

Working in Belgium as a Chinese professional Rundown on Immigration framework

In cooperation with
Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (BCECC)

INTRODUCTION



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**Your one-stop-shop for pragmatic & tailor-made legal advice
and assistance relating to international employment.**

Global Mobility. Immigration. Social Security.
Payroll. Labour Law. Tax.

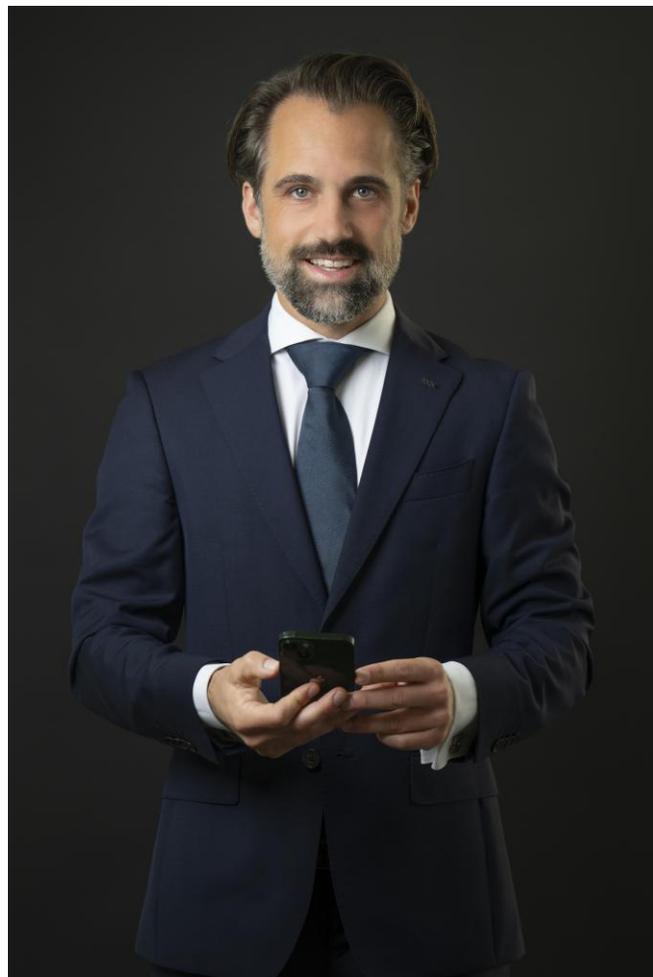


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AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Immigration formalities for Chinese nationals
3. Immigration formalities for Chinese family members
4. Practical tips on navigating exemptions
5. Digitalisation of immigration formalities
6. Looking ahead

2. Immigration formalities for Chinese nationals

Short stay vs. long stay
Employee vs. self-employed

SHORT STAY

- Schengen Visa (Type C)
- Legal basis: business visit, family visit, tourism
- Schengen Calculator (EU Commission)

90 days in 180-day period

LONG STAY

- Residence Application
- Type D Visa
- Legal Basis (employment, self-employed, family reunification, ...)

BELGIAN IMMIGRATION FRAMEWORK

RIGHT TO WORK

Regional Competence

Regional Employment Ministry

Flanders – Brussels – Wallonia

RIGHT TO RESIDE

Federal Competence

Ministry of Internal Affairs – Immigration Office

2. Immigration formalities for Chinese nationals

SHORT STAY

KEY REQUIREMENTS | BUSINESS VISIT

- Schengen Visa – Type C visa
- Exemption for business visitors – WP
- Declaration on arrival (Annex 3)

KEY REQUIREMENTS | ON A WORK ASSIGNMENT

- Schengen Visa
- Work permit – Application procedure approx. 2-12 weeks depending on the competent region
- Social Security
- Posted Worker Notification (Limosa)
- Declaration on arrival (Annex 3)

2. Immigration formalities for Chinese nationals

LONG STAY | EMPLOYEE STATUS

IMMIGRATION CATEGORY

- Diploma – Remuneration

KEY REQUIREMENTS | LOCAL HIRE → Building towards unlimited residency status

- Single Permit
- Belgian employment contract

KEY REQUIREMENTS | SECONDMENT / ASSIGNMENT → No accumulation of residence rights

- Single Permit
- Contracts (employment contract, assignment letter, service agreement,...)
- Social Security
- Posted Worker Notification (Limosa)

