

# Legal 500

## Country Comparative Guides 2024

**Greece**

**Corporate Immigration**

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This country-specific Q&A provides an overview of corporate immigration laws and regulations applicable in Greece.

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# Greece: Corporate Immigration

## 1. What are the relevant government entities relating to immigration in your jurisdiction?

In Greece, several government entities are involved in the immigration process, each handling different aspects of immigration and related matters. The primary entities include:

**(a) Ministry of Migration and Asylum:** This is the central authority responsible for immigration policy, asylum procedures, and the overall coordination of immigration services. It oversees the implementation of immigration laws and policies.

**(b) Ministry of Citizen Protection:** This ministry is responsible for border security, immigration enforcement, and the regulation of entry and exit of non-EU nationals. It works in coordination with other ministries to ensure compliance with immigration laws.

**(c) Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** This ministry handles visa applications and related consular services through Greek embassies and consulates abroad. It is the first point of contact for foreigners seeking to enter Greece.

**(d) Regional and Local Authorities:** Local municipalities and regional authorities are involved in issuing residence permits and providing certain public services to immigrants.

**(e) Hellenic Police:** Specifically, the immigration service within the Hellenic Police is responsible for the enforcement of immigration laws, including the apprehension and deportation of illegal immigrants.

These entities work together to manage immigration in Greece, ensuring that processes are in line with national and EU regulations.

## 2. What are the options available for sponsor-based employment in your jurisdiction and timelines involved in securing a work permit?

Greece provides various pathways for sponsor-based employment, tailored to different categories of skilled workers. The primary options available are:

**1. Highly Qualified Employees:** According to EU Directive 2021/1883, highly skilled professionals from outside the

EU, and their family members, can work in any EU member state. This is widely known as the "EU Blue Card."

**2. Intra-Corporate Transfer Permits (ICT):** The Intra-Corporate Transfer Employment Permit is designed to facilitate the transfer of senior management, key personnel, or trainees of multinational companies. This allows third-country nationals to work in Greece for up to three years for managers and specialists, and one year for trainees.

**3. Employment for Special Purposes:** The legal framework governing the issuance of national visas encompasses a list of special categories, ranging from shareholders and directors of both domestic and foreign subsidiary companies to foreign press correspondents and technical staff or employees in marine exploration, etc.

**4. Seasonal Workers:** Seasonal work is a flexible type of employment contract provided only for a particular period of time (up to 9 months per year). Seasonal workers offer crucial support in specific sectors of the Greek economy, such as tourism and agriculture.

**5. Employment upon Invitation:** Third-country citizens are eligible to apply for permits for dependent work in Greece, provided they have an employment contract with a salary that is at least equal to the minimum wage for unskilled workers.

**6. Researcher Permit:** This permit is available for researchers intending to work on a project at an accredited Greek research institution. The applicant must have a valid hosting agreement with the institution.

### General Requirements for All Permits

- **Job Offer:** Valid job offer from a Greek employer.
- **Qualifications:** Relevant qualifications and experience for the job.
- **Salary:** Must meet the Greek standards for the specific type of work permit.
- **Health Insurance:** Proof of health insurance coverage in Greece.
- **Documentation:** Commonly required documents include a valid passport, proof of qualifications, employment contract, proof of

health insurance, and accommodation in Greece.

### 3. What are the primary options available for unsponsored work and investment in your jurisdiction?

In Greece, there are several options available for unsponsored work and investment, catering to various types of professionals and entrepreneurs. Here are the primary options:

**1. Golden Visa Program:** This program is designed for non-EU/EEA citizens who wish to invest in Greece. By purchasing real estate property worth at least €800,000<sup>1</sup>, investors can obtain a residence permit for themselves and their family members. This permit is renewable every five years, provided the property remains in the investor's ownership.

**2. Residence Permit for Financially Independent Persons:** This permit is available for non-EU/EEA nationals who have sufficient financial means to support themselves without engaging in any work or business activities in Greece. Applicants must demonstrate a stable income of at least €3,000 per month, plus an additional amount for each family member. This income can come from pensions, bank deposits, or other lawful sources outside Greece.

**3. Entrepreneurial Activity:** Non-EU/EEA citizens can apply for a residence permit to engage in entrepreneurial activities in Greece. The applicant must provide a viable business plan that contributes to the national economy, creating jobs or enhancing economic growth. The initial permit is granted for two years and can be renewed.

**4. Start-up Visa (Elevate Greece):** Greece offers a Start-up Visa for third-country nationals who wish to establish or join an innovative start-up. Applicants need to submit their business idea to Elevate Greece, a government platform that supports innovative entrepreneurship. If the business idea is approved, the applicants can obtain a residence permit to develop their start-up in Greece.

