



INTERCLab
Intercultural lab
for migrants' inclusion

EU BLUE CARD



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WHAT IS IT? HOW LONG DOES IT LAST? WHO CAN ASK FOR IT?	3
2. LEGAL BASIS	6
3. HISTORY ABOUT EU BLUE CARD AND POSSIBLE EVOLUTIONS	9
4. ADVANTAGES OF BLUE CARD VS ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL VISA / RESIDENCY PERMIT	12
5. CASE STUDY: EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF THE BLUE CARD IN GERMANY (HIGHEST OF EU).....	19
6. VIDEOS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	21
<i>BLUE CARD IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES</i>	27
SPAIN	27
GREECE	31
PORTUGAL	34
ITALY	38
GERMANY	43

1. WHAT IS IT? HOW LONG DOES IT LAST? WHO CAN ASK FOR IT?

The EU Blue Card is a prestigious work permit issued by EU member states to third-country nationals who possess advanced education and skills. This document aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the EU Blue Card, including its purpose, eligibility criteria, application process, and key differences from other residence permits.

The EU Blue Card is specifically designed to attract highly qualified third-country nationals to address skill shortages in occupations where qualified personnel are scarce or likely to be in demand in the future. It serves as the main residence permit for university graduates from abroad who wish to utilise their talents into EU countries.

The EU Blue Card offers highly skilled non-EU citizens an opportunity to work and reside in most EU member states. It provides a streamlined process for obtaining work authorization, favourable family reunification rules, and increased geographic mobility within the EU. Understanding the eligibility criteria and application process is crucial for those seeking to leverage their skills and contribute to the European workforce.

The Blue Card is an approved EU-wide work permit (Directive (EU) 2021/1883) allowing highly skilled non-EU citizens to work and live in 25 of the 27 countries within the European Union excluding Denmark and Ireland, which are not subject to the proposal. However, according to new rules, if it is a business trip, it does allow entry to a Schengen area member country if the country issuing the Blue Card is not a member of the Schengen area (like EU members Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania).

The term Blue Card was coined by the think tank Bruegel, inspired by the United States' green card (known officially as a permanent resident card) and making reference to the European flag which is blue with twelve golden stars.

The Blue Card proposal presented by the European Commission offers a one-track procedure for non-EU citizens to apply for a work permit, which would be valid for up to three years, but can be renewed thereafter. Blue Card status also carries other rights, such as favourable family reunification rules. The proposal also encourages geographic mobility within the EU, between different member states, for those who have been granted a blue card.

The Blue Card proposal was introduced at a press conference in Strasbourg on October 23, 2007, by President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security Franco Frattini. Barroso stated that the proposal aimed to address the future labour and skills shortage in the EU, the challenges faced by third-country workers in moving between member states for employment, the inconsistent admission procedures across the 27 member states, and the disparity in rights between EU citizens and legal immigrants. Alongside the

Blue Card proposal, another proposal (COM (2007)638) was presented, which included a simplified application process and a common set of rights for legal third-country workers. The name "Blue Card" was chosen to signify that it is the European equivalent of the US green card, with the colour blue being prominent in EU flags and logos.

The proposal received criticism from governments of developing countries shortly after its presentation. They expressed concerns that the Blue Card system would lead to the recruitment of skilled workers from their countries, exacerbating the existing brain drain. South African Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, highlighted the negative impact on African countries already experiencing the migration of skilled health workers. Moroccan international economic law professor, Tajeddine El Hussein, went further, characterizing the proposal as a new form of colonization and discrimination, and anticipated difficulties in garnering support for it among southern countries.

Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible for an EU Blue Card, applicants generally need to meet a number of criteria, which can vary slightly between different EU member states.

The first, of course, is to be a non-EU citizen.

The second is to have a valid job offer in an EU country that pays above a certain threshold. That said, obtaining the EU Blue Card is also contingent upon the prevailing unemployment situation within the particular country. The issuance of these cards is subject to an annually fluctuating quota set by each country.

A sufficient level of Higher Education (usually a Bachelor's degree or higher) is also necessary. Individuals aiming to acquire an EU Blue Card should be capable of providing evidence of advanced education or training over a period of at least three years that is directly applicable to the responsibilities anticipated within the employing company and meets the standard necessary for competent performance. In situations where these aren't possible, proof of a minimum of five years of relevant professional experience tied directly to the field is required instead.

The EU Blue Card offers several advantages to immigrants and their families, including:

- The opportunity to reside and work in any EU member state.
- Unrestricted movement within the EU without additional procedures.
- The ability to include immediate family members in the application, granting them the right to reside in the EU.

Duration of the EU Blue Card:

- The validity period of the EU Blue Card varies by country.
- Typically, it ranges from one to four years.
- For instance, Spain offers a validity period of 12 months, while countries like France and Germany allow up to 48 months.

In conclusion, the EU Blue Card is available to highly skilled non-EU nationals who are seeking to work and reside in an EU member state.

Eligibility for the EU Blue Card is generally based on the following criteria:

- **Qualifications:** the individual must hold a higher education degree, such as a university diploma or equivalent qualifications, demonstrating at least three years of professional experience.
- **Employment contract:** the individual must have a job offer or a binding employment contract from an employer in an EU member state for a highly skilled or shortage occupation. The employment contract must meet the minimum salary requirements set by the member state. Have a job offer that guarantees gross annual earnings.
- **Labour market test:** in certain cases, the employer may be required to demonstrate that no suitable EU citizen is available for the job position before hiring a non-EU national. However, exemptions apply for specific occupations or if the salary exceeds a certain threshold.
- **Valid travel document:** the individual must possess a valid travel document, such as a passport, with a minimum validity of three months beyond the intended duration of stay.
- **Health insurance:** adequate health insurance coverage that is valid in the EU member state where the individual intends to work and reside is required.
- **Demonstrate expertise in occupations** such as doctors, engineers, natural scientists, mathematicians, and IT specialists.
- **Have a clean criminal record** and not be subject to entry restrictions.
- **No threat to public policy, security, or health:** The individual must not pose a threat to the public policy, security, or health of the EU member state.

It's important to note that the specific requirements and procedures for obtaining the EU Blue Card can vary among EU member states. Each member state has the authority to establish its own regulations regarding the implementation and application of the EU Blue Card Directive. Therefore, it is advisable for individuals to consult the relevant national immigration authorities or embassies of the EU member state where they intend to work to obtain accurate and up-to-date information.

2. LEGAL BASIS

The legal basis of the EU Blue Card is primarily established through EU directives and regulations, along with national legislation implemented by individual member states.

The legal framework for the Blue Card is primarily outlined in **Directive 2009/50/EC**, which sets forth the conditions of entry and residence for third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment. However, the European Parliament has approved a new EU Blue Card **Directive (EU) 2021/1883** aiming to improve the rules for attracting highly skilled workers from outside the EU. The directive lays down the entry and residence conditions for and rights of highly qualified third-country nationals and their families:

- Staying for more than 3 months in a European Union (EU) Member State;
- Working in a Member State other than the one that first granted them an EU Blue Card.

The new Directive amending Directive (EU) 2016/801 on the entry and residence of non-EU nationals for research, studies, training, voluntary service, secondary education and au pairing and repeals the original Blue Card directive, Directive 2009/50/EC, as of 19 November 2023. It has applied since 17 November 2021 and had to become law in the Member States (excluding Denmark and Ireland) by 18 November 2023.

The directive refines and updates the regulations governing the entry and stay of highly skilled non-EU workers, giving the EU a targeted legal migration scheme that can respond to skill shortages and makes it easier for highly skilled professionals to join the workforce. It establishes the criteria and procedures for obtaining and holding a Blue Card, including requirements related to qualifications, employment contracts, and minimum salary thresholds. It also outlines the rights and benefits afforded to Blue Card holders, such as equal treatment with EU nationals in terms of employment, social security, and access to education. It also provides an EU framework for attracting talent, while individual Member States decide how many people to admit to their labour market.

The main purpose of the new Directive is to further assist employers for recruiting from outside the EU by making the process easier and more accessible, especially for industries where there is a labour shortage such as technology, healthcare and engineering. EU Member States will have two years to implement the new Directive into their national laws.

Its main objectives are to enable:

- EU to attract and retain highly qualified non-EU nationals and facilitate their access to the labour market of EU countries.

- Establishment of a fast-track procedure and common admission criteria for issuing the EU Blue Card by EU countries.
- Mobility of highly qualified persons within the EU.

