Tightening of the highly skilled migrant scheme in the Netherlands

The Dutch government plans to tighten the rules of the highly skilled migrant scheme. This means that it will become more difficult to hire foreign employees as highly skilled migrant for employment in the Netherlands. A highly skilled migrant is a foreign national employed by a recognised sponsor, meeting certain specific requirements such as age, salary and experience.

Proposed key changes

Increase in salary criteria

The salary criteria for highly skilled migrants will be increased more than the usual annual indexation. For employees under the age of 30, it will be probably 1.1 times the average gross annual salary. The salary criteria for recent graduates may also be increased to the average gross salary of Dutch starters on the labour market and limited in time.

Tightening of the conditions

The government wants to focus the scheme more on the talents that Dutch businesses need and wants to avoid abuse of the scheme.

Restriction on deployment via employment agencies

The government wants to prevent highly skilled migrants from being deployed through via employment agencies and employer of records.

Stricter conditions for recognised sponsors

There will be more emphasis on the financial health of the company and the reliability of its management. The sponsorship may be refused or withdrawn in case of violations including, tax offence, failure to pay the statutory minimum wage, use of illegal labour, violation or other relevant legislation. The authorities may also terminate the sponsorship if the sponsor has not appointed any highly skilled migrants or submitted any applications for two consecutive years.

Purpose of the adjustments

The government wants to further strengthen the knowledge economy while reducing migration to the Netherlands. By tightening the regulations, the government hopes to maintain greater control over labour migration.

Transitional provision

The above policy intentions will be further elaborated in the coming period. More clarity on this will be provided after the elections in October 2025. At that time, it will also be determined if there will be a transitional arrangement or if the new rules will apply immediately.