




Basic information	
2023/0404(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Regulation	Procedure completed
Establishing an EU talent pool Subject 4.15 Employment policy, action to combat unemployment 7.10.08 Migration policy	


Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	AL-SAHLANI Abir (Renew)	30/09/2024
			Shadow rapporteur DÜPONT Lena (EPP) MORENO SÁNCHEZ Javier (S&D) VANDENDRIESSCHE Tom (P/E) KANKO Assita (ECR) STROLENBERG Anna (Greens/EFA) BARRENA ARZA Fernando (The Left)	
	Former committee responsible		Former rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	AL-SAHLANI Abir (Renew)	22/01/2024
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE	Development	TOBÉ Tomas (EPP)	04/12/2024
	EMPL	Employment and Social Affairs	VIND Marianne (S&D)	21/11/2024
	CULT	Culture and Education	RIEHL Nela (Greens/EFA)	03/12/2024





	Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE Development	TOBÉ Tomas (EPP)	28/11/2023
	BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs (Associated committee)	VIND Marianne (S&D)	29/01/2024
	CULT Culture and Education	ALBUQUERQUE João (S&D)	16/01/2024
Council of the European Union			
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Migration and Home Affairs	JOHANSSON Ylva	

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/11/2023	Legislative proposal published	COM(2023)0716 	Summary
08/02/2024	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
08/02/2024	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
13/11/2024	Resumption of business from the previous parliamentary term		
19/03/2025	Vote in committee, 1st reading		
19/03/2025	Committee decision to open interinstitutional negotiations with report adopted in committee		
26/03/2025	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A10-0045/2025	Summary
31/03/2025	Committee decision to enter into interinstitutional negotiations announced in plenary (Rule 72)		
03/04/2025	Results of vote in Parliament		
03/04/2025	Committee decision to enter into interinstitutional negotiations confirmed by plenary (Rule 72 - vote)		
03/12/2025	Approval in committee of the text agreed at 1st reading interinstitutional negotiations	GEDA/A/(2025)005762	
10/03/2026	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T10-0058/2026	Summary
10/03/2026	Results of vote in Parliament		
30/03/2026	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		

29/04/2026	Final act signed		
12/05/2026	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2023/0404(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 57_o Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 079-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/10/00268

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE766.973	20/12/2024	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE768.050	28/01/2025	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE768.051	28/01/2025	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE768.053	28/01/2025	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE766.857	10/02/2025	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE767.980	19/02/2025	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE766.602	20/02/2025	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A10-0045/2025	26/03/2025	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T10-0058/2026	10/03/2026	Summary
Council of the EU				
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary	
Coreper letter confirming interinstitutional agreement	GEDA/A/(2025)005762	28/11/2025		
Draft final act	00062/2025/LEX	22/04/2026		
European Commission				
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary	
Legislative proposal	COM(2023)0716 	15/11/2023	Summary	
	SEC(2023)0716			

Document attached to the procedure		16/11/2023	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2023)0716 	16/11/2023	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2023)0717 	16/11/2023	
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2023)0718 	16/11/2023	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2026)05-05	05/05/2026	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	CZ_CHAMBER	COM(2023)0716	09/02/2024	
Contribution	EL_PARLIAMENT	COM(2023)0716	07/03/2024	
Contribution	IT_CHAMBER	COM(2023)0716	04/04/2024	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	COM(2023)0716	23/05/2024	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0050/2024	24/04/2024	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
EP Research Service	Briefing	02/07/2024
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency				
Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	27/11/2025	EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF BUILDING AND WOODWORKERS EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	06/11/2025	Fagligt Fælles Forbund
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	24/10/2025	Fagligt Fælles Forbund

VIND Marianne	Rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	20/05/2025	European Transport Workers' Federation Fagligt Fælles Forbund
PETROV Hristo	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	05/03/2025	Ceemet
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	19/02/2025	Vereniging VNO-NCW
MORENO SÁNCHEZ Javier	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	18/02/2025	Diageo
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	18/02/2025	Stichting Mondiaal FNV
MORENO SÁNCHEZ Javier	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	03/02/2025	CEEMET
MORENO SÁNCHEZ Javier	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	31/01/2025	ISACA
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	17/01/2025	UNHCR
MORENO SÁNCHEZ Javier	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	17/01/2025	ETUC
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	16/01/2025	ETUC
BUŁA Andrzej	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	16/01/2025	Dreman company, HANZEL - Opolskie Centrum Rozwoju Gospodarki
RIEHL Nela	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	16/01/2025	EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	13/01/2025	ODI Europe
PETROV Hristo	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	17/12/2024	United Federation of Workers in Denmark (3F)
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	12/12/2024	SME United
PETROV Hristo	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	11/12/2024	BUSINESSEUROPE
PETROV Hristo	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	03/12/2024	Българска стопанска камара - съюз на българския бизнес
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	02/12/2024	Digital Europe Workaday
MORENO SÁNCHEZ Javier	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	21/11/2024	German Federal Employment Agency
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	12/11/2024	Migration Policy Centre
BUŁA Andrzej	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	06/11/2024	World Employment Confederation-Europe
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	17/10/2024	European Trade Union Institute
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	16/10/2024	Migration Policy Institute Europe
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	14/10/2024	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
STROLENBERG Anna	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	14/10/2024	OECD
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	06/03/2024	OECD
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	22/02/2024	SMEUnited
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	21/02/2024	North Sweden European Office

AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	21/02/2024	OECD International Labour Organisation International Organisation for Migration European Commission
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	15/02/2024	European Disability Forum
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	14/02/2024	industriAll European Trade Union
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	14/02/2024	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	14/02/2024	Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände e.V.
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	13/02/2024	European Transport Workers' Federation
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	12/02/2024	Confederation of Danish Employers
ALBUQUERQUE João	Shadow rapporteur	CULT	12/02/2024	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	09/02/2024	Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände e.V.
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	09/02/2024	Danish Trade Union Confederation EU Office
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	08/02/2024	Picum
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	08/02/2024	International Labour Organization
RUOHONEN-LERNER Pirkko	Shadow rapporteur for opinion	EMPL	08/02/2024	Suomen pysyvä edustusto Euroopan unionissa
DÜPONT Lena	Shadow rapporteur	LIBE	07/02/2024	IHK Hannover
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	02/02/2024	Fagligt Fælles Forbund
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	01/02/2024	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	01/02/2024	EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	01/02/2024	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging
VIND Marianne	Rapporteur	EMPL	01/02/2024	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	30/01/2024	The Swedish Trade Union Confederation
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	30/01/2024	The Adecco Group
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	29/01/2024	International Labour Organisation
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	25/01/2024	EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	24/01/2024	BUSINESSEUROPE
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	24/01/2024	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	24/01/2024	EU Commission DG HOME DG EMPL
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	23/01/2024	HOTREC, Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe
AL-SAHLANI Abir	Rapporteur	LIBE	22/01/2024	European Network of Migrant Women

Other Members

Transparency		
Name	Date	Interest representatives
CEULEMANS Estelle	19/03/2025	EFFAT
CEULEMANS Estelle	04/03/2025	World Employment Confederation-Europe
CEULEMANS Estelle	03/03/2025	BUSINESSEUROPE
DANIELSSON Johan	24/01/2025	The Swedish Trade Union Confederation
OETJEN Jan-Christoph	17/01/2025	Deutsche Industrie- und Handelskammer
CUNHA Paulo	14/01/2025	HOTREC, Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe
INCIR Evin	27/11/2024	Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation

Final act
Regulation 2026/1047 OJ OJ L 12.05.2026

Establishing an EU talent pool

2023/0404(COD) - 10/03/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 414 votes to 182, with 21 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU talent pool.

The European Parliament adopted its position at first reading by amending the Commission's proposal as follows.

Objective

It is specified that the regulation establishes an **EU talent pool**, available to all Member States, in order to:

- facilitate the **recruitment of jobseekers from third countries** who reside outside the Union and have the relevant skills and level of qualifications to fill shortage occupations in the Union;
- promote fair recruitment standards;
- enhance the Union's ability to attract talent from outside the Union.

The regulation lays down rules concerning the facilitation of the recruitment of job seekers from third countries who have benefited from specific support under **a talent partnership, a bilateral agreement or a national framework** for skills development and validation in a third country, as well as the protection of the rights of jobseekers, participating employers and other participating entities for the purposes of the regulation.

Participation and withdrawal of Member States

Any Member State may, at any time, decide to participate in the EU Talent Pool. It should notify the Secretariat of its intention at the latest **9 months** before the date from which it intends to participate and indicate the types of entities allowed to make job vacancies available on the **IT Platform**. A participating Member State may withdraw from the EU Talent Pool.

Structure

The EU talent pool consists of: (i) the secretariat; (ii) the steering group and (iii) the national contact points.

The **steering group** will be composed of (i) two representatives from each participating Member State, including one employment expert and one immigration expert; (ii) two representatives from the Commission; and (iii) six representatives from cross-industry social partner organisations at Union level, with equal representation from trade unions and employers' organisations. An expert from the European Parliament may be invited to attend the steering group meetings, as may representatives from third countries participating in talent partnerships, bilateral agreements, or national frameworks for skills development and validation in a third country.

