

SEASONAL WORKERS: HOW DO EU MEMBER STATES AND THE UK ATTRACT THEM AND PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS?

EMN FLASH #14 - 2020

Introduction to the EMN Study on Attracting and protecting the rights of seasonal workers in the EU and United Kingdom

Background

For many EU countries, seasonal workers from third countries are crucial to fill temporary, cyclical labour market needs. Since the adoption of the Seasonal Workers Directive in 2016, this specific category of workers can benefit from EU-harmonised admission policies and rights concerning their entry and stay. Against this background, this study provides a comparative overview of recent trends in seasonal workers coming to the EU, and the national strategies and practices related to seasonal workers from third countries.

What is the profile of seasonal workers from third countries in the EU? Do Member States and the UK place specific efforts on attracting seasonal workers to address labour market needs? How does the Seasonal Workers Directive achieve its goal of protecting the rights of seasonal workers? What measures did Member States introduce to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic? At a glance, the main research findings are introduced below.

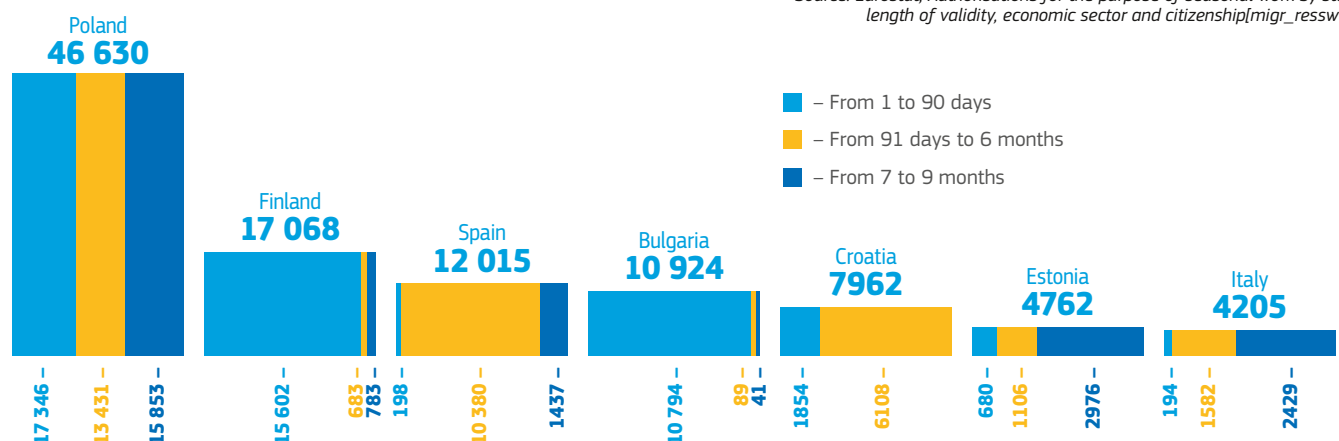


Key trends and findings

- Most seasonal workers in Member States are from neighbouring regions and the majority have been admitted under the Seasonal Workers Directive.** Ukraine is the most common country of origin. The most common sectors where seasonal workers are employed include agriculture, tourism and manufacturing.
- In most Member States seasonal workers are important to fill shortages in certain sectors and several Member States have measures in place to attract seasonal workers.** These include faster and simplified procedures, shortening of processing times and cooperation with third countries.
- Some Member States have made use of the option to limit the rights and protection of seasonal workers,** in particular regarding access to unemployment benefits and family benefits.
- Across the Member States, several agencies are responsible for the monitoring of working conditions.** Still, cases of abuse might go undetected, as seasonal workers are highly dependent on employers and often do not know their rights. Several Member States have run information campaigns to provide seasonal workers with information on their rights.
- Several Member States have introduced measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.** These include permit extensions for seasonal workers already present in the Member States, lifting of travel restrictions for seasonal workers, but also a mobilisation of domestic labour to fill the gaps. In some Member States seasonal workers have gained more visibility and recognition from the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Total number and length of validity of permits for seasonal workers per Member State in 2019, top 7 countries.



Source: Eurostat, Authorisations for the purpose of seasonal work by status, length of validity, economic sector and citizenship[migr_ressw1_1]

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