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Ireland – New Initiatives to Attract Skilled Workers to Ireland, Streamline Permit Process

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Further to our [Flash International Executive Alert 2013-055](#) (27 March 2013) which outlined initial plans for a re-vamp of Ireland's employment permit process, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), on 10 April 2013¹, formally announced a new series of reform initiatives as noted on its Web site (<http://www.enterprise.gov.ie/>). The changes – which largely take immediate effect – are another step in the evolution of Ireland's employment permit system geared towards:

- attracting workers from abroad to fill skills shortages, and
- achieving a faster, more user-friendly system.

Highlights of the changes are noted below.

- A broadening of the “highly skilled occupations” list, particularly for Green Card applications where the salary range is €30,000 - €60,000 per annum.
- A “Labour Market Needs Test” is required for certain types of work permits which previously involved eight weeks of advertising the job vacancy. This has now been reduced to two weeks. Mandatory newspaper advertising has also been relaxed; it is now possible to advertise the job for three days on a job's Web site as an alternative approach.
- Amendments have also been made to the employment permit application forms designed to reduce the burden of providing supporting documentation.
- Requirements for applicants to be outside of Ireland during the application process are also being relaxed. Provided the applicant is otherwise legally resident in Ireland, he or she is now eligible to apply for an employment permit in an occupation that is approved for having a shortage of highly skilled workers.
- With effect from 1 July 2013, non-EEA (European Economic Area) nationals will be permitted to travel to Ireland where they are invited by an Irish employer to attend an interview on the highly skilled occupations list.
- Holders of *Intra-Company Transfer* (ICT) permits and *Contract For Service Provider* permits can now apply for other types of employment permit where previously this was not allowed.
- The prior requirement for ICT applications that the employee be working for the home country employer for at least 12 months has now been reduced to six months.
- The remuneration threshold has been reduced from €30,000 to €27,000 where the individual is an IT graduate from a foreign college or will take up a technical sales role with non-EEA language requirements.

- Income levels were previously based on “salary” in considering employment permit applications. Going forward “remuneration” on wage statements will be taken into account. Therefore, other cash allowances and taxable benefits-in-kind may be included for the purpose of determining income.

The DJEI also announced that there will also be improvements in its own working practices/procedures, designed to achieve the department’s commitment of speeding up processing times by at least 10 days.

KPMG Note

The department’s statement also provides a welcome snapshot of the future with further announcements to be made over the next few months, including:

- use of a single application form which will electronically guide the applicant through the form;
- online applications;
- broader access to the DJEI telephone call center;
- communication by email in respect of applications;

Further updates will be provided over the coming months as they are announced by the Irish government.

Footnote:

1 Also, see: <http://www.djei.ie/press/2013/20130410b.htm> .

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The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Ireland. The information contained herein is of a general nature and based on authorities that are subject to change. Applicability of the information to specific situations should be determined through consultation with your tax adviser.

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