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Position Paper | 09.09.2020

The Crucial Role of Third-Country Migrant Workers in the European Union

A Greens/EFA Position Paper

Europe must finally acknowledge that it is a continent of immigration. It is time for Europe to rethink its migration policy and shift from a policy of borders and deterrence to a policy of safe and legal opportunities. An inclusive economic and social recovery plan for Europe needs to address the crucial role of migrants in our societies. For this, we need a holistic European Migration Code, which addresses the vulnerabilities migrant workers face, reduces inequalities, ensures decent working conditions for all workers, and allows migrants to play an active role in society. **To achieve this holistic European Migration Code, the Greens/EFA demand:**

1) **Equal rights** for all workers in the EU through harmonisation and approximation of fundamental rights and ensure access to social rights for migrant workers; and

2) **New legal avenues** for migrant workers and their families who wish to come and work in the European Union (EU), creating equal opportunities for low- and medium-wage migrant workers.

We believe the European Migration Code should be a future framework that includes a well-balanced international dimension. This includes the situation of people affected by the long-term impact of climate change, especially where the person's decision to migrate may be voluntary and planned, even if constrained. The Code on labour migration should also integrate an intersectional perspective, which pays specific attention to multiple forms of discrimination and different experiences that migrant women face, particularly in predominantly female sectors e.g. healthcare, domestic and care work.

Greens/EFA demands in short

1. **A EUROPEAN MIGRATION CODE.** COVID-19 shows that only a comprehensive European approach to migration, through a migration code will fully protect the rights of migrant workers and their families, allow for successful integration, and bring about advantages for migrants, host societies, and countries of origin alike. **Our goal is to reach such an approximation and harmonisation of rights and ensure that there are new safe and legal channels for all migrant workers to enter the EU, irrespective of their skill or wage level, ultimately leading to a European Migration Code.**

2. **ENSURING EQUAL TREATMENT, FUNDAMENTAL & SOCIAL RIGHTS.** To ensure dignified treatment of migrant workers in the EU and improve their prospects for integration and social inclusion, we demand a **uniform EU rights-based framework harmonising fundamental rights and enforcing access to social rights for migrant workers and their families, particularly those in low- and medium-wage sectors.** We therefore demand to:

- **Protect migrant workers from labour exploitation by delinking residence permits from single employers** and their particular job and increasing the length of stay for migrant workers, to protect especially those in seasonal/temporary occupations.
- **Facilitate intra- and extra-EU mobility and uphold the right for re-entry.**
- **Safeguard migrant rights**, particularly by:

  - Allowing applications for a **residence permit from within the EU** for all migrants, irrespective of their residence status or lack of residence status, including individuals whose applications to seek asylum have been rejected and undocumented migrants;
  - Granting and strengthening **family reunification rights** for all migrant workers;
  - Strengthening access to **social rights** including the right to healthcare, social security, housing, justice and realisation of gender equality.

3. **OPENING NEW AVENUES OF LEGAL LABOUR MIGRATION.** To ensure that **equal opportunities for legal entry exist for all migrant workers, irrespective of their skill or wage level and to address vulnerabilities migrant workers and their families face,** the Greens/EFA demand the EU to:

- **Create new legal and safe channels for migrant workers and their families**, particularly for low- and medium-wage sectors where there is a current need and gap. This includes new channels such as a job- and vocational-training visa, a job-seeking visa, a talent pool and matching platform, and youth mobility schemes, accessible to all migrant workers.
- **Ease recognition of qualifications and skills** to pave the way for a wide mutual recognition on EU level, which will open up new opportunities for students, researchers, and health-related professionals.
- **Work with third countries to move from brain drain to brain gain,** and reinforce partnerships with African countries in light of the *Strategy with Africa*. In order for such partnerships and cooperation to be truly balanced, cooperation with third countries, including on development or trade, should be delinked from - and not made conditional upon - policies on migration control or return. These partnerships should address remittances, facilitate multiple-entry visas for migrant workers and significantly expand on the existing labour migration pilot projects.

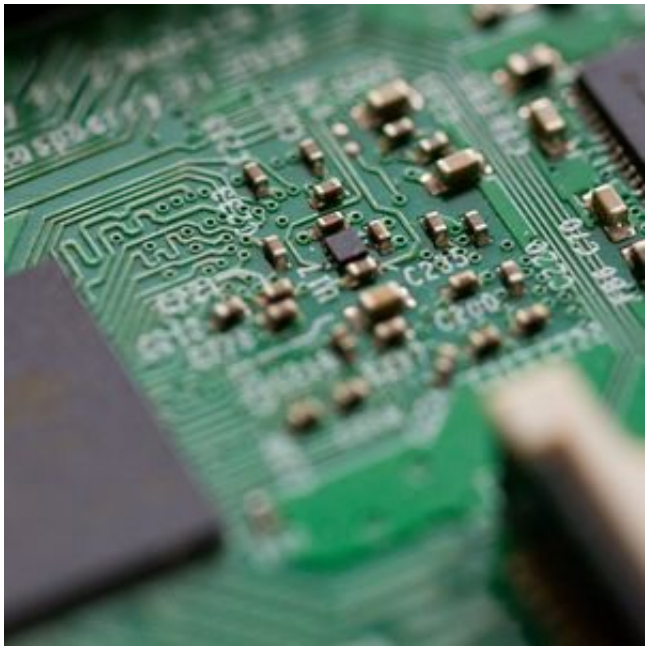
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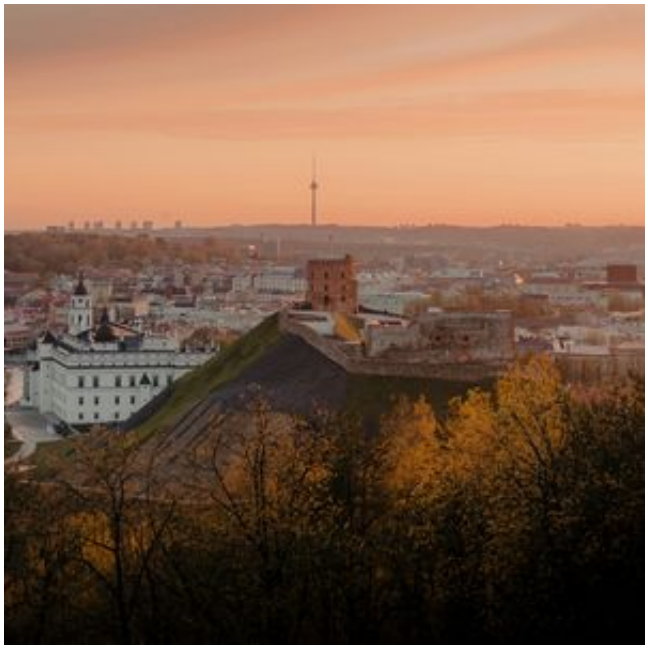
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O Papel Crucial dos Trabalhadores Migrantes de Países Terceiros na União Europeia
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