

New rules for the Red-White-Red Card

Simplifications offer new paths to work and residency for qualified foreigners

Good news for companies hiring foreign nationals – and for foreign nationals who plan to live in Austria. As of 1 October 2022, amendments to the Austrian Employment of Foreign Nationals Act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz – AuslBG) and the Austrian Settlement and Residence Act (Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz – NAG) came into effect.

For businesses in Austria that want to employ skilled workers from third countries (i.e. who are not EU/EEA/Swiss citizens) and for those workers themselves, the process has been simplified in a number of areas. Below are some examples of the changes:

- Applications can now be processed more quickly by the authorities.
- The minimum salary for some Red-White-Red cards has been lowered – the new minimum salaries (per year, gross, 14 payments) are as follows:
 - EU Blue Card: €44,395
 - RWR Other Key Workers: minimum salary is now €39,690 and applies only to workers over the age of 30
 - RWR Card for Graduates: the only salary requirement now is that it is in line with the applicable collective bargaining agreement and the standard additional payment.
- Criteria for the Red-White-Red Card and its various subcategories have been simplified as follows: The allocation of points for qualifications, professional experience and language skills has been amended and additional points are now allocated for the age criterion and non-university vocational training for skilled workers in shortage occupations. Professional experience that is in line with the level of training is no longer required for the Red-White-Red Card for Other Key Workers.
- Language certificates to verify language skills for the Red-White-Red Card points system are now valid for five years rather than one year (German and English).
- Birth certificates no longer have to be submitted.
- Professional experience is now recognised in half-years (rather than years).
- Five additional points can be awarded if the worker can demonstrate knowledge of English and provide evidence that English is the company's language of business.
- IT workers can now obtain an EU Blue Card if they have a minimum of three years recognised professional experience in their field and meet other relevant criteria. Previously only persons who had completed a relevant degree could apply for the Red-White-Red Card for Other Key Workers
- The new Red-White-Red Card for “Core Employees” has been introduced for permanent employment of regular seasonal workers (requirements: employed as seasonal workers in the same industry sector for at least seven months per year in the last two years, min. A2 level German, employed position offered on a permanent basis).

- The new EU Blue Card directive has been implemented. This is intended to simplify the process of changing employer and improve mobility for EU Blue Card holders.
- Evidence of suitable accommodation is no longer required as part of the RWR Card application process (only applies for family members). A “Meldebestätigung” confirming registration of a main residence in Austria must be presented when collecting the RWR or Blue Card.
- Employers can now file applications from families at the same time as the application for the skilled worker in Austria, which enables them to immigrate at the same time. The RWR Card Plus for family members will be valid for the same period as the skilled worker’s residence permit, i.e. up to two years.

Business Immigration Office - the service point for international executives in Vienna

At the Business Immigration Office (BIO), multilingual experts from the Vienna Business Agency work closely with the relevant official authorities to provide international skilled workers with advice on the residency process. The service is confidential, independent and free of charge. The experts in the Expat Center are available to provide support for international skilled workers moving to Vienna. They offer expats and their families advice and information on all aspects of life as an expat.