Seasonal employment: conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals

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Ministers held a first exchange of views on a Commission proposal for a directives on conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals concerning seasonal employment.

Several ministers recalled the right of member states to determine the number of third-country nationals to be admitted to their territories. In this context, they pointed out that the impact on national labour markets should be taken into account. Several ministers also highlighted the need for greater flexibility, for example with reference to the proposed duration of stay or the time limits in which applicants must be given a decision. In the case of seasonal employment, a number of member states mentioned that a choice should be given on whether accepted third-country nationals would receive residence permits, as proposed by the Commission, or long-term visas.

Another issue highlighted by several ministers was the question whether the rights accorded to third-country nationals should be equivalent to those enjoyed by nationals of the host member states, in particular with regard to social security benefits. Other delegations questioned whether the proposal on seasonal workers was in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

The Commission underlined that the main goal of the proposal was that once member states decide they need legal immigrants in these two areas that equal treatment will be given to those accepted throughout the EU.