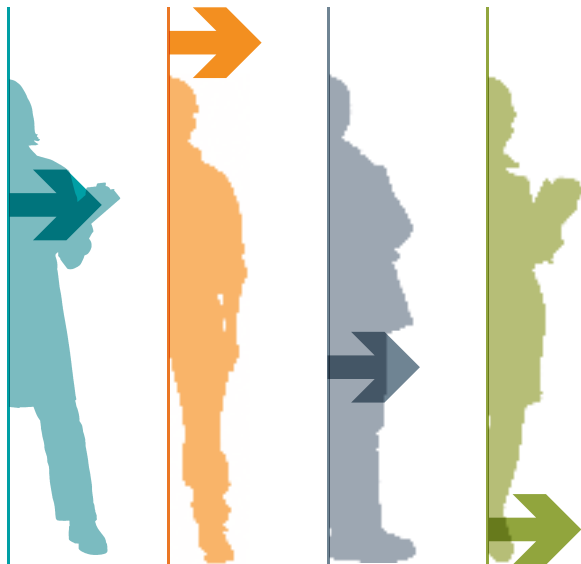




European  
Commission



## READY TO MAKE THE MOVE?

What you need to know about  
living and working abroad –  
and so much more



Social Europe

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# READY TO MAKE THE MOVE?

What you need to know about  
living and working abroad – and so much more

**European Commission**

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Unit C. 3.

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## INTRODUCTION

- Do you fancy a change of scene?
- Do you want to develop your professional and personal skills?
- Are you finding it hard to get work locally?
- Are you interested in discovering other countries and cultures?
- Might your skills be worth more to an employer in another European country?
- Are you ready for a new challenge in life?

If you answered yes to any of the above, this booklet could be just what you need. It is designed for anyone who is thinking of moving to live and work abroad – or else commuting daily to work in a neighbouring country, as a cross-border worker. It includes tips on looking for and applying for work in each European Union Member State, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. All these countries have an agreement to allow each other's citizens to travel and work in any of the other countries.

The booklet has been produced by EURES, the European jobs network, which was set up in 1993 to promote and put into practice the European Union's principle of free movement of workers<sup>(1)</sup>. EURES Advisers from each country in the network share their expert local knowledge to help jobseekers look for work in another country, apply for jobs, succeed at interviews, prepare the paperwork for living and working abroad, and settle into their new environment.

Their advice brings together over 20 years of experience acquired since EURES began seeking to match job vacancies and jobseekers in Europe, and offering expert, personalised information and guidance to jobseekers, job changers and employers at all stages of the recruitment process.

Although aimed at jobseekers, the booklet should also be useful for employers to find out a little more about their applicants' cultural backgrounds.

**More and more people are recognising the benefits of gaining professional experience in another European country. Working abroad can increase your skills levels and improve your chances of finding a better job in your own country. And thanks to the European Union's principle of free movement of workers, the opportunities for the motivated and mobile jobseeker are better than ever.**

<sup>(1)</sup> Some EU citizens may have restricted access to the European labour market for a certain period, depending on when their country joined the EU. EURES can tell you which countries you can move to freely and which require a work permit.



*'Men for Trees® specialises in forestry and related areas. With partner companies in Cyprus and Romania, our main markets are Germany, Austria and Sweden. After posting a job announcement with EURES and receiving relevant CVs, EURES enabled us to hire around 25 workers from Romania with German skills – a big help for our sector in Austria. We are extremely pleased with the performance of EURES and with our fruitful collaboration.'*

**Men for Trees, Austria**

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The booklet begins with introductory sections to help jobseekers think about the reality of moving abroad to work, provide general advice on applying for work and preparing for interviews, and give information about the EURES network and how it can help in your search.

Dotted through the booklet are a number of testimonials from employers, employees and EURES Advisers about the services EURES can provide and giving advice on working abroad. In addition, an interview with a consultant and trainer in cross-cultural issues gives his take on the challenges and rewards of working abroad experiences. A chapter on social media offers advice on how to make the best use of the Internet in your job search.

The bulk of the booklet comprises country-by-country sections on the labour market and job landscape in the 32 European countries that are members of the EURES network.

A brief overview of each country gives details of the skills and professions that are most in demand (at the time of writing) on the local labour market. This is followed by practical advice on looking for work, approaching employers, preparing for interviews and presenting yourself in the best way possible.

Nothing beats the advice of a local expert: did you know that Norwegian business culture is somewhat informal? That only a firm handshake is acceptable in the Netherlands? Or that in some countries you should be prepared to state your salary requirements, but in others you are advised to avoid talking about money until you are offered the job? These are the sorts of essential topics dealt with in the country sections.



## FIND OUT MORE

Of course, there is a lot that is not covered in this booklet, and we urge you to visit the EURES job mobility portal to find out more. On the portal you can find a selection of links to other websites of interest for jobseekers and employers, source recruitment events, post your CV, view current offers of employment – and much more. Details of what the portal offers can be found on page 9 of this booklet. You can also consult one of more than 900 EURES Advisers – or other network partners listed online – for personalised help with any questions.

Looking to connect with other jobseekers and EURES users and share experiences and ideas? Then the EURES Facebook page is one of the best places to start. In addition, if you have any ideas that you think will help keep the information contained in this booklet up to date for future editions, we would be very glad to hear from you. Simply use the contact form on the EURES portal to send us your feedback.

Finally, this booklet could not have been produced without the hard work and expertise of individual EURES Advisers/Coordinators, and we thank them for providing such comprehensive, up-to-date information on what it really means to live and work in their country. We are confident that you will find this booklet helpful as you think about moving abroad to work – and we wish you every success along the way!

*'Contacting EURES was the best thing I could have done for my career. Last year I sent a letter to my local EURES Adviser explaining that I wanted to do an internship in a wine company in Italy. Three months later, EURES Italy found a position including accommodation and living costs. The support continued throughout the internship. When I arrived in the country, EURES helped me to complete all the necessary paperwork.'*

**Dalma, jobseeker from Hungary**





## WHY WORK ABROAD?

There are many good reasons to consider moving abroad to work. Here are just a few of them.



*Gain professional experience and enhance your CV.*

*Improve personal skills, such as initiative, determination and flexibility.*



*Increase your self-confidence.*

*Take advantage of vocational training or an internship.*



*Try something new and have an adventure.*

*Boost your earning potential.*



*Experience a new culture and improve your language skills.*

*Find more vacancies in your chosen field.*



*Take advantage of a different – perhaps better – lifestyle.*

*Take time out from your usual job and do something different.*



# WORKING ABROAD IN EUROPE

## EUROPE SUPPORTS MOBILE WORKERS

Labour mobility is important as it helps to balance the job market. For example, areas of high growth may struggle with unfilled vacancies, while in other regions there may be persistently high unemployment. Europeans keen and willing to move abroad to live and work – or even to commute across borders for their job – can help to redress this imbalance, while reaping all the benefits that being part of another culture can bring.

Thanks to the European Union's principle of free movement of workers, you can get a job or live or study in any country of the European Union, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland<sup>(2)</sup>.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKERS

Workers and jobseekers face increasing challenges. The labour market is changing more rapidly than ever before, adapting to the demands of global competition. Employers expect greater flexibility from employees, yet offer less security. Few people still have a job for life. Lifelong learning has become essential to keep abreast of new technologies and the demand for new skills.

This new working landscape can also present an exciting opportunity. People are freer than before to explore a range of roles, sectors and locations. With flexibility and an open mind, both employers and employees can benefit from the greater ease of finding work and doing business across Europe.

The experience of working abroad, either short or long term, can help you acquire and improve your skills, expand your outlook and interact with people of different cultures. Many people find that as well as being an enriching personal experience, working abroad also enables them to find a better job when and if they decide to return home. However, going to work abroad is not a decision that anyone should make overnight. It needs careful consideration and reflection. Being well prepared is essential.

## BE PREPARED: USE EURES!

With the right help and support, jobseekers can find work opportunities outside their immediate environment.

<sup>(2)</sup> Some EU citizens may have restricted access to the European labour market for a certain period, depending on when their country joined the EU. EURES can tell you which countries you can move to freely and which require a work permit.



EURES, the European jobs network, provides job-matching and recruitment services to all European Economic Area (EEA) countries<sup>(3)</sup>, plus Switzerland. It helps jobseekers and job changers get to where the jobs are, and it opens up to employers a wider pool of candidates with the skills they need to develop their businesses. *All EURES services for jobseekers and workers are provided free of charge.*

EURES has a network of partners, including public employment services, and this network is being extended to include many more recruitment actors in your home country, such as private recruitment agencies. More information can be found on the EURES job mobility portal.

## EURES' SERVICES

EURES' services are comprehensive and available to all European jobseekers – before, during and after their job search. They address every aspect of living and working abroad, from providing career guidance, reviewing and translating CVs, analysing offers and facilitating video-conferencing for interviews, to providing information on the European labour market, giving legal and social security advice, organising job fairs and advising on training opportunities, language learning and funding opportunities.

### **The EURES job mobility portal**

The EURES portal hosts more than one million job vacancies from 32 countries in Europe, almost as many CVs and thousands of registered employers. It offers you tools to:

- create a profile allowing you to tag interesting sectors or countries and receive e-mail notifications of relevant job vacancies;
- build and maintain a CV in one or several language versions – and post it online, so it is visible to the 30 000 employers registered on the portal;
- search for information on living and working in your country of choice;
- search for European Job Days and other recruitment events in your region; and
- connect with other jobseekers and exchange tips on job hunting and living and working abroad.

### **EURES Advisers**

EURES Advisers – and other recruitment professionals in the EURES network – can be contacted for information and advice at any stage of your job search and moving process. With specialised expertise in the practical, legal and administrative aspects of European labour mobility, they can:

- recommend interesting opportunities based on your profile – and even seek to match your profile with a suitable employer in another European country;
- assist you with your job application and pass on your CV to potential employers;

<sup>(3)</sup> EEA members are the 28 EU Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.



- give you information on the living and working conditions in your country of destination; and
- help you get started in your new country by providing information on accommodation, social security and taxes, and on schools and healthcare for your family, if relevant.

*'We support hundreds of cross-border workers on a daily basis with questions like: Where do I pay my taxes? Where can I claim child benefits? Can I use the health service? This helps make the transition easier for mobile workers moving to another country.'*

**Joe Lavery, EURES Adviser, Cross-border Partnership Ireland – Northern Ireland**

**Please note that the services available may differ from one country or EURES partner organisation to another.**

You can find more information and contact details of your local EURES Adviser and other recruitment professionals on the EURES portal.

### **EURES in cross-border regions**

**Working and living in two different countries is the most common form of labour mobility. EURES operates in cross-border regions throughout Europe. Information for cross-border workers is available on the EURES job mobility portal and from your local EURES Adviser.**

### **European Job Days and other events**

Each year, hundreds of EURES events are held throughout Europe – all easy to access and free of charge. The best-known are European Job Days – an ideal environment for you to meet potential employers, either on-site or online, as well as to benefit from live Q & As and one-to-one video coaching with job mobility and other relevant experts. EURES also hosts conferences, seminars and general mobility information days where EURES Advisers are on hand to provide expert advice on finding a job in Europe. European Job Days can be either generalist in nature or focused on a particular sector or sectors. Check the events calendar on the EURES job mobility portal for more information on events in your area.

*'Concentrix has worked with EURES for a number of years, and the partnership is key to our recruitment success. We advertise throughout the EURES network, have worked to build and sustain relationships with individual Advisers around Europe, and regularly attend EURES recruitment events in various countries. Owing to our high recruitment needs and varied language requirements, using the EURES portal and network of advisers for in-country advertising is crucial. The level of service is invaluable – as is the local knowledge and advice.'*

**Concentrix, Northern Ireland**



## OTHER EUROPEAN MOBILITY NETWORKS AND SERVICES

Besides EURES, the following European mobility networks may also be of interest.

### **Your Europe**

The **Citizens** section of this site gives practical information about moving, living, working and studying in another European country. It includes tips on vehicle registration, health cover and consumer protection. A separate **Business** section offers a practical guide to doing business in Europe.  
<http://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm>

### **Your Europe Advice**

If you have a question about your EU rights, Your Europe Advice is a team of independent legal experts who can provide free and personalised advice in your language, within a week. They can also clarify the European law that applies in your particular case.  
<http://europa.eu/youreurope/advice>

### **SOLVIT**

Citizens or businesses may encounter problems in their dealings with other EU countries due to the misapplication of EU rules. This online network exists to resolve such problems – for example obtaining a residence permit, getting your professional qualifications recognised, or with social security, work or tax rights – without legal proceedings.  
<http://ec.europa.eu/solvit>

### **Directorate-General for Education and Culture**

From 2014, up to 5 million people could have the chance to study or train abroad with a grant from Erasmus for all, a programme that brings together EU and international schemes covering education, training, youth and sport.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/erasmus_en.htm)

### **Europass**

Europass documents enable students and jobseekers to present their skills and qualifications to organisations and recruiters in other countries.  
<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>

### **Euroguidance**

This network of careers guidance bodies helps promote learning opportunities across Europe.  
<http://euroguidance.eu>



**Enterprise Europe Network**

This network helps small businesses to get the most out of the European marketplace. Employers can find out how to expand a business, source new technologies and access EU funding and financial information.

<http://een.ec.europa.eu>

**European small business portal**

This website provides information on, and for, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including policy issues, practical advice and local contact points.

<http://ec.europa.eu/small-business>



# LIKE, SHARE, TWEET...

## HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO NET YOUR PERFECT JOB

In 2011, over 51% of all EU Internet users used at least one social media platform.

But how effectively are jobseekers using social media to promote their skills to employers?

At the very least, as a jobseeker you should make sure that your online presence is not stopping you from getting a job. One survey found that 20% of candidates were rejected partly due to what employers found on their social network profiles.

If you want to use social media to target employers, your profile should match how you want to be seen in public and your accounts should be tailored to your target audience, like a CV.

### STYLE YOUR PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

- Make your social media profiles interesting to potential employers. Give relevant details and, if you want employers to see multiple social network accounts, post hyperlinks, for example enter the address of your LinkedIn account in your Twitter bio.
- If you really want to show off your skills and promote yourself on Facebook or Google+, create a professional fan page. These can be posted exactly like a personal social network profile and can contain all pertinent information about you, saving employers from having to review your personal profile. Try to keep this updated and maintain it like a blog, or you may appear uncommitted.
- Getting referrals or recommendations from former employers on services like LinkedIn can also help interest an employer. It allows them to see a reference straight away and to obtain the contact details of your ex-employer.
- Add a professional and recent picture of yourself to your profile pages. If using multiple social network profiles, keep them the same. This shows you are aware of visual identity and branding, and makes it easier for employers to identify who you are.

### ENGAGE WITH ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- Follow companies you are interested in. Show you are interested in the industry. Follow industry news. This highlights that you are in touch with what is going on.
- Comment constructively on campaigns, news or groups from the industry or company you want to work in. This shows you understand what you read and employers will see your research and analytical skills.



- Contact company employees to find out more about the company. You may not always get an answer, but finding out what the company is like from an employee's point of view can help you make up your mind about working for them or that sector.

## TAKE THE EMPLOYER'S VIEW

Even if you do not want employers to see your profile, be prepared to be viewed. According to a US report, 45% of employers use social media as part of the screening process for candidates.

By having employers review your profiles, this means that they will be looking at the following.

- Presentation: how do you present yourself? Are you positive? Have you complained about former employers?
- Interpersonal skills: how do you interact and speak with others?
- Checking: does what you put online match your CV?

## WORK YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Choose your preferred social media platform. If you want to comment on live events or develop real-time conversations, your best option is Twitter. If you want information about a company or are looking for professional discussions, LinkedIn could be better.
- Different social media may be used in different job sectors. If you are creative, highlight some of your work on <http://www.reddit.com> or even create an infographic CV. If it will involve video or journalism, then create a video CV and add it to YouTube. Make sure your efforts are visible by adding them on a professional profile such as LinkedIn or type the links on your CV.
- You can also use hyperlink shortening services such as <http://bitly.com>, <http://tinyURL.com> and <http://goo.gl>. By tailoring your links, you not only create short memorable links for employers to find, but some services also track when and where your link was clicked. You then know that someone was interested, which you can bring up in an interview with a potential employer.
- Match your social network profile to the industry you want to go into. If it is technical or computer-based, show those skills on your profile through comments on articles. If it is marketing or public relations, show your people skills by interacting through conversations.





## SOCIAL MEDIA AROUND THE WORLD

At the time of writing, Facebook is the main social network platform used in Europe, with Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ also being popular. However, check what is popular in the country you would like to work in by reviewing market research services such as Comscore or national statistics services. Again, at the time of writing, a number of other platforms are popular in the following European countries:

- Germany: Xing (<http://www.xing.com>)
- Netherlands: Hyves (<http://hyves.nl>)
- Poland: Nasza Klasa (<http://nk.pl>)
- Spain: Tuenti (<http://www.tuenti.com>)



## PREPARE FOR LIFE ABROAD: TIPS FROM EDOARDO CLEMENTI, ADVISORY MANAGER, ERNST & YOUNG BUSINESS SCHOOL

The best advice for jobseekers thinking of going to work abroad has to be: learn the language. It's through the language that you understand the culture. Some things just can't be translated.

