



RECRUITING AND EMPLOYING RUSSIAN SKILLED WORKERS

- Brief information for employers -

In view of the political situation in the Russian Federation and its ongoing war against Ukraine, many skilled workers are leaving the Russian Federation in search of new opportunities to live and work in other countries. For German companies, they represent an additional source of skilled labour.

The Federal Government supports the recruitment and hiring of skilled workers from the Russian Federation in Germany.

For this reason, it has agreed on measures to expedite visa procedures for Russian employees of German and international companies being transferred to Germany. And it is working to speed up procedures for newly recruited skilled workers. The Federal Government has also developed an advertising campaign for its website “Make it in Germany”. The campaign was launched on 1 June 2022, initially in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Turkey, because many Russian skilled workers are apparently located in these countries at present. The advertising campaign is designed to appeal to this group in the hope that they will become interested in taking up skilled employment in Germany.

In the following, employers will find key information for recruiting and employing Russian skilled workers in Germany.

Last updated: 18 July 2022



1. HOW DO I FIND RUSSIAN SKILLED WORKERS?

The Federal Employment Agency offers services to inform employers about employing nationals of countries that are not EU member states (third countries). If you advertise your job listings with the Federal Employment Agency, you can decide whether you would like to employ nationals of third countries. Your job listings will then be published on major international websites such as the European Employment Services website EURES or the “Make it in Germany” website:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/working-in-germany/job-listings>

https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/employers_en

https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/jobseekers_en

In this way, skilled workers from the Russian Federation will quickly be able to find your job listings.

2. DO RUSSIAN SKILLED WORKERS NEED A VISA?

Yes, before they enter Germany, skilled workers who are Russian nationals need to have a **visa** which permits employment. A Schengen visa (also known as a tourist visa) is not sufficient. Which visa is needed depends on various factors. More detailed information is offered by

- the **Visa Navigator** of the Federal Foreign Office (<https://visa.diplo.de/en/index.html#/vib>) and
- the Federal Government website “**Make it in Germany**” (<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/procedure/entry-process>).

Visas are issued by the responsible German mission abroad. Skilled workers who are Russian nationals and usual residents of the Russian Federation can currently apply for visas at the German missions not only in the **Russian Federation**, but also in **Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan** and **Turkey**. Before hiring a Russian skilled worker, please take advantage of the extensive information offered here so that you can help your new employee prepare for the visa application process.

3. WHAT DOES THE LAW REQUIRE FOR A VISA TO BE ISSUED TO A SKILLED WORKER?

a) A binding job offer

The employer must make the skilled worker a binding offer of employment.

b) Approval from the Federal Employment Agency

The Federal Employment Agency must approve the intended employment. The office that issues the visa asks the Federal Employment Agency for its approval in an interagency procedure. Approval is given if the terms of employment are not less favourable than those for comparable German workers and if the skilled worker is qualified to perform the job offered. No approval from the Federal Employment Agency is required for university graduates who have applied for an **EU Blue Card** if the employment they have been offered pays a gross annual salary of at least 56,400 euros (for 2022) and is commensurate with their qualification. Employers provide the necessary information in the certification of employment (*Erklärung zum Beschäftigungsverhältnis*):

<https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/veroeffentlichungen/themen/migration/feg-anwendungshinweise-anlagen/anlage4.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=8> (in German only)

c) Qualification: Vocational training or university degree

The position requires a **skilled worker**. According to residence law, skilled workers are third-country nationals who have successfully completed quality vocational training in Germany or who have completed a degree at an institution of higher education in Germany or another country. If the degree was completed in another country, it must be recognised or otherwise comparable to a German higher education degree.

If this **degree qualifies them for employment in a non-regulated profession** (for example as computer scientists, natural scientists or economists), during the visa procedure the German mission abroad uses the anabin database to check whether it is the equivalent of a German degree (<https://anabin.kmk.org/anabin.html>, in German only). If the degree is not listed in the database, the skilled worker then requests the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) to evaluate whether the degree is the equivalent of a German degree. For applicants for an EU Blue Card, the ZAB must evaluate the degree within two weeks; for other applicants, this process usually takes three months.

People who have completed **vocational training or are applying for employment in (academic) regulated professions** (for example, as physicians or health care workers) must apply to the appropriate office to have their qualifications checked for equivalence with the

relevant German qualification. To work in a **regulated profession** (for example, as a health care worker), a professional licence (*Berufsausübungserlaubnis*) is required.

You can find more information here:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/working-in-germany/recognition/procedure>

Special case: For skilled employment in the field of information and communications technology, the requirement for a foreign degree that is recognised in Germany can be waived under certain conditions (including several years of work experience).

