

International Comparative Legal Guides



Practical cross-border insights into corporate immigration law

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1 Introduction

1.1 What are the main sources of immigration law in your jurisdiction?

The main immigration legislation in Greece is the following:

- Immigration Code (Law 4251/2014), setting out the various types of visa and residence permit that are available for third-country nationals in Greece and regulates the respective requirements and process to obtain them (we note that as from 01/01/2024 Law 4251/2014 will be replaced by Law 5038/2023 – the new Immigration Code);
- Presidential Decree 106/2007, which regulates the freedom of movement of European Union citizens and the residence status of their (third-country) family members;
- Presidential Decrees 30/2021 and 101/2016, which set out the requirements for the posting of employees; and
- Greek Citizenship Code (Law 3284/2004), setting out the conditions to obtain Greek citizenship.

In addition to the above legislation, a number of Ministerial Decisions further elaborate on various specificities regarding administrative procedures, documentation requirements, etc. Additionally, Greece as a Member State of the EU applies respective EU legislation, such as the EU Visa Code.

1.2 What authorities administer the corporate immigration system in your jurisdiction?

In the absence of a unified immigration authority in Greece, the main authorities involved in immigration matters are the following:

- Greek Consulates, competent for issuing Visas for the entrance of third-country nationals in Greece;
- The Ministry of Migration and Asylum, competent to receive applications for many types of residence permits by third-country nationals;
- Decentralised Administrations, competent mainly for residence permits of dependent work of third-country nationals and third-country family members of EU citizens; and
- Police Departments of Aliens, mostly competent for the registration of EU citizens.

1.3 Is your jurisdiction part of a multilateral agreement between countries (EU/NAFTA/MERCOSUR) which facilitates the movement of people between countries for employment purposes?

Greece is a Member State of the EU, which entails the free

movement of EU citizens and in some cases also of third-country nationals, according to applicable EU legislation.

Furthermore, Greece is also a party to the Schengen Agreement, which led to the abolishment of national borders for the participant countries, while it has also signed a number of bilateral/multilateral agreements for the facilitation of movement of people, such as agreements with the USA and UK for a visa-waiver regime or with Canada concerning youth mobility (and work), etc.

2 Business Visitors

2.1 Can business visitors enter your jurisdiction under a relevant visa waiver programme?

In general, third-country nationals may enter Greece with a Schengen Visa (Visa C) issued by the competent Greek Consulate, which allows them to stay in Greece (or any State within the Schengen area) for up to 90 days within a rolling 180-day period for purposes of tourism, participation in conferences, cultural and sport events, etc. In case, however, the applicants are specifically entering Greece for business purposes, the latter may request a “Business Invitation” Visa C from the Consulate (following the request of a Greek/EU/EEA/foreign national lawfully residing in Greece), which enables them to be engaged in the following professional activities: business meetings; conferences; seminars; trainings; exhibitions; and other business events. However, this excludes the provision of substantive work. It is clarified that foreign nationals that enjoy a visa-waiver status do not require this special Visa, as business activities are also covered by such status.

Please note that EU/EEA/Swiss nationals are entitled to freely travel, work and reside in Greece with either their passport or ID card with no restrictions related to the duration or the purpose of visit/relocation or the place of establishment of the employer, etc. However, in case they remain in Greece for more than three months, they have a personal obligation to register with the Police and obtain a “Registration Certificate as EU citizen”, although this is not a requirement for the provision of work, training etc.

2.2 What is the maximum period for which business visitors can enter your jurisdiction?

Business visitors who are third-country nationals and enter Greece either with Visa C (including “Business Invitation” Visa C) or under a visa-waiver regime, can stay in the country for up to 90 days within a rolling 180-day period.

As already mentioned, such restrictions do not apply to EU/EEA/Swiss nationals.

2.3 What activities are business visitors able to undertake?

Holders of “Business Invitation” Visa C (as well as holders of a Schengen Visa or visitors under a visa-waiver regime) are entitled to participate in business and professional events, such as meetings, congresses, seminars and training, exhibitions, conferences or other events of commercial or industrial nature. The provision of employment services is prohibited, while the appropriate permit required should be assessed on an *ad hoc* basis.

