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## **Invest in Greece Agency**

*Invest in Greece is the official Investment Promotion Agency of Greece that promotes and facilitates private investment. Invest in Greece Agency provides investors with assistance, analysis, advice and aftercare support. It is committed to helping businesspeople discover the many opportunities in Greece, the gateway to Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean.*

# How to work and live in Greece



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These guidelines summarize the main issues concerning residence permits for foreigners wishing to enter, reside and work in Greece. Depending on the citizenship of the foreigner, different issues arise and different procedures are followed.

## Citizens of EU member-states

### Entering Greece

- Citizens of EU member-states have the right to enter Greece on the basis of their passport or identity card.

### Working in Greece

- EU citizens, citizens of states of the European Economic Area (i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and Swiss citizens who wish to reside and work in Greece must obtain a residence permit for working purposes. The procedure for the issuance of such permits is not complicated and is carried out at the Aliens Bureau of the place of residence in Greece of the EU citizen. Residence permits are normally issued at the time of filing of the relevant application;
- Residence permits of EU citizens can have a duration of up to five (5) years.

### Acquiring permanent residence

- EU citizens who have resided legally in Greece for a continuous period of five (5) years have the right to acquire permanent residence in Greece and to obtain a residence permit of indefinite duration.

## Citizens of non-EU member-states

### Before entering Greece

- Non-EU citizens who wish to reside and work in Greece should acquire an entry permit (visa) for working purposes from the Greek Consulate of their country of residence or origin before arriving in Greece. This entry permit is a "D" type one entry visa which must specify if it is for dependent employment or for provision of freelance services. If the third country citizen, who enters based on such an entry visa, leaves Greece before his residence permit is issued, he will not be allowed to re-enter Greece on the basis of that entry visa;
- The physical presence of the respective foreigner is compulsory at the time of the filing of the entry visa application. Also, several supporting documents must be filed;

- Failure to obtain the correct type of entry visa could affect the issuance of the residence permit after their arrival in Greece and delay the procedures;
- The residence permit application, together with the relevant supporting documents, should be filed while the entry visa is still valid, whose duration is three (3) months. If the third country citizen fails to file his residence permit application within this period, he will have to leave Greece in order to return to his country of origin to renew the entry visa;
- In the case of non-executives, certain procedures must be commenced well before the issuance of the entry visa (see below under heading "Regular staff").

### After entering Greece

Greek immigration legislation provides for different types of residence permits depending on the professional status of the foreigner, i.e. whether he will be employed by virtue of a dependent employment agreement or provide independent services (freelancer) etc. Regarding foreigners entering Greece to provide dependent employment services, different procedures for the issuance of the residence permit apply for them and their family members depending on whether the third country citizen will be employed as regular staff or will hold an executive position.

### Executives

- The procedure and provisions for the issuance of residence permits for executives apply only to non-EU citizens who come to Greece to provide services to the Greek affiliated enterprise of a foreign group as employees at an executive level, members of the board of directors or administrators;
- This procedure is relatively quick and the residence permit is normally issued within one (1) month following the filing of the relevant application together with all the relevant supporting documentation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



### Regular staff

- The procedure and provisions for the issuance of residence permits for regular staff apply to third country employees who do not qualify as executives (i.e. they do not satisfy the requirement of high compensation);
- This procedure is more complicated and time consuming. It should commence long before the employee arrives in Greece and even before the application for the entry visa is made. The procedure requires the cooperation of the competent Greek authorities and of the Greek Consulate of the country of origin of the respective foreigner to verify in communications between them that there is a need in Greece for the employee's specialization.

### Common provisions

- The physical presence of the respective foreigner is required at the time of filing of the application for the issuance of the initial residence permit;
- The initial residence permit is valid for one year and can be renewed for two years;
- Certain documents (including a copy of the passport, a health certificate issued by a Greek hospital, evidence of health insurance coverage, photos, employment agreement) and payment of an issuance fee are required for both types of residence permits.

### Family members

- Third country citizens who qualify as executives can be accompanied by their family members, but the family members should also apply for the same type of entry visa and after arriving in Greece, for the same type of residence permit as family members of an executive;
- Third country citizens who are treated as regular employees are allowed to invite their family members to come and reside with them in Greece only after they have resided for two consecutive years in Greece and can provide evidence that they have sufficient funds to cover the living expenses of their family members in Greece.

### Infringement of Immigration Legislation

- In case of employment of third country citizens without the appropriate residence permit, monetary penalties ranging from EUR 3 000.00 to EUR 15 000.00 per each illegally employed individual may be imposed on the employer. Furthermore, imprisonment of at least three (3) months may also be imposed on the employer, which can be extended to a period of at least six (6) months in case of repetitive infringements;
- Imprisonment may also be imposed on the third country citizen who was illegally employed in Greece who may also be deported from Greece under certain conditions.