

20. Relocating to Czechia



Up to 90 days per 180 days

Short stay visa

Longer than 90 days in a 180 days period

Long stay visa

Immigration requirements of foreign nationals relocating to Czechia.

Foreigners coming from EU and non-EU countries must satisfy immigration obligations.

1. EU nationals

No visas or work permits are required for the EU nationals.

EU nationals need to be registered at the Labour Office by their employer on their first working day at the latest. In addition, they must process their registration with the Czech Foreigner's Police within 30 days after their arrival (if not processed automatically via accommodation facility, e.g. hotel). A residence certificate is not mandatory but is recommended if the EU national intends to stay and/or work in Czechia for a period exceeding three months as it is often needed in daily life agenda as e.g. car registration, obtaining a parking permit, closing a contract with a phone provider, buying property in Czechia and other transactions. EU nationals must be covered by health insurance during their stay in Czechia. An EU Health Insurance Card satisfies this requirement.

The termination of work in Czechia must be reported to the Labour Office most lately within 10 days. If applicable, EU nationals shall inform the Ministry of Interior about the termination of their stay and return the relevant residence certificate.

1.1 Family members of EU nationals

Family members of EU nationals from third countries are subject to a preferable treatment (compared with other non-EU nationals) if they accompany or follow the EU national residing in Czechia. Registration at the Foreigner's Police and mandatory application for a temporary residence permit apply to them.

2. Non-EU nationals

2.1 Short-term stay (up to 90 days)

Non-EU nationals intending to stay in Czechia for a period up to 90 days can apply for a Schengen short-term visa. The short-term visa can be granted for one or multiple entries. It is processed by a Czech embassy or consulate in about two weeks.

Citizens of countries under a [Schengen visa-free regime](#) may enter and travel within the Schengen Area freely according to a "90/180 rule"; i.e. they can stay in Czechia/Schengen area for a maximum of 90 days within any 180-day period. The visa waiver program applies only for travels of a nonprofit nature. Non-EU citizens providing hands-on work in Czechia should apply for a work permit and a short-term work visa, unless they meet certain criteria to avoid this obligation.

2.1.1 Business visitors

Non-EU nationals from countries with a visa-free regime are not required to obtain a visa to travel to Czechia for business (not work) purposes. Non-EU nationals from countries with a [visa requirement](#) need to apply for the business type of Schengen visa to be able to enter Czechia.

2.2 Long-term stay

For all non-EU nationals, a stay exceeding 90 days in a 180-day period is possible only with a long-term visa or relevant residence permit (see *below sections*). A visa or residence permit is issued for a single purpose, such as for employment, entrepreneurship or study. A foreign national working in Czechia without a visa or residence permit and/or relevant work permit may be subject to deportation. Significant fines (and other penalties) can be imposed on the Czech company if the foreign national performs work without the respective work/residence permit or visa.

Long-term visa

A long-term visa for a stay exceeding 90 days is issued based on an application filed at a Czech embassy or consulate abroad and processed by the Czech Ministry of Interior. The application processing time usually takes up to three months.

The long-term visa can be issued for a period of up to one year. If the purpose of the visit remains the same, the stay in Czechia may be extended. The visa is then replaced by a residence permit that can be issued for a period of up to two years and may be renewed repeatedly.

Mandatory registration of non-EU nationals after arrival in Czechia.

Non-EU nationals coming without a visa or with Schengen or long-term visa need to be registered with the Czech Foreigner's Police within three working days after their arrival in Czechia (unless the registration is processed automatically by the accommodation facility, e.g. hotel). Individuals with approved long-term residence permit application and stamped entry visa need to visit the Czech Ministry of Interior instead to provide their biometric data that will be used for issuance of their biometric residence permit (e.g. Employee Card – see Section 2.2.1). Non-EU nationals working in Czechia need to be also registered at the Czech Labour Office on their first working day at the latest.

