



GLOBAL IMMIGRATION TRENDS – DECEMBER 2024

Introduction

This global migration summary outlines the latest updates and trends in immigration policies, emphasizing changes across different regions across the world and their implications for Nigerians seeking immigrant or non-immigrant visas. Additionally, we have included an Immigration Outlook for the year 2025, which outlines anticipated shifts and new initiatives in the global immigration landscape particularly in relation to Africa.

Europe

Portugal

PORTUGAL INTRODUCES WORK PERMIT AND WORK VISA FAST-TRACK ROUTES

Portugal has announced its plans to introduce a new 'Green route' to accelerate the processing and completion of the residence permit applications within twenty (20) days. This initiative aims to facilitate easier access to work permits for foreign workers.

The Portuguese Government previously planned to process work visas within thirty (30) days. However, the faster route has been introduced in response to the rising demand for skilled labor.

A study by Migrations and Human Rights in Portugal indicates that the country will require between fifty thousand to one hundred thousand (50,000–100,000) skilled foreign workers annually to sustain economic growth. The construction sector alone is projected to need approximately eighty thousand (80,000) skilled workers.

This initiative is expected to mitigate labor shortages, attract foreign talent, and drive economic development across various sectors in Portugal.

Find more:

<https://businessday.ng/news/article/portugal-to-issue-work-visas-in-less-than-one-month/>

The Netherlands

NETHERLANDS REVIEWS SALARY THRESHOLD FOR HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS FOR 2025

The Dutch government recently reviewed the cost of residency applications in the Netherlands, including the gross salary thresholds that apply will to Highly Skilled Migrant ("HSM") labour migrant work permit. Effective from January 1, 2025, this review will introduce a six-point-seven percent (6.7%) increase on the relevant fees.

According to the publication, the fees will apply as follows:

- About Two Thousand, One Hundred and Ninety-Two Euro (€2192) Gross SV wage without holiday allowance, approximately Two Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty United States Dollars (\$2,260USD), is now required for Married couple/co-habiting unmarried couples.
- Nearly One Thousand, Five Hundred and Thirty-Four Euro (€1534) Gross SV wage without holiday allowance, approximately One Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty-one United States Dollars (\$1,581USD), is now required for Singles.

In addition, the following salary criterion will apply:

- For Highly Skilled Migrants of 30 years of age or older: Five Thousand, Six Hundred and Eighty-Eight Euro (€5,688), approximately Five Thousand Eight-Hundred and Sixty-Three United States Dollars (\$5,863 USD), gross per month
- For Highly Skilled Migrants younger than 30 years of age: Four Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy-One Euro (€4,171), approximately Four Thousand Two-Hundred and Ninety-Eight United States Dollars (\$4,298 USD), gross per month
- For Recent graduates in the Netherlands: Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Eighty-Nine Euro (€2,989) gross per month, approximately Three Thousand, Eighty-Two United States Dollars (\$3,082 USD).
- For European Blue Card holders: Five Thousand, Six Hundred and Eighty-Eight Euro (€5,688) gross per month, approximately Five Thousand Eight-Hundred and Sixty-Three United States Dollars (\$5,863 USD).
- For European Blue Card holders within three years of graduating from higher education: Four Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty-One Euro (€4,551) gross per month, approximately Four Thousand Six-Hundred and Ninety-one United States Dollars (\$4,691 USD).

Additionally, it should be noted that the following pay elements are not included in the salary criterion:

- Vacation allowance.
- The value of payment made in kind.
- Uncertain, non-regular pay elements (for example overtime allowances, tips and payments from funds).

Also, for highly skilled migrants already on payroll and for applications filed before January 1, 2025, their current salary criterion will continue to apply as it will not be necessary to adjust their salary.

Pursuant to the above, it is envisaged that the salary threshold as announced will continue to ensure that highly skilled migrants are adequately compensated while working in the Netherlands, promoting an attractive environment for top talent.