STEPS BEFORE TRAVEL 4-6 MONTHS

LONG STAY | EMPLOYEE STATUS

STEP 1 - DOCUMENT GATHERING approx. 2-4 weeks

STEP 2 - GOVERNMENT PROCESSING

STAGE 1 – REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT MINISTRY

Flanders: approx. 2 weeks

Brussels: approx. 5-8 weeks

Wallonia: approx. 4 weeks

STAGE 2 – IMMIGRATION OFFICE: 17 WEEKS

STEP 3 - VISA D at Belgian Embassy – approx. 1-2 weeks

STEP 4 – IN COUNTRY REGISTRATION

Lead time approx. 6-10 weeks

TRAVEL READY



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IMMIGRATION SALARY THRESHOLDS 2025

LONG STAY | EMPLOYEE STATUS

IMMIGRATION CATEGORY	REGION		
	FLANDERS	BRUSSELS <i>Monthly amounts</i>	WALLONIA
HIGHLY SKILLED EMPLOYEE (Below 30 yrs)	48.912 EUR	3.703,44 EUR	51.613 EUR
	39.129,60 EUR	n/a	41.290 EUR
EXECUTIVE	78.259 EUR	6.647,20 EUR	86.110 EUR
EU BLUE CARD <i>(only local hire)</i>	63.586 EUR	4.748,00 EUR	66.738 EUR Junior EU Blue Card: 53.390 EUR
EU ICT - Specialist	48.912 EUR	4.510,60 EUR	48,799 EUR
EU ICT - EXECUTIVE	78.259 EUR	5.460,20 EUR	60,998 EUR
EU ICT - TRAINEE	48.912 EUR	2.611,40 EUR	30,499 EUR

IMMIGRATION SALARY THRESHOLDS 2025

LONG STAY | EMPLOYEE STATUS

WHAT IS CONSIDERED SALARY FOR IMMIGRATION PURPOSES?

Certain and guaranteed at the start of employment

- Only the fixed, contractually guaranteed gross monthly (or annual) remuneration
- This is the amount written in the employment contract or assignment letter that the employee is entitled to **from day one**.

Not accepted / not counted towards the salary threshold

- Variable elements such as bonuses, commissions, profit-sharing, tips.
- Conditional or discretionary payments (e.g. performance-based incentives).

2. Immigration formalities for Chinese nationals

LONG STAY | SELF-EMPLOYED STATUS

KEY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

-  Education
-  Economy & Innovation
-  Security
-  Compliance
-  Income

STEPS BEFORE TRAVEL 4-6 MONTHS

LONG STAY | SELF-EMPLOYED STATUS

STEP 1 – Document gathering

STEP 2 - GOVERNMENT PROCESSING – approx. 11-14 weeks

Submission of professional card application via Belgian Embassy
Evaluation by Regional Employment Ministry

STEP 3 - VISA D at Belgian Embassy – approx. 1-2 weeks

STEP 4 – IN COUNTRY REGISTRATION
Lead time approx. 6-10 weeks

3. Immigration formalities for Chinese family members

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LONG STAY | VISA D APPLICATION

ELIGIBILITY – CAN you apply?

Reference person income threshold:

110% of Guaranteed Average Monthly Minimum Income (GAMMI) = 2.323,079 EUR

+10% per dependent family member = 211,19 EUR

3. Immigration formalities for Chinese family members

LONG STAY | VISA D APPLICATION

PROCEDURE – AUTOMATIC processing?

Reference person is a:

- Employee with Single Permit (gross salary > €5.000/month)
- Researcher with hosting agreement
- EU Blue Card holder
- Intra-Corporate Transferee
- Self-employed with professional card

CONDITIONS NOT MET?

➔ Visa application forwarded to Immigration Office = LEAD TIME UP TO 9 MONTHS

4. Practical tips on navigating exemptions

Key questions:

- Location of the activities in Belgium (which region?)
- Nature of the activities
- Duration of the activities

Categories:

1/ Short term activities subject to Limosa Notification

2/ Short term activities exempt from Limosa Notification

3/ Long term activities?

