



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Belgium – The ‘Working in Belgium’ One-Stop-Shop for Foreign Employment

Belgium’s regional governments have approved the Cooperation Agreement of 5 March 2021 implementing the Cooperation Agreement of 2 February 2018. The 2018 Agreement contains provisions for:

- coordinating between the policy on work and residence authorisations and on standards for the employment and residence of foreign workers¹, and
- regulating the development of a common electronic/digital platform within the framework of the Single Permit.

On 31 May 2021, the online platform one-stop-shop known as “Working in Belgium” will become operational.

WHY THIS MATTERS

With Working in Belgium, the Immigration office and National Social Security Office together with the Walloon, Flemish, German, and Brussels Regions have as a goal bringing together all aspects of foreign employment in Belgium in one single point of contact where the user can find all the required information he or she needs and submit applications online.

Through this one-stop-shop, employers or their authorised agents are able to submit work authorisation requests online for a period of more than 90 days.

It is hoped that with the simplified one-stop-shop Working in Belgium, Belgium can attract foreign highly-skilled talent to fill the shortages in the country’s labour market.

Background

Third-country nationals, who do not fall under an exemption category, can work in Belgium as employees with work permits if their stay is less than 90 days (unless there is an exception like the one for cross-border workers). Third-country nationals staying more than 90 days require a Single Permit.

The application for a Single Permit must be submitted with the authorities of the competent region. Currently, it takes approximately one-and-a-half to three months before a Single Permit is approved instead of the maximum of four months. During the COVID-19 crisis, applications are sent in a soft copy version by e-mail to the competent authorities. However, the Single Permit applications are not yet fully digitised and employers cannot therefore follow-up on the status of applications online.

KPMG NOTE

This can have an impact on the competitive position of Belgian employers compared to the neighbouring countries where applications are processed more quickly.

Smoother Application Procedure

With the introduction of Working in Belgium, the government intends to foster a smooth application procedure, which is more efficient and customer-friendly than the current procedures.²

Employers will no longer have to follow different procedures depending on the competent region. Indeed, at present, there are regional differences in the way an application for a Single Permit must be submitted.

Via the Working in Belgium platform, the application will be submitted online and will automatically be sent to the right region. This way, the applicant no longer has to determine himself which region is competent. After review and processing by the regional authorities, the file is automatically forwarded to the Service of Foreigners for further review and processing. This new procedure will enable applicants to view the status of their applications and receive decisions through the platform.

In a first version of the tool that will go live on 31 May 2021, it is already possible to submit and process Single Permit applications. Beginning of next year, it will also be possible to request work permits for less than 90 days and work authorisations for unlimited duration through the online platform.

More details on the functionalities and procedures of the on-stop-shop Working in Belgium will follow in later communications by the authorities.

KPMG NOTE

Any questions or concerns regarding third-country nationals wanting to work or currently working in Belgium should be directed to your qualified professional services contact or a member of the team (see Contact Us section) with the KPMG International member firm in Belgium.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Cooperation agreement of 5 March 2021 implementing the cooperation agreement of 2 February 2018 between the Federal State, the Walloon Region, the Flemish Region, the Brussels Region and the German Region regarding the coordination between the policy on work and residence authorisations and on standards for the employment and residence of foreign workers, *Belgisch Staatsblad* 16 March 2021.

2 See: [Digitaal loket voor aanvraag gecombineerde vergunning | Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering \(agii.be\)](#) and <https://www.vlaanderen.be/departement-werk-sociale-economie/nieuwsberichten/gecombineerde-vergunning-uniek-loket-working-in-belgium-voor-alle-regios>

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Contact us

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* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not offer immigration services or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Belgium.

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