People often underestimate the relevance of cultural issues when moving abroad to work. This includes language and labour market regulations, but also organisational culture in the workplace and wider society. In Nordic countries, typically, there is little hierarchy. In France, there is a lot and the system is highly centralised. In eastern European countries, authority tends to be very important and negative feedback may not always be welcome.

EURES Advisers seem to me to be really aware of the importance of the cultural factor. They work in a multicultural organisation and have contacts with colleagues across Europe. They are a good resource for jobseekers.

*'People do not always prepare themselves adequately for living and working abroad. They do not realise that it is necessary to find out about their rights and obligations. The advantage of using EURES' services is that they are free, accessible and provide information that makes the process of searching for a job, moving and working abroad much safer.'*

**Piret Ustav, EURES Adviser, Estonia**

### BIG ADVANTAGES

Adapting to work in a foreign environment is a skill in itself. A person who works for a time in Spain, Romania and Sweden, for example, has learnt to adapt to different cultural patterns and knows how to work best and to cooperate with people there. These are very valuable skills.

Someone working in a Latin country such as Italy, for example, would get used to managing flexibility, so when someone says '5 minutes', they know that this may not be the same as 5 minutes would be to a German.



## SELL YOUR EXPERIENCE

Working abroad, even if only briefly, can be useful later on, even in a different sector. It shows adaptability. Many employers want to check a candidate's previous international experience.

## PREPARE FOR THE PITFALLS

Be prepared for the culture shock, as it will happen. Many people set off seeing everything through rose-tinted spectacles, but this wears off. It is important to prepare yourself to minimise the negative impacts.

There have been cases where people have moved to another country in Europe in search of work but without the language or other skills required and have ended up homeless and without the means to return home. Elsewhere, migrants have stayed in a country after losing their job due to the economic crisis, because they didn't want to return home and admit that things hadn't worked out. EURES Advisers can provide useful tips to avoid this situation.

*'I attended a job fair in Basel and met a EURES Adviser from Luxembourg. He gave me practical and useful advice, including information on the labour market, living and working conditions in the country, and how to apply for jobs – as well as the steps to be taken before moving abroad.'*

**Jobseeker from Switzerland, living and working in Luxembourg**

## PREPARE FOR GOING HOME

You can experience 're-entry culture shock' when you return home after working abroad. You might have got used to living in a city with certain standards and you may not find the same quality of life when you return home. Your perception of what good standards are has changed.

People also sometimes imagine that they will find the same place they left when they go home, and could be let down. Their city, job, family and network will have changed after 3 years. Things might be better – but they could also be more difficult. At the end of the day, you are unlikely to find things the same as before you left.



## COMPETENCE-BASED INTERVIEWS

A growing number of employers are conducting competence-based (also known as structured or situational) interviews. These have proved to be very effective in predicting future job performance and are more objective than unstructured interviews.

In a competence-based interview, each question is designed to test the candidate on a specific skill or competence. The answer can be matched against pre-decided criteria and marked accordingly. In this way, candidates are compared to the standard required rather than being compared with each other.

Candidates are asked questions relating to their behaviour in specific situations, which they need to back up with concrete examples. The interviewers can probe further by asking for explanations about their behaviour or skills.

### HOW TO PREPARE

Prepare for competence-based questions by making sure you know which skills and competencies are required for the post. Examples of common skills covered include:

- working with others;
- planning and organising;
- analysis and problem-solving;
- leading and decision-making;
- communicating.

Then practise the STAR method: situation, task, action, result.

For example, if you are asked how you deal with stress and to give an example of a situation where you worked under pressure, first describe the context (situation) including what was required of you (task); next – and this should be the bulk of your answer – describe what you did (action); and finally, say what happened (result). Emphasise your role and how this contributed to the outcome.

The key to answering these questions successfully is to use real examples from your own experience with lots of detail, and not just to talk about the topic in a theoretical way.



# COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY APPLICATION PROCEDURES: TOP TIPS AND ADVICE FROM LOCALS ON LOOKING, AND INTERVIEWING, FOR A JOB ABROAD

## LOOKING FOR JOBS

### **Where to look for jobs**

Look for job adverts published on the Internet, in newspapers, at employment offices and with private recruitment companies. Don't forget to check the EURES job mobility portal too. A company's own website may contain details of vacancies, or they may use an external recruitment agent to conduct an initial screening of candidates.

Check websites and media targeted at specific occupations and sectors, or particular regions in Europe. These may be useful for identifying companies and contacts you might like to work for. Certain countries have websites specifically targeted at foreign jobseekers.

Post your CV on the EURES job mobility portal and other websites for jobseekers. Don't forget: if there is no closing date on the announcement, check whether the vacancy is still open before applying. Some websites may contain out-of-date announcements.

Many recruitment agencies specialise in vacancies in a particular sector and retain CVs of promising candidates to present to employers. Identify specialist recruiters in your chosen field and contact them for current and future openings.

In some countries, many job vacancies are publicised by word of mouth and personal networking. Check the country sections in this booklet for further details. As a general rule, smaller firms may recruit this way. Larger companies want to market vacancies as widely as possible to attract the best candidates.

*'Each year, we are involved in EURES Job Days – or other recruitment events. The statistics can be impressive. At one job fair, for example, there were 900 job vacancies from 17 EEA countries covering different sectors including construction, catering-hospitality, gardening, IT, healthcare and industry.'*

**Ewa Staniewicz, EURES Adviser, Poland**



**Time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

The time between when a vacancy is advertised and when the post is filled depends on the type of job. Some jobs can be announced and filled on the same day. However, the employer may wish to meet other candidates or make background checks and seek references.

Also, in some countries, notice periods can be several months long. Employers expect to have to negotiate start-dates and crossover periods with outgoing and incoming members of staff.

**APPLYING FOR A JOB****Responding to a vacancy announcement**

Follow the procedure for applying described in the job advert. Some companies ask candidates to apply with a CV and a covering letter. Others provide an application form that should be completed fully.

Always make the application in the language of the advertisement, unless indicated otherwise.

If possible, personalise your application: find out the name of the individual conducting the selection – this may be a human resources (HR) officer or a department manager – and address your application to them.

Keep a record of the vacancies you have applied for, as you will need this if the employer contacts you.

**Making contact by phone**

If necessary, phone the company for details of how to apply, for an application form or to get a contact name so you can address your application letter to the right person.

When calling about a particular job, explain whether you are calling for more information or to actually apply for the job. If the timing of the call is not convenient, ask for a more appropriate time to ring back. Speak clearly and briefly to show that you have prepared the call. If you are calling from abroad, make this known. Indicate if you would prefer to conduct the call in your own or another (foreign) language.

Prepare a short, clear presentation of yourself, explaining why you are suitable for the job and try to make an appointment for a face-to-face interview. Avoid a noisy background, especially if you are calling from a mobile phone.

Be prepared to write down any information you receive over the phone.



### **Make an 'on spec' application**

If making a spontaneous application in writing, be persuasive. You need to convince the employer that meeting you will be worth their time. Your grammar and spelling should be perfect and the tone of your letter should be positive and compelling.

Start by specifying the kind of role you are interested in and detail the skills, knowledge and experience you have that are likely to match what the employer is looking for. Then provide other information about your background that is likely to stimulate their interest. Mention your availability too. And keep your letter concise.

### **CV and covering letter**

The CV can be general, although it is always better to target it to each application.

The covering letter is not just a letter accompanying a CV; it must be personal, relevant and attract attention. Use the national format and standards for a letter – find these out in advance.

Your letter must always be tailored to a particular vacancy, be signed and give the reasons why you are applying. Include the correct address of the company, the date, the job you are applying for, information on where you found the job advertisement, what you can offer (qualifications, work and other experience), a request for a personal interview and your name and correct contact details. If you do not have a contact name to write to at the company, address your correspondence (e-mail or letter) to 'Dear Sir or Madam'.

Highlight why you are suitable for the job in question and describe what you will contribute to the company. Address the most important requirements mentioned in the job advertisement, using your own words to show how you meet **them**. Focus on what you can offer to the employer and how joining the company will help them (rather than on how getting the job will help **you**).

**Want to stand out? Then research the company before you apply. Find out about its people and culture, locations at home and abroad, size of the workforce and future strategy. Look for details about the company in the trade press as well as on the company's own website to get the bigger picture (their competitors, state of the market, local economic factors).**

**Pay attention to presentation:** a clear layout for your letter and CV is essential. The European format Europass CV is widely used in some countries, but not in all – refer to the country sections in this booklet for specific advice.

Make your documents easy to read and tidy, to appeal to the employer. Avoid animation or fancy design, unless this is a requirement of the job.



**Sell your skills:** besides your education, training and professional experience, add details of skills gained during voluntary activities or hobbies. Confirm if you have a driving licence, which languages you speak (and to what level) and what IT and other skills you have.

**Photographs:** in some countries it is standard to send a photo with a job application. In others it is not advisable. Refer to the country sections in this booklet for advice.

### **E-mail applications**

Avoid using a jokey or humorous e-mail address or cryptic subject line. Do not send your application from your current employer's e-mail system or by mass mail. Fill in the subject line with the name of the position you are applying for.

### **E-mail attachments**

Keep them to a minimum and avoid sending large files. If your application is a covering letter and a CV or application form, write a brief cover note in the e-mail message describing the attachments to the e-mail. The CV and covering letter should usually be sent as attachments (check country sections in this booklet for specific advice).

Make sure you answer all the questions if there is an application form to be completed.

### **Waiting for a reply**

It is not unusual to receive no reply to your application if the employer is not interested in your profile.

## PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Interview culture is as varied as the number of companies and organisations on the market. Find out as much as possible about the process in advance. Do you need to take documents, prepare a presentation or undertake psychometric, practical or other tests as part of the interview? How long will the process take and who are you likely to meet?

For non-specialist jobs, there is usually just one interview. If the vacancy is for a specialised or more senior position, there may be several rounds and a panel of interviewers.

Bear in mind that well-known firms and brand names vary from country to country. Research equivalents to any well-known names on your CV in order to help the interviewer understand your background. Equally for tools, software and protocols: try to find out the correct terms, or their equivalents, in the language of the country where you are applying to work.





The same goes for your educational and training background. Universities, training institutions and qualifications can vary widely. Be ready to give a brief description of the main subject areas you covered to help show the employer how you meet their requirements.

There is currently no universal recognition of educational qualifications across Europe, meaning that an employer in one country may be hesitant to hire a worker from another country if they do not understand their level of qualification. One solution is to use the Europass skills passport, which can help you to give a comprehensive picture of your skills and qualifications by creating a folder for all your documents (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport>).

Starting in 2013, the EURES job mobility portal will also introduce sectoral skills passports to help jobseekers describe their skills in a way that can be easily understood by employers all over Europe.

You can also find useful information on the Your Europe portal: <http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens>

If travelling a distance to an interview, will your travel costs be covered? Note the correct address for the interview venue, how to get there and how long you need to allow for the journey, so as not to arrive late. Carry details and contact numbers to alert the company in case you are delayed.

Prepare what you are going to wear in advance and consider the impact of your personal presentation, attitude, body language and the way you express yourself. Non-verbal communication is almost as important as what you say.

Take a pen and notebook so that you can make notes during the interview.

### **Interview tips**

- Check/ask in advance about the structure of the interview, whether it will involve tests and what form these will take, whether you need to prepare a presentation and whether you need to bring copies or originals of your diplomas or other documents.
- Take a copy of your CV, the application form, a notebook and pen, and a list of questions you would like to ask.
- Confirm your attendance at the interview and double-check the date, time and contact person.



## PERSONAL PRESENTATION

Employers pay attention to accuracy, appearance, composure, confidence, gestures and level of preparation during an interview.

Switch off your mobile phone before you enter the interview. Shake hands with your interviewers if invited to do so. Wait for a seat to be offered. Try to appear self-confident and composed. Speak clearly and not too quietly. Try to avoid showing signs of nervousness. Make eye contact.

Be careful not to criticise former employers or other people. If invited to express criticism about something or someone, try to make the best of it and put things as positively as possible. Do not discuss personal or financial problems.

## ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Prepare well for the range of questions that might be covered. Most questions are likely to focus on your experience, skills and motivation. Persuade your interviewers that you are very motivated to get the job. Tell them about how your strengths and interests match those that the employer is seeking. Answer questions fully but concisely. Speak only about facts that may be of interest to the employer. Be polite, honest and professional. Never lie.

Be clear and concise in your answers and do not use jargon or acronyms. Common interview questions asked by employers include the following.

- Why do you want this job?
- What can you contribute to our company?
- Tell me something about yourself. Who are you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work in this country?
- How long do you intend to stay in this country?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Are your qualifications appropriate for the job we have to offer?

Expect to give practical examples to demonstrate your motivation and skills.



## TRICKY QUESTIONS

Deal diplomatically with questions about your weaknesses or inappropriate qualifications. Try to present your weaknesses as strengths. Counter bad experiences by giving several examples of things that worked out well and that you managed to cope with well.

Prepare answers in advance for questions about the reasons why you left other jobs or former employers. Practise these on your family and friends. They should tell you honestly if the answer you give is convincing.

## PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Some interviews may address non-professional topics. Nevertheless, certain areas are considered as private and candidates should not feel obliged to answer questions on these topics. All countries have anti-discrimination laws in conformity with EU rules relating to sexual orientation, age, disability, race or ethnic origin and religious beliefs. Other areas that should not be considered for discussion within the interview are political opinions, health, marital status or family plans. If the interview does include this sort of question, you are advised to ask: 'How does this relate to the job I am applying for?'

## ASKING QUESTIONS

Generally, keep your questions to the end of the interview. Questions may cover the following: management structure of the company, a typical working day of the employee in that position, deadline for receiving feedback and the company's staff training and qualification programmes.

## DISCUSSING MONEY

Discussions about pay depend on the country and the job being applied for (refer to country sections in this booklet for specific advice on this). If in doubt, wait for the employer to raise the issue. Avoid discussing pay requirements at your first interview. In many countries, it is common to wait for the employer to make a job offer before negotiating pay and other benefits.

You may have more chance of negotiating pay and benefits with a small company, as large companies and institutions usually operate a fixed salary scale.

Whether pay is expressed hourly, daily, monthly or annually varies between sectors and countries. See country sections for details.



# MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION

## DRESS CODE

Find out what is standard dress code for the sector in question (e.g. conservative and sober or original and individual) and dress for the occasion, rather than in the latest fashion. It is common to dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual.

In general, candidates are advised to be neat and tidy. Wear smart, clean shoes; avoid sportswear or revealing garments (short skirts, low tops). Avoid strong deodorants and perfumes. Hair and beards should be clean and tidy, and make-up and jewellery discreet. See also individual country sections in this booklet for national advice on dress codes.

## GENERAL ADVICE

Be polite, friendly and smile. Make eye contact with the interviewer. Listen carefully to questions and answer each one (for up to 2 minutes or so). Speak clearly, confidently and calmly.

Compare your strengths and experience with the requirements of the position you are applying for. Thank the employer for their time.

Prove your interest in working for the company by learning as much as possible about the company in advance.

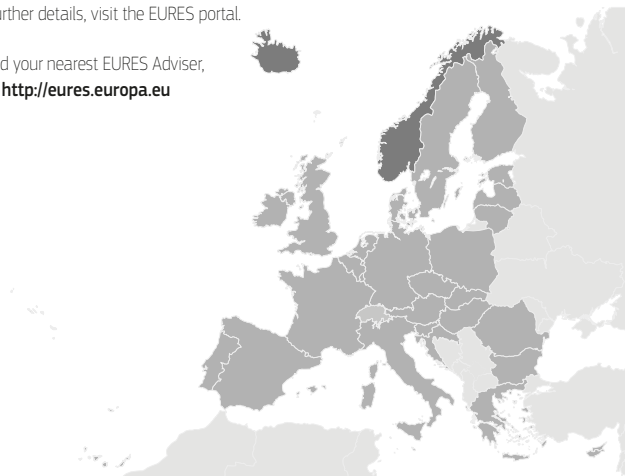


## WHERE CAN YOU FIND EURES ACROSS EUROPE?

- ➔ EU Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom.
- ➔ European Economic Area = EU Member States + Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
- ➔ Switzerland.

EURES is represented in different regions and cross-border regions.  
For further details, visit the EURES portal.

To find your nearest EURES Adviser,  
go to <http://eures.europa.eu>



In the following chapter, sources such as the EURES website's country sections, national employment websites and Eurobarometer reports were used to write each country's introduction texts containing tourism and labour market-related information. The other information in this section has been provided by the EURES member organisations in each country.