**5. Residence Permit for Investors in Securities or Bank Deposits:** This option is available for those who invest in Greek government bonds, shares of real estate investment companies, or bank deposits in Greece. The minimum investment amount varies depending on the type of investment, and the residence permit is granted for five years, with the possibility of renewal.

Each of these options has specific requirements and

procedures, but they all aim to attract foreign investment and skilled professionals to Greece, thereby contributing to the country's economic development.

#### Footnote(s):

<sup>1</sup> In specific areas provided by law, the investment threshold may be lower (i.e. €250,000)

### 4. What are the requirements for becoming a sponsor of employment-based migrants and what are the role and reporting duties of sponsors?

#### Eligibility Criteria:

- 1. Registration:** The sponsoring entity must be a legally established business in Greece, registered with the appropriate Greek tax and business authorities.
- 2. Employment Contract:** The sponsor must offer a contract that adheres to Greek labor standards, including salary, working conditions, and benefits. The contract should clearly outline the job role, responsibilities, and terms of employment.
- 3. Financial Stability:** The company must demonstrate financial stability (good standing) and the ability to support the migrant employee's salary and associated costs.
- 4. Compliance with Labor Laws:** The sponsor must comply with Greek labor laws, including health and safety regulations, working hours, and social security contributions.
- 5. No Legal Infractions:** The company should not have any convictions for violating immigration or labor laws in the past year and must maintain a clean record with the Greek authorities.

**Fast Track Scheme Certification (if applicable):** To obtain certification under a fast track scheme, the company must meet additional criteria:

- 1. Minimum Employee Requirement:** The company must have at least 10 full-time employees at the time of certification.
- 2. Online Guidance Meeting:** Participation in an online guidance meeting with the competent Greek authorities, such as the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, may be required.
- 3. Clean Legal Record:** The company must not have been involved in any significant legal disputes or infractions, particularly related to immigration and labor laws, within the last year.
- 4. Labor Dispute History:** The company should not have been involved in any serious labor disputes recently.

5. **Work Environment Compliance:** The company must have a good standing with the Greek labor inspection authorities and must not have any significant issues or violations concerning the working environment.

#### Role of Sponsors:

- **Employment Facilitation:** Sponsors are responsible for facilitating the employment of the migrant, ensuring that the job role and responsibilities are clearly defined and that the migrant has the necessary qualifications and experience for the position.
- **Support and Integration:** Sponsors should provide necessary support to help the migrant integrate into the workplace and the local community, including orientation programs and assistance with settling in Greece.

#### Reporting Duties:

1. **Notification of Changes:** Sponsors must promptly notify the Greek authorities of any significant changes in the migrant's employment status, such as termination, changes in job role, or salary adjustments.
2. **Compliance Documentation:** Sponsors are required to maintain accurate records of the migrant's employment and provide necessary documentation to the authorities as required. This includes copies of contracts, proof of salary payments, and compliance with labor standards.
3. **Annual Reporting:** Some schemes may require sponsors to submit annual reports detailing the employment of the migrant, compliance with the terms of sponsorship, and any issues encountered.
4. **Audit Cooperation:** Sponsors must cooperate with any audits or inspections conducted by the Greek authorities to ensure compliance with immigration and labor laws.

By adhering to these requirements and responsibilities, sponsors in Greece can ensure the successful employment and integration of migrants, contributing to the overall economic and social fabric of the country.

### 5. Are applications filed electronically, or paper base? Is a physical visa/work permit document issued or is an electronic approval issued?

In Greece, applications for work permits and visas can be filed electronically through the online portal of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum. Supporting documents are also uploaded online during this process. After the initial application, the applicant (employee) is required to

have their biometric data recorded at a designated service center within Greece or at a Greek diplomatic mission abroad if the applicant is residing outside of Greece.

Upon successful submission and approval of the application, an electronic approval is issued. The applicant will then receive a physical work and residence permit card, which must be collected from the relevant Greek authorities. The physical permit card serves as the official documentation for the individual's right to work and reside in Greece. The processing time for the issuance of the physical permit card may vary but is generally completed within a few weeks after approval.

### 6. Is an in-person attendance/interview required as part of the visa/work permit application process? Is an individual required to enrol their biometrics (digital photo, fingerprint scan) as part of the visa/work permit process?

Applicants for a visa or work permit in Greece are generally required to attend an in-person appointment at a Greek diplomatic mission or an authorized application center. During this appointment, the individual must enroll their biometrics, which includes providing a digital photograph and fingerprint scan.

### 7. What persons qualify as dependants? Can dependants work based on their dependant visa status? Are there any restrictions?

In Greece, persons qualifying as dependants are:

- Spouse or civil partner,
- Unmarried children under 21 years,
- Parents of the main visa holder.

Dependants must meet specific criteria to qualify under the dependant status. Spouses or civil partners must be in a marriage or civil partnership recognized in Greece. Children must be under 21 years of age and unmarried. Parents can also be included as dependants if they are financially dependent on the main visa holder.