2.4 Are there any special visitor categories which will enable business visitors to undertake work or provide services for a temporary period?

In principle, holders of Visa C (including the “Business Invitation” Visa) do not have access to the Greek labour market. However, in exceptional cases (i.e. seasonal workers) the issuance of Visa C may provide access to the Greek labour market under certain conditions.

In addition to this, third-country nationals who obtain a national Visa (Visa D) may be entitled to provide work for a short period, even without the issuance of a relevant residence permit, although these cases are exceptional and are specifically defined by law (e.g. seasonal employees, employees employed by an undertaking established in an EU Member State who travel to Greece to provide a specific service under a contractual obligation etc.).

2.5 Can business visitors receive short-term training?

The entitlement of a third-country national to participate in short-term training is explicitly mentioned in the case of “Business Invitation” Visa C, although it is accepted that any holder of a Visa C or a foreigner under a visa-waiver regime is entitled to participate in short-term training not exceeding 90 days.

3 Immigration Compliance and Illegal Working

3.1 Do the national authorities in your jurisdiction operate a system of compliance inspections of employers who regularly employ foreign nationals?

Greek authorities, mainly the Labour Inspectorate and the Police, are competent for the inspection of the Greek labour market with a view to prevent the illegal work of third-country nationals.

3.2 What are the rules on the prevention of illegal working?

Employers are prohibited from recruiting any third-country national who is not entitled to work in Greece. Employers are expressly required to request a copy of a valid residence permit providing access to the Greek labour market from any prospective employee and retain a copy thereof. Furthermore, in the context of notification of any recruitment of foreign nationals through the applicable electronic platform called ERGANI, a scanned copy of their residence permit must also be submitted.

3.3 What are the penalties for organisations found to be employing foreign nationals without permission to work?

In case of recruitment of a third-country national illegally staying in Greece, employers are subject to i) a fine of EUR 5,000 per employee (EUR 10,000 in case of relapse within four years), ii) exclusion from public tenders and subsidies for up to five years, iii) temporary suspension of their operation, and iv) possible criminal sanctions if aggravating circumstances exist.

In the case of a recruitment of a third-country national lawfully residing in Greece, without the right to work, employers are subject to a fine equal to EUR 1,200 per foreigner.

4 Corporate Immigration – General

4.1 Is there a system for registration of employers who wish to hire foreign nationals?

There is no generally applicable registration system for employers who wish to hire foreign nationals.

4.2 Do employers who hire foreign nationals have ongoing duties to ensure immigration compliance?

As already mentioned above under question 3.2, employers are expressly required to request a copy of a valid residence permit providing access to the Greek labour market from any prospective employee as well as any further renewal thereof.

4.3 Are employers who hire foreign nationals required to show a commitment to train or up-skill local workers?

There is no such obligation.

4.4 Are employers who hire foreign nationals required to pay government charges and fees which contribute towards the training or up-skilling of local workers?

There is no such obligation.

4.5 Do the immigration authorities undertake routine inspections of employers who sponsor foreign nationals, to verify immigration compliance?

No specific monitoring programme is in place. Such audits are usually conducted in the normal course of audits by the labour authorities.

4.6 Do the immigration authorities maintain a list of skilled occupations which may be filled by foreign nationals?

Under Greek immigration law, third-country nationals are entitled to reside and work in Greece under specific conditions, which are mostly work-related. In general, the law does not specify the occupations that can be filled by third-country nationals and their expertise, even though there is a list with occupations for which special restrictions apply (i.e. farmers) and a certain number of third-country nationals who can enter in Greece under the status of highly-skilled employees (i.e. EU Blue Card). See also our answer to the below question.

4.7 Is there a recognition that some occupations may be in short supply and do special exemptions apply to certain sectors and occupations?

Every two years, a Ministerial Decision is issued specifying the maximum number of residence permits available per occupation (e.g. farmers, fishermen, cooks of foreign cuisines, EU Blue Card for highly skilled employees) and per geographic area.