Find more:

<https://vialtopartners.com/regional-alerts/netherlands-immigration-2025-salary-thresholds-published>

<https://ind.nl/en/news/fees-and-required-amounts-for-2025-known>

Germany

GERMANY TO APPROVE 40,000 CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS IN 2025

The German Naturalisation Department has announced plans to issue forty thousand (40,000) citizenships by naturalization in 2025. To achieve this target, the department aims to process and approve three thousand (3,000) applications per month.

This initiative follows the introduction of Germany's New Citizenship Law in June 2024, which simplified and expedited the naturalization process. The reform was introduced to manage the significant increase in applications observed throughout 2024.





Additionally, skilled workers may benefit from the German Opportunity Card, which provides a fast-tracked pathway to permanent residency and citizenship, further supporting Germany's efforts to attract and retain talent.

Read more

<https://winnyimmigration.com/germany-aims-to-grant-40000-citizenship-applications-in-2025#:~:text=Germany%20is%20setting%20an%20ambitious%20goal%20to%20process,3%2C000%20individuals%20every%20month%20to%20meet%20this%20target>

Sweden

NEW EUROPEAN UNION BLUE CARD RULES FOR SKILLED WORKERS

Sweden has announced its amendment to its European Union (EU) Blue Card rules, which shall take effect from January 1, 2025. The new rules will relax some of the prior parameters and requirements.

The new rules will implement the following changes:

- Reduction of minimum salary threshold from one point five (1.5) times to one point two five (1.25) times the annual average salary in Sweden
- Reduced job-offer duration requirements from one (1) year to six (6) months
- Expanded eligibility, permitting applicants with relevant work experience but without formal education to qualify.
- Foreign nationals with certain categories of residence permit or previously held EU blue card may now apply for an EU Blue Card from within Sweden.
- All EU Blue Card holders will be able to change jobs simply by filing a change-of-status notification to the Swedish authorities

The eased rules are aimed at attracting more foreign skilled workers and retaining the existing foreign talent by providing them permanent settlement options.

Find More

<https://travelobiz.com/sweden-eases-eu-blue-card-rules-lower-salary-job-requirements/>

<https://schengen.news/official-sweden-will-simplify-eu-blue-cards-rules-for-foreign-professionals-from-january-1-2025/>

Italy

ITALY INTRODUCES NEW STUDENT VISA REGULATION FOR 2025

Italy has announced updates to visa regulations affecting international students and other applicants seeking long-term visas, including those planning to stay in the country for more than ninety (90) days.

Effective January 10, 2025, applicants for the Italian Type D visa (national/long-stay visa) – including students enrolled in programs exceeding ninety (90) days – must book and attend an individual appointment at the Italian consulate. As part of the process, applicants will also be required to undergo fingerprinting.

These changes aim to enhance the security and efficiency of the visa issuance process, ensuring compliance with Italy's immigration policies.

Find more

<https://www.visasolutions4u.com/news/italy-introduces-new-visa-rules-for-international-students-starting-2025>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/study/italy-introduces-new-visa-rules-for-international-students-starting-in-2025/articleshow/116203433.cms?from=mdr>

Greece

GREECE FACES URGENT DEMAND FOR 300,000 FOREIGN WORKERS

Greece is experiencing significant labor shortages across various sectors and urgently requires over three hundred thousand (300,000) foreign workers to meet the country's economic needs. The demand spans both skilled and unskilled labor, with key sectors such as tourism and IT facing acute workforce gaps.

Despite this pressing need, the work permit application process for unskilled workers remains complex. Conversely, the pathway for highly qualified workers has been simplified under the EU Blue Card scheme. Foreigners entering Greece under visa-free regimes or holding short-stay visas are now eligible to apply for an EU Blue Card. Previously, this option was limited to individuals with long-term national visas.

This adjustment is expected to attract more skilled professionals to Greece, alleviating labor shortages and supporting economic growth.