# BELGIUM

Official languages → **Dutch (north), French (south), German**

Government → **Constitutional monarchy**

Population → **11.2 million**

Capital → **Brussels**

Currency → **euro (EUR)**

Member EU or EEA → **EU**

Phone code → **+32**

Internet code → **.be**

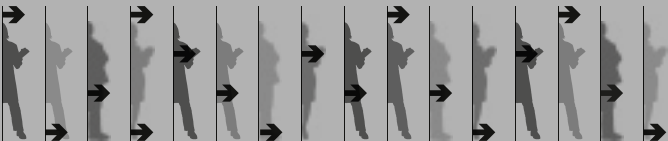
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN BELGIUM?

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Home to EU institutions and other international organisations, Belgium is affluent and multilingual. The Dutch-speaking Flemish north has coastal resorts, the historic cities of Bruges and Ghent and the vibrant port city of Antwerp. To the south, the French-speaking Wallonia has dense forest, remote heathland and a more relaxed way of life. Brussels is a melting pot of the two cultures and a large international community.

Employee shortages vary by region with many vacancies unfilled, particularly in Wallonia and Brussels. This is due in part to a mismatch between jobseekers' profiles and what employers require. Most jobs are in the services or public sector. There is also consistent demand for healthcare, IT, primary education professionals, domestic cleaners, sales staff, and office workers.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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To find a job in Belgium, it is good to speak Dutch and/or French, the most widely spoken languages. German is spoken only in a small part of Belgium. Brussels, the capital, is bilingual: for most jobs here, people have to know both Dutch and French. However, many English-speaking people also manage to find work in Belgium, mainly in Brussels. Job opportunities for people who speak English can be found at <http://jobsinbrussels.com>.

Belgium has four public employment services for the different regions and language communities.

**Actiris** in the capital, Brussels (bilingual Dutch/French): <http://www.actiris.be>

**Le Forem** in Wallonia (south and French-speaking region): <http://www.leforem.be>

**VDAB** in Flanders (north and Dutch-speaking region): <http://www.vdab.be>

**ADG** in German-speaking areas in the east of Belgium: <http://www.adg.be>

The EURES portal's **Links** section contains links to other jobs websites and newspapers that feature job vacancy adverts. See also the website about international mobility and Belgium: <http://www.bijjob.be>.

### Tips for job applications

Most employers select candidates on the basis of a CV and covering letter. If you apply by e-mail, use a 'professional' e-mail address. Put a clear reference in your e-mail and take care with the layout of both the covering letter and the CV.

Use accepted Belgian standards (*BIN-normen*, if known) to write your covering letter.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, it is not advised.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, most applications are sent by e-mail.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

The national format is preferred, but the Europass format is used increasingly, too.

### Making contact by phone

If you call the employer, introduce yourself briefly and clearly, and speak in the required language. If you are making a spontaneous application, introduce yourself and make clear what kind of function you are applying for.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

No, they are usually not required at this stage. However, they may need to be submitted when signing your contract, so have a translated diploma ready.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

Six weeks, although for some jobs (e.g. vacancies where there is a shortage of applicants) this can be much shorter.



## Preparing for the interview

If the employer is interested in your profile, one or more interviews might be arranged, as well as assessments and skill and psychological testing.

Prepare well by researching the company, reflecting on why you want to work for this employer and in this sector, and practising answers to questions in another language.

An interview can be seen as a form of negotiation, rather than as a question and answer session. For the employer, your attitude, assertiveness, politeness and the way you present yourself are crucial. You will be a representative for the company and you have to fit in with the team.

### Who will be there?

A psychologist usually conducts the first interview. Afterwards you may have an interview with the line manager or even a future colleague. The final interview, to negotiate salary, etc., will be with a representative of the HR department. Expect 45 minutes for an interview and half a day for testing.

### Do we shake hands?

Yes, in Belgium this is common.

### Is there a typical interview structure?

Interviews normally start with the interviewers introducing themselves. Then the candidate is asked to present him- or herself. The interviewer will move from very general to very detailed questions. At the end of the interview

the candidate can ask additional questions. The interview will conclude with practical arrangements for the decision period and feedback.

The atmosphere is normally formal and professional. Act professionally, both before and after the interview. Speak only about topics that might be of interest to the employer. Take note of the way interviewers present themselves; use their first name only if they do. Be aware that the atmosphere at an interview does not always reflect the company culture.

### When is a question out of bounds?

You do not have to answer questions about religion, sex, family plans, etc. Being unwilling to answer sensitive questions can also be evidence that you are assertive and can count as a strong point. You can make an official complaint if you feel you have been discriminated against.

### Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?

References or letters of recommendation are not used in Belgium. They may be requested, but this does not happen often. Proof of good conduct may be required for certain jobs.

### Negotiating your pay and benefits

Salary negotiations usually take place in the final phase of the recruitment procedure, when the applicant has the opportunity to ask questions. Salary is normally expressed as gross pay, per month or per hour, depending on the type of contract. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification of the exact content of your salary package. An extra 13th or even 14th month's





salary may be negotiable within the annual salary. These are not included in the salary advertised. Salary negotiations are only possible in the private sector.

The main non-statutory benefits are: meal vouchers, hospital insurance, company car, mobile phone, computer and refunding of transport costs for commuters. Negotiations take place between the applicant and an HR representative.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

From a legal point of view, a 1-day work trial is not possible, unless arranged via a temporary jobs agency (which means that you will be paid for that day). Practical testing at the workplace is possible, but can last no longer than is needed to test your skills.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

Seven to fourteen days for workers; 1 to 12 months for employees.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

In general, the employer will not cover your travel costs.

### **When will I hear the result?**

This depends on the job and the employer.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If an employer has promised to give you feedback within 1 week, do not call before that time. If they have not called you after 2 weeks, you may call and ask for feedback.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Always be punctual. Try to arrive 5 minutes early. If you expect to arrive late, due to traffic, train delays, etc., let the employer know. Be sure to have a contact number with you when travelling to the interview.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress as you would expect someone to do in the position for which you are applying, neither over- nor underdressed for the role. Jewellery or perfume should match your clothing. Remember that the way you present yourself reflects your personality.



# BULGARIA

Official language → **Bulgarian**  
 Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
 Population → **7.3 million**  
 Capital → **Sofia**  
 Currency → **Bulgarian lev (BGN)**  
 Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
 Phone code → **+359**  
 Internet code → **.bg**

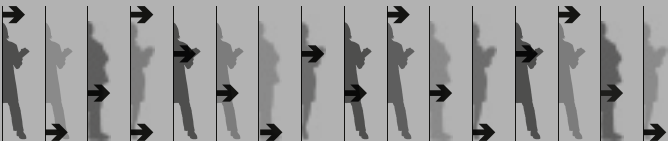
## WHY GO TO WORK IN BULGARIA?

Sun-lovers flock to the Black Sea coast's beaches, while the more adventurous can hike the rugged mountains and forests still roamed by lynx, bears and other rare wildlife. History fans can view plentiful Roman remains and get acquainted with the ancient Thracians, a prehistoric tribe known for their metalworking, horsemanship and artistic culture.

Bulgaria has seen strong economic growth since it joined the EU in 2007. However, it still has high levels of unemployment and low wages for Europe. There may be more opportunities for entrepreneurs, while many multinational corporations require staff for their growing business interests. Most jobs are in the services sector, followed by manufacturing and agriculture. The hotel business and tourism are sectors with a significant demand for workers.

*'Bulgaria is a good country to live and work in. Hospitable and respectful of those from other countries, its people are open, frank and warm. The countryside is very beautiful, the climate is good, there is a vibrant cultural life – and the wine and cuisine are excellent!'*

Elena Vidinska, EURES Adviser, Bulgaria



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Jobseekers can start by looking for work through the national employment agency, the biggest mediator on the labour market. A number of private agencies are also licensed to operate, including Adecco Bulgaria, Manpower Bulgaria, Job Tiger and Jobs.bg. For web links to these organisations, visit the EURES portal's Links page. Other resources include the EURES page on the Bulgarian national employment agency's own portal (<http://www.az.government.bg/eures>) as well as the local labour offices across the country.

### Tips for job applications

The normal application procedure is that candidates apply for a job and are then invited for an interview with the employer or his or her representative. In addition to a CV, the employer usually requires a short motivation letter, showing why the candidate is interested in that vacancy.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

A photo on the CV is advisable, though not obligatory.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, the covering letter should be typed on a computer.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Yes, the European (Europass) CV format is preferred.

### Making contact by phone

In general it is not recommended to apply for a job by phone, as it allows the employer to rule out the candidate more easily. The aim of a phone call is to fix an appointment for an interview. Be sure to do the following: introduce yourself, and clarify which position you are interested in and your reason for calling. Focus briefly and clearly on why you are suitable for the position and try to fix a date for an interview.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

No, but you may be required to present a copy of your diploma during the interview.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

This depends on the employer's requirements, but it rarely takes several months.

### Preparing for the interview

The applicant should know about the activity of the company, the management, the clients and competitors and the opportunities for development. The employer pays attention to accuracy, appearance, composure, confidence and gestures during the interview.

### Who will be there?

If the interview is held at the local labour office, the participants are the labour officer, the candidate and the employer or their representative. If the interview is held at the company,



the participants are the employer or their representative and the candidate.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Sometimes, but only on the initiative of the interviewer. If there is a panel of interviewers, you do not shake hands.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

The meeting takes 1/2 hour to 1 hour at the most. Where an employer insists on the candidate taking a practical test after the meeting, the procedure will be longer.

Typically, the interview follows a basic structure, which starts – after the greetings – with the employer or his/her representative asking questions to the candidate. The employer will try to have a normal conversation with the candidate, who is expected to be self-confident and composed.

Candidates should be polite, friendly and smile; make eye contact; listen carefully to questions; answer each question for up to 2 minutes; speak distinctly, self-confidently and calmly; briefly summarise their strengths; and compare their experience with the requirements of the position they are applying for.

A candidate can ask questions at the end of the interview. Questions may cover the management structure of the company, a typical working day of an employee in that position, the deadline for receiving feedback, the company's staff training and qualification programmes, etc.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

The employment promotion act forbids direct or indirect discrimination in job application procedures. The employer may not ask for information about a candidate's private life. The law on personal data protection provides that private information is defined as any information about an individual person that can be traced through an individual number.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Previous employers can act as referees and supply references to prove that the candidate is suitable for the job vacancy. Some employers may require letters of recommendation. Whether or not proof of good conduct is needed depends on the nature of the work.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Candidates should not raise the question of pay during the interview. It is common to wait for the employer to make a job offer before negotiating pay and other benefits. Depending on the contract, payment is calculated by the hour or it is monthly. The level of pay is determined by the duration of the work or by production figures. The amount of pay for one item (the production quota) is negotiated between the employee and employer and cannot be less than the amount set out in the collective labour agreement. There are payment thresholds for certain groups of professions. In all other cases, the level of pay should not be less than the minimum salary annually fixed by the government.



The salary is usually paid each month, though in some cases a weekly payment is possible. It is common to get an advance payment (part of the monthly salary) approximately in the middle of the monthly period. Some large private companies pay performance bonuses.

It is unusual to negotiate other benefits. Social insurance contributions, health insurance contributions and taxes are fixed by law and deducted from the salary by the employer. If the employer wishes to offer additional benefits or more days of holiday, they may do so.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Only as part of the probation period (see below).

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

Companies usually ask candidates to agree to a trial/probation period for up to 6 months, which is allowed by the Bulgarian labour code. During this period, the employee may be released without notice.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

This would be very rare. Travel costs may be covered under some specific programmes for unemployed persons registered in labour offices.

### **When will I hear the result?**

When an applicant is referred to the employer by a labour office, the employer is obliged to

inform the local labour office about the result of the selection procedure within 7 days. When the local labour office is involved in organising the interview, they are expected to inform unsuccessful candidates about the employer's decision. In other cases, there is no legal requirement for employers to inform applicants about the result of the selection procedure.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

At the end of the interview, thank the employer for the time taken or even write a letter of thanks afterwards. Somewhat later, the candidate can contact the employer to ask for the result of the interview, unless another agreement was made in advance.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Job applicants are expected to arrive some 10 minutes before the time fixed for the interview.

### **Dress-code tips**

Clothes should be smart casual: no sportswear, short skirts or bright colours. Clothes should be clean and shoes should be polished and should match the clothing. Avoid strong deodorants and perfumes and pay attention to details like clean hair, nails and hairstyle. Men should be clean-shaven or have a well-groomed beard. Do not wear eccentric jewellery.



# CZECH REPUBLIC

Official language → **Czech**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **10.5 million**  
Capital → **Prague**  
Currency → **Czech koruna (CZK)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+420**  
Internet code → **.cz**

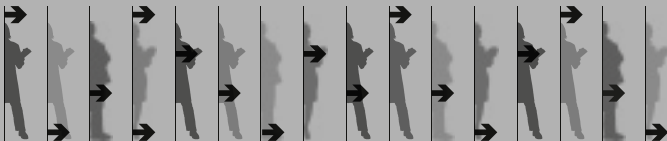
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC?

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Comprising the ancient lands of Bohemia, Moravia and part of Silesia, the country is at the crossroads of European cultures. Prague, its stunning capital, has a vibrant arts scene; the wider countryside is dotted with castles, historic villages and spa towns.

The economic crisis has proved challenging for many Czech companies. However, jobs in the construction industry and services sector have held up relatively well. Unemployment levels vary widely between regions: the north and east have much higher levels of unemployment than Prague and the central region, which enjoy sustained interest of foreign investors and large numbers of tourists. Vacancies commonly look for catering and retail staff, sales representatives, security personnel, truck drivers, skilled engineers and technicians, and machine operators.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Free vacancies are provided by the labour office and by employers, although many employers in the Czech Republic use the services of private employment agencies, which provide details of job vacancies when you register with them.

### **Tips for job applications**

Reply as soon as possible to a job announcement that interests you, taking into account the criteria mentioned in the advert. You want to attract the employer's interest, and your first contact with them is very important.

If you apply electronically, send a covering letter of one page maximum and a structured CV. Do not send your application from your present employer's e-mail box, from an e-mail address with a nickname or by mass mailing.

Fill out the subject of the e-mail with the title of position, for example, and clearly describe the attachments to the e-mail. Send your CV as an attachment.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

Yes, this is usual practice.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, applications can be handwritten or typed. If handwritten, make sure the script is legible.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

Yes, this is the preferred format.

### **Making contact by phone**

If you are contacting the employer by phone, it is better to do so at the beginning of the working day. Try to speak to the person responsible for your field. Be prepared for questions – make sure you have a pen, a notebook and your CV to hand. Reply briefly and to the point and ask for the opportunity to meet in person. Do your best to accept the time suggested.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

No, recruiters usually check diplomas or other documents at the interview stage. Applicants must normally submit copies of their diplomas and documents after signing the job agreement.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This is variable. The advertisement may state an exact start date or the employer and the applicant may agree this between them.

### **Preparing for the interview**

Recruiters expect applicants to be informed about the company (structure, scope of activities) and about the details of the position on offer. They will ask the applicant why they want to work in that company in particular. The candidate must also be prepared to answer questions related to his or her expert knowledge and any other qualifications (personal qualities, ability to work individually or in a team, reliability, adaptability and previous experience). To verify an applicant's personality,



some employers also require that they take psycho-diagnostic tests.

The most common type of interview is in person. However, the first round of interviews may be carried out by e-mail. New media resources are just starting to be used for interviews.

### **Who will be there?**

One to three interviewers, as a rule.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, this is standard practice.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Most meetings start with a short introductory chat about personal details. This is followed by questions that help the personnel officer to obtain more detailed information about the applicant, their expectations and career aims. These questions focus on education and job experience. The next part of the interview is about the position itself. This informs the candidate about the company, its internal relationships and working environment.

Common questions include: Can you tell us something about yourself? What do you expect from a job in our company? Why do you think we should employ you? Why did you leave your last job? What did you do when you were unemployed? When can you start work? What are your salary expectations? Are you willing to work overtime?

The end of the interview can cover non-professional questions or the applicant may be given the time to explain their motivation for the job and to show their skills and knowledge. It is important to behave confidently and show your interest in the job and the company. The question of pay is best left until employers raise it or tell you that they want to employ you.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Anti-discrimination law is covered in statutory regulations (e.g. labour code, employment law, etc.). Questions about political orientation, membership of a political party, religious affiliation, family situation and property, or partnership relations and marital status should not be asked.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References or letters of recommendation are usually not required. Employers verify information about the applicants' last jobs by means of a phone call to their former employer.

Proof of good conduct is generally required for certain jobs, such as teachers, judges or police officers. This is issued by the Czech filling and verification information national terminal (Czech POINTs) – a network of assisted public administration centres where every citizen can obtain information on the data kept on him or her by the state in its central registers.





## **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

If you want to negotiate pay, you need to have salary/wage awareness, as rates can differ from branch to branch and place to place. There is a better chance of negotiating pay with private and smaller employers. In large companies, public or state administrations or budget-dependent institutions, salary scales are generally fixed. Remuneration is expressed in hourly or monthly terms, rarely in annual figures – except for top management positions.

Rules for paid holidays are set out in the labour code but can be modified by agreement between the employer and trade unions. In some cases, annual bonuses and conditions can be negotiated, mostly where managers' contracts are involved.