Dependants in Greece are allowed to work based on their dependant visa status. However, there are certain restrictions. They are not permitted to work in roles that require specific professional qualifications or registrations unless they obtain the necessary permits or licenses. Additionally, dependants are not allowed to work in positions that could lead to a conflict of interest or are prohibited by Greek law. It is advisable for

dependants to verify the specific requirements and restrictions related to their employment in Greece to ensure compliance with local regulations.

## 8. What is the general time frame and processes for obtaining permanent residence and citizenship for sponsored and unsponsored business-related immigration?

For individuals sponsored by a company or employer for business-related purposes, the process to obtain permanent residence typically follows these steps:

- 1. Temporary Residence Permit:** Initially, the applicant must secure a temporary residence permit, which is usually valid for one to two years. This permit is renewable as long as the employment relationship continues and the initial conditions of the permit are met.
- 2. Permanent Residence Permit:** After five continuous years of legal residence in Greece on a temporary residence permit, the applicant can apply for a permanent residence permit. The applicant must meet specific criteria, including:
  - Proof of stable and sufficient income to support themselves and their family.
  - Comprehensive health insurance.
  - Proof of continuous residence in Greece.
- 3. Application Process:** The application for a permanent residence permit is submitted to the Decentralized Administration of the region where the applicant resides. The processing time can vary but typically takes several months.

### Unsponsored Business-Related Immigration:

For individuals who are not sponsored by an employer, such as investors or entrepreneurs, the process includes:

- 1. Temporary Residence Permit:** Initially, they must obtain a temporary residence permit based on their business activities, such as investment in Greek enterprises or starting a new business. This permit is usually valid for one to two years and is renewable.
- 2. Permanent Residence Permit:** After five continuous years of legal residence in Greece under the temporary residence permit, they can apply for a permanent residence permit. The same criteria for income, health insurance, and proof of continuous residence apply as for sponsored individuals.

### Citizenship

### Eligibility for Citizenship:

Once an individual holds a permanent residence permit, they may be eligible to apply for Greek citizenship. The process and requirements are as follows:

- 1. Continuous Residence:** The applicant must have resided legally and continuously in Greece for a total of seven years.
- 2. Application Submission:** The application for citizenship is submitted to the local municipal authority or the Ministry of Interior. The application must include:
  - Proof of continuous residence.
  - Proof of stable and sufficient income.
  - Evidence of integration into Greek society (e.g., language proficiency, participation in social and economic life).
- 3. Naturalization Process:** The naturalization process includes an interview and an examination of the applicant's knowledge of Greek history, culture, and political system.
- 4. Processing Time:** The processing time for citizenship applications can vary but generally takes around two to three years from the date of application.
- 5. Special Provisions:** There are certain exemptions and special provisions for individuals of Greek origin, spouses of Greek citizens, and those who have made significant investments in Greece, potentially shortening the required period of continuous residence.

In summary, for both sponsored and unsponsored business-related immigrants, obtaining permanent residence in Greece typically requires five years of continuous residence under a temporary residence permit, while obtaining citizenship requires an additional seven years of residence, integration into Greek society, and successful completion of the naturalization process.

## 9. What productive type activities can a business visitor undertake and for how long?

In Greece, business visitors are allowed to undertake a range of productive activities without requiring a work permit, provided these activities do not result in a direct output for a Greek company. Specifically, business visitors can engage in activities such as attending business meetings, participating in negotiations, conducting market research, attending seminars or conferences, and engaging in training sessions.

However, any activities that contribute directly to the



production or delivery of goods or services for a Greek company, or involve the creation or modification of products, require a work permit.

The duration of stay for business visitors in Greece is limited to 90 days within any 180-day period. This is in line with the Schengen visa regulations. It is important to note that while the maximum stay is 90 days, the nature of business activities often means that visits are typically shorter to comply with the non-productive output stipulation.

Therefore, while business visitors can actively participate in a variety of professional engagements, they must ensure their activities do not infringe upon the requirement for a work permit by avoiding any tasks that produce an outcome for a Greek company

## 10. Can remote work be carried out from your country?

Yes, remote work can be carried out from Greece without immigration implications during a legal stay in the country or on a procedural stay if it relates to your continued employment abroad. No productive work can be carried out for a Greek entity under such circumstances. However, tax issues might arise, and it is recommended to seek legal guidance on tax implications. Additionally, if you work for a company with a Greek branch, it may raise questions about whether you are working for the company abroad or for the Greek branch.

## 11. Are there any productive work / revenue generating activities that can be carried out as a visitor and without the need for a work permit? If so, what activities and for how long?

