Ministry publishes draft law on promoting legal immigration for consultation

The Ministry of Immigration and Asylum posted a draft law, "Promotion of Legal Immigration Policies", on opengov.gr for public consultation. According to the press release, the aim of the law is to shape a modern and effective framework for legal immigration, which will constitute a barrier to illegal immigration and respond to the needs of the Greek economy and the requirements of social cohesion and public security.

The bill aims to reduce bureaucracy and accelerate services for third-country nationals living legally in the country. An automatic renewal is introduced for 'safe' categories of permits, such as dependent employment, with the sole exception of reasons of public order and security. At the same time, a minimum validity period of 2 years is established for each residence permit.

In the employment sector, procedures for relocating workers from third countries are being strengthened by simplifying the stages, allowing flexibility in changing employers and introducing a minimum age limit. Temporary employment agencies are added as potential employers, while a special "fast-track" procedure is established for workers in large public projects and strategic investments.

At the same time, bilateral interstate agreements with countries of origin are being promoted, with an emphasis on the cooperation of these countries on the returns of their illegally-residing citizens and the fight against illegal immigration.

Particular emphasis is placed on attracting highly skilled and knowledgeable human resources. New categories of national visas are introduced, such as tech visa and talent visa, as well as arrangements for visiting professors, while consular procedures are being accelerated by simplifying procedures in selected cases. The validity period of the residence permit for highly skilled workers (Blue Card) is increased.

Significant interventions are also foreseen for students and third-country students, with residence permits equivalent to the duration of the study programs, the right to part-time employment, the possibility of staying after graduation to look for work and faster issuance of visas in the context of international collaborations.

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The bill also aims to make better use of the skills of beneficiaries of international protection by providing vocational training programs in sectors with shortages, such as construction, agricultural production and tourism, gradually reducing dependence on benefits and strengthening their integration into the labor market. In other words, for those who benefit from international protection, they will be given the opportunity to work, instead of subsisting through benefits.

The new framework tightens sanctions for the crimes of illegal migrant smuggling at all levels and punishes the assistance of illegal immigrants by legal immigrants, who will lose their legal status if they assist illegal immigrants in any way. The bill even provides for the penalty of life imprisonment for smugglers.

At the same time, the framework for NGOs is regulated with the aim of enhancing transparency. The process of registering NGOs in the ministry's registry is simplified by reducing bureaucracy. At the same time, sanctions are tightened for NGO staff who assist in the crime of smuggling illegal immigrants with aggravating criminal sanctions of many years of imprisonment and deletion of NGOs from the ministry's registry. Any possibility for NGOs to preferentially contract with programmatic contracts with the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum is abolished, and they will now be contracted exclusively through competitive procedures like all providers.

The draft law also provides for the establishment of a Migration Policy Coordination Committee, in order to ensure the coherence and effective implementation of the measures, as well as the conditional release with immediate deportation of those immigrants serving misdemeanor prison sentences.

With the draft law "Promotion of Legal Migration Policies", Greece is shaping a comprehensive policy that is strict against illegality, open only to legal mobility and oriented towards the real needs of the economy and society.

Source(s)

- Ministry of Migration and Asylum | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (30 December, 2025), Σε δημόσια διαβούλευση το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου με τίτλο: «Προώθηση Πολιτικών Νόμιμης Μετανάστευσης» [Draft law of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum entitled "Promotion of Legal Immigration Policies" is up for public consultation], https://migration.gov.gr/en/se-dimosia-diavoyleysi-to-schedio-nomoy-toy-ypoyrgeioy-metanasteysis-kai-asyloy-me-titlo-proothisi-politikon-nomimis-

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