



Legal migration: Attracting skills and talent to the EU

Brussels, 27 April 2022

The Commission is today proposing an ambitious and sustainable legal migration policy. As part of the comprehensive approach to migration set out in the [Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), the Commission is proposing legal, operational and policy initiatives that will benefit the EU's economy, strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries and improve overall migration management in the long term. The set of proposals also includes specific actions to facilitate integration of those fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine into the EU's labour market.

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias**, said: *"Whilst our Member States are busy managing the arrival of over 5 million people from Ukraine, this does not preclude the need to lay the foundations of a sustainable and common approach to labour migration to address EU skills needs in the long term. With today's initiatives we recognise that legal migration has a positive impact all round: it gives those who want to migrate an opportunity to improve their circumstances while providing more skilled workers for host countries, who in turn boost the economy for all."*

Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, said: *"Annually, 2 to 3 million nationals from non-EU countries come to the EU legally, in contrast to 125,000 to 200,000 irregular arrivals. Legal migration is essential to our economic recovery, the digital and green transition and to creating safe channels to Europe, while reducing irregular migration. With today's package, we are simplifying the application process for living and working in the EU and improving rights for residents and their family members. I am confident we are putting in place a solid way forward to attract new talent into the EU for today and tomorrow."*

An enhanced legislative framework

To provide a more effective framework for legal pathways to the EU, the Commission is proposing to revise the [Single Permit Directive](#) and the [Long-Term Residents Directive](#).

- **A streamlined procedure for the single permit** for combined work and residence will make the process quicker and easier for applicants and employers. It will allow applicants to lodge applications from both non-EU countries and EU Member States and will also enhance safeguards for equal treatment and protection from labour exploitation.
- **The revision of the Long-term Residents Directive** will make it easier to acquire the EU long-term residence status by simplifying the admission conditions, for instance by allowing the cumulation of residence periods in different Member States. In addition, the revision will enhance the rights of long-term residents and their family members, including improvements to family reunification and facilitated intra-EU mobility.

Better matching skills and labour market needs

The Commission is proposing to step-up **operational cooperation** at EU level between Member States as well as with partner countries. Work is already advanced with a number of key initiatives to match labour market and skills needs of Member States and partner countries. Following the [launch](#) of **Talent Partnerships** in June 2021, the Commission is now proposing a number of steps to operationalise them with the aim of agreeing on the first Talent Partnerships by the end of 2022.

The Commission is proposing to establish the first EU-wide platform and matching tool, an **EU Talent Pool**, to make the EU more attractive for non-EU nationals looking for opportunities and help employers find the talent they need. To address the urgent need to facilitate access to the labour market for new arrivals from Ukraine, the Commission is proposing a **pilot initiative** that should be up and running by summer 2022.

A forward-looking legal migration policy

Finally, the Commission is exploring further potential avenues for legal migration to the EU in the medium to longer term. The Commission sees the potential for focusing on forward-looking policies

around three areas of action: care, youth and innovation. The aim will be to:

- Attract skills and talent in sectors where there are labour shortages and needs, for example in the long-term care sector;
- Create opportunities for young people to explore new countries, to benefit from work and travel; and
- Promote innovation entrepreneurship within the EU and invest in our European tech sovereignty.

Background

Whilst Member States alone decide on the volumes of legal migrants they wish to admit, the EU can support them with practical and operational tools. Over the past two decades, the EU has developed a legal framework largely harmonising Member States' conditions of entry and residence for non-EU nationals. An evaluation of this legal framework in 2019 underlined that more could be done to increase the impact of the EU legal migration framework on the EU's demographic and migration challenges. After a wide public consultation and following two resolutions from the European Parliament in 2021, the Commission was asked to present a set of proposals to facilitate legal migration to the EU with the objective of reducing bureaucracy, strengthening harmonisation, promoting fundamental rights and equal treatment, and preventing labour exploitation.

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[Revised Single Permit Directive](#)

[Revised Long Term Residents Directive](#)

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