

Legal 500

Country Comparative Guides

Legal Landscape | Corporate Immigration

Cyprus - Corporate Immigration

Contributor



LLPO Law Firm



Andreas Leonidou

Partner | aleo@llpolawfirm.com

Georgia Lavithi

Associate, Head of Real Estate and Investment Immigration Department
lgla@llpolawfirm.com

For a full list of jurisdictional Q&As & hot topic articles visit legal500.com/guides/

Cyprus - Corporate Immigration

Summary

Cyprus has positioned itself as a regional hub for corporate headquarters, fintech, maritime, and technology operations. According to the 2025 William Russell report, the island ranks 5th in Europe for ease of incorporating a foreign business, achieving an Expat Entrepreneur Score of 6.77 out of 10 a reflection of its vibrant startup ecosystem, strong business survival rates, and a growing community of high-net-worth founders. A retooled Business Facilitation Unit (BFU) regime and the transposition of the revised EU Blue Card Directive now sit alongside long-standing company, tax, and labour frameworks. Together, they deliver fast-track residence and work authorisations for non-EU hires, streamlined family reunification, and clear salary and qualification thresholds. Digital services are expanding across the Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD), while Schengen accession remains a near-term policy objective. These developments allow companies to deploy talent swiftly and efficiently while establishing a European headquarters in a jurisdiction that combines regulatory clarity, tax efficiency, and strategic connectivity.

1. What is the current legal landscape for Corporate Immigration in your jurisdiction?

The principal sources of immigration law in the Republic of Cyprus are found in the **Aliens and Immigration Law, Cap. 105**, together with the subsidiary **Aliens and Immigration Regulations** enacted thereunder. These instruments collectively govern the conditions of entry, residence, and removal of third-country nationals within the Republic.

In an effort to enhance Cyprus's position as a competitive international business hub, the Council of Ministers, by decision dated 15 October 2021, adopted a new national strategy for attracting companies to establish and/or expand their operations in Cyprus. The strategy, which entered into force on 2 January 2022, introduced a comprehensive framework aimed at facilitating foreign investment and corporate presence in the Republic.

At the core of this initiative is the establishment of the Business Facilitation Unit (BFU), a dedicated governmental mechanism designed to serve as a single point of contact for Companies of Foreign Interest (CFIs) as well as other qualifying sectors, including shipping, high-tech and innovation, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, and licensed tertiary education institutions. Through this policy, the Cypriot government seeks not only to streamline administrative procedures but also to provide an attractive and supportive environment for internationally active enterprises.

The regime requires an initial investment of €200,000 in Cyprus, either as a cash deposit or qualifying expenditure, within six months before application, together with independent office premises separate from private residences. It permits the recruitment of highly skilled third-country nationals earning a minimum gross salary of €2,500, holding a degree/diploma or at least two years' relevant experience, and engaged under contracts of at least two years. Companies must achieve within five years a workforce composition of at least 30% Cypriot/EEA nationals, with case-by-case review where unmet. For support

staff (gross salary under €2,500), third-country nationals may comprise up to 30% of headcount, subject to certified contracts. Residence and work permits are issued or renewed for up to three years. Importantly, the spouses of BFU permit holders earning €2,500 or more gain immediate access to paid employment, except where the principal is employed as support staff.

Complementary routes are also available. The EU Blue Card (recast) permits residence of up to three years, renewable, with intra-EU mobility benefits, subject to a salary threshold of €43,632 gross annually and higher education or specified ICT experience. The Digital Nomad Visa offers residence (not local work authorisation) to third-country nationals working remotely for employers or clients abroad, with a minimum net monthly income of €3,500, validity for one year (renewable for two), and family reunification rights (dependants may not work locally).

Longer-term settlement may be pursued through naturalisation, either by ordinary application or by exception. Under the government's business talent policy, eligibility arises after five years of residence and employment, subject to statutory requirements and fees, with a fast-track examination option available for an additional fee.

All applications are processed by the Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD) in Nicosia, with certain categories directed to appointment lanes. Biometric enrolment (photograph, fingerprints, signature) is required for all residence permits. The CRMD is actively expanding digital pathways, including online notifications, forms, and selected application processes.

Cyprus is not yet a member of the Schengen Area, though accession remains a government priority and alignment work is ongoing. Until accession, Cypriot residence permits and national visas do not provide Schengen-wide entry rights.

1.2 Key corporate routes at a glance

Route	Typical Use Case	Core Thresholds	Dependants
BFU/CFI - High-Skilled	Scaling tech/fintech/HQ hires from non-EU	Employer eligibility + €200k initial investment; salary ≥ €2,500; degree/experience; 2-year contract	Spouse immediate work rights if principal ≥ €2,500
BFU - Support Staff	Admin/ops roles < €2,500	Within 30% cap of support staff; certified contract	Family in principle eligible for reunification; spouse work rights depend on principal category
EU Blue Card	Senior, highly qualified specialists	Salary ≥ €43,632; higher education/qualifying ICT experience	Family reunification; mobility advantages; path to long-term residence
Intra-company Transfers/Executives	Group moves/short- to medium-term assignments	BFU path or Blue Card (if criteria met)	Standard reunification rules
Digital Nomad	Remote workers without Cyprus employer	Net income ≥ €3,500; no local work	Family may accompany; no local work rights

2. What three essential pieces of advice would you give to clients involved in Corporate Immigration matters?

Corporate immigration in the Republic of Cyprus requires careful planning and strategic foresight. For clients intending to recruit non-EU talent, we advise focusing on three essential areas from the outset:

1. Choose the Right Corporate Route at Incorporation

If you plan to hire non-EU talent, structure as a Business Facilitating Unit (BFU) from day one, ring-fence the €200,000 investment, and secure an independent office lease before onboarding. Cyprus offers a competitive corporate tax rate of 12.5%, full participation exemptions on dividends and capital gains, and access to an extensive network of double taxation treaties, making early incorporation both strategic and tax-efficient.