4.8 Are there annual quotas for different types of employment-related work permits or visas?

See our answer above.

4.9 Are there restrictions on the number of foreign workers an employer may sponsor, in relation to a maximum percentage of foreign workers in the employer's workforce?

No such restrictions apply currently.

4.10 Are employees who are sponsored to work in your jurisdiction required to demonstrate language proficiency?

In principle, language proficiency is not required for the issuance of residence permits providing access to the Greek labour market, even though it may be required for the issuance of a special type of permit, i.e. long-term residence permit, which also provides access to work.

4.11 Are employees who are sponsored to work in your jurisdiction required to undergo medical examinations before being admitted?

Medical examinations of third-country nationals are required by the competent Greek Consulates in order for them to be provided with the requested Visa for their entry into Greece, while no further medical examinations are required at the stage of residence permit application.

4.12 Are employees who are sponsored to work in your jurisdiction required to have medical insurance or are they entitled to any free public medical services?

All employees, either Greek or EU/EEA/Swiss or third-country nationals (holders of a valid residence permit), must be insured in the mandatory Greek social security system, which provides public and free healthcare. Certain non-employment residence permits can be obtained even without registration with social security if a private medical insurance is held.

4.13 Does the work permit system allow employees who hold work permits to be seconded to a client site?

The Greek immigration law does not prohibit the secondment of a holder of a valid residence permit providing access to the labour market to another employer in Greece, since third-country employees enjoy the same rights with Greek national employees. The change of employers, however, is subject to restrictions.

4.14 Does the work permit system require the sponsoring employer to have a physical office space at which employees are required to be physically present?

No, there is no such requirement for third-country nor for EU/EEA/Swiss nationals.

4.15 Does the work permit system allow employees who hold work permits to work remotely including work from home?

Third-country and EU/EEA/Swiss nationals enjoy the same rights as Greek national employees, including the right to telework, according to the relevant provisions set by law.

5 Non-Sponsored Highly Skilled, Exceptional or Extraordinary Talent Visas

5.1 Is there an immigration category which covers highly skilled individuals (including those who are not sponsored by a company)?

Third-country nationals are entitled to reside and work in Greece as highly qualified employees mainly under the "EU Blue Card" Residence Permit. This residence permit applies exclusively to employees whose qualifications are proven by higher professional qualifications or relevant professional experience, as specified by law and their gross annual salary exceeds the threshold set by law (the current applicable threshold is approximately 32,000 Euros). The EU Blue Card, however, covers only employees, not freelancers or self-employed persons.

Highly skilled employees could also apply for the Intra-Corporate Transfer (ICT) Residence Permit, which requires a temporary assignment of a third-country national from an employer abroad to a Greek entity of the same group of companies, under the conditions set by law. The ICT residence permit is also applicable only to employees (please see our input under Section 9 below).

Another category currently applicable to skilled individuals is the Residence Permit of Special Purpose (i.e. Executive Employees), which applies to third-country nationals who enjoy executive status either from a corporate perspective (being shareholders, members of the Board of Directors (BoD), legal representatives of an entity in Greece, etc.) or an employment perspective (having a managerial employment relationship).

The Residence Permit for Digital Nomads applies to third-country nationals who work remotely in Greece for employers or clients outside Greece by means of Information and Communication Technology and are usually considered highly skilled persons. This type of residence permit applies to employees, freelancers and self-employed persons (please see our input under question 6.1 below).

5.2 Is there an immigration category which allows those with exceptional or extraordinary talent in their specialist field to obtain a work visa?

The provision of a work-related Visa or a residence permit which provides access to the Greek labour market is mostly connected with qualifications (e.g. managerial or highly skilled employee under an employment contract, etc.) or profession (e.g. authors, actors, athletes, fishermen, tour-leaders, etc.) or with family-related reasons. On the other hand, there is no specific

work-related Visa or residence permit applicable to those having exceptional or extraordinary talents as such, other than the EU Blue Card mentioned above.

6 Remote Working Visas

6.1 Is there a visa category which allows employees of overseas companies who remain employed outside your jurisdiction to work remotely in your jurisdiction without the need to obtain a standard work permit?

