

Global Immigration alert

June 2025

Belgium

Flemish authorities approve proposal that streamlines immigration rules for employers and foreign workers

Executive summary

On 9 May 2025, the Flemish authorities approved a proposal aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the immigration process for employers and foreign workers in Flanders. This proposal includes expedited processing for applications from highly skilled workers and introduces a new fee for applicants from outside the EU seeking work or single permits.

Key developments

The proposal includes the following changes, some of which have already been adopted:

- *Faster processing for applications for highly skilled workers:* As of 1 May 2025, these applications are being processed within 15 days (down from 12 weeks previously). By January 2026, other application types, such as those for low-skilled occupations and the "other" permit category, will also be subject to faster processing, with a maximum processing time of 30 days (down from 12 weeks currently).
- *Fee for applicants from outside the EU:* Effective January 2026, a fee of EUR 200 will apply to both work permit and single permit applications, including initial applications and renewals, filed from outside the EU.
- *Parallel processing of applications:* Effective early 2026, the authorities will facilitate parallel processing between regional and federal authorities to enhance efficiency. This change will allow both authorities to examine applications simultaneously, significantly reducing processing times. Currently, applications are processed sequentially, with the regional authorities reviewing them first before they are passed to the federal authorities.
- *Stricter regulations for low-skilled occupations:* Effective early 2026, the "other" permit category will be limited to specific shortage occupations. Employers will be required

to evaluate the Belgian labor market to ensure there are no suitable candidates available locally before they can recruit workers from outside the EU.

Additionally, Belgium's "Working in Belgium" [portal](#) has recently been enhanced to expand the applications that employers and their representatives can file electronically. Currently, applications may be filed online for single permits (which are for jobs in Belgium lasting for more than 90 days) and for professional cards (which are intended for self-employed individuals). It is expected that by early 2026, employers will also be able to electronically file applications for work permits for jobs lasting less than 90 days. Employers that have not yet designated a representative to submit applications on their behalf may prepare their authorization documents in advance. Additionally, employers are required to register any foreign entities in the Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (KBO) when applying for permits, such as the single permit for a seconded employee. While work permit applications can currently be submitted via email without KBO registration, this will change as applications transition to the "Working in Belgium" portal. Once this transition occurs, employers seeking to apply for work permits will be required to register their foreign entities in the KBO to continue submitting their applications. Employers may also need to provide authorization to their service providers to ensure compliance with this new requirement.

Impact on employers

These changes are expected to benefit employers by streamlining the employment process and expediting the processing of immigration applications. Employers may prepare to use the



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“Working in Belgium” portal for single permit applications by making the necessary arrangements for their representatives who will submit applications on their behalf.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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