2.2.1 Work permit, Employee Card, intra-corporate transfers, Blue Card and self-employment

Employee Card & Work Permit

The Employee Card has two forms. The dual version combines a work permit and residence permit and is intended for all non-EU nationals locally employed by a Czech entity. The non-dual version of the Employee Card needs to be supported by a Work Permit granted by the Czech Labour Office and is intended mainly for the assigned non-EU individuals without an employment contract with a Czech entity. The application processing standardly takes two or three months, however the overall process including documents collection may take around six months depending on documents gathering or availability of appointments for employee card application filings at the Czech embassy or consulate abroad. Overall process may be simplified and processing time significantly shortened while utilizing one of the programmes for economic migration introduced by Czech government – see below.

The Employee Card in both forms can be valid for up to two years and can be further extended in Czechia.

Local employees

A company intending to employ a non-EU national in Czechia must register a job position with the Czech Labour Office. This registration is public, and the Czech Labour Office has 10-30 days to fill the position with a Czech or other EU national. If no appropriate candidate is found in Czechia or in other EU countries, the position is registered in the official database for Employee Cards and a non-EU national can apply for it by filing an application at the Czech embassy or consulate in his or her country of citizenship or long-term/permanent residence (exemptions or further conditions may apply). The application for the Employee Card must be supported by the local employment contract or agreement on the future contract between the applicant and the Czech company. This contract must meet certain criteria relating to a working schedule and level of salary.

If the Ministry of Interior approves the application, the Czech embassy or consulate issues a special visa to the applicant to allow him or her to enter Czechia and register with the Czech Ministry of Interior. On the finalization of this process, the non-EU national obtains the Employee Card in the form of a plastic biometric residence permit.

Assigned (posted) individuals

Assigned individuals (individuals who do not have a local employment contract with the Czech employer and they keep their home country contract) are required to apply for a Work Permit in Czechia. After the work permit application is filed with the respective Labour Office, they are allowed to apply for the non-dual Employee Card. A Czech company must inform the Czech Labour Office about the assignment of a non-EU national to Czechia. No testing of the Czech or EU labour market is required. When the work permit is collected (usually takes one or two months), it must be included into the Employee Card application – upon its approval the process of entering Czechia and collecting the Employee Card is the same as in the case of local employment.

Intra-corporate transfers

Since 2017 foreign workers seconded to Czechia based on intra-corporate transfers (ICTs) may apply for an ICT Card, which may be obtained for a period of one year for trainees and three years for specialists and managers. Because of the relative inconvenience of ICT (cannot be extended beyond three years' validity, condition of at least six months' prior employment with the seconding enterprise and complexity of the documentation to be submitted), employers may choose to continue to use the "old" process of legalizing a working stay for assigned non-EU nationals, which is the obtaining a work permit and a non-dual employee card.

Blue Card

A Blue Card is intended for the non-EU nationals with high qualifications who want to work in positions that are not covered by Czech or EU nationals.

Czech companies need to register positions available under the Blue Card procedure in the Blue Card register.

A Blue Card is a combination of a work permit and a residence permit in one document and allows the recipient to reside in Czechia and work in a job for which the Blue Card is issued.

A Blue Card is issued to workers with high professional or university education who have already agreed on an employment contract with a Czech company. The contract must have a duration of at least one year and meet certain other criteria.

A Blue Card is valid for the duration of the agreed employment contract plus three months, at maximum for a period of two years. The application for a Blue Card must be submitted to the relevant embassy or consulate of Czechia – the application is then processed by the Czech Ministry of Interior. The process is very similar to the dual Employee Card regime; the processing time of the application is standardly between three and four months, overall process may take around six months.

In comparison to the dual Employee Card, a Blue Card may ease the relocation of its holder to other EU member countries.

Governmental programmes

Overall process may be simplified and processing time significantly shortened while applying for an Employee Card, an ICT Card and a Blue Card (and some other permits) under [several programs for economic migration](#) introduced by Czech government – there are certain requirements to be met both by the foreign national and the Czech company in order to qualify under the programme.

2.2.2 Exemptions from the work permit obligations

The following individuals (and some others) are exempt from the work permit obligation:

- A holder of a Czech permanent residence permit
- A foreigner who undertakes or completes studies at a high school or university accredited in Czechia
- A foreigner seconded to provide services in Czechia on behalf of his or her employer with a seat in an EU country
- A third-country citizen who is accompanied by his or her close family member (spouse, child or parent) from an EU country
- A dependent of a non-EU national who is working in Czechia based on a residence permit provided that the dependent holds a valid residence permit

Nevertheless, the employer must timely report commencement of their work at the Czech Labour Office, and the individuals are always required to obtain a relevant visa or residence permit.

