

IMMIGRATION IN GREECE



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System of immigration



Introducing Greece which can be described as one of the most popular European countries. Located at the crossroads of Europe and considered the cradle of Western civilization, Greece shares land borders with North Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north, Albania to the northwest, and Turkey to the northeast. Its population is currently estimated at about 11 420 163. The official language is Greek. The official currency is the euro (EUR). Greece is a core member state of the European Union and the Schengen area, which provides many benefits for its residents. It is possible to acquire a residence permit in Greece.

Immigration services

The central government or more specifically the Ministry of Interior (General Secretariat for Population and Social Cohesion), particularly its Departments of Migration Policy and Social Integration, is responsible for immigration and integration policy in Greece. The Ministry of Public Order and Citizens Protection and the Greek police are responsible for the return of third-country nationals illegally residing in the country. The Asylum Service is the country's primary autonomous structure dealing with the examination of claims for asylum and international protection. This service contributes to policymaking at the national level. It ensures cooperation with the EU and international organizations by providing administrative support to the new Refugees Authority in cases where requests for international protection are rejected at the first instance.

Despite the fact that Greek law specifies certain exceptions to visa and entry permit requirements, the generally applied rule is that an applicant cannot be granted a residence permit until he or she has been evaluated and approved by the Greek consulate. So, any person seeking entry to Greece must start out by drafting and submitting an application to the consular authority responsible for his or her country of residence. Submitting an application to the wrong authority will most likely result in a refusal. Such services are usually best provided by law firms and immigration agencies.

Purposes for immigration



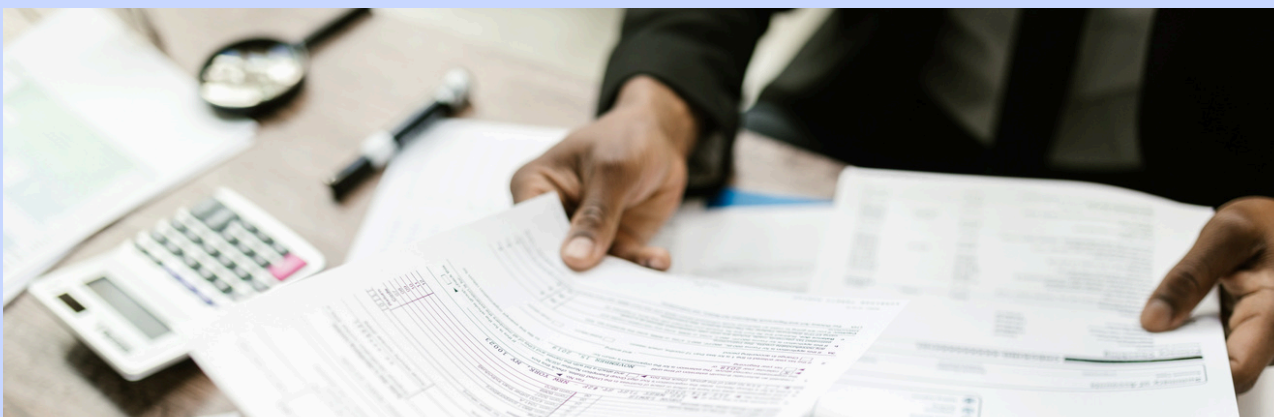
The following are the most common purposes for which people plan immigration to Greece:

- **Employment opportunities:** Greece attracts immigrants who are seeking better job prospects and economic opportunities. The country has industries such as tourism, shipping, agriculture, and information technology that can provide employment options for skilled workers.
- **Education:** Greece is home to prestigious universities and educational institutions, attracting students from around the world who seek to pursue higher education in various fields. Many international students choose to immigrate to Greece for the purpose of studying and gaining qualifications.
- **Family reunification:** Greek citizens or residents may sponsor family members for immigration, allowing them to reunite with their loved ones who are already settled in the country. Family reunification is a common reason for immigration to Greece.
- **Humanitarian reasons:** Greece has been a destination for individuals seeking asylum or protection due to conflicts or persecution in their home countries. The ongoing migration crisis has led to an influx of refugees and asylum seekers into Greece, seeking safety and a new start.

Indirect or other routes of immigration

Here are some of the routes through which a person can migrate to Greece.