Other benefits may be offered as a perk, e.g. discounts on company products, meal vouchers, vouchers for theatres, swimming pools, money-off vouchers and holiday allowances. There is room to negotiate between the employer and the trade union of the company.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

A trial period is not legal. Employees must have a contract and receive pay for any work they do.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The employee or employer can withdraw from the contract anytime during the probationary period, which is 3 months maximum (6 months

for managers). It may be possible to reduce the length of this (i.e. to make it shorter than 3 months). Applicants generally accept the company's proposal.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, this is not usual.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Sometime after the interview, you will receive the employer's decision (which should be in writing). If this is positive and you decide to take the job, contact the personnel officer (HR manager) of the company, inform them of your decision and negotiate your start date and other important details of the employment contract.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

Rejected candidates may call to find out why they were not selected, but this is not common practice.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Lateness to an interview on the part of a job applicant is not usually tolerated. Usually 5 minutes is acceptable, but not more.



**Dress-code tips**

Dress should be appropriate to the position. A dark suit, plain tie, good-quality leather shoes and briefcase are generally recommended for men. For women, a sober two-piece suit, trouser suit or coat and skirt are recommended (the skirt should be knee-high) together with high-quality court shoes, discreet make-up and a hairstyle that suits you. Jewellery, only as an

accessory to your suit, might be a small brooch, fine necklace and small earrings.

**Any further advice?**

Try to find out as much as possible about the company, people and corporate culture. Prepare well for the interview, be positive, try to adapt to the company culture. Do not talk too much. Be clear in your answers to questions.



# DENMARK

Official language → **Danish**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **5.6 million**  
Capital → **Copenhagen**  
Currency → **Danish krone (DKK)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+45**  
Internet code → **.dk**

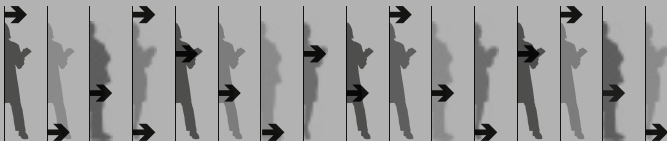
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN DENMARK?

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You are never more than an hour from the coast in Denmark, a country famed as one of the happiest on Earth, as well as for its skills in design and craftsmanship, and efficient public services. The gap between rich and poor is very narrow in Denmark, placing most Danes in a thriving middle class.

Unemployment is lower than average for Europe, and although Denmark has not escaped the impact of the economic crisis, employers still find it difficult to fill certain vacancies, for example for mechanical and IT engineers, doctors, psychologists, IT consultants, software developers, pharmaconomists (expert in pharmaceuticals) and others.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

Employers will publish vacancies on their own websites or on the official website <http://job-net.dk>. Vacancies for foreign jobseekers can also be found on <http://www.workindenmark.dk> where you can also submit your CV. Sometimes employers request that vacancies are posted on specific websites or they might use a recruitment agency to handle the initial screening of candidates.

### Tips for job applications

The procedure for application is described in the job advert, and should be adhered to.

Contacts between the candidate and the employer are usually direct. When sending an application (usually electronically), it is very important to personalise it to the specific employer. Only contact the employer in the language requested in the advertisement. You do not need to be able to cover all the qualifications, but you do need to speak the language suggested in the vacancy. Always write the application and make the contact yourself. Documents in a foreign language must be proved to be authentic.

The following are absolutely not acceptable during an application procedure: misspelling of the name and address of the company; errors in the application; being disloyal towards former employers; turning up late for an interview.

*'The EURES Adviser gave me information about doing a greenhouse gardener's course in Denmark and combining it with a Danish language*

*course and work in a Danish farm. I saw it as an interesting opportunity – and a way to develop new skills and knowledge for my future professional life. It broadens your horizons, makes you more independent, builds your self-confidence and expands your personal network.'*

*Sarunas, jobseeker from Lithuania*

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

Photos are optional, although it is becoming increasingly popular to include one.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, do not handwrite your application.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Europass CVs are not popular among Danish employers. You are expected to compile a personalised and targeted CV.

### Making contact by phone

It is advisable to contact the enterprise by phone if you wish to send a spontaneous application. This will help you target your application. Job ads will specify whom to contact; you are welcome to contact the enterprise before sending an application. Prepare your questions well to ensure that you will not be remembered as a candidate who wasted their time. Avoid asking about the salary; this issue will be dealt with during the interview.



### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

No, unless they are specifically requested in the job ad. An application consists of a CV and a covering letter, except otherwise stated.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This varies, but is approximately 1 to 2 months.

### **Preparing for the interview**

The job interview is a dialogue between you and the interviewers, so you are expected to be active and ask questions. Prepare questions in advance and try to find out about the company's values and mission. There may also be psychological and practical tests.

### **Who will be there?**

There will normally be one to five interviewers present during the interview. It is important to maintain good eye contact with all interviewers. Try to make everybody feel included. A meeting will typically take up to 1 hour, with the candidate often being offered a cup of coffee or tea.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Shake hands with all persons present, both when meeting and saying goodbye. Make it a good firm handshake while keeping eye contact.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Employers pay specific attention to the applicant's ability to meet the qualifications demanded.

There is a specific structure for the meeting. First you may talk briefly about the weather, how you got to the meeting, or another general subject. Then the company gives a short introduction and applicants have the opportunity to present themselves. The applicant can ask questions about the position, salary, working conditions, contract, holidays, extra entitlements, etc. at the end of the meeting.

The meeting ends with information about what the next steps will be. In general, the atmosphere is friendly and straightforward, and the applicant's attitude is expected to match this. Remember to make good eye contact.

The interview will mostly cover professional topics. The most common questions include your strengths and weaknesses, as well as where you hope to be in 3 to 5 years' time. There are no trick questions. Topics might also involve non-professional items such as pets/children/sport and other interests as additional material, or as small talk at the end of the interview.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

There are anti-discrimination laws in Denmark in conformity with EU rules, relating to sex, age,



disability, race, religion and political opinions. You do not have to answer all the questions. Sexual orientation and whether you are planning to have more children are considered to be strictly private matters.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

The need for references depends on the situation. Referees will be contacted if the employer is uncertain or if a high level of professionalism is needed, for example in managerial or academic posts. References may be from former employers or colleagues (they are expected to answer a possible request for a reference from the employer).

A letter of recommendation can be useful. A good recommendation is always helpful. If you wish to work with children or the elderly, or in the financial sector, proof of good conduct is needed.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

There are standard employment contracts, but the company might use their own. Use the standard contract to make sure that nothing is forgotten in your individual contract. It can be purchased in any bookshop.

It is common to negotiate the salary or working hours, as well as fringe benefits, depending on the level of the job offer. Remuneration may be per hour, week or month, but it is rarely annual. Holiday pay is according to the statutory requirement. If there is a bonus system, it should be mentioned separately.

There is room to negotiate extra benefits, depending on the level of the job. The most common ones are a free telephone, newspapers, company car, Internet, etc. Negotiation is either with the head of the company or the HR department.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

This is not usual, except in a small number of professions. You can refuse.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

A 3-month probationary period is common.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Travel costs for getting to the interview are rarely reimbursed.

### **When will I hear the result?**

It varies, but usually you will hear from the employer within a week of the interview. If other candidates are equally qualified, you may be called in for a second interview.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is common to call or meet again for an evaluation, in order to know in which areas the applicant can improve.



**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Danes are very punctual. Preferably turn up 5 to 10 minutes in advance. You are not expected to confirm your attendance. You cannot be absent and make a new appointment unless you hold unique qualifications worth waiting for.

**Dress-code tips**

Dress fairly conservatively – not too flashy, not too relaxed. Jewellery should be discreet and generally no piercings should be visible.



# GERMANY

Official language → **German**  
Government → **Federal parliamentary republic**  
Population → **80.5 million**  
Capital → **Berlin**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+49**  
Internet code → **.de**

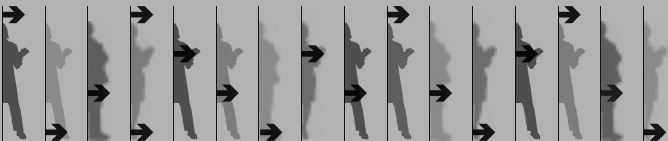
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN GERMANY?

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The largest EU member has it all, from world-class cities to pretty villages and fairy-tale castles, dramatic mountains, deep forests and sandy beaches – and a peerless train network to explore it all in style.

Germany is an industrial powerhouse, famous for the quality of its manufacture and design, especially in motor vehicles and electronics. The country has weathered the economic crisis well, registering a growth in jobs while other EU countries have seen job numbers decline. Jobseekers find work most easily in the south and south-west, while unemployment in the eastern Länder, although falling, is still almost double that in the west. In terms of sectors, there is demand for workers to fill skilled technical and engineering vacancies, as well as jobs in construction, care work and midwifery.





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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Jobseekers can get a general idea of the German labour market from the website of the national public employment service (see the Links section on the EURES portal).

In addition, the website of the Ministry of Economics and Technology, the Labour Ministry and the national public employment service has helpful information about living and working in Germany: <http://www.make-it-in-germany.com>

Other jobs sites may cater to specific professions or regions. If you have a definite idea of where you want to live, look at the website of the regional newspaper.

### Tips for job applications

For written applications, make sure that you create a complete file containing your application letter, CV, a photo and some letters of recommendation. Make sure that there are no spelling mistakes in any of your documents and that your file looks perfect.

The application letter should comprise not more than one page and the CV should be limited to two pages and include the job contents – or you can add a job profile with your skills and expertise. The folder style should be appropriate to the function.

If you send your application by e-mail, you are advised to send your covering letter, CV, photo and letters of recommendation all in one document.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

To enclose a photo with the CV is not compulsory. Nevertheless most employers like to have it in an application.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

There's no preference for handwritten CVs, unless clearly specified.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

The Europass CV is often used – besides other personal data sheets. In some cases or some professions, it is more beneficial to create an individual format, to set oneself apart from the other CVs.

*'A collaboration between EURES Spain and the association of engineers of Zaragoza resulted, in just a few months, in job placements for more than 20 engineers in small- and medium-sized enterprises in Germany and the Nordic countries. We also provided support and practical information to those workers – and to the companies where they were engaged – in order to facilitate the transition.'*

**Teresa Vieitez Carrazoni,**  
EURES Adviser, Spain

### Making contact by phone

If you make telephone calls to the employer or the HR department, make sure you are always polite and give your full name (first name and



surname). Prepare your answers in advance and answer to the point.

If you are considering a spontaneous application, prepare what you want to say and be sure that you can explain why you are applying in this way.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Yes, especially if it/they relate closely to the job profile or the skills required. There is no need to attach every diploma (e. g. from a computer course 10 years ago).

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

For jobs without training or skilled crafts and trades, it can be up to a month. For highly qualified jobs, it can be up to 3 months.

### **Preparing for an interview**

The employer pays a great deal of attention to the way you present yourself, including your clothing, hairstyle and jewellery, your attitude, body language, eye contact and the way you express yourself. Be prepared to persuade the interviewer that you are very motivated to get the job and prove this by asking questions during the interview.

Always try to find out in advance what the company specialises in and what products it makes, an estimate of the number of employees and their national and foreign locations, in case the interviewers test your knowledge of their company.

In exceptional cases and depending on the job, it may be possible to conduct a first interview by phone. Very few companies use Skype or other VoIP tools.

### **Who will be there?**

On average, the interview is conducted by between two and six people. The following may take part in the interview: the company owner or general manager, people in management functions, HR staff and peer colleagues.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, interviewers expect you to shake hands when you enter the interview room.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Yes, the interview is usually very well structured. It starts with introductions to present the representatives of the company and the company itself. Then it is the applicant's turn. From this point on, a company representative will ask all kinds of questions.

Towards the end of the interview, the applicant has the opportunity to ask further questions. At the end, the applicant is given more information about the application procedure and when the employer will let them know the decision. The interview usually takes about an hour, but it may vary.

Bear in mind that some questions can be tricky. Questions about strengths and weaknesses or about inappropriate qualifications need to be answered carefully and diplomatically. Try to present your weaknesses as strengths. For example, if you know that one of your



weaknesses is that you are impatient with your colleagues, tell the employer that you are used to getting your colleagues to meet deadlines or frequently asking for their results.

If you are asked whether you are over-qualified for the job, you might answer that it is quite possible that this is the case at the moment, but that you are sure that after you have become integrated in the company, the employer will no doubt find a job or task that is a more suitable match for your qualifications.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Germany has anti-discrimination law known as the *Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (AGGs) (general equal treatment law). This law states that questions about strictly private situations that have nothing to do with the job are not permissible. Questions about your general health, a planned pregnancy, financial situation, religion, sexuality, etc. are considered to be strictly private matters.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Testimonials that prove that you are an efficient, hard-working employee are a must to convince your potential employer that you should be hired for the job. (The testimonial is a certificate that every employee in Germany has the right to receive from their employer. The simple testimonial contains personal data and information about the type and duration of the employment, with no evaluation. The qualified testimonial also includes the output, qualification and official behaviour of the employee.) You must send testimonials and copies of your diplomas with your covering letter and your CV.

References and letters of recommendation are not widely used. Only in exceptional cases will a new employer contact your existing or previous employer.

For a job in the public sector, you will need proof of good conduct, available from your local police station. For other jobs, you will usually not know in advance if you need this. The employer may ask for it when you sign your contract.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Contract negotiations depend on the company and the sector in which it operates. Apart from fixed payment jobs, pay can be taken to be negotiable. When you start to negotiate, remember that in Germany pay is expressed in hourly or monthly rates. Questions of pay are negotiated by the executive responsible (*zuständige Führungskraft*).

Besides your pay, you can negotiate extra benefits, such as holiday pay and annual bonuses, provided they are not already included in the company's contract.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Some companies may ask for a 1-day trial period. It is recommended not to refuse.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

There is no general duration fixed in the German civil code, but it is limited to a maximum of 6 months. This should not be confused with employment on probation, which is by nature a temporary working contract (with the probation as a factual reason for the limitation).



**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Some companies might cover the costs you incur in attending the interview, but there is no rule on this. You can only wait and see if they offer to reimburse your expenses.

**When will I hear the result?**

If a company decides to offer you the job, it will normally let you know by phone.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

At the end of the interview, the employer should explain the next steps of the procedure

and how long this will take. If the period that you agreed on has elapsed without you hearing anything, you can contact them for more information.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is very important to German employers.

**Dress-code tips**

Dress in line with the business and function that you are applying for. For example, bankers or bank employees need to wear a tie. Avoid eye-catching jewellery.



# ESTONIA

Official language → **Estonian**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **1.3 million**  
Capital → **Tallinn**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+372**  
Internet code → **.ee**

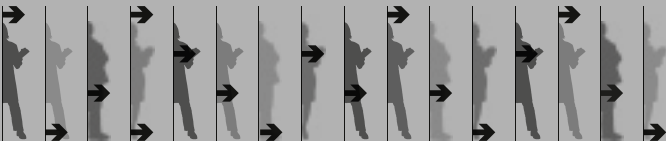
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN ESTONIA?

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Estonia is known for its information technology – Skype was written by two Estonians – and for its medieval capital, Tallinn, coastal resorts, islands, romantic castles, and forest covering over half of its territory. Although their country is commonly described as the smallest of the Baltic states, many Estonians see themselves as Nordic rather than Baltic, since their ethnic and linguistic roots are closer to those of the Finns than to those of the Lithuanians or Latvians.

In late 2011 Estonia had the lowest levels of public debt in the EU. Competition for vacancies is fierce in the country's small labour market, especially for manager-level jobs. Jobs in services, sales and for operators of machinery and equipment had the least number of applicants per vacancy, according to recent figures.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

Common ways to find a job in Estonia are with the help of friends, newspaper advertisements, recruitment companies, Internet portals and the public employment service: the Estonian unemployment insurance fund and its labour offices (weblinks on the Links page of the EURES portal). Other useful Estonian job search portals include: CV-Online (<http://www.cv.ee>) and CV Market (<http://www.cvkeskus.ee>).

In general, a network of personal contacts is essential to finding a job. If you have a connection that will help you find inside information, use it. Do you know someone who works in a company? Ask if they can help.

And use social media. Become a 'fan' of the company you want to join on Facebook and follow it on Twitter. You'll find information you may not have found otherwise.

### Tips for job applications

In Estonia, it is most common to apply for a job through an online job database. It is advisable to use an electronic application, and this should be short and specific. Any written application should be legible, grammatically correct, short and to the point.

In many cases you have to go through more rounds after submitting your CV and application. These may include a language and a job-suitability test. Finally – if you are successful – you can expect an invitation to an interview.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

This is entirely up to the applicant and is not obligatory. Around half of applications in Estonia include a photo on the CV.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, the covering letter and CV are usually typed and sent electronically.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

The national CV format is preferable.