In Greece, certain activities can be carried out by visitors without the need for a work permit, provided they meet specific criteria. Here are the productive work/revenue-generating activities that can be conducted without a work permit:

1. **Artists and Performers:** Artists, musicians, performers, and associated staff can be exempted from the requirement of a work permit if they are participating in significant artistic events. The event must have a short-term character, typically lasting less than 30 days. This exemption includes necessary staff such as managers, make-up artists, dressers, sound and light technicians, and tour bus drivers.
2. **Guest Lecturers and Researchers:** Guest lecturers and researchers do not require a work permit if they are invited to teach or conduct research for a period not exceeding 30 days at an educational or research institution in Greece.
3. **Business Meetings and Conferences:** Business visitors attending meetings, conferences, or seminars do not need a work permit for stays up to 90 days, provided they do not engage in direct revenue-generating activities such as selling products or services.
4. **Professional Athletes and Coaches:** Professional athletes and their coaches may participate in sports events, training sessions, or short-term engagements without a work permit, provided their stay does not exceed 90 days.
5. **Technicians and Specialists:** Technicians, consultants, or instructors employed by a foreign company can enter Greece to install, maintain, or repair machinery, software, or other technical equipment without a work permit for a period of up to 90 days. This exemption applies to high-tech equipment and systems.

It is essential to ensure that these activities are indeed short-term and do not involve the establishment of a permanent presence or continuous employment in Greece, as this would require the appropriate work permits and visas.

## 12. Is there a remote work or nomad visa category in your jurisdiction? If not, how likely is it that this will be implemented in future?

In Greece, yes, there is a remote work or digital nomad visa category. The Greek government introduced the digital nomad visa in 2021, allowing non-EU nationals who are employed or self-employed and work remotely using digital technology to live in Greece. This initiative aims to attract digital professionals to the country, offering a residency permit for up to 12 months, with the possibility of renewal.

Given the current global trends and the positive reception of the digital nomad visa, it is likely that Greece will continue to support and possibly expand this category in the future to attract more remote workers and digital professionals to the country.

### 13. How easy is it to switch visa categories/jobs/employer from within country? And/or if made redundant, can the individual regularise their stay in another capacity and what is the timeframe allowable?

In Greece, switching visa categories, jobs, or employers from within the country is subject to specific regulations and procedures.

#### 1. Switching Jobs/Employers:

- **General Conditions:** If an individual is working in Greece under a specific work visa and wishes to change employers, they must submit a new application for a residence and work permit that includes details of the new employment. This application must be submitted to the competent authorities before the individual can start working for the new employer.
- **Specific Programs:** For certain specialized visa categories, such as the EU Blue Card or other employment-based visas, the individual may be allowed to start their new job upon submission of the application, without needing to wait for the final decision, provided they meet all necessary conditions and qualifications.

#### 2. Switching Visa Categories:

- **From Work to Other Categories:** If an individual wishes to switch from a work visa to another type of visa, such as a student visa, family reunification visa, or long-term resident status, they must apply for the new visa category while their current visa is still valid. The application must meet all the criteria and requirements of the new visa category.
- **In-Country Applications:** Generally, it is possible to apply for a different visa category from within Greece, but the individual must ensure that their current residence permit remains valid during the application process.

#### 3. Redundancy and Regularizing Stay:

- **Made Redundant:** If an individual is made redundant, they may apply to change their residence status to another capacity, such as a job seeker or other permissible categories.
- **Timeframe:** The timeframe for applying to regularize their stay depends on the specific circumstances and the type of new permit

being sought. Generally, the individual should act promptly to submit their application before their current permit expires to avoid any legal issues.

In all cases, it is advisable for individuals to consult with legal experts or immigration authorities to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements and to understand the specific timelines and conditions applicable to their situation.

### 14. What common issues or concerns may arise for employers under business immigration in your jurisdiction?

The immigration process in Greece, while systematic, presents several considerations for employers. Here are some key issues and concerns:

1. **Work and Residence Permits:** Employers must ensure that foreign employees obtain the necessary work and residence permits before commencing work in Greece. The process involves multiple stages, including application submission, document verification, and issuance of permits, which can be time-consuming. Failure to comply can result in penalties and legal complications.
2. **Notification Requirements:** Employers are required to notify the relevant Greek authorities when hiring foreign workers. This includes submitting detailed employment contracts and proof of qualifications. Non-compliance with notification requirements can lead to fines and potential legal action.
3. **Social Security and Tax Compliance:** Employers must register foreign employees with the Greek social security system and ensure appropriate tax withholding and contributions. Greece has specific regulations regarding social security for foreign workers, and non-compliance can result in substantial fines.
4. **Employment Contracts:** Contracts must be compliant with Greek labor laws, specifying terms of employment, including duration, salary, and job responsibilities. Any discrepancies or non-compliance with local labor regulations can lead to legal disputes.
5. **Business Visitor Activities:** The activities allowed during a business visit are restricted. Business visitors are typically permitted to attend meetings, conferences, and training sessions but cannot engage in productive work. Employers must ensure that the activities of business visitors do not violate these restrictions to avoid fines, deportation, or entry bans.
6. **Housing and Relocation:** Employers often need to assist with housing and relocation services for foreign

employees. Finding suitable accommodation and navigating local real estate regulations can be challenging. Employers should also be aware of cultural differences and provide support to ease the transition for foreign employees.

