



European
Commission



STATE
OF
THE
UNION
2017

ENSURING EFFECTIVE
LEGAL PATHWAYS TO EUROPE



“Irregular migration will only stop if there is a real alternative to perilous journeys. We are close to having resettled 22,000 refugees from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon and I support UN High Commissioner Grandi’s call to resettle a further 40,000 refugees from Libya and the surrounding countries. At the same time, legal migration is a necessity for Europe as an ageing continent. This is why the Commission made proposals to make it easier for skilled migrants to reach Europe with a Blue Card.”

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, State of the Union Address, 13 September 2017

Europe has consistently shown solidarity during the migration crisis. Over the past year alone, we have granted protection to more than 720,000 persons in need of protection. Through our **resettlement schemes**, we enable the most vulnerable refugees in need of protection to reach Europe through legal and safe pathways and prevent them from having to endanger their lives on dangerous illegal routes. At the same time, enhancing **lawful alternatives for economic migration** will help us respond to the growing needs of the ageing workforce in our societies and skill shortages on the labour markets while reducing incentives for irregular migration.

A NEW CALL FOR RESETTLEMENT

Ensuring legal pathways to Europe for those in need of international protection is a key part of the EU’s asylum and migration policy. The Commission has been working successfully with member states over the past few years to increase the EU’s collective resettlement efforts.

Building on the successful joint EU efforts, the Commission is proposing today a **new resettlement scheme with at least 50,000** additional resettlement places for particularly vulnerable persons in need of international protection, to be admitted by EU Member States by October 2019.

A particular focus should be put on resettlement from **North Africa and the Horn of Africa, notably Libya, Egypt, Niger, Sudan, Chad, and Ethiopia**, whilst ensuring continued resettlement from Turkey and the Middle East.

The Commission has set aside **€500 million** to support Member States’ resettlement efforts in the next two years - **€10,000 for each resettled person from the EU budget**.

RESETTLED
SO FAR:

23,000

UNDER BOTH THE EU RESETTLEMENT
SCHEME LAUNCHED IN JULY 2015
AND THE EU-TURKEY STATEMENT
FROM MARCH 2016

Setting up **private sponsorship schemes**: Member States are encouraged to establish private sponsorship schemes to allow private groups or civil society organisations to organise and finance the resettlement and integration of persons in need of protection in line with national legislation. To that effect the Commission invites EASO to coordinate a pilot project on private sponsorship schemes with interested Member States.

A **permanent EU Resettlement Framework** to coordinate European efforts in the long term: In July 2016 the Commission proposed to create an EU Resettlement Framework with a unified procedure and common criteria. Once adopted, the EU Resettlement Framework with a unified procedure and common criteria. Once adopted, the EU resettlement framework will replace the current ad hoc resettlement and humanitarian admission schemes.

BETTER MANAGING LEGAL MIGRATION

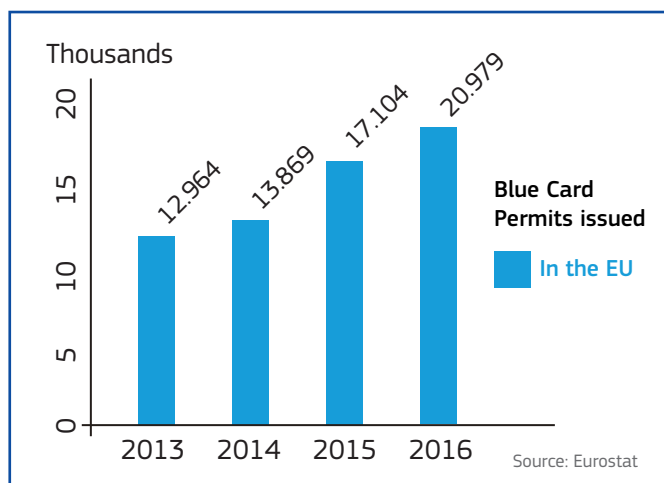
Better managing legal channels for skilled migrants as part of a structured EU policy on labour mobility will help us turn irregular flows into needs-based economic migration for non-EU workers, complementing upskilling and employment efforts in the existing work force. It also helps facilitate cooperation on issues such as prevention of irregular migration and readmission and return.

WHY A NEW EU BLUE CARD?

The EU faces significant labour shortages in certain sectors, which have the potential to limit growth and competitiveness – a challenge that will become more and more pressing due to Europe's ageing demographic profile. The new Blue Card makes it easier and more attractive for highly skilled workers to come to the EU, strengthens the rights of workers and their families and provides for more flexible rules so that Member States can attract the work force they need, when they need it.

This is why, in June 2016, the Commission proposed a **new EU Blue Card** to improve the EU's ability to attract and retain highly skilled workers. The European Parliament and the Council should now swiftly come to an agreement and adopt the Commission proposal.

BLUE CARD PERMITS ISSUED 2013 - 2016



EXPLORING NEW TOOLS

The Commission is currently analysing how the current legal framework can be further simplified. We are also looking at systems already applied in other countries that work on the basis of "expressions of interest" to manage legal migration.

INVOLVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In order to identify labour market needs in the EU, it is essential that private **sector stakeholders** are involved.

PILOT PROJECTS WITH PARTNER COUNTRIES

The Commission is ready to help finance and coordinate pilot projects in 2018 for legal migration with selected partner countries which have shown political engagement to work in partnership with the EU on migration.

CRACKING DOWN ON ILLEGAL EMPLOYMENT OF MIGRANTS

In line with the **Employers Sanction Directive**, all Member States prohibit the employment of irregular migrants and impose financial, administrative or criminal sanctions on those employers who break these rules. But in order to significantly reduce the pull factor of illegal work, Member States need to fully implement EU law and, in particular, **increase the number of labour inspections to high-risk economic sectors**. The Commission will report annually on the implementation of the directive and **launch infringement procedures where necessary**.