### Making contact by phone

When you prepare a phone call, be sure to have the vacancy, skills list, your CV and a notebook to hand. Find the right contact person – an HR specialist. Show interest in the vacancy and ask where you should send the necessary documents. Be polite, listen, and speak slowly and clearly, giving specific answers and information about references. Be proactive.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

No, you should bring diplomas and qualification certificates with you to the first interview. Copies are accepted. Present the diploma of your highest qualification only. You do not need to present a diploma older than 10 years if it is not related to the vacancy and the skills required.



### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

One month is the average.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Do sufficient preparatory work before the interview so that you can appear self-assured and focused during the meeting. Take a pen and notebook with you so that you can make notes. Do not take a seat before it is offered. Be self-confident and persuasive – and don't forget to smile.

### **Who will be there?**

Normally the official representative of the employer and personnel specialist(s) will be present, as well as other applicants if a group interview is involved. If you are taking part in a test, expect there to be 2 to 10 candidates. Tests usually take 30 minutes to 1.5 hours.

### **Do we shake hands?**

A handshake is acceptable as a greeting; remember to wait for the employer to offer the handshake first. Be friendly and open, stand or sit up straight, and speak audibly and clearly, keeping eye contact.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

At the beginning of the meeting expect a short warm-up (general questions), followed by specific questions about your personality and motivation.

You then give a brief introduction about yourself. You may then be asked about your strengths and weaknesses, why you are interested specifically in this vacancy, with questions about education, training and previous employment experience, hobbies, job conditions and salary. You are expected to be frank and friendly, but not too familiar.

Expect questions about duties, job conditions, future colleagues, bonuses, salary and general information about your previous job, your duties there and your reason for leaving.

Candidates can usually ask for additional information about the vacancy and the company at the end of the interview.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Questions about private life (e.g. information about sexual orientation, religion, pregnancy, sickness and financial circumstances) are considered to be strictly private matters.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Candidates should indicate the contact details of two or three referees on their CV. These can include previous employers or contacts from school or university. They should be able to confirm the relevant contents of the CV and give professional background information about the candidate.

Proof of good conduct is obligatory for public service employees. Some professions need police confirmation of a lack of a criminal record (e.g. drivers with regard to previous traffic offences).



### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Contract negotiations can involve the date you start work, salary and bonuses. The salary may be negotiable, but that depends on the position and company. Pay is generally expressed in monthly terms. Holiday pay is included in the remuneration and regulated according to Estonian law. Yearly bonuses cannot be negotiated separately.

The following perks may be offered but are not common: company car, reimbursement of travel expenses, gym or pool membership. In the private sector, these extras can be negotiated. Extra benefits are negotiated with your direct superior.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

No, this is not common practice.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

Four months, or 6 months for state/government positions.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, this is not likely.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Most (60 %) companies let you know the result of the application procedure sometime in the 2 weeks following the interview. The others (40 %) do not send any feedback.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

The employer may expect you to follow-up yourself. You can ask after the interview when you can expect feedback. If you do not receive any feedback within the promised time, you can call the employer and ask for the results. After the interview you can send an e-mail to thank the employer for the interview – this will show that you are interested and will help the employer to remember you.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Being punctual at the interview is highly recommended. Delay without a valid reason is not permissible. You should arrive a few minutes early; this will show your punctuality and interest in the vacant position.

### **Dress-code tips**

This depends on the job function. It is advisable to dress in a conventional and comfortable style. Jewellery can be worn.





# IRELAND

Official languages → **English, Irish**

Government → **Republic**

Population → **4.6 million**

Capital → **Dublin**

Currency → **euro (EUR)**

Member EU or EEA → **EU**

Phone code → **+353**

Internet code → **.ie**

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## WHY GO TO WORK IN IRELAND?

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Ireland has charmed visitors with its dramatic western coastline, the vitality of its capital, Dublin, and a musical and literary culture that punches well above its weight. It has modernised rapidly in recent years, but it retains its legendary welcome and a unique, local charm that seems to defy the influence of globalisation.

Ireland was hit hard by the economic crisis which began in 2007, with significant jobs losses in construction, manufacturing and the service industries. There was growth, however, in the accommodation and food, and ICT sectors. Other major industries are biotech and pharmaceuticals, medical devices, green energy and financial services. The EURES portal details the specific skills shortages in Irish firms in science, engineering, IT, financial, sales and marketing.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Most vacancies ask candidates either to submit a CV and covering letter, or to complete an application form.

### **Tips for job applications**

Your CV and covering letter are the employer's first impression of you and need to provide evidence that you have the qualities to do the job well. If you are applying to the Irish market, you are expected to identify relevant skills for a job vacancy and provide examples of how you are developing those skills.

Always type your CV on good quality paper. Print it in black ink on white paper. Use the same template/style/materials for your covering letter. Always look at your CV as a marketing tool, which will help convince the employer to notice you.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

No, not unless specifically requested.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, there is no preference in Ireland for handwritten covering letters.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

The Europass format CV is not widely used in Ireland. Irish employers generally prefer a general format, although the Europass CV would be accepted too. Remember that your CV has to attract an employer's attention. Keep it specific,

keeping in mind that the purpose of the CV is to sell your skills set to your potential employer.

### **Making contact by phone**

It is not customary to telephone an employer other than to ask for an application form or for details of how to apply.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

If the application process involves sending a CV and covering letter, you should send photocopies of relevant qualifications along with the CV. For electronic application forms, state all your qualifications clearly and indicate that the certificates will be available on request. The applicant may be asked to bring originals of diplomas to the interview.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

Up to 6 weeks, on average, although some jobs may be advertised one day and filled the next.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Preparation is the key to any interview and this is when your job actually begins. It is important to find out as much as you can about the company before you go to the interview. This will help you prepare to answer questions as well as to prepare questions of your own to ask the interviewer. An important part of the preparation is to take time to analyse the job description and highlight what the company is seeking in a candidate. Make a list of the skills, knowledge, professional and personal qualities that are required by the employer and are critical



for success in the job. Prepare a list of questions and answers referring to your own career goals, long-term plans, past successes, and work strengths and weaknesses. Don't forget to take your CV and names of people who could provide references with you.

### **Who will be there?**

Normally two or three people will conduct the interviews. One or more people may conduct tests. Interviews normally last about 40 minutes.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Interviews almost always begin with a greeting and a handshake, so if the interviewer stretches out a hand, be prepared to shake their hand.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Usually an interview will be held in a private office. One of the interviewers will take the role of chairperson and introduce themselves, the panel and the interview procedure. Normally you can expect a very formal atmosphere, and the applicant is expected to treat the process formally and with respect. The vast majority of the interview will concentrate on professional items, with perhaps 10% of the time being spent on non-professional issues. Candidates should be able to show their reasons and motivation for applying for the job. They should be clear and concise in their answers, and should avoid using jargon or acronyms.

You will be offered the opportunity to ask questions, but if there is a second interview in the process you should wait until this interview to ask any relevant questions.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

There are very strict anti-discrimination laws in Ireland – these laws form the basis of the process. You cannot be asked a question that would be considered discriminatory and you can refuse to answer such a question – e.g. What age are you? Most personal matters, such as your age, religion, sexual orientation, etc. are considered to be absolutely private.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

In Ireland, it is very common to use references – usually two – one of which will be a personal reference about your character, etc. and the second from your previous employer about your work. Employers will not contact referees unless they are going to make you a job offer. Candidates should have cleared the inclusion of a referee with the person in question prior to including them in their application. A previous employer, priest, vicar or member of the Garda (police) could be good references. They are expected to complete a written or telephone reference with the employer on behalf of the applicant.

While all jobs require that the applicant is of good moral standing, there are nevertheless certain jobs which will require greater proof of character, e.g. childcare, care assistant – some of which may require Garda references.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Normally the remuneration package is stated before the process takes place. For this reason, there is not a lot of room for financial or other negotiations.



Remuneration can be expressed in hourly, weekly, monthly or yearly terms. Usually professional and clerical jobs are expressed as a yearly salary, while jobs in building, retail, hotel and catering are expressed in hourly terms.

Holiday, benefits and other non-pay issues are included in the pay listed. In general, the personnel officer/manager negotiates pay and any extra benefits.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

You may be asked to work for a trial period of 3 to 6 months.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

An alternative to a work trial, a probationary period may be anything up to 1 year. The process will continue up to the time you receive notification of success or failure.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

It's reasonable to ask the employer to cover the costs for attending an interview, however these days you need to be prepared to hear that it's not in the budget. In that case, you'll need to decide whether you're willing to cover the costs yourself.

### **When will I hear the result?**

The employer will explain the follow-up procedure at the first interview.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

Employers will offer feedback to unsuccessful candidates on request.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Plan your journey well in advance and arrive at your job interview at least 10 minutes before it is due to begin. Employers will not tolerate candidates who are not punctual for their interview, as it may indicate that there is a problem with their pattern of work.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dressing neatly and tidily is the rule of thumb; face and body piercings are not desirable.

### **Any further advice?**

Employers expect people to present themselves in the best possible way. You should be respectful and courteous. Any other behaviour will not be tolerated. Eye contact is very important.



# GREECE

Official language → **Greek**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **11.1 million**  
Capital → **Athens**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+30**  
Internet code → **.gr**

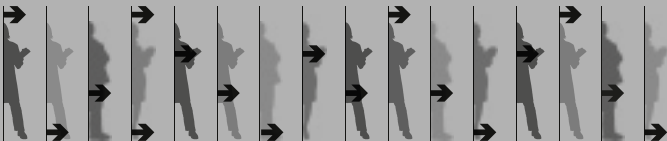
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN GREECE?

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Small Greece is huge in its influence, from its historic contributions to civilisation to the variety of sights/activities that it offers today, including more than 2 500 islands, captivating beaches, lush gorges and romantic ruins.

The debt crisis, starting in 2010, led to stringent austerity measures and financial reforms. Unemployment is high, particularly among the young. Labour mobility is low with a large number of people working in family businesses. Migrants (most from Albania) account for 9.4% of the workforce, a quarter of them in construction. Shipping and tourism are Greece's two biggest industries. The greatest demand for workers is for office and accounting staff, shop workers, followed by construction workers and personal services staff (hairdressers, cooks and waiters).



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Besides looking on the EURES portal, follow the **Links** page to find the Greek national employment service, the OAED, which is managed by Manpower Employment Organisation. You can get contact details for all the local employment offices via the **PES index** link on the OAED website. Private recruitment agencies are not allowed in Greece.

### **Tips for job applications**

The normal procedure for applying for a job in Greece is to send a CV to the employer by e-mail or hand it in in person, or to phone them. A covering letter signed by the applicant and giving the reasons for applying must accompany a CV.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

A photo is standard but not obligatory, except in the tourism sector, where employers in hotels and restaurants may require one.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, it is better to send a typewritten letter.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

In general, a Greek CV is no longer than two pages; however, the Europass format is known and may be used. The employer is more interested in the skills, work experience, personality and passion for work of the applicant than in the CV format. Make sure your CV is detailed

and correctly structured, with all the references available and validated, when required.

### **Making contact by phone**

If you call the employer, be polite, serious, show that you are interested, listen carefully and be honest.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Not unless asked specifically to do so. However, candidates should have all the necessary documents (diplomas, certificates, letters relating to job experience) available and validated for when they meet the recruiter.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This is usually up to 1 month.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Before attending an interview, it is a good idea to find out as much as you can about the company.

In the event that you cannot attend the interview, you must ask for a new appointment 2 to 3 days in advance, if there is a valid reason.

### **Who will be there?**

For an individual interview, you could be alone with the interviewer. There may be two consecutive interviews with different people. For an interview with a committee, there will likely be three to five people. For a group interview,



many candidates are invited to participate in a conversation.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, it is polite and professionally acceptable to shake hands before and after an interview.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

During an interview, the recruiter wants to learn about the skills of the applicant and the possible terms of recruitment. The department manager or the HR manager is in charge of the meeting. There may be two to four meetings and tests before recruitment.

In general, the atmosphere during interviews or tests is relaxed, friendly and exploratory. The ratio of non-professional to professional items addressed during the interview is about 30:70% respectively.

The applicant must play an active part in the interview and listen carefully to questions. He/she should show professionalism and dignity. If the applicant has to relocate for the job, the recruiter will expect them to deal with language issues as well as accommodation and family issues.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Questions about your political position and personal life are considered strictly private.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

It depends on the employer. These are not normally needed, but a previous employer could be a referee. They are expected to strengthen the applicant's position by confirming the quality and skills of the applicant.

Letters of recommendation are not usually required, but must be available at any time. Proof of good conduct might be necessary for security and high-level jobs.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Standard contracts include terms of duration, general remuneration and holiday pay. It is advisable to let your employer make the first step. You can then negotiate your pay and any possible annual bonuses separately. In cases where there are additional benefits, these might include extra salary at the end of the year, extra medical coverage, a company car and commission. These should be negotiated with HR staff or a department manager.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

You are under no obligation to agree to a work trial if the employer requests this.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

There is a 12-month paid probationary period. If the contract is terminated within this period, the dismissed employee is not entitled to compensation.



**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

It depends on the employer.

**When will I hear the result?**

The whole procedure generally takes about a month.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

Normally the employer takes the initiative in organising follow-up to the interview. It is not common for candidates to ask for feedback.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

The applicant must be punctual. It is advisable to arrive 10 minutes early for the interview. However, you should not expect the same punctuality from the employer's side.

**Dress-code tips**

Check your appearance, and make sure you are clean, shaved and well dressed, according to the standards of the company.





# SPAIN

Official language → **Spanish**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **46.7 million**  
Capital → **Madrid**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+34**  
Internet code → **.es**

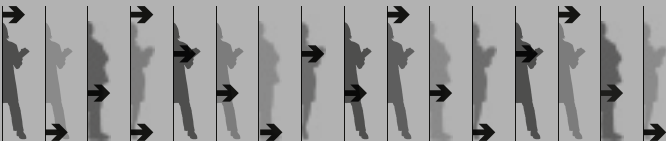
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN SPAIN?

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Although famous for its sunshine and beach culture, Spain does not want for variety, with snow-capped mountains, rugged back-country, lush nature reserves and rocky coastal paths. It also has one of the highest numbers of Unesco world heritage sites.

The economic crisis has hit Spain hard. As unemployment has risen, the large number of foreign workers in Spain has decreased. But tourism and related sectors have held up well, and there has been growth in the number of jobs in IT; artistic, recreational and entertainment activities; and administration. Trends suggest that further labour market growth is likely to come from the services sector, industry and technological development, and a revival of the agricultural sector by applying new technologies.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

Finding work in Spain is challenging. Use all the resources available (acquaintances, family members, media, information centres, professional associations, etc.), as well as the EURES network and a large amount of imagination and creativity.

Be prepared for a waiting game if you come to Spain looking for work. Even when an employer advertises a vacancy with the employment service, they may not respond quickly to applications.

*'Working abroad widens your horizons and gives you a taste of independent life. It also helps to build your self-confidence and enlarge your personal network. If you do move, be open to the new culture, as well as ready and willing to learn new things.'*

**Jobseeker from Lithuania, living and working in Denmark**

### Tips for job applications

The most common application method is to send a CV with a covering letter. The letter should be no longer than four short paragraphs on one page. It should be written in a simple, clear, cordial and formal way. Also make sure that it's signed and that it includes your phone number and full address. Use the same font, margins and paper type as for the CV.

Do not send large or untested files by e-mail. It is better to send just a CV and covering letter and offer to send more information if necessary. If your application is handwritten, make it legible, and avoid using very small lettering or coloured ink.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

A photo is standard but not obligatory. The photo should be a head/shoulder shot (unless a full-body photo is requested), appropriate to the position. Save it in a format that doesn't take up too much space in the CV.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, a covering letter should be typed unless otherwise requested.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

The national CV format is generally preferred.

### Making contact by phone

For telephone contacts, find out who the person on the phone is and say who you want to talk to before stating who you are.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

No, however it is advisable to get the authenticity of your documents confirmed by the Spanish authorities, if possible.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

It is variable.



## Preparing for an interview

Prepare sufficiently so that you can attend the interview knowing clearly the virtues that make you the perfect candidate for the post.

It is common to be required to complete an aptitude test to demonstrate your practical skills and knowledge and to have an interview with a person from the HR department. You normally have to attend the company's premises, although it may be possible to use a new media resource (e.g. video-conferencing, Skype, etc.).

## Who will be there?

Usually the employer, another executive-level person or the HR department conducts the interview.

## Do we shake hands?

Yes, people usually shake hands at the beginning and the end of the meeting. It is usual to touch the other person (shoulder, arm) and, where there are women in the group, it is not uncommon to kiss each other (twice). If the Spanish person opposite you tries to give you a kiss, do not refuse it, but you should not be the one to initiate the kiss.

A tip about personal space: Spanish people like to be close and usually leave less space than northern Europeans when meeting someone.

## Is there a typical interview structure?

No, it may be structured or unstructured, formal or informal, by a panel or with a group.

The interviewer will discuss your CV, focusing on training and academic work as much as on work experience. They may ask about your attitudes and personality. They will want to identify what you are like, how you behave in certain situations and how you fit in to a team.