Each participating Member State must designate a **national contact point**, composed of employment and immigration experts from the relevant national authorities. The national contact point will be responsible for, inter alia:

- facilitating the functioning of the IT Platform at national level;
- making job vacancies available on the IT Platform through the single coordinated channel;
- removing job vacancies from the IT Platform and profiles of registered jobseekers from third countries following the transmission of relevant information by the national competent authorities;
- keeping registries of employers and other entities who have been permanently excluded from the EU Talent Pool or whose access to the EU Talent Pool has been refused or suspended;
- checking the registry before making a job vacancy available and refusing access to the IT Platform by employers on the basis of other information on infringements of relevant Union or national law and practice that have been established.

Registration and access for jobseekers from third countries

Job seekers from non-EU/EEA countries can create their **profiles** using the Europass profile creation tool to register on the online platform. Profiles of registered jobseekers from third countries who made a **false declaration** should be removed from the IT Platform following the transmission of the relevant information by the national competent authorities. These profiles must be visible to participating employers and other participating entities.

Job seekers from third countries will be able to indicate in their profile whether they have participated in a talent partnership, a bilateral agreement, or a national skills development and validation framework. The platform will implement a **flag** integrated into the profile to facilitate this.

Candidates must specify: (i) the name of the partnership, agreement, or framework concerned; (ii) the training courses completed, their duration, their purpose, and the skills developed (including language skills). They may also attach supporting documents or other information relevant to the recruitment process.

The flag indicator will serve **only as information**: it is without prejudice to entry and residence rights.

Profiles of registered jobseekers from third countries may also include information on the availability of the jobseeker from a third country to start work and the **Member States of preference**.

Participation of employers

Job vacancies made available on the IT Platform should include at least the following information: (i) the name and contact details of the employer with whom the jobseeker from a third country would engage in a direct employment relationship and of any other participating entity; (ii) the job description; (iii) the duration of the employment contract; and (iv) the normal place of work. The EU talent pool may not be used to recruit trainees or apprentices.

Participating employers must **comply with applicable national and EU legislation and practices** regarding the protection of third-country nationals against unfair recruitment, inadequate working conditions, discrimination, adverse treatment, and human trafficking, where applicable. They must also comply with applicable collective agreements that protect third-country nationals' right to freedom of association and their right to collective bargaining.

Member States may decide **to permanently exclude** participating employers from the EU talent pool in the case of criminal offences relating to the employment of third-country nationals residing illegally.

Establishing an EU talent pool

2023/0404(COD) - 15/11/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to set up an EU Talent Pool to help address labour shortages across Europe.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the EU and individual Member States are facing shortages in a wide range of sectors and occupations, including in those relevant for the green and digital transitions. Extensive shortages in construction, healthcare, hospitality, transport, information and communications technology and in science technology, engineering and mathematics, are long-standing and have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the acceleration of the green and digital transitions. Labour shortages are expected to persist and potentially aggravate in the light of demographic challenges.

Due to the current scale of the labour market shortages and the demographic trends, measures targeting the domestic and Union workforce alone are likely to be insufficient to address existing and future labour and skills shortages. Therefore, **legal migration** is key to complement those actions and must be part of the solution to fully support the twin transition.

CONTENT: in order to facilitate international recruitment and provide opportunities for third-country nationals to work in EU-wide shortage occupations, the Commission proposes to set up a Union-wide platform, **the EU talent pool**, aimed at addressing labour shortages at Union level by facilitating the recruitment of third country nationals to work in EU-wide shortage occupations. This platform will bring together and support the matching of profiles of registered jobseekers from third countries residing outside the Union and job vacancies of employers established in the participating Member States.

General provisions

The EU talent pool will be a **voluntary tool** which offers additional support at EU level to interested Member States to facilitate international recruitment. As Member States remain free to decide whether they want to join, clear rules on their participation are laid down. In particular, Member States may decide at any time to join the EU talent pool. These decisions will be notified to the Commission at the latest 9 months beforehand. Only employers established in the participating Member States would be able to use the EU Talent Pool to publish their job vacancies on the platform.

IT system

The proposal establishes a new IT platform (EU Talent Pool IT platform) which brings together and supports the matching of profiles of jobseekers from third countries residing outside the Union and job vacancies of employers established in the participating Member States.

Governance

An EU Talent Pool Secretariat is established to ensure the overall management of the EU Talent Pool, including the setting up and management of the EU Talent Pool IT platform. A Steering Group is also established composed of representatives of the participating Member States and is aimed at providing support on a number of aspects relevant for the implementation of the EU Talent Pool. This group may also offer a forum of discussion to facilitate Member States' exchanges on the implementation of accelerated immigration procedures to facilitate the recruitment of jobseekers from third countries matched with employers via the EU Talent Pool IT platform.

Each participating Member State will designate the EU Talent Pool National Contact Points which will transmit job vacancies to the EU Talent Pool IT platform and notify the EU Talent Pool Secretariat the national list of shortage occupations as well as the shortage occupations removed from or added to the EU-wide list of shortage occupations.