7. **Health and Safety Regulations:** Ensuring compliance with Greek health and safety regulations in the workplace is essential. Employers must provide adequate training and resources to maintain a safe working environment for foreign employees.
8. **Legal Representation and Support:** Engaging legal representation familiar with Greek immigration and labor laws is advisable. This helps in navigating the complex regulatory environment and ensures compliance with all legal requirements.

Failure to address these concerns adequately can lead to significant legal and financial repercussions for employers, including fines, legal disputes, and reputational damage. It is crucial for employers to stay informed about the latest regulatory changes and seek professional advice when necessary.

### 15. Is there a fast track process / certification that business can obtain to expedite visa / permit processing?

Yes, there is a fast-track process available in Greece. Businesses can obtain expedited visa and permit processing through the Fast Track Work Permit procedure. This allows certain categories of employees to have their applications processed more quickly, provided that specific criteria are met. For further information, please refer to sections 2 and 4 of the guide.

### 16. What are the recent trends, both political and social that have impacted your jurisdiction with regard to immigration policy and law?

In recent years, Greece has experienced several significant trends and developments in its immigration policy and law, driven by both political and social factors.

1. **Increased Demand for Foreign Labour:** Post-COVID-19, Greece has seen a marked increase in the need for foreign labour, driven by economic recovery and growth in various sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and construction. This trend is expected to continue as Greece seeks to address labour shortages and stimulate economic development.
2. **Political and Legislative Changes:** To address these needs, Greece has implemented several legislative changes aimed at simplifying and enhancing

immigration processes. Notably, in 2023, Greece revised its immigration framework to facilitate easier and quicker entry for skilled workers and investors. This includes the introduction of a new digital nomad visa to attract remote workers from around the world, contributing to the diversification of the economy.

3. **Labour Market Integration:** The Greek government has introduced initiatives to integrate foreign workers into the labour market more effectively. This includes programs aimed at upskilling and reskilling migrants to better match labour market needs, as well as efforts to streamline the recognition of foreign qualifications and skills.
4. **Retention of International Graduates:** Recognizing the value of international students, Greece has also made policy adjustments to retain graduates who have completed their studies in the country. Graduates are now eligible to seek employment and reside in Greece for up to two years following the completion of their education, with the possibility of further extensions based on employment contracts.
5. **Social Integration and Support:** In response to the influx of migrants and refugees in recent years, Greece has enhanced its social integration programs. These programs focus on language acquisition, cultural orientation, and access to public services, aiming to foster smoother integration into Greek society.
6. **Enhanced Border Management and Security:** While facilitating legal migration, Greece has also strengthened its border management and security measures. This includes the deployment of advanced surveillance technologies and increased cooperation with European and regional partners to manage migration flows more effectively and prevent illegal immigration.
7. **Economic Incentives for Investors:** To attract foreign investment, Greece has expanded its Golden Visa program, which grants residency to non-EU nationals who invest in real estate or other strategic sectors. The minimum investment threshold has been adjusted to attract a broader range of investors, thereby stimulating economic growth.

These recent trends reflect Greece's proactive approach to managing immigration in a way that supports economic growth, addresses labour shortages, and enhances social cohesion.

### 17. Are there any new and / or anticipated changes impacting immigration law and / or policy in your jurisdiction?

In Greece, there are ongoing discussions and



considerations regarding changes to immigration law and policy. While there has not been a comprehensive new legislative package announced, several key developments are noteworthy:

1. **Digital Nomad Visa:** Following the global trend, Greece has introduced the Digital Nomad Visa, allowing non-EU citizens to live and work remotely from Greece. This initiative aims to attract digital entrepreneurs and professionals who can work independently of their location. The program has been well-received and there may be further refinements to streamline the application process.
2. **Golden Visa Program Adjustments:** The Greek government is continuously evaluating potential adjustments to the Golden Visa program, which grants residency permits to non-EU investors who invest in Greek real estate or other sectors. Recently, with the exception of specific areas, the minimum threshold for obtaining a residence permit through real estate investment has been increased to €800,000.
3. **Enhanced Border Management and Security Measures:** In response to the ongoing migration challenges in the region, Greece is expected to implement more robust border management and security measures. These include improved surveillance technologies and better coordination with EU agencies to manage and monitor migration flows more effectively.
4. **Integration Policies:** There is an anticipated focus on integration policies for immigrants, including language training and employment support, to facilitate smoother assimilation into Greek society. These policies are designed to support both new immigrants and long-term residents.
5. **Labor Market Access for Third-Country Nationals:** Recent discussions have suggested potential easing of restrictions for third-country nationals seeking employment in Greece, particularly in sectors facing labor shortages. This may involve streamlined processes for obtaining work permits and recognition of professional qualifications.

