



EUA Statement on Visa directive: Researchers Welcome

23 September 2015

Europe needs talented students and researchers in order to achieve its goals for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. For this reason, the European University Association (EUA) welcomes the initiative to revise the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing.

European universities require talent in order to sustain their high level of teaching and research, both in order to keep Europe at the forefront of global knowledge creation and to train highly qualified workers for the knowledge-intensive industries on the continent. At present, there are not enough highly qualified people within Europe to sustain, let alone develop, a globally competitive knowledge economy. Human resources from elsewhere are needed. Already one in four doctoral researchers in the EU are from outside the Union. This global recruitment of future researchers and knowledge workers through universities is vital.

In comparison with other countries, the EU is still far behind the USA and Japan in terms of researchers in the work force, and China is catching up. The European Commission estimates that the growth in the number of new job opportunities in research, across all sectors, will reach the million mark between now and the end of the decade. Competition for these research positions is increasing globally, and the EU cannot afford to create obstacles that will reduce their appeal.

For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that talented students and researchers from across the world are welcome in Europe and that their entry to the EU should be as straightforward as possible. Moreover, in order to bolster the attractiveness of Europe as a destination for researchers, the question of giving the same rights to researchers entering Europe as those already enjoyed by EU citizens, such as free mobility within the Union, is crucial. This is particularly important for researchers and students who need to build European networks so as to fully contribute to research and innovation. They need to feel at home and welcome throughout Europe.

EUA wishes to draw the attention of the trilogue partners in the upcoming negotiation round to

the importance of the Directive, to the need for its efficient functioning, and to its sending the right signals to researchers, which is that Europe welcomes them and appreciates their contributions. Watering down the content of the Directive through exceptions or curbing of the proposed rights will put Europe at a clear disadvantage in the ongoing global competition for talent.

For information on the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing, click [here](#).