



Global Employer Services Immigration

What Bulgaria's Presidency of the Council means

The Council presidency rotates among EU Member States every six months. Bulgaria takes over the presidency from Estonia on January 1, 2018 and will in turn hand it over to Austria six months later.

Three consecutive presidencies collectively agree on the areas that will be examined at the European level. This ensures that important topics remain in focus over the course of 18 months.

Bulgaria will continue to build on defined focus points and has set specific concrete goals. The following, within the area of Justice and Home Affairs, are of interest for mobility specialists:

1. Internal security and protecting Europe's external borders
2. Interoperability and the exchange of information
3. A holistic approach to legal and illegal migration

Concluding negotiations on SIS and ETIAS?

A safe and secure Europe means that Bulgaria will strengthen internal security and protect Europe's external borders by improving cooperation and using cutting-edge information systems. This translates into reaching an agreement in the Council on amending the Schengen Borders Code and Visa Code (then trilogues will follow), and conclude the negotiations with the European Parliament on reforming the Schengen

Information System (SIS) and introducing Europea Travel Information and Authorisation System (TIAS).

Foreigners who do not require a visa will need to log onto a website and provide basic information. All of this information is then checked across several databases, and when there is a "no hit," the traveler receives an approval. This is the so-called ETIAS ([immigration alert of 7 July 2017](#)).

The Entry-Exit system is an EU-wide database whereby travelers scan their passports and fingerprints when they enter and leave the Schengen area ([immigration alert of 7 July 2017](#)). The Estonia presidency created an agreement and Bulgaria will now oversee the start of the implementation, which should be finalized by the end of next year.

Interoperability is the new buzzword

A key priority is achieving the interoperability of information systems and databases. The optimum use of information will help tackle migration issues, terrorist threats, organized crime, and cyberattacks. A new architecture for the exchange of information will be created. Bulgaria will strive to reach an agreement in the Council on the interoperability Regulation regulation and to have a political agreement with the European Parliament on the extension of the mandate of eu-LISA, the European Agency managing large-scale information systems. Bulgaria will oversee the implementation of the Passenger Name Record Directive.

The Blue Card Directive

Regarding migration management, Bulgaria will focus on the return policy, defining the rules on returning illegal immigrants to their country of origin and on concluding the trilogue stage on the Common European Asylum System. To improve the channels of legal migration, Bulgaria says it will "strive to achieve progress" on the Blue Card Directive. A cautious approach that indicates that an agreement will probably not be reached during the Bulgarian presidency.

With security currently a hot topic and a planned focus point in Bulgaria's presidency, many changes affecting immigration into Europe are likely. Deloitte will continue to monitor changes at the European level affecting employers and employees, and will provide updates.

Contacts

If you have any questions concerning the items in this alert, please contact your usual tax consultant at our Deloitte office in Belgium or:

- Matthias Lommers, mlommers@deloitte.com, + 32 2 600 65 44
- Alexandre Pirotte, apirotte@deloitte.com, +32 2 80 23 10

For general inquiries, please contact:
bedeloittetax@deloitte.com, + 32 2 600 60 00

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