



Pre-departure information for Indians going to the European Union



SECOND EDITION



International
Labour
Organization



ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development



Indian Council
of World Affairs

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The header features a blue background with white silhouettes of European landmarks including the Leaning Tower of Pisa, St. Peter's Basilica, the Eiffel Tower, and the Colosseum. On the right, a person is walking on a path towards a large, bright circular light source.

► Foreword

This document is focused on Indians who are migrating to the European Union to work or join family members. It covers various aspects of the migration process, aiming at sensitizing migrant workers to better prepare them for migration to EU. The topics covered in this handbook include:

- Choosing a country to migrate to
- Understanding different visas (employment, education, family reunification) and how to get them, seeking jobs and choosing recruiters
- Understanding the risks and dangers of trafficking and smuggling
- Living in the EU as well as financial management
- Thinking about return to and reintegration in India.

Those going to study in the EU may also find this information helpful. Specific information for students has also been developed under this project - it can be found in the link below¹. Regardless of which European Union (EU) Member State you want to go to, this document will assist you with information about migration to the EU from the moment you make the decision to migrate until your departure and beyond.

► NOTE

This document is prepared in December 2025. Readers are encouraged to find the most up-to-date information through respective EU/Indian/EU Member State websites/agencies and other relevant sources.

1. Student checklist can be found here - <https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/47936/file/Checklist%2520for%2520Students%2520-%2520Prepare%2520your%2520Study%2520in%2520Europe.pdf>



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We also extend our appreciation to the stakeholders who contributed valuable insights and feedback to the development of the previous version of this publication, laying a strong foundation for this update. Their earlier inputs were instrumental in shaping the original repository and continue to inform our ongoing work.

01

▶ Introducing Europe

With a culture that goes back to ancient times, Europe is at the root of Western civilisation. Since the fifteenth century, European countries have played a central role in global affairs, spreading their influence to various parts of the world. Europe is a major migration destination, and people want to live there for a variety of reasons

ranging from quality of life, security, human rights, healthcare, social protection and climate change.

Europe is the second-smallest continent in the world, but it has the third-largest population. It is made up of **44 countries**.

Map of the European Union (EU)



Source: https://european-union.europa.eu/easy-read_en

1.1 The European Union, the Schengen area and the Eurozone

After the Second World War, in order to prevent the possibility of war, some countries in Europe came together to foster greater economic cooperation. Over time, this community evolved into the EU, which is both an economic and a political union between 27 countries in Europe. Of these, 25 Member States (MS) are part of the Schengen area, which is discussed in detail in the next section.

The Eurozone officially known as the Euro area, is a union of 20 EU MS that have adopted the euro as their primary currency. No other currency is valid or used for the sale and purchase of goods and services in this zone.

1.2 Travel within the Schengen area

The Schengen area is an area in Europe without internal borders, and a Schengen visa allows you free entry and movement within the 29 Schengen countries. These are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland,

NOTE

Please visit the official website of the EU, which provides information on all the EU Member States². You can learn more about each country by clicking on the country name.

Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The 29 countries that are part of the Schengen area includes 25 EU member states and 4 countries are part of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), but are not EU Member States: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. Additionally, some microstates in Europe, such as Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City, maintain open or de facto borders with the Schengen Area.

The two EU MS that have not joined the Schengen zone are Ireland and Cyprus.



2. The official website of the EU is https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en

02

▶ Moving to the EU



2.1 Clarifying expectations

Many people migrate to the EU each year for many reasons which may include the following group of people.

Workers

- ▶ Highly qualified workers
- ▶ Intra-corporate transferees (ICTs)
- ▶ International service providers
- ▶ Seasonal workers
- ▶ Self-employed workers

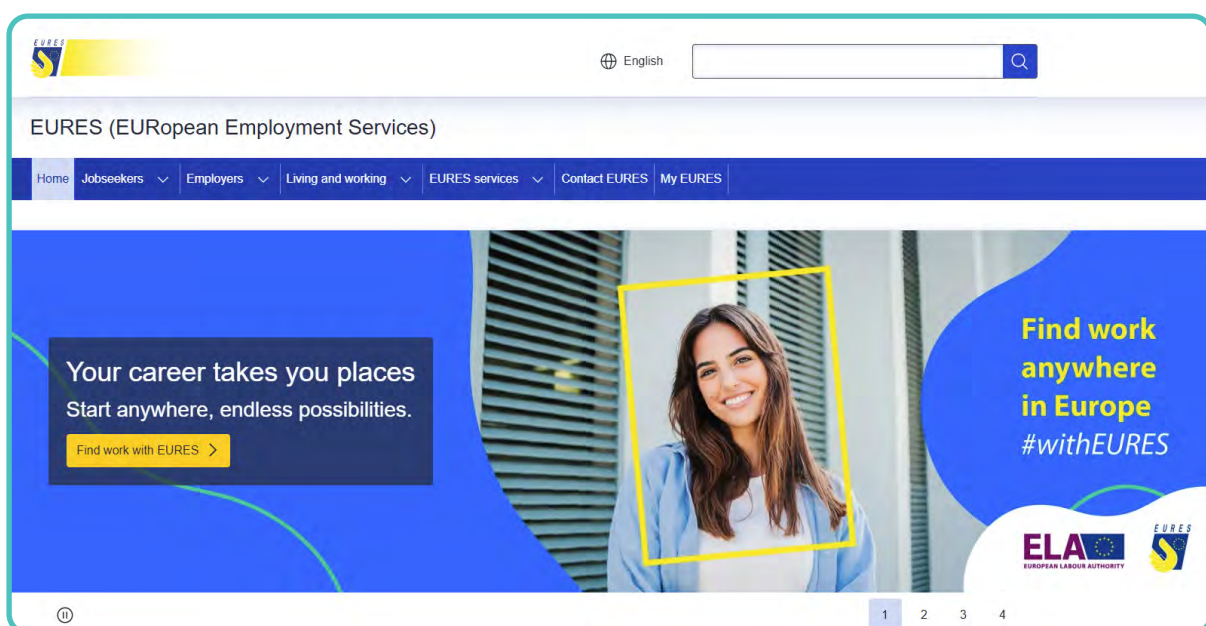
▶ Other workers

- ▶ Family members of migrants already legally residing in the EU
- ▶ Researchers
- ▶ Students
- ▶ Trainees/apprentices
- ▶ Volunteers

2.2 Going to the EU to work

Migration can bring big rewards, but it also involves many risks and challenges. In order to be able to

Job mobility portal



make an informed migration decision, you should seek information on a wide range of practical, legal and administrative issues related to the process.

Looking for potential jobs that you may be qualified for.

The EU has created the EURES job mobility portal which provides information on job prospects in the EU. You can find jobs by location, occupation and sector on this website (<https://europa.eu/eures/>

[portal/jv-se/home?lang=en](https://europa.eu/eures/portal/jv-se/home?lang=en)). You can also find out country, region and sector specific job vacancies and labour shortages, both in short and long term. This may help you narrow down your job hunt.

Understanding your potential wages

You may want to get an indicative idea of the wages you will be earning. The EU makes this information available on a website https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Wages_and_labour_costs

Reviewing the cost of living in the destination country

Alongside wages, you may also benefit from reviewing the cost of living in the destination country. The EURES portal provides a user-friendly platform to understand the living and working conditions in the EU MS. This includes information on finding accommodation, finding schools, taxes, cost of living, health, social legislation, comparability of qualifications, etc. This information is available on https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/living-and-working-conditions-europe_en

NOTE

Please note that finding a job via the EURES portal does not change the legal obligations and administrative procedures that may apply to non-EU citizens while moving to the EU. It is also useful to remember that many jobs may only be available to EU nationals.

Living and working conditions in EU MS

The screenshot shows the EURES portal interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, Jobseekers, Employers, Living and working, EURES services, Contact EURES, and My EURES. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Living and working > Living and working conditions. The main heading is 'Living and working conditions in Europe'. A text box states: 'Please note the following pages are only available in English, French, German and the national language(s) of the country you will be looking at. You can use the machine translation feature at the top of the page to translate each page to the language you prefer.' Below this, a prompt says 'Select the country you would like to read more about'. There are six country cards displayed in a 2x3 grid, each with a flag icon and the text 'Living and working conditions: [Country Name]'. The countries shown are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, and Czechia.

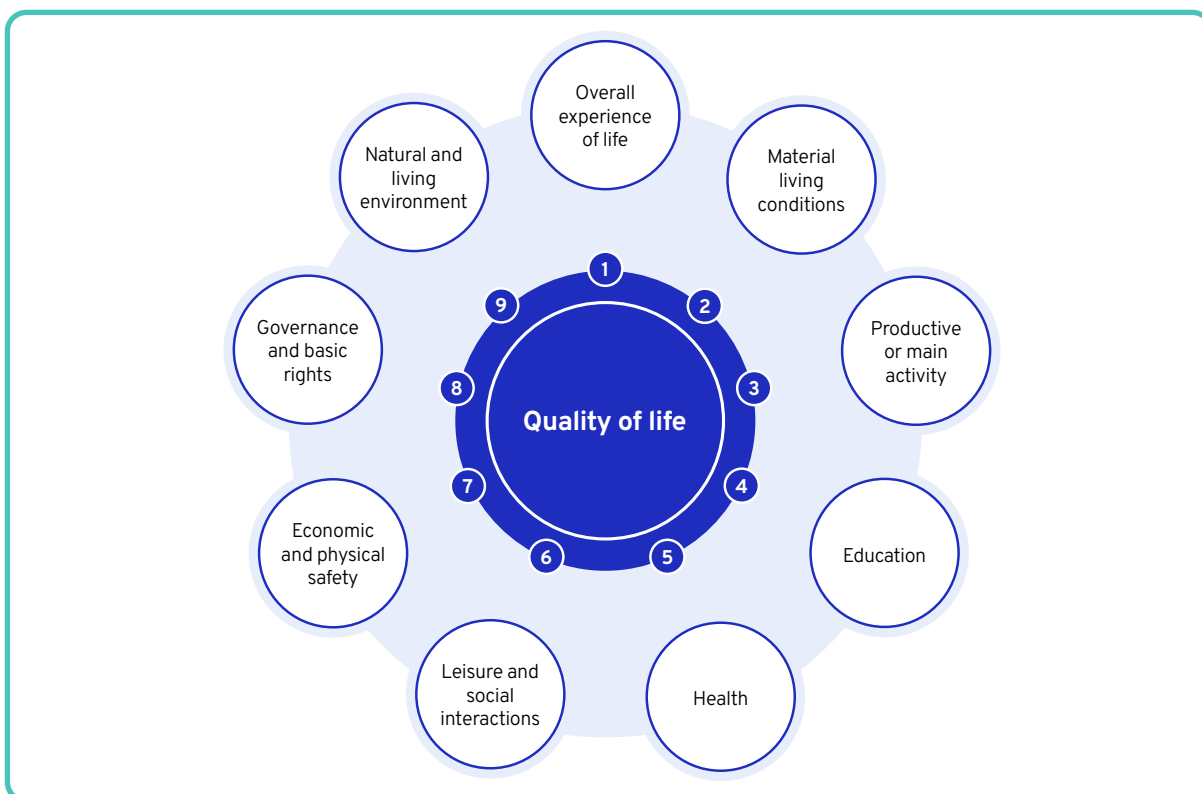
Reviewing the quality of employment

When choosing a job and a country to work in, there may be several indicators of interest for you. The page <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/labour-market/information-data/quality-employment> provides detailed data and analysis of the seven areas related to employment.

Reviewing the quality of life

The quality of life indicators which include information on education, health, safety, environment, housing and employment is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality-of-life/information-data> and could prove helpful while choosing a country to migrate to.

Quality of employment indicators



Quality of life indicators



▶ **NOTE**

Encourage yourself to clear any doubts and gather as much information as possible, so that you can informed choices and plan well for a decent and fulfilling life.

2.3 Professional considerations

1. Why do you want to work in the EU? Are you ready to work in a foreign environment?
2. What alternatives do you have in India? Have you explored job opportunities in other parts of the country?
3. What are the benefits and risks of working overseas?



PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Navigate changes?
- Benefits and risks?
- Qualifications recognized in the EU?
- Alternatives in India?
- Financial Goals?
- Visa options?
- Do you have a backup plan?
- Why work in the EU?
- Afford costs of migration?

4. Are you qualified for a job in the EU? Will your Indian qualifications and work experience be recognized in the EU?
5. Can you obtain the necessary documents and afford the costs of migration? Remember that these costs may include visa expenses, costs to recruiters, medical clearances and costs associated with assessment and recognition of your qualifications.
6. What are your financial goals and would working in the EU meet them?
7. What are your visa options?
8. Will your employer help you navigate the changes of living in a new country including relocation costs and a temporary housing stipend?
9. How long do you intend to stay in the EU? Do you have a backup plan if things do not work out?

2.4 Choosing a country to migrate to

Open and flexible labour markets, healthcare systems, education systems and an openness to immigration are some of the primary factors that you may wish to consider while choosing a country to migrate to. Another way to approach this is to find out where your specific skills are most in demand and then do your research about the process of moving and obtaining a work visa.