- 1. Work permits and employment:** Individuals can immigrate to Greece for employment purposes if they have a confirmed job offer from a Greek employer. The employer must demonstrate that no Greek or EU citizen is available to fill the position. Obtaining a work permit and a visa is necessary in such cases.
- 2. Student visas:** International students can immigrate to Greece by applying for a student visa. This option allows individuals to pursue higher education at recognized Greek universities or educational institutions. It's important to apply for and secure admission to an approved institution before applying for a student visa.
- 3. Family reunification:** If the Immigrant has close family members who are Greek citizens or legal residents of Greece, the Immigrant may be eligible for family reunification. This option allows family members to join their relatives in Greece, subject to specific requirements and documentation.
- 4. Investor and entrepreneur visas:** Greece offers residency permits and visas to individuals who make significant investments or start businesses in the country. The specific investment requirements and criteria may vary, but these programs aim to attract foreign investors and stimulate economic growth.
- 5. Humanitarian protection and asylum:** Individuals who are fleeing conflict, persecution, or human rights abuses in their home countries may seek asylum or humanitarian protection in Greece. The process involves applying for refugee status or other forms of international protection, and it is typically handled by the relevant Greek authorities.



Types of Visas



Greece has the following types of visas :

Transit visa

A transit visa is a temporary travel authorization that lets passengers pass through a foreign country to get to another. This is usually used for air travel; however, it might also apply to sea or land travel too. A transit visa allows you to enter a country temporarily to change flights or catch another form of transport to your onward destination. These visas are often essential if your passport is not eligible for visa waivers or other online visa alternatives in the country in question.

Tourist visa

A tourist visa is an official document or stamp that authorizes an individual to enter a foreign country for leisure and tourism. Tourist visas typically allow the holder to stay in the host country for a short period. This can range from several days to several months. During the stay, tourist visa holders are not allowed to work or engage in non-tourist activities. In some cases, a short-stay visa for a particular country may permit multiple purposes in addition to tourism, such as business.

Visitor visa

Third-country nationals wishing to visit family members, friends, or relatives living in the Schengen Zone may be subject to the Schengen visa regime.

Family reunion visa

If a person wishes to join a family member in Greece, he will need to apply for a family reunification visa. Only the following are eligible for application: spouses and children under 18 of the residents in Greece. This visa is also granted to establish family relationships, like marriage or adoption.

Business visa:

Government authorities issue business visas to travelers who intend to conduct permissible business activities and attend meetings that do not constitute labor or employment in a specific country. Business visas are also often different from work permits as they are only granted for a temporary short-term period while, generally, work permits can be granted for longer periods. Many business visas are valid for 30 to 90 days within a 180-day period. However, some business visas are granted for as little as 15 days or for periods longer than 90 days.

Medical treatment visa:

A medical visa is a type of visa that permits the holder to enter a country for the purpose of undergoing medical treatment there. Many patients around the world travel abroad to receive treatment. This may be because certain treatments are unavailable in their country of residence or because they wish to see a particular specialist based abroad. Medical visas generally permit short-term stays to cover the duration of the treatment. Some countries also issue medical visas to companions who are accompanying the patient (usually friends, family.)

Short-Term study visa:

A Student Schengen Visa is an entry permit to the Schengen Zone, granted to third-country nationals wishing to enter and remain for short-stays in any of the member states, for the purpose of studying. This visa permits its holder to remain in the Schengen territory for a maximum of 3 months. If your study or training course lasts longer than that, you should apply for a Long-Stay Study Visa at the embassy of the respective country.

Cultural visa:

The Schengen Cultural Visa enables people to enter the Schengen area to participate in events related to culture, sports, film shooting, or religion. The full name of the visa is the Schengen Cultural, Film Crew, Sports, and Religious Visa.

Work visa:

All nationals from countries outside of the European Union ("EU") or European Economic Area (EEA) must have valid residence and work permit to be employed in Greece. They must get this document before starting their employment activity in the country. To work in Greece, a person from a non-EU or EEA nation must first get a visa to enter the country. This visa is called Visa D and is a long-stay visa. Once a person has this visa, he/she can then apply for a residence/work permit in Greece.

