

## Immigrating to Germany for work: the Western Balkans Regulation and the Skilled Immigration Act (FEG)

**You have the following options for entering Germany to take up employment:**

### **1. Employment under the Western Balkans Regulation**

The so-called “Western Balkans Regulation” (Section 26 para. 2 of the Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners [BeschV]) applies to nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Under this regulation, the Federal Employment Agency can grant approval for any type of employment following a priority review. For this purpose, you need an employment contract or a binding job offer. In this case, **you do not need to have your qualifications recognised**, unless you want to work in a regulated profession such as medicine.

### **2. Employment as a “skilled worker”**

You can apply to immigrate to Germany as a skilled worker. **To apply for a visa for the purpose of employment as a skilled worker, you will need a specific job offer and proof that your qualification is recognised in Germany or is comparable to a German qualification.** This applies to employment in both regulated and non-regulated professions.

To find out how to get your foreign qualifications recognised in Germany, visit the German government’s “Recognition in Germany” information portal. You can also contact the Service Centre for Professional Recognition (ZSBA) for advice.

#### **2.1 Entry for the recognition of foreign qualifications**

Did you apply for the recognition of your qualifications but they were not fully recognised? You also have the option of completing a qualification programme in Germany to obtain full recognition. To do this, you must apply for a visa for the recognition of foreign qualifications from the competent German diplomatic mission.

### **Info box: Recognition partnership**

**Introduction** of the option of entry and **employment under a recognition partnership** from 1 March 2024: The recognition partnership will make it possible for applicants to obtain a residence title for qualified employment and to complete the necessary recognition procedure after entering the country. For more information see the “Visa & residence” section of the “Make it in Germany” portal.

## **2.2 Entry for job search**

Under certain conditions, you can also enter the country to look for employment. For this purpose, from 1 June 2024, you will be able to apply for an opportunity card visa from the competent German diplomatic mission or – if you are already in Germany with a residence permit – from the foreigners authority.

We would like to draw your attention to the “fast-track procedure for skilled workers” launched in 2020, which allows your future employer in Germany to initiate the entry procedure for a separate fee. This procedure results in shorter processing times for the authorities involved, including the visa sections. However, it is not possible to enter the country under the Western Balkans Regulation using the fast-track procedure for skilled workers.

You can find useful information about the current skilled labour immigration rules here: <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act>.