

## Germany Immigration Update

### Immigration landscape

As you may be aware, we have been experiencing significant delays in visa and permit processing times in Germany which are causing disruption to planned employee start dates in country. Germany is experiencing an unprecedented increase in visa applications—particularly from India and Turkey. For example, for the period January–May 2023, the authorities issued 64% more visas to Turkish nationals compared with the same period in 2022. High volumes, and a number of other pressures within the German immigration system, has led to considerable uncertainty in the German immigration process.

### Why is the German immigration system under pressure?

The pressures facing the German immigration landscape are not solely a result of increased volumes from specific countries. The challenges encountered by the German authorities are due to multiple factors which include:

- Companies locating European headquarters in German cities because of Brexit
- Increased numbers of foreign employees who might have previously relocated to other countries (for example, the UK)
- A system that remains document heavy and paper based
- Lack of digitization across many services and limited departmental interfaces between that which has been digitized
- Continued government understaffing

### Most recent developments in the German immigration system

Further to our alert from last year ([Newland Chase | GERMANY: Authorities Closure and Delays](#)), we have seen continued and exacerbated challenges in supporting visa and permit applications:

- The impact of the increased workload has been compounded by the traditional holiday period over the month of August.
- German visa processing offices have been at full capacity for some time and have suspended visa rejection appeals to focus the workforce on processing new applications. Furthermore, the authorities have taken the measure to process document renewal cases nearer to the document expiry dates which further demonstrates the lack of staff at hand.
- Appointments will continue to be challenging to obtain and will not be readily available. If assignees have expiring permits during the holiday season, they should share their travel plans with their respective consultant as soon as possible so we can contact the authorities to obtain interim permits as quickly as possible.
- Please also note that interim permits are not being issued as easily as in the past. We cannot guarantee the issuance of an interim permit, even in time for planned travel due to the backlog with the Immigration authorities.
- We have noticed that the authorities are taking between two and eight weeks to respond to emails and are often unavailable by phone or direct email communication.

## Helping to manage your assignees' expectations

We are acutely aware of our role in empowering you to manage the expectations of your assignees. Many assignees will have encountered other immigration processes in other countries and may expect a certain level of streamlined processing that simply does not exist in Germany. Conversely, some assignees may be relocating for the first time, so the immigration processing period will naturally present challenges and uncertainties in what is already an uncertain period for them and their families. Finally, when an assignee has previously lived and worked in Germany with a residence permit, it's important to recognize that this circumstance will trigger an alternative immigration procedure—based on their pre-existing German immigration file—and potentially result in additional delays. This outcome may differ from the expectations of the returning assignee.

Managing expectations from the outset is key. Once the assignee is in Germany and their application is in process, a variety of document-heavy and complex processes, educational and training recognition requirements, and travel restrictions must be addressed. We want to make sure that we assist in always avoiding stressful situations during the process; so, providing realistic timeframes, together with essential and timely information to your assignees is a fundamental part of our service strategy. It is important that both assignees and all players in the relocation process (from HR colleagues, receiving managers, recruiters, and other relocation providers) are prepared for longer wait times and changing requirements throughout the process.

## Promising news from the German immigration authorities

The German government is aware of the pressures facing employers relocating staff into Germany and wishes to attract international talent. In recent months, Labor Minister Hubertus Heil has actively promoted Germany as a destination of choice for relocating foreign talent. In addition, the government passed a bill that will make it easier for skilled workers to move to Germany from outside the EU. It is expected to come into force in three steps



between November 2023, March 2024 and June 2024 and will resemble more of a points-based system. More details are coming in the next few weeks. Whilst this is encouraging, attracting an estimated 60,000 more skilled workers will mean appropriate resourcing will be even more essential.

Newland Chase will continue to monitor the current delays, together with developments in proposed changes to the German immigration system and will keep you updated throughout this period of uncertainty across the German immigration landscape. We look forward to continued partnership with you, to achieve the best possible outcomes for your assignees.