

New rules to attract non-EU students, researchers and interns to the EU

Plenary sessions [11-05-2016 - 12:24]

Harmonised EU entry and residence rules to make it easier and more attractive for people from third countries to study or do research at EU universities were approved by Parliament on Wednesday. The new rules clarify and improve conditions for non-EU interns, volunteers, school pupils and au pairs.

The new rules merge two existing directives (one on students and one on researchers) to ensure that:

- students and researchers may stay at least nine months after finishing their studies or research in order to look for a job or to set up a business, which should also ensure that Europe benefits from their skills,
- students and researchers may move more easily within the EU during their stay. In future, they will not need to file a new visa application, but only to notify the member state to which they are moving, for example to do a one-semester exchange. Researchers will also be able to move for longer periods than those currently allowed,
- researchers have the right to bring their family members with them and these family members are entitled to work during their stay in Europe, and
- students have the right to work at least 15 hours a week.

"I am glad that the EU recognizes the value of attracting highly skilled people to come here and to entice them to stay by creating a harmonized European system applicable in all member states, said lead MEP Cecilia Wikström (ALDE, SE).

"This undoubtedly means that European universities will be able to strengthen their competitiveness on the global arena and become more attractive than ever to ambitious and highly-educated people from other countries, thanks to considerably improved conditions in the EU", she added.

The new directive also provides for uniform entry conditions and better protection for interns and volunteers under the European Volunteer Scheme during their stay. Optional provisions are foreseen for other volunteers, school pupils and third-country au pairs, who will be covered for the first time by an EU law.

Next steps

The directive enters into force the day after its publication in the European Official Journal. Member states will then have two years in which to transpose its provisions into their national laws.

Further information

- Adopted text (A8-0166/2016) will soon be available here (click on 11 May 2016) : <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 11.05.2016): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>

Press release

- Video of the press conference (11 May at 14:30): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/video?event=20160511-1430-SPECIAL>
- EbS+ : <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm?sitelang=en&page=3&institution=0&date=05/11/2016>
- Audiovisual material for media: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/default.aspx>
- EP Research note on foreign students and researchers: new rules for mobility : http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_ATA%282016%29581990

Political groups

- News pages of the EPP group: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press-releases>
- News pages of the S&D group: <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom>
- News pages of the ECR group: <http://ecrgroup.eu/news/>
- Press release by the ALDE group: <http://www.alde.eu/nc/press/press-and-release-news/press-release/article/researchers-and-students-from-third-countries-easier-entry-and-residence-conditions-new-directiv/>
- News pages of the GUE/NGL group: <http://www.guengl.eu/news/archives/category/gue-ngl-news>
- News pages of the Greens/EFA group: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/press/70-press-releases.html>
- News pages of the EFDD group: <http://www.efdgroup.eu/newsroom/press-releases>

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