Employing Professional Drivers from Abroad: Entry Options and Regulations

Professional drivers from third countries can be employed in Germany with the approval of the Federal Employment Agency (BA). Take advantage of this opportunity and find out what the requirements are.

Hiring candidates with recognised professional driving qualifications

You can employ third-country nationals as HGV, coach or bus drivers – even if they have no formal training in Germany – if the **Federal Employment Agency (BA)** has approved their employment. Approval is granted under Section 24a (1) of the **Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners** (BeschV) and requires drivers to have the necessary licences and qualifications for employment as a professional driver. These include an EU or **EEA** driving licence for the relevant category and the initial or accelerated initial qualification under Directive (EU) 2022/2561. Proof of an EU or EEA driving licence and the required (accelerated) initial qualification is generally not necessary in the approval procedure. As an employer, you are responsible for ensuring that your employees have the necessary licences and certificates and for confirming this to the Federal Employment Agency as part of the declaration on the employment relationship.

In the approval procedure, the Federal Employment Agency only checks the conditions of employment, such as whether the foreign skilled worker's salary and working hours correspond to the usual local working conditions for comparable work. This check does not involve a priority review. The **visa** application is checked for plausibility by the visa department.

If your future employee is over the age of 45, they must earn a certain minimum salary for employment in Germany or provide proof of adequate pension provision. In 2026, this minimum salary is **€55.770**.

Facilitate entry of professional drivers via fast-track procedure for skilled workers

If your future skilled workers already have the required professional driving qualifications, you can speed up their entry process by applying to the competent foreigners authority for the **fast-track procedure for skilled workers**.

Hiring candidates without a professional driving qualification

If your applicants do not yet have an EU or EEA driving licence or an (accelerated) initial qualification, you may consider employing them in an alternative occupation (e.g. in the warehouse or workshop) as long as you also offer them the opportunity to obtain the necessary German driving licence and (accelerated) initial qualification.

Entry and residence for the purpose of qualification measures are subject to approval of the employment by the Federal Employment Agency (BA), which will grant its approval if the following requirements are met in accordance with Section 24a (2) of the Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners (BeschV):

- You offer your future employee an employment contract that requires them to take part in training to obtain the (accelerated) initial qualification and a German driving licence for the required category while working for the company.
- The working conditions for the alternative work during the qualification measures are designed in such a way that your employee is able to obtain a German driving licence or the (accelerated) initial qualification and any necessary language skills within **15 months**.
- The applicant is able to provide evidence of an existing driving licence for the required category from a **third country** for employment as a professional driver in their country of origin.

- You guarantee your future employee a specific job offer as a professional goods vehicle driver or bus/coach driver in your company after obtaining a driving licence and the (accelerated) initial qualification.

If these requirements are met, the Federal Employment Agency (BA) can give approval pursuant to Section 24a (2) of the Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners (BeschV), if the future employee has not obtained the EU or EEA driving licence or the (accelerated) initial qualification or both.

Your future employee can enter the country without an EU or EEA driving licence if he or she has already obtained the (accelerated) initial qualification during previous employment in another EU or **EFTA** memeber state and if the qualification is still valid. Drivers must exchange their foreign driving licence for a German one within six months of registering their place of residence in Germany. If the issuing state is not listed in **Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers (FeV)**, the holder must take theory and practical tests before their foreign driving licence can be exchanged for a German one. If the issuing state is listed in Annex 11 of the Regulations for the Licensing of Drivers (FeV) with the corresponding licence category, the holder's foreign driving licence can often be exchanged without the need for a test, or at least the procedure is made easier.

In such cases, you should contact the German diplomatic mission responsible for the applicant to find out what documents are required for the visa process.

Further training required if basic qualification has expired

If the foreign professional driver's EU (accelerated) initial qualification is no longer valid, an approval of employment or entry is still possible pursuant to Section 24a (2) of the Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners (BeschV). In these cases, the applicant must complete further training before taking up employment as a professional driver.

To find out what you, as an employer, need to know about the approval procedure, contact the **Labour Market Approval team at the Federal Employment Agency**.

Video: successfully recruiting and integrating professional drivers

Information on the web

Federal Employment Agency (BA)

Information on admission to the labour market

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