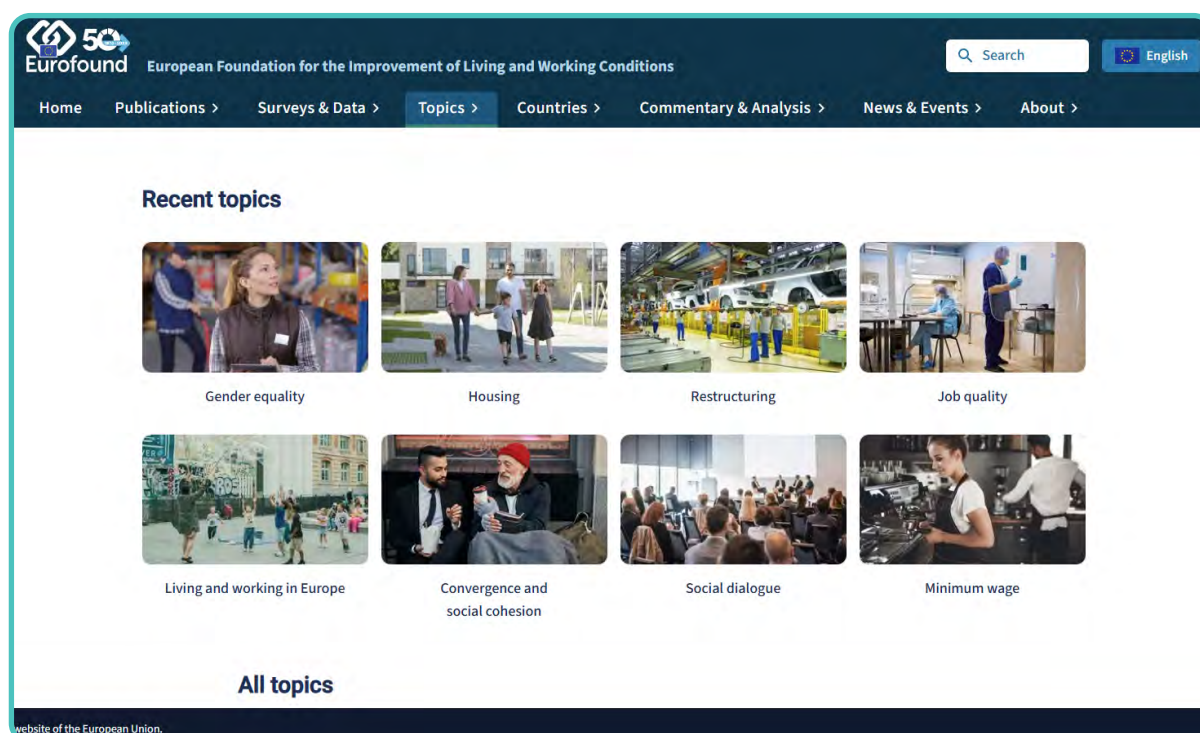
To understand these details better, it would be helpful to get information from within the country. Do you have any personal contacts in Europe? Can they help you find any of this information?

Questions to ask if you have access to someone living in a country you are considering:

1. What is the country like in general? What are the working and living conditions like? Are there career growth opportunities and opportunities for the family?
2. What is the current demand for workers with your skills in the local job market?
3. If you have secured a job, can you contact colleagues at your new workplace? Is there a diaspora group in that country or repatriated migrants in India from that country? What do they say about the conditions of their migratory experience? Who can you reach out to?
4. What languages are spoken in the country? What are the official languages for business? Will you be able to manage if you don't know the local language upon arrival? What will language tuition cost?
5. How difficult or easy is it to get housing? Where should you live initially?
6. Will you be able to bring your family / dependents along?
7. How will you qualify for social security, insurances and pensions?
8. Do you have any friends or references of people in that country who can help you when you arrive?
9. If you choose to go back to India in some time, what will your options be upon your return?

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) provides research, data and analysis on a wide range of social and work-related topics related to the quality of life, and in particular to working life, in the EU. The data is available for all EU MS and can be found on the following website: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/>

Eurofound website



2.5 Social and living considerations

New locations can bring new life experiences and unexpected friendships. However, the experience can also be isolating.



2.6 Psychosocial considerations

1. What and who are you leaving behind?
2. What about your responsibility towards your family members who may remain in India?
3. How will moving overseas affect your partner, children, parents, siblings and extended family?
4. What do you need to have in place when you return?
5. Do you need to send money back home for your family? If yes, will you be paid enough to live comfortably with what you have left?

2.7 Joining a family member

If you are joining a family member in the EU, keep these considerations in mind.

1. Do you know what the eligibility criteria for entry to the EU as a family member is?
2. If you are being invited to the EU by a citizen / resident of a MS, are you sure about their intentions? How long have you known the person?

Your entry will depend on them so their papers have to be valid, and they must meet all the criteria for inviting you into the country.

CASE STUDY - 1

Ramish and Sara are both IT professionals. After exploring job opportunities in the EU for several years, Ramish finally received two equally good job offers from two different EU MS. Ramish works in the very specialized area of digital forensics and is keen to go to the EU, for the experiences and opportunities that working there would provide him.

Ramish and Sara have a two-year-old daughter and as a family, they are clear that Sara's career must not suffer with this move. In India, they have the support of Ramish and Sara's parents who take turns in providing child care support for them to pursue their careers. Living in the EU, this would not be possible. The following set of questions helped Ramish and Sara make the best choice for their family.

Q. Which country would Sara be able to find a job in easily?

- A. Checked the job openings and reached out to employers to check if the

openings were available for non-EU nationals on a family visa.

- A. Asked family and friends about the job market.

- A. Asked the employer if they could assist with information regarding jobs for spouses.

Q. How would they take care of their daughter?

- A. Checked child support systems available in the country.

- A. Checked how close to work such support would be available.

- A. Reviewed the cost of living in the countries to know how affordable it may be for them as they wanted the best childcare for their daughter.

- A. Checked with employers about the possibility of working from home or part-time.



continued...

Q. How would they find housing and how easily would they be able to adjust and have a social life?

A. They used the quality of life tool to assess the housing, healthcare and employment situation of the country (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality-of-life/information-data#What's%20been%20achieved%20so%20far?>)³

A. They reached out to friends and acquaintances to get first-hand information on living in the country

A. They discovered they could live in an area which had neighbourhood parks, a weekly local market and a children's entertainment area, where they would be able to meet local people.

2.8 Indians in the EU

People from every country across the world come to live in the EU, and Indians are no exception. Across the EU, Indians are employed in several sectors, ranging from farm work and commerce to information technology and telecommunications.

The total number of Indians living and working in the EU is increasing every year. In 2024, the EU reported that 192,445 Indians were issued first permits (or 5.5 per cent of the total first permits issued)⁴.

Along with those who enter the EU for work, many Indian students who go there are sometimes authorized to work part-time, building their careers in an international environment.

The growing number of Indian migrants in the EU has led to the flourishing of many cultural and business opportunities in the EU, where Indian food, culture and partnerships are increasingly part of mainstream culture. You can find yoga centres, Indian restaurants, music and Indian films being part of European life. Table 1 shows how many Indians live in the different countries of the EU.

Table 1: Total stock of Indians in the EU

S No	EU Country	Total Population EU MS	Foreign migrants in the country	Population (number) of overseas Indians (NRI & OCI) in EU MS
1	Austria	9,158,750	1,784,900	32500
2	Belgium	11,817,096	1,633,800	28,834
3	Bulgaria	6,445,481	119,100	803
4	Croatia	3,861,967	115,200	12011

3. The national portals of EU MS on living and working conditions can be found here https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/living-and-working-conditions-europe_en

4. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Residence_permits_-_statistics_on_first_permits_issued_during_the_year#First_residence_permits_by_citizenship_and_by_destination_in_the_EU

S No	EU Country	Total Population EU MS	Foreign migrants in the country	Population (number) of overseas Indians (NRI & OCI) in EU MS
5	Cyprus	966,365	232,000	14979
6	Czechia	10,900,555	945,600	9498
7	Denmark	5,961,249	649,900	20647
8	Estonia	1,374,687	246,500	2328
9	Finland	5,603,851	371,300	21359
10	France	68467362	6,028,500	119000
11	Germany	83,456,045	12,109,000	260864
12	Greece	10,400,720	743,800	35000
13	Hungary	9,584,627	250,700	8734
14	Ireland	5,351,681	818,600	61386
15	Italy	58971230	5,253,700	206503
16	Latvia	1875316	258,000	3000
17	Lithuania	2885891	136,000	4570
18	Luxembourg	672050	317,500	5321
19	Malta	563443	158,400	18250
20	Netherlands	17942942	1,523,900	228787
21	Poland	36620970	430,200	24200
22	Portugal	10639726	1,045,400	103682
23	Romania	19067576	231,400	6027
24	Slovakia	5424687	63,000	3000
25	Slovenia	2123949	203,300	908
26	Spain	48619695	6,502,300	67592
27	Sweden	10551707	834,300	60000

SOURCE: <https://www.mea.gov.in/population-of-overseas-indians.htm>

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_population_diversity_by_citizenship_and_country_of_birth#:~:text=%20Eurostat%20\(migr_pop4ctb\)-,29.0%20million%20non%20EU%20citizens%20living%20in%20the%20EU%20on,%25\)%20and%20Cyprus%20\(24.0%25\).](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_population_diversity_by_citizenship_and_country_of_birth#:~:text=%20Eurostat%20(migr_pop4ctb)-,29.0%20million%20non%20EU%20citizens%20living%20in%20the%20EU%20on,%25)%20and%20Cyprus%20(24.0%25).)

► Applying for and obtaining a visa

If you have weighed the pros and cons of migrating and are sure you want to go to the EU, you should understand the different opportunities available for legal migration.

As an Indian citizen, you would fit into the category of a non-EU citizen and your visa category would determine your rights in the country.

3.1. Thinking about applying for a visa

To migrate to an EU MS, you must apply for a visa, fulfil all the visa conditions and follow the procedures for obtaining it. While applying for a visa, you will need to first determine the purpose you are going for. This will help you determine your visa category.

To understand and assess the category you fit into, visit the website of the European Commission⁵, where you can find detailed information on the many different visa types provided by 25 of the 27 EU countries, excluding Denmark⁶ and Ireland⁷. For more information on Denmark and Ireland, please see the visa websites of their respective countries.

► NOTE

Since October, the EU has introduced the Entry/Exit System (EES), which is a new border management system for registering non-EU nationals travelling for a short-stay travel (up to 90 days within a 180-day period) to the Schengen area, each time they cross the external borders of the 29 European countries⁸. EES is intended to strengthen border management, improve compliance with Schengen rules, and enhance overall system efficiency. For more information, please see: <https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees>

EU Immigration portal website

You will also find information for migrant categories like highly skilled workers, businesspersons and students, volunteers and trainees on the website. If

5. Detailed information on legal migration opportunities is available at https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/general-information/what-category-do-i-fit_en.
6. <https://um.dk/en/travel-and-residence/how-to-apply-for-a-residence-permit/>
7. <https://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/india/visas/applying-for-irish-visa/#EmploymentVisas>
8. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

you know which category you fall in and which MS you wish to immigrate to, the website provides an interactive map that will help you find the relevant information easily⁹.

3.2 Types of visas in the EU

A visa may be issued for one, two or multiple entries.

There is nothing known as a Schengen work visa. A residency permit or a national visa of the D category is granted to individuals who work or reside long-term in a Schengen country.

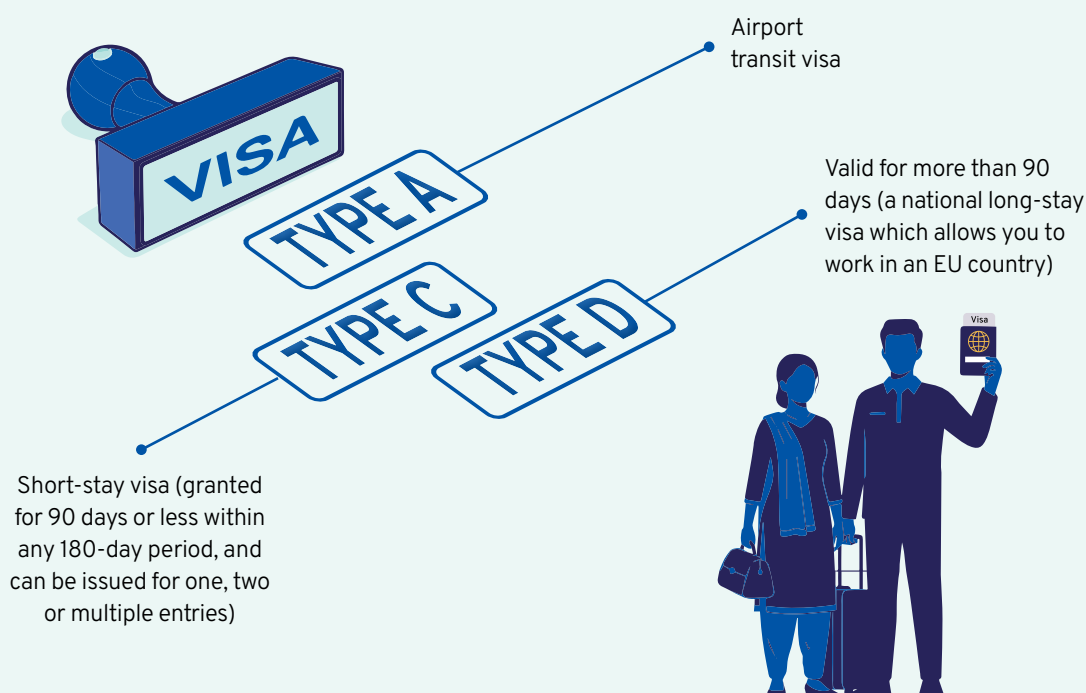
General pre-requisites

These are some things that all migrants must remember while putting documents together for a visa application. The Information Sheet for Schengen Visa Applicants in India may come handy in this regard, and you can access it at this link: <https://visa.vfsglobal.com/ind/en/deu/common-information>

NOTE

On 18 April 2024, the European Commission adopted a new visa “cascade” regime for Indian nationals applying for short-stay Schengen visas in India. The regime facilitates access to long-term, multiple-entry visas for travellers with an established travel history, subject to passport validity. Under this framework, applicants may be issued a two-year multiple-entry visa after lawfully using two visas within the previous three years, followed by a five-year visa where passport validity permits. For more information, please see https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/european-union-adopts-more-favourable-schengen-visa-rules-indians_en?s=167

TYPES OF VISAS IN THE EU



9. The interactive map is available at https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/node_en.

However, some of the basic questions you must ask yourself are:

- ▶ Do you have a passport that is valid for at least three months after your return date from the Schengen state, which contains at least two blank pages and has been issued within the previous 10 years?
- ▶ Do you have photographs in the right passport format?
- ▶ Do you have proof of the financial means required for obtaining a visa?
- ▶ Do you have travel medical insurance with minimum coverage of EUR 30,000?

If you are going for work, ask yourself these questions:

- ▶ Do you have a contract of work, or a sponsor, for applying for a Schengen visa?
- ▶ Do you have enough funds to live in the destination country for at least three months after your arrival?
- ▶ Do you have a health insurance that is valid in the EU?

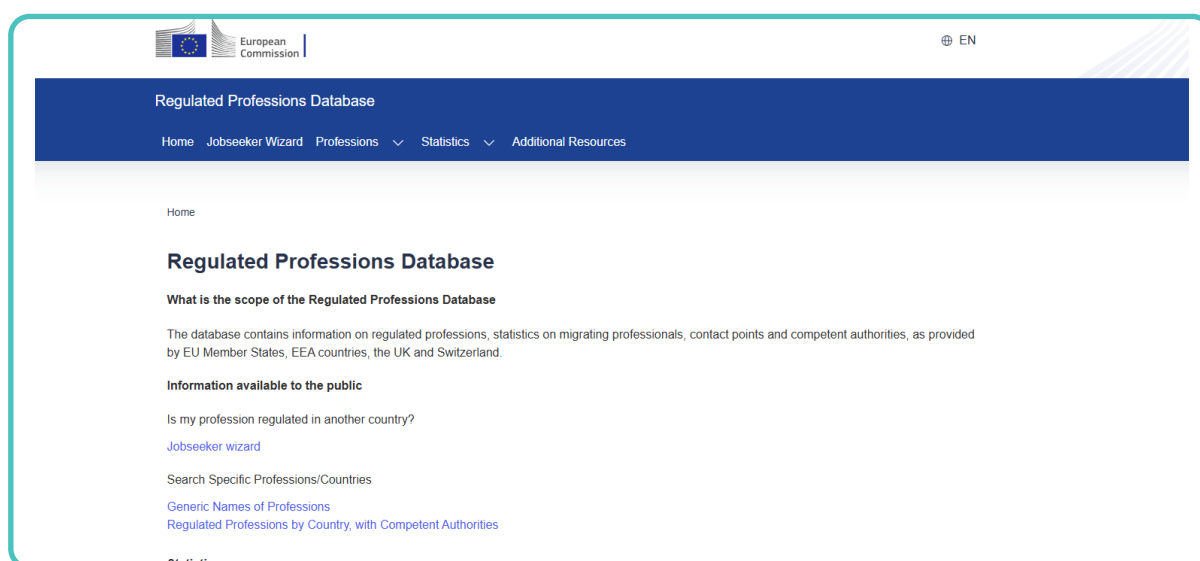
3.3 Professional skills and language requirements

You may have studied, qualified and trained in India, but does that mean you qualify to work in the EU? Not

necessarily! Increasingly, people migrating to the EU for jobs will need to be highly qualified with certified skills, and therefore meet the following criteria:

- ▶ You must prove that you have higher professional qualifications, such as a university degree or relevant professional experience (if such experience is recognized as qualifications in the concerned MS).
- ▶ You will need to get your degree / training recognized in the EU country where you want to work. If your profession is regulated, you may also need to sit for special exams, such as state exams, and or / register with a professional body before you can practise that profession.
- ▶ Your annual gross salary must meet the national salary threshold and must be between 1-1.6 times the average gross national salary¹⁰.
- ▶ You must have the necessary travel documents, including health insurance for yourself and your dependents who come with you to the EU.
- ▶ Your profession may also be regulated, and you may need to be certified¹¹. The list of regulated professions is different for each MS. To find out if your profession is regulated, you can use the database of regulated

Regulated professions database website



10. Average national salary is the mean income earned by workers in a country over a given period. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-resettlement/work/eu-blue-card-attracting-highly-qualified-talent-eu_en

11. <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/home>

professions at this link: <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/reproof/index.cfm?action=regprofs>

If you are moving to the EU temporarily, you don't need to apply for recognition of professional qualifications except if your profession has health and safety implications.

Seasonal workers will have a different set of criteria and need not be highly skilled. They are mostly employed in the following sectors: agriculture, horticulture, construction, hospitality, retail, tourism and in jobs that require mostly physical labour.

For those already living in the EU and seeking jobs – for example those under family reunification – you can check your skills against the EU Skills Profile Tool for non-EU Nationals¹². This online tool helps map the skills, qualifications and work experiences of non-EU citizens to give them personalized advice on further steps, including a referral to recognition of diplomas, skills validation, further training or employment support services.

The Indian government has also set up a number of international skill centres across the country to help Indian citizens upgrade their skills and learn new ones. Some of these centres will impart skill training that will help you to qualify and find a job in the EU. For information and updates, please check the official website of the National Skill Development Corporation¹³.

3.4 EU employment visa programs

Each EU member state has its own visa policies, and these policies may differ from one country to the other. Employment visa programs in the EU have been established to cover the labour needs of the respective countries and fill job shortages. Therefore, employment visa criteria and

requirements, as well as the application process, depend on the labour needs of each country and on the skills that you can offer to the country's job market.

Migrant workers usually apply for visas for professional reasons and the duration of their visa is usually linked to the term of their contract. Their visa can be valid for different durations depending on the type of visa and length of contract. The visa can be renewable or not, multi-entry or single entry.

3.5 Are you a highly qualified worker?

If you are a highly qualified worker, your chances of qualifying for an EU Blue Card are high. Some EU countries may offer other employment permits for highly qualified workers in addition to the EU Blue Card¹⁴.

What is an EU Blue Card?

An EU Blue Card gives highly qualified workers from outside the EU the right to live and work in an EU country. The EU Blue Card does not apply in Denmark and Ireland. If you are preparing to apply for an EU Blue Card, you could refer to EU Blue Card Checklist to aid you in this process-https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/62206/file/Final_WEB_EU-India%2520Blue%2520Card%2520Checklist_Booklet%2520A5_WEB.pdf



You must prove that you have higher professional qualifications by showing a higher educational qualification (such as a university degree). Some MS may also accept at least five years of relevant professional experience in lieu of a degree.



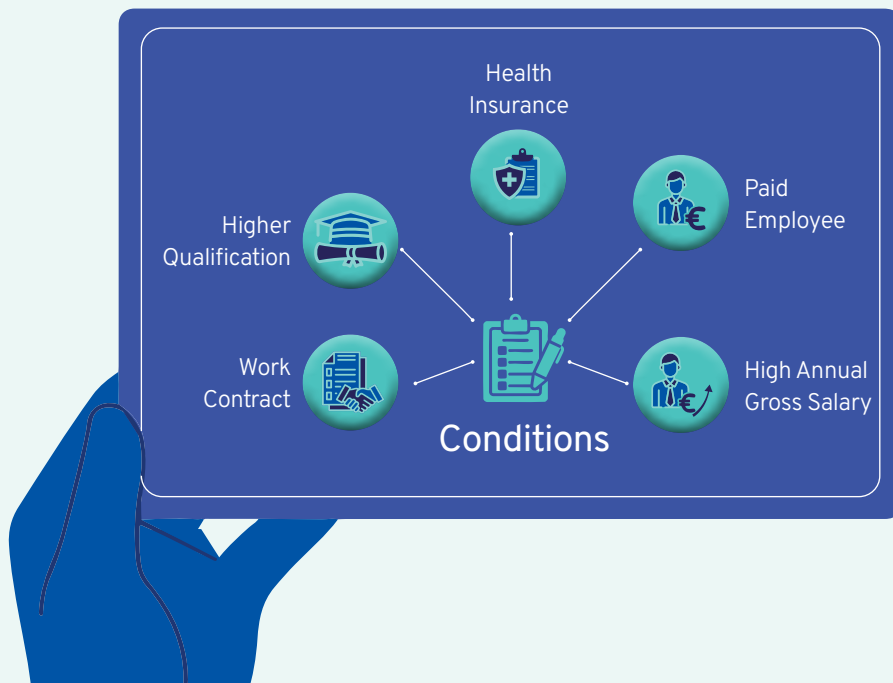
You must work as a paid employee – the EU Blue Card does not apply to self-employed workers or entrepreneurs.

12. <https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/>

13. The website can be accessed at <https://nsdcindia.org/>

14. For detailed information on what rules apply in a particular EU country, you can select your destination country in the interactive map linked to in footnote 8.

WHAT CONDITIONS MUST I FULFIL TO APPLY FOR AN EU BLUE CARD?



- ▶ Your annual gross salary must meet the salary threshold decided by the respective EU MS. Recently the EU has decreased the salary threshold in order to attract more talent and depending on the MS, your annual gross salary is required to be only 1 to 1.6 times the national average salary.
- ▶ You must present a work contract or binding job offer in an EU country for at least six months.
- ▶ You must have the necessary travel documents. You must have health insurance for yourself and any relatives who come to the EU with you.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EU BLUE CARD HOLDER?



3.6 Are you an Inter-Corporate Transferee (ICT)?

If you work for a company in India which wants to send you to a branch office in the EU on assignment, you are an ICT.

To enter EU as an ICT, you would have to prove that:

- ▶ You have been working for the same company for 3-12 months prior to your transfer (depending on the requirements of the specific EU MS).
- ▶ You must furnish proof that the company in the EU and India are branches of the same parent company.
- ▶ You have a work contract and confirmation of your position, dates of employment, salary and why you need to travel for business purposes.
- ▶ A letter of invitation stating what you will be doing during your time in the EU. If you are travelling within the EU, you will also need to attach an itinerary to your application.
- ▶ You have the required professional experiences and qualifications.
- ▶ You have or will have adequate health insurance.

You may also be asked to present an assignment letter as well as a no objection certificate from your employer in India, with evidence that you will be transferred back to your company in India upon the completion of your assignment in the EU.

Other rights as an ICT professional

- ▶ Your salary shall not be lower than the salary earned by nationals occupying comparable positions.

- ▶ You may bring your dependent family as per family reunification laws.
- ▶ You can join or be associated with organizations representing workers or employers.
- ▶ You can access social security benefits depending on the agreement between the EU country you are in and India¹⁵.

Maximum time of being under this visa category is 3 years for managers and specialists and 1 year for trainee employees¹⁶.

3.7 Are you an entrepreneur or self-employed?

As of 2025, over 18 EU Member States have dedicated startup or entrepreneur visa schemes for non-EU founders. A special visa and residence permit to admit non-EU citizens / start-up employees may also exist in EU Member States.

To start a new company or expand your business in an EU country, you need to know the rules that apply and the relevant national contact point to set up a company in that specific country. You can visit the Starting a Business in the EU webpage¹⁷ and choose the country of your choice for more details.

Support from personal or professional networks may also be considered. In some cases, collaboration with EU citizens or permanent residents to establish a company may be explored as a potential avenue to support a visa or residence application, subject to compliance with national business and immigration regulations.

General requirements for entrepreneurs and self-employed persons

This is a list of the common requirements for entrepreneurs and self-employed. For specific requirements, please check with the individual MS.

15. More information on countries with which India has operational social security agreements is available at https://www.epfindia.gov.in/site_en/International_workers.php.

16. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal/what-category-do-i-fit_en

17. https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/running-business/start-ups/starting-business/index_en.htm



You may find more detailed information on the same in a 2020 study on the facilitation of admission and growth of start-ups between India and the EU on this link: https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_766953/lang--en/index.htm. However, ensure that you cross-check any developments that might have occurred since the time of publication of this study.

3.8 Are you a seasonal worker?

You can be granted a residence permit as a seasonal worker if you do a job that can only be carried out at a specific time of the year, or if you are going to work as a holiday replacement for a permanent employee.

The process of obtaining a work visa for seasonal workers is similar to the process for highly skilled

workers. The visas are valid for the duration of the work contract and can never exceed nine months¹⁸.

You should be aware that seasonal employment in the EU may not be economically beneficial in the short timeframe normally offered, as it may not allow earning sufficient income to cover the migration costs and for accruing significant savings or remittances. A decision regarding seasonal employment must thus be taken with careful financial consideration.

To get a seasonal work visa, you need to demonstrate that:

- ▶ You have an employment contract
- ▶ The employer has applied for a visa on your behalf

18. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/eu-immigration-portal/what-category-do-i-fit_en

- ▶ You have suitable accommodation in the destination country
- ▶ Your travel costs are covered
- ▶ You will return to your country once the job has been completed. In some cases, you may be able to get another legal contract of work, making you eligible to renew your visa and permit to stay.

You should be aware that seasonal employment in the EU may not be economically beneficial in the short timeframe normally offered, as it may not allow earning sufficient income to cover the migration costs and for accruing significant savings or remittances. A decision regarding seasonal employment must thus be taken with careful financial consideration.

3.9 Are you sponsoring family members?

A legal resident in an EU country can sponsor family members to come to the EU MS under family reunification for as long as their own visa is valid.

The family members you are permitted to bring are¹⁹:

- ▶ Your registered spouse (husband or wife).
- ▶ Your unmarried partner.
- ▶ Your parents or the parents of your spouse who are dependent and do not enjoy family support in the country of origin.
- ▶ Your adult, unmarried children, or those of your spouse, who are unable to look after themselves due to the state of their health.

To bring in dependents, you need to prove:

- ▶ You have adequate accommodation.
- ▶ You have health insurance including cover for your dependents.

- ▶ You have a sufficient, regular and stable income.
- ▶ You and your family members may also need to pass language or other knowledge tests about the destination country. These can include an oral or written test, and the rules vary from country to country.

If a dependent child is to enter the EU alone, the following documents will also be required:

- ▶ Birth certificate.
- ▶ An application form signed by both parents.
- ▶ Order of the Family Court if one parent has full custody.
- ▶ Certified copies of both parents' personal documents.
- ▶ Parental authorization by parents if the minor will be travelling alone.

3.10 When to apply for a visa to work in the EU?

You should start the visa application at least two months prior to your trip to the EU country you plan to work in (visa applications can be submitted up to six months prior to travel date). Sometimes, it may take up to 12 weeks for the process to be completed. You should normally receive a contract of employment that can give you access to a visa valid for the purpose of your work. The visa will allow you to enter the EU MS where you are assigned to work and where you will get a Residence Permit (or Permit to Stay).

In case you have an employment contract in a non-Schengen country (Ireland or Cyprus), the type of visa required is different from the standard visas issued by the Schengen countries, and you will need to get additional details from the specific country.

19. For detailed information on the family members who can join you in a particular EU country and the specific norms and procedures you must follow, use the interactive map available at https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/node_en.

3.11 Applying for a work visa in the EU

Steps to get work visa in the EU

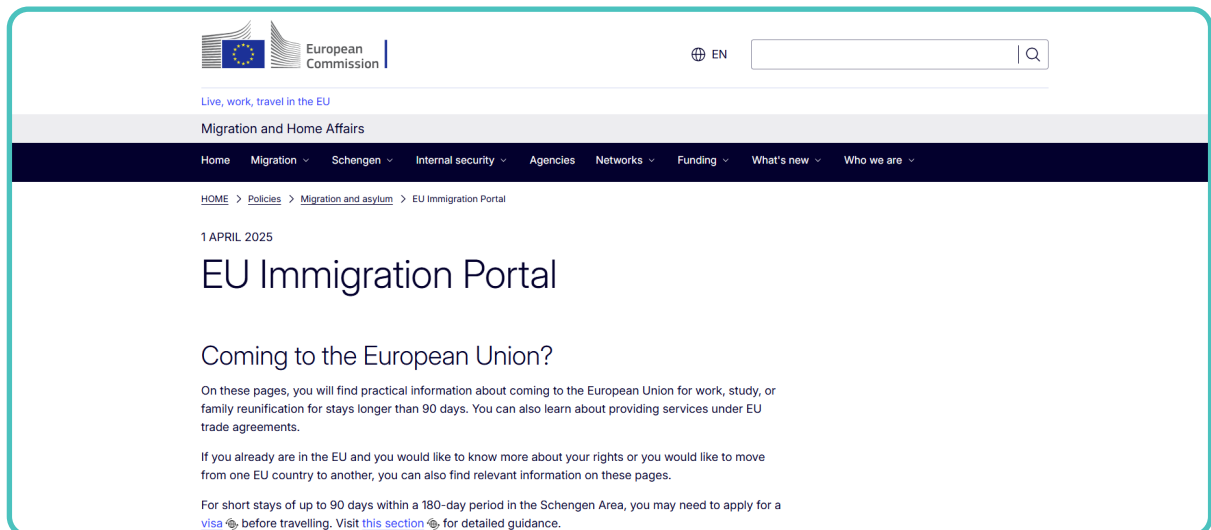
- ▶ **Step 1:** Check the different employment visa options available in the EU MS you wish to work in
- ▶ **Step 2:** Meet the criteria for the work visa; this may include, among others, proof of insurance, professional certifications or language proficiency
- ▶ **Step 3:** Check the updated information on specific MS embassy websites for the required

documentation when applying for a visa. Apply for the visa with all your documents at the embassy or designated centre along with the visa fees. In most cases, you will need a job offer before applying for the visa; ensure you have this before you schedule the appointment for your interview

- ▶ **Step 4:** Attend the interview carrying all the required documents
- ▶ **Step 5:** Wait to hear back from the embassy

Please note that these are only the basic requirements that you will have to provide in order to get a work visa. Each EU Member State has

EU immigration portal



The screenshot shows the top part of the EU Immigration Portal. At the top is the European Commission logo and a search bar. Below it is a navigation bar with links like 'Home', 'Migration', 'Schengen', 'Internal security', 'Agencies', 'Networks', 'Funding', 'What's new', and 'Who we are'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'HOME > Policies > Migration and asylum > EU Immigration Portal'. The date '1 APRIL 2025' is displayed. The title 'EU Immigration Portal' is followed by the heading 'Coming to the European Union?'. Below this, there is a paragraph explaining that the portal provides practical information for work, study, or family reunification for stays longer than 90 days. It also mentions that users can find information on providing services under EU trade agreements. Another paragraph states that if users are already in the EU and want to know more about their rights or how to move from one EU country to another, they can find relevant information. A final paragraph notes that for short stays of up to 90 days within a 180-day period in the Schengen Area, users may need to apply for a visa before travelling and should visit a specific section for detailed guidance.

Which country do you want to go to?



Table 2: Documents required for travelling to the EU and stage of preparedness

Stage	Document Required	Where to apply for the document?
Pre-application	Passport	Passport Offices
	Certificates of qualifications and experience duly translated and certified	Academic institutions, employers
Pre-departure	Employment contract in the EU	Employer, Recruiting agency
	MS National Visa	National embassies and consular services of EU MS
	Return ticket, hotel bookings	Various public and private service providers
Post arrival	Residence permit, Permit to Stay, registration for national health and welfare system	Local authorities (city councils, local sanitary units, local welfare and police offices, etc.)

specific requirements that you will need to research carefully²⁰.

You should also check the embassy website of the targeted EU Member State for further information.

You may not have to present your application to the embassy personally and can mandate a third party to submit the application on your behalf through a written power of attorney duly dated and signed by you. You may, however, need to be physically present for an interview.

Keep in mind that this is the standard procedure to apply for an employment visa in the EU. The exact visa process may differ from one MS to another.

3.12 How long is a work visa valid in the EU?

As mentioned previously, there are short-stay and long-stay visas available for the EU.

A short-stay visa, known as a Type C visa (which is not a work visa), allows the holder to be in the Schengen area for no more than 90 days in a period of 180 days. This visa can be of the following types:

Single Entry Visa: This visa allows the holder to enter the Schengen area only once within the time period mentioned on the visa sticker on their passport.

Double Entry Visa: This visa works mostly in the same way as a single-entry visa, but it allows the holder to go back to the Schengen territory once more after they have left it.

Schengen visa specimen copy



Multiple Entry Visa: This visa allows its holder to go in and out of the Schengen area as many times as they want as long as they are not in the Schengen area for more than 90 days in a 180-day period.

20. Please check this site for more details: <https://ec.europa.eu/immigration/node/en>

The national long-stay visa, or the Type D visa, is mandatory for a Schengen country if you intend to stay in the EU for longer than 90 days unless you hold a residence permit. This visa is typically granted to individuals who are studying, working or permanently residing in a Schengen country.

The validity of your visa, as well as a few other details, will be written on the visa sticker affixed in your passport²¹.

A national visa (residency permit) can also be a single-entry or multiple-entry visa.

- ▶ Single entry visas are granted to those who need to reside in the country of destination for a certain period of time, and for a single purpose, after which they shall return to their country of origin.
- ▶ Multiple-entry national visas allow the holder to travel in and out of their country of residence and also travel throughout the whole Schengen area without additional visa requirements.

3.13 Extending your EU work permit

In most EU countries, you will be able to extend your EU work permit if you have an extension on

NOTE

If you overstay your visa allowance or do not go through proper channels, you will be considered an irregular migrant. As a result, you could be at serious risk of being exploited at work and you could also find yourself in a state of severe alienation and poverty. As an irregular migrant, you will eventually be deported back to India.

your existing work contract or a new job contract. There is an application process and required documents, which you will have to collect and submit to the competent authorities in your EU MS of residence, prior to the expiry date of your visa or residence permit. You may also find it useful to consult trade unions and migrant associations on the local procedures for visa extension.

21. <https://schengenvisa.info.com/sticker/>

CASE STUDY – 2

Amar entered an EU Member State as a farm worker on a seasonal worker permit valid for nine months. After this time, he found a job on another farm through some friends and decided not to return to India as he had borrowed money to pay the agent for the recruitment, visa and travel. He had not been able to repay these costs even after working for nine months. His new employer kept delaying his paperwork and even after two years, Amar neither had a contract nor was his visa officially extended. As a result, he became an irregular migrant. The employer paid him less than he had been promised and gradually made him also do many additional tasks.

While Amar lived with friends who shared living costs, they started making him do more work in the house as he was unable to pay the full rent. Amar also found it increasingly difficult to send money home as his earnings were not like they used to be. He also found his health deteriorating as he worked long hours and did not dare to access public healthcare. He feared imprisonment and deportation and did not

approach any authority. Leaving this job was not an option as his visa had expired and he would not get a regular contract.

What can Amar do now? These are some of his options.

- ▶ Approach social services for advice and assistance.
- ▶ Seek assistance from a lawyer to get his employer to give him a contract so that he can have papers to work and live legally.
- ▶ Opt for voluntary return to India, reaching the Indian Embassy in his country of residence.

Ensure that your visas and residence permit are renewed well in time, especially before your visa or employment contract expire. If you are returning to India for a short vacation during the tenure of your employment contract, ensure that the validity of your visa does not expire before you return to your country of employment.



04

► Finding a Job in the EU

EU employers use different services and communication tools to post job vacancies. They can post openings directly on their company websites or use different channels such as public employment services, private employment agencies and recruitment agencies, specialized websites and publications, university recruitment cells, etc.

An overview of vacancies available in the EU, tips on how to apply for a job and information on living

and working conditions in all EU countries can be found on EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal²². You can also search for jobs at the national employment agency of a specific MS, temporary employment agencies or recruitment agencies. On the EURES portal, you can choose a country and click on 'Finding a job' under the living and working conditions section to see vacancies. You can find jobs by sector and occupations²³.

EURES job mobility portal

22. Job Mobility Portal: <https://europa.eu/eures/portal/jv-se/home?lang=en>

23. Living and working conditions link - https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/living-and-working-conditions-europe_en

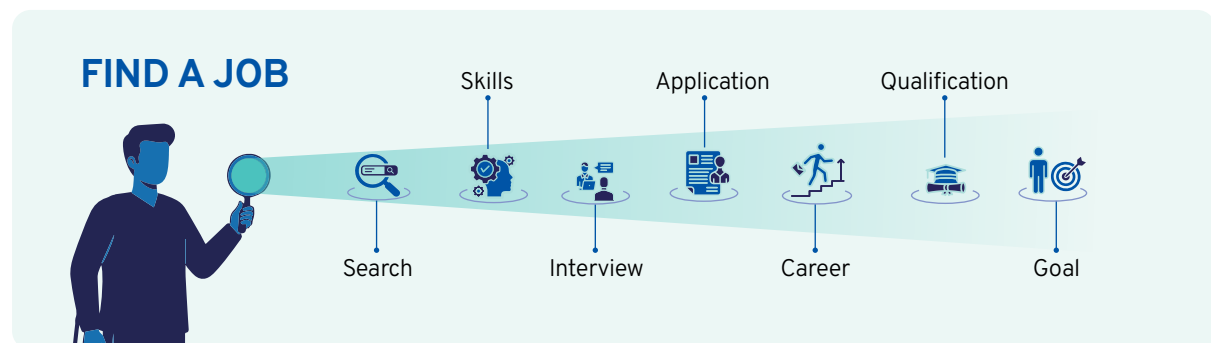
4.1 Questions to ask while gathering information for a job

For each vacancy that you have identified, understand the following:

- ▶ Is it open to non-EU citizens?
- ▶ What is the recruitment process?
- ▶ What are the application deadlines for this job?
- ▶ How long is the contract for? Will you meet your financial and personal goals in this time frame?
- ▶ What are the qualification requirements?
- ▶ What are the required language skills?
- ▶ Will this job teach you skills and enable access to future jobs after the first contract?

NOTE

You are advised to carefully verify prospective employers, as residence and work authorisation are directly dependent on the employer's legal status and compliance with national regulations. While verification is typically conducted through national business, labour, and tax authorities, you can reduce risks by seeking employment through validated public employment services such as the EURES, where job postings are limited to verified employers.



If you have a family member, friend or acquaintance in the destination country, they can be a very useful source of information on how to access the labour market. For example, you could ask your friends with a similar university degree how they managed to find a job in the country?

4.2 Questions to ask while applying for a job

- ▶ Do you have all the required documents? These documents include a passport, certified copies of your educational qualifications, references from your previous employer, a cover letter for the job, an updated CV in English, and if required, in the national language of the country of destination.
- ▶ Are all your documents translated by a certified translator (if necessary)?
- ▶ Do you have certified copies of all your certificates and their translation (if requested)?
- ▶ Did you make digital files of your applications?

Once you have gathered your documents and put together your application, depending on the vacancy, you can then either apply online or by post. Regardless of how you have made your application, always ensure that you are able to track your application.

4.3 Using a recruitment agent

You can use a registered agency to help you find a job in the EU. There are a few things that you must keep in mind before committing to an agency.

- ▶ Check if the recruitment agent is registered with the Government of India through the eMigrate portal, which lists agents verified by the Ministry of External Affairs. You can verify this at <https://emigrate.gov.in/#/emigrate/emigrant/list-of-ra-consolidate-report>

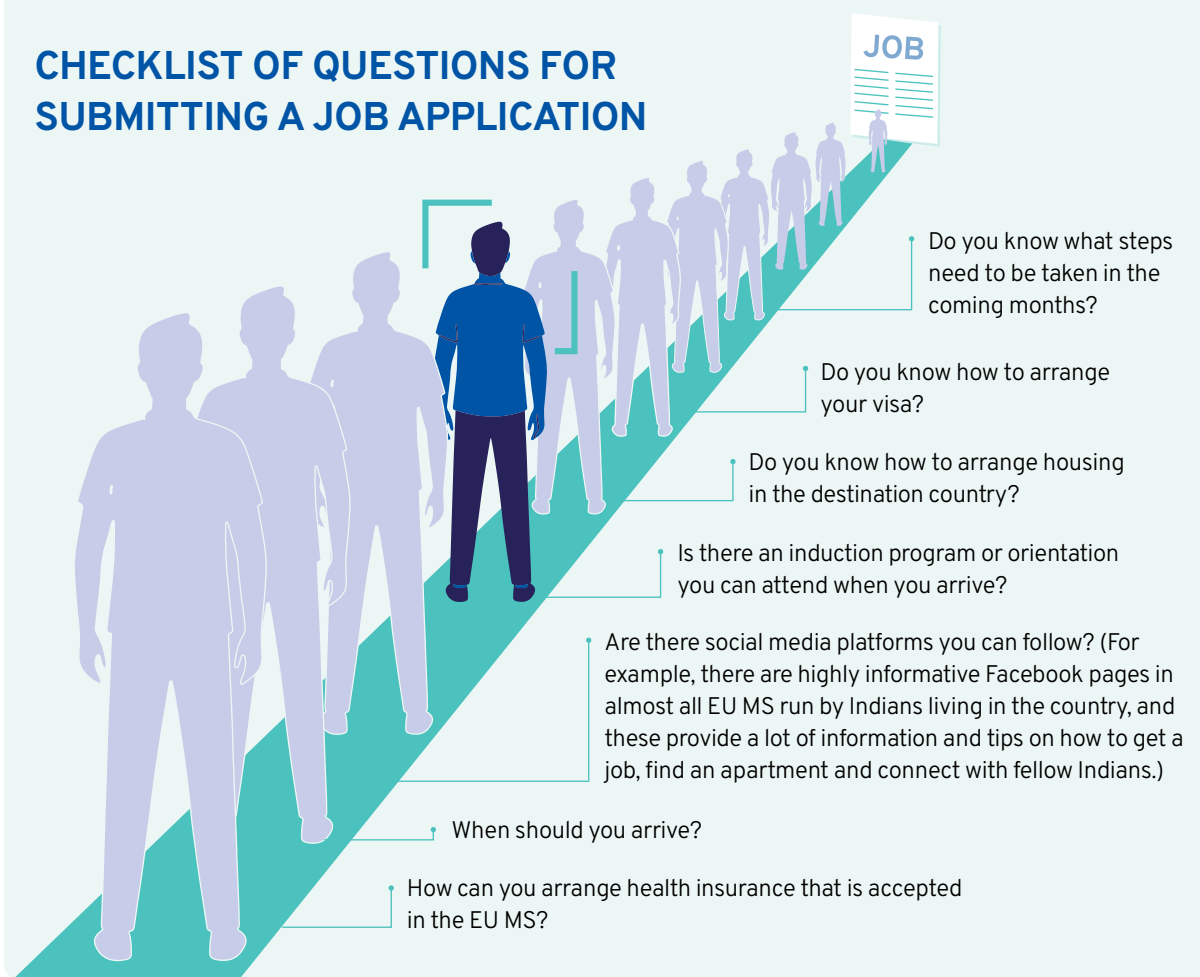
- ▶ Ask them to show you the original registration certificate issued by the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE), Government of India. Do not deal with the agency unless it is registered, and their registration is valid. You can check whether a recruitment agent is registered with the MEA or whether or not they are active on the eMigrate portal²⁴.
- ▶ Do not deal with an agent working for a registered agent. Sub-agents are not permitted to recruit under the Emigration Act, 1983.
- ▶ Does the employer or the recruiting agency provide help with visa application?
- ▶ What is the reputation of the employer or the recruiting agency in question? Are they known to be honest people with a transparent way of working?
- ▶ Once you have got your job, carefully go through your employment contract and ensure that it details your salary / wage levels and other service conditions.
- ▶ Do not pay more than INR 30,000 for the agent's services and get a receipt of this payment. It is best to pay by demand draft or cheque and obtain a receipt.
- ▶ Complaints of overcharging or cheating can be lodged in India with the concerned POE or with the PGE or at Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSKs) and Kshetriya Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendras (KPBSKs).

4.4 Submitting a job application

When your job application is complete and submitted, it will be reviewed for possible acceptance by the employer or the agency. This process usually takes anywhere from two to six weeks, and you can start preparing for the next steps.

²⁴. The eMigrate portal can be accessed at <https://emigrate.gov.in/>.

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A JOB APPLICATION



Other things to remember before you accept a job offer and start the visa process:

- ▶ If a website's URL does not seem European, this is sometimes a signal that the website you are looking at is untrustworthy and you might be the victim of a phishing attack. Trustworthy websites usually have a suffix extension / ending that includes the EU country's abbreviation. For example, for official Germany websites, the extension is .de; for France, it is .fr; for Italy, it is .it; and for the European Union, it is .eu. You can find more information on visas and contacts of the embassies of the EU MS in India on the EU website²⁵.

- ▶ You can obtain information about the place, vacancies and organization from the website of your potential employer.
- ▶ If you see different information on a recruiting agency's advertisement of a vacancy from the employer's website, always follow the conditions of the working contract you receive because those are the conditions for obtaining a proper visa.

Verifying your employment contract

Once you have been offered a job in the EU, you will be offered an employment contract. The employment contract describes the rights and duties of both employees and employers. It should provide at least the following information:

25. This information can be accessed at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/consular-protection-eu-citizens-india-or-bhutan_en.

- ▶ **Name and address:** Both yours and that of the employer are written on it.
- ▶ **Date on which the contract starts:** This is the date when the employment begins.
- ▶ **Term of contract:** This tells you when your contract ends. The term of the contract must be agreed in writing, otherwise it is considered to be valid for an undetermined period of time.
- ▶ **Place of work:** Where will you be working? If there is no permanent or main workplace, the contract of employment shall state that the employee works at different locations and shall state the business address or, if appropriate, the home address of the employer.
- ▶ **Job description:** What tasks are expected of you? The contract should provide a description of the work, the employee's title, position, or category of work.
- ▶ **Remuneration:** How much will you be paid for your work? Will the employer pay you supplements or bonuses? When do you get your salary (e.g. at the end or beginning of the month)? It should be noted that the contract usually states the gross, or the total, remuneration. From this amount, taxes and social contributions need to be deducted to arrive at your take-home salary.
- ▶ **Working hours:** This includes the duration and disposition of the agreed daily and weekly working hours. Unlike some work environments where overtime is a common occurrence, this working style is not very popular in the EU. Working long hours is not the norm and is discouraged. However, in certain sectors and under specified conditions, you'll be asked to work more for a better wage. Check with trade unions about any details of your wage or working week to be included in your contract.
- ▶ **Holidays:** How much leave are you entitled to per year? What are the rules for the fixing of dates for holidays?
- ▶ **Collective agreements and work agreements:** In certain sectors, such as healthcare, employer associations and trade unions have reached collective agreements. These agreements may regulate matters of remuneration, bonuses or holidays for all workers in that nation, and may also be stated and respected in your work contract.

From 1 August 2022 the Member States have in place new provisions regarding the working conditions. On top of the information stated above, the worker should also receive the following information:

- ▶ **Temporary agency workers:** If you are employed by a temporary work agency, you have the right to get information about the enterprises where you will be sent to work.
- ▶ **Probationary period (if any):** This is the period during which you or your employer can terminate the contract relatively quickly. Your employer must inform you if the employment relationship is subject to a probationary period and if so, how long that period is and the conditions of it.
- ▶ **Training:** Does the employer provide any training entitlement?
- ▶ **Unpredictable work pattern:** Is your work pattern entirely or mostly unpredictable? In that case the employer shall inform you about the number of guaranteed paid hours and the payment for work performed in addition to those hours. You should also get information on the reference hours and days within which you may be required to work and the minimum notice period before the start of a work assignment and any deadline for the employer to cancel an assignment, after which you are entitled to compensation.
- ▶ **Social security:** Where the employer pays any social security contributions on your behalf, you have the right to know to which institutions these are paid.

CASE STUDY – 3

After working with several major IT companies for many years in different countries, Mala moves to Amsterdam as a technical lead for a Dutch IT company. On arriving in Amsterdam and settling into her new office, she finds that she gets along very well with her co-workers and superiors, and is glad that she decided to move.

A few months later, she is assigned to a project with strict deadlines and a heavy workload and for a few days. Upon the request of her supervisor, Mala stays at work late, in order to meet the deadlines. At the end of the month, a general mail is sent around asking people to report on extra hours worked. She is unsure about this so she approaches a colleague who directs her to the workers union in the company. The union leaders inform Mala about the rights of workers in general, and about the entitlements related to overtime in the country and how she can claim them.

Mala is pleasantly surprised and happy to receive an acknowledgement and extra benefits for her efforts. The rights of

workers and fairness at work is something Mala greatly appreciates about working in the Netherlands.

Q: What are normal working hours in the EU²⁶?

A: This may vary between Member States, but the average for each week must not exceed 48 hours, including overtime. In the Netherlands, the standard working week is 38 hours.

Q: How does one get to know about these entitlements?

A: Conditions of work in the contract.

A: Asking the company HR.

A: Asking the representatives of the trade union.

Q: Is one entitled to overtime wages or other benefits (days off in lieu)?

A: Yes, there is overtime pay and benefits-in-kind for employees.

Once you arrive in the EU MS that you will work in, if you have difficulty locating your foreign employer and you are lost abroad, contact the nearest Indian Embassy or Consulate immediately.

In addition, once you start working under the conditions of your contract, please visit the local office of any trade unions relevant to your industry and show them your contract. You can ask them for any clarifications and any additional information you need about your contract.

If you want to change your job and/or employer, you need to check whether it is allowed by the conditions under which your visa was granted. You must also understand your rights and the terms of the new contract you get. Never sign a document you don't understand, take your time to read and give it to your family, friends and specialists like trade unions for their opinions and inputs.

26. More information on working hours in the EU is available at https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/human-resources/general-employment-terms-conditions/working-hours/index_en.htm

► Rules for Migrating from India



To travel outside India, you need a passport issued by the Government of India. Passports now must be applied for online, followed by a visit to your closest Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) or Regional Passport Office (RPO)²⁷.

It normally takes 30 days for a new passport, or to have yours re-issued, at a cost of INR 1500.

5.1 Obtaining a passport

To travel to the EU MS for any purpose, the Government of India does not lay down any restrictions or clearances. Every individual is free to travel without requiring any formalities or permissions from the government. However, it is advisable that migrants register on the eMigrate website to let the government know of their whereabouts, making it easier for them to respond in times of crisis.

In case you have any doubts about your documents or recruiter, you may reach out to the offices of the POE²⁸ located in Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Raebareli, Patna, Bengaluru, Guwahati, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar & Agartala.

For those travelling as ICT workers or for a short-term stay, you can continue your social security benefits (including provident fund) in India and avoid contributions towards similar schemes in destination countries. This is only possible for countries with which India has signed a social security agreement. For the list of countries, please refer to the MEA website at the following link: (https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26465/Social_Security_Agreements).

If you are a health worker, keep these things in mind.

Please check the special rules that apply to your profession, both in India and in EU MS.

Many Indian state governments require medical doctors who have graduated from a government institution to provide compulsory service to the state after completion of their studies or pay a high penalty.

As most health professions are regulated in the EU, there are specific rules including professional certifications that are required by MS before health workers can practise their profession. More information on regulated professions is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=regprofs>.

27. You can locate your nearest PSK or RPO by entering your pin code here: <https://www.passportindia.gov.in/psp/LocatePsk>

28. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/01-Overview-04-2024.pdf>

Table 3: Steps for obtaining an Indian passport.

Step 1	Register through the Passport Seva Online Portal ²⁹ . (You can do this by clicking the User Registration link on the portal's home page).
Step 2	Login using your registered login details.
Step 3	Click the Apply for Fresh Passport / Re-issue of Passport link.
Step 4	Fill in the required details in the form and submit.
Step 5	Click the Pay and Schedule Appointment link on the View Saved / Submitted Applications screen to schedule an appointment. Online payments have now been made mandatory for booking appointments at all PSKs and Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK). Online payments can be made using any one of the following modes: ▶ Credit or debit card (MasterCard and Visa) ▶ Internet banking (State Bank of India (SBI), associate banks and other banks) ▶ SBI Bank challan
Step 6	Click the Print Application Receipt link to print your application receipt containing an application reference number (ARN) / appointment number. You do not have to carry a printout of your application receipt any longer. The SMS you receive with your appointment details is also acceptable as proof of appointment during your visit to the Passport Office.
Step 7	Visit the PSK or RPO where your appointment has been booked along with your original documents.

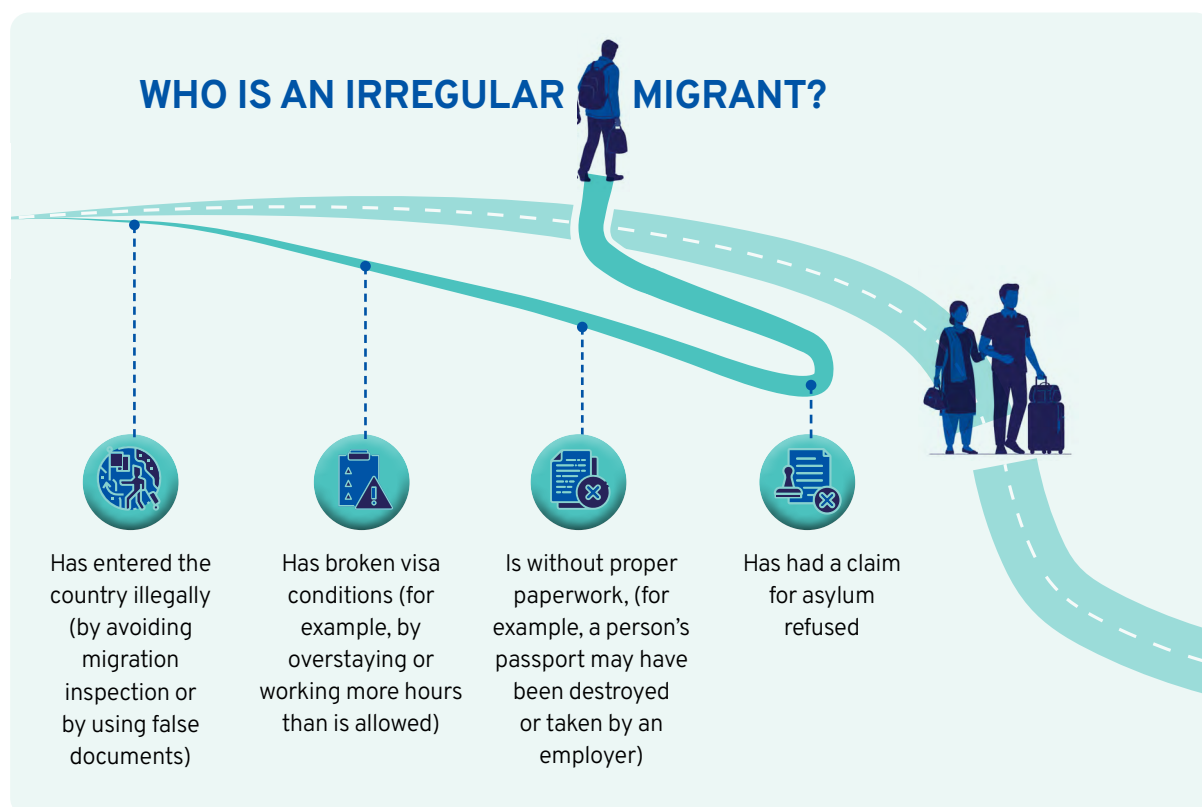
29. The portal can be accessed at <https://www.passportindia.gov.in/psp>.