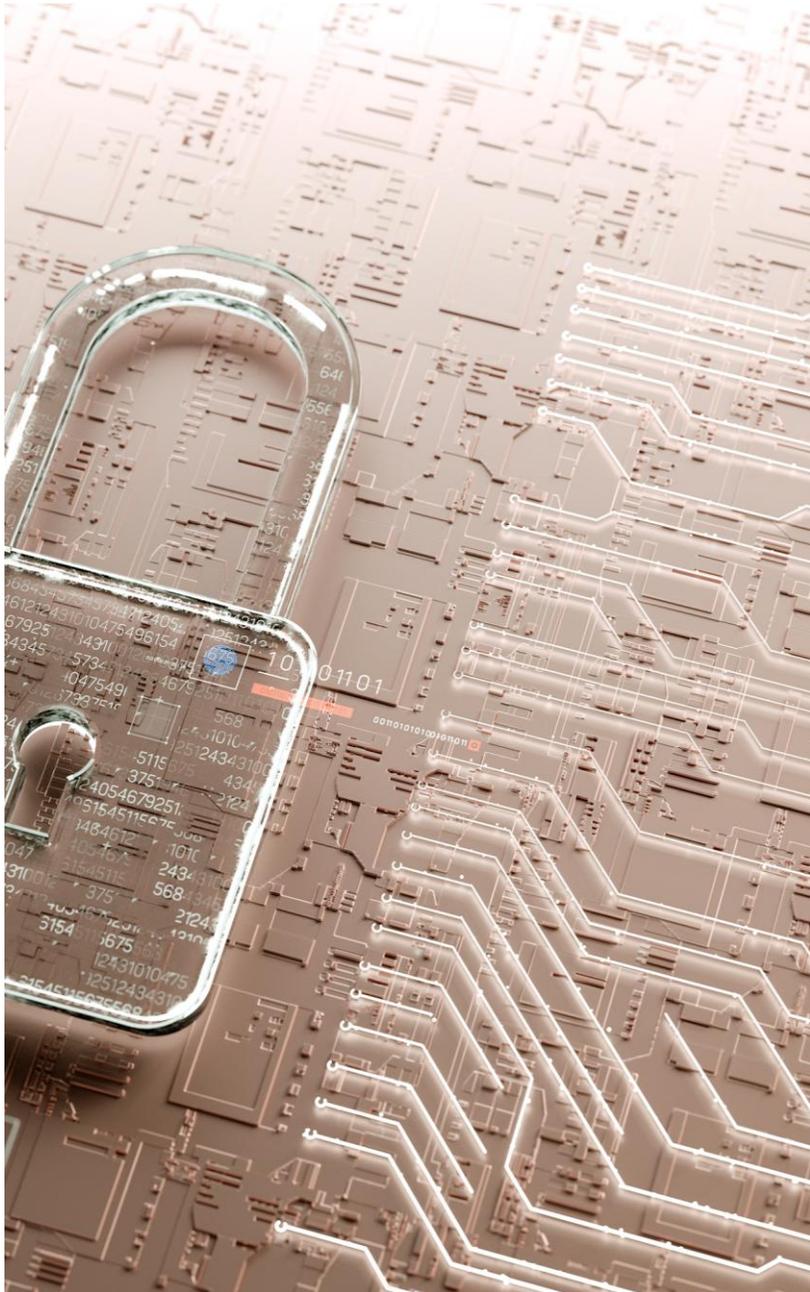
5. DIGITALISATION OF IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

NATIONAL PROCEDURES

Expected soon!

Work Permit application via online digital filing platform “Working In Belgium” cfr. Single Permit application





5. DIGITALISATION OF IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

EU LEVEL

Entry/Exit System (EES) – Phased Rollout

Activation date

12 October 2025 → start of the 6-month progressive deployment across **29 European countries**.

Transition period

Rollout in phases; not all border points collect biometrics immediately.