Besides a representative from the HR department, there may also be a technical professional to ask questions related to the tasks of the role. The HR representative will focus on personal and general skills and working conditions.

The candidate can then ask additional questions before the interview concludes with practical arrangements for the decision period and feedback. Make the most of the farewell to show that you are optimistic and expect good news.

Be aware that your non-verbal communication gives information about you throughout the interview to confirm or belie what you are saying. Answer questions about errors or criticism sincerely. We all make mistakes. What is important is how you learnt from the situation. Always tell the story from a positive point of view and draw positive conclusions.

If faced with uncomfortable or provocative questions, try to remain calm. Difficult questions are commonly used in the selection of senior executives, sales personnel or customer liaison staff.

Practice your interview technique at <http://www.todofp.es> or with an interview trainer (simulator) at <http://www.educastur.es>.



### **When is a question out of bounds?**

The employer should not ask for strictly private information, but in some cases, especially if you are a woman, you may be asked about your personal and family situation and plans. Although it is desirable to answer all the questions, you can always ask politely: 'How does this relate to the job I am applying for?'

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Yes, bring these documents to the interview. It is better to have them to hand should you need them. The use of recommendation letters or references has increased in recent years. Take copies of diplomas, letters of recommendation from previous employers, colleagues or teachers, and any other documents related to the information in your CV.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Salaries are normally expressed in terms of monthly salaries or as an annual total. If the salary is not given in the job notice, ask a trade union (it does not matter if you are registered or not) about the legal and the normal salary for that role. In Spain there is a national minimum wage, and collective agreements vary a lot, depending on the region.

If the employer asks what you want to earn, try to give two figures or keep open the possibility of negotiating: for example, EUR X to start with and an agreed increase once you have demonstrated your competence.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Trial periods for workers are those that are established in the different types of employment contracts.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

Six months maximum for qualified technicians and 2 months for other workers. In the case of the *contrato indefinido de apoyo a los emprendedores* (indefinite contract to support entrepreneurs), the probationary period is 1 year. During the probationary period, the contract may be terminated by either party for any reason.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, the applicant usually pays these costs. This matter could be negotiated with the employer before the interview.

### **When will I hear the result?**

The length varies between employers. Usually the employer informs the applicant about the result of the interview shortly after, but they may not do so.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you do not receive any feedback shortly after the interview, you can assume that you have not been selected. It is unusual to be informed if you are unsuccessful.



**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Spanish people are often not very punctual, but candidates should not be late. Arriving 5-10 minutes beforehand is enough time to look for the person you will meet.

**Dress-code tips**

Going to an interview is not like going to a party. You should attend the interview thinking that

you are going to work there. It is usually sufficient to be clean and tidy. Graduates or executives usually wear ties if they are men and heels if they are women. Avoid eye-catching jewellery and bright colours.

**Any further advice?**

Smoking is banned by Spanish law almost everywhere, and many Spanish people dislike it. Candidates are therefore advised not to smoke, even if they are invited to.



# FRANCE

Official language → **French**  
Government → **Presidential republic**  
Population → **65.6 million**  
Capital → **Paris**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+33**  
Internet code → **.fr**

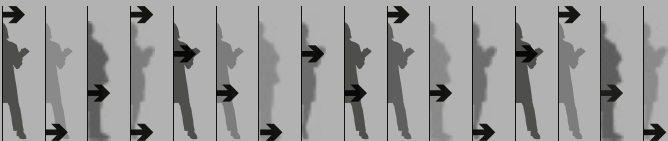
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN FRANCE?

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France is a major tourist centre, attracting 80 million visitors every year. Tourism accounted for more than 7% of GDP in 2010 and is a significant source of jobs.

The French economy is a social market economy based on private property. It is principally a service economy – three quarters of French people work in the services sector – although industrial firms continue to represent a relatively large share of gross domestic product (GDP) and exports, and employ 14% of the workforce. In 2011, France had more foreign investment in industry than any other country in Europe, principally in the chemicals, metals and metalworking, and food industries. Foreign investment in research and development rose 12% a year on average from 2007-11.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

The most common way to find work in France is to send a motivation letter and a CV to an employer. Many job vacancies are available via the French public employment service, Pôle emploi (<http://www.pole-emploi.fr>), or via temp agencies, which also recruit for medium- and long-term employment contracts. Each day, on average, the Pôle emploi website displays ads for some 150 000 jobs. You can send your application by e-mail or post.

Most recruitment processes involve at least one interview with the employer.

### Tips for job applications

The CV should consist of one page for young graduates, or two pages maximum for more experienced profiles. A two-page CV is generally organised in six sections.

- **Personal details:** name, address, phone number (with international code), e-mail. Marital status, age and nationality (if you are a citizen of the European Economic Area) are optional.
- **Title:** state the general job position sought, possibly with your strengths, for example 'Commercial assistant trilingual: English, French and Spanish'.
- **Professional experience:** employment history, including dates, position, company name, industry and location, and detailing your responsibilities, tasks and results.
- **Training:** provide graduation dates and their equivalent in the French educational system.

- **Language and IT knowledge:** indicate your native language and specify your level of French – reading, written and spoken.

- **Other information,** often called 'Interests'. Mention if you have lived in France.

Your application letter should be no longer than one page and typed (most frequently you send it by e-mail). Demonstrate your interest in the company and highlight how you meet the needs of the position.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

It is common to include a photo on the CV, especially for jobs that involve client contact.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

If not specified, send a typewritten covering letter. If the employer uses graphology in the selection process, the job ad will ask for a handwritten covering letter. However, it is no longer legal to shortlist applicants solely on the basis of graphology.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Although not widely used, use of the Europass format CV is increasing, especially in large companies. Employers value the section on language skills in particular.

### Making contact by phone

It is not common to contact an employer by phone before an interview. If you wish to, however, you are advised to do so in French. If you



do not know the name of the person in charge of the recruitment, ask for this before you send your application. If you apply for a job through a recruitment agency, it is worth asking at least about the company's area of activity and size.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

There is no need to send diplomas with your application, but do take everything to the interview. A copy of your diplomas with a certified translation might be useful, especially if your education was very different from the French education system.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This is 3 weeks on average, but it may be anything from 24 hours to several months.

### **Preparing for an interview**

The employer will pay particular attention to your punctuality and your general attitude, including dress. The interview may last half a day, including practical tests. Research the company so that you can highlight your motivation for the role.

### **Who will be there?**

The first interview is usually with a representative from the HR department. In small companies or with craftsmen, you will generally meet the director.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, shake hands with your interviewer before and after your meeting. French people set great store by etiquette, and courtesy and good manners are appreciated.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

In general, the employer will introduce the company. He or she will then expect you, the candidate, to show why you should be hired in preference to the other candidates. You are advised to highlight your competences and demonstrate how these correspond with what the employer is looking for to help meet the needs of the company.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

French anti-discrimination legislation is very clear. You can refuse to answer any question that seems inappropriate and/or is not relevant to your candidature for the job in question.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Letters of recommendation are not essential. However, do detail your professional experience in order to show your competences. Some employers may wish to contact by phone or e-mail one or more of the employers mentioned on your CV. For certain jobs in security or public administration you may need to prove that you do not have a criminal record.





### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

As a general rule, salary details are published in the job advertisement. They are given as a monthly or annual gross figure, before deductions. However, there may be room to negotiate pay at the end of the recruitment process. It may also be indicated that the salary is negotiable. In this case, you will need to demonstrate that you are worth more than the basic salary proposed. You must sign your employment contract before taking up the position or at the latest on the day you start work.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Tests are common as part of the recruitment process. Work trials, however, are not widely used. If you are asked to complete one before signing a contract, it must be very short and should not be used to perform work for the employer.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The probationary period varies from 1 day to several months depending on your qualifications and the type of employment contract. For 1-month contracts, it is generally one week. The period can be renewed once.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Travel costs for getting to interviews may be met by the public employment service if the candidate is registered as a jobseeker and asks for this support before going to the interview.

### **When will I hear the result?**

It takes 2 to 4 weeks to get the results: the higher the qualification level, the longer the recruitment process. After 4 weeks, we suggest you call the recruiters.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is not common to ask why you were not selected for a job, but it is possible, as long as you do so tactfully. The feedback should be useful for your subsequent interviews.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Even though the French are not very punctual, especially in big cities like Paris, we suggest you arrive 15 minutes in advance.

### **Dress-code tips**

The dress code should be appropriate to the job you are applying for.



# CROATIA

Official language → **Croatian**  
 Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
 Population → **4.3 million**  
 Capital → **Zagreb**  
 Currency → **Croatian kuna (HRK)**  
 Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
 Phone code → **+385**  
 Internet code → **.hr**

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## WHY GO TO WORK IN CROATIA?

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Too many visitors to Croatia bypass Zagreb, a capital with elegant Austro-Hungarian architecture, a lively arts scene, excellent shopping and countless pubs. But the millions of tourists who flock to Croatia each year could equally be forgiven for succumbing to the charms of the Dalmatian coast and its 1 000 islands.

Unemployment rate is high, especially among the youth, but there are incentives for investors and there is good potential for labour market development. There is demand in tourism and the hospitality sector, especially in summer. There is also seasonal demand for unskilled workers in agriculture, and for doctors and other medical staff mostly in rural areas and on islands. There may also be opportunities for tourist representatives and native-speaker foreign-language teachers.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Look for work through personal contacts, job-search websites and newspaper adverts or by sending a spontaneous application to an employer. There are private agencies for temporary employment, while vacancies in the public sector have to be announced in the official gazette and through the Croatian employment service.

### **Tips for job applications**

The covering letter should be no longer than one page and should provide accurate information about the reasons you are the right candidate for the job. The text should be grammatically correct and in accordance with the rules of business communication. The text should be understandable and easy to read.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

Yes, it is recommended to include a photo.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, a typewritten application is preferred.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

Yes, it is fine to send a Europass CV.

### **Making contact by phone**

If the telephone number is provided, it is possible to make contact by phone. However, many employers state that it is not possible to get information by phone.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Yes, if this is stated in the vacancy.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

From a few days to a few months, depending on the position. Selection procedures for highly skilled positions, as well as for employment in public institutions, can take some time. Unskilled positions or those in small companies can be filled quickly.

### **Preparing for an interview**

First impressions are very important. The way you dress for the interview will be noticed. Also, you will need to present yourself based on your CV. The most common questions are related to your strengths and weaknesses. You should research the company so that you are familiar with its everyday business and the demands of the job you are applying for. If you have connections inside the company, use these to help you get an advantage.

Written and oral tests (psychological, professional) may be performed before the interview.

If you are no longer interested in a job, inform the employer in good time.

### **Who will be there?**

Either one or a group of persons, depending on the company.



### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes. Etiquette states that you shake hands first with the women, then the most important person, then the others.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Interview structures vary, but there are some common characteristics. The atmosphere is usually formal. The interviewers introduce themselves, and will then invite you to present yourself, your education, previous work experience, any special skills and competences, your interests and why you applied for the job.

Employers usually ask questions about your CV, previous work experience and their expectations. The interview lasts about 1/2 hour.

Save your own questions for the end of the interview, keep them brief and avoid going into too much detail.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Questions regarding religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or pregnancy must be avoided, according to Croatia's anti-discrimination act, which came into force in 2009. You can refuse to answer questions related to your private life.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References or letters of recommendations are not needed in Croatia, unless requested. Some companies and institutions need criminal records office certificates.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Employers often set salaries and benefits and there is limited room for negotiation. In any case, salaries are only negotiable in the private sector; in the public sector they are fixed by law. Salaries are expressed as a monthly rate and should include holiday entitlements. Bonuses and other benefits are negotiated separately.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

From a legal point of view, a 1-day work trial is not possible.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The probationary period is usually between 1 and 3 months long.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

The employer is not obliged to cover costs for attending an interview.

### **When will I hear the result?**

At the end of the interview, you can ask the interviewer when the results will be announced. The employer usually informs you about the results a week or two after the interview.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

After the interview, you can call the interviewer and ask for feedback.



### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

We suggest you arrive 10-15 minutes early in order to organise and review your documents, and to get ready. Let the employer know if you expect to be late or if you are not able to attend.

### **Dress-code tips**

A candidate dressed appropriately and neatly is going to make a much better impression than one dressed in jeans and a T-shirt. Excessive jewellery and accessories, and extreme hairstyles or dyed hair should be avoided. Your personal appearance should reflect that of a potential employee.

### **Any further advice?**

Your behaviour during the interview can affect the outcome. If you show self-confidence, make eye contact with the interviewers and have a firm handshake, this will give your prospective employer a favourable impression.

Do not speak badly of former employers. Keep questions to general queries about the company and job you are applying for, and avoid asking too much about salaries, benefits and days off.

Finally, take care to speak about your positive attributes and do not focus on your negatives or weaknesses, even if you are asked about them.



# ITALY

Official language → **Italian**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **59.7 million**  
Capital → **Rome**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+39**  
Internet code → **.it**

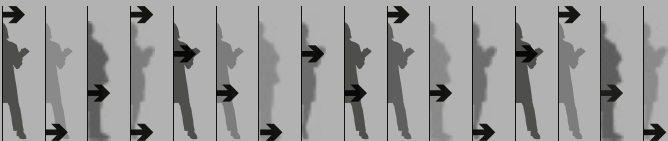
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN ITALY?

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Italy has it all – from an enviable climate, varied landscape and historical and artistic treasures to a beloved national cuisine. Its people know how to live the good life, cherishing family, cultural traditions and beautiful surroundings.

Recruitment has picked up since 2012 in Italy. Recent observations have seen a marked increase in the proportion of highly skilled jobs on offer, particularly for IT, manufacturing and construction specialists, as well as for administrative, financial and banking technicians. There has also been a growth in demand for labourers and skilled workers, with less demand for clerical and sales staff. Italy traditionally has a large number of jobs for seasonal workers, due to the large tourism industry. Companies have a problem filling around 20% of vacancies.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

Jobseekers in Italy usually start by looking for work on the Internet. Local public employment services and newspapers all have websites with job offers. The Ministry of Labour has a new website with job offers: <http://www.cliclavoro.gov.it>. It is also common to send employers a spontaneous application with your CV. Other options are to buy local newspapers, or visit the local public employment service or private job agencies.

### Tips for job applications

The standard application procedure in Italy is to send an up-to-date CV together with a covering letter, by e-mail or regular mail.

With electronic applications, make it clear which job you are applying for and activate the reading confirmation option in your e-mail account settings.

In written applications, the layout and the appearance of the covering letter itself are very important. The covering letter should be better structured than an electronic application.

Check the receipt status of your application by a phone call. If your application is of interest to the company, the employer should contact you within a few days. If not, it means that you have not been selected. However, CVs are often stored for a long time, and you might receive a phone call for a job vacancy that you applied for the previous year.

If you are applying spontaneously, your application must be grammatically correct and well written, but it must also be very motivating.

How else can you capture the attention of an employer for a position that is not vacant?

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, but you can include one if you want to.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, you should not send a handwritten letter.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Yes, the Europass format is preferred.

*'Through EURES, I secured an internship in a design studio in Senigallia, northern Italy. At the same time, I did an Italian language course, which turned out to be a great place to meet people from all over the world and make new friends outside work. On a personal level, it was a very valuable experience as I learnt how to manage daily life in a country so different from my home country – and in a new language. Professionally, the internship proved to be very successful because shortly afterwards I got a permanent job as a product designer in Denmark.'*

**Ebba, jobseeker from Sweden**

### Making contact by phone

If the first contact is made via phone, be polite and speak fluently and correctly. Ask for an appointment right away and do not forget to ask for the person's contact details.



### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

No, but bring everything with you to the interview (Italian bureaucracy is very strict).

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

As soon as possible after the new recruit is available.

### **Preparing for an interview**

If you are particularly interested in the position, collect information about the company or the employer; think about what they would like to hear from you. Being sociable, willing and enthusiastic could be an advantage.

### **Who will be there?**

Depending on the vacancy, the employer, head of department, HR officer or even a person specially appointed to conduct such interviews – so either one person or a panel of people might attend. Written tests are usually carried out in groups. A meeting or a test usually lasts for a maximum of 1 hour.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, this is common practice.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

The interview usually starts by talking about the candidate's previous work experience. The atmosphere is formal. It is up to the interviewer/

employer to make the atmosphere more relaxed.

The employer pays attention not only to the way you speak and act, but also whether your appearance and dress are suitable for the vacancy. You should also give a good explanation of your motivation.

After the employer has explained the duties and work that have to be carried out, the applicant can ask questions about any issue that is not clear. This can include the nature and duration of the contract, pay conditions and anything else.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Applicants should feel free not to answer questions about their personal life. The employer should not ask for strictly private information.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

It is always an advantage to the candidate to provide references or letters of recommendation (from previous employers, university professors, etc.) to support their previous work experience or testify to their skills and abilities.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Financial and contract conditions are not negotiable in Italy. If you take the job, you will sign a contract that sets out all the information and the description of the financial and work conditions. Negotiation of pay, holidays, bonuses, etc. depends on the employer and on collective agreements (CCNL).