The key points of the new legislation are summarized as follows:

- It applies to non-EU nationals applying, or having applied, for highly qualified employment in a Member State. It does not apply to non-EU nationals: seeking international protection, carrying out a research project, who are granted long-term resident status in a Member State, who are covered by an international agreement allowing a temporary stay, rights of free movement or whose expulsion has been suspended.
- It does not affect more favorable rules in EU law, including bilateral and multilateral agreements and/or the right of Member States to decide how many non-EU nationals may enter their territory.
- Under the new Directive, the local employment contract or job offer should be conducted for a minimum of six months instead of the current twelve months.
- The minimum salary requirement for the highly skilled workers will range between 1 and 1.6 times the national average salary, instead of the current set minimum of 1.5 times the average salary. Member States may choose to set a lower threshold for professions where there is shortage of workers or for recent graduates.
- Member States would be allowed to implement “recognized employer programs”. Such employers would benefit from a beneficial regime with simplified procedures and requirements for their highly skilled employees, inclusive for the EU Blue Card application process.
- The concept of business trips is introduced. Business travel within the EU countries will be allowed for EU Blue Card holders for specific activities without the need of a separate work permit or registration. Currently there are no rules on the business travel activities, which third country (non-EEA) nationals, including EU Blue Card holders may perform while on business travel within the EU. Only the local legislation of each EU Member State is applicable.
- EU Blue Card holders will be able to benefit from a special regime and move to another EU country after being employed for a 12-month period in the Member State, which initially issued the EU Blue card. Further, EU Blue Card holders should be allowed to relocate to a second Member State under simplified conditions.
- EU Blue Card holders may be allowed to perform self-employment activities in parallel with their regular employment. Each Member state will determine if they would implement this additional benefit as well the scope of the allowed self-employment.
- The family reunification procedure would be less burdensome as non-EEA family members would be allowed to apply for dependent residence permits at the same time when the highly skilled worker applies for the EU Blue Card. Non-EEA family members of EU Blue Card holders would also be allowed to work by being granted access to employment or self-employment activities under a simplified process.

- Professional qualifications of EU Blue Card holders who wish to exercise a regulated profession (e.g., doctors, lawyers, architects) should be recognized via a simplified procedure in the same way as those of EU, EEA and Swiss nationals.

Furthermore, each EU member state has transposed the provisions of Directive into its national legislation, adapting the requirements and procedures to its specific context and labor market needs. National laws and regulations govern the implementation of the Blue Card scheme within each member state, including details such as application procedures, eligibility criteria, and rights and obligations of Blue Card holders.

3. HISTORY ABOUT EU BLUE CARD AND POSSIBLE EVOLUTIONS

The Lisbon European Council in **March 2000** set the Community the objective of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion. In this follow-up, in October 2007, the European Commission proposed the EU Blue Card scheme as a means to attract highly skilled workers to the EU.

In May 2009, the EU Blue Card Directive was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The directive aimed to establish a common framework for the admission of non-EU nationals to the EU for the purpose of highly skilled employment.

In December of 2011, the EU Blue Card Directive came into effect. The directive laid down the conditions for obtaining and holding an EU Blue Card, including requirements related to qualifications, employment contracts, and minimum salary thresholds. It also provided for certain rights and benefits for EU Blue Card holders and their families, such as facilitated mobility within the EU, equal treatment with nationals in areas such as social security and access to education, and the possibility of permanent residency after a certain period of time.

Implementation by Member States: Member states of the EU were required to transpose the EU Blue Card Directive into their national laws and to start issuing EU Blue Cards to eligible applicants.

Amendments and Updates: Over the years, the EU Blue Card scheme has undergone amendments and updates to address practical issues and to improve its effectiveness. These changes have included adjustments to salary thresholds, expansion of the list of eligible occupations, and simplification of administrative procedures.

Overall, the EU Blue Card has become an important tool for facilitating the migration of highly skilled workers to the EU, contributing to the EU's competitiveness and economic growth, while also providing opportunities for talented individuals from around the world.

Objectives and evolution of EU Card

The EU Blue Card program is designed to make Europe a more attractive destination for professionals from outside the European Union. All EU member states (except Denmark and Ireland) issue the EU Blue Card.

To an extent the EU Blue Card program is a merit-based system; interpreting a person with 'merits' as one who received adequate education or, through professional experience possesses sought-after skills. The EU Blue Card is not points-based; either you have the education or skills, or you do not.

The European Blue Card initiative has a number of distinctive qualities that will help Europe become the world's most favorite migration destination:

- Working and salary conditions equal to nationals
- Free movement within the Schengen area
- Entitlement to a series of socio-economic rights (e.g., unemployment benefits)
- Favorable conditions for family reunification
- Permanent residence perspective
- Freedom of association

The EU Blue Card scheme has been a significant step in attracting highly skilled workers to the European Union, but like any policy initiative, it has faced challenges and opportunities for evolution.

Here are some possible **evolutions or developments related to the EU Blue Card**:

- 1) **Harmonization and Standardization:** Although the EU Blue Card Directive aimed to create a common framework for the admission of highly skilled workers, implementation and interpretation can vary between EU member states. Further efforts could be made to harmonize and standardize the application process, eligibility criteria, and rights and benefits across all member states, reducing administrative burdens and ensuring a more uniform experience for applicants.
- 2) **Expansion of Eligibility Criteria:** Currently, the EU Blue Card is primarily targeted at highly skilled workers with specific professional qualifications. However, there may be room to expand the eligibility criteria to include other categories of migrants, such as entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, and innovators, who can contribute to the EU's economic growth and competitiveness.
- 3) **Streamlining Procedures:** Simplifying and streamlining the application procedures for the EU Blue Card could make it more attractive to both employers and prospective migrants. This could involve reducing processing times, improving online application systems, and providing clearer guidance on documentation requirements.
- 4) **Flexibility in Mobility:** While the EU Blue Card already provides certain mobility rights within the EU, further enhancements could be made to facilitate the movement of EU Blue Card holders between member states for employment purposes. This could involve measures such as mutual recognition of qualifications, standardized language requirements, and greater portability of social security benefits.
- 5) **Enhanced Family Reunification:** Family reunification rights for EU Blue Card holders and their family members could be strengthened to promote social cohesion and integration.

This could include expanding the definition of family members eligible for reunification, reducing processing times for family visa applications, and ensuring equal access to education and healthcare services for family members.

- 6) **Promotion and Awareness:** Increasing awareness and promotion of the EU Blue Card scheme both within the EU and internationally could attract more highly skilled workers to the EU and help address labor shortages in key sectors. This could involve targeted marketing campaigns, partnerships with employers and academic institutions, and participation in international job fairs and recruitment events.

Overall, the evolution of the EU Blue Card will likely continue to be shaped by ongoing demographic, economic, and geopolitical trends, as well as by feedback from stakeholders and experiences gained through its implementation.

4. ADVANTAGES OF BLUE CARD VS ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL VISA / RESIDENCY PERMIT

In order to strengthen the competitiveness, the EU is interested in attracting highly-skilled workers from non-EU countries. With this objective, the EU put in place a specific migration scheme for highly qualified non-EU workers in 2009. This provided a fast-track procedure for issuing a residence and work permit to highly-skilled workers. It is called the EU Blue Card (Council Directive 2009/50/EC on the conditions of entry and residence of nationals of non-EU countries for the purposes of highly qualified employment) and is designed to facilitate access to the EU's labour market; it also entitles its holders to socio-economic rights, favorable conditions for family reunification and facilitated movement within the EU.

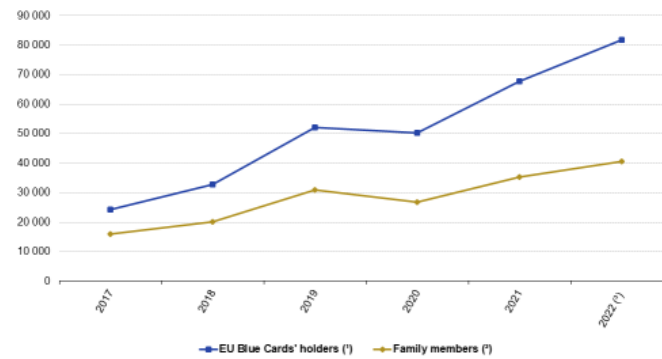
In December 2011, the Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU) was adopted. It is based on a single application procedure to obtain a single permit that grants the holder the right to both residence and work in the EU, while guaranteeing that non-EU workers should receive equal treatment to that enjoyed by nationals in areas such as working conditions, joining organizations representing workers, education and vocational training, recognition of diplomas, social security, tax benefits, and access to goods and services including procedures for housing and employment advice.

More recently, the rules for the EU Blue Card were amended (Directive (EU) 2021/1883) and have become law in the Member States (by the end of 2023). The new scheme introduces efficient rules for attracting highly skilled workers to the EU, including more flexible admission conditions, enhanced rights and the possibility to move and work more easily between EU Member States.

Across the EU, the total number of EU Blue Cards granted to non-EU citizens rose from 24 305 in 2017 to 52 127 in 2019. It then fell to 50 234 in 2020 and increased again to 67 730 in 2021 (+ 35 %) and to 81 851 in 2022 (+21 %). It should be noted that the coverage (of EU Member States) included in this total changed over time – see Figure 3.

Family members of EU Blue Card holders are also entitled to receive residence permits and benefit from work and mobility rights. In 2022, 40 569 residence permits were issued in the EU for family members of EU Blue Card holders. Note that the coverage of the data shown in Figure 3 changes over time and is not the same for the two indicators.:

Blue Cards granted and admitted family members, 2017–2022
(number)



Note: Denmark and Ireland are not bound by the EU Blue Card Directive. Cyprus: quota set to zero by legislation.
 (*) 2017–2018: Greece no data available.
 (*) 2017 and 2019: Greece and the Netherlands: no data available. 2018: Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland: no data available. 2020: Germany no data available. 2021: Greece and Malta no data available. 2022: Greece no data available.
 (*) Calculations: include provisional data for France and Spain.
 Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr_resbc1 and migr_resbc2)

eurostat

Table 1: Blue Cards granted and admitted family members, 2017–2022 (number)
Source: Eurostat (migr_resbc1) and (migr_resbc2)

Germany issued 63 200 EU Blue Cards in 2022 (77 % of all EU Blue Cards issued)

Table 1 shows that, in 2022, the majority of EU Blue Cards issued in the EU were issued in four countries: Germany (63 242, 77.3 % of the total), Poland (4 831, 6.0 %), Lithuania (3 924 or 4.8 %) and France (3 876, 4.7 %). Conversely, eight EU countries issued less than 100 EU Blue Cards in 2022: Sweden (83 EU Blue Cards), Spain (58), Estonia (36), Portugal (27), Greece (22), Malta (21), Hungary (18), and Slovakia (14) and no EU Blue Cards were issued in Cyprus.

EU Blue Cards and linked family residence permits issued, 2020–2022

	EU Blue Card holders				Family reunification with EU Blue Card holders			
	2020	2021	2022	2022	2020	2021	2022	2022
	(number)	Share of total (%)	(number)	Share of total (%)	(number)	Share of total (%)	(number)	Share of total (%)
TOTAL (*)	50 234	100.0	67 730	100.0	81 851	100.0	26 732	100.0
Belgium	117	0.2	114	0.2	124	0.2	93	0.3
Bulgaria	299	0.6	323	0.5	922	1.1	153	0.6
Czechia	365	0.7	671	1.0	636	0.8	150	0.6
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	43 227	86.1	57 671	85.1	63 242	77.3	21 911	82.0
Estonia	15	0.0	25	0.0	36	0.0	15	0.1
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greece	3	0.0	12	0.0	22	0.0	-	-
Spain (*)	51	0.1	64	0.1	58	0.1	24	0.1
France (*)	2 032	4.0	1 864	2.8	3 876	4.7	1 106	4.1
Croatia	96	0.2	225	0.3	440	0.5	15	0.1
Italy	211	0.4	409	0.6	572	0.7	1	0.0
Cyprus	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Latvia	69	0.1	226	0.3	357	0.4	53	0.2
Lithuania	289	0.6	1 267	1.9	3 924	4.8	250	0.9
Luxembourg	464	0.9	697	1.0	1 011	1.2	531	2.0
Hungary	5	0.0	10	0.0	18	0.0	0	0.0
Malta	15	0.0	26	0.0	21	0.0	3	0.0
Netherlands	205	0.4	214	0.3	304	0.4	0	0.0
Austria	223	0.4	312	0.5	501	0.6	276	1.0
Poland	2 251	4.5	2 980	4.4	4 931	6.0	1 818	6.8
Portugal	8	0.0	23	0.0	27	0.0	0	0.0
Romania	113	0.2	237	0.3	211	0.3	149	0.6
Slovenia	52	0.1	96	0.1	131	0.2	57	0.2
Slovakia	6	0.0	10	0.0	14	0.0	7	0.0
Finland	95	0.2	200	0.3	390	0.5	99	0.4
Sweden	20	0.0	54	0.1	83	0.1	21	0.1

- Indicates not available or not applicable.
 Note: Denmark and Ireland are not bound by the EU Blue Card Directive. Cyprus: quota set to zero by legislation.
 (*) Total and shares based on available data.
 (*) Provisional.
 Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr_resbc1 and migr_resbc2)

eurostat

Table 2: EU Blue Cards and linked family residence permits issued, 2020–2022
Source: Eurostat (migr_resbc1) and (migr_resbc2)

Citizens of India granted the highest number of EU Blue Cards in the EU in 2022

The top 10 countries whose citizens were granted EU Blue Cards in 2022 (see Table 3) accounted for about two thirds (67.1 %) of the 81 851 cards that were issued in the EU in 2022. Of these, 19 896 EU Blue Cards were granted to citizens of India, which represented about one quarter of all EU Blue Cards issued in the EU (24.3 %). The next largest numbers and shares were for citizens of Russia (7 606 EU Blue Cards, 9.3 % of the total), Belarus (5 541, 6.8 %), Türkiye (5 234, 6.4 %) and Iraq (3 618, 4.4 %).

Among the top 10 countries of citizenship for EU Blue Cards granted in 2022, the ones for which the issue of these cards was most concentrated in a single EU Member State (i.e. Germany) were Iraq (99.9 %), Pakistan (94.7%), and Egypt (91.8 %).

Top 10 countries whose citizens were granted EU Blue Cards, by main issuing EU Member States, 2022

Countries whose citizens were most often granted EU Blue Cards	EU Blue Cards granted in the (number)	Top three EU Member States granting the most EU Blue Cards						Other EU Member States granting EU Blue Cards				
		Highest (number)	Share of total (%)	Second highest (number)	Share of total (%)	Third highest (number)	Share of total (%)	(number)	Share of total (%)			
TOTAL	81 851	Germany	63 242	77.3	Poland	4 931	6.0	Lithuania	3 624	4.8	9 754	11.9
India	19 896	Germany	17 541	88.2	Poland	849	4.3	France	507	1.6	1 139	5.7
Russia	7 606	Germany	4 695	61.7	Lithuania	722	10.1	Bulgaria	561	7.4	1 570	20.7
Belarus	5 541	Lithuania	2 797	50.5	Poland	1 852	33.4	Germany	638	11.5	254	4.6
Türkiye	5 234	Germany	4 504	86.1	Poland	145	2.8	France	119	2.3	455	8.9
Iraq	3 618	Germany	3 613	99.9	Romania	2	0.1	Croatia	1	0.0	2	0.1
China (*)	3 484	Germany	3 127	89.8	France	95	2.7	Romania	71	2.0	191	5.5
Ukraine	2 582	Germany	1 468	56.9	Poland	798	30.9	Lithuania	101	3.9	215	8.3
Egypt	2 401	Germany	2 203	91.8	Poland	68	2.8	France	27	1.1	103	4.3
Tunisia	2 321	Germany	1 501	64.7	France	749	32.3	Bulgaria	22	0.9	49	2.1
Pakistan	2 205	Germany	2 088	94.7	Poland	38	1.7	Luxembourg	22	1.0	58	2.6

Note: Denmark and Ireland are not bound by the EU Blue Card Directive. France: provisional.
(*) Including Hong Kong
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_resbc1)

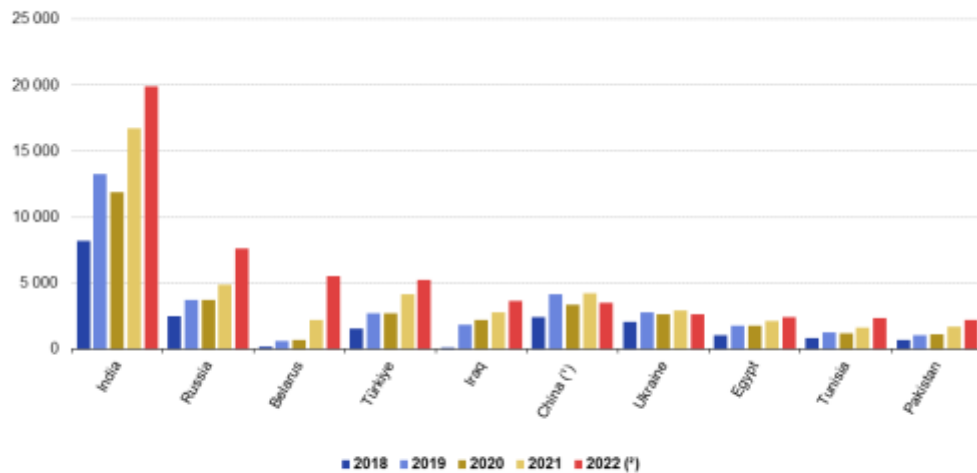
eurostat

Table 3: Top 10 countries whose citizens were granted EU Blue Cards, by main issuing EU Member States, 2022

Source: Eurostat (migr_resbc1)

Table 3 shows that the top five countries whose citizens were granted the most EU Blue Cards in 2022 recorded an increase in 2021 and 2022: India, Russia, Belarus, Türkiye and Iraq.

Top 10 countries whose citizens were granted EU Blue Cards, 2018–2022
(number)



Note: selection and ranking based on 2022 data. Denmark and Ireland are not bound by the EU Blue Card Directive.
(*) Including Hong Kong.
(*) France: provisional.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_resbc1)

eurostat

Figure 4: Top 10 countries whose citizens were granted EU Blue Cards, 2018–2022
(number)

Source: Eurostat (migr_resbc1)

In 2022, the number of first permits issued as EU Blue Cards was 16.3 % of the number of all first permits granted to highly-skilled workers

This section provides information on first residence permits issued to non-EU citizens as highly-skilled workers, which comprises two categories:

- First permits issued as EU Blue Cards;
- First permits issued for highly-skilled workers under national legislation.

The share of permits as EU Blue Card on all first permits issued for highly-skilled workers is shown in Figure 5 and it highlights the significant role of EU Blue Cards in attracting highly-skilled workers to the EU.

In 2017, the EU Blue Card scheme accounted for 22.3 % of all first permits issued to highly-skilled workers (either as EU Blue Cards or under national legislation). The share rose each year to a peak of 28.8 % in 2019 however decreased to 19.5% in 2020 and 14.3 % in 2021. The EU Blue Card scheme was increasingly used as a means for highly-skilled workers to enter the EU labour market

up until 2019; the end of this development coincided with the start of the COVID-19 crisis and its related containment measures.

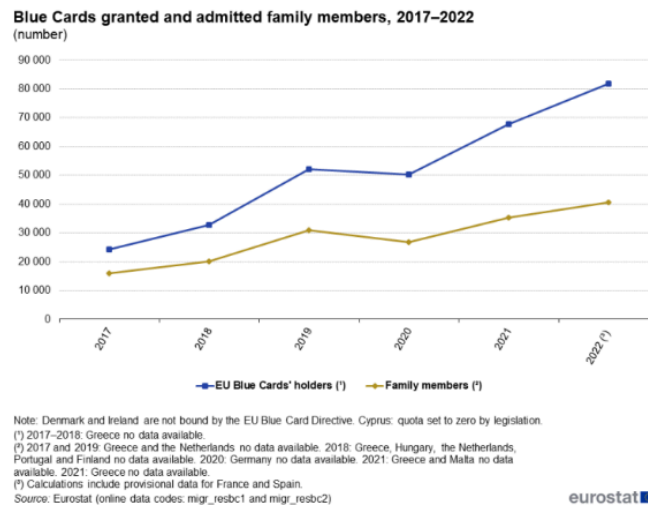


Figure 5: First permits issued as EU Blue Cards as a share of all first permits issued for highly-skilled workers, 2017–2022 (%)

Source: [Eurostat \(migr_resocc\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

See <https://www.apply.eu/>:
EU Blue Card Network

The EU is increasingly competing with other destinations in the global race for talent. To attract and retain highly qualified workers – particularly in sectors facing skills shortages – the EU updated the Blue Card directive in October 2021.

The Blue Card is a special residence permit. Not all foreigners can obtain this residence permit. The new rules harmonise the conditions of entry and residence for highly qualified workers from non-EU countries and increase the attractiveness of the EU Blue Card.

Member states are able to maintain national schemes for highly qualified workers alongside the EU Blue Card scheme. However, the new rules introduce a number of provisions to ensure that holders of EU Blue Cards and their families are not at a disadvantage compared with holders of national permits.

Blue Card holders can:

- Enter, re-enter and stay in the territory of the EU country issuing the card.
- Access highly qualified employment in the Member State issuing the card.

- Be treated in the same way as nationals in terms of working conditions, education and training, social security and access to services.
- Request family reunification permits for the same duration as the EU Blue Card.
- Accumulate periods of residence in different member states to be eligible to an EU long-term residence permit.

Blue Card holders can travel in the EU:

- Short-term mobility: they can travel to other EU countries for up to three months during a six-month period for the purpose of carrying out a business activity.
- Long-term mobility: after one year in an EU country, they may also reside and work in another member state and apply for a new Blue Card via a quick and simple procedure.

The Blue Card has many benefits and is very rewarding. The possibilities offered by the Blue Card are wide and cover various areas, both private and professional.

- Traveling with the Blue Card. With the EU Blue Card, you can generally travel to other Schengen states for tourism purposes without a visa for up to 90 days within 190 days. The Schengen States include Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
- Facilitation of family reunification. An advantage of the Blue Card is the simplification of family reunification. Due to the already high requirements for the Blue Card, issuing a declaration of undertaking is already easier to fulfill than other residence permits. With the Blue Card, family reunification is subject to simplified conditions. For example, the spouse can obtain a residence permit without prior language knowledge and is authorized to work in Germany.
- Naturalization with a Blue Card. It allows naturalization if all the requirements for German citizenship are met. Naturalization with the Blue Card has exactly the same conditions as naturalization with any other authorized residence permit. Due to the already high requirements for the Blue Card in terms of salary, it is easier to provide proof of subsistence than with many other residence permits. You can also apply for naturalization after 7, 6 or 3 years by providing some evidence (previously passed naturalization exam, B2 certificate or marriage to a German citizen).
- Residence permit with Blue Card. The Blue Card brings advantages in terms of settlement permit. For example, in Germany, Blue Card holders can apply for an establishment permit after just 33 months. Blue Card holders must have a highly qualified occupation, have paid contributions to the pension fund and be able to express themselves in simple German. With a B1 certificate, it is possible to reduce the 33 months to 21 months.

- The time employed on the EU Blue Card, in various countries or in one, accumulates. After two to five years, depending on the country of residence, you can apply for permanent residency.

5. CASE STUDY: EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF THE BLUE CARD IN GERMANY (HIGHEST OF EU)

On 1 August 2012, the Federal Government of Germany introduced the EU Blue Card as the residence permit for highly qualified professionals from third countries wishing to live and work in Germany. The Blue Card is issued in line with Section 19a Residence Act (AufenthG), which is based on the Highly Qualified Employment Directive of the European Union 2009/50/EC. This directive has applied since 19 June 2009 and had to become law in the Member States by 19 June 2011.

In recent years, the requirements of the labour market have made it necessary to adjust the conditions for obtaining the EU Blue Card several times - in this case to make them less restrictive, e.g. more flexible admission conditions (lower salary threshold), simpler procedures (fast-track procedures in cooperation with employers), broader rights and easier travel within the EU.

Meanwhile, the instrument of the EU Blue Card is well established in Germany and all relevant information is promoted in a special section of the website "Make it in Germany" run by the Federal Government in four language versions: German, English, Spanish and French.

Statistics on the EU Blue Card on national level in Germany

The acute shortage of skilled labor in Germany, which is being worsened by the aging of society and the retirement of the baby boomers, will make it necessary to liberalize immigration regulations in the long term. Roughly 45.7 million persons resident in Germany were in employment in January 2024, the **unemployment rate at a moderate level of 3.1%**. According to the 15th coordinated population projection (based on data as of Dec 31, 2021), the number of people of working age (20 to 66 years) will decrease in the coming years. Even with high net immigration - i.e. a high positive balance of immigration and emigration - there would be a slight decrease of 1.6 million people by the mid-2030s. With low net immigration, the number could fall by 4.8 million people.

Thus, the EU Blue Card is a valuable instrument to face this future challenge. "According to an analysis of the Central Register of Foreigners, almost 200,000 academic professionals from non-EU countries received a Blue Card for the first time between 2012 and 2022. According to the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis), 83% of those who received this residence permit between 2012 and 2017 continued to live in Germany after five years. Compared to international students (55%), Blue Card holders therefore have a higher retention rate after five years. Almost 68,900 people received a Blue Card for the first time between 2012 and 2017. Most of them had Indian citizenship (22.4%), followed by people with Chinese (8.7%) or Russian (7.5%) citizenship. The majority of people who received a Blue Card for the first time between 2012 and 2017 had a settlement permit after five years (59.9%). A further 11.3% were naturalized, 9.0% continued to hold a Blue Card and 3.1% held another residence title. In contrast, 16.7% no longer lived in Germany.

Compared to Blue Card holders, the retention rate for international students is lower. Around 219,600 international students received a residence permit for study purposes in Germany for the first time between 2006 and 2012. Most of them had Chinese citizenship (19.6%), followed by people with American (6.9 %) and Russian (6.4 %) citizenship. After five years, 55% of former international students were still living in Germany, after ten years the figure was 46%."

Statistics on the EU Blue Card on international level in the EU (2022)

"The majority of EU Blue Cards issued in the EU were issued in four countries: **Germany (63 242, 77.3 % of the total)**, Poland (4 831, 6.0 %), Lithuania (3 924 or 4.8 %) and France (3 876, 4.7 %). Conversely, eight EU countries issued less than 100 EU Blue Cards in 2022: Sweden (83 EU Blue Cards), Spain (58), Estonia (36), Portugal (27), Greece (22), Malta (21), Hungary (18), and Slovakia (14) and no EU Blue Cards were issued in Cyprus."

6. VIDEOS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- **VIDEOS**

EU Blue Card: filling the skills gap <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOdfMwZiXms>

How do I get the EU Blue Card? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpQCGfZvBU8>

- **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

INNETICA (SPAIN)

Baldi, G., & Miglio, V. (2020). The European Blue Card: An Unfulfilled Promise? Analysis of the EU Framework for Attracting Highly Skilled Migrants. *International Migration*, 58(6), 85-101.

Bruegel. (2007). Blue Card Proposal - Highly Skilled Workers: A Proposal for a Directive. Retrieved from <https://www.bruegel.org/2007/10/blue-card-proposal-highly-skilled-workers-a-proposal-for-a-directive/>

European Commission. (2007). Questions and Answers: Blue Card Proposal. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_07_425

European Commission. (2020). Blue Card Network: Facts and Figures 2020. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/blue_card_network_facts_and_figures_2020_en.pdf

European Commission. (2021). Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly skilled employment (Blue Card). Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021L1883>

European Migration Network. (2012). Study on Blue Card Directive (2012): Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_2012_statistical_annex_en.pdf

European Migration Network. (2015). Study on Blue Card Directive (2015): Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_2015_statistical_annex_en.pdf

European Migration Network. (2016). EU Blue Card: Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_2016_statistical_annex_en.pdf
European Migration Network. (2017). Study on Blue Card Directive (2017): Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_2017_statistical_annex_en.pdf
European Migration Network. (2019). Study on Blue Card Directive (2019): Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_statistical_annex_2019_en.pdf
European Migration Network. (2020). Study on Blue Card Directive (2020): Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_2020_statistical_annex_en.pdf
European Migration Network. (2021). Study on Blue Card Directive (2021): Annual Policy Report on Migration and Asylum - Statistical Annex. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/blue_card_policy_report_2021_statistical_annex.pdf
European Parliament. (2009). Directive 2009/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2009 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32009L0050>
European Parliament. (2016). Implementation of the Blue Card Directive. Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/112785/IMCO%20v2.pdf>
European Union. (2020). EU Immigration Portal: Blue Card. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/blue-card_en
European Union. (2021). Blue Card. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/eulf> you have any specific questions or need further information about the European Blue Card, feel free to ask!

ISON (GREECE)

European Commission (2023) EU Blue Card Portal
-https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/work/eu-blue-card_en

European Commission (2021). EU Blue Card: Commission welcomes political agreement on new rules for highly skilled migrant workers, Press Release. Available at: [EU Blue Card: new rules for highly skilled migrant workers \(europa.eu\)](#)

European Commission (2018). "Essential information". *EU Immigration Portal - European Commission*. 11 June 2018. Retrieved 12 March 2024. [Essential information - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

European Parliament (2021). EU Blue Card Directive (EU) 2021/1883, Official Journal of the European Union, L 382/1, 28.10.21 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021L1883>

European Parliament (2016). EU Blue Card Directive (EU) 2016/801, Official Journal of the European Union, L 132/21, 21.05.16 - [DIRECTIVE \(EU\) 2016/ 801 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL - of 11 May 2016 - on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing \(europa.eu\)](#)

European Parliament (2009). EU Blue Card Directive 2009/50/EC, Official Journal of the European Union, L 155/17, 18.6.2009. [L_2009155EN.01001701.xml \(europa.eu\)](#)

European Union (2021). EU blue card – entry and residence of highly qualified workers (from 2023)- [EU blue card – entry and residence of highly qualified workers \(from 2023\) | EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

Eurostat (2023) Residence permits – statistics on authorisations to reside and work. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/SEPDF/cache/70280.pdf>

Other resources:

National Resources:

Greece

EU Immigration Portal _ Greece: [Greece - Highly-qualified worker - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

Infographic - EU blue card: attracting talent- [Μπλε κάρτα της ΕΕ: Προσέλκυση ταλέντων - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

Ministry of Internal Affairs- Greece: Immigration Code - Article 114: Applying for an "EU Blue Card" [Άρθρο 114: Υποβολή αίτησης για χορήγηση «Μπλε κάρτας της ΕΕ» | Υπουργείο Εσωτερικών \(opengov.gr\)](#)

AFN (PORTUGAL)

By Info Migrants [Kai Dambach](#) Published on: 2018/05/11



EU Blue Card Network - EU Blue Card eligibility and conditions. (s/f). Apply.Eu. Recuperado el 25 de abril de 2024, de <https://www.apply.eu/BlueCard/>
Wikipedia contributors. (2024, abril 3). *Blue card (European union)*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Blue Card \(European Union\)&oldid=1217038170](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Blue Card (European Union)&oldid=1217038170)

STUDIO RISORSE AND INFORMATICA (ITALY)

Residence permits – statistics on authorisations to reside and work. Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Residence permits %E2%80%93 statistics on authorisations to reside and work#EU Blue Cards issued to highly qualified non-EU citizens](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Residence_permits_%E2%80%93_statistics_on_authorisations_to_reside_and_work#EU_Blue_Cards_issued_to_highly_qualified_non-EU_citizens)

- Council of the Europe Union (2022). EU blue card: attracting talent. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-blue-card/#0>

VHS (GERMANY)

The EU Blue Card in Germany – rising numbers and diverse opportunities. (2023, 6 diciembre). <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/the-eu-blue-card-in-germany-rising-numbers-and-diverse-opportunities>

— *EU blue card – entry and residence of highly qualified workers (until 2023) | EUR-Lex.* (s. f.). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-blue-card-entry-and-residence-of-highly-qualified-workers-until-2023.html>

— *EU Blue Card.* (2024, marzo 4). Make-it-in-germany.com. <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types/eu-blue-card>

— (S/f). Make-it-in-germany.com. Recuperado el 25 de abril de 2024, de [https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/fileadmin/1 Rebrush 2022/a Fachkraefte/PDF-Dateien/3 Visum u Aufenthalt/Visagrafik_EN/2024 Visum Blaue Karte_EN.pdf](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/fileadmin/1_Rebrush_2022/a_Fachkraefte/PDF-Dateien/3_Visum_u_Aufenthalt/Visagrafik_EN/2024_Visum_Blaue_Karte_EN.pdf)

Employment continues to increase in January 2024. (s/f). Federal Statistical Office. Recuperado el 25 de abril de 2024, de https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2024/02/PE24_075_132.html

Demografischer Wandel. (s/f). Statistisches Bundesamt. Recuperado el 25 de abril de 2024, de <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Im-Fokus/Fachkraefte/Demografie/inhalt.html>

83 % der Personen mit Blue Card leben nach fünf Jahren weiterhin in Deutschland. (s/f). Statistisches Bundesamt. Recuperado el 25 de abril de 2024, de https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/07/PD23_289_12.html

Residence permits – statistics on authorisations to reside and work. (s/f). Europa.Eu. Recuperado el 25 de abril de 2024, de https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Residence_permits_%E2%80%93_statistics_on_authorisations_to_reside_and_work

BLUE CARD IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Having explained the concept and general features of the Blue Card in the European Union, each partner will now explain specific information about the Blue Card in their own country.



SPAIN

Am I eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card?

To be eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card in Spain, the applicant must comply with the following requirements:

- Be a non-EU citizen or hold citizenship in the EEA, Switzerland, or be a family member of citizens from these countries.
- Have no criminal record and not be prohibited from entering Spain. Illegal entry is strictly prohibited. Also, you should not have any criminal record against you in Spain or your previous countries of residence for offences punishable under the Spanish legal system.
- Have a signed work contract in a highly qualified profession mutually agreed upon by both the employer and the employee, ensuring continuous employment throughout the validity period of the Blue Card.
- Your employment should fall within the category of occupations that are deemed difficult to fill and the Immigration Office has confirmed the unavailability of a local worker to fill the position for which you are applying for the EU Blue Card.
- Your employer must be registered in the relevant regime of the Social Security system and must be compliant with tax and Social Security obligations.
- Your employer must possess the necessary financial resources for the business project and must adhere to the obligations outlined in the contract.
- Meet the same requirements to obtain residence and work as an employee initially.
- **Provide evidence of higher education or training for a minimum of 3 years (which must be related to the tasks to be carried out in the company), and of sufficient level to be able to perform them successfully.**
- Alternatively (if you do not have 3 years of education), be able to demonstrate a minimum of 5 years of professional experience related to the activity for which residence is granted. Such occupations fall under the category of “highly skilled professional” and “incredibly advanced research programs.”

The Directive 2021/1883 also expands its scope by incorporating beneficiaries of international protection (according to the definition of Article 2(a) of Directive 2011/95/EU), so that those who are highly qualified are enabled to apply for the EU Blue Card, both in the Member State that has granted them such protection and in Member States other than that. Likewise, access to such card is extended to third-country nationals highly qualified who enjoy the right to freedom of movement by having family ties with EU citizens, a right that must be applied regardless of whether they have exercised the fundamental right to move and reside freely, pursuant to Article 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

How much do I have to earn to qualify for an EU Blue Card?

The gross annual salary resulting from the monthly or annual salary specified in the work contract or binding job offer must be equal to or higher than the relevant salary threshold defined by the Member State (at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary for this profession in Spain). For 2024, Spain set the minimum salary threshold at: **33908 €**.

Will EU citizens' applications be prioritized over mine?

Spain applies a Labour Market Test, which implies that this mechanism aims to ensure that migrant workers are only admitted after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers, EU citizens (in EU Member states this also means EEA workers) or legally residing third-country nationals with access to the labour market according to national legislation, so yes, the EU citizens' applications will be prioritized.

How long will my EU Blue Card be valid?

In Spain, the validity of the EU Blue Card is 12 months, but it can be renewed for another year. The application for a new EU Blue Card can be renewed biannually, unless the applicant is compliant with the initial requirements for granting a long-term residence permit.

The validity period of the EU Blue Card must be 24 months. However, when the duration of the employment contract is shorter, such authorization must be issued for at least the duration of the employment contract plus 3 months and for a maximum of 24 months (Article 9.2). As can be seen, in this aspect, the validity period of the card is doubled compared to the regime of Directive 2009/50.

In the processing of this type of authorization, the new Directive regulates mechanisms for streamlining. For example, it is stated that Member States may establish employer recognition procedures, in accordance with their national law or administrative practice (Article 13). If so, Member States must provide clear and transparent information to interested employers about, among other things, the conditions and criteria for recognition, the validity period, and the

consequences of non-compliance with the conditions, including possible revocation or non-renewal, as well as any applicable sanctions (Article 13).

How long will it take to get my EU Blue Card?

- In general, the maximum processing time that member states have to issue applicants with an EU Blue Card is 90 days.
- National law in Spain stipulates that the maximum processing time for issuing a Blue Card is 45 days.

How much will it cost?

- The initial Blue Card fee is: **418 EUR**.
- The Renewal of the Blue Card it is the same as the fee for replacement: **112 EUR**.

Other information

How Do I Renew an EU Blue Card?

The application period for renewal is 60 calendar days prior to the expiration date of the Blue Card.

Should the card expire, you will still be eligible to renew the card within 90 days of its expiration, but you are liable to be fined for failing to file the renewal before the date of expiration.

You must also apply for a new ID card within a month of receiving your renewed Blue Card.

Does a Blue Card Holder Have to Remain in Spain?

As an EU Blue Card holder, you and your family members can enter and re-enter Spain as you wish. You are also free to travel through the member states of the EU, but they cannot work there without the necessary permission.

After 18 months of residence in Spain, you may also apply for a visa to live and work in another EU member state.

You are allowed to start working in another EU country before a decision to grant the visa has been taken and family members can join you immediately as long as you continue to meet the EU Blue Card criteria.

A Blue Card holder can apply to work anywhere within the EU, irrespective of the national unemployment rate in the country.



Official LINKs

https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/eu-blue-card/spain_es

<https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/migraciones/w/movilidad-de-trabajadores-titulares-de-una-tarjeta-azul-ue-expedida-en-otro-estado-de-la-union-europea-hi-23->

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/infographics/eu-blue-card/>

<https://www.immigrationspain.es/tarjeta-azul/>

https://www.congreso.es/docu/docum/ddocum/dosieres/sleg/legislatura_14/spl_70/pdfs/44.pdf

<https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=DOUE-L-2021-81434>





GREECE

Am I eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card?

To apply for a Blue Card, the applicant must:

- Have a valid work contract or binding job offer for highly qualified employment with a duration of at least 1 year, guaranteeing that the remuneration corresponds to the minimum remuneration for highly skilled employment as this is set by the Ministry for Migration Policy, amounting to 1.5 of the average gross annual remuneration in Greece based on the Greek Statistics Authority data;
- Meet the minimum salary threshold in the Member State concerned.
- For regulated professions: present documents proving that the national legal requirements are met;
- In case of unregulated professions: **present highly-specialized professional qualifications either through studies or through a minimum of professional experience, that means at least five years of professional experience of a level comparable to higher education qualifications and which is relevant in the profession or sector specified in the work contract or binding job offer.**
- Present a valid travel document, an application for a visa or a visa, and a valid residence permit or a national long-term visa (if appropriate);
- Present a proof of sickness insurance (or a proof of having applied for it).

In addition, the applicant must not pose a threat to public policy in the view of the Member State. S/he may also be required to provide his/her address in that Member State.

For the admission of non-EU nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment the same procedure of volumes of admission is implemented as for employed workers. Once the relevant procedure has been followed and the person enters the country, s/he should apply to the Ministry for Migration Policy before her/his national visa for highly qualified employment expires. It should be noted that a maximum number of admissions is applied.

How much do I have to earn to qualify for an EU Blue Card?

The gross annual salary resulting from the monthly or annual salary specified in the work contract or binding job offer must be equal to or higher than the relevant salary threshold defined by the Member State (at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary in the Member State concerned). For 2015, Greece set the minimum salary threshold at: **30 675** EUR.

Will EU citizens' applications be prioritized over mine?

Greece applies a Labour Market Test (LMT). This is a mechanism that aims to ensure that migrant workers are only admitted after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers, EU citizens or legally residing third-country nationals with access to the labour market according to national legislation.

How long will my EU Blue Card be valid?

The standard period of validity in Greece is 2 (two) years. If the employment contract is of shorter duration, the EU Blue Card shall be issued for the duration of the contract plus three months. The EU Blue Card can be renewed for a period of three years, unless the employment contract duration is shorter, in which case it will be renewed for the period of the employment contract plus three months.

How long will it take to get my EU Blue Card?

National law foresees that the maximum processing time for issuing a Blue Card in Greece is 90 days.

How much will it cost?

The initial Blue Card fee is 300 EUR. The cost for renewal is 450 EUR, while there are no fees for replacement or for express issuance.

Other information

The law in Greece that describes the requirements for the Blue Card is the Article 123: *Right of residence in Greece for an EU Blue Card holder from another EU Member State.*

Non-EU citizens legally residing in Greece as EU Blue Card holders enjoy equal treatment with Greek nationals in the following manner:

- Free movement and settlement across the country;
- Access to social security organizations and insurance rights;
- Working conditions, safety and security at the workplace;
- The right to association, participation in trade unions and sharing of any respective rights;
- Access to education and vocational training;
- Recognition of typical qualifications and professional skills certifications;
- Pension rights taking into consideration
- Bilateral agreements, national and EU legislation;

- Access to goods and services for the provision of goods and services for the public, including access to housing, information and consulting by employment services.

Additionally, members of the family may visit or accompany the person with EU Blue Card, under the precondition that s/he can provide for their stay. Their family members' residence permits are issued within six months after the applications are submitted and these are of the same duration as their own EU Blue Card, provided that their travel documents cover this time.

Change employment: For the first two years of the EU Blue Card, the person should be employed as a salaried highly- specialized employee. If they wish to change employer during the first two years since their EU Blue Card was issued, they need a written approval by the Department issuing this card. After the first two years, they should notify competent Authorities on any change of employer and other conditions of their employment.

Official LINKs

Ministry for Migration Policy: [Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου \(migration.gov.gr\)](http://migration.gov.gr)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: [Visas - Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(mfa.gr\)](http://mfa.gr)

Diplomatic missions abroad [Foreign Missions in Greece \(mfa.gr\)](http://mfa.gr)

Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity [Home - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs \(ypergasias.gov.gr\)](http://ypergasias.gov.gr)

Apply link: https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/greece-highly-qualified-worker_en



PORTUGAL

What Is the Portugal EU Blue Card?

The Portugal EU Blue Card is a residence permit specifically designed for highly qualified non-EU nationals who wish to work and reside in Portugal. This coveted permit not only offers a chance to contribute to the vibrant Portuguese workforce but also paves the way for potential long-term opportunities in the European Union.

With an EU Blue Card, holders can benefit from several privileges, such as favorable work conditions, socio-economic rights, and mobility within EU member states.

How do you qualify for a Blue Card in Portugal?

Educational and Professional Qualifications: Applicants must have a higher education degree or have at least five years of professional experience in their respective fields.

Valid Work Contract: A binding work contract or job offer from a Portuguese employer for a duration of at least one year is mandatory.

Who is eligible for a Blue Card in Portugal?

For most professions, applicants are expected to have a salary that's at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary in Portugal.

To offer more specificity, if the national average is €30,000, a general applicant would need an offer of at least €45,000 to qualify.

What Are the Requirements for an EU Blue Card for Portugal?

To be eligible for an EU Blue Card in Portugal, you must meet the following criteria:

- You must have a valid work contract or a job offer for a duration of 1 year (12 months) for highly qualified employment.
- **You have completed a study course with a duration of three years and have a diploma recognized by the educational institutions in Portugal.**
- You have at least 5 years of proven professional work experience.
- You meet the minimum salary threshold in Portugal. (see below)
- You meet the national legal requirements of Portugal. (regulated professions).
- You must present documentation proving that you meet the higher professional qualifications. (unregulated professions)
- You are not considered a threat to the public policy of Portugal.

What is the salary for Blue Card in Portugal?

The minimum gross salary stated in your employment contract must be at least 1.5 times the average gross salary of the profession you want to work in Portugal. For 2022, the minimum salary threshold is 822 EUR per month.

What Is the Cost of an EU Blue Card for Portugal?

The fees for a Blue Card in Portugal may vary for individuals who already have a Blue Card in another EU member state and want to get a new EU Blue Card for Portugal, and for individuals that want to get a Blue Card in Portugal.

The fees for EU Blue Card in Portugal are presented in the table below:

EU Blue Card for holders of a Blue Card in Portugal	
EU Blue Card Application	€107
Issuance of EU Blue Card	€102
Renewal	€102
Replacement	€50% of issuance fees (first duplicate), 100% (others)
Data change	25% of the issuing fee.

*The fees may change depending on your country of origin or residence.

What Are the Benefits of the EU Blue Card for Portugal?

The Portuguese EU Blue Card entitles you to the following benefits:

- You are free to travel to other member states of the European Union.
- You can take your family members to live with you in Portugal.
- You and your family will have access to education and vocational training.
- You will be treated equally with Portuguese nationals.
- You will have the same workplace rights as Portuguese nationals.
- Access within the territory of Portugal.
- Access to public goods and services.
- Paid leaves.

- o Two rest days a week (Saturday and Sunday).
 - o 13 national holidays. Any work assignment on holiday is considered overtime and subject to additional pay.
 - o 22 working days of annual leave. You can use your vacation until the end of April of the following year.
 - o 20 working days for new hires.
 - o 72 days of maternity leave which can be extended by 30 days maximum if the child is hospitalized or you give birth to twins.
 - o 120-150 days of parental leave for both mothers and fathers. The number of days can change depending on the number of babies born.
 - o Special or extraordinary leave (marriage, doctor appointment, funeral, care of sick persons, education, public and personal obligations, etc.)
 - o Sick leave. The Portuguese social security system covers employees on sick leave. The employer covers the first three days and pays 89% of the employee's wage.
- Flexible working hours.
 - o Regular working hours: The Portuguese Labour Law states that a regular working week must be 40 hours or 8 hours per day.
 - o Overtime will be compensated (hourly rate plus 25% for the first hour, hourly rate plus 37.5% for any additional hours, hourly rate plus 50% for overtime work on rest days).

What Is the Duration of an EU Blue Card for Portugal?

The standard period of validity for a Blue Card in Portugal is 12 months (one year) and can be renewed for another two additional years once it expires if you still meet the requirements.

How long does it take to get a card in Portugal?

The processing time for a residency visa is 60 days. You must lodge your application at a Portugal embassy/consulate in your country. Before you do so you have to make an appointment with the embassy, you can either write an email or visit the embassy personally to schedule the appointment.

Will EU citizens' applications be prioritised over the portuguese?

Some Member States apply a Labour Market Test (LMT). This is a mechanism that aims to ensure that migrant workers are only admitted after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers, EU citizens (in EU Member States, this also means EEA workers) or legally residing third-country nationals with access to the labour market according to national legislation (for more information see the FAQ section). Portugal does not apply a labour market test.

Official LINKs:

<https://www.apply.eu/pt/>

<https://imigrante.sef.pt/en/solicitar/residir/art121-b-121-k/>

https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/eu-blue-card/portugal_en

https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/eu-blue-card/essential-information_en#faq

<https://visaguide.world/europe/eu-blue-card/portugal/>

<https://total.law/in-to-pt/work/portugal-blue-card/>

https://www.google.com/search?q=What+is+the+salary+criteria+for+the+EU+Blue+Card+in+Portugal%3F&rlz=1C1CHZN_pt-PTPT981PT981&oq=What+is+the+salary+criteria+for+the+EU+Blue+Card+in+Portugal%3F&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBCTg0MDJqMGoxNagCCLACAO&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8



ITALY

Am I eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card?

To apply for an EU Blue Card, the applicant must:

- Have a valid work contract or binding job offer for highly qualified employment with a duration of at least 1 year;
- Meet the minimum salary threshold in the Member State concerned;
- For regulated professions: present documents proving that the national legal requirements are met;
- For unregulated professions: present documents proving that the relevant higher professional qualifications are met;
- Present a valid travel document, an application for a visa or a visa (if necessary), and a valid residence permit or a national long-term visa (if appropriate);
- Present a proof of sickness insurance (or a proof of having applied for it).

In addition, the applicant must not pose a threat to public policy in the view of the Member State. S/he may also be required to provide his/her address in that Member State.

Conditions:

To work in Italy as a highly-skilled worker:

- Your employer must present a proposal for a residence contract to the One-Stop-Shop for Immigration.
- You must get a visa, before you enter Italy;
- You must apply for a residence permit within eight days of entering Italy.

Highly-skilled workers fall outside the quota system.

How much do I have to earn to qualify for an EU Blue Card?

The gross annual salary resulting from the monthly or annual salary specified in the work contract or binding job offer must be equal to or higher than the relevant salary threshold defined by the Member State (at least 1.5 times the average gross annual salary in the Member State concerned).

For Italy, the minimum salary threshold in 2023 is set at: **24 789.93 EUR**.

Will EU citizens' applications be prioritized over mine?

Italy applies a Labour Market Test, which implies that this mechanism aims to ensure that migrant workers are only admitted after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers, EU citizens (in EU Member states this also means EEA workers) or legally residing third-country nationals with access to the labour market according to national legislation, so yes, the EU citizens' applications will be prioritized.

How long will my EU Blue Card be valid?

The standard period of validity in Italy is: two years.

Specific rules: In Italy, the EU Blue Card is issued for a period of two years if the employment contract is a permanent one. If the employment contract is temporary, the EU Blue Card shall be issued for the duration of the contract plus three months.

How long will it take to get my EU Blue Card?

National law foresees that the maximum processing time for issuing an EU Blue Card in Italy is 90 days.

Procedures:

Where and how to apply	<p>Proposal for residence contract</p> <p>Your employer must present a request or a communication (in case he/she has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry) proposing a contract to the One-Stop-Shop for Immigration in the "Prefettura" of the competent province.</p> <p>Highly-skilled work is not subject to quotas.</p> <p>Visa</p> <p>When the employer's proposal is accepted, the One-Stop-Shop For Immigration will communicate the decision to the Italian embassy in your country of origin and you will be issued with a visa.</p>
------------------------	---

	<p>Residence permit</p> <p>You must apply for a residence permit at the One-Stop-Shop for Immigration in the "Prefettura" of the competent province within eight days of arriving in Italy.</p> <p>As a general rule, visas to enter the Italian territory (excluding Uniform Schengen Visas) cost €116. As for residence permits, their cost is €40 for stays between 3 and 12 months; €50 for stays between 12 and 24 months; and €100 for long-term residence permits, highly-qualified workers and intra-corporate transferees. In addition, administrative costs amount to €30 for the sending of the postal kit; €16 for the tax stamp; and €30.46 for issuance costs.</p>
Documents required	You must sign a contract of residence (in Italian) and present a passport and travel documents
Duration of validity of permits (Blue Card)	<p>Your work authorisation corresponds to the contract of work-related residence and will last for a corresponding period of time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Contract duration plus three months; o If you have an unlimited contract the permit is issued for two years. <p>The duration of your residence permits will depend on your visa or work authorisation.</p>
Appeals	Decisions related to visas and residence permits can be challenged before the Regional Administrative Tribunal within 60 days of notification.

How much will it cost?

Euro 30,46 come contributo fisso, Euro 16,00 per la marca da bollo ed Euro 30,00 per la spedizione della propria pratica alla Questura competente.

Initial EU Blue Card fee: 100 EUR.
Renewal: 100 EUR. Replacement: Free
Fee for express issuance: N/A.

In addition, administrative costs amount to: €30 for the sending of the postal kit; €16 for the tax stamp; and €30.46 for issuance costs.

Other information

Rights:

Change of employment	For the first two years in the territory, the type of activity you, as a highly-qualified worker, may undertake must be similar to that for which a work authorisation has been released. Change of employer must be authorised by the Territorial Directorate for labour.
Unemployment	If you have a residence permit for salaried employment but lose your job or resign you may be put on the employment placement lists for the remaining period of validity of your residence permit or, in any event, for a period of at least twelve months. Unemployment benefits are granted to workers who have involuntarily lost their job, provided they meet the criteria set by law.
Change of status	Highly-qualified workers may convert their status to long-term residence (see section on long-term residence below).
Family members	Family reunification is allowed provided the person residing in the Italian territory holds a residence permit of at least one year and meets the legal requirements as to incomes and accommodation.
Long-term residence	An EC long-term residence status is granted after five years of continuous and legal residence. You must prove sufficient financial resources, accommodation and you must not constitute a threat to public order and security.