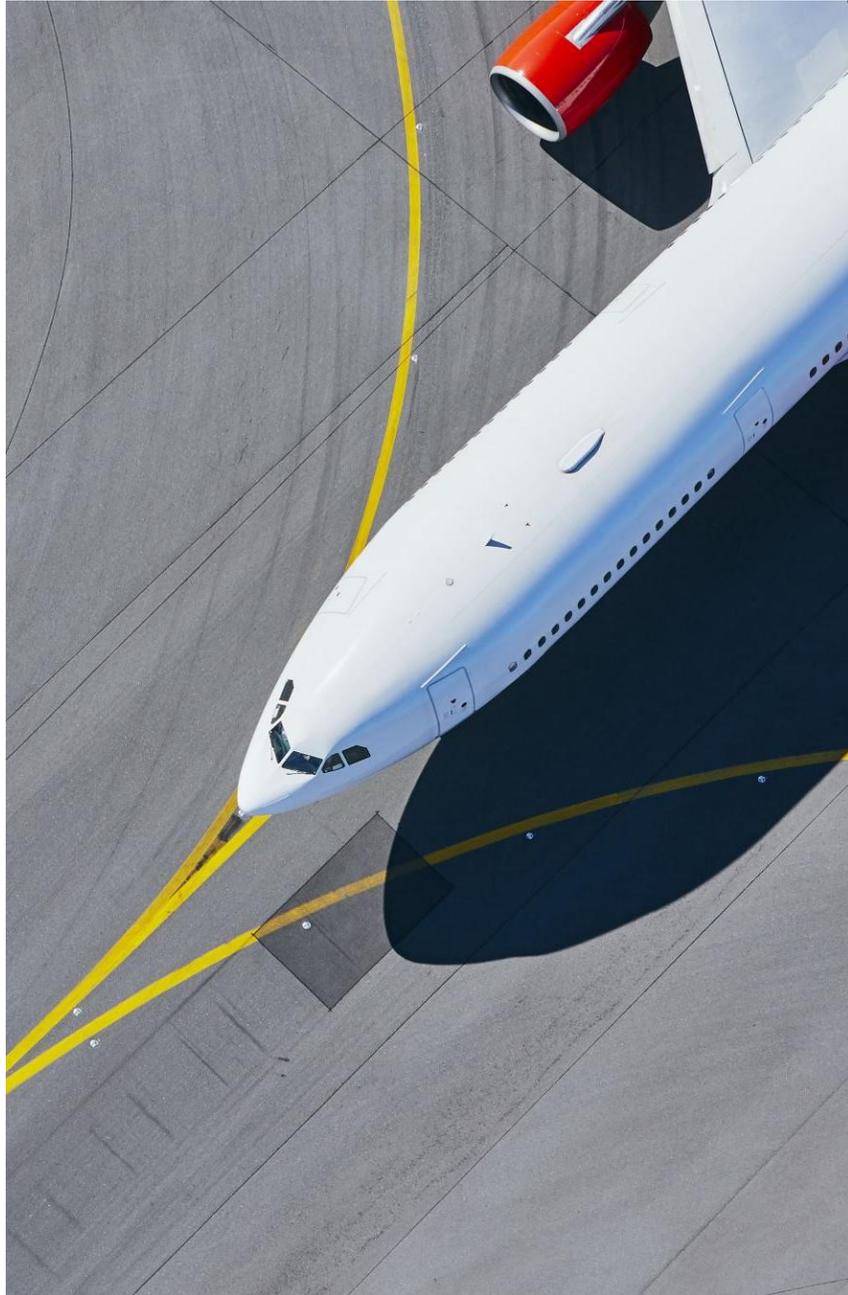
Biometrics involved: **facial image & fingerprints**.

Some travellers' data may **not** be registered yet.

Passport stamping continues as usual.

Full operation

From 10 April 2026 → EES fully operational at **all external border crossing points** of participating countries (biometric checks + registration at every crossing).



5. DIGITALISATION OF IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES

EU LEVEL

ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System)

Activation date

Operational start foreseen in Q4 – 2026

What is ETIAS?

- Compulsory travel requirement to enter territory of EU countries for short-term stays ('90/180') Apply PRIOR to travel
- Cost is approx. 20 EUR
- Valid up to three years or until the passport expires

(!) Valid ETIAS does equal immigration compliance

6. Looking ahead

SALARY & GOVERNMENT RETRIBUTIONS

- Annual indexation
- 200€ retribution for Single Permits in Flanders (01/01/2026)

GOVERNMENT LEAD TIMES

- Clear ambitions on regional level – What about federal level?

INSPECTION AND COMPLIANCE REVIEW

- Increased headcount with social inspection services
- Centralisation of data through digital connections (“only once”)

LOW- & MEDIUM SKILLED TALENT

- Reduced access to work authorizations for low- and medium skilled foreign employees



6. Looking ahead – Single Permit Reform by May 2026?

EU Directive (EU) 2024/1233 to be transposed by 21/05/2026

- **Faster Decisions:** Deadline cut to 90 days (currently 120 days).
- **In-Country Applications**
- **Transparency:** Clear info required & easier access to all submitted documents.
- **Renewal Procedure:** Work & stay rights continue during renewal.
- **Job Mobility:** Switching employers must be easier
- **Unemployment Protection:** Up to 3–6 months to find new work before losing residence rights.
- **Enforcement:** Stronger sanctions on employers & workers' right to complaints/legal recourse.



THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?