Find more

<https://greekcitytimes.com/2024/12/04/greece-faces-critical-labor-shortage-needs-300000-foreign-workers/>

<https://schengen.news/greece-urgently-needs-over-300000-foreign-workers-to-support-its-economy/#:~:text=Key%20Takeaways,application%20rules%20earlier%20this%20year.>

United Kingdom

UNITED KINGDOM ANNOUNCES NEW IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR 2025

The UK Home Office has introduced significant updates to its immigration system, focusing on digitization and new financial requirements for students, tourists, and workers in 2025.

Key Changes to Immigration Processes:

eVisa Access: Applicants holding biometric residence permits (BRP) or EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) biometric residence cards (BRC) are encouraged to access their eVisas via www.gov.uk/eVisa. The Home Office will allow airlines and other carriers to accept BRPs and EUSS BRCs expiring on or after December 31, 2024, as valid travel documents until March 31, 2025, pending further review.

Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA):

From January 8, 2025, nationals from non-EU/EEA countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, will need an ETA to enter the UK without a visa. Applications opened on November 27, 2024.

From April 2, 2025, nationals from EU and EEA countries (excluding Ireland) and Switzerland will also require an ETA. Applications for this category will open on March 5, 2025.

New Financial Requirements for 2025:

Students:

From January 2, 2025, students applying to study in London must demonstrate financial capacity of One Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty-Three Pounds (£1,483), approximately One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty Nine United States Dollars (\$1,839 USD) per month for up to nine (9) months. Those studying outside London must show one Thousand One Hundred and Thirty-Six Pounds (£1,136), approximately One Thousand Four Hundred and Nine United States Dollars (\$1,409 USD) per month.

For nine-month courses, students in London must provide evidence of savings totalling Thirteen Thousand, Three Hundred and Forty Eight Pounds (£13,348) approximately Sixteen Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty United States Dollars (\$16,550 USD), while those outside London must provide evidence of Ten Thousand Two Hundred and Twenty-Four Pounds (£10,224) approximately Twelve Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty United States Dollars (\$12,680 USD). Funds must be held for at least twenty-eight (28) consecutive days and within Thirty-One (31) days of the visa application date.

Tourists:

Tourists must demonstrate financial stability to cover accommodation, transportation, and daily expenses. While no fixed amount is stipulated, longer stays may undergo more rigorous financial scrutiny.

Skilled Worker Visa Applicants:

Applicants must show proof of One Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy Pounds (£1,270) approximately One Thousand Five Hundred and Seventy-Five United States Dollars (\$1,575 USD) for personal maintenance unless the sponsoring employer certifies financial support.





Finland

NEW MINIMUM INCOME THRESHOLD FOR RESIDENCE PERMITS

The Finnish Ministry for Economic Affairs and Employment has announced an update to the minimum salary threshold for residence permit applicants, effective January 1, 2025.

Under the updated policy, foreign skilled workers applying for a residence permit in Finland via employment must have a minimum monthly income of One Thousand, Six Hundred Euros (€1,600) approximately One Thousand Six Hundred and Fifty-One United States Dollars (\$1,651 USD), an increase from the previously applicable One Thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety-Nine Euro (€1,399) approximately One Thousand Four Hundred and Forty-Four United States Dollars (\$1,444 USD).

The Policy also applies to the extended permits application from April 1, 2025.

This updated salary requirements aims to ensure that foreign workers and naturalized residents are financially capable of sustaining themselves in Finland. It must be noted that the salary requirements only apply to primary employment as other income is not included.

Find more:
<https://businessday.ng/careers/article/finland-introduces-new-minimum-income-threshold-of-e1600-to-obtain-residence-permit/>

<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/5202425/new-minimum-income-limit-as-of-1-january-2025-for-the-residence-permit-for-an-employed-person>

North America

Canada

CANADA DISCONTINUES LABOUR MARKET IMPACT ASSESSMENT ("LMIA")-BASED JOB OFFER POINTS FROM EXPRESS ENTRY

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship ("IRCC"), has announced that, beginning in early 2025, Express Entry candidates will no longer receive additional points for having a job offer.

