



Mobility: Immigration alert

April 2024

North Macedonia

North Macedonia launches portal for nationals of Albania and Serbia under the Agreement on Conditions for Free Access to the Labor Market in the Western Balkans

Executive summary

In March 2024, North Macedonia introduced a new online portal for nationals of Albania and Serbia who seek to apply to enter and work in North Macedonia under the Agreement on Conditions for Free Access to the Labor Market in the Western Balkans (i.e., “the Agreement”).

Background

The Agreement, a part of the [Open Balkan](#) initiative, was signed by Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia in December 2021. It aims to simplify entry, work and residence procedures for nationals of each country in the two other countries. Based on the Agreement, the single labor market of Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia was officially established in March 2024.

Key developments

Eligible nationals of Albania and Serbia (and not companies) must submit a request under the Agreement via the newly launched online platform. To do so, individuals must create a profile on the Open Balkan online portal of their home country and obtain an Open Balkan ID number. They may submit the request for free access prior to entering North Macedonia, or no later than 90 days from the date of arrival in North Macedonia. Requests will be processed within 30 days of submission.

Successful applicants will receive an electronic document via email that authorizes them to stay and work in North Macedonia for up to two years, with the possibility of extension. These individuals will not be required to separately obtain work and

residence authorization. However, they will not be eligible to sponsor dependents.

Impact on employers

The Agreement is expected to benefit companies that send nationals of Albania and Serbia to work in North Macedonia by reducing the time and costs associated with obtaining work and residence permits.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

EY | Building a better working world

EY exists to build a better working world, helping create long-term value for clients, people and society and build trust in the capital markets.

Enabled by data and technology, diverse EY teams in over 150 countries provide trust through assurance and help clients grow, transform and operate.

Working across assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax and transactions, EY teams ask better questions to find new answers for the complex issues facing our world today.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

Ernst & Young LLP is a client-serving member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited operating in the US.

© 2024 Ernst & Young LLP.
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 003892-24Gbl

2101-3682263
ED None

ey.com

Nevena Kovacheva

Partner - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +35928177146
Email: nevena.kovacheva@bg.ey.com

Kristina Milovanovikj

Senior - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +38923101753
Email: kristina.milovanovikj@mk.ey.com

Ben Willis

Partner - People Advisory Services, EMEA Immigration Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 9589
Email: ben.willis@uk.ey.com

Seema Farazi

Partner - People Advisory Services, EMEA Immigration Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 7122
Email: seema.farazi@uk.ey.com