Licenses and documentation required



The following are the documents required to apply for a Greek Visa:

- Valid passport;
- Two recent photos;
- Health insurance;
- Proof of accommodation
- Evidence of sufficient financial means
- Travel itinerary
- Medical certificate
- Documents regarding employment status; and
- Additional required documents for minors.

For minors traveling to Greece, whether with parents or a legal guardian, these documents must be presented at the Greek consulate:

- Birth certificate;
- Marriage certificate of parents; and
- Consent of the parental authority or legal guardian, in case the minor travels alone or only with one parent.

Additional requirements according to the purpose of entry

Note that depending on the purpose of the trip to Greece, a person will need to submit additional requirements for a Greece visa application.

Recent developments

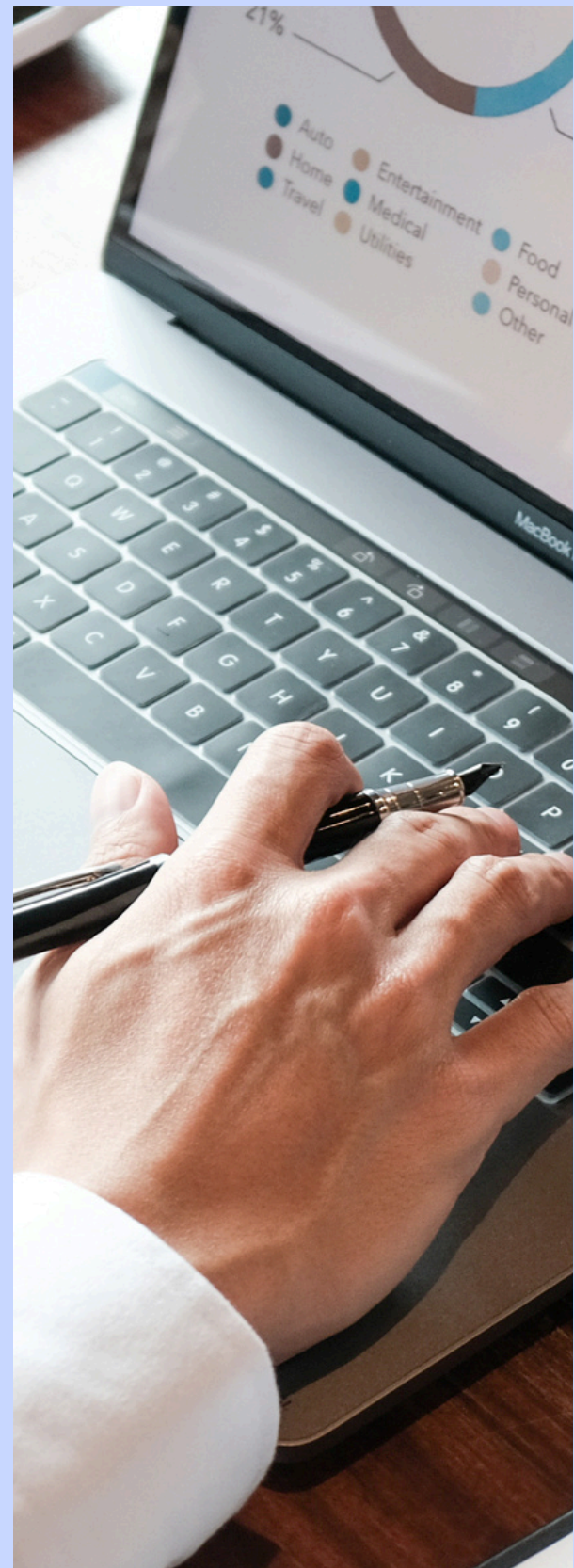
Greek parliament passes new code on migration:

The Greek Parliament has passed a new law that changes some of the regulations on residence permits for migrants from third countries, benefiting migrant children who have been born and raised in Greece as well as those who wish to enter the country for work purposes. On Wednesday, March 29, the Parliament approved a law extending the residence permits' validity for migrant children born and raised in the country. In line with the new rules, this group of migrants will be entitled to receive residency permits that will remain valid for a period of ten years instead of the previous five.