2.2.3 Self-employed individuals & Statutory representatives

Self-employed individuals must have trade licenses to perform self-employment activities in Czechia. In addition, non-EU nationals relocating from abroad must obtain an entrepreneur type of long-term visa.

To acquire this license, the individual must apply at the appropriate trade license office.

Non-EU national who is a statutory body or member of a statutory body of a Czech company or cooperative applies only for the long-term entrepreneurship visa, trade license is not required.

The entire immigration process takes approximately five months after all the required documents are submitted.

2.2.4 Family members

Non-EU national dependents of a long-term visa, Employee Card, ICT or Blue Card holder may stay in Czechia based on a granted short-term or long-term visa or a residence permit for reunion purposes. The long-term visa and residence permit may be further extended in Czechia.

The visa or residence permit applications of the family members can be filed together with the main applicant with the Czech embassy or consulate abroad, the visa/residence permit validity depends on the validity period of main holder's visa or residence permit.

2.2.5 Students

Students from non-EU countries intending to study in Czechia for a period exceeding 90 days may apply for a long-term study visa. Students from non-EU countries with the visa obligation may need a Schengen short-term study visa for a study stay under 90 days.

2.2.6 Trainees

A special regime may be applied to non-EU national trainees assigned to Czechia. These individuals may apply for the same immigration permits as the standard assignees or undertake a simplified immigration procedure via so called project Job Training. This simplified procedure avoids the obligation to apply for a work permit or Employee Card if the trainees' work in Czechia will not exceed six months and the substance of the work will be experience and training for their future career in a "home country company" located outside EU.

Before the assignment of trainees, the Czech company must apply for registration into the project with Confederation of Industry of Czechia – upon successful registration the trainee applies for a Schengen short-term visa or a long-term visa (valid for up to 6 months in the specific case) at the Czech embassy or consulate abroad.

2.2.7 Termination of the stay

The termination of work in Czechia for both EU nationals and non-EU nationals must be reported to the Labour Office. In addition, non-EU nationals must inform the Ministry of Interior about the termination of their stay and return the relevant residence permit (if applicable).

3. Temporary protection for Ukrainian refugees

As a reaction to Russian invasion to Ukraine, the Parliament of Czechia has approved a trio of regulations to assist refugees from Ukraine, collectively referred to as Lex Ukraine. Lex Ukraine among other implements temporary protection activated by EU for Ukrainian citizens who had resided in Ukraine prior to 24 February 2022, their family members or holders of permanent residence in Ukraine whose departure to the country of their citizenship is not possible. Temporary protection has been recently extended till 31 March 2024. Holders of temporary protection, which expires on 31 March 2023, need to register for its extension via online platform launched by Czech Ministry of Interior. Registration must be done by 31 March 2023 at the latest, otherwise the temporary protection will expire.

By registering online, the foreigner's temporary protection will be automatically extended until 30 September 2023 – by this time, he/she will have to visit the MVČR office to have the visa sticker affixed, the date of the visit will be set immediately during registration. The visa sticker will then extend the temporary protection until 31 March 2024.

Temporary protection holders have free access to Czech labour market thus can be employed without a work permit or any additional documentation. Temporary protection holders are also covered via the Czech public health insurance scheme.

4. Russian and Belarusian citizens

Czechia has suspended the issuance of visas for Russian and Belarusian citizens at Czech embassies abroad shortly after the start of the Russian aggression. Applications by Russian and Belarusian citizens for visas or long-term residence permits can currently only be submitted under a few specified exceptions - for example, by family members of EU citizens and some foreigners who are already long-term residents of Czechia.

From 25 October 2022, Russian citizens who arrive with a valid short-term ("Schengen") visa issued for tourism, sport or cultural purposes by any EU Member State will be denied entry to Czechia.

The measure should apply to Russian citizens travelling to Czechia by air from the external border of the Schengen area. If tourists arrive from another Schengen state, they will be allowed to enter.