The most common non-statutory benefits in Italy are meal vouchers, a company mobile phone or a car. Negotiations on pay and non-statutory benefits are conducted with HR staff.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

The employer may ask for a 1-day work trial or a probationary period. You can refuse this if the period exceeds the statutory period (which depends on the specific collective agreement).

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

There is no standard period.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

In some cases, for some positions, the candidate may be offered a refund of some or all of the costs incurred in travelling to the interview.

### **When will I hear the result?**

If you are hired, it will be up to your new employer to communicate this to you. The employer should specify at the interview how much time will be needed to make a decision.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you want to get follow-up about your interview or ask more questions, you can do so by phone or by e-mail.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is very important. If you are prevented from going to the appointment, you should give notice as soon as possible.

### **Dress-code tips**

In some companies there is a dress etiquette. The same goes for jewellery. The general rule is: if you do not know anything more specific, go for the smart casual look.



# ICELAND

Official language → **Icelandic**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **320 000**  
Capital → **Reykjavik**  
Currency → **Icelandic króna (ISK)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EEA**  
Phone code → **+354**  
Internet code → **.is**

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## WHY GO TO WORK IN ICELAND?

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Iceland is an island of natural wonders with volcanoes, glaciers, geysers and mud pots. Fear not the Vikings; Icelanders are friendly, stoical and humorous, and their capital Reykjavik has the safety and charm of a village.

Unemployment in Iceland has historically been very low, around 1%. This changed with the financial crisis and the collapse of the banks in 2008, increasing to over 8%, although it has fallen since. The economic crisis also led to an upturn in tourism, due to the devaluation of the currency. A growth in the software development sector has translated into a need for skilled IT workers, and there is a shortage of skilled workers in the metal industry, including welders and ironworkers. The country is also in need of doctors, as many Icelandic doctors have moved to work abroad.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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If you don't speak Icelandic, the best way to look for work is via EURES. For some vacancies, you are requested to fill in an online application form at <http://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/eures>. For others, you can send your application directly to the employer. Make sure that you complete the form giving as much detail as possible.

You may also, free of charge, register with one or more private employment agencies (*ráðningargjónustur*), check job advertisements in local newspapers or place your own advert.

You can contact the local branch of your trade union (*stéttarfélag*): they have information on the current employment trends in your profession and can advise on where to start looking.

Be aware, too, that word of mouth is very powerful in a small community like Iceland, and many jobseekers find work through family contacts or other personal networks.

### Tips for job applications

Sending a CV and a covering letter is the most common procedure when applying for a job. A CV should never exceed two pages and should be to the point and recently updated. The letter should state why you are interested in the vacancy and why you are the right person for the position.

If you apply spontaneously, try to hand your application directly to the person who will be in charge of the selection procedure. This will make a better impression.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

Yes, photos in CVs are very common. Choose the photo well: it should be of you alone and with nothing in the background. Photos from the beach or last weekend's party are not a good idea.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

Not at all: handwritten covering letters are generally considered unprofessional.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Europass-type formats tend to be long and very detailed. It is more important that the CV is short and clear, no more than two pages.

### Making contact by phone

If applying by phone, remember that Icelandic people are not very formal. Even so, it is usual to state your name and the reason for your call at the start of the conversation. Take care not to speak for too long and never interrupt the person you are talking to.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

You should have your diploma assessed for equivalence and recognition in Iceland. This will make it easier for employers to evaluate your knowledge and skills. It may also help you to get a better job with higher pay.

The basic principle is that valid qualifications for practising a profession in your homeland



are also valid in other EEA countries. Higher degrees, 3 years of academic studies (BA, BSc, BS) and vocational studies with a secondary-school education should be recognised throughout the EEA.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for coordinating recognition procedures. However, other ministries handle recognition for their respective spheres, for instance the Ministry of Health for the recognition of medical and health professions. The best place to begin collecting the information you will need is <http://www.menntagatt.is>, the national reference point for the assessment and recognition of qualifications.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

In low-skilled jobs, applicants are usually expected to start within days or a month at the latest. For highly skilled specialist positions there is more room for negotiation. One to three months is common.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Before you go to an interview, do your homework. Read up about the company on its webpage, and be prepared to answer any questions they might bring up. These could include: what are your strengths and weaknesses? How would you describe yourself as a worker? Why did you leave your last job? Show that you are interested in knowing as much as possible about the company and the vacancy.

### **Who will be there?**

There may be one to four people from the employer's side. In general, the more specialised the job, the more people conduct the interview.

### **Do we shake hands?**

People always shake hands at formal occasions such as job interviews. Shake hands firmly and make eye contact. A weak handshake is not a good start.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Interviews usually take 30 minutes to an hour. There is no specific structure. The best thing to do is to present yourself as honestly as possible and not to 'oversell' or 'undersell' your skills. Be polite and try to be calm.

Employers want to discover who you are during the interview. Do not be surprised if they ask questions about your personal life. Non-professional items usually take up a small part of the interview and are used simply to make the atmosphere more relaxed. The employer should already know basic things about your experience from your CV. Use this opportunity to speak in greater depth about your skills and why you are the best candidate. Also, try to convince them that you will contribute something that will enhance the quality of their company and that you are willing to work hard to do this.



Any questions from you regarding the nature of the job are appreciated, but it is better to wait until you know for sure that you have got the job before asking about the salary, unless the employer brings it up first.

At the end of an interview, the employer usually tells you when you can expect to hear from them again. If they do not, the odds are that they are not interested. If the employer has not contacted you within the period you were told, the best thing is to simply contact them and ask for feedback.

While you will always present yourself better in person, if you cannot attend the interview, check if the employer can conduct the interview as a conference call. Video-conferencing is also growing in popularity in Iceland.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Anti-discrimination laws in Iceland are quite clear. Employers can ask if you are married or if you have children. They cannot ask about your sexual orientation, your political views or if you intend to have children. The best thing to do if these questions come up is to point out politely that these questions make you uncomfortable and that you question whether they are legal.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Give details in your CV of at least two people, such as a former employer or teacher, who will give you a good reference. Get their approval in

advance. They should know how you work and be able to attest that you have the skills and attitude to work that you claim to have.

Letters of recommendation can help, but most employers prefer to get the references themselves. Mention the letters in your CV nevertheless and be ready to present them at your job interview.

Some employers want verification from your local authorities that you do not have a criminal record. This is particularly common in care and cleaning jobs, where you are left on your own, often in private homes or offices.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Salaries and contract length may be negotiated in the interview or after a job offer is made. Icelandic labour law states that you should have a job contract not later than 2 months after the job starts. The contract should state your salary. There is always room to negotiate your pay. You are entitled to one interview with your employer every year to discuss pay.

The most common point of negotiation is over the monthly salary. If you have a job where you often work overtime, negotiating an hourly rate would be a good idea. Holiday pay and bonuses are fixed, so they do not have to be negotiated.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

There is usually no need for a trial period as it is very easy to hire and fire people in Iceland and at the beginning of a job the notice period is



very short. You should be paid for every day that you work.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

If you have one, it is usually between 1 and 3 months long. If the employer does not intend to pay you for this period, you should refuse and inform the Directorate of Labour or a trade union.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Very rarely, except in the case of a highly skilled specialist job. This is up to the employer.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Employers do not like to contact people to tell them that they have not been hired. Therefore it is a good idea to contact the employer 1 week after the application deadline to find out the status of the vacancy. A good rule of thumb is that if you have not been hired 1 month after the deadline, they do not want to employ you.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is a good idea to take the initiative and contact the employer for feedback. It shows that you are interested and take matters into your own hands when needed.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Icelanders are very punctual when it comes to work. It is therefore imperative that you show up on time for your interview.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress casually and smartly or conventionally. Avoid wearing too much jewellery. Jewellery on men, except for an engagement or a wedding ring, is frowned upon in Icelandic society.

### **Any further advice?**

Icelandics like people who help themselves, and they are not too hung up on formalities and pecking order. With this in mind, use all methods to find work and be proactive.

*'Including the cross-border labour market in your search for employment will create new opportunities and improve your chances of actually finding a new working environment. Ensure that you are well informed, organise your paperwork, take on the challenge and experience a new culture without the hassle of having to move house.'*

**Sarah O'Brien, EURES Coordinator, Scheldemond cross-border region, the Netherlands**



# CYPRUS

Official languages → **Greek, Turkish**  
Government → **Presidential republic**  
Population → **870000**  
Capital → **Nicosia**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+357**  
Internet code → **.cy**

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## WHY GO TO WORK IN CYPRUS?

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Cyprus retains the marks of 10 000 years of civilisation, as well as a good number of party hotspots. Away from the resorts are villages and ruins drenched in scents typical of the Mediterranean. It is also a little-known fact that Cyprus is home to one of Europe's most southerly ski resorts.

In terms of work, the country has seen a contraction in the construction, hotel and catering industries, as well as in retail and commerce. Unemployment has risen significantly in recent years, especially among the young. The best prospects for employment for those with a secondary education include work as shop staff and cashiers, waiters, in childcare and care work, and bakers. Those with a higher education are more likely to find work in accounting and finance, IT, telecoms, and electrical engineering.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

Candidates can look for vacancies through the Cyprus section of the EURES portal, at public employment service offices or private employment agencies, or in newspapers. Useful links can be found via the EURES portal's **Links** page.

### Tips for job applications

The most common way to apply is to send a typed letter and a CV. For unskilled occupations, the application procedure is usually verbal. In cases where the applicant is sent by the public employment services, a standard reference letter is issued – which has to be completed by the prospective employer, stating their final decision – and submitted to the labour office.

If you apply for a vacancy found on the EURES portal, mention the national reference number. Both electronic and written applications should include a covering letter, which should be no longer than one page, to the point and typed. This letter, addressed to the employer or the organisation advertising the post, should contain important data not included in the CV. It should always be signed.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

Yes, photos are common on CVs in Cyprus.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, a typed letter is preferred.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Yes, it is quite common and well understood by Cypriot employers.

### Making contact by phone

The first contacts when looking for work in Cyprus are usually made by phone. As a prospective candidate, you are advised to ask if the vacancy is still open and for details of the application procedure.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

A copy of the diploma is always needed, usually at the very beginning of the application. Authenticity of documentation is rarely necessary, except for regulated professions for which registration is required, such as doctors, architects, engineers, etc.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

After the agreement between the two parties, the job usually starts by the beginning of the next calendar month for occupations paid on a monthly basis, or by the beginning of the following week for unskilled occupations paid on a weekly basis.

### Preparing for an interview

The applicant should have a general idea about the company's activities, size, etc. Employers usually pay attention to the candidate's general





appearance and dress. Candidates should present themselves self-confidently and politely.

### **Who will be there?**

Be aware that in Cyprus most establishments are small units where the owner is at the same time the director and the personnel manager. The director or personnel manager usually conducts the interview.

### **Do we shake hands?**

It is customary to shake hands with someone you meet for the first time.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

There is no specific structure for the job interview. You may be asked to present yourself and discuss your positive and negative sides as well as your qualifications and experience in relation to the job description.

Questions are most often related to qualifications and experience, for example: Why do you feel you are suitable for this job? What is your experience in this field? What are your expectations of this job? For low-skilled professions, the employer may ask the candidate to demonstrate their skills on-site.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

In Cyprus, there are laws against discrimination and for the protection of personal data. During an interview, the candidate is not obliged to answer strictly private questions or give

confidential information, for example about one's sexual orientation.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References and letters of recommendation are commonly used for high-level jobs. When listing referees, the applicant should inform the relevant person in advance and ask for their permission to include their name, phone number and job title in the CV.

Regulated professions usually need proof of good conduct as evidence of a clean criminal record.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

In Cyprus, terms and conditions of employment are usually determined in collective agreements. Candidates are encouraged to be informed about the terms of these agreements. However, collective agreements are not binding by law and in many cases wages and other benefits are negotiated between the employer and the employee.

Employers are obliged to inform an employee in writing about the terms and conditions of employment offered within 1 month of the commencement of employment. This document should include the salary, hours of work, annual leave, etc.



**Is a trial period likely?**

A trial period may be negotiated between the two parties, but it is not determined by law or by collective agreements.

**How long is the standard probationary period?**

The usual period is 1 month.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, this is not standard practice in Cyprus.

**When will I hear the result?**

There is no general rule as to when candidates are informed about the outcome of an interview.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is not customary to give feedback to all candidates. However, any written queries from candidates are usually answered in due time.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Candidates are encouraged to be on time for their interview. If you cannot attend, give notice of this in advance.

**Dress-code tips**

Candidates are advised to dress in a smart casual style and avoid extremes.

**Any further advice?**

If you apply for a job in Cyprus from abroad, be sure that the vacancy is still open when you apply. You can do that by contacting the employer directly.



# LATVIA

Official language → **Latvian**

Government → **Parliamentary republic**

Population → **2 million**

Capital → **Riga**

Currency → **Latvian lats (LVL)/euro (EUR), as from 2014**

Member EU or EEA → **EU**

Phone code → **+371**

Internet code → **.lv**

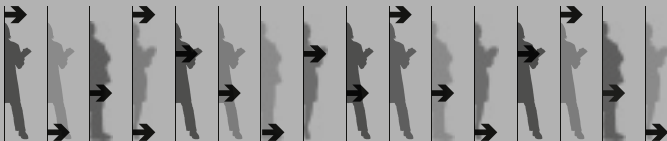
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN LATVIA?

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One of Europe's best kept secrets, Latvia's lively capital Riga is home to more than a third of the country's population, boasts stunning art nouveau architecture and, as a former member of the medieval Hanseatic League, has a long and proud history of commerce and international trade.

The country's labour market has recovered from the economic crisis and is currently stable with rising employment. In some sectors there is already a shortage of specialists: IT specialists, engineers and highly qualified specialists in industry are all in demand. To be successful in finding a job in Latvia, candidates should be flexible and multi-skilled, for example in starting and running a business, with good IT and communication skills, and able to speak Latvian and/or English and/or Russian.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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The most common way to find work in Latvia is via personal contacts, social networks and the state employment agency (NVA).

### Tips for job applications

A CV and covering letter are usually required to support the application. They are usually sent by e-mail or sometimes by post. If you apply for seasonal or unqualified work you can so do by phone, because employers usually pre-select for these kinds of jobs.

Although most Latvian businesses are keen to adapt their processes to west European standards, which (in most cases) are less formal, most Latvian companies are still hierarchical in terms of structure and management culture. This is also true of their attitude to the application procedure.

The covering letter is very important and should be reliable and convincing. Employers look for candidates who understand their business, mission and market. Fraudulent job experience or other incorrect information is not acceptable. The candidate should treat the employer with respect at all times.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

It is up to you whether or not to include a photo on your CV. Some employers ask for a photo, especially for positions where work is related to customer service.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, the most common way of applying in Latvia is with a typed covering letter.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Yes, either a national-style or European CV may be submitted, as long as it is targeted, clear and well written.

### Making contact by phone

More effective than sending your CV to different companies is to establish close contact with the personnel manager of a company and make a phone call to find out more about the application procedure.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

If requested, copies of your diplomas and other proof of your qualifications must be provided.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

One month on average.

### Preparing for an interview

Interviews and tests to elicit psychological and character traits or practical skills are generally used in all companies. Employers not only focus on professional aspects, but also on human qualities.



It is very important to show your motivation for the job, your ability and willingness. You must be honest and explain what you can improve and how. You must show that you would really like to work for the company.

### **Who will be there?**

In smaller companies, the head of the company or line manager conducts the job interview. In larger companies, there are usually three interviewers, including the head of the company or a particular division and a personnel specialist.

### **Do we shake hands?**

A handshake is acceptable as a greeting, but remember to wait for the employer to offer the handshake first.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Interviews are usually formal in Latvia. Employers may also conduct so-called 'test interviews' which may be conducted by phone or in a group for the purpose of identifying the leader.

An interview rarely takes more than 1/2 hour per candidate. Questions are very similar for all applicants if the interview is official and formal. The candidate is expected to have prepared for the interview, and to know about the company and the position. Candidates are allowed to ask questions about the job and duties to which they have not yet obtained an answer.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

There are various documents banning discrimination on grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender, social

class, language, political opinions, etc. Statutory rights are usually not impaired, but there is nevertheless some remaining hostility to diversity.

Discriminatory questions are those that ask the candidate about marital status or plans to have children. Questions regarding age, marital status, personal information (height, weight, etc.) may also be considered discriminatory. Sometimes tricks are used to elicit such information: for example employers can ask a candidate to send a full-body photo or conduct a 'stress interview', during which they test how a potential employee behaves in an uncomfortable situation, how creative a person is, etc. This is an interesting method, but the boundary between legitimate techniques and the violation of applicants' rights is slim.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Letters of recommendation can be helpful in Latvia because personal contacts are a very common and effective way of finding a job. References and letters of recommendation can also be part of a formal application procedure. They can come from your previous employer or colleagues, but not from relatives.

For some positions it is compulsory to supply proof of good conduct.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Before the contract is signed, the employee and employer need to discuss working conditions: salary, how often the salary is paid, working hours and overtime, probationary period, extra benefits and other topics. Wages are usually paid once or twice a month in Latvia.



