

# Global BRIEF



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## SOUTH AFRICA: GOVERNMENT MAKES GOOD ON PROMISE TO ATTRACT SCARCE TALENT TO THE COUNTRY BY EASING IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

In an attempt to attract scarce skills to the country the South African government has published a comprehensive list of skilled professionals who can apply for work permits without having a job offer already.

The Immigration Act regulations have been criticized for making it difficult for local and foreign companies to bring in the skills they need.

Published only last week, the list names the specific professional categories that work permit quotas will apply to - the first definition since the new Immigration Act was adopted.

The quotas and categories were developed by the home affairs, trade and industry and labor departments after consultation with business.

Professionals in the specified categories will be able to apply for quota work permits without having first secured permanent employment in the country.

Once approved, the successful applicants will be able to seek work in their professions.

This is a major departure from the previous system that required a labor certification or proof that a local South African could not fill the post and a positive move towards attracting the talent that is critical to develop the economy.

Examples of some of the professional categories are:

- 500 for aeronautical engineers;
- 5000 construction or civil engineers;
- 200 astrophysicists;
- 5000 industrial engineers;
- 1000 mechanical engineers;
- 1000 silicon and microchip developers;
- 1000 math and science teachers;
- 3000 biological science technicians;
- 300 research and development pharmacologists;
- 250 virologists;
- 1000 plant pathologists and 500 veterinarians.

## EU15 PREDICTIONS ABOUT EU10 STATES ENTIRELY INCORRECT SAYS NEW REPORT FROM EU COMMISSION

When the EU enlarged in May 2004, the UK estimated that 13,000 workers from the new 10 EU states would go to the UK to work. The numbers released in a recent publication by the EU commission, show the actual number of people who traveled from the new EU states to be closer to 300,000.

The commission report concluded that, far from increasing unemployment and wrecking prospects for British workers - as critics predicted - the arrival of newcomers has stimulated the economy.

When the EU expanded, only Britain, Ireland and Sweden decided not to impose work restrictions. The commission noted that those nations had "experienced high economic growth, a drop of unemployment and a rise of employment".

One of the key points in the document is that since May 2004, the rate of employment had increased in the UK and migration has not been higher into countries with open borders than those with tough restrictions, which is not what the alarmists predicted would happen with the opening of the borders.

The document said workers from new nations could help by "relieving labour shortages in certain areas" and highly skilled workers contributed to "business creation and long-term growth". They "did not crowd out national workers" but encouraged those working in the black economy to legalize their status and pay taxes.

Overall the number of workers from the new EU members was equivalent to just 0.4 per cent of the UK workforce, lower than in countries such as Germany (0.7 per cent) and Austria (1.4 per cent) which introduced work permits.

- Poles 162,870
- Lithuanians 37,275
- Slovaks 29,395
- Latvians 18,480
- Czechs 16,385
- Hungarians 8,200
- Estonians 3,855
- Slovenians 270

Total: 290,695

Total Number of East Europeans who have entered the UK in the past 16 months since enlargement of the EU in May 2004

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