

# New Framework for Hiring Foreign Workers in Cyprus as of February 19, 2025.



By ZSM LLC

On 19 February 2025, the Council of Ministers in Cyprus approved a new framework designed to streamline and modernize the process of hiring foreign workers. This development reflects the country's continued commitment to fostering economic growth, attracting specialized talent, and addressing labor market needs across multiple sectors.

Below is an overview of the key changes introduced by the new framework:

## 1. Simplified Work Permit Procedures

**a. Single Application Portal** One of the most significant changes is the **introduction of a single, integrated online platform for work permit applications**. This portal consolidates the previously separate steps of work authorization and residency permits, aiming to reduce bureaucracy and shorten the overall processing time.

**b. Reduced Processing Time** Under the new system, standard work permit applications are expected to be processed within **four to six weeks**, a marked improvement compared to past timelines. This accelerated process will help businesses and applicants alike plan more effectively.

## 2. Revised Eligibility Criteria

**a. High-Skilled vs. General Labor** The new framework distinguishes between high-skilled and general labor categories, tailoring requirements to the specific profile of the applicant:

- **High-Skilled Applicants** must generally meet educational and/or professional experience standards, with a clear pathway for longer-term residence once employed.

- **General Labor Applicants** are subject to updated labor market tests to ensure that local workers are not overlooked and that employers can address genuine labor shortages effectively.

**b. Minimum Salary Thresholds** Companies must meet adjusted minimum salary thresholds for each category. The framework updates these thresholds annually to reflect changes in living costs and average wages, ensuring fair compensation for foreign workers.

### 3. Sector-Specific Provisions

Recognizing that certain sectors are more reliant on foreign talent, the new framework includes special provisions for:

- **Tourism and Hospitality:** Simplified processes for seasonal workers, with flexible re-entry rules for returning staff.
- **Shipping and Maritime Services:** Tailored permit categories for seafarers and maritime specialists, acknowledging Cyprus's role as a leading shipping hub.
- **Technology and Innovation:** A fast-track application process for startups and tech firms, designed to attract IT specialists, software developers, and researchers.
- **Agriculture:** Streamlined procedures to address the acute labor shortages faced by farmers and agricultural producers.

### 4. Enhanced Compliance and Enforcement

The updated legislation places a stronger emphasis on compliance measures:

- **Mandatory Labor Market Testing:** Employers must post vacancies on official job portals or authorized media to demonstrate that no suitable local candidates are available.
- **Audits and Penalties:** A newly established Monitoring Unit under the Ministry of Labor will carry out periodic compliance audits. Employers found in violation of the rules may face increased fines or be temporarily barred from hiring foreign workers.

### 5. Family Reunification Provisions

To support integration and encourage long-term commitments from high-skilled workers:

- **Easier Dependent Visas:** Eligible foreign workers can more readily bring immediate family members to Cyprus, benefiting from reduced documentation requirements.
- **Work Authorization for Spouses:** Spouses of high-skilled permit holders may receive automatic work authorization in specific sectors, easing the financial and social transition of relocating families.

### 6. Transition Measures and Implementation

**a. Phase-In Period** The new framework takes effect in a phased manner over the next **six to twelve months** to allow employers, agencies, and individuals ample time to familiarize themselves with the updated processes. During this transitional window, existing permits will remain valid, but renewals will gradually shift to the new procedures.

**b. Public Awareness Campaign** The government, in collaboration with local business and industry associations, has launched an awareness campaign to provide detailed guidelines and informational workshops across Cyprus.

## 7. Implications for Employers and Foreign Workers

The updated framework is expected to bring greater predictability and efficiency to the hiring process, thereby strengthening Cyprus's position as an attractive destination for international talent. Key benefits include:

1. **Accelerated Approvals:** Shorter processing times reduce project delays and help employers on tight recruitment schedules.
2. **Enhanced Competitiveness:** Clearer requirements and specialized fast-track mechanisms facilitate the inflow of skilled professionals, vital for sectors like technology and shipping.
3. **Improved Compliance:** Strengthened oversight and penalties ensure fairness for both local and foreign workers.
4. **Long-Term Investment:** Simplified family reunification measures encourage high-skilled workers to establish deeper roots in Cyprus, benefiting local communities and the economy.

The new framework for hiring foreign workers in Cyprus—approved by the Council of Ministers on 19 February 2025—represents a modernized approach to immigration and labor market regulations. By integrating digital tools, clarifying requirements, and reinforcing compliance, the reform aims to balance the needs of employers with the protection of local workers and foreign talent alike.

As the framework is rolled out in stages, employers and applicants are encouraged to monitor official government channels and consult professional advisors for the latest guidelines and procedures. This proactive approach will help ensure a smooth transition to the new system and unlock the full potential of Cyprus as a vibrant, globally connected economy.

### How Our Firm Can Assist

At [ZSM LLC](#), our team stands ready to help clients navigate these new regulations. We offer comprehensive legal support, including:

- Advising on permit eligibility and application strategies
- Assisting with labor market testing and compliance requirements
- Guiding businesses on sector-specific provisions
- Supporting the family reunification and dependent visa processes

For more information on the new framework or to discuss how these changes might affect your business or personal circumstances, please **contact us** or reach out to [admin@zsm.law](mailto:admin@zsm.law)

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