Be aware that only written work contracts can protect employee and employer rights. If a verbal agreement is made, the labour relationship is governed only by civil laws, and the employee may lose social security rights.

Benefits in addition to statutory rights may include health insurance, travel expenses or living costs, gym membership, etc. All bonuses depend on the goodwill and facilities of the employer.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

No, there are no trial periods for work in Latvia.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

An employer can ask the employee for a probationary period. This is usually included in the employment contract, and it may last up to 3 months. The probationary period for state/government positions may be up to 6 months.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Employers rarely cover costs for attending an interview.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Most companies let you know the result of the application procedure within 2 weeks of the interview. Some may not inform you of the result at all.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

You can ask after the interview when you can expect feedback. If you do not hear from them within the agreed time, you can call and ask for the results.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

The employer expects you to be on time for the interview. It shows your punctuality and sense of responsibility.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress-code rules depend on the sector and position. For a bank, a state institution or an office role, your dress style should be conventional. In general, you should be neat and well groomed.



# LIECHTENSTEIN

Official language → **German**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **36800**  
Capital → **Vaduz**  
Currency → **Swiss franc (CHF)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EEA and EFTA**  
Phone code → **+423**  
Internet code → **.li**

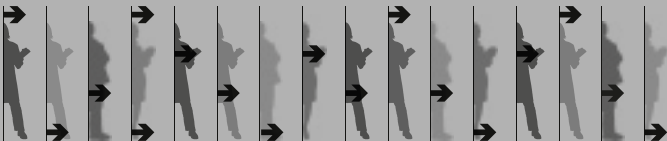
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN LIECHTENSTEIN?

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The last remnant of the Holy Roman Empire, Liechtenstein was established in 1719 and has close ties with Switzerland. It is most famous for its low tax regime and high salaries, and as a centre of banking and commerce, but it also has the highest industrial concentration of all countries in Europe. There is not an awful lot of it – the country measures 25 km long by 6 km wide – but the capital, Vaduz, has some beautiful mountain scenery popular with hikers, cyclists and, in winter, skiers.

The unemployment rate was the lowest in Europe in 2012 (2.4% average and 2.75% for youth unemployment). The labour market has shortages of craftsmen and skilled technicians.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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The best website for jobs in Liechtenstein is the Arbeitsmarkt Service Liechtenstein (<http://amsfli.li>). The public labour market service can provide further information.

### Tips for job applications

Written applications are most common in Liechtenstein. If you apply by e-mail, use PDF files if possible. Send your complete recruitment file: covering letter, CV with photo, references and letters of recommendation, diploma and other documents that are relevant for the job. Do not forget to include your contact details.

After applying, you will receive an invitation for an interview or a (written) refusal. After the interview, you can expect a test or assessment. There may be one to three interviews before the contract is signed.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

Yes, a photo on the CV is definitely recommended.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, handwritten applications are only used if explicitly asked for by the employer.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

No, you are advised to use the Swiss CV format. A sample CV can be found on <http://www.amsfli.li>.

### Making contact by phone

When you phone the employer, ask to speak to the contact person mentioned. Do not ask too many questions, and keep these to the point. Do not make your call longer than needed.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

Preferably yes, or at the very least take them with you to the interview.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

Between 1 and 3 months.

### Preparing for an interview

Applicants should know as much as they can about the company they are interested in: information about the company, turnover, size, sector, geographical position, organisational culture, etc.

Prepare for questions like: Why do you want to work for our firm? What do you know about our company? Write down questions that you want to ask. Be careful with personal or professional information about yourself that the employer can find on the Internet.

### Who will be there?

Usually one to three people will conduct the interview, including at least an HR representative and a supervisor





**Do we shake hands?**

Yes, it is customary to shake hands in Liechtenstein.

**Is there a typical interview structure?**

An interview takes 1 to 2 hours. Tests or assessments may take another few hours.

There are structured (fixed questions – easy to compare the candidates), semi-structured and non-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are used most. A possible structure could be: introduction; presentation of the company; questions to the applicant (job, education, interests, extra courses, skills, team spirit, etc.); hobbies and non-professional occupations; personal goals; contract negotiations; summary; and next steps.

The atmosphere will be cooperative, open and frank. The ratio between non-professional and professional questions will be half–half. It is important to prove your motivation. The employer wants to know as much as possible about a candidate's motivation, knowledge and skills, but also their personality.

You can ask any questions at the end of the first interview. Questions about salary are usually dealt with during the second interview.

**When is a question out of bounds?**

Questions about a planned pregnancy, illness, religion or political affiliation should not be answered if they are not relevant to the job.

**Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Letters of recommendation and references are very important for the recruiter, but need be provided only on request.

**Negotiating your pay and benefits**

You can negotiate your benefits. The personnel manager is usually the person to negotiate with. It may be useful to contact a trade union first to find out about the range of salaries in that occupation. Normally salaries are expressed on a monthly or annual basis. Holiday pay is included; bonuses are not, at least not in the fixed salary. The most common non-statutory benefits are: meal vouchers, company car, mobile phone, sports vouchers, company restaurant, laptop, etc.

**Is a trial period likely?**

The use of a 1-day work trial is not common, but can be useful in certain situations. You can refuse a work trial, but it may be useful for the candidate to get to know the job.

**How long is the standard probationary period?**

One to three months maximum.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Yes, but do ask about this in advance.



**When will I hear the result?**

The employer should inform you at the end of the interview about the deadline for the decision or other future steps. If not, you should ask about it.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

After the interview, you can ask for feedback by phone.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

It is usual to arrive about 10 minutes early. You should report on arrival.

**Dress-code tips**

Your dress code should be adapted to the company and the role. In general, avoid bright colours and revealing clothes, and be sparing with make-up and jewellery.

**Any further advice?**

Due to its small size and attractive regulatory environment, the Liechtenstein has for some time been obliged to regulate the entry of foreign citizens. The possibility of settling in the country is thus restricted.



# LITHUANIA

Official language → **Lithuanian**  
Government → **Presidential republic**  
Population → **3 million**  
Capital → **Vilnius**  
Currency → **Lithuanian litas (LTL)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+370**  
Internet code → **.lt**

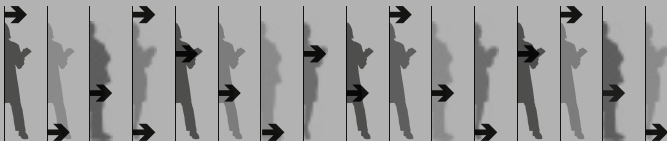
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN LITHUANIA?

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Smoothed by the glaciers of the last ice age, the rolling countryside of Lithuania is dotted with lakes, wetlands and forests as well as plenty of space to roam and pick wild berries and mushrooms. Larger than Belgium or the Netherlands, it has less than a third of their population.

Lithuania had one of the fastest-growing economies in eastern Europe prior to the financial crisis in 2008. It has made efforts to develop a knowledge-based economy with an emphasis on biotechnology. The job market has picked up following difficult years in 2009-10, with strong demand for personnel to fill the following roles: sales managers, doctors, insurance agents, international truck drivers, tailors, salespersons, multi-skilled construction workers, waiting and bar staff, and metalworking machine operators.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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The biggest newspaper, *Lietuvos rytas*, announces job vacancies every day. Vacancies are also published in the newspapers *Alio reklama* and *Noriu*; all three post adverts on their websites too. The Lithuanian labour exchange also gives an overview of all registered vacancies as do many other jobs websites. Visit the **Links** page of the EURES portal for these and other useful web addresses.

Recruitment agencies are also commonly used and personnel departments of large companies often compile databases of potential employees, so you can send your CV directly to them.

### Tips for job applications

Lithuanian employers usually want to see a written CV before they request an interview with a candidate. Nowadays it is popular to use the Europass CV.

If you are making a spontaneous application, choose the largest companies and send your CV with a covering letter. Limit your typed CV to two pages, including only the most relevant details and giving the most recent activities first. You can add copies of your original passport or ID card, diplomas or qualification documents. The CV and covering letter should be written in Lithuanian or, in the case of international companies, in English.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, if a photo is required, it will be indicated in the vacancy advertisement.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, typed covering letters are more common.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Both national and Europass formats are used, and there is no preference for either one over the other.

### Making contact by phone

Telephone contacts are not very common for the first contact with a jobseeker. Employers prefer face-to-face interviews.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

Yes, send copies with the application and take the originals to the interview.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

The typical period is 1 to 3 months.

### Preparing for an interview

There is usually just one round of interviews. Most of the time, this takes the form of an in-depth conversation between the person responsible for recruitment and the candidate.



### **Who will be there?**

In larger companies, when the list of candidates is long and the position is very important, a preliminary interview may be conducted by the personnel manager. The second interview is usually conducted by a line manager, as he/she knows exactly which work-specific questions to ask and is the person that the applicant will be working for directly. Selection centres (assessment centres) are not widely used in Lithuania, but some employers use the services of recruitment companies for the pre-selection of staff.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, it is common to shake hands firmly with the interviewer.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

No, but you can expect questions such as: What did you do before? Tell us something about yourself (here you have a good chance to present yourself and offer important information to the prospective employer to stimulate their interest in you). Why do you want to work for us? Why did you leave your previous job? How do you see your responsibilities in our company? What can you offer us? What are your strengths and weaknesses, and your interests outside work? What are your future ambitions?

Demonstrate enthusiasm. Make it clear that you want the job. Show that you are prepared. Include evidence that you have found out more about the company in your answers, but do not make it too obvious. Ask questions afterwards.

Be prepared to answer the question about what salary you expect. Possible answers could include: 'I think I should not receive less than the employee who occupied the position previously,' or 'Since your company is known to be prestigious, I am sure I will be paid according to current rates.' Applicants are advised to make a brief survey of salary levels in the chosen field prior to any salary negotiations.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

It is not tactful for employers to ask about age, marital status, pregnancy, addictions or religion.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Previous employers could be asked for a reference. It is advisable to bring original diplomas to the interview, not copies. Letters of recommendation are uncommon in Lithuania, but bring them along if you have them (if in a foreign language, they need to be translated).

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Usually employers ask about the desired pay, which is usually expressed as a monthly amount. Salaries are negotiated with the employer or staff manager. Holiday pay is included in the contract and is strictly defined by labour law.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Yes, trial periods are quite common in Lithuania and they are indicated in the contract.



**How long is the standard probationary period?**

It can be up to 3 months long.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, it is not common for employers to cover travel costs.

**When will I hear the result?**

Usually you will get the result within 2 weeks.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

For evaluation, you can call the employer back after a few days.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

It is advisable to arrive 10 minutes early for the interview. Punctuality and a smooth start to the meeting are appreciated in Lithuania.

**Dress-code tips**

It depends on the vacancy. A suit or dress is always appropriate. Jewellery and cosmetics should be used in moderation.



# LUXEMBOURG

Official languages → **French, German, Luxembourgish**

Government → **Constitutional Grand Duchy**

Population → **537 000**

Capital → **Luxembourg**

Currency → **euro (EUR)**

Member EU or EEA → **EU**

Phone code → **+352**

Internet code → **.lu**

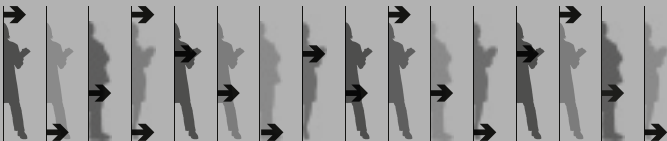
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN LUXEMBOURG?

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Postage-stamp-sized Luxembourg is known for its banking sector, low tax regime and fairy-tale castles. Besides the city, its magical outside with steep hills and lush wooded valleys are ideal for a walk before lunch in a rustic tavern beside a turreted manor house. Almost half the country's resident population are foreigners. Even more people commute to work daily in Luxembourg from the other side of its borders.

The job market has grown rapidly in recent years – up 30% from 2004 to 2012 with growth in the business and financial services health and social services, construction, transport and communication. There is also still recruitment potential in construction, hotels and restaurants, business services, industry, wholesale and retail trade, transport and health, and social services.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Job vacancies are posted on bulletin boards in the Luxembourgish public employment service, in Saturday editions of national newspapers, on websites of private employment organisations and on the websites of recruitment organisations and large companies. See the EURES portal's **Links** page for useful web addresses in Luxembourg.

Spontaneous applications are very common in Luxembourg, especially among young graduates and for people applying to work in large companies. Do not hesitate to apply in this way and get yourself noticed by a company. Your application will probably be stored in a database.

Taking into account that Luxembourg is at the centre of Europe and has three official languages (French, German and Luxembourgish), many job adverts insist that candidates speak different languages. And since companies in Luxembourg also have activities and cooperate with other companies all over Europe, knowledge of extra languages such as Dutch, English, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish is indispensable or at least very much appreciated. It is essential to be bilingual, including in at least one of the country's official languages, if you want to find a job here.

### Tips for job applications

The most common application procedure is to send a CV and a covering letter in response to a job advertisement. The letter should make it clear that you understand very well what the company wants in a new employee and that

your skills and qualities meet their needs. You should explain your motivation for the job and the reason why you want to work for the company. The letter should be written without mistakes and in the same language as the advert, unless otherwise specified.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

Yes, it is standard to include a photo on your CV.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

Sometimes, as many companies still insist that the covering letter is handwritten. They would, however, normally mention this in the advertisement.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

No, it is not widely used. For employers, the Europass format contains too much information and is too long.

Your CV should be no longer than two pages, and should list your education, training courses and work experience, language skills, computer skills and fields of interest.

### Making contact by phone

Contacting the employer by phone is not recommended.





### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

You are advised to send a copy of your diplomas with the application.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

It all depends on the kind of job and the availability of the person.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Finding a job is hard work. You have to put a lot of time into it in order to be successful as quickly as possible. Things you must definitely do to prepare for the interview are the following.

- Conduct a thorough self-analysis: strengths and weaknesses, skills and competences, your assets.
- If you were unsuccessful in previous application procedures, persist in your efforts and be certain to show clearly why you are applying.
- Make sure you can tell the employer more about the job and working conditions that you are looking for.
- Get informed about the company, their products and their image.
- Show the employer that you have prepared for the interview. If the employer has the impression that you did not prepare well, he/she will consider you to be sloppy and unprofessional.

Make sure you can supply a short, clear summary of yourself, your motivation and your strengths in relation to the job requirements.

### **Who will be there?**

The number and role of those present will depend on the job in question.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, always shake hands with your interviewer(s).

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

There is no typical interview structure; it depends on the job and firm (size and sector of activity).

That said, it is quite possible that the person who is in charge of the interview will ask you some tricky questions, especially about the reasons why you left other jobs or former employers. Make sure you prepare in advance to answer such questions. You can always try out the answers with your family or friends. They should tell you honestly if your answers are convincing.

As a rule, if you are asked about a bad experience, always try to make the best out of it. Never be negative about former employers or colleagues. Counter the bad experience by giving several examples of things that worked out well.

To make a good impression on your potential future employer, remember to show a positive



attitude, keep your head up and make eye contact with the person in charge of the interview.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Luxembourg has legislation to protect private lives, so highly personal topics should not form part of the interview.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

There are no general rules regarding the use of references or letters of recommendation. Normally the job advert mentions the documents or references that are required. It is often advised to bring copies of these documents to the interview. This is also true for the need for proof of good conduct.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Financial aspects can be negotiated in some companies, but not in those where employers have agreed on a collective labour agreement for pay or where pay is determined by a pay scale.

For white-collar employees or administrative and managerial positions, pay is expressed in monthly rates. Blue-collar wages are expressed in hourly rates. Holiday pay is not standard and annual bonuses depend on the company and the sector. In some cases they are included in collective agreements.

Choose a level of pay that really rewards your abilities. It is important to persuade the

employer to reward you for these abilities. You will therefore have to prove the added value that you can provide to the employer once you have been hired. It is not always necessary to name figures when asked to state the level of pay you have in mind. Inform yourself in advance about the usual remuneration in the sector or the company. The pay may consist of a mix of cash payment and non-statutory benefits.

Asking people who occupy the same position in other companies or looking things up in specialist HR magazines can help you to define your negotiation standards.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Yes, in general there is a 3-month trial period for an unqualified worker and a 6-month trial period for a qualified person.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The probationary period is 6 months long in general.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, candidates' travel costs are not usually covered.

### **When will I hear the result?**

You will usually hear after 1 week.



**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is acceptable to call the employer and ask for feedback on your interview performance.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality and respect for the appointment you have made are considered to be very important.

**Dress-code tips**

Adapt your clothing and your overall appearance to the situation and the kind of company in which you are applying to work. In the financial sector, recruiters still expect men to wear a suit and tie.



# HUNGARY

Official language → **Hungarian**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **9.9 million**  
Capital → **Budapest**  
Currency → **Hungarian forint (HUF)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+36**  
Internet code → **.hu**

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## WHY GO TO WORK IN HUNGARY?

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Hungary has a culture and language which are unique in central Europe. