(English version)

Question for written answer E-004650/25
to the Commission
Sandro Gozi (Renew)
(20 November 2025)

Subject: EU's attractiveness to highly skilled talent in the face of the Chinese K visa and the new rules for the H-1B visa

The United States' introduction of USD 100 000 fees for their H-1B visa, combined with the launch of the Chinese K visa on 1 October 2025, marks a turning point in the global competition for talent. The K visa directly targets young professionals in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics — professionals whom Europe urgently needs to fill its shortages in AI and data science.

While China is adopting an open strategy and the US is restricting access, Europe does not yet have a coordinated response, which puts our digital sovereignty at risk — especially as the EU Blue Card, which is still concentrated in only a few Member States, remains inadequate to meet the scale of the challenge.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the Chinese K visa's impact on the EU's ability to attract the highly skilled talent it needs for its digital transformation?

2. Is it considering an accelerated reform of the EU visa policy, including introducing simpler and faster pathways, in order to seize this opportunity before the EU's competitors do so?

Submitted: 20.11.2025

Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(5 March 2026)

The Commission is aware of recent changes to the United States H-1B visa and of the introduction of the Chinese K visa in October 2025. As these measures have been introduced recently, it is too early to assess their concrete impact on international talent flows.

The Commission recognises that international students, researchers, highly qualified and skilled workers and innovative entrepreneurs make a key contribution to the Union's economy and competitiveness by addressing skills shortages and supporting innovation and growth.

The EU already has a framework in place to attract international students, researchers and highly qualified workers, notably through the Students and Researchers Directive ([1]) and the EU Blue Card Directive ([2]).

In order to complement this framework and reinforce the EU's attractiveness to international students, researchers, highly qualified and skilled workers, startup founders and innovative entrepreneurs, the Commission adopted an EU Visa Strategy ([3]) and a Commission Recommendation on Attracting Talent for Innovation ([4]).

Taking stock of the implementation of the recommendation, the Commission will assess in 2026 whether targeted legislative adjustments are needed, including the feasibility of targeted amendments to existing EU rules on students and researchers and highly qualified and skilled workers, to adapt them to the innovation and research ecosystems, as well as a targeted EU legal framework for start-up and scale-up founders and innovative entrepreneurs.

([1]) Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (recast), OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, pp. 21-57.
([2]) Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC, OJ L 382, 28.10.2021, pp. 1-38.
([3]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on EU visa policy strategy, COM(2026) 43 final.
([4]) Commission Recommendation of 29.1.2026 on attracting talent for innovation, C(2026) 462 final.