

GMS Flash Alert



Immigration Edition

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Belgium - New Travel Ban on Individuals Coming from Very High-Risk Countries

Belgium recently introduced a new travel ban starting 28 November 2021, for a certain number of countries that are considered “very high-risk countries.” Belgium’s last travel ban ended in August 2021.¹ However due to the evolving threat to public health given the rise in coronavirus cases² and the discovery of the new “omikron” (also “omicron”) variant of the coronavirus, a new travel ban has been implemented in an attempt to stop the spread.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The various COVID-19 containment measures have had a profound impact on both professional and personal travel. Companies worldwide have had to cancel or postpone business trips and assignments. However, in the past months, many companies have slowly started to resume their international travel plans and have prepared for business travel and assignments.

However, it appears the increased travel restrictions triggered by the rise of the new omikron variant will again impact travel and relocations to Belgium.

Employers and their mobile employees may wish to reconsider their plans. To the extent possible, it may be prudent for some individuals to delay any plans to depart Belgium (if their plan is to return to the country) to prevent potential complications and the possibility of being refused re-entry at the border, as the situation is fluid.

More Details

Belgium has identified a list of nine “very high-risk countries” and has introduced measures intended to contain the further spread of the new variant in Belgium – the variant has recently been identified as having entered Belgium.³ Currently, the coronavirus situation in Belgium (and many other countries) is trending in a direction which is concerning.

With the new omikron variant, the Belgian competent authorities decided to take no chances and therefore stopped all entry by individuals coming from the published list of very high-risk countries. This update and the list of countries has been published on the website of the federal government.⁴

Consequences

This travel ban means that in many cases third-country nationals travelling from one of the nine countries will not be able to travel to Belgium until further notice (even if they received their work permit/single permit approval before the instalment of the travel ban). The only exceptions to this travel ban concern:

- diplomatic missions (essential travel certificate required);
- Belgian residents/nationals (travelling back from one of those countries);
- spouses/partners/children of Belgian nationals/residents (essential travel certificate required);
- transits through Belgium to another EU or Schengen country where they are residing;
- professional travel undertaken by transport personnel and seafarers;
- travel for humanitarian reasons (Certificate of Travel for Humanitarian Reasons required);
- individuals whose physical presence is indispensable for national security (essential travel certificate required).

KPMG NOTE

Employers will need to stay abreast of the changes to the list of very high-risk countries since their plans for economic migration or business travel arrangements to/from Belgium could be impacted.

Which Countries?

The following countries are considered as very high-risk countries and individuals originating from these countries are not allowed to enter Belgium as from 28 November 2021, until further notice:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Botswana▪ Eswatini▪ Lesotho | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Malawi▪ Mozambique▪ Namibia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ South Africa▪ Zambia▪ Zimbabwe |
|---|---|--|

Please note that this list will be reviewed regularly and for a real-time update, see "Measures for territories of countries classified as very high risk" at: <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/countries-with-high-risk/>.

KPMG NOTE

Any questions or concerns regarding any 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 For related coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2021-209](#), 2 August 2021.

2 See the following website for latest figures: <https://datastudio.google.com/embed/reporting/c14a5cfc-cab7-4812-848c-0369173148ab/page/ZwmOB>. Please note, by clicking on this link, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site, that KPMG is not affiliated with, nor is KPMG endorsing its content. Use of the external site and its content may be subject to the terms of use and/or privacy policies of its owner or operator.

3 See Euronews.com, "Omicron: Europe's first reported case of new COVID variant has been discovered in Belgium," 27 November 2021, by clicking [here](#). Please note, by clicking on this link, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site, that KPMG is not affiliated with, nor is KPMG endorsing its content. Use of the external site and its content may be subject to the terms of use and/or privacy policies of its owner or operator.

4 For the updated list of high-risk countries:

(In French) <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/fr/pays-a-haut-risque/>.

(In English) <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/countries-with-high-risk/>.

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Belgium:



Saâdia Abdi
Senior Manager
Tel. +32 (0)27083650
sabdi@kpmg.com

Premila Autar
Senior Immigration Coordinator
Tel. +32 (0)27084191
pautar@kpmg.com

* 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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