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Global Immigration alert

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Netherlands

New timelines and increased flexibility for employers and international employees

Executive summary

On 22 May 2026, the revised EU Single Permit Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/1233) entered into force. The Directive introduces more consistent decision timelines, clear deadlines for change of employer procedures, and extended job search periods in certain cases of unemployment. It applies to combined residence and work permits (GVVA), including for paid employment, highly skilled migrants, EU Blue Card holders, researchers, and other specified categories.

Key developments

The revised Single Permit Directive introduces the following key developments:

- **Extension of statutory decision periods:** The Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) may extend the statutory decision period for initial residence applications by up to 30 days for certain residence purposes, provided that sufficient justification is given.
- **Change of employer:** For holders of a residence permit for paid employment, highly skilled migrant status, work experience, or research under Directive (EU) 2016/801 who change employers, the application must be assessed within 45 days. Under the revised Directive, this period may be extended by up to 15 days in exceptional cases. A shorter decision period of 30 days applies to EU Blue Card holders.
- **Change of purpose:** Similar timelines apply in cases of a change of residence purpose. Where a permit holder applies for a different residence purpose covered by the Directive, the application must be assessed within 45 days. Under the revised Directive, this period may be extended by up to 15 days in exceptional cases. For EU Blue Card holders, a shorter decision period of 30 days applies if the application is submitted by an accredited sponsor.
- **Decision period:** A key objective of the Directive is to ensure continuity of lawful residence and employment during

administrative procedures. Where the IND fails to decide within the applicable decision period, the permit holder may continue working for the new employer, reflecting a national safeguard to prevent gaps in lawful employment and residence.

- **Extended job search period following unemployment:** The revised Directive extends the job search period for permit holders who become unemployed from three to up to six months if they have held their permit for at least two years. The same extended period applies in cases of labor exploitation. In all cases, the job search period may not exceed the validity of the residence permit.
- **Combined change of employer and extension procedure:** Where a change of employer is combined with an application for extension of the residence permit, the applicant may request both simultaneously. In such cases, two decision periods apply:
 - 45 days for the assessment of the change of employer covering the remaining validity of the residence permit.
 - 90 days for the assessment of the extension of the residence permit.

Impact on employers

The revised Directive is expected to have several implications for employers, including:

- **More structured process control and timeline management:** Harmonized and fixed decision timelines should lead to a more structured process. Employers must continue to ensure timely submission of applications and maintain close coordination with their immigration provider to avoid delays impacting onboarding and employment continuity.
- **More structured handling of job changes and internal mobility:** Clear procedural deadlines for changes of employer and residence purpose require employers to align hiring,

transfers, and start dates with immigration requirements to ensure work authorization for employees.

- *Enhanced compliance oversight and sponsor responsibility:* As permit holders may start working during pending change of residence purpose procedures or benefit from extended job search periods, employers must actively monitor and document employees' immigration status to mitigate risks related to noncompliance and recognized sponsor obligations.

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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