



Response from Permits Foundation to the EU Green Paper on Confronting Demographic Change

The contribution of immigration

1. Permits Foundation agrees that immigration and shorter-term economic migration will help to mitigate the effects of demographic ageing.
2. The policies that should be developed include allowing the legally resident spouses / partners / family members to work freely. This will facilitate integration, combat discrimination and encourage more women and young people into employment.

Currently, many European member states do not allow accompanying spouses / partners / family members to work freely. Even although they are legally resident, they need to fulfil a separate economic needs test if they wish to work. The means that a potential workforce that is already legally resident within the EU is being under-utilised and actively discouraged from working. This particularly affects women who represent the majority of accompanying partners.

- 3a. The EU's legislative framework should deliver of a secure legal status and a guaranteed set of rights to assist the integration of those who are admitted and to support equal opportunity to employment of legal residents. Open work permits for partners is one of the most important examples of this.

Specifically, Permits Foundation proposes:

- Family members should be allowed to accompany the principal work permit holder. Once the spouse/partner is legally resident, he or she should be granted an open permission to work for the same duration as the principal work permit holder. This permission should not require a separate test of the employment market and should apply to the partner rather than their employer, so that subsequent changes of employment are also possible without further restrictions during the course of the assignment.
 - The permit should allow spouses and partners to take up either employment or self-employment.
 - This principle should apply equally to both the private and public sectors.
- 3b. Structural funds and the employment strategy can also contribute by encouraging EURES and the Public Employment Services to use their web sites to give clear information about entry into and settling/working in the EU. Great improvements have been made in recent years. However, EURES and Public Employment Service websites are still largely concentrated on local/EU citizens. Information for third country migrants is much more limited. There is currently little recognition of the special needs of accompanying spouses/partners/family members of both European citizens and third country migrants.

Background on Permits Foundation <http://www.PermitsFoundation.com>

Permits Foundation is dedicated to the promotion of open work permits for the spouses and partners of expatriate staff worldwide. The companies and international organisations that support Permits Foundation have considerable experience with international mobility and the transfer of staff between countries. All of this experience shows that when moving staff internationally, it is the benefits that apply to the family as a whole that make or break the assignment. Several major international surveys show that concerns about spouse employment are the most important reason why staff turn down an international assignment.