While these changes are still under discussion and development, they reflect Greece's proactive approach to adapting its immigration policies to current global trends and domestic needs. Stakeholders should stay informed about official announcements and legislative updates to navigate the evolving immigration landscape effectively.

## 18. How do you see technology developing and evolving to support immigration process in the

### future?

In Greece, the integration of advanced technologies is anticipated to significantly streamline and enhance the immigration process. The Greek government is increasingly focusing on digital transformation initiatives to improve efficiency and accessibility for applicants. One major development is the ongoing digitization of immigration services, where more applications and procedures are being made available online. This transition to digital platforms aims to reduce the bureaucratic burden, minimize errors, and expedite processing times.

Moreover, the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technologies is expected to play a crucial role in automating routine tasks, such as document verification and data analysis. These technologies can provide quicker and more accurate assessments of applications, thereby reducing the workload on immigration officers and allowing them to focus on more complex cases.

Blockchain technology is another area with potential impact, offering secure and transparent ways to handle sensitive information and ensuring the integrity of immigration records. This can also facilitate smoother inter-agency and international cooperation by providing a tamper-proof record of immigration-related data.

Additionally, the use of biometric systems, including facial recognition and fingerprint scanning, is likely to become more widespread, enhancing the accuracy and security of identity verification processes. This will not only improve the applicant experience by speeding up identity checks but also bolster national security by preventing fraud and identity theft.

In summary, the future of the immigration process in Greece is set to be significantly improved through the adoption of digital solutions, AI, blockchain, and biometric technologies. These advancements will lead to more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly immigration services, benefiting both applicants and administrative bodies.

## 19. What are the Right to Work requirements in your jurisdiction?

In Greece, employers are legally obligated to verify that their employees have the right to work in the country. This includes ensuring that the employee possesses the necessary work permit and residence permit if they are a non-EU/EEA national. For EU/EEA nationals, no work

permit is required, but they must have a valid registration certificate.

If an employer hires an individual without the proper authorization, both the employer and the employee face significant penalties. The fines for employers can range from EUR 1,500 to EUR 10,500 per unauthorized employee, depending on the severity and circumstances of the violation. In addition to financial penalties, there may also be criminal charges against the employer, which can lead to imprisonment.

For employees working without the appropriate authorization, the consequences include potential fines, expulsion from Greece, and a ban on re-entry. The duration of the re-entry ban can vary depending on the specific circumstances of the case.

Employers must keep accurate records of their employees' right to work documents and should conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with these regulations. Failure to comply not only exposes the company to financial and legal risks but also damages its reputation.

Overall, it is crucial for employers in Greece to adhere strictly to the right to work requirements to avoid severe penalties and ensure a lawful and compliant workforce.

## 20. What are the types of civil and criminal penalties employers may face for non-compliance with immigration rules i.e. employing an individual who does not have the Right to Work?

In Greece, employers who fail to comply with immigration rules and employ individuals who do not have the right to work may face both civil and criminal penalties. The consequences for non-compliance include:

1. **Civil Penalties:** Employers can be subject to significant fines, which can range from EUR 500 to EUR 10,000 per illegal employee, depending on the severity and recurrence of the violation. These fines are imposed to discourage the employment of unauthorized workers and ensure compliance with immigration laws.
2. **Criminal Penalties:** In addition to fines, employers may also face criminal charges. This can result in imprisonment for up to two years if found guilty of intentionally employing individuals without the right to work. The severity of the sentence depends on the

circumstances of the violation and whether it is a repeated offense.

3. **Administrative Actions:** The authorities may also impose additional administrative measures, such as the suspension or revocation of business licenses, which can significantly impact the employer's operations.
4. **Employee Consequences:** Employees found working without the proper authorization may face deportation and a ban on re-entry to Greece and the Schengen area for up to five years. This measure aims to prevent future violations and uphold the integrity of the immigration system.

Employers in Greece must ensure strict adherence to immigration regulations to avoid these severe penalties and maintain compliance with the law.

## 21. Are there labour market testing requirements in your jurisdiction and if so, what do they involve?

In Greece, labour market testing requirements are part of the process for hiring foreign employees. The main objective of these requirements is to ensure that the employment of a foreign worker does not adversely affect the local labour market.