	<p>You must present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ copies of passport and tax declaration or declaration of income; ✓ a criminal record; ✓ a certified identification certificate and a certificate of adequate accommodation where a permit is simultaneously granted to a family member; ✓ the following levels of income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you have no family you must show that your income is equal to or higher than that of the annual social security. - If you have a family composed of one or more members you must show an income equal to or higher than the yearly social security increased by half for each family member. ✓ If you have two or more children aged less than fourteen, you must show an income equal to or higher than the double of the annual social security.
--	--

Official LINKs

Legislative decree n. 152 of 18 October 2023 published in the Official Journal, General Series n.256 of 02-11-2023 (in Italian) <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2023/11/02/23G00161/SG>

Directive (EU) 2021/1883 - conditions of entry to and residence in the European Union of non-EU nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment (in Italian) (<https://www.ticonsiglio.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/direttiva-ue-1883-2021.pdf>)

Circular 2829/2024, March 28 (in Italian) (<https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita-immigrazione/normativa/circolare-congiunta-prot.-n.-2829-del-28-marzo-2024>)

https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/eu-blue-card/italy_en

Apply link: [Apply for an EU Blue Card in Italy](#)

Directorate General for Immigration and Integration policy (in Italian) <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/ministero/dipartimenti/dipartimento-liberta-civili-e-limmigrazione>



GERMANY

The EU Blue Card (*In German: Blaue Karte EU*) is a "residence title for academics outside the EU who wish to work in an EU Member State. To obtain an EU Blue Card, applicants are required to have a university degree and a work contract which meets the minimum gross salary requirement." It facilitates and promotes the permanent immigration of highly-qualified workers to Germany from non-EU countries.

In Germany, the so-called new Skilled Immigration Act will continue - and in some cases even expand - the existing mechanisms for skilled workers with a university degree and the EU Blue Card. From November 2023, the provisions will be phased in. There are new possibilities with view to lower salary thresholds and a wider group of people.

Am I eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card?

Basically, there are three requirements:

- **Qualification**
 - **Equivalence or comparability of the foreign academic qualification** (regulated professions: licence to practice required additionally). **If you do not have a traditional university degree, you must demonstrate that you have a tertiary-level qualification that took at least three years to complete in order to obtain an EU Blue Card.** In Germany, this qualification must correspond to at least level 6 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) or level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework. Examples of such training qualifications include "Master craftsman training / Master craftswoman training" as well as professional qualifications in educator professions.
 - There is a **special case for IT specialists** without formal qualification and at least three years of work experience at higher educational level contract.
 - **Employment in a bottleneck profession** - in Germany, these include:
 - Manufacturing, mining, construction and distribution managers
 - Information and communications technology service managers
 - Professional services managers, such as childcare services, health services and education managers
 - Academic STEM professionals
 - Academic professionals in architecture, spatial planning and transport planning
 - Medical doctors

- Veterinarians
 - Dentists
 - Pharmacists
 - Academic and comparable nursing and midwifery professionals
 - School and out-of-school teachers and educators
- **Concrete job offer in Germany** or valid employment contract (minimum contract period of six months) matching your qualification.
 - **Minimum annual gross salary** (see next item).

How much do I have to earn to qualify for an EU Blue Card?

Your job in Germany must enable you to earn a gross annual salary of at least **€45,300** (as of 2024). This corresponds to 50 per cent of the annual contribution assessment ceiling (BBG) in the general pension insurance scheme.

As exceptions, a minimum annual gross salary of **€41,041.80** (as of 2024) is required for

- Bottleneck professions (see above).
- Higher education graduates within three years after graduation.
- IT specialists without formal qualification AND at least three years of work experience at higher educational level AND a concrete job offer as an IT specialist in Germany or a valid employment contract (minimum contract period of six months).

Will EU citizens' applications be prioritized over mine?

"Some Member States apply a Labour Market Test (LMT). This is a mechanism that aims to ensure that migrant workers are only admitted after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers, EU citizens (in EU Member States, this also means EEA workers) or legally residing third-country nationals with access to the labour market according to national legislation. Germany does not apply a labour market test."

"The principle of freedom of movement for workers within the EU makes it easy for citizens from other member states to access Germany's labour market."

In case, there are appropriate EU citizens' applications for a job, the employers may prioritize German or EU citizens to others. In this way, employers save both the administrative effort and the waiting time until the visa and EU Blue Card are authorised. However, at present there is a lack of skilled workers in general but in particular in occupations considered to be bottleneck professions in Germany. Therefore, the employers are open to face more effort in order to find high-potentials and skilled workers that match with the requirements of a job profile.

How long will my EU Blue Card be valid

The EU Blue Card is a temporary residence permit that is issued for a period of four years as a matter of principle. If the duration of the employment contract is shorter than four years, the EU Blue Card is issued for the duration of the employment contract, plus three months. However, an employment contract or binding offer of employment for a period of at least six months is required in all cases. If the conditions are met, it can be extended. The competent foreign office can suspend a change in job of an EU Blue Card holder for 30 days and reject it within this period in the first twelve months of employment.

“After 27 months, EU Blue Card holders can obtain a settlement permit if they can prove that they have German language skills at level A1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). If language level B1 can be demonstrated, the settlement permit can be issued after only 21 months.”

How long will it take to get my EU Blue Card?

You apply for the residence title Blue Card (EU) for employment in Germany at the local foreigners authority in Germany. For this purpose, you need an entry visa in advance, which you can apply for online in the foreign portal (<https://digital.diplo.de/Blaue-Karte>) or on site at your competent foreign representation.

You will upload the required supporting documents and submit them for a preliminary review. Your information and the documents will be checked and as soon as everything will be complete, you will have an in-person appointment at your Germany mission. “On their websites, the German embassies and consulates provide information about possible waiting times for appointments and any additional documents that may be required. Please inform yourself of whether you have the option of accelerating the entry process via the fast-track procedure for skilled workers with the help of your employer.”

Following the appointment, “processing times may strongly vary depending on the mission abroad and processing workload. Please find further information on the website of the competent embassy.”

After entering Germany (and before the entry visa expires) you have to book an appointment at the competent foreigners authority and apply for the EU Blue Card.

Applicants will be notified of the decision within 90 days of submitting the application.

It takes 3-4 weeks until the EU Blue Card is issued as an electronic residence permit.

How much will it cost?

There are costs on different steps of the application for the EU Blue Card in Germany:

- Application for a visa in the country of residence: 75 EUR (in local currency).
- Application for residence permit EU Blue Card in Germany: Fees may add up to 100 EUR.

Other information

"If you have held an EU Blue Card in another EU member state for at least 12 months, you can travel to Germany visa-free for work and stay there under certain conditions.

An EU Blue Card allows you to be mobile within the EU and visit Germany in the context of short-term or long-term mobility.

If you hold an EU Blue Card, you are also entitled to an EU long-term residence permit after five years. Both times spent in Germany, as well as periods in which you have lived in another EU Member State, will count towards this qualification period."

It is recommended to check the information on the EU Blue Card in Germany and the respective websites regularly, as the regulations may change. By March 2024, the EU website https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/germany_en is not yet adjusted with the new information issued on the website of the German Federal Government (e.g. gross annual salary).

Official LINKs

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act>

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types/eu-blue-card>

[https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/fileadmin/1_Rebrush_2022/a_Fachkraefte/PDF-Dateien/3_Visum u Aufenthalt/Visagrafik EN/2024 Visum Blaue Karte EN.pdf](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/fileadmin/1_Rebrush_2022/a_Fachkraefte/PDF-Dateien/3_Visum_u_Aufenthalt/Visagrafik_EN/2024_Visum_Blaue_Karte_EN.pdf)

<https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/MigrationAufenthalt/ZuwandererDrittstaaten/Migrathek/BlaueKarteEU/blauekarteeu-node.htm>

<https://digital.diplo.de/Blaue-Karte>

<https://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/324659/#:~:text=Durchschnittliche%20Bearbeitungszeit,als%20elektronischer%20Aufenthaltstitel%20ausgestellt%20ist>

https://immigration-portal.ec.europa.eu/germany_en

CC-BY-NC-SA



This document may be copied, reproduced, or modified according to the above rules. In addition, an acknowledgement of the authors of the document and all applicable portions of the copyright notice must be clearly referenced.

All rights reserved.

©2024 INTERCLab

Disclaimer

"The "INTERCLab" project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the Consortium and neither the European Commission, nor the Italian National Agency are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein."