



Deal on new rules to attract non-EU students, researchers and interns to the EU

Harmonised EU entry and residence rules that will make it easier and more attractive for students and researchers from third countries to study or do research at EU universities were informally agreed by MEPs and ministers on Tuesday. The deal also has provisions to clarify and improve conditions for non-EU interns, volunteers, school pupils and au pairs, so as to facilitate cultural exchanges. These rules still need to be approved by Parliament as a whole and the Council of Ministers.

"Today's agreement means without a doubt that our European universities are strengthening their competitiveness in the global arena, becoming more attractive than ever for talented, ambitious and highly-educated people from other countries, who will receive considerably improved conditions here", said Parliament's lead MEP on the file Cecilia Wikström (ALDE, SE).

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

- students and researchers will have the right to 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. Today, it is individual EU member states which decide whether students and researchers from third countries may stay on after their studies or research have ended,
- it will be easier for students and researchers to move within the EU during their stay. Under the new rules, they will have to notify only the member state to which they are moving, for example to do a one-semester exchange, instead of having to submit a new visa application and wait for it to be processed, as is the case today. Researchers will also be able to move for longer periods than those currently allowed.
- researchers will have the right to bring their family members with them, also when they move within the EU, and these family members will also have the right to work during their stay in Europe, and
- students will have the right to work at least 15 hours a week

In addition to the rules on students and researchers, the new directive also has provisions for interns and volunteers under the European Volunteer Scheme, who will benefit from uniform conditions to enter Europe and increased protection once there, as well as optional provisions for other volunteers, school pupils and au pairs. This is the first time that third-country au pairs have been included in an EU law.

Next steps

The political agreement must now be approved by the Civil Liberties Committee and endorsed by Parliament as a whole and the Council of Ministers.

The directive enters into force the day after its publication in the European Official Journal. After that, member states will have 2 years to transpose the new provisions into their national laws.

Further information

[Rapporteur Cecilia Wikström \(ALDE, SE\)](#)

[Video statement by rapporteur Cecilia Wikström after the trialogue agreement](#)
[Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#)

Contacts

Rikke ULDALL

Press officer

☎ (+32) 2 28 42976 (BXL)

☎ (+33) 3 881 72033 (STR)

📱 (+32) 498 98 32 57

🐦 [@EP_Justice](#)

✉ libe-press@europarl.europa.eu



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