



Enhancing safe and legal pathways to Europe

#SOTEU

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'A truly united, European migration policy also means that we need to look into opening legal channels for migration [...] if there are more, safe and controlled roads opened to Europe, we can manage migration better and make the illegal work of human traffickers less attractive.'

Jean-Claude Juncker, State of the Union Address, 9 September 2015



Developing orderly legal pathways for persons in need of protection and creating channels for labour migration has been a priority of the Juncker Commission from the very outset. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration and goes hand in hand with a firm policy on tackling irregular flows and ensuring stronger border protection, streamlined asylum procedures and more effective returns.

Legal migration: the way forward



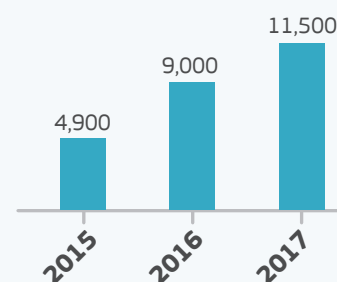
A new EU Blue Card — attracting highly skilled workers

In a steadily improving EU economy shortages in certain high-skill sectors of the labour force are to be expected in the near future, with some Member States already facing a rising number of unfilled vacancies. Whilst the EU will continue to invest in the full activation, training and upskilling of the EU workforce, a strategic and pro-active EU policy on legal migration is needed to complement these efforts and contribute to a more competitive EU economy. This is why the Commission, in June 2016, proposed a revised EU Blue Card scheme to make it easier and more attractive for highly skilled workers and their families to come to the EU and ensure that Member States can get the workforce they need when they need it.

NEXT STEPS

- The Commission calls on the Council to swiftly agree on a position that adds value compared with the current Blue Card scheme in view of relaunching negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council to ensure that an ambitious agreement can be reached and that the new EU Blue Card is adopted before the European Parliament elections in May 2019.

EU Blue Cards issued (total EU-wide)





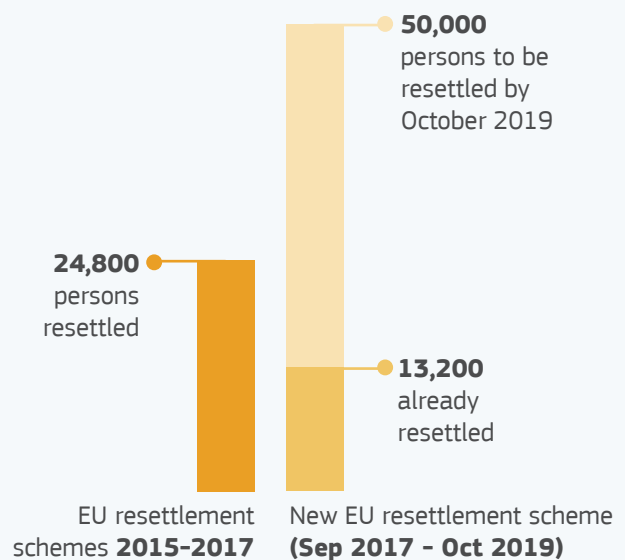
Resettlement — safe pathways for those in need of protection

EU resettlement initiatives have demonstrated that unsafe and irregular migration can be replaced with legal and safe channels for persons in need of international protection. Since 2015, two successful EU resettlement programmes have helped over 38,000 of the most vulnerable people find shelter in the EU. In September 2017, the Commission launched a new resettlement scheme in which Member States pledged to resettle more than 50,000 persons in need of protection — the largest EU resettlement scheme to date. To coordinate European efforts in the long term, the Commission has proposed to set up a permanent Union Resettlement Framework as part of the overall asylum reform.

NEXT STEPS

- Member States must swiftly step up their efforts to implement the total commitment of 50,000 resettlement places by October 2019.
- The European Parliament and the Council should agree soon on the Commission proposal for a Union Resettlement Framework.

EU resettlement schemes



Pilot projects on legal migration — strengthening cooperation with African countries

Legal migration is an important element for the EU to strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with third countries, and should be fully integrated into the EU's foreign policy. Enhanced and tailored cooperation on legal migration with countries of origin and transit will help reduce irregular migration, contribute to filling gaps in certain sectors of Member States' labour markets and be an incentive to improve cooperation on migration management overall, including on readmission and returns. As part of its strategy to actively promote the external dimension of legal migration, the Commission has taken the initiative to develop, together with Member States, a number of pilot projects with African countries to promote legal migration schemes for labour or traineeship purposes.

NEXT STEPS

- The Commission calls on Member States to fully engage and cooperate on developing pilot projects with African countries and with other non-EU countries in the future, with the first projects to be launched by the end of 2018. The Commission will provide support on funding and practical cooperation.