No; there is no relevant Visa for employees of overseas companies who remain employed outside Greece to work remotely in Greece without a relevant residence permit.

On the contrary, third-country nationals who work remotely in Greece for employers or clients outside Greece by means of Information and Communication Technology may apply for a Digital Nomads Visa and/or Residence Permit, under the conditions set by law.

6.2 To what extent do your visitor rules explicitly permit temporary remote working, for example where the employee of a foreign company cannot leave your territory due to health or other emergencies?

Health problems or other emergencies of foreign visitors could extend their right to legally reside in the country although this would not entitle them to access the Greek labour market without an appropriate residence permit.

7 Investment or Establishment Work Permits

7.1 Is there an immigration category which permits employees to be authorised to work based on investment into, or setting up a subsidiary or corporate presence in, your jurisdiction?

Greek immigration legislation provides for certain residence permits that apply for investment purposes, such as investment in real estate or in financial instruments; however, they do not provide access to the labour market.

On the other hand, investors and personnel to be employed in investments which may have a positive impact on Greek development and economy or have been declared as “strategic” may be entitled to a residence permit which allows their employment for the respective investment/project.

Additionally, shareholders, members of BoD, legal representatives, administrators and directors of a subsidiary company, a branch of a foreign company or a company which is subject to a special legal regime in Greece may be entitled to receive a Residence Permit of Special Purpose, which provides access to the labour market.

8 Temporary Work Permits

8.1 Is there an immigration category permitting the hiring of temporary workers for exchanges, career development, internships or other non-economic purposes?

There are special types of residence permits for third-country nationals for studies, internship, professional training and volunteer work, each of which has different restrictions, however, not

all of these types provide access to the labour market, while there are also some restrictions as to working conditions (e.g. part-time work).

8.2 Are there sector-specific temporary work permit categories which enable foreign workers to perform short-term temporary work?

Yes; in specific cases of temporary work, as set by law, third-country nationals are entitled to work temporarily by holding only a relevant Visa (without the issuance of a residence permit). The main cases where this is feasible are the following: seasonal work (agriculture, tourism etc.); fishing; music; traineeships; scholarships by the Fulbright Foundation; employees legally employed by an undertaking established in an EU Member State who travel to Greece to provide a specific service under a contractual obligation; qualified technical staff employed by an undertaking established in a non-EU/non-EEA/non-Swiss country; and those under a procurement contract to provide specific services, etc.

9 Group or Intra-Company Transfer Work Permits

9.1 Does a specific immigration category exist for inter-company transfers within international groups of companies?

Yes; third-country nationals who are employed within an international group of undertakings may be entitled to the Intra-Corporate (ICT) Residence Permit, if the requirements set by law are fulfilled.

9.2 What conditions must an employing company or organisation fulfil in order to qualify as part of a group of companies?

For immigration law purposes, a group of companies means two or more undertakings acknowledged as linked under Law 4172/2013 art.2, as follows: an undertaking, in relation to another undertaking directly or indirectly: (a) holds the majority of that undertaking’s subscribed capital; (b) controls the majority of the votes attached to that undertaking’s issued share capital; (c) is entitled to appoint more than half of the members of that undertaking’s administrative, management or supervisory body; or (d) the undertakings are managed on a unified basis by the parent undertaking.

9.3 What conditions must the employer fulfil in order to obtain a work permit for an intra-company group employee?

Both companies (the foreign posting one and the Greek receiving one) must prove (a) that they belong to the same group of undertakings by submitting relevant corporate documents (e.g. Articles of Association, Commercial Registry extracts etc.) to the competent Greek Consulate and the Ministry of Migration, (b) the prior period of service of the third-country employee in the foreign company, and (c) provide the existing employment contract and the assignment agreement for the transfer in Greece ensuring that the working conditions (e.g. salary, working hours etc.) will be in line with Greek law. We note that further documentation is required by the foreign employee as well.

