



## **Global Employer Services** Immigration

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### **Belgian Immigration updates**

Increased contributions for visa and residence applications and communal fees for foreigner ID card delivery

Since approximately 2 years, a payment of EUR 60, EUR 160 or EUR 215 is needed to obtain a Belgian visa D or to submit a request for permission to stay in Belgium (if no visa is obtained before arrival in Belgium).

As of 1 March 2017 the EUR 160 fee will be increased to EUR 200 and the EUR 215 fee will be increased to EUR 350.

In addition, new legislation allows communal authorities to autonomously decide on fees for the application, renewal or replacement of Belgian ID cards for foreigners.

#### **Newcomer's Declaration and foreigner Integration efforts**

Another new legislation with respect to foreigner integration will also enter into force. The main requirements of this legislation entail the obligation for foreigners to sign a newcomer's declaration to commit to integration and eventually prove efforts made towards integration to retain the right to reside in Belgium.

#### **Newcomer's Declaration**

Most foreigners aiming to reside in Belgium for more than 3 months and initiate their request for a Belgian residence permission will need to sign a declaration stating that they will make reasonable efforts to integrate Belgian society.

At the moment, the authorities are still fine-tuning the template for this new declaration.

The foreigner will also need to provide proof that he or she is making sufficient integration efforts. These efforts are verified during the validity period of the Belgian Residence card's initial validity, i.e. during the first year or when requesting Belgian ID card renewal.

The authorities will have the power to end the right to reside in Belgium if they deem efforts made as being insufficient. The authorities will also be able to request additional documents or proof of integration.

Authorities will take into account a number of criteria when checking if the foreigner is undertaking the required integration actions, such as the completion of an integration course or performing professional activities as an employee or self-employed person.

Foreigners already legally residing in Belgium before the law entered into force are excluded from this obligation. Other exemptions also exist for several specific categories of individuals.

## Conclusion

The new measures aim to increase integration efforts of foreigners who plan to reside in Belgium for a prolonged term, and also aim to cover the additional cost related to the authorities' involvement in these integration efforts.

Whereas foreigners with a professional activity in Belgium will be able to easily prove their integration efforts, foreign family members may need to provide proof of specific actions, such as language courses or integration courses organised by the local authorities.

Once more clarity is available on the practical implementation of this new legislation, more detailed guidance will be provided.

Deloitte Belgium's immigration and social security team is readily available to provide more detailed information

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## 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:

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