



## EU Blue Card: Commission welcomes political agreement on new rules for highly skilled migrant workers

Brussels, 17 May 2021

The Commission welcomes the agreement reached today by the European Parliament and the Council on new rules for the entry and residence of highly skilled workers from outside the EU under the [revised Blue Card Directive](#). The new scheme will introduce efficient rules for attracting highly skilled workers to the EU, including more flexible admission conditions, enhanced rights and the possibility to move and work more easily between EU Member States. Agreement on the revised Blue Card is a key objective of the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#).

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias** said: *"Today's agreement gives the EU a modern, targeted legal migration scheme that will allow us to respond to skills shortages and make it easier for highly skilled professionals to join our workforce. The EU Blue Card will help sustain economic growth, respond to labour market needs and increase productivity to allow the EU to emerge stronger from this pandemic. This agreement on a key migration file also shows that, by working together, the EU can equip itself with a future-proof migration system."*

Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson** said: *"Migrant workers already make an important contribution to the EU's economy. But our shrinking, aging society means we must continue to attract skills and talent from abroad. Today's agreement is a key element of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum that will allow us to normalise our migration policy. New rules will make it easier to work and move within the EU and will recognise the potential of highly skilled workers from diverse backgrounds, including beneficiaries of international protection."*

### Attracting new skills and talent

The EU is increasingly competing with other destinations in the global race for talent. While Member States are responsible for deciding on the number of persons they admit for labour purposes, an improved framework at EU level will put Member States and businesses in the best possible position to attract the talent they need. The new scheme will introduce the following changes:

- **Flexible requirements:** To qualify for an EU Blue Card, the salary threshold will be reduced to between 1 and 1.6 times the average gross annual salary, making it more accessible to more people. The minimum duration for a contract of employment will also be reduced to 6 months.
- **Qualifications and skills equivalency:** New rules will facilitate the recognition of professional skills for occupations in the information and communication technologies sector. Applicants with professional experience equivalent to a higher education qualification in some specific sectors will also be eligible to apply.
- **More flexibility to change position or employer:** During the first 12 months, EU Blue Card holders need only complete a new labour market test if they wish to change position or employer. Only after this period, EU Blue Card holders may be subject to an obligation to notify a change in their situation to the relevant national authorities.
- **Highly skilled beneficiaries of international protection** will be eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card.
- **Family reunification:** To attract and retain highly skilled workers from outside the EU, family members of EU Blue Card holders will be able to accompany them and access the EU labour market.
- **Intra-EU mobility:** EU Blue Card holders, and their family members, will be able to move to a second Member State based on simplified mobility rules after 12 months of employment in the first Member State. Periods of time spent working in different Member States will also be taken into account, facilitating easier access to the EU long-term resident status.

### Next steps

The European Parliament and the Council will still need to confirm formally today's political

agreement by adopting the EU Blue Card Directive. Once the Directive is formally adopted, Member States will have 2 years to transpose the rules into national law.

## **Background**

In 2016, the European Commission proposed to reform the Blue Card Directive, after identifying a number of weaknesses in the initial scheme, adopted in 2009, including restrictive admission conditions and the existence of parallel rules that created additional burdens for employers and applicants.

The reformed rules are an important part of the EU's overall migration policy, that aims to attract skills and talent and providing legal pathways to the EU, as highlighted in the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). The Commission will soon launch Talent Partnerships with non-EU partner countries to help match labour and skill needs in the EU and link skilled workers, employers, social partners, labour market institutions, and education and training through dedicated outreach and by building a network of involved enterprises, as well as financially support mobility schemes for work or training. Later in the year, the Commission will also propose a skills and talent package.

## **For More Information**

[Blue Card Directive](#)

[Proposal for a revised Blue Card Directive](#)

[Impact Assessment](#)

[Blue Card web-page](#)

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Press contacts:

[Christian WIGAND](#) (+32 2 296 22 53)

[Ciara BOTTOMLEY](#) (+32 2 296 99 71 )

[Laura BERARD](#) (+32 2 295 57 21)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)