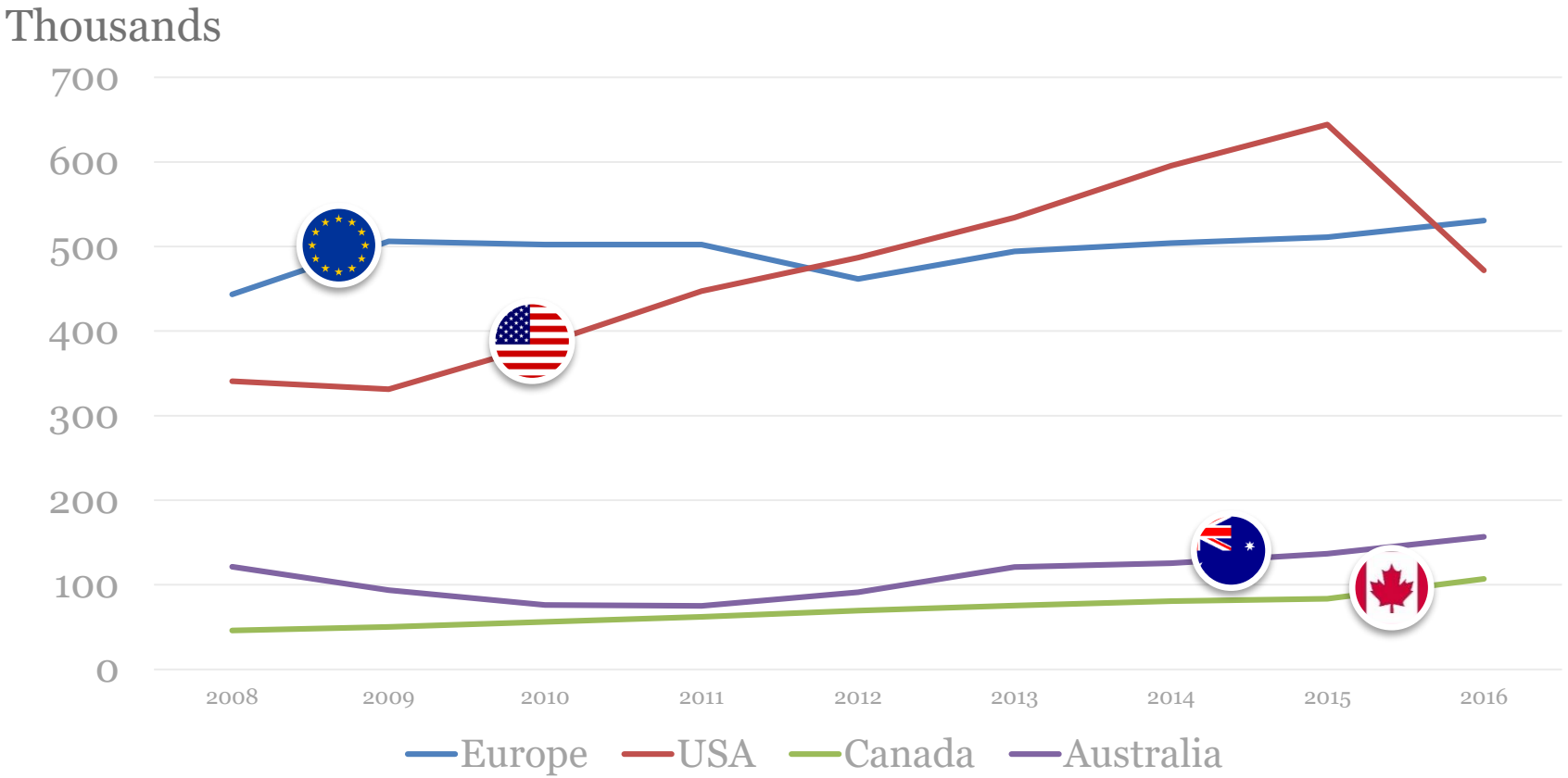
Estimated annual inflow of skilled and highly skilled labour migrants, selected OECD destinations, 2014-2016



Note: USA, Canada, Australia: primary applicants under permanent economic migration programmes. USA: FY2014-2017, excludes unskilled EB3. Canada: 2014-2018, NOC 0/A/B. Other: temporary renewable (OECD standardised statistics permanent-type) permit. Korea, Japan: 2014-2017, see https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264307872-en. EU: MS covered by legal migration framework, summing different permit types (high estimate), see https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264257290-en.
Source: OECD Secretariat calculations.