06

► Irregular Migration, Smuggling and Trafficking

iving without a valid visa in the EU is a criminal offence. Most irregular migrants originally enter the

EU legally on short-stay visas but remain in the EU for economic reasons once their visa has expired.





6.1 Signs of Illegal Recruitment

It is not always easy to spot an illegal recruiter, but these are some signs to look out for. The agent:

- ▶ Suggests shortcuts to a job in a destination country and talks about bypassing legal requirements.
- ▶ Does not provide copies of the employment contract.
- ▶ Does not provide adequate information about the employer and the work being applied for.
- ▶ Does not provide sufficient information about the agency.
- ▶ Immediately demands payment without issuing receipts.

- ▶ Holds on to your passport and other papers.
- ▶ Discourages you from sharing information with others.
- ▶ Makes unrealistic promises of instant wealth and success to entice a worker to apply and work abroad.

6.2 Migrant smuggling and trafficking

When someone assists you in entering a country without legal paperwork, evading border controls or by getting false or fake travel or identity documents, for financial or other material benefits, it is known as smuggling.

When you have not consented to enter a country irregularly but do so under threat or force, are

coerced, tricked, threatened into doing this, and you end up in an exploitative work situation, it is termed as trafficking.

Trafficking includes:

- ▶ **Recruitment:** by acquaintances, relatives or criminal gangs, often with promises of well-paid jobs.
- ▶ **Transportation:** movement from remote rural areas to cities or from poorer to richer countries.
- ▶ **Manipulation and coercion:** to control victims through deception and (the threat of) force.

Normally, those who enter a country through such means pay a lot of money to enter, often incurring enormous debts at home. Getting into a country by irregular means can land you in hazardous and dangerous situations, and you should take all precautions to ensure that you do not end up being smuggled or trafficked into the EU. Smuggling is seen as a crime against the state and trafficking is seen as a crime against persons.

India and the EU have biometric elements in the visa process in order to prevent smuggling and trafficking including fingerprint-linked passports

and visas, face recognition technology, etc. However, the most important step to avoid and help fight human trafficking is to be informed and stay vigilant. Learn as much as you can about the human trafficking situation in the EU and the related laws in both origin and destination countries. In the EU, the anti-trafficking website of the European Commission may contain relevant information, including on the situation on trafficking in human beings in the EU: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings_en Pay close attention to what the agent or agency is asking of you so that you do not miss the signs of irregular recruitment.

Treat all information that you read on the internet as things to be verified. For example, you may come across attractive job offers on job websites or meet someone asking you to visit them in the EU on dating or social networking websites. Indeed, in recent years, many traffickers have used such websites to lure victims. Investigate all job offers thoroughly, particularly those where you are told to keep the opportunity secret and not to share information with anyone.

CASE STUDY - 4

Rajnish had seen his childhood friend Jitu's family building a new home and buying a new car with the money that Jitu was sending home from Europe. He also dreamt of going to Europe to earn a good living and he shared his dreams with a few friends. After a few months, he was approached by an agent in his village. The agent had been seen quite regularly at the local tea shop, whose owner was known

to Rajnish's family. He promised to help Rajnish find a job as a waiter in Europe but also told him that the cost of getting the visa and arranging the journey was quite high, so he should think about it. He showed Rajnish several papers; the salary for the waiter's job was shown to equivalent to Rs 45,000. As



continued...

Rajnish currently earned about Rs 18,000, this seemed like a reasonable amount, specially as the agent promised that the salary would increase annually. So after a discussion with his family, Rajnish took a loan of € 14000 (approximately Rs 12 lakhs) to cover the cost of his journey and paid the total sum, as requested by the agent, in cash.

For the next three months the agent arranged for Rajnish to receive training at a centre which included learning basic English. During this time, Rajnish was also taken to the government centre and his passport was made. Two months after completion of the training, Rajnish was given his passport and ticket and told to be prepared to leave the next week. Rajnish and family were very happy and said a long goodbye at the airport.

When Rajnish went through immigration at the arrival, the authorities took a long time and he started to get worried. He was finally called aside and after long hours

and many questions, he was told that the visa he was travelling on was fake. Rajnish was taken to a detention centre and two weeks later, sent back to India.

Upon his return, Rajnish tried the agent's number but it was switched off. Along with his family, he visited the shop often but the agent was not found. Rajnish was now indebted with a hefty loan and had little chance of being able to pursue his dream of living and working in Europe.

What could Rajnish have done to not be in this situation?

- ▶ Verified the agent through the websites of the Government of India.
- ▶ Ensured receipts for the payments he had made and paid by cheque.
- ▶ Asked friends and family about the costs associated with getting a visa and arranging travel.
- ▶ Tracked his visa through the embassy.

6.3 What risks could you face if you are an irregular migrant in the EU?

Often, people overstay their visas and continue to live in the EU, hoping they may someday regularize their papers and gain the right to live and work in the EU. However, there are many risks associated with being irregular in the EU. Some of them include:

- ▶ You may end up working illegally in sectors that are poorly paid and are rarely monitored for safety standards and working conditions. Further, they are also subject

to the risk of exploitation. Common sectors include construction, agriculture, hotels and restaurants, cleaning, care work and domestic work.

- ▶ It will be hard to seek legal recourse for violations of rights, including exploitation by employers on wages, days off etc.
- ▶ You will most likely have no access to any social services, not even healthcare in some countries.
- ▶ You will not be entitled to any social protection like unemployment allowances, etc.

- ▶ It will not be possible for you to bring any family members to the EU.
- ▶ It will be difficult to rent accommodation; you will most likely end up in inadequate and unhealthy accommodation and be overcharged for residence.
- ▶ It will be very difficult to open a bank account.
- ▶ You could be caught by police anytime and put into detention and finally deported back to India.

Return of irregular migrants

If you are apprehended as an irregular migrant you will be ordered to leave. The decision ordering you to leave the EU and the Schengen area may be accompanied by an entry ban. This means that you will be prohibited from travelling back to the EU and the Schengen area for a certain period of time. You will generally have the option to return to your home country voluntarily and you may be assisted in this respect. If you refuse to cooperate on voluntary return, you may face a forced return procedure which may involve detention. Illegal stay and/or irregular entry may also be criminalised under the national law of the Member State whose territory you are on. In some cases, your property may be confiscated for covering the costs of return.

6.4 What risks could you face if you are smuggled or trafficked into the EU?

If you are smuggled into the EU, you do not have the legal right to be there. You may have to pay fines, and each EU country sets its own penalties for unauthorized entry or stay. You could also be deported to your home country. Moreover, as part of law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute criminal networks that smuggle migrants, you may be asked to cooperate as a witness to take down the perpetrators.

Trafficked migrants usually have their passports and official papers taken from them upon arrival

and end up in forced labour situations. Victims are then told that they are in the destination country irregularly, which increases their dependence on their traffickers. Without their documents, they cannot prove their right to stay in the country nor can they go to the authorities for assistance. Victims are often kept in isolation or captivity. They are also trapped in debt bondage, where they are obliged to pay back large sums of money for recruitment, transportation and other fees before being released from their traffickers. Human trafficking is severely punished by EU laws and if you find that you are a victim of such a crime, you must report it to the police, breaking the circle of your isolation. There are also civil society organisations that may help you, including with reporting to the police or to be referred to services that can provide you with assistance, support and protection.

In addition, if you are staying in the EU without permission, you may also face difficulties getting a job, finding a place to live and accessing education and healthcare. This could lead to further risks and possible exploitation.

While there is no set formula to determine whether a person has been trafficked or not, this list of questions can help determine if a given situation shows elements of trafficking.

- ▶ Are you free to leave your workplace?
- ▶ Are you being physically, sexually or psychologically abused?
- ▶ Do you have a valid passport or identification card? Are you in possession of these documents?
- ▶ What is the pay and conditions of your employment? Are your wages being withheld? Are the work conditions abusive or exploitative?
- ▶ Are you afraid to share information about your living and working conditions with anyone?
- ▶ Do you owe a huge or a growing debt?

- Are you or a family member of yours being threatened?
- Do you fear that something bad will happen to you, or to a family member, if you leave this job?

6.5 How do you avoid these risks?

Be very careful and thoroughly verify any job in the EU that seems too good to be true, before accepting it. It could be a sign that a migrant smuggling network is at work, and you could be their next victim. Contact consular authorities and check government websites for information on how to legally enter the EU either for short-term or long-term stays.

What to do in case you are a victim of irregular recruitment?

Complaints against recruiting agents can be addressed either through post or by e-mail to pge@mea.gov.in. Complaints can also be filed with any of the 16 Protector of Emigrants³¹. A toll-free helpline number, 1800-11-3090, can also be called to request help. An aggrieved emigrant can also file a complaint with the Indian Mission in the country of destination on telephone or through e-mail. Contact information regarding Indian Missions can be found on the interactive map available at the MEA website (<https://mea.gov.in/indian-missions-abroad-new.htm>). Please click the country on this map for further information.

Interactive map - Indian Missions Abroad³⁰

Indian Missions A To Z

Click on respective country to view details on Indian Missions Abroad.

Note: Above map has been kept just for graphical representation to provide easy user navigation and it's not presenting or associated with any political boundaries of countries.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	Y	Z
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

30. Detailed list of Indian Missions is available here: <https://igod.gov.in/int/INMISS/organizations>

31. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/attach/01-Overview-04-2024.pdf>

What to do in case you are a victim of human trafficking?

If you are a victim of human trafficking or may have information about a potential trafficking situation, immediately report the matter to the local police, concerned government agencies, embassies, trade unions, non-government organizations and migrants' associations. For instance, the European Commission's anti-trafficking website contains relevant contact in the Member States at https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/national-hotlines_en, as well as a list of civil society organisations working with victims of trafficking in human beings in the EU, available at https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ce3caea2-9939-49e4-af1a-11191b368ac3_en?filename=EU-Civil-Society-Platform-participants_en.pdf

home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/organised-crime-and-human-trafficking/together-against-trafficking-human-beings/national-hotlines_en, as well as a list of civil society organisations working with victims of trafficking in human beings in the EU, available at https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ce3caea2-9939-49e4-af1a-11191b368ac3_en?filename=EU-Civil-Society-Platform-participants_en.pdf

Table 3: The dos and don'ts for safe and legal migration to the EU.

Dos	Don'ts
 Check the authenticity of your visa with the embassy of the destination country. You can directly contact the embassy and inquire about your visa status by providing your passport details.	 Do not apply to recruitment agencies not duly registered with the MEA.
Insist on receiving an original copy of your work contract duly attested by the concerned authorities.	Do not deal with any person who is not an authorized representative of a licensed agency.
Leave a copy of your work contract along with copies of your passport and other related documents with your family before you leave India.	Do not accept visitor, tourist or student visas for work purposes if you want to emigrate legally. You will face various problems being regularized as a legal migrant worker once you arrive in the EU.
	Never sign blank papers either in India or after your arrival in the destination country under any circumstances. In case you are persuaded or forced to sign blank papers, please inform the nearest police station and the Indian Embassy within 24 hours.
	Do not pay approved recruitment agencies more than the allowable service charges as provided by the Emigration Act of 1983. Report any violations to the concerned embassy or the MEA.
	Do not pay service charges or placement fees unless you have a valid employment contract and an official receipt.

▶ Living in the EU



7.1 Preparing for cultural differences

Culture shock is the reaction one faces when confronted with a new cultural environment. A growing amount of anxiety can develop in a new country during which you may feel helpless. The difficulties of living abroad, such as language barriers, absence of social cues and familiar geographic references, can come to the surface. This can develop into frustration, anger and sleeplessness. Not knowing where and when to cross the street or even how to find your way back to the market can result in discomfort. You may feel anxious or alone, and one of the best ways to overcome this may be to remain connected with family, make new friends and travel around the country.

The first step in preparing for culture shock is simply knowing what it is. Find out as much as you can about your destination country. You will encounter customs or practices different from what you have been used to.

Nuclear families are more common in the EU. Often, young people move out of their parents' homes when they are 18 years old, and they become financially independent at an early age. As a result, decision-making does not always include familial opinions, and the relationships between the young and old, men and women, are different and more equal. This may take some adjusting to. Besides

this, there are going to be many other differences, and it will be useful if you watch and learn and speak to different people. It is also useful to develop a cultural curiosity, to learn about the nuances of European culture, and to avoid making broad assumptions or using stereotypes.

To help you with information related to finding accommodation, finding a school, taxes, cost of living, health, social legislation, comparability of qualifications, etc. in an EU country, you can refer to the Living and Working Conditions webpage available on the EURES portal³².

7.2 Culture in Europe

How much do you know about European values?

The European Union's fundamental values are respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law³³, and these are extended to migrants.

Human dignity: Everyone is to be respected and this is inviolable.

Freedom: This includes respect for private life and privacy, freedom of thought, religion, to assemble freely, express themselves and share information.

Democracy: People vote for their leaders and people's voices are heard through their elected representatives.

32. https://eures.europa.eu/living-and-working/living-and-working-conditions-europe_en

33. More information is available at <https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/eu/about/eu-values/>.

Equality: There are equal rights for all citizens before the law. This principle extends to equality between women and men, equal pay for equal work, etc. There are increasing examples of women leadership. Your bosses and supervisors may be woman.

Rule of law: The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its MS. Justice is upheld by an independent judiciary.

Human rights: Human rights are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice. Do not be surprised if a man speaks of a husband at home.

EU workplaces have a high degree of professionalism, and everyone is expected to do the work that is assigned to them. Timings are stringently followed and even though overtime is paid for by law, it is not encouraged and nor is it the norm.

Maintaining a proper balance between your professional commitments and personal life is considered important. Everyone is expected to be treated equally and with respect and men and women are treated equally.

7.3 Looking after your health

Are you fit to travel and live in the EU?

