A bill of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum entitled "Promotion of Legal Immigration Policies" was submitted to the Parliament on 23 January 2026 and will be discussed in the competent committees, with the aim of shaping a modern and effective framework for legal immigration, which will constitute a barrier to illegal immigration and which meets both the needs of the Greek economy and the requirements of public security.

The main provisions of the bill by different themes include:

License renewal

- Intervention at all stages of the licensing process.
- Reducing bureaucracy and accelerating service to third-country nationals residing legally in the country.
- Introduction of automatic renewal for "safe" categories of permits (e.g. dependent employment), with the sole exception of reasons of public order and security.
- Establishing a minimum duration of two years for each residence permit.

Employment – Transfer

- Strengthening the procedures for relocating workers from third countries.
- Simplification of process and flexibility in changing employers.
- Establishment of a minimum age limit.
- Inclusion of Temporary Employment Agencies as potential employers.
- Establishment of a fast-track procedure for employees in large public projects and strategic investments.

International Cooperation

- Promotion of bilateral interstate agreements with countries of origin. Emphasis on cooperation for the return of persons illegally staying in Greece and in the fight against illegal immigration.

High Specialisation

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- Attracting highly specialized and knowledgeable human resources.
- Introduction of new categories of national visas, as follows:
    - Tech visa
    - Talent visa
- Arrangements for visiting professors.
- Acceleration of consular procedures in selected cases.
- Increase in the duration of residence permits for highly skilled workers (Blue Card).

Students and Third-Country Students

- Residence permits valid for the duration of studies.
- Right to part-time employment.
- Possibility of staying after graduation to seek employment.
- Faster visa issuance in the context of international cooperation.

Beneficiaries of International Protection

- Better use of the skills of beneficiaries of international protection who reside legally in the country.
- Vocational training programs in sectors with shortages: construction, agricultural production and tourism
- Reducing dependency on benefits.
- Strengthening integration into the labour market.

Illegal Trafficking – Sanctions

- Stricter sanctions for illegal migrant smuggling at all levels.
- Punishment of assistance to illegal immigrants by legal immigrants.
- Loss of legal status for those who contribute in any way.
- Provision of up to life imprisonment for traffickers.
- Conditional release of foreigners from prison for misdemeanors subject to immediate deportation.

Non-governmental organisations

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- Regulation of the operating framework of NGOs with the aim of enhancing transparency.
- Simplification of the registration process in the Ministry's registry.
- Tougher sanctions for NGO members involved in trafficking:
    - long-term imprisonment
    - deletion of NGO from the register
- Abolition of preferential programmatic contracts.
- Contracting exclusively through competitive procedures.

Institutional Arrangements

- Establishment of a Migration Policy Coordination Committee for the effective implementation of the measures, as well as the conditional release with immediate deportation of those immigrants serving misdemeanor prison sentences.

With this bill the Ministry intended to draw up a coherent and comprehensive migration policy, strict against illegality, open exclusively to legal mobility and fully aligned with the real needs of the economy and society.

Source(s)

- Ministry of Migration and Asylum | Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (24 January, 2026), Κατατέθηκε στη Βουλή το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου με τίτλο: «Προώθηση Πολιτικών Νόμιμης Μετανάστευσης» [Bill of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum entitled "Promotion of Legal Immigration Policies" was submitted to Parliament], https://migration.gov.gr/en/katatethike-sti-voyli-to-schedio-nomoy-toy-ypoyrgeioy-metanasteysis-kai-asyloy-me-titlo-proothisi-politikon-nomimis-metanasteysis/

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