It is to be noted that in the framework of ICT, the transferee remains engaged by virtue of an employment contract by the foreign entity, which assigns the transferee to the host entity in Greece, while it applies only to managers and specialists who have been employed within the same undertaking or group of undertakings for at least 12 uninterrupted months prior to the assignment and trainees who have been trained within the posting undertaking or the group of undertaking for at least six uninterrupted months.

9.4 What is the process for obtaining a work permit for an intra-company group employee?

The ICT is a two-step process, requiring (a) the prior issuance of a national Visa (Visa D) from the competent Greek Consulate of the applicant's place of residence on the basis of the documentation specified under question 9.5 below, and (b) after arrival in Greece, the electronic submission of the application to the Ministry of Migration on similar documentation, following which the applicant receives an interim residence permit which enables him/her to lawfully reside and work in Greece. Soon after, the third-country national will also provide biometrics (fingerprints and signature) and finally he/she will receive the residence permit card.

9.5 What is the process for the employee to obtain a visa under the intra-company group transfer category?

The third-country national must prove that the requirements for the issuance of the relevant Visa are fulfilled by providing:

- i) corporate documents of both entities, as mentioned above under question 9.3;
- ii) documents related to the employment (e.g. prior service in the foreign entity, employment contract etc.); and
- iii) evidence of high professional qualifications and experience (i.e. diplomas of higher education at university level or working experience of a level comparable to higher education qualifications of at least five years) or (if applicable) present documentation certifying that the applicant fulfils the conditions laid down under Greek law for EU citizens to exercise the regulated profession to which the application relates.

In addition to this, the general documentation for the issuance of national Visa must be provided (e.g. passport, photos, medical certificate, criminal record and travel insurance).

9.6 How long does the process of obtaining the work permit and initial visa take?

The total duration for obtaining the ICT Visa and the relevant residence permit mostly depends on the availability and workload of the competent Greek Consulate abroad, while the process at the Ministry usually runs smoothly without delays since it can be completed electronically as soon as the required documents are available (the applicant receives an interim residence permit on the same day of the application submission, while the final residence permit card is usually issued within one to three months). From our experience the whole process (including both procedures at the Consulate and the Ministry) may be completed within two to six months.

9.7 Is there a maximum period of validity for initial intra-company transfer visas, can they be extended and is there a maximum period of stay in this category?

In general, D Visa (including the special Visa for ICT purposes) are issued for a duration ranging from 90 to 365 days, depending on the circumstances, while extension is not possible. As regards the ICT Residence Permit, it is issued with annual duration (unless the duration of the transfer is shorter), while it can be renewed for a maximum period of three years for managers and specialists and one year for trainees. Following the lapse of three years or one year respectively, they are required to leave Greece and cannot further extend this type of card, even though they may be eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card (as highly skilled employees, as mentioned above).

9.8 Can employees coming under the intra-company route transfer to a permanent stay visa route and apply for permanent residence?

As mentioned above, the ICT Residence Permit cannot be extended beyond a certain time threshold, after which the third-country national must either apply for a different type of residence permit (i.e. EU Blue Card) or leave Greece. The eligibility to apply for a Permanent Residence Card or a Long-Term Residence Permit requires, among others, at least five years of lawful and uninterrupted residence in the country, which cannot be fulfilled in the case of an ICT permit.

9.9 What are the main government fees associated with this type of visa?

The administrative fees involved are currently equal to (a) 180 Euros for the submission of the Visa D application at the Greek Consulate, (b) 150 Euros for the submission of application of the ICT Residence Permit, and (c) 16 Euros for the issuance of the residence permit card.

10 New Hire Work Permits

10.1 What is the main immigration category used for employers who wish to obtain work permits for new hires?

Under Greek law, there is no standard type of residence permit for new hires, since this mostly depends on the type of the company, the profession of the third-country national and his/her qualifications. However, companies in Greece often select highly skilled employees falling within the framework of the ICT Residence Permit, EU Blue Card or the Residence Permit of Special Purpose, as mentioned above under question 5.1.

10.2 Is there a requirement for labour market testing, to demonstrate that there are no suitable resident workers, before a work permit can be issued to new hires?

There is no general requirement for employers to demonstrate any workforce deficit, with the exception of the EU Blue Card Residence Permit where the employer is required to support that there is no suitable workforce already available in the country.