You may need to go through a medical test before you are given an employment contract. This is to ensure that you are physically and mentally fit for the job and to ascertain that your health status does not endanger the public health of the country. You may be asked to take specific vaccinations, and these costs should be borne by the employer. You must avail travel insurance with your ticket to ensure that you are covered during your journey.

What if you fall sick in the EU?

Medical insurance is mandatory for everyone residing in the EU. Therefore, all Indian migrants who are migrating to the EU must have health insurance that starts the day you enter the EU.

Normally, your employer will purchase the insurance for you which will typically cover emergencies, hospitalization costs, outpatient care, prescribed medications, therapy, maternity and laboratory tests. The amount of coverage depends on the health insurance plan your employer has provided as well as the legislation of the specific EU MS. Short-term workers can extend their Indian schemes to include the EU states where they will work.

Health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, may lead to additional travel requirements. Stay updated on any changes before your departure.

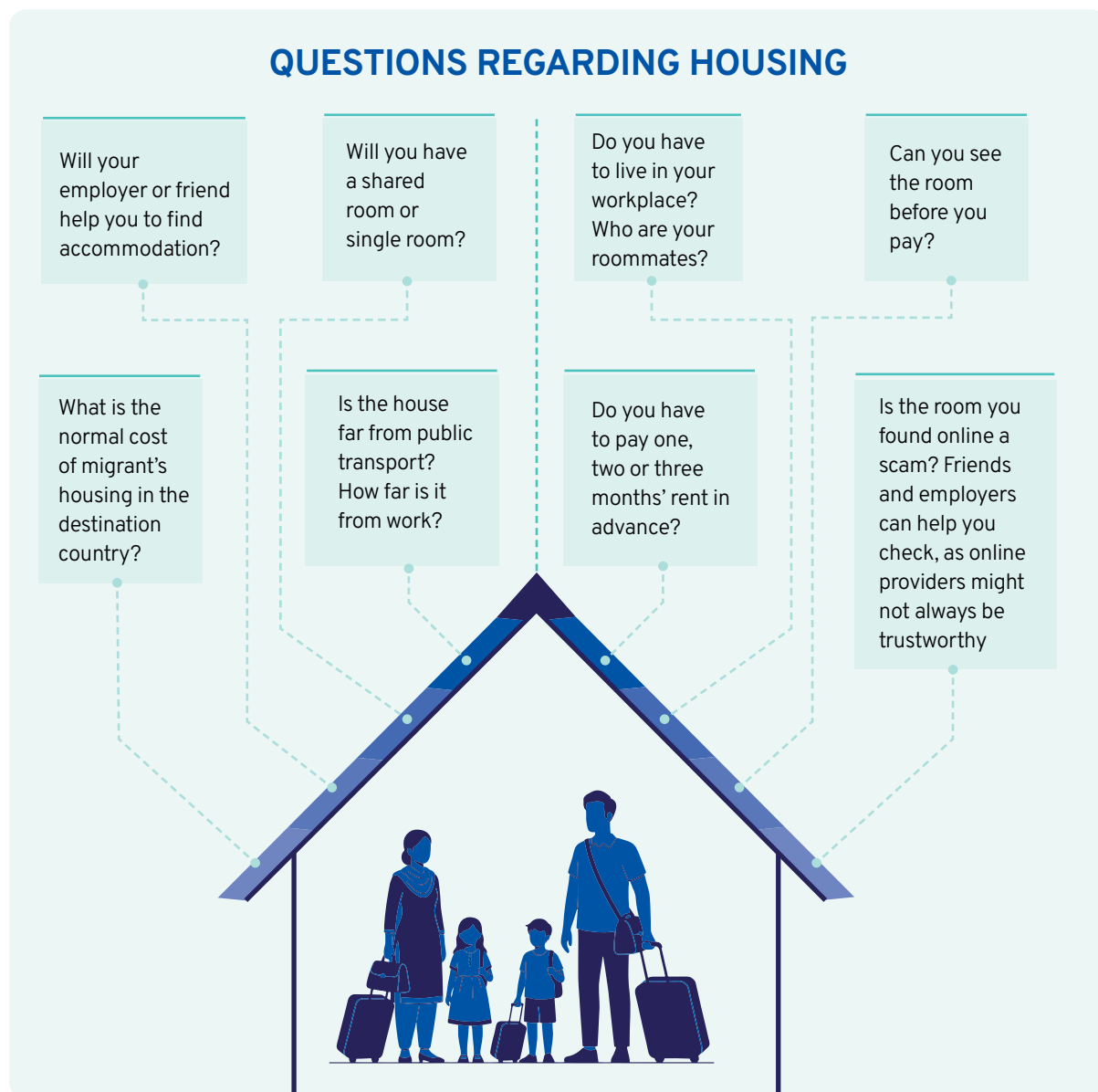
7.4 Housing and housing-related costs

Looking for an apartment in the EU can be difficult and stressful. It is best to start looking for a place to rent before you leave India or plan for free time to be dedicated to the search. You should familiarize yourself with the basic rental practices and terminology in the EU. For example, you should know about housing costs in addition to the rent. In general, in Europe, rent and housing-related costs such as electricity, heating, gas, etc. take up the biggest share of the average household's net income. It is important to know if the rent includes additional costs such as garbage disposal, cleaning costs and sometimes Wi-Fi, water, electricity and heating. It is best to ask for help from friends or colleagues in your new country.

Rent varies greatly between regions and cities and depends on the type of accommodation. It can be very expensive, especially in big cities, where many migrants live together to share the rent. Of course, rent is lower in smaller cities and rural areas,

especially in southern and eastern Europe. In most cases, you will be asked to put down a deposit for

renting a home. The deposit can vary from one to three months of rent in advance.



NOTE

You must also bring enough money to cover living expenses such as rent, food, clothing and transportation for a three-month period with you. When you are deciding how much money to bring, it helps to research the cost of living in the part of EU where you plan to live

7.5 Keeping the Indian Embassy informed

It is advised to register with the Indian Embassy in the country you are going to. This allows the embassy to be aware of your presence and in case of emergencies, to be able to reach out to you. In case there is no embassy in the country, check for the closest embassy in another country. Check the MEA website to locate embassies (<https://mea.gov.in/indian-missionsabroad-new.htm>).

7.6 Getting around

Public transport systems in most countries in the EU are very robust, and you do not usually need private transport. Unlike many countries where owning a car is seen as a status symbol, people in major European cities prefer to travel by public transport. In countries like the Netherlands, cycles are also popularly used as a mode of transport. All international airports in the EU, are connected via public transport to the city. Take along a map of your destination and the route to find local public transport as this can be a far cheaper option than a private taxi.

Driving licence

If you would like get your own car, you will need a driving license valid in your host country. To get an EU driving licence you must :

1. usually be resident in the EU MS where you are applying
2. meet the minimum age requirements
3. meet the minimum medical requirements
4. pass a driving test

Extensive information on all the procedures required to get a driving licence valid in the EU is available at https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/vehicles/driving-licence/get-driving-licence/index_en.htm

The main obstacle you might face is language because you are required to pass the test with understanding and fluency in the local language.

7.7 Managing your finances

European salaries may seem very high to Indian migrant workers if you simply convert to Indian rupees, but you also need to take into account the cost of living in Europe. After deducting all the basic expenses, you'll need to survive daily, and you might discover that you will only be able to save an amount significantly smaller than you expected.

It is thus crucial that you are aware of the cost of living to manage your finances and develop your return and reintegration plans.

You can find varying living and working conditions among various countries in Europe, and sometimes, in the same country, some areas are more expensive and some are cheaper to live in.

Regionally, the southern and eastern nations of EU are poorer and have more approachable rules for migration. In addition, the housing, wages and living expenses are lower than northern and central European countries. Conversely, in northern and central European countries, migrants might find better jobs and can count on a more developed welfare system, but they might face a number of challenges with stricter rules of entry and higher expenses upon arrival. This can often be unaffordable in some cases.

The most commonly used currency in the EU is the euro, and 20 EU MS³⁴ countries use Euro as their currency. You can find euro exchange rates on the European Central Bank's website³⁵.

You should bring a small amount of euros with you when you come to any of these 20 countries, or the local currency of the other countries, if it is available in India. You may also bring your credit or ATM card. The use of cards is very common in Europe, and international credit and debit cards will be accepted in most places. The withdrawal of cash may incur high fees, and it is best to check with your local bank in India about this.

Once you have arrived and settled in the EU, you'll get a residence permit that, among other advantages, will make it possible for you to open an account in the national post offices and apply for a debit card (prepaid). This is useful for charging and withdrawing cash and paying online for your daily expenses (tickets, shopping, bills, etc.). Credit cards are very expensive in the EU.

34. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/euro/countries-using-euro_en

35. More information is available at https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/carry/using-euro/index_en.htm

7.8 Remitting money to India

Many people think about remitting money home as even a small amount in euros could be a lot in Indian rupees and would help their families with expenses. You could also send money home in order to save it for your future. Some of the questions you should ask yourself include:

- ▶ What are the financial needs of your family in India in your absence?
- ▶ How much would you like to send back to them and how regularly?
- ▶ Do you have any loans that need to be paid back?
- ▶ Who would be the custodian of this money in India? Does that person have a bank account? Remember to take all the bank details of all the recipients' accounts when you leave the country, including their bank code.
- ▶ Do you want to retain your money in a foreign currency in your name? To do so, can you also open an NRI account?

Take the following into consideration when choosing a mode to transfer your money to India.

International money transfers

Do you want to send money back to your family or your own bank account in India? If so, there are many different options for you. You can send money to India through banking services, money transfer operator services, digital payments via online payment sites or fintech.

Bank Transfer

Bank transfers can only be made through banks in Europe if you have an account with them. The transfer requires an International Bank Account Number (IBAN) and the Bank Identifier Code (BIC) or Society of Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication code (SWIFT) of the recipient bank. The transfer can take weeks and also costs a lot. It may be useful while making fewer but larger transfers.

Money transfer agencies: This way of transferring money through companies like Western Union

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHILE CHOOSING AN INTERNATIONAL PAYMENT OPTION



- How much will it cost to send the money?
- What is the exchange rate you are being offered?
- How soon will the money reach the destination?
- How safe is the method?
- How easy is it for you to send and for the recipient to receive the money?

or MoneyGram takes only a few minutes, but the costs can be very steep, ranging from 3 per cent, 20 per cent and sometimes up to 50 per cent of the amount sent. The recipient of the money will be required to show identification to the office you named. The transfer costs vary in terms of commission, exchange rates and transfer charges.

Digital services: Several mobile and internet-based services are increasingly available for money transfer. Accounts can be opened online through apps, and money can be deposited and sent instantly. As they are purely digital, they have lower commissions costs and are quick to use. The recipient receives the money via bank transfer, mobile money wallet or cash pick-up. In Europe, some of the established services are Wise, WorldRemit and Remitly but the sector is growing rapidly.

There is still uncertainty about bitcoin and cryptocurrency and as India and some EU MS are still framing rules around this, it may be best to wait and learn more about these currencies.

Carrying cash physically is never considered a good option due to safety issues and because countries often set limits on the amount you can carry out or bring in. You can bring or take less than 10,000 euros (or equivalent in other currency) in and out of the EU in cash. You can bring approximately 4,000 euros (equivalent of USD 5000) to India without declaration; there is no limit to the amount when declared. Using in-cash transfers through informal or unregistered intermediaries is risky, unsecure and best avoided.

7.9 Insurance

Buy an appropriate travel and comprehensive medical insurance that covers you for any unexpected costs. Make sure you have sought medical advice for health concerns, have up-to-date vaccinations, and if you're carrying pharmaceutical

products or medicines from India, make sure they are allowed in the EU.

7.10 Food

Food habits in Europe vary by region and social class, and the food is very different from the food commonly eaten in India. Bread is the main food at both breakfast and supper / dinner. Early breakfast usually includes croissants, or rolls of various kinds, while supper / dinner typically consists of bread, meat, cheese, and perhaps a salad. Vegetables are often used in soups or stews but are also served as side dishes. It is also normal to eat meat. Potatoes are very popular as well as rice, pasta and noodles. However, there are considerable differences of eating habits within Europe, both with regard to ingredients as well as eating times. Most Europeans purchase food from supermarkets or specialty shops such as bakeries and butcher shops, but outdoor food markets also exist in many places. Immigrants offer even more variety to the European restaurant scene, and Greek, Italian, Turkish and Asian restaurants are waiting for you if you want!

European food does not use as many and as different spices as Indian food, and it can sometimes be hard for Indians to adjust to it. Access to good Indian food on a regular basis is difficult, and while there are many Indian restaurants in the major cities of Europe, finding one that fits your budget, has authentic flavours and stocks your favourite food is still quite a substantial task.

Indian or Asian stores may stock up on some Indian ingredients, but they may not have a very good range. Instead of carrying packaged food, it is a better idea for you to carry the spices that you will not find easily. Rice, pulses and common vegetables are freely available in supermarkets and you will be able to purchase what you need. Please note that you are not allowed to bring any meat or dairy products into the EU from India³⁶.

36. More information on carrying food into the EU is available at https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/carry/meat-dairy-animal/index_en.htm.

7.11 Power plugs and voltage

If you bring electrical devices or appliances with you from India, note that although the European electric standard is the same as in India (230 Volts (50Hz) AC), the types of plugs used in EU MS may differ (and they may also differ among MS). You may need an adapter, or you'll have to buy a device compatible to local sockets.

7.12 Weather

Europe is generally characterized by a temperate climate. Most of Western and Central Europe has an oceanic climate, featuring mild summers and cold winters with frequent overcast skies. Southern Europe is characterized by a Mediterranean climate featuring warm, dry summers and cool, wet winters. However, the weather in many countries can be a little unpredictable at times. Therefore you should bring some warm clothes, good walking shoes, rain protection, umbrellas, etc. with you.

7.13 Medication

If you are bringing medication, bring them in their original, clearly labelled containers. You will also need to bring a signed and dated letter from your physician or doctor describing your medical condition(s) and medication. If you are carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. Carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you, if you have them.

7.14 Management of important papers

- ▶ Make copies of your passport (including visa pages), insurance policy, traveller's cheques, visas and credit card numbers. Store one copy in a separate place away from the originals and also leave a copy with someone at home.
- ▶ Protect your passport and report it promptly if it is lost, stolen or damaged. Carry extra passport photos in case your passport is lost or stolen, and you need to replace it while you're away.