This measure aims to mitigate fraudulent practices associated with the unlawful buying and selling of LMIA's to artificially boost Express Entry candidates' scores.

It is worthwhile to note that this development will only impact applicants pursuing permanent residence through the express entry system, including those currently working in Canada temporarily but will not affect applicants who have already been invited to apply or who have an application in progress.

Find more:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/12/canada-takes-action-to-reduce-fraud-in-express-entry-system.html>

CANADA OPENS INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE CANADA ("IEC") PROGRAM FOR 2025

Canada has officially opened the IEC program for 2025 to eligible candidates as of December 16, 2024. Candidates have been advised to create their profiles online and begin preparing for the first round of invitations scheduled to take place during January.

For context, the IEC is a program that offers young individuals from countries with youth mobility agreements (YMA) with Canada and selected non-partner countries the opportunity to work and travel in Canada. The program comprises of three distinct categories, namely:

- Working Holiday:** this is ideal for candidates seeking the freedom to work for any employer in Canada. The candidates receive an Open Work Permit which allows them to change jobs and locations while living in Canada.
- Young Professionals:** this is ideal for candidates looking to gain professional Canadian work experience. The candidate needs a valid job offer from a Canadian employer and employer-specific work permits is issued which means that such candidate must work for the same employer at a specified location.

3. **International Co-op (Internship):** this is suitable for international students needing to complete an internship or work placement in Canada as part of their academic program.

Find more:
<https://immigrationnewscanada.ca/international-experience-canada-iec-2025/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec/apply-work-permit.html>

CANADA PLANS TO INTRODUCE NEW PERMANENT RESIDENCY PATHWAYS FOR 2025

In a bid to address labour shortages, foster linguistic diversity, and meet the caregiving and economic needs of Canada's communities, the IRCC have introduced new programmes for permanent residence permit in 2025. These programs include:

- Enhanced Caregiver Pilot Programs:** This is ideal for home care workers, enabling them to secure permanent residency upon their arrival in Canada. To be eligible for this program, the applicant must:
 - attain a minimum score of 4 on the Canadian Language Benchmarks.
 - hold an education level equivalent to a Canadian high school diploma.
 - have recent and relevant experience in caregiving.
 - secure a full-time job offer in Canada's home care sector.
- Rural Community Immigration Pilot Programs:** This program is designed to attract and retain skilled foreign workers in smaller, underserved communities and ensure the long-term settlement of immigrants in rural areas.
- Francophone Community Immigration Pilot Programs:** This program is intended to focus on increasing the number of french-speaking immigrants settling in Francophone minority communities across Canada. It is aimed at supporting the economic development of Francophone communities, and increasing the demographic weight of french-speaking populations outside Quebec.

It is worthwhile to note that these programs not only offer immigrants clear, accessible pathways to permanency residence but also strengthen the social and economic fabric of communities across the nation.

Find more:
<https://immigrationnewscanada.ca/new-canada-permanent-residency-pathways/#:~:text=Canada%20is%20gearing%20up%20to%20launch%20four%20new,the%20caregiving%20and%20economic%20needs%20of%20Canada%E2%80%99s%20communities>

Asia

Vietnam

VIETNAM LAUNCHES ELECTRONIC PORTAL FOR VISA APPLICATIONS

Vietnam launched a new electronic visa (e-visa) portal in November 2024 to operate alongside the previous website used in processing applications - <http://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/>. This new portal features improvements including upgraded user experience, addition of English and Vietnamese Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) among others.

As from November 2024, international travelers can now apply for electronic visas through the new portal - <http://thithucdientu.gov.vn/>.