Greece to Permit Non-EU Nationals to Leave & Return More Than Once Until Dec. 31, 2023

Third-country nationals will be subject to easier entry rules when planning to head to Greece after the latter's Ministry of Citizen Protection has announced that they will be eligible to exit and re-enter the country for a period from January 1 until December 31, 2023. Through a statement, the same Ministry has announced that such a decision has been introduced as part of efforts to further ease the travel process for foreign citizens from third countries. It has been reported that to leave the country and enter again during the period mentioned above, third-country nationals must be holders of valid passports or other travel documents recognized by authorities in the Hellenic Republic and also meet the following requirements:

- Prove that they have completed all the required documents for the initial granting or renewal of a residence permit in line with the country's Law; and
- Present a certificate of legal residence following the country's Law.



Greece's new immigration law to go into effect on 1 January 2024:

The Greek authorities recently approved a new Immigration Code, which will enter into force on 1 January 2024. Once the new Immigration Code is implemented, the following changes will go into effect:

- (i) Highly skilled third-country nationals will be eligible to apply for Blue Cards;
- (ii) Third-country nationals who are already lawfully present in Greece using a C Visa, residence permit, or their valid passport will be able to apply for a Blue Card from within Greece provided they meet the eligibility criteria;
- (iii) third-country nationals who hold a valid Blue Card issued in another EU Member State and have resided in that Member State for at least 12 months will be eligible to apply for a Greek Blue Card residence permit.

Greek golden visa: The new rules for 2023:

On December 21st, 2022 the Greek Ministry of Development submitted the amendment of the law into parliament to raise the Golden Visa minimum to €500,000, in certain parts of Greece.

According to the governmental 'Amendment - Addition' of the Permanent Residence of Investor (Golden Visa), paragraph B of article 20 of the law "4521/2014 (A' 80)", it is revised as follows:

Regions of Greece that will have a minimum investment of 500k for the Greek golden visa

The new minimum value at the time of purchase will apply to the North, Central, and South sectors of Athens in the Attica Region, the islands of Mykonos and Santorini, and the Municipality of Thessaloniki. For the other regions, the limit of 250,000 euros will remain.

The amendment clarifies that the above investment must concern the purchase of a single property, while in cases of joint property ownership, the minimum

Golden visa €500K property threshold extends for 3 Months

With the same amendment, however, a transitional period is provided for investors who have started the procedures. The deadline has been set originally on April 30, 2023. With a new amendment voted by the Greek Parliament, a new extension by July 31, 2023, has been introduced, allowing investors to qualify through a €250,000 investment in one of the areas undergoing a price hike if they make a 10% deposit before this date. Third-country nationals have until 31 December 2023 to complete ongoing contracts for the areas where minimum values are changing.

How we can help?

The firm can provide valuable assistance in the process of immigrating to Greece. Here are some of how our firm can help:

Application assistance

The team can help the client to prepare and submit an application for a visa or other immigration-related documents. This includes reviewing your application and ensuring that all necessary documentation is included.

Translation services

The team can provide translation services to ensure that an application is submitted in the correct format and with the correct information.

Communication with immigration authorities

The team can communicate with the immigration authorities on your behalf, ensuring that all queries or concerns are addressed in a timely and professional manner.

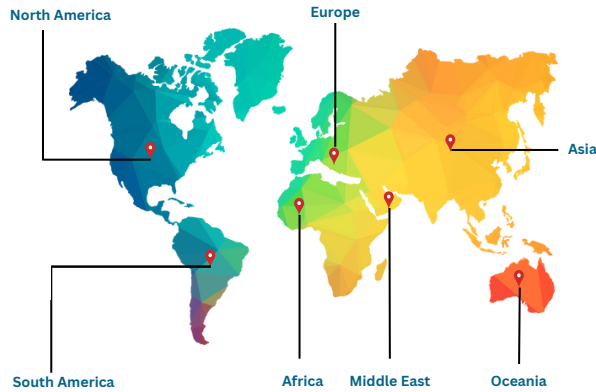
Representation in legal proceedings

If a person encounters legal issues during the immigration process, the team can represent a client in legal proceedings, such as appeals or hearings.

Overall, our firm can provide valuable support throughout the immigration process, helping clients navigate complex legal requirements and ensuring that an application is processed as smoothly as possible.



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