- ▶ In case your stay in the EU is for a reasonable length of time, register with the local Indian Embassy or Consulate before leaving India or soon after arrival to get better access to consular assistance and updates.
- ▶ You must have the full name, address, telephone and fax number of your employer before you leave India as well as the directions from your airport of arrival to your home.
- ▶ If you misplace your passport, inform the nearest Indian Embassy or Consulate immediately and give them the relevant details, i.e. passport number, date and place of issue, your name and date of your entry in the country of employment. You will be able to give these details only if you keep a photocopy of your passport in a safe place. In case there is no embassy in the country, check for the closest country in which there is an embassy. You can find Indian embassies on this website: <https://www.mea.gov.in/indian-missions-abroad-new.htm>.
- ▶ Do not lose your copy of your employment contract. Make photocopies and keep them with you always. Leave extra copies with your friends.

7.15 Languages of Europe

To have a successful experience of working and living in the EU, knowledge of the local language is probably the most essential and, in many instances, it may be compulsory to have a certain level in the language. You may want to consider learning the language before leaving India. English as a second language is the most commonly used language for travellers and business, but it will not suffice for long-term integration, especially work-related experiences.

Language learning

Language courses are available in many public and private educational institutions such as universities, cultural centres and private language schools. Such classes also become a place for learning about the culture and systems of a country and help you make

WHAT IS SUFFICIENT PROOF OF LANGUAGE SKILLS?



One of the following documents is usually accepted to prove your language skills. If you cannot provide any of these documents, you may be required to do an interview or a test (oral and / or written).

friends and integrate better. There are no shortcuts to speaking and writing a new language fluently. These are some tips to improve your language skills while in Europe:

- Expose yourself to the vocabulary and sounds of the language by reading local newspapers and magazines, watching television shows and films and listening to the radio. The more you hear the local language being spoken, the faster you will learn it.
- Get as much personal contact with people as possible. Chat with colleagues, neighbours, friends, shopkeepers, etc. in their language.

- Consider taking private one-on-one classes of language if you have the money to spare. Rates usually start at 15 euros per hour.

7.16 Rights and responsibilities of migrants

People with jobs must, as a rule, make payments towards taxes, for public health insurance, pensions, public housing, unemployment protection etc. in a country they migrate to, and you will have to make these too. Depending on the sector you work in and on the country you live in, these payments will usually come to about 40–50 per cent of your gross

income. However, the employer normally pays half of this cost, meaning that your contribution will be about 20 per cent of your earned income.

Rights and Responsibilities of migrants:

- ▶ Social Security
- ▶ Pensions
- ▶ Trade Union Membership

7.16.1 Social security

Under EU rules, a person can be subject to only a single country's social security laws at a time, and they must pay their social security contributions in that country only. As a general rule, the laws of the country where the person actually works (as an employee or self-employed) apply, and contributions must be paid there. It doesn't matter where the person lives (for example, if they commute) or where their employer is based.

For workers on short-term transfers, they may not have to contribute to all branches of social security in the EU MS if there is a social security agreement in place between India and the country. For the list of social security agreements, please check the following link: https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26465/Social_Security_Agreements. You will need a certificate of clearance from the Employees Provident Fund Organization to ensure that you can retain your provident fund contributions. This certificate can be obtained online. Check the website at the following link; https://www.epfindia.gov.in/site_en/index.php to obtain a certificate of clearance from the Government of India.

7.16.2 Pensions

Most migrants will not be eligible for pension in EU MS (post-retirement benefits) unless they have

long-term residency. The qualifying period varies between EU MS. For example, Germany has a minimum qualifying period of five years, and this period is 10 years in Italy and 15 years in Spain. However, if you are going to an EU MS which has a social security agreement with India, and if you have obtained a certificate of clearance before leaving India, you can continue your contributions to your provident fund and avail the benefits upon maturity.

7.16.3 Trade union membership

Trade unions are membership-based groups or organizations that represent, protect and advance the collective interests of workers. Trade unions in Europe often negotiate with employers on collective bargaining agreements that help establish benefits and working conditions of employees. You will normally be charged a nominal fee for membership.

Why join a trade union?

You will:

- ▶ Get support if you have a grievance or a problem at work. Trade unions campaign on important issues that matter to workers such as low pay, discrimination in the workplace and precarious work situations.
- ▶ Learn more about your rights and can seek information and advice about work-related issues.
- ▶ Be entitled to additional membership services of the union such as insurance and discounts, financial services and legal counselling.
- ▶ Have more opportunities for trainings to improve your vocational and professional qualifications.

► Preparing for Departure



Keep in mind that each EU Member State is different but offers similar working alternatives. The following points are designed to help guide you to think about several issues as you plan your departure.

For a convenient and hassle-free travel experience:

- Be at the airport at least three hours before your scheduled flight.
- Present yourself and your baggage for a security check.
- Find your flight on the timetable of the airport and check-in at the airline counter.
- Hold onto your boarding pass and baggage claim stubs.
- Visa documents should be in your hand baggage and not inside your check-in luggage.
- Do not accept a package from anyone, especially if they are not known to you. If you must take a parcel for someone, check its contents thoroughly. Failing to do so may land you in serious difficulties on arrival in your host country.

- Present your travel documents at the immigration counter.
- Proceed to the waiting lounge or designated gate.
- Board the plane when your boarding call is made.
- Be aware of customs regulations which includes how much foreign currency you can take from India. In 2025, the amount allowed for those employed overseas is US \$5000. Check the Reserve Bank of India website for further details³⁷.

37. <https://www.rbi.org.in/commonman/english/scripts/FAQs.aspx?Id=829#q3>

CASE STUDY – 5

Mira arrives at the airport three hours before departure and verifies on the departure timetable that her flight is on time. She is carrying one suitcase, which weighs less than 20 kgs, and a small shoulder bag. While waiting in queue for check-in at the airline desk, a man asks her to include his bag in her baggage because he says he cannot carry it. She gently refuses explaining she knows that for health, administrative and security reasons nobody should exchange their bags before and while travelling.

When it is her turn, she shows her documents and ticket. After checking her suitcase, she takes her shoulder bag and goes to the departure area. After security check and immigration, she identifies the timetable of departures showing the departure gate numbers. She goes to the gate and waits for the gate to be open. Mira shows her ticket and flies to an EU MS. After landing, she goes through immigration, where she shows her passport and visa to

the border police and enters the baggage claim hall, where she can collect her bag and leave the airport.

Q. Why did Mira refuse to take the man's bag?

- A. She did not know the man and had not verified what was in the bag herself and did not know if it had any illegal substances.
- A. Carrying illegal substances into the EU can lead to fines or prosecution.

Q Do you know what goods are restricted?

- A. Medicines without prescriptions
- A. Endangered species
- A. Dangerous chemicals
- A. Counterfeited or pirated goods
- A. Animal products, food or plants
- A. Weapons



8.1 Arriving in the EU

When you land in the airport and go through customs, there are usually three lines:

- ▶ EU citizens who have nothing to declare
- ▶ EU citizens who have items to declare
- ▶ Citizens from countries outside the EU

You must be prepared to open your baggage for random checks at any time. There are several goods that are restricted or even prohibited to import or export from Europe. Strict regulations

apply for weapons, medicine, animals and food. It is prohibited to import or export drugs and narcotics. Even though a small amount of drugs might be allowed for personal consumption in some EU MS, the import and export of the same is prohibited.

Some useful tips for your arrival

Take a map of your destination along with a map of the means of transport to reach your accommodation with you from India. Normally, all EU MS will have public transport from the airport to the city. Check this before your arrival as it may save you unnecessary costs.

Carry certified translated copies of your documents. Check with the embassy of the destination country in India for this information before departure.

You will be expected to open a bank account as soon as you arrive, especially if you are salaried. Do this soon upon your arrival at destination.

Many countries will also expect you to register with the local municipality and to obtain ID, health and other relevant registrations etc. Ensure you sort this out as soon as possible.

8.2 Returning to India

Even as you are preparing to migrate, it is also important to plan your return and reintegration.

USEFUL TIPS FOR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION



Upon return to your home country, understand that it may take some time to reintegrate so you must be patient. The process of reintegration can take several months as you rebuild your relationships and decide where to invest your energy and resources.



Watch your spending. It's tempting to celebrate your return with dining out or giving gifts, but it's important to stay within your budget and continue to save for the future. Don't spend impulsively upon your return and deplete your savings.



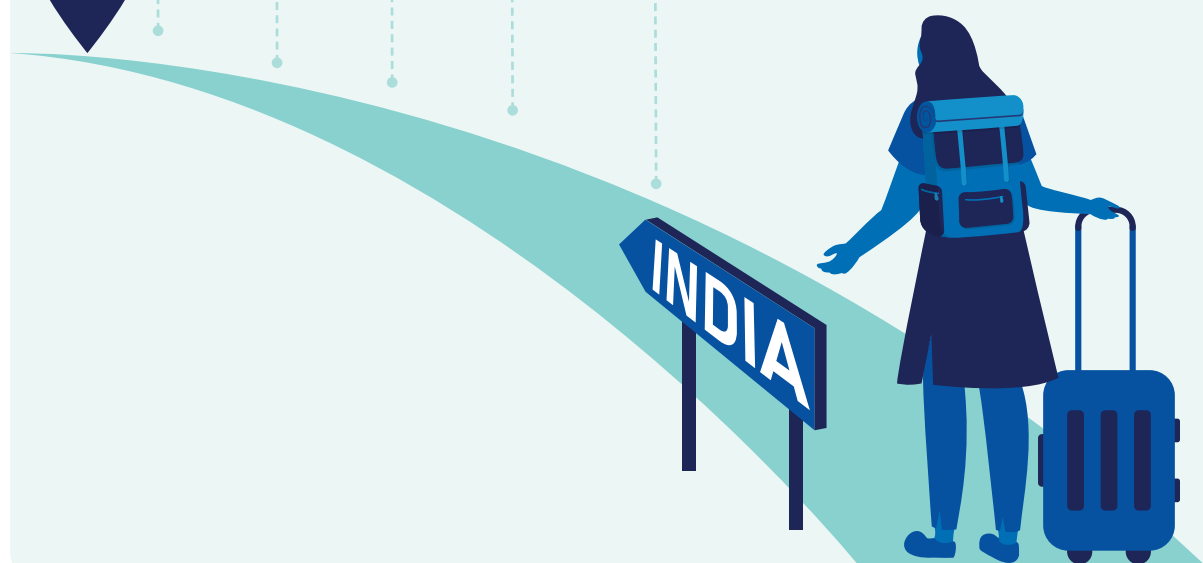
Learn to manage your finances effectively and implement a "forced-savings" program for yourself. There are many apps to assist you with this process.



Re-examine future plans, dreams and expectations as needed



Keep in touch with your family and friends.



The header features a blue background with silhouettes of various world landmarks including the Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, and Big Ben. On the right, a person is walking on a path that leads towards a large, bright circular light source.

Annex I

► Important Contacts

You can find all Indian missions in all countries of the world by clicking on the map here: <https://www.mea.gov.in/indian-missions-abroad-new.htm>.

- Emergency consular assistance can be availed by contacting the local Indian Embassy or Consulate concerned (via phone or email). The contact details of all Indian Embassies or Consulates are available here: <https://www.mea.gov.in/indian-missions-abroad-new.htm>.

- Register with the Embassy in country of destination.

- If you are unable to reach the Indian Embassy or Consulate due to some reason, the Consular Section of the CPV Division of the Ministry of

External Affairs could be contacted: <http://www.mea.gov.in/cpv.html>.

- If you are not satisfied with the consular services received you could lodge a grievance related to the same at MADAD: <http://madad.gov.in> (or MADAD mobile App or helpline at 1800-11-3090 (toll free); (011-26885021 (International)).

- To check information on agents, contact POE / PGE. Information on POEs is available at <https://mea.gov.in/protector-general-emigrants.htm>.

- For information on visas, check with Individual EU Member States (see Annex 2, link to their missions in India).

Annex II

► EU Member States' Missions in India



Austria	http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/embassy/new-delhi.html
Belgium	https://india.diplomatie.belgium.be/en
Bulgaria	https://www.mfa.bg/en/embassies/india
Croatia	https://mvep.gov.hr/in/en
Cyprus	https://www.gov.cy/mfa-highcomnewdelhi/en/
The Czech Republic	http://www.mzv.cz/newdelhi/en/index.html
Denmark	https://indien.um.dk/en
Estonia	https://newdelhi.mfa.ee/
France	https://in.ambafrance.org/
Finland	https://finlandabroad.fi/web/ind/frontpage
Germany	http://www.india.diplo.de/
Greece	https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/india-en
Hungary	https://delhi.mfa.gov.hu/eng
Ireland	https://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/india/
Italy	https://ambnewdelhi.esteri.it/ambasciata_newdelhi/en/
Latvia	https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/newdelhi
Lithuania	https://in.mfa.lt/en
Luxembourg	http://newdelhi.mae.lu/en
Malta	https://missions.foreign.gov.mt/high-commissions/india/
Netherlands	https://www.netherlandsandyou.nl/your-country-and-the-netherlands/india
Poland	https://www.gov.pl/web/india
Portugal	https://novadeli.embaixadaportugal.mne.gov.pt/en/
Romania	https://newdelhi.mae.ro/en
Slovenia	http://newdelhi.embassy.si/index.php?id=37&L=1
Slovakia	https://www.mzv.sk/web/dilli-en
Spain	https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/nuevadelhi/en/Paginas/index.aspx
Sweden	https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/india-new-delhi/

**ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia
and Country Office for India**

India Habitat Centre, Core 4B, 3rd Floor
Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003, India

Tel: +91 11 47509200

Email: delhi@ilo.org | www.ilo.org/india

ICMPD Brussels Mission

Pl. du Champ de Mars, 1050 Brussels

Email: euindia@icmpd.org

Website: www.icmpd.org/euindia

#EUIndiaCamm

Indian Council of World Affairs

Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi 110001

Tel: +91 11 2331 72 46

Website: www.icwa.in



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