



Immigration Law News in Lithuania: Overview

21 September 2016

Please be informed that on 14 September 2016 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted amendments to the Law on Legal Status of Foreigners (the "Law").

The Law introduces a new procedure for the issue of residence permits for start ups, facilitates employment of highly qualified specialists, etc.

Below you will find a brief overview of immigration legal regulation effective from 1 January 2017. This overview has been prepared for information purposes only and does not contain a binding advice.

Start-ups dedicated to new technology development

A foreigner arriving and planning to conduct HITEC activities relevant for the economic and social development of Lithuania, may apply for a temporary residence permit provided that an authorized institution confirms all the following facts:

- (i) The planned activities contain the element of innovation;
- (ii) The applicant possesses all the necessary qualifications, financing and business plan; and
- (iii) The applicant's presence in Lithuania is necessary to conduct the activities of the Lithuanian start-up.

Residence permit shall be issued for 1 year and may be renewed for additional 1 year. Applicant's family members are eligible for temporary residence permits as well.

Highly qualified specialists

A foreigner arriving to work as a highly qualified specialist in Lithuania may obtain a residence permit ("Blue Card") if the following requirements are met:

- (i) An employer hires a foreigner for at least 1 year period and pays a monthly salary not lower than 1,5 Lithuanian average gross salaries (i.e. not lower than EUR 1,158);
- (ii) An applicant submits a document certifying his/her higher professional qualification, i.e. diploma in higher education or document on recognition of professional experience of at least 5 years, equivalent to higher qualification¹;
- (iii) Lithuanian Work Exchange Office issues a decision confirming that foreigner's work meets the requirements of the Lithuanian labour market. Such decision is not required when:
 - Foreigner's profession is included into the list of professions under demand in the Lithuanian labour market; or
 - A monthly salary of the employee is not lower than 3 average gross salaries (i.e. not lower than EUR 2,316); or
 - Highly skilled employee, who has been employed in Lithuania for 2 years, applies for the renewal of the residence permit.

Residence permit shall be issued for 3 years with the extension possibility. Foreigner's family members are eligible for temporary residence permits as well.

Other

Other amendments include the adjusted requirements for foreigners acting as CEOs and/or shareholders in Lithuanian companies, employment regulation for studying foreigners, etc.

Amendments to the Law come into effect from 1 January 2017. Applications to issue/renew residence permits submitted before 1 January 2017 will be processed under the procedure set by the current law.

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¹ Equivalence of foreigner's experience to higher professional qualification shall be recognized under a separate procedure to be established by the Government of Lithuania. Procedure for experience recognition shall be applicable only to non-regulated professions.