

Earth Times

Austria agrees new immigration law amid protests

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Vienna - Austria's government on Tuesday agreed on [immigration](#) law reforms aimed at attracting more qualified workers amid criticism from various aid groups.

Christian migrant aid organizations and the Green party in particular criticized a proposal that migrants must learn German before their arrival, unless they are highly qualified specialists. The reform package gets rid of the current blanket quota for highly qualified employees from outside the European Union, in exchange for flexible quotas that can be adjusted to changing demand for various occupations.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR and other groups criticized another provision that obliges [asylum](#) seekers to stay in a camp during their first week in [Austria](#) and cooperate with authorities. "This so-called cooperation obligation is a detention with open prison doors," UNHCR said in a statement.

The reform package is expected to be passed by the majority of parliamentarians from the governing coalition, made up of Social Democrats and the conservative Peoples Party.