

# 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.

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