10.3 Are there any exemptions to carrying out a resident labour market test?

Given that there is no generally applicable labour market test, no exemptions are provided for in the law.

10.4 What is the process for employers obtaining a work permit for a new hire?

In addition to the EU Blue Card, the only other residence permit process that requires the prior approval of the contemplated recruitment of a foreign national by the immigration authorities is the recalling process that mainly relates to non-specialised workers (e.g. in agriculture, mining, construction) as per the available positions indicated in the Ministerial Decision that is issued every other year. In all other cases of corporate immigration (such as ICT, Residence Permit of Special Purpose etc.), the employer's involvement is mainly related to the provision of the relevant corporate documentation, employment contracts etc. in relation to the contemplated recruitment of a foreign national.

10.5 What is the process for the employee to obtain a visa as a new hire?

The employee must apply and submit the required documents for the issuance of a Visa at the competent Greek Consulate based on the place of his/her residence, while the documents that may be necessary in addition to the general data required (i.e. passport, photos, medical certificate, criminal record and travel insurance) depend on the respective residence permit type requested.

10.6 How long does the process of obtaining the work permit and initial visa for a new hire take?

It depends on the category of the residence permit and the workload of the competent Consulate and immigration authority. In general, however, an average timeframe for the completion of the whole process is approx. two to six months.

10.7 How long are initial visas for new hires granted for and can they be extended?

National Visas (D Visas) are issued for a duration ranging from 90 to 365 days, depending on the circumstances, while extension of national Visas is in principle not possible. Residence permits are usually issued for two years and can thereafter be renewed for three-year periods.

10.8 Is labour market testing required when the employee extends their residence?

The renewal of residence permits does not in principle require any labour market testing.

10.9 Can employees coming as new hires apply for permanent residence?

The eligibility to apply for a Permanent Residence Card or a Long-Term Residence Permit requires, among others, at least five years of lawful and uninterrupted residence in the country on the basis of the initial and renewed residence permit(s).

10.10 What are the main government fees associated with this type of visa?

The costs involved also depend on the specific type of residence permit requested, but the usual costs are the application fees equal to 150 Euros (for most cases), a fee equal to 16 Euros for the printing of the residence permit card, while also the applicant must pay a relevant fee at the Greek Consulate for the issuance of the Visa (where required) usually equal to 180 Euros.

11 Conditions of Stay for Work Permit Holders

11.1 What are the conditions of stay of those who obtain work permits and are resident on this basis?

Third-country nationals who hold a Greek residence permit must continue to comply with the application requirements throughout its duration so as to avoid the risk of revocation of their permit. In addition to this, the validity of the residence permit in most cases is not affected (i) by a temporary absence of its holder which does not exceed six months per year, nor (ii) by any longer period of absence due to completion of obligatory military service, or (iii) by an absence up to 12 continuous months for a serious reason, such as pregnancy, maternity, severe disease, studies, vocational training in another EU Member State or non-EU country.

11.2 Are work permit holders required to register with municipal authorities or the police after their arrival?

After obtaining the residence permit from the competent immigration authority, third-country nationals are not required to further register to municipal authorities or the police, however, public authorities (such as immigration, tax, social security authorities) must be informed upon the application submission about their place of residence and about any change thereof, thereafter.

12 Dependants

12.1 Who qualifies as a dependant of a person coming to work on a sponsored basis?

In principle, dependent family members of the sponsor-employee are the following:

- (a) his/her spouse, on the condition that he/she is at least 18 years old;
- (b) their common underage and unmarried children (including adopted children); and
- (c) the underage and unmarried children (including adopted children) either of the sponsor-employee or of the spouse on condition that the sponsor-employee or the spouse has such children's custody respectively.

12.2 Do civil/unmarried or same-sex partners qualify as family members?

In general, third-country nationals who are married or have concluded a civil partnership with the sponsor-employee are considered dependent family members. Same-sex partners are considered family members only in the case of a civil partnership concluded in Greece.

