

Germany to ease immigration rules for skilled workers

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BERLIN: Worker-starved Germany will ease immigration rules to attract foreign job seekers, including giving well-integrated, irregular migrants who are employed a shot at staying in the country, ministers said on Tuesday.

In a deal hammered out after marathon talks deep into the night, Chancellor Angela Merkel's centre-right CDU party, their Bavarian allies CSU and the centre-left SPD agreed on a new strategy to combat fast-ageing Germany's worker shortage.

Migrants without residency permits who are awaiting decisions on their asylum applications or their deportation may get to stay if they are gainfully employed and can show they have joined the fabric of German society.

Job seekers from outside the European Union — including, for example, cooks, metallurgy workers or IT technicians — can also come to Germany for six months to try to find employment, provided they speak German.

They would however have no access to Germany's social security system and must prove they are able to finance their stay.

Manpower from within the EU bloc of around 500 million people would not suffice to keep the German economy ticking, the coalition said.

“That's why we need workers from third countries,” Interior Minister Horst Seehofer told a press conference about the strategy that has yet to be passed by parliament and become law.

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