

# Fragomen Germany COVID-19 overview for employers

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Last updated 2 April 2020**

The COVID-19 crisis is impacting global mobility programmes and foreign nationals in Germany. This summary provides useful information and advice for your mobility strategy planning and addresses your duty of care towards employees.

### Situation report

- ▶ Travel from outside the EU into Germany is largely restricted until 17 April 2020. German citizens and foreign residents can still enter. EU, EEA, EFTA and UK travellers and their dependents not living in Germany can only enter Germany to move into their home state. Other third country national travellers will be denied entry if they do not have an urgent travel need. Holders of D-Visas newly arriving in Germany are not to be admitted unless they have already obtained proof of residence in Germany.
- ▶ Controls at internal German borders: Air and sea travel into Germany from the following Schengen countries will be subject to border controls: Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Only citizens, foreign national residents, commuters and other travellers with urgent travel needs will be admitted. Commuters and urgent travellers are asked to carry proof of their need to travel. Land border crossing into Germany is only allowed at selected border check points. There are still many borders check points open, only smaller ones have been closed to help manage police resources.
- ▶ German Embassies and Consulates around the globe are increasingly shutting down or restricting visa services, so delays are to be expected.
- ▶ Immigration offices in Germany are shutting down or restricting services, so delays are to be expected. Most of them are still operational though.
- ▶ The Federal Employment Agency is still accepting and processing work permission applications.
- ▶ Public life is largely halted in Germany due to government restrictions.
- ▶ The government is offering immediate employer subsidies for short term work.

### Impact to your organisation

- ▶ Business travellers into Germany: Due to the travel restrictions, regular business travellers will not be admitted until at least 17 April 2020.

- ▶ Assignments and new hires with start dates in the next period of time: Please expect delays at any stage in the immigration process. Holders of recently issued national entry type D visas may not be admitted into Germany until at least 17 April 2020.
- ▶ Assignments and new hires with start dates from summer: Keep initiation services in place, so all process stakeholders can take into account potential delays and communicate these as early as possible.
- ▶ Hires of foreign nationals with immigration status in Germany: Expect long delays for work permit amendment applications.
- ▶ Foreign national employees and assignees may not be able to travel freely in the upcoming months if their extension applications are pending and interim permits which are necessary to travel cannot be issued by the authorities in time.

### **Communication to your employees**

- ▶ Make sure your employees understand that the German government measures are not due to the high risk of the virus for most people, but rather to protect vulnerable individuals and to manage hospital capacity
- ▶ Working from home is permitted under any status which grants the right to work in Germany
- ▶ Prospective assignees, new hires and their families may have to delay travelling due to embassy closures and travel restrictions – they should monitor the relevant government websites for updates.
- ▶ Foreign national employees and their families in Germany may find themselves with expired permits due to local immigration office closures. Reassure them that no negative impact on their legal status is to be expected. However, travel outside Germany may not be possible in these situations.
- ▶ Foreign national employees and their families are advised to carry their passports and permits at all times.
- ▶ Collection of interim permits during extension application processes might be difficult or impossible due to authority closures.
- ▶ Business travellers and commuters into and out of Germany: Postpone and cancel future trips. Current business travellers may have to extend their permission to stay on an exceptional basis due to flight restrictions.

### **What we can do for you**

- ▶ Impact analyses on your foreign national employee population
- ▶ Advise your cross-border commuters and business travellers on expected document requirements
- ▶ Advise on the immigration aspects for your short-term work programme
- ▶ File permit and extension applications electronically to secure status in Germany in cases where immigration offices have closed personal appointments
- ▶ File work permit pre-approvals for upcoming assignments and hires
- ▶ Issue attorney confirmation letters for your foreign national employees in Germany with expired permits (not good for travel)
- ▶ Individual consultation services
- ▶ Webinars and virtual town halls for your global mobility teams, recruiters and employees
- ▶ Virtual clinics and call helplines for your employees
- ▶ COVID-19 specific knowledge content

Please make sure you have signed up for our client alerts. Also, Fragomen maintains a dedicated [COVID-19 microsite](#) with detailed summaries and impacts for over 150 countries, which is updated several times a day by our Knowledge team

Please let us know should you have any further questions.