Yes, there are labour market testing requirements in Greece. The process involves several steps:

1. **Job Posting and Advertisement:** The employer must first advertise the job vacancy locally to ensure that there are no suitable candidates available within the Greek labour market. This typically involves posting the job vacancy on national employment platforms and other relevant job advertisement channels for a minimum period, usually around two weeks.
2. **Documentation:** The employer must provide documentation to prove that the position was advertised adequately and that no suitable local candidates were found. This documentation includes details of the job advertisement, the number of applicants, reasons for the rejection of any local candidates, and any other relevant recruitment efforts.
3. **Approval from Authorities:** The employer must submit the documentation along with the application to hire a foreign worker to the relevant authorities. The competent authorities will review the application and the provided

documentation to assess whether the employer has made genuine efforts to recruit a local worker.

4. **Assessment:** If the authorities are satisfied with the employer's efforts and the documentation, they will grant permission to hire the foreign worker. This permission is necessary before the foreign employee can obtain a work permit and begin employment in Greece.

It is recommended that employers thoroughly document their recruitment efforts and ensure that they comply with all local labour market testing requirements to avoid delays in the hiring process. This includes maintaining records of all job advertisements, applicant responses, and reasons for not selecting local candidates.

## 22. Are there quota requirements, restrictions or a cap on the numbers of foreign nationals hired per company in your jurisdiction?

In Greece, there are specific quota requirements, restrictions, and caps on the number of foreign nationals that can be hired per company. The key regulations are as follows:

1. **General Quota and Restrictions:** The Greek government does not impose a strict quota on the total number of foreign nationals that can be hired by companies across the board. However, certain sectors and job categories might have specific limitations or requirements that need to be adhered to, based on labor market needs and national interest.
2. **Special Schemes and Job Categories:** For certain job categories and specialized schemes, there may be specific requirements or restrictions. For instance, positions that require highly specialized skills or are listed under critical shortage occupations might have different regulations compared to general employment positions.
3. **Residence and Work Permits:** The issuance of residence and work permits to foreign nationals is subject to annual planning by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The permits are issued based on the labor market needs as assessed by relevant authorities and are subject to change each year. Employers need to ensure compliance with the annual quotas set for various job categories and sectors.
4. **Intra-Company Transfers and EU Blue Card:**

There are also specific schemes like the EU Blue Card for highly skilled workers and the intra-company transfer (ICT) permit, which facilitate the mobility of skilled workers. These schemes have their own set of requirements and caps that must be adhered to.

5. **Sector-Specific Restrictions:** Certain sectors, such as agriculture, tourism, and construction, may have additional requirements or caps based on seasonal needs and labor agreements. These sectors might have more flexible or stringent regulations depending on current economic conditions and labor market demands.

Employers should closely monitor the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum and other relevant authorities to ensure compliance with all applicable quotas, restrictions, and requirements when hiring foreign nationals. It is advisable to seek legal counsel to navigate the complexities of these regulations effectively.

## 23. Are there any exit procedures in your jurisdiction, if an individual is departing permanently?

In Greece, when an individual is departing permanently, they are required to complete certain exit procedures to ensure proper deregistration and compliance with local regulations. The key steps include:

1. **Deregistration from the Local Municipality:** The departing individual must deregister from the local municipal registry (Δημοτολόγιο) where they were registered as a resident. This involves notifying the local municipal office (Δημαρχείο) of their departure.
2. **Tax Clearance:** It is essential to obtain a tax clearance certificate (Φορολογική Ενημερότητα) from the tax authorities. This certificate confirms that the individual has no outstanding tax liabilities in Greece. The individual should file their final tax return and settle any pending taxes before departure.
3. **Social Security Deregistration:** If the individual has been employed in Greece, they need to deregister from the social security system (ΕΦΚΑ). This involves informing their social security office of their departure to ensure that no further social security contributions are charged.
4. **Informing Relevant Authorities:** Depending on the individual's circumstances, they may need

to inform other relevant authorities or institutions, such as their employer, bank, healthcare provider, and any other relevant service providers, about their departure to ensure that all accounts are properly closed and there are no remaining obligations.

Failure to complete these exit procedures can result in legal and financial complications, including fines or issues with re-entry into Greece in the future. It is advisable to start the deregistration process well in advance of the planned departure date to ensure a smooth transition.

#### 24. Are there any requirements for medical certificates or vaccinations for your jurisdiction?

No, there are no specific requirements for medical certificates or vaccinations for global mobility purposes in Greece.

#### 25. Are there any language requirements for your jurisdiction?

In Greece, there are no formal language requirements as an immigration requirement for obtaining work permits or residence permits. However, similar to many other jurisdictions, knowledge of the local language (Greek) or English can be an implicit employment demand depending on the nature of the job. Many employers expect a working proficiency in Greek for roles that require direct interaction with the local population or for roles in public administration.