12.3 Do spouses and partners have access to the labour market when they are admitted as dependants?

In principle, dependent family members have full access to the labour market, similarly with the residence permit of the sponsor-employee. Some investment permits, however, that do not provide access to the Greek labour market to the applicants do not provide access to their dependants either.

12.4 Do children have access to the labour market?

As mentioned in question 12.3 above, children as dependants in principle receive access to the labour market. It goes without saying that such access is subject to the applicable restrictions of Greek employment legislation that only permits the employment of children above 15 years old, under specific conditions and following an administrative permit process.

13 Permanent Residence

13.1 What are the conditions for obtaining permanent residence?

The Permanent Residence Permit, which has a 10-year validity period, is applicable to third-country nationals who are family members of a Greek or EU citizen and have been lawfully residing in Greece for at least five uninterrupted years.

On the other hand, third-country nationals, who do not fall within the personal scope of the Permanent Residence Permit even though they have been lawfully residing in Greece for at least five uninterrupted years, may be entitled to obtain the Long-Term Residence Permit, on condition that further conditions are met (e.g. sufficient income for them and their family, integration in the Greek society proven either by sufficient knowledge of the Greek language/history etc. or by residing lawfully for at least 12 years in Greece etc.). This type of permit also has a 10-year validity period.

13.2 Is it possible to switch from a temporary work visa to a work visa which leads to permanent residence?

Third-country nationals who hold a temporary work visa (not a residence permit) may only switch to a work-related visa (and a respective residence permit) if the conditions for such change are met (i.e. issuance of a new relevant Visa from the competent Consulate).

14 Bars to Admission

14.1 What are the main bars to admission for work?

As regards third-country nationals, in general, the application for a residence permit (including its renewal) may be rejected or the permit may be revoked in the following cases:

- a. the conditions for issuance of the permit are not fulfilled anymore;
- b. public authorities prove that the foreigner used false/misleading information or false/falsified documents or committed fraud or proceeded to any other illegal method to issue the residence permit; or
- c. the foreigner does not correspond within two months to written communications from the immigration authorities regarding the residence permit.

In any case, however, the application for a visa will be rejected by the Greek Consulate if the applicant constitutes a threat to public order, Greek security, public health, the international relations of Greece or is listed as unwanted in the relevant national databases.

14.2 Are criminal convictions a bar to obtaining work permission or a visa?

Yes; Greek Consulates check the criminal record of the applicant prior to allowing his/her entrance in Greece, while also Greek immigration authorities in cooperation with police authorities may reject the application or revoke the permit in the case where: a) a third-country national has convicted an offence/crime and has been sentenced to imprisonment for at least one year; b) he/she is included in the list of unwanted persons; or c) other reasons of public order or internal security are involved.



Manolis Zacharakis is a member of Zepos & Yannopoulos employment & labour practice.

He works closely with the firm's clients, advising on various employment matters arising from their operations in Greece, including termination of employment contracts, collective redundancies, working hours, pregnancy protection, employee handbooks, etc. Manolis is often engaged in the employment aspects of business transactions, such as corporate restructurings, mergers and close-downs. He also advises on various cross-border employment issues, including employee involvement procedures related to the establishment of Societas Europaea, international assignments, etc.

Manolis also handles corporate immigration matters for the foreign executives and employees of the firm's clients, supporting them to determine and acquire the appropriate type of residence permit.

Manolis is admitted before the Supreme Court. He was admitted to the Athens Bar in 2003 and joined Zepos & Yannopoulos in 2004.

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Katerina Skiada's practice focuses on employment, immigration and social security law. She regularly advises domestic and international clients on a wide array of employment matters, including drafting of employment contracts, compliance audits, employee benefits, health and safety, etc. She is also actively involved in due diligence reviews and other corporate transactions, including transfers of undertakings. Katerina also handles corporate immigration matters of third-country nationals for their lawful residence and employment in Greece.

Before joining Zepos & Yannopoulos, Katerina was trained at the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) in Brussels and participated in the research honours programme Think Tank 2019 on "Health, Wellbeing and the Future of Healthcare", in cooperation with the Catholic University of Leuven and Stellenbosch University.

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