



## EU SIMPLIFIES ADMISSION PROCEDURES FOR THIRD-COUNTRY WORKERS

The EU Commission recently adopted 2 legislative proposals in the area of economic migration. The first proposal aims to establish a directive for the purpose of admission of highly qualified migrants to the EU. The second proposal seeks to establish a “one-stop-shop” application procedure for a single work permit for third-country nationals to reside and work lawfully in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers residing legally in the EU.

### A. The EU Blue Card

The proposal for the directive in the admission of highly skilled migrants seeks to effectively and promptly respond to fluctuating demands for highly qualified immigrant labor and to offset present and incoming skill shortages. Workers admitted will receive a special residence and work permit called the “**EU Blue Card**”.

Admission of highly qualified third-country workers is based on work contract, professional qualifications and minimum salary level which is at least 3 times the level of the minimum wage at national level.

Under the EU Blue Card scheme, access to the labor market in the Member State is subject to restriction for an initial period of 2 years. Holders of “EU Blue Card” can move to a second Member State for highly qualified work under certain conditions (i.e. work contract) after 2 years of legal residence in the first Member State. In order not to restrict movement of geographically mobile workers, they are allowed to add up periods of residence in the different member states to obtain long-term EU residence.

To avoid the negative “brain drain” effects in developing countries, especially in Africa, the proposal promotes ethical recruitment standards to limit, if not ban, active recruitment by Member States in developing countries suffering from serious brain drain.

## B. One-Stop-Shop

The “one-stop-shop” proposed directive on the single application procedure and single permit will simplify and streamline admission procedures for the purpose of work and would contribute to improve immigration control. The proposal further grants both the nationals of the Member States and third-country nationals equal treatment. Such equal treatment would apply to all third-country workers legally working and not holding a long-term resident status.

The benefits, among others, would include working conditions, health and safety at workplace, education, vocational training, recognition of qualifications, social security, export of pensions once they are paid, access to goods and services and tax benefits. Granting these rights to the lawfully third-country workers would not only reduce the rights gaps and protect them from exploitation. It will also protect the EU citizens from cheap labor.

Source: DFA 2008