Scientific research: admission of third-country national researchers to the Community, uniform visas

2004/0063(COD) - 16/03/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to facilite the issuing of uniform short-stay visas for third-country researchers travelling within the EU. PROPOSED ACT : Council Recommendation. CONTENT : this Recommendation addresses the question of short-term visas needed to meet the precise requirements of researchers who have to attend conferences or seminars in connection with their work. It is being proposed alongside a Directive on the specific procedures for admitting third-country nationals for purposes of scientific research (CNS/2004/0061) and a Recommendation on facilitating the admission of third-country researchers in the EU (CNS/2004/0062). It seeks to complete the general framework relating to this particular set of proposed legislation. It is a recognised fact that researchers need to travel extensively for the purposes of their work either to attend international conference or seminars. Visa restrictions hinder the free movement of these researchers within the EU. Such a situation aggravates the low up take of research posts in the European Union as a whole. The proposed Recommendation seeks to address this issue by proposing a set of measures, which would facilitate the movement of third-country researchers within Europe by issuing uniform short-stay visas. The Recommendation calls on the Member States to gradually adopt measures facilitating the entry and movement of non-member country researchers who are currently subject to EU regulated visa requirements. The exact procedures and conditions for issuing uniform short-stay visas are set out in the Common Consular Instructions. These procedures seek to facilitate the issuing of visas and are intended to apply to people acting in good faith. The Recommendation is based entirely on the assumption that third-country researchers are regarded by the Member States as bona fide applicants for whom it is legitimate to facilitate the issuing of uniform visas. Member States may set themselves the objective of taking the necessary steps in terms of material and administrative resources to ensure, in general terms, that they reduce the amount of time taken to issue visas requested by researchers. In addition, Member States are being asked to issue visas to researchers who can prove that their work necessitates frequent travel. This would allow them to make frequent return trips between the EU and their country of origin. Similarly, Member States should adapt their administrative provisions so that the length of time a visa is valid is equal to the length of time needed to conduct the research. Researchers would then not have to apply for several successive visas during their period of work in the EU. Member States are also urged to consider reducing the amount of evidence required to support the application for research work. The immigration authorities, together with appointed research organisations, should seek to harmonise their approach towards the processing of researchers' visa applications. Member States may also wish to reduce or waive the fees for processing researchers' individual applications. Lastly, to promote the exchange of best practice, it is recommended that Member States share information on administrative measures used to facilitate the processing of researcher visa applications. One year following the adoption of the Recommendation, the Commission will present a first assessment of the measures taken by the Member States to implement the proposed measures.