Registration of job seekers from third countries

Rules on the registration and access of jobseekers from third countries in the EU Talent Pool IT platform are laid down in the proposal. After having registered their profiles via the **Europass profile builder tool**, registered jobseekers from third countries become visible to employers and are allowed to search for job vacancies in the platform.

Talent partnerships

The EU Talent Pool IT platform will offer a tool to implement the Talent Partnerships by facilitating job placements in this context.

Jobseekers from third countries who participated in a Talent Partnership should receive an **'EU Talent Partnership pass'** which certify the skills developed or validated in the context of a Talent Partnership. Once the profiles of these jobseekers are registered in the EU Talent Pool IT platform, the 'EU Talent Partnership pass' becomes visible to employers.

Participation of employers in the EU Talent Pool

The proposal lays down rules on the participation of employers in the EU Talent Pool. Employers' job vacancies are transferred to the EU Talent Pool IT platform by the EU Talent Pool National Contact Points. As the EU Talent Pool targets certain shortages occupations, only job vacancies falling within the list of EU-wide shortage occupations, the national adjustments to this list and those relevant for a Talent Partnership are transferred to the platform.

Accelerated immigration procedures

The proposal introduces the possibility for participating Member States to put in place accelerated immigration procedures in particular as regards the obtention of visas and residence permits for work purposes and the exemption from the principle of preference for Union citizens.

Establishing an EU talent pool

2023/0404(COD) - 26/03/2025 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report by Abir AL-SAHLANI (Renew, SE) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an EU talent pool.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament adopt its position at first reading subject to amendments.

Subject matter

The proposed Regulation establishes an EU Talent Pool available to all Member States. It lays down rules on:

- the **functioning of the EU Talent Pool IT platform**, in compliance with the applicable standards on user-friendliness and accessibility, and related support services, including the provision of information;
- the **facilitation of recruitment** of jobseekers from third countries benefitting from a Talent Partnership or a Member State framework on validation of skills and qualifications of third-country nationals;
- the **protection of the rights** of registered jobseekers, jobseekers selected for a job vacancy in the EU Talent Pool and employers participating in the EU Talent Pool.

Scope

The draft Regulation applies to jobseekers from third countries residing outside the Union of all skills and qualifications levels and employers established in the participating Member States. It will apply to job vacancies transferred to the EU Talent Pool IT platform to carry out work in the territory of a participating Member State where the employer is established and where the jobseeker will normally work.

EU Talent Pool IT platform

Members stressed that the design and functioning of the EU Talent Pool IT platform will ensure that the automated matching tool does not lead to **unfair biases or discriminatory practices** prohibited under Union or national law.

Processing of personal data

An amendment stipulates that processing of the special categories of personal data for the purpose of searching and matching will be prohibited.

Functions of the EU Talent Pool Steering Group

The EU Talent Pool Steering Group will be responsible for:

- ensuring the **exchange of best practices** among Member States regarding the **national adjustments to the list of EU-wide shortage occupations**;
- facilitating the **gathering of data** relevant for the monitoring activities of the EU Talent Pool;
- discussing and exchanging **best practices** regarding the implementation of accelerated immigration procedures to facilitate the recruitment of registered jobseekers from third countries.

Registration and access of jobseekers from third countries

Members highlighted that profiles of jobseekers who have made a false declaration with regard to the information will be removed from the EU Talent Pool IT platform.

Information provision and support services

The report clarifies that information provided on the EU Talent Pool IT platform will be made available **free of charge**, in a clear, comprehensive, user-friendly and non-discriminatory manner.

Accelerated immigration procedures

In order to reduce the burden of bureaucratic procedures and make recruitment procedures more effective for companies, participating Member States will put in place accelerated immigration procedures covering the non-application of the labour market test for job vacancies posted on the EU Talent Pool IT platform and the recognition of qualifications and skills of jobseekers from a third country developed or validated in the framework of an EU Talent Partnership, a bilateral arrangement or a national framework and certified by a 'Talent Partnership pass'.

Monitoring activities and feedback

The performance and cost-effectiveness of the EU Talent Pool will be regularly monitored by the EU Talent Pool Secretariat. In particular, gender-disaggregated data will be gathered on: (i) the number and type of profiles of employers registered in the EU Talent Pool IT platform; (ii) the number of placements facilitated via the EU Talent Pool in the context of the EU Talent Partnerships or national frameworks on skills development and validation in a third country; (iii) the number of profiles and job vacancies removed from the EU Talent Pool IT platform; (iv) the levels of skills and qualifications of jobseekers from third countries who have been selected for a job vacancy in the EU Talent Pool, in order to assess the risk of brain drain.

Reporting

By 31 December 2031 and every five years thereafter, the Commission will submit a report on the application of this Regulation. That report will assess the effectiveness of this Regulation in addressing skills shortages and in attracting talent from third countries.