

EU Blue Card: new rules to attract more highly-skilled workers



EU Blue Card

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Find out how the EU aims to increase the attractiveness of the European Blue Card for highly-skilled migrants.

MEPs adopted the reform of the EU's Blue Card initiative to make it easier to attract highly-qualified workers from outside Europe.

In May 2021, [Parliament and Council negotiators agreed](#) on a revision of the 2009 Blue Card directive to make it easier for employers in EU countries to hire people from elsewhere. Originally proposed by the European Commission in 2016, this is the only legislative change at EU level in the field of legal labour migration in recent years.

The revised directive on entry and residence conditions ensures more flexible criteria, including a lower threshold for the minimum salary that applicants must earn in order to qualify. It also expands the rights of beneficiaries to make it easier to move within the EU and be reunited with family faster.

With the EU's [working-age population](#) set to drop from 333 million in 2016 to 292 million by 2070, there will be significant implications for its labour force. Parliament approved the reform of the blue card system to facilitate the employment of highly-skilled non-EU workers during the plenary session in September.

Read more about the [EU policy on migration](#)

The update to the [Blue Card](#) system will allow applicants to present a valid work contract of at least six months instead of the current 12. To make it accessible to more people, the salary threshold for the Blue Card will be reduced to between 1 and 1.6 times the average gross annual salary.

Blue Card holders will be able to move more easily to another EU country one year after working in the country in which they first settled. Their family will be able to accompany them.

At the same time, the updated rules will allow refugees and asylum seekers that currently live in the EU to apply for a Blue Card in other EU countries and not just the one where they reside now, as was the rule until now.

By lowering the criteria for admission and strengthening the rights of Blue Card holders and their families, Parliament aims to increase the attractiveness of the EU Blue Card.

EU countries could reject or refuse to renew applications for a Blue Card where there is a proven threat to public security. Before issuing a card, member states would also be able to take account of conditions in their domestic labour market, for example high unemployment.

The Blue Card gives highly-skilled workers from outside the EU the right to live and work in any EU country with the exception of Denmark and Ireland.

Read more about migration in the EU

- [Labour migration: improving legal avenues to work in the EU](#)
- [Improving the European Common Asylum System](#)
- [EU border controls and managing migration](#)
- [Returning migrants: facts and figures and EU policy \(infographics\)](#)

The EU Blue Card

[Civil liberties committee report on the EU Blue Card](#)

[Press release on provisional deal \(18 May 2021\)](#)

[Check legislative progress: revision of the Blue Card directive](#)