

## Turkey Overhauls Work Permits For Foreigners, Clarifies Requirements for Company Directors

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Turkey has introduced new principles and procedures regarding work permits for foreigners, as well as exemptions. Existing uncertainties about work permit requirements for company directors have been clarified and a new "Turquoise Card" system is introduced. The Turquoise Card grants holders the same benefits as an indefinite term work permit.

The Law on International Labor Force ("**Law**") was published in Official Gazette numbered 6735 on 28 July 2016, entering into force on the same day. It supersedes The Law on Work Permits for Foreigners numbered 4817.

Uncertainties about work permits for company directors have now been clarified. Accordingly, the following people must now obtain work permits:

- Directors who are shareholders of limited liability companies.
- Directors who are shareholders of joint stock companies.
- Directors who are also active partners of partnerships in commendam, where the capital is divided into shares.

The following people are exempt from requiring a work permit:

- Directors of joint stock companies who are not resident in Turkey.
- Shareholders who are not acting as directors.

Other notable changes to the work permit regime include:

- The "Turquoise Card" system is introduced:
  - Same benefits as indefinite term work permit holders.
  - Granted initially for a three year term.
  - Granted based on education, experience, contribution in science and technology, impact of the applicant's activity or investment in Turkey on national economy, as well as employment.
  - Spouses and dependent children of Turquoise Card holders receive documents indicating their relationship, which can be used as a residence permit.
- Foreigners must now enter Turkey within six months of the date their work permit was issued, or the permit will be cancelled.
- Work permit applications can now be made via authorized intermediary institutions.
- The Ministry of Labor and Social Security ("**Ministry**") will establish a Foreigner Application, Evaluation and Monitoring System, to receive and evaluate work permit requests and monitor the impacts of Turkey's foreign labor force.
- Work permit extension applications must now be made sixty days before an existing permit expires, or the Ministry will reject the extension application.
- Foreigners applying for or undertaking internships, as well as temporary workers (cross border service providers), are now included in the scope of the work permit regime.
- Applicants for indefinite term work permits must now have been previously granted at least eight years' worth of work permits (previously six years).

The Ministry will publish further details as secondary regulations, such as application terms and procedures.

Definite term work permits granted before 28 July 2016 will be valid until their expiry date. Indefinite term work permits will continue to be valid, unless the Ministry cancels them.

The Law continues the existing categories of work permits: Indefinite term; Definite term; Independent. Work permit applications continue to be possible from both inside and outside Turkey.

Please see this [link](#) for the full text of the Regulation (only available in Turkish).

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