For those looking to establish long-term residence or citizenship in Greece, there are language requirements. To apply for permanent residence, applicants must demonstrate knowledge of Greek at a basic level. For citizenship, a higher level of proficiency in the Greek language is required, including an understanding of Greek culture and history. Language lessons and courses are widely available to assist migrants in meeting these requirements.

Additionally, various integration programs offer free Greek language lessons to help new residents and their dependents assimilate better into Greek society.

#### 26. What are the government costs associated with a typical employment based visa?

In Greece, the government costs associated with a typical employment-based visa include several fees. Here is a

detailed breakdown:

1. **Residence Permit Application Fee:** The main fee for an employment-based residence permit is EUR 150 (approximately USD 165 as of 2023).
2. **Administrative Fee for the Submission of the Application:** There is an additional administrative fee of EUR 16 (approximately USD 18).
3. **Issuance of the Residence Permit Card:** The fee for issuing the residence permit card, which includes the recording of biometric data, is EUR 16 (approximately USD 18).
4. **Embassy Fees:** If the application is submitted through a Greek embassy or consulate abroad, additional fees may apply. These fees vary depending on the location but generally range around EUR 60-80 (approximately USD 65-90).
5. **Translation and Legalization Fees:** Any required documents that are not in Greek must be translated and legalized, which can incur additional costs depending on the country of origin and the specific requirements of the Greek authorities.

It is important to note that the costs mentioned above are subject to change, and applicants should verify the current fees with the relevant Greek authorities or through the official government websites before proceeding with their applications.

#### 27. Is a local contract of employment required in order to obtain a work based visa or work permit? Are there salary or other thresholds to be met?

In Greece, a local contract of employment is typically required to obtain a work-based visa or work permit. This ensures that the terms of employment comply with Greek labor standards and regulations. However, it is possible to provide an appendix to the original contract that outlines the terms specific to the employment in Greece.

There are salary thresholds that must be met by the migrant, which are generally aligned with the minimum wage requirements in Greece. Additionally, for highly skilled workers or positions requiring specific expertise, there may be higher salary thresholds to ensure the compensation is commensurate with the role's responsibilities and the applicant's qualifications. These thresholds are periodically updated and must be verified according to the current regulations at the time of application.

## 28. What are the maximum periods of stay for individuals on an employment based visa / work permit?

In Greece, the maximum period of stay for individuals on an employment-based visa or work permit depends on the type of permit issued. Initially, a temporary work permit is granted for up to 1 year. This permit can be renewed annually as long as the employment conditions and requirements continue to be met.

For fixed-term employment, the maximum period of stay is typically tied to the duration of the employment contract. Upon expiry of the contract, the individual is generally required to leave Greece, unless they secure a new employment position and submit a new application for a work permit before commencing the new job.

Additionally, Greece offers the possibility of a long-term residence permit for employees who have stayed in the country for a continuous period of five years under a temporary work permit. This long-term permit allows for more stable residency and employment rights.

It is important for individuals and employers to ensure compliance with all renewal procedures and to submit applications in a timely manner to avoid any gaps in legal residency and work authorization.

## 29. Does your jurisdiction allow dual nationality?

Yes, Greece allows dual nationality. Greek citizens can acquire foreign nationality without losing their Greek citizenship. This applies to both natural-born Greek citizens and those who acquire Greek citizenship through naturalization or other means. Greek law recognizes and accepts multiple citizenships, ensuring that individuals do not have to renounce their Greek nationality when obtaining another. There are no specific deadlines or additional requirements for retaining Greek citizenship after acquiring another nationality.

## 30. What are the most positive aspects of your

## immigration system compared to the rest of the world?

Greece's immigration system offers several positive aspects that make it attractive for global mobility compared to other countries.

Firstly, the Greek government has made significant efforts to streamline the immigration process for highly skilled workers. The procedures for obtaining work permits and residence permits are designed to be straightforward and efficient, minimizing bureaucratic hurdles. Information regarding these processes is readily accessible in both Greek and English on the official migration portal, facilitating easier navigation for foreign nationals and employers alike.

Moreover, Greece offers the Golden Visa program, which provides a fast-track residence permit for non-EU nationals who invest in real estate or other sectors of the economy. This program not only encourages investment but also provides a relatively quick and secure pathway to residency for investors and their families.

The Greek government also recognizes the importance of attracting talent to address labor market shortages and has introduced initiatives to support this. For example, the recent introduction of the Digital Nomad Visa allows remote workers to reside in Greece, benefiting from its favorable climate and quality of life while contributing to the local economy.

Additionally, Greece's immigration policies are continually evolving to adapt to the changing global landscape. There is a concerted effort to align immigration regulations with the needs of the modern workforce, ensuring that the country remains competitive in attracting international talent.

In summary, Greece's immigration system stands out for its streamlined processes, investment-friendly policies, and adaptive regulatory framework, all of which contribute to making it an appealing destination for global mobility.

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