

PRO HR

IMMIGRATION UPDATE

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SHORTAGE OCCUPATION LIST IDEA DROPPED

The Polish government has abandoned its proposal to introduce a list of occupations experiencing labour shortages.

The proposed list included approximately 300 occupations, such as doctors, nurses, roofers, electrical equipment operators, bus drivers, application developers, and database designers and administrators.

Had it been introduced, the list would have enabled foreign nationals employed in shortage occupations to obtain work permits under an expedited procedure.

Currently, the expedited processing of work permit applications is available only to businesses in the Republic of Poland that are considered to be of significant importance to the national economy. Faster processing is also available when applying for a subsequent work permit for the same foreign national, provided that the working hours and remuneration are not lower than those specified in the previously issued work permit.

In all other cases, the standard processing times continue to apply. As a result, employers may still have to wait up to five or six months for a work permit to be issued for a foreign employee.

DEADLINE FOR BELARUSIAN NATIONALS TO APPLY FOR A POLISH TRAVEL DOCUMENT EXTENDED UNTIL 31 DECEMBER 2026

The Polish government has decided to extend the validity of provisions allowing Belarusian nationals to apply for a Polish travel document. The new regulations will enter into force on 1 July 2026.

Under the applicable regulations, a Polish travel document for a foreign national may be issued to a Belarusian citizen where all of the following conditions are met:

1. The foreign national has lost their travel document, their travel document has been destroyed or expired, or they have never possessed a travel document.
2. The foreign national has been granted one of the following:

- a) a permanent residence permit;
- b) EU long-term resident status;
- c) a temporary residence permit;
- d) subsidiary protection; or
- e) permission to stay for humanitarian reasons.

3. The application for a Polish travel document is submitted by 31 December 2026.

This solution is intended for Belarusian nationals who are unable to obtain a passport in Belarus, for example due to the risk of political persecution. In such cases, the Polish travel document serves as a substitute for a Belarusian passport and enables its holder, among other things, to travel internationally.

ETIAS IS GETTING CLOSER – NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR VISA-FREE TRAVELLERS

According to the latest announcements from EU institutions, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) is expected to become operational by the end of this year. The new system will constitute an important element of the European Union's external border management and will affect the way visa-exempt foreign nationals travel to the Schengen Area.

ETIAS will introduce a mandatory electronic travel authorisation for nationals of third countries who are currently allowed to enter the Schengen Area without obtaining a short-stay visa. The system will apply, among others, to citizens of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

Before travelling to the European Union, travellers will be required to submit an online application through the dedicated ETIAS system. The application will require basic personal information, travel document details and answers to questions concerning, among other things, security, previous travel history and criminal records.

The travel authorisation is expected to cost €20. Once granted, it will remain valid for three years, or until the expiry of the passport to which it is linked, whichever comes first. During that period, travellers will be able to enter the Schengen Area multiple times, provided that they continue to satisfy the applicable entry and stay requirements.

Obtaining an ETIAS authorisation will become a mandatory precondition for travel. Airlines, ferry operators and coach carriers will be required to verify that passengers hold a valid ETIAS authorisation before allowing them to board. In practice, travellers without a valid ETIAS may be denied boarding before departure to a Schengen destination.

It should be noted that obtaining an ETIAS authorisation will not guarantee entry into the European Union. The final decision will continue to rest with border control authorities at the external border crossing point. Travellers may still be asked to provide supporting documents confirming the purpose of their trip, proof of sufficient financial means, accommodation reservations, or a return ticket. Entry will only be permitted once all applicable conditions have been verified.

The introduction of ETIAS forms part of a broader reform of the European Union's external border management. The system will operate alongside the Entry/Exit System (EES) that will record the entry and exit dates of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Schengen Area. Together, these systems aim to strengthen security, improve the efficiency of border controls and enhance monitoring of compliance with short-stay rules.

The new requirements will be particularly important for employers posting workers abroad, individuals who frequently travel to EU Member States for business purposes and companies managing the international mobility of their employees.

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