



## Immigration: a single work and residence permit

**A simplified administrative procedure and equal treatment with national workers on pay, working conditions and social security: this is the aim of a draft directive that received the backing of the EP Civil Liberties Committee on Tuesday. The broad aim is to stop the exploitation of foreign labour by boosting the rights of third-country citizens working in the EU.**

The "single permit" directive will dovetail with the EU blue card, which is designed to facilitate legal immigration where it meets the needs of the European labour market. It will allow citizens of non-EU countries to obtain a work permit and a residence permit through a single procedure at a one-stop shop.

The holder of a single permit would also acquire the right to travel through other Member States. Any decision to reject an application for a permit would have to be justified and there would be a right of appeal in accordance with national law.

The draft directive does not affect the rules on the admission of non-EU citizens, which are decided by the Member States. However, it guarantees them certain core rights and gives them a secure legal status, as a safeguard against exploitation.

The legislation does not cover seasonal labourers (who are the subject of a different draft law) or applicants for international protection.

### **Equal treatment with national workers**

The directive seeks to ensure equal treatment between workers from non-EU states and national workers in areas such as pay, working hours and conditions, training and social security. However, the Member States can restrict equal treatment in certain circumstances, for example by requiring proof of a thorough knowledge of the language in order to follow education or training courses.

Members of the Civil Liberties Committee believe it is up to the Member States to decide whether an application for a single permit should be lodged in the non-EU country or the Member State of destination. If the application is not lodged in a non-EU country, it will have to be made by the applicant's employer.

The Civil Liberties Committee's report, drafted by Véronique Mathieu (EPP, FR), was adopted by 41 votes to 8, with 2 abstentions.

The draft legislation was published in 2007 but the legal basis has changed as a result of the Lisbon Treaty and Parliament is dealing with it under the co-decision procedure with the Council of Ministers.

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