2. Plan Hiring Around Salaries and Workforce Ratios

Map roles to €2,500/month (BFU high-skilled) and €43,632/year (Blue Card) thresholds, and maintain the 30%/70% non-EU/EU workforce ratio over five years. Align these figures with offer letters, budgets, and board approvals. Cyprus also provides favourable personal tax regimes for expatriates, including non-domicile exemptions on dividend and passive income, making it easier to attract top global talent.

3. Front-Load Dependants and Compliance

File spouse and dependent applications with the principal where possible. Schedule medical, criminal record, insurance, and biometric requirements early. Implement internal audits, track three-year permit expiries, and keep HR files inspection-ready. Combined with Cyprus's lifestyle, safety, and EU access, these compliance strategies ensure smooth operations and make relocation highly appealing for high-net-worth employees.

3. What are the greatest threats and opportunities in Corporate Immigration law in the next 12 months?

In the next 12 months, corporate immigration in Cyprus presents both notable opportunities and clear areas of caution. On the positive side, the launch of the EU Blue Card (recast) provides a second high-skilled pathway for senior hires, coupled with the advantage of intra-EU mobility. At the same time, the Business Facilitation Unit (BFU) framework continues to enhance Cyprus's competitiveness for regional headquarters and corporate relocations, particularly with the introduction of multi-year permits and immediate labour market access for spouses of qualifying employees. Ongoing digitalisation at the Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD) including online notifications, appointment channels, and document standardization further reduces friction in application processing. Against this backdrop, businesses must remain alert to certain risks: salary and eligibility thresholds under schemes such as the Blue Card and BFU are subject to periodic revision, requiring forward-looking contract and budget planning; the timeline for Cyprus's accession to Schengen remains uncertain, meaning travel planning and secondments cannot assume Schengen-wide entry from Cypriot permits; and operational backlogs linked to seasonal demand and biometric enrolment capacity can extend onboarding timelines, underscoring the importance of early filing and use of the appropriate service lanes.

4. How do you ensure high client satisfaction levels are maintained by your practice?

At the core of our firm's sustainable expansion model lies the client-centric approach and sectoral expertise of our lawyers, in tandem with the ongoing utilization of innovative technology. Client satisfaction is maintained through structured processes designed to provide clarity, predictability, and compliance assurance. Onboarding is managed as a defined project, following a set pathway covering eligibility assessment, BFU registration, labour and CRMD submissions, visa issuance where required,

biometric enrolment, and subsequent registrations for tax, social insurance, and GESY. Communication is supported by service level standards, including weekly status reporting, document checklists, and renewal calendars with automated reminders at 180, 90, and 30 days. Compliance is integrated into delivery, with template offer letters benchmarked against statutory thresholds, role descriptions mapped to BFU and Blue Card criteria, and internal audits conducted twice yearly to monitor right-to-work and ratio obligations. Fee management is transparent, based on milestone billing and disbursement logs, supplemented by regular policy updates and impact notes to assist forward planning.

5. What technological advancements are reshaping corporate immigration law and how clients benefit from them?

Technological advancements are increasingly reshaping corporate immigration practice in Cyprus, with a particular focus on digitalisation, automation, and data management within the Civil Registry and Migration Department (CRMD). Key developments include online application portals, digital document submission, automated status notifications, and e-appointment scheduling, all of which streamline previously manual processes and reduce administrative friction. The integration of biometric enrolment systems for residence permits capturing photograph, fingerprints, and signature enhances both security and procedural efficiency.

For clients, these advancements translate into tangible benefits: faster processing times, greater transparency of case progress, and improved predictability in onboarding and relocation timelines. Automated alerts and digital dashboards support proactive compliance, ensuring critical deadlines for renewals, right-to-work checks, and permit validity are consistently met. Collectively, these technological enhancements enable companies to plan workforce mobility with greater certainty, reduce operational risk, and allocate resources more efficiently, reinforcing Cyprus's position as a competitive jurisdiction for international corporate relocations and talent deployment.

As Cyprus aligns itself more closely with Schengen standards and continues to refine its corporate immigration framework, the opportunities for businesses to secure and retain global talent are expanding rapidly. Yet thresholds shift, compliance demands sharpen, and timing often makes the difference between a seamless relocation and a stalled project. For companies considering Cyprus, the most effective strategy is to plan early, structure wisely, and rely on local expertise that has navigated these processes countless times. In practice, that is what ensures not only permits on paper, but productive teams on the ground.

Contributors

Andreas Leonidou

Partner

aleo@llpolawfirm.com



Georgia Lavithi

**Associate, Head of Real Estate and Investment
Immigration Department**

gla@llpolawfirm.com

