

Employment of foreigners

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Who is a foreigner?

A foreigner is any person who is not a citizen of the Republic of Latvia or non-citizen of the Republic of Latvia;

There are two categories of foreigners under the laws of the Republic of Latvia:

Union citizens – the citizens of the European Union Member States, Member States of the European Economic Area (EU27 + Lichtenstein + Iceland + Norway), and the Swiss Confederation who have a status in Latvia equal to that of the citizens of the Republic of Latvia.

third-country nationals whose entry into and employment in Latvia is subject to additional conditions.

What are the differences between Union citizens and thirdcountry nationals within the employment process?

Based on the EU regulatory framework, there are almost no restrictions for Union citizens to enter into, stay and work in Latvia. A Union citizen may start working as soon as an employment contract is signed. Those Union citizens who wish to stay in the Republic of Latvia for more than three months continuously must be registered with the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and must obtain a certificate of registration, however, there is no need in such a registration for the period of up to six months if a Union citizen stays for the purpose of finding a job.

As to the employment of third-country nationals, there is a number of restrictions both with regard to entering (visa), staying (residence permit), and employment (right to employment), while the employer is fully responsible both for the foreigner's employment (including restrictions related to wages and salary), staying (including the place of residence and health care), and removal costs, if any.

What are the main steps for a shortterm employment of third-country nationals?

The employer shall register a [vacancy](#) in the [State Employment Agency](#) if the employment is supposed on the basis of an employment contract;

The employer shall submit an [invitation request](#) to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (together with the employment contract or its draft and foreigner's documents on education);

The foreigner shall submit documents to apply for a visa at the diplomatic or consular mission of the Republic of Latvia abroad. The information regarding the right to employment shall be included in the visa;

The foreigner shall get registered with the State Revenue Service as a tax payer.

What are the main steps for a longterm employment of third-country nationals?

The employer shall register a [vacancy](#) in the [State Employment Agency](#) if the employment is supposed on the basis of an employment contract;

The employer shall submit a [sponsorship request](#) to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (together with the employment contract or its draft and foreigner's documents on education);

The foreigner shall submit [documents](#) to the diplomatic or consular mission of the Republic of Latvia abroad to obtain the residence permit and right to employment;

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs shall issue the residence permit with the right to employment;

The foreigner shall get registered with the State Revenue Service as a tax payer.

What are the main steps in the foreigners' employment process?

Vacancy

There is no restrictions to employ Union citizens, while third-country nationals may be employed only if the vacancy is free for at least 10 working days. Such vacancies must be officially registered on the CV and vacancy portal of the State Employment Agency.

Sponsorship/invitation

In order to employ third-country nationals for a short-term period, the employer shall submit an invitation request to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, but in case of a long-term employment a sponsorship request shall be submitted.

An approved invitation serves as a basis for granting a visa and the right to employment, while an approved sponsorship serves as a basis for granting a visa (for entering), residence permit and the right to employment.

Visa

A visa together with the right to employment may serve as a basis for short-term employment. The visa shall be issued on the basis of an approved invitation.

Residence permit

A residence permit is required to employ a foreigner for a long-term period. Third-country nationals who have a valid residence permit issued in another Schengen country, citizens of a country whose citizens do not need a visa to enter the Republic of Latvia, or those having a valid visa with the right to employment are entitled to submit documents to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs to apply for a residence permit. Other third-country nationals shall apply for a residence permit at the diplomatic or consular mission of the Republic of Latvia abroad. The residence permit will be issued by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. As to the Union citizens, first they are issued a Union citizen's certificate of registration, and, after a continuous 5-years staying, they are issued a permanent residence certificate. Foreigners are issued a temporary residence permit first, and, after a continuous 5 years staying and passing the test of knowledge of the official language (at least at the A2 level), they are issued a permanent residence permit.

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<https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/employment-foreigners>