The EU competes with the US to attract international students

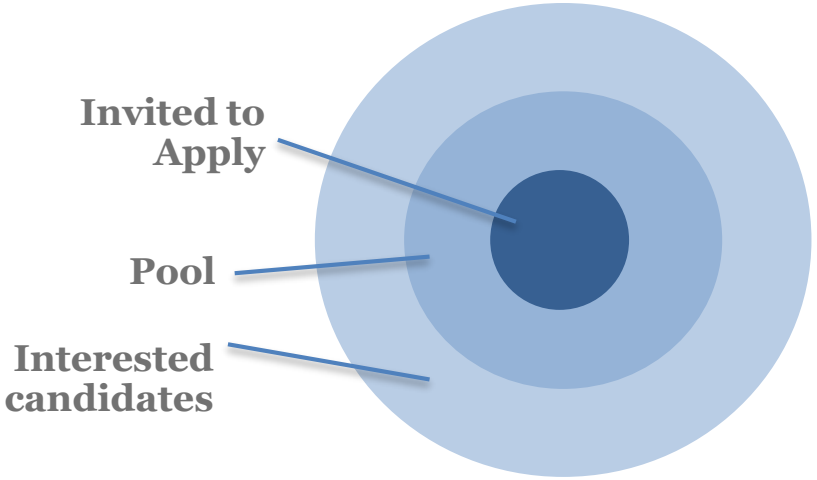
Number of permits granted to international students, 2008-16, excluding intra-EU mobility



Source: OECD International Migration Outlook, 2018

Innovative approaches to managing high skilled migration

Expression of Interest: New approaches to merit based systems in the OECD:



EoIs that *after a period of time* do not receive an invitation to apply are discarded

EoIs that do not meet the minimum requirements are excluded

Selection 1

Qualifying candidates eligible for (at least) one migration programme

EoI

Pool of pre-selected candidates to be examined by relevant actors

Selection 2

Qualifying/high ranking candidates in the pool to be invited to apply for immigration in regular selection rounds

ItA

Candidates are invited to apply for a specific migration programme

Migration application

Key features and impact of EOI systems

Key features

- Selection criteria are be used to enter the pool
- Fixed or variable duration of stay in the pool (expiration)
- Regular draws (weekly, monthly, by trimester…)
- Potentially open to various stakeholders
- Compatible with multiple (existing) programmes

Impact

- Reduces backlogs
- Allows to select more diverse profiles
- Could improve matching but in practice employers are not using it
- Contribute to improve outcomes
- Most of the people in the pool are abroad, but most of those selected are already in the country

Adapting the EOI to the EU
An EU "Merit-Based" system

One of three scenarios developed by the OECD (2019) for the EU

Two options:

- Short Stay Visa (job-search) – in-country issuance of next permit
- EU Permit (not possible under TFEU)

Meet criteria for EU Blue Card (education) and language skills.

Pool

Points-based system for selection under quota. Selected candidates receive visas or permits with EU-wide validity.

