

Global Immigration alert

February 2026

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Greece

Significant amendments to immigration policies

Executive summary

Effective 6 February 2026, Greece published a law that introduces significant amendments to the Migration Code. The law establishes a comprehensive migration policy framework that regulates and ensures the attraction of third-country nationals exclusively through lawful procedures, and contributes to the prevention and tackling of irregular migration.

Key developments

The law establishes:

- A single application procedure for the granting of a single permit, which allows third-country nationals to reside in the Greek territory for employment purposes, aiming to simplify the admission procedures for such individuals and facilitate the monitoring of their status
- A common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in the Greek territory, regardless of the purpose of their initial admission, based on equal treatment with that accorded to Greek nationals

Key amendments include the following:

- *Revised residence permit renewal timeline:*
 - In line with the current practice, a third-country national must submit the relevant renewal application within two months prior to the expiry of the residence permit. However, a residence permit renewal may also be submitted up to three months after expiry (previously one month), with a €100 fine for each month of delay. After three months, applications are only accepted if applicants can prove unforeseeable circumstances that prevented timely submission.
- *Other new provisions:*
 - The validity period of the EU Blue Card is increased from two to three years and is renewable for up to three years each time.
 - Lawfully licensed temporary employment agencies with a share capital of €1,000,000 may recruit workers as direct employers for the purpose of

further secondment to indirect employers. The issuance of a Ministerial Decision is expected for the implementation of this provision.

- Under the amended code, third-country nationals who enter Greece as specialized technical personnel, employed by a non-EU company and contracted by a domestic company to construct production units in the technology, pharmaceutical, or industrial sectors for investments exceeding €10,000,000, may be granted a National Visa permitting residence for employment. The visa may be issued for the period required to fulfill the contractual obligations, up to a maximum of twelve months.
- Third-country nationals entering Greece to work exclusively for companies registered in the National Startup Registry (“Elevate Greece”) may be granted a National Visa of up to 12 months (“Tech Visa”). Eligible employees may be accompanied by their family members, who receive corresponding National Visas; however, neither the employees nor their family members may change employers during the visa’s validity. Before the National Visa expires, the employee may apply for an EU Blue Card.
- *Higher education:*
 - Third-country nationals entering Greece for the purpose of studies or research may, upon completion of their studies or research, remain in Greece for a period of one year in order to:
 - Seek employment as highly skilled workers, special purpose workers or employees under a dependent employment relationship.
 - Establish a business.
 - Third-country nationals admitted to Greek higher education institutions or university-level entities as visiting professors may be granted a National Visa of up to 12 months by the competent Greek consular authority, permitting residence for this purpose.

- Third-country nationals who graduated from foreign higher education institutions listed in at least two international rankings and who hold a master's, doctoral, or postdoctoral degree from similarly ranked institutions may be granted a 12-month National Visa to seek employment or pursue professional activity.
- Third-country nationals enrolled in foreign higher education institutions that have cooperation agreements with Greek colleges, offering studies under validated or franchised programmes leading to accredited postgraduate degrees, may be granted a National Visa of up to nine months.

Impact on employers

These changes are expected to benefit companies that employ third-country nationals. They may inform impacted employees of these changes, update their internal processes and stay updated with the ongoing developments.

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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