Find more
<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/travel/visa/vietnam-launches-new-e-visa-portal-to-facilitate-foreigners-entry-4814067.html>

Thailand

THAILAND EXPANDS ELECTRONIC PLATFORM FOR E-VISA APPLICATION

The Kingdom of Thailand launched an expansion of its e-visa system to allow for easy and accessible Thailand visa to foreign nationals all around the world, effective from January 1, 2025.





The Thailand e-Visa online application service allows applicants fill out the Thailand visa application form, submit digital copies of all the required supporting documents online and pay the visa fee online.

The official website for the Thailand e-Visa is thaiveisa.go.th.

Find more:

<https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/kick-off-thai-e-visa-en>

<https://thaiest.com/blog/thailand-e-visa-application-apply-for-thai-visa-online>

Africa

Ghana

GHANA APPROVES VISA-FREE ENTRY FOR ALL AFRICA CITIZENS IN 2025

The president of the Ghana, President Nana Akufo-Addo, recently approved the visa-free entry for citizens of all African nations, beginning in January 2025.

This policy is aimed at boosting economic growth, encouraging tourism, and cultural exchange across the continent. Previously, Ghana provided visa-free access to citizens of twenty-six (26) African nations, while travellers from other African countries could obtain a visa upon arrival.

This development marks a significant step toward realizing the African Union's goal of economic integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Find more

<https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/lifestyle/ghana-becomes-5th-african-country-to-implement-visa-free-travel-for-africans/4rk8xbt>

Immigration Outlook for 2025

- **Increased Inter-Africa Mobility**

It is anticipated that Inter-Africa economic and workforce mobility will grow significantly as evident in some of the notable trends from 2024. For instance, Ghana recently approved visa-free entry for citizens of all African nations, starting in January 2025. Similarly, Kenya and Ethiopia enhanced bilateral agreements to facilitate the free movement of professionals, particularly to support key sectors such as healthcare and technology.

- **Migration from Nigeria to foreign countries**

The migration of Nigerians to foreign countries is anticipated to increase in 2025, driven by persistent challenges such as economic hardship, inadequate healthcare and education systems, sectoral stagnation, insecurity, and the continued depreciation of the Naira.

Some foreign countries have released migration plans for 2025 to attract skilled and unskilled workers to meet their labor market demands. Unless there is substantial improvement in Nigeria's domestic conditions, a growing number of Nigerians will likely take advantage of these migration opportunities.

- **Use of Advanced Technology/Intelligence (AI)**

In 2025, African countries are expected to increase investment in advanced technology to improve border security and immigration processes. AI-powered border surveillance systems and smart immigration checkpoints will be implemented to combat irregular migration and human trafficking. Additionally, the adoption of technology in visa processing is expected to streamline applications, improve efficiency, and ensure greater transparency. These technological advancements will make immigration systems more effective and secure, benefiting both citizens and governments.

- **Policy and Regulatory Development**

To attract foreign investment and bolster economic growth, countries are expected to simplify their immigration processes and entry requirements. Efforts will be focused on streamlining visa issuance and fostering collaboration between African nations and international partners. This will likely make it easier for individuals and businesses to engage in cross-border activities, facilitating economic and workforce mobility across the region.

Conclusion

It is evident from the global immigration trends that several nations are revising their immigration policies to attract skilled workers, address labor shortages, and streamline application processes. These changes reflect the growing demand for talent in critical sectors and are expected to shape the global migration landscape significantly.

We encourage applicants seeking opportunities abroad to be cognizant of these changes as they are dynamic and seek professional guidance when necessary.

This alert is for general information only. It is not offered as advice on any particular matter, whether legal, procedural or otherwise.

Foreign currency values are subject to fluctuations, and it is advisable to verify current rates for updated fees.

For additional information, please contact Bloomfield LP Email- immigration@bloomfield-law.com or your usual contact at Bloomfield LP.