

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

2026-105 | 20 April 2026

Sweden – Government Approves Bill to Tighten Labour Immigration Rules

The Swedish government has approved a bill introducing more stringent conditions for labour immigration, including enhanced controls and new criminal provisions to counteract fraud and work-related crime, while maintaining pathways for highly skilled labour migration. The proposals are scheduled to take effect from 1 June 2026 and are based on an agreement between the government and the Sweden Democrats.¹

WHY THIS MATTERS

The legislative changes could significantly affect employers seeking to recruit non-European Union (EU) nationals and globally mobile employees considering work in Sweden. The introduction of stricter wage requirements, increased criminal penalties, and enhanced powers to refuse work permits raises the compliance threshold for employers, particularly those hiring in occupations where abuse of the current system has been identified.

The ability to exclude entire professions from work permit eligibility and to double sanctions for employing unauthorized workers could heighten operational risk for non-compliance. At the same time, highly skilled workers may benefit from certain regulatory improvements, such as expanded in-country application rights and longer permit periods, which may facilitate mobility for targeted groups.

Key Highlights

- Introduction of a condition requiring labour migrants to be paid at least 90 percent of the median wage for a work permit to be granted; potential exceptions for certain professional groups in cases of particular labour shortages.
- Authority for the government to exclude specific professions from work permit eligibility where serious abuse of immigration regulations is identified, regulated via ordinance.
- Establishment of two new offences - exploitation of foreign labour and trading in work permits - to enable more effective prosecution.

- Refusal of work permit applications if the employer has been sanctioned or is suspected or convicted of certain offences; potential doubling of the special charge for employing unauthorized foreign nationals.
- Extended permit periods for EU Blue Card holders and seasonal workers; expanded rights for certain highly skilled foreign nationals to apply for residence permits from within Sweden.
- Proposed legislative amendments to enter into force on 1 June 2026.

KPMG INSIGHTS

In light of the changes, the organisations might wish to consider the following:

- Review current and planned use of labour migrants, especially in sectors at higher risk of exclusion or scrutiny.
- Assess salary structures to support compliance with the new wage requirement and prepare for possible exceptions.
- Strengthen internal processes for vetting third-party recruiters and monitoring for regulatory updates.
- Prepare for potential increases in permit processing times due to additional controls and expanded grounds for refusal.
- Monitor developments regarding the government's ordinance on excluded professions and the operationalization of new criminal provisions.

If employers, organisations, or individuals have questions regarding the updated immigration regulations and require further advice and assistance regarding next steps, they should consult with their qualified immigration counsel, or they can contact a member of the Immigration team with KPMG in Sweden (see the Contacts section).

ENDNOTE:

1 Government Offices of Sweden, Ministry of Justice, "[Stricter labour immigration regulations to end abuse and strengthen controls](#)," published on 17 December 2025.

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Contacts

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or the following professional with the KPMG International member firm in Sweden:



Peter Lindström
Senior Manager
Tel. + 46 72 1458439
peter.a.lindstrom@kpmg.se

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