

Kingdom of Belgium



About Belgium

Capital City:

- Brussels

Monetary Unit:

- Euro (€)

Major Language:

- Belgian, French, German

Main Exports:

- Chemical Products
- Precious Stones & metals
- Machinery & Transport Equipment

Our Immigration Services in Belgium

Business & Temporary Residency

Visas – Guidance & assistance with visa applications to be submitted with the Belgian embassy or consulates abroad

Van der Elst Visas – For foreign nationals who are not members of the EEA, have a valid residence permit in one member state & will work temporarily under a contract for services in another member state

Work Permits for Highly Qualified

Employees or Executives – For foreign nationals who are not members of the EEA, are employed abroad & will come to Belgium to assemble, commission or repair a supplied system

Residence Permits – For foreign nationals who are not members of the EEA who will stay in Belgium for more than 90 days

The Belgian Economy

A founding member of the European Union (EU) and host to the EU headquarters, Belgium is home to over 10 million people. Belgium is located in Western Europe, bordered by the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and France. It has a highly developed market economy and its per capita GDP ranks among the highest worldwide.

Belgium is among the top ten destinations for foreign direct investment in the world. Over 1,400 multinational organizations have established their European headquarters in Belgium, including Abbott Laboratories, Boeing, General Foods, NATO, Procter & Gamble, and Toyota. Its second largest city, Antwerp, is considered the diamond center of the world.

Belgium has a strong biopharmaceutical presence and is reported to have the largest number of medicines in development and clinical trials per capita in the world. Additionally, many of Belgian companies are market leaders in eco-technologies, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, etc.

For more information about foreign investment in Belgium, visit the web site at: <http://tinyurl.com/3km5wq2>

Business Travel to Belgium

Belgium is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and party to the Schengen Agreements. Based upon the Schengen Agreements, individuals with passports issued by member states are currently permitted to travel without a passport and visa controls within Schengen territory (<http://tinyurl.com/3j63jvt>). Foreign nationals who are not members of the Schengen territory must present a passport and may require a visa

for entry to Belgium. Further, there is a strict, cumulative limit of 90 days within a 180-day period that an individual may spend as a visitor within the Schengen Area.

Thus, foreign nationals who are not part of the Schengen area or otherwise exempt from presenting a passport for admission and wish to travel to Belgium for business should ensure their passports are valid for at least six months beyond the intended dates of stay and contain at least two blank visa pages. U.S. citizens generally are not required to obtain a visa in advance of business travel within the 90 day limitation.

Permissible business activities as a visitor include attending business meetings, trade shows or scientific seminars and engaging in contract negotiations. If the stay will exceed the prescribed period or involve more than simple business meetings, a visa and/or work permit will be required. The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains a foreign entry requirements tool at the following link:

<http://tinyurl.com/3w7q3lz>

Living in Belgium

Belgium offers much more than fine chocolate and beer. It prides itself in offering an excellent quality of life and its educational and healthcare systems are among the best in the world. The country is extremely multicultural with three main cultural influences: Dutch (Flanders); French (Wallonia); and German (northeast).

Belgium is a popular destination for expatriates throughout Europe and the Americas. Approximately one-fourth of the population in Brussels is foreign. Rental apartments are the most popular accommodation for expatriates and most are furnished or semi-furnished.

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Belgian Business Culture

Business dress in Belgium is conservative, particularly for those in legal services. Men typically wear dark-colored suits with white shirts and silk ties, with laced shoes. Women typically wear business suits or conservative dresses.

Business cards are exchanged with little formalities. A dual-sided card printed in English and either Dutch or French, dependent upon the area, is suggested. Most business meetings are formal in nature and conducted in English.

Belgian Work Permit Process

1

Labour market test, if required, and application for employer and work permit (non EEA nationals)

2

Once the work authorization is approved:

If outside of Belgium and a visa is required, the foreign national must apply for the visa at a Belgian consulate

- OR -

If within Belgium, the foreign national may be allowed to extend their current work authorization or change their work authorization for employment with another employer

3

Prior to entry and if applicable, Limosa Declaration must be completed on-line -AND-

Within three days of arrival in Belgium, the foreign national must register with the local commune and request a residence permit

How Goel & Anderson can assist your organization in Belgium

Organizations that wish to employ foreign workers abroad require an immigration service provider with a record of successfully coordinating and delivering global, business immigration services for multinational organizations. Goel & Anderson practices exclusively in the field of immigration to assist your company with the recruitment, hiring, and retention of foreign workers across the globe, including Belgium. We understand that time and resources are valuable to your business and that staffing an international project can be critical to your business' reputation and success. We are committed to efficiently delivering business immigration solutions that combine broad global coverage with a depth of local expertise.

We carefully select co-counsel who share our service and compliance-oriented approach to meet the needs of organizations doing business in the global marketplace. Our Global Immigration Practice group and local counsel work closely together to ensure comprehensive business coordination and seamless delivery of services. Our immigration services include end-to-end processing, including: work permit and visa application preparation and filing; detailed guidance on Limosa Declaration, visa

stamping and residence permit application process; and tracking key expiration dates. Personal representation at the Belgian embassy or consulate abroad and local commune may be available.

Unless exempted, Belgian work permits are only issued if there are no workers or not enough workers in the Belgian labour market for the sector in question and if there is an international agreement. Thus, if your company's Belgian office anticipates engaging foreign talent, an early analysis of immigration options and strategies, as well as a thorough understanding of the sponsorship obligations, will better position your project for success. We also understand that despite careful planning, emergent issues can arise. We are well positioned to assist your business to address unexpected business requirements. Because global immigration matters do not occur within a vacuum and the law is infrequently static, we seek local experts who may also assist with a range of related legal services, including corporate formation, contracts, employment agreements, licensing, and transactions and who will advise of changes in policy and procedures.

With headquarters outside of Washington, DC in Reston, Virginia and operations in Pune, India, Goel & Anderson is an immigration firm that is international in scope and personal in nature. We are known as a firm that is highly professional and also highly human. We offer clients extensive experience and a comprehensive understanding of all areas of business, employment, and family-based immigration law worldwide.

For more information about our Global Immigration Practice and services, please contact Jill Marie Bussey at jill.bussey@goellaw.com or +1 703.796.9881.

*Goel & Anderson, LLC does not engage in the practice of law within India. All services in India are provided by our affiliate, G&A Immigration Services Private Limited.

The information contained in this document is intended for informational purposes only, is general in nature, and does not constitute legal guidance.



Innovative Approaches to Immigration Law

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