

Mobility: Immigration alert

January 2024

Malta

New fast-track immigration pathway for highly skilled third-country nationals

Executive summary

In January 2024, Malta launched the Specialist Employee Initiative (SEI), which provides an alternative immigration pathway to highly skilled third-country nationals and third-country nationals with specialized technical knowledge who do not meet the eligibility requirements under the existing Key Employee Initiative (KEI) fast-track scheme.

Key developments

The SEI route is available to third-country nationals who earn an annual income of EUR 25,000 (approx. USD 27,190). The annual income requirement for KEI applicants is EUR 35,000 (approx. USD 38,066). In addition to meeting the income requirement, applicants must have an employment contract with a Maltese company and either a relevant bachelor's degree ([MQF Level 6](#)) or higher or at least three years of work experience in their field.

Employers must submit SEI applications via email and pay an application fee of EUR 300 (approx. USD 326) and, if approved, successful applicants will obtain a combined work and residence permit. The processing time is approximately 15 working days from the date of application submission (compared to the processing time of up to four months for non-fast-track applications). This permit is initially valid for one year and can be renewed multiple times in one- to three-year increments.

Impact on employers

The initiative is expected to benefit employers by enabling them to attract a larger pool of highly skilled third-country nationals.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

EY | Building a better working world

EY exists to build a better working world, helping create long-term value for clients, people and society and build trust in the capital markets.

Enabled by data and technology, diverse EY teams in over 150 countries provide trust through assurance and help clients grow, transform and operate.

Working across assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax and transactions, EY teams ask better questions to find new answers for the complex issues facing our world today.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

Ernst & Young LLP is a client-serving member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited operating in the US.

© 2024 Ernst & Young LLP.
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 000825-24Gbl

2101-3682263
ED None

ey.com

Robert Attard

Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +35623471458
Email: robert.attard@mt.ey.com

Yaneka Farrugia

Manager - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +35623471300
Email: yaneka.farrugia1@mt.ey.com

Maria Cassar

Assistant Manager - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +35623471351
Email: maria.cassar1@mt.ey.com

Ben Willis

Partner - People Advisory Services, EMEIA Immigration Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 9589
Email: ben.willis@uk.ey.com

Seema Farazi

Partner - People Advisory Services, EMEIA Immigration Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 7122
Email: seema.farazi@uk.ey.com