

New EU Blue Card rules for highly qualified immigrants wishing to work in Europe

- More flexible criteria for admission: a valid work contract or binding six-month job offer will be enough
- Lower threshold for the minimum salary that applicants must earn in order to qualify
- Moving between EU countries will be simpler and being reunited with family quicker for EU Blue Card holders

MEPs adopted the reform of the EU Blue Card to facilitate the employment of highly qualified non-EU nationals and help alleviate labour shortages in key sectors.

The Blue Card Directive, in place since late 2009, defines the conditions of entry and residence that third country nationals (and their family members) must meet to take up highly qualified employment in the member states. However, the scheme has not attracted enough of these much-needed workers, with [only 36 806 Blue Cards issued in the EU in 2019](#) (and Germany issuing most of them).

Less stringent criteria for applicants and employers

Under the revised rules, applicants will need to present a work contract or a binding job offer of a minimum of six months as well as evidence of higher qualifications or professional skills. Currently, a 12-month contract or offer is required. The salary threshold for applicants has been reduced to at least 100 % and not more than 160 % of the average gross annual salary in the member state of employment (from the current 150 % minimum with no upper limit).

Beneficiaries of international protection -such as refugees- will also be able to apply for an EU Blue Card in members states other than the one where they received asylum or another protection status.

It will be possible to attest certain types of professional qualification, such as in the information and communication technology sector, through proof of relevant work experience.

More rights for beneficiaries and their families

Holders of an EU Blue Card will be able to move to another member state after an initial 12-month period in the country that first granted them the Blue Card. They will also benefit from being reunited with family members swiftly through faster reunification procedures and access to the labour market for accompanying family members.

Quote

After the plenary vote, the rapporteur [Javier MORENO SÁNCHEZ](#) (S&D, ES) said: “We must do everything we can to improve legal migration to Europe and, above all, facilitate the arrival of qualified workers who contribute to the development of our continent. A more attractive and viable scheme adds real value to the existing national schemes. In the future, we intend to go further so that workers in medium and low-paid jobs can contribute to our society in the same beneficial way that Blue Card holders can now.”

Next steps

The [informal agreement with the Council](#) was backed by the Parliament with 556 votes to 105 and 31 abstentions. It will now have to be approved by the Council and published in the Official Journal before it can enter into force. Member states will then have a two-year period to bring their national legislation in line with the directive.

Further information

[Adopted text will be available here \(15.09.2021\)](#)

[Recording of the debate \(14.09.2021\)](#)

[Press release after committee vote \(3.06.2021\)](#)

[EP Research Service brief on the revision of the EU Blue Card Directive](#)


[Steps of the procedure](#)


[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

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