You can find more information here:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types/other/it-specialists>

d) Age

If the skilled worker is **more than 45 years old**, in many cases the prospective employment must pay at least a certain minimum salary, or proof of adequate old-age pension provision must be presented. You can find more information here:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/types/work-qualified-professionals>

e) General requirements

In addition, skilled workers must meet the general requirements for a visa; for example, they must have a passport and be able to support themselves financially. And they must not present a security risk.

4. WHAT CAN I DO TO EXPEDITE THE VISA PROCEDURE?

Given the special situation, the Federal Government is working to ensure that visa applications are processed quickly and with a minimum of bureaucracy.

There are several ways to expedite the process:

- The Residence Act offers a **fast-track procedure for skilled workers** (section 81a) in which employers can initiate the visa procedure on behalf of the skilled worker. In this case, the employer makes an agreement with the local foreigners authority, which then coordinates all the necessary consultations with other government agencies. If all the requirements are met, the foreigners authority issues preliminary approval (*Vorabzustimmung*) which the German mission abroad can retrieve from the Central Register of Foreigners. With this preliminary approval, the skilled worker can get an appointment with the German mission abroad sooner to apply for a visa. This means that compliance with most of the requirements under residence

law is checked in Germany, and it is usually not necessary for original documents to be sent from Germany to the German mission abroad. All the government agencies involved are required to meet short deadlines. The fee for the fast-track procedure is 411 euros. You can find more information here:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/looking-for-foreign-professionals/entering/the-fast-track-procedure-for-skilled-workers>

The fast-track procedure also covers the subsequent immigration of spouses and minor, unmarried children whose visa applications are submitted around the same time.

Some of Germany's federal states have set up central offices to process fast-track visa applications for skilled workers. You can find the points of contact in the federal states here:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/looking-for-foreign-professionals/support/important-points-of-contact>

You can find important forms for the fast-track procedure for skilled workers here (in German only):

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/unternehmen/unterstuetzung/downloads>

- If you don't use the fast-track procedure for skilled workers and the Federal Employment Agency must provide approval for the visa to be issued, you can request **preliminary approval from the Federal Employment Agency**, which must be presented to the German mission abroad. You can find more information here (in German only):
<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/unternehmen/arbeitskraefte/vorabzustimmung-fuer-auslaendische-beschaeftigte>
- Most delays in the visa application process occur because applicants **have not submitted all the necessary documents**. The German missions abroad list on their websites which documents are necessary for nationals of the relevant country. The German chambers of commerce abroad in Kazakhstan and Turkey can also assist you with information on the legal requirements and the documents needed for visas. As a rule, original documents must be presented; the German missions abroad decide whether exceptions can be made in justified cases.
- If you would like to hire more than ten skilled workers who are residing in the same third country, you should contact the visa office at the responsible German mission abroad to discuss the option of scheduling group appointments.

5. MAY SKILLED WORKERS BRING THEIR FAMILIES?

Skilled workers can move to Germany together with their family members (spouses or civil partners and minor unmarried children). Learn more about the conditions on the “Make it in Germany” website:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/family-life/spouses-joining-citizens-non-eu>

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/family-life/children-join>

6. SPECIAL CASE: INTRA-CORPORATE TRANSFERS FROM THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Visa offices at German missions abroad will try to fast-track visa applications of skilled workers who were or are employed with a German or international company in the Russian Federation and who wish to continue working for the same company or business group in Germany.

To expedite visa procedures, the Federal Employment Agency has issued a **General Approval**. Learn more on the agency’s website:

<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/vor-ort/zav/globalzustimmung>

If you wish to have several skilled workers continue working for you in Germany, we recommend that you contact the visa office at the responsible German mission abroad to discuss how to handle the visa procedures most efficiently.

7. WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION?

The Federal Government website “Make it in Germany” (<http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en>) provides businesses and potential immigrants with extensive information on how to navigate entry and visa procedures, find a job and adjust to everyday life in Germany. The website is available in different languages. Interested skilled workers from the Russian Federation will find this information in Russian on the Russian version of the website (<https://www.make-it-in-germany.ru/>).

The Federal Foreign Office offers answers to the most frequently asked questions on its website:

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/skilled-worker-immigration/2304796>

Learn more about the recognition of professional qualifications acquired abroad in the employers section of the government's information portal for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, **Anerkennung in Deutschland**:

<https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php>

On the website, you can search for counselling services, including services you can contact from abroad, and use the Recognition Finder, which will direct you to the authority responsible for recognising your professional qualifications. The website is also available in Russian:

<https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/ru/index.php>

Moreover, employers will find information and practical assistance concerning the recognition of professional qualifications on the **Unternehmen Berufsanerkennung** website at <https://unternehmen-berufsanerkennung.de> (in German only).

8. WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS?

Initial counselling:

You can **send** us your specific questions using our contact form:

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/looking-for-foreign-professionals/support/contact-us/email>

Russian skilled workers who wish to **write** in Russian can use the Russian-language contact form: <https://www.make-it-in-germany.ru/kontakt>

The **telephone** hotline **Arbeiten und Leben in Deutschland** will answer your questions about the immigration process from Monday to Friday between 8 and 18 CET at +49 (0)30-1815-1111.

The employer services at the Federal Employment Agency provide counselling and assistance on matters concerning staff, including staff from abroad:

<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/unternehmen/arbeitgeber-service> (in German only)

Counselling abroad:

The German **chambers of commerce** in Kazakhstan and Turkey assist as needed in recruiting local Russian skilled workers in their countries. The chambers of commerce can give interested skilled workers initial counselling about working in Germany.

Your contacts in Kazakhstan and Turkey:

Delegation of German Industry and Commerce for Central Asia in Kazakhstan (AHK)

Mr Hovsep Voskanyan, Delegate

Phone: +7 727 356 10 61, Email: hovsep.voskanyan@ahk-za.kz

<https://zentralasien.ahk.de/>

Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Turkey (AHK)

Ms Satı Gör Tekbaş, Commercial Lawyer – Head of the Investments and Visa Department

Phone: +90 212 363 05 00, Email: Sati.GorTekbas@dtr-ihk.de

<https://www.dtr-ihk.de/>

9. SECURITY

Recruiting and employing skilled workers in **security-sensitive positions** is subject to the strict requirements of the Security Clearance Check Act (*Sicherheitsüberprüfungsgesetz*).

Moreover, the **activities of Russian intelligence services in Germany** have been at a consistently high level for many years. Their espionage activities target the political, business, research, tech and military spheres, with varying degrees of intensity. Considering the current financial and trade sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation, activities are expected to increase, e.g. to mitigate economic and academic deficits. These activities aim at acquiring trade secrets, committing sabotage and specifically spying on persons opposed to the Russian government. Foreign workers from authoritarian states or people having family in these countries, in particular, are at risk of being pressured into collaboration.

The prevention section at the Federal Office for Protection of the Constitution (BfV) has published a fact sheet on the risk of employees being targeted by intelligence services and what they can do to protect themselves. The fact sheet “Methods of espionage: HUMINT” can be downloaded at www.verfassungsschutz.de and www.wirtschaftsschutz.info.



Die
Bundesregierung

If you need further information, or if you want to ask specific security-related questions or report possible security incidents confidentially, please contact the prevention/economic security section at the BfV:

Email: wirtschaftsschutz@bfv.bund.de

Phone: +49 (0)30-18-792-3322

You can also contact the state office for the protection of the constitution in your federal state.

10. OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT IN GERMANY

Russian nationals can open (payment/current) accounts in Germany. EU financial sanctions do not prevent access to financial services as long as the Russian nationals have a temporary or permanent residence permit in the European Union and are not subject to targeted financial sanctions. However, banks must check on their own whether financial sanctions apply that would prevent forming a business relationship. Money laundering and sanctions laws require the customer's identity to be verified (e.g. using valid official identification including the holder's photograph or passports or their substitutes recognised or accepted under foreigners law). In addition, customers must inform the financial institution in which country or region they are resident for tax purposes. The customer's tax identification number must be provided as well.

Based on the principle of contractual freedom, however, financial institutions and their (potential) customers are free to decide whether and with whom they conclude contracts on bank accounts and how these contracts are structured.

However, **basic payment accounts** are exempt from this general principle of contractual freedom. A basic payment account can be used like a current account (for depositing or withdrawing cash; managing direct debits, credit transfers and payment card transactions), but cannot be overdrawn. Consumers who lawfully reside in the European Union and do not have a bank account are entitled to open a basic payment account. They can choose any bank offering payment accounts. As banks might not volunteer information about their basic payment accounts, interested customers should take the initiative and ask for such an account, if needed. As with a standard bank account, money laundering law requires customers wishing to open a basic payment account to prove their identity with a passport or passport substitute.

If the bank refuses to open a basic payment account although none of the grounds for rejection listed in the Payment Accounts Act (*Zahlungskontengesetz*) applies, persons concerned may contact the Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (BaFin). In such cases, BaFin can instruct the bank to open a basic payment account through administrative proceedings.



For details on basic payment accounts and the administrative proceedings as well as contacts at BaFin, please visit the BaFin website:
https://www.bafin.de/EN/Verbraucher/Bank/Produkte/Basiskonto/basiskonto_node_en.html