



European Commission

Revision of the EU Blue Card Directive

7 June 2016

Highly skilled workers from third countries play a key role in strengthening the EU's competitiveness. The EU faces significant labour and skills shortages in certain sectors, which have the potential to limit growth, productivity and innovation. These shortages are projected to continue to increase in the future. The EU's current framework for the immigration of highly skilled workers is not well-equipped for these challenges. The existing EU Blue Card scheme and Member States' national schemes have proven insufficient so far. Restrictive admission conditions and the existence of parallel rules, conditions and procedures across the EU are creating a burden for employers and applicants and have limited the use of the scheme. The proposal for a new EU Blue Card aims to improve the EU's ability to attract and retain highly skilled workers, in order to enhance the competitiveness of its economy and cope with demographic challenges.

Main proposed changes compared to the current EU Blue Card Directive

**The Directive applies to all EU Member States except for the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland.*

Harmonisation, simplification and efficiency

A truly EU-wide scheme:

A harmonised, efficient and streamlined approach establishing a single EU-wide scheme to attract highly skilled workers by offering more clarity and cutting red tape.



More inclusive and flexible admission conditions

A **lower general salary threshold**, equivalent to or at the highest 1.4 times the average national salary, and facilitated access for recent graduates and workers in shortage occupations for whom a lower salary threshold of 80% of the average national salary can be applied.

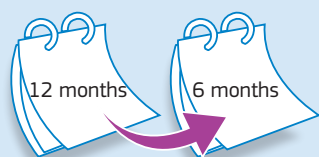


Extension of the scheme to highly skilled beneficiaries of international protection

residing in Member States and having the right to work under EU asylum rules



Duration of the contract:



A contract or a job offer in the Member State concerned is still needed. **BUT** the required minimum duration of the contract is brought down from 12 to 6 months to align with labour market realities.

Conditions adaptable to the national labour markets:

More harmonised conditions yet still adaptable to the national needs and circumstances through nationally set salary thresholds (within a range set out in the Directive) and lists for shortage occupations for which a lower salary threshold can be applied. Possibility to make labour market tests in case of serious disturbances, such as high level of unemployment, in the national labour market.

Professional experience equivalent to higher education qualifications to be recognised by Member States:

Professional experience



qualifications



education

Enhanced Intra-EU mobility

NEW



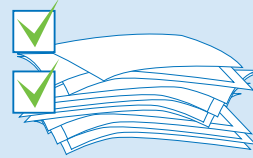
Short-term business trips will be less complicated for EU Blue Card holders.

Moving to another Member State to take up a new job is facilitated

Faster procedures



Fewer conditions



Shorter residence required in previous Member State



Safeguards to protect national labour markets are foreseen

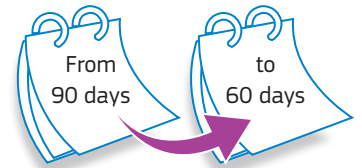
Faster and more flexible procedures

Application procedures:

From now on applications can be submitted either abroad or within the EU (currently applications submitted within the EU are exceptional)



Maximum processing time:



A new «trusted employers» scheme:

Member States may offer a special fast-track procedure for trusted employers with fewer conditions to reduce administrative burden.



Improved rights

Easier access to other high-skills jobs



Right to self-employed activity in parallel with the EU Blue Card job



(when fulfilling the EU Blue Card conditions)

Access to EU long-term residence after:



residence in several Member States



OR



if the EU Blue Card holder resided continuously in the same Member State

New EU Blue Card website

NEW dedicated EU Blue Card section on the EU Immigration Portal with user-friendly, up-to-date and practical information for potential EU Blue Card applicants, providing them with the possibility to compare the conditions and rights of the current EU Blue Card across Member States.



Website:
ec.europa.eu/immigration/bluecard_en