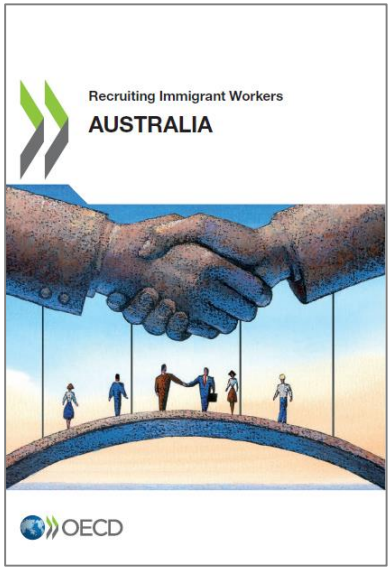
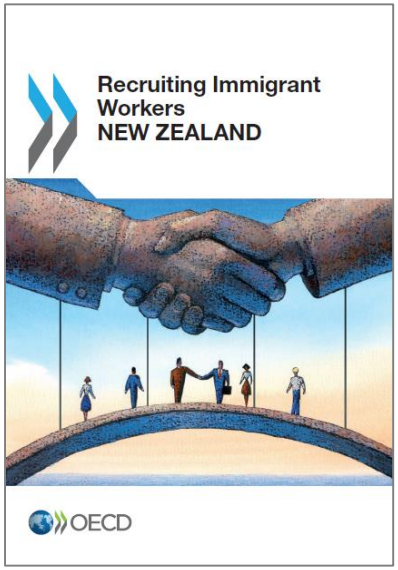
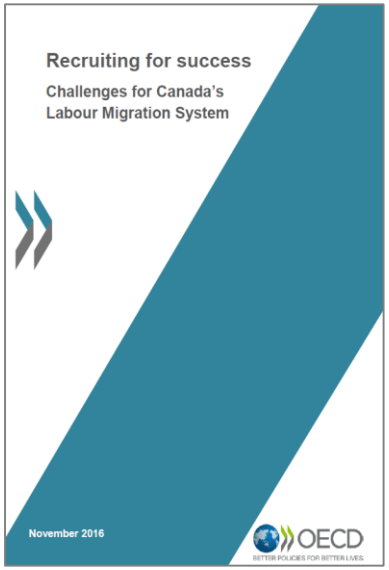
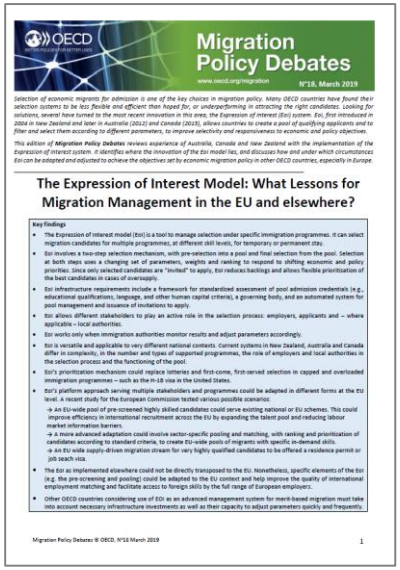
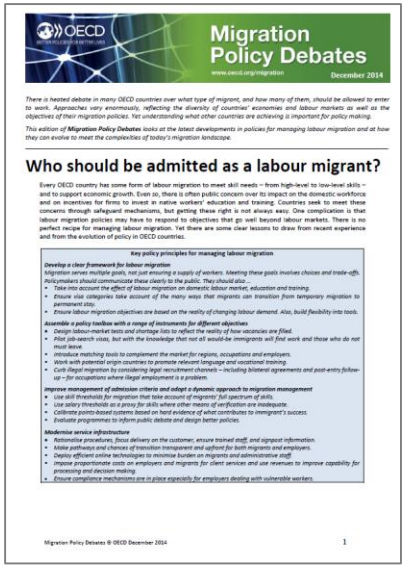
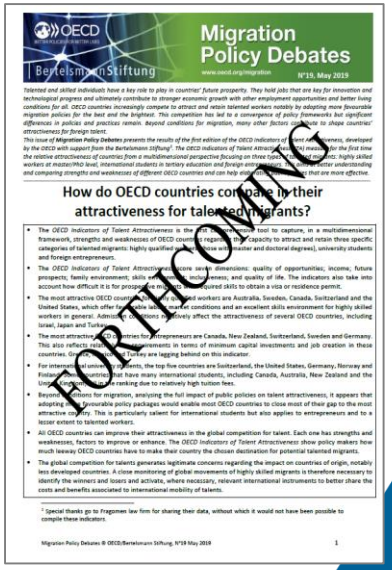
Member States, employers, recruiters can inspect and sponsor profiles in the pool

Possible bridge to employment platforms (public databases)

A merit based system for the US (1/2)
Lessons learnt from other OECD countries

- Point based systems do not work in all contexts
- Wage-based criteria have limitations
- Need to think carefully about temporary admissions and transitions
- Identify economy/employers' (long term) needs to set the parameters accurately
- Adopt a flexible/adaptable framework for any merit-based system
- Invest in evaluation and create a feedback loop in policy implementation
- Invest in management infrastructure and enforcement mechanisms
- Identify and address policy trade-offs (e.g. students, family)
- Are numerical limits the best tool to protect resident workers ?

A merit based system for the US (2/2)
Reforming the H-1B programme

- US system is already merit based…
- …but the doorway to permanent residency is small…
- …forcing people into a long queue…
- …from which most are selected on waiting time rather than merit
- Most EB Green Cards are granted to people in the country in temporary (non-immigrant) visa programs…
- …and these are not very selective
- So reforming the permanent system also requires to think about temporary admission

Recent OECD comparative work on "merit based" systems