

Recent Amendments to the Law on Foreigners

Albanian Parliament approved several amendments to existing Law no. 108, dated 23.3.2013 "On Foreigners" as amended, (the 'Amendments') which are already published in the Official Gazette and will be effective by March 25, 2020. The Amendments introduce, inter alia, the below changes and additions:

e-Visa

The main purpose of the Amendments is to establish the necessary mechanisms for ensuring the online visa issuance procedure. So, for the first time, the notion of applying online for electronic visas is introduced in the law. The Amendments aim to implement the electronic visa issuance system for both Type C and Type D visas.

The e-visa system will accelerate and facilitate the procedures for issuing visas for foreigners to enter and stay in the Republic of Albania, providing a complete electronic process from application to e-visa issuance.

The Council of Ministers, the Ministry for Europe and External Affairs, the Ministry for Internal Affairs and the State Intelligence Service are required to enact the secondary legislation for the implementation of the new provisions on electronic visa within June 2020.

Labour Market Needs

The obligation of employers to announce a vacancy before hiring foreigners is cut from 4 (four) weeks to 7 (seven) calendar days, such term starting from the moment of filing the application to obtain the Work Permit for the foreigner they intend to hire.

Also, the Amendments have abolished the employers' restriction to hire foreigners up to a total of 10% of the total number of employees declared in the payroll for the previous 12 (twelve) months if employer has an ongoing activity, and, 10% of the total number of employees at the moment of application, if employer has recently started activity.

Work Permit

The maximum processing time for Work Permit applications by the relevant labour authorities will be shortened from 30 (thirty) days to 10 (ten) days.

The Amendments introduce new categories of foreigners who do not have the obligation to obtain a work permit because they enjoy equal rights in the employment field with Albanian citizens such as:

Citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia and North Macedonia, and

Foreigners hired in different sectors for the remediation of consequences and recovery from natural disasters.

Family members of EU or Schengen country citizens, regardless of their nationality, if they are legally residing in Albania.

Residence Permit

The maximum processing time for Residence Permit applications by the relevant immigration authorities will be shortened from 60 (sixty) to 30 (thirty) days.

For more detailed information, please contact us.