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Global Immigration alert

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Georgia

Georgia to introduce new work authorization and visa and residence permit requirements for foreign workers

Executive summary

Effective 1 March 2026, Georgia is expected to implement new immigration requirements for foreign nationals who are employed by local entities or engaged in self-employment, entrepreneurial activities or remote work. A transition period will apply for certain individuals, with full compliance required for all impacted individuals effective 1 January 2027.

Background

Under current legislation, foreign nationals who are lawfully present in Georgia pursuant to a visa, residence permit or visa-free entry, may work or engage in self-employment and entrepreneurial activities without obtaining a separate work authorization or residence permit. The upcoming changes will establish a new framework under which most foreign workers, self-employed individuals and entrepreneurs will need to obtain a work authorization and either a D1 visa or a work residence permit (i.e., a long-term residence permit). Foreign nationals who hold permanent residence permits will not be subject to these changes and may continue to reside and work in Georgia without additional documentation.

Key developments

The changes that are scheduled to go into effect on 1 March 2026 include the following:

- Foreign citizens who enter Georgia for employment or entrepreneurial purposes after this date will be required to obtain a work authorization, along with either a D1 visa or a work residence permit.
- Citizens of visa-exempt countries will have the option of applying for either a residence permit or a D1 visa, whereas citizens of visa-required countries will be required to apply for a D1 visa. In both cases, a work authorization will be required, regardless of the individual's citizenship.
- Individuals working in the information technology (IT) sector may be eligible for a special IT residence permit

instead of a standard work residence permit. Those in other sectors will be required to follow the standard process, unless additional sector-specific permits are introduced.

- Foreign nationals residing in Georgia who hold any type of Georgian residence permit (such as work, study, dependent residence permit) at the time the changes take effect will only be required to obtain a work authorization. Neither a D1 visa nor an additional work residence permit will be required in these cases.
- Foreign nationals employed in Georgia and registered in the Labor Migrants [portal](#) by 1 March 2026 will benefit from a transition period, allowing them to continue working in Georgia without a work authorization, or visa or residence permit until 1 January 2027.
- Noncompliance with the new rules may result in fines of GEL 2,000 (approx. EUR 634) for both the foreign national and their employer. The fine may also apply to a natural or legal person receiving the foreign national's service. Repeated violations may lead to higher fines and additional sanctions.

While further details are pending, the local authorities have outlined the following initial process and conditions for obtaining work authorization:

- Employers will be required to submit work authorization applications on behalf of their foreign employees to the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia ("the Ministry"). Self-employed foreign nationals will be required to submit their applications directly to the same Ministry.
- The Ministry will review and process work authorization applications within 30 calendar days. Expedited processing may be available, with fees not expected to exceed GEL 500 (approx. EUR 159).

- Work authorization will be employer-specific and will not be transferable. Authorizations for self-employed individuals will reference the individuals' declared field of activity.
- The immigration authorities will be permitted to cancel work authorizations held by self-employed foreign workers who remain outside of Georgia for more than six consecutive months.
- Remote workers employed by a local employer who work from outside Georgia and do not need to visit the country are only required to obtain a work authorization. They are exempt from the obligation to secure a D1 visa or residence permit.

Impact on employers

Employers may remain abreast of developments, review their internal policies and processes, and evaluate their current talent pipelines, to plan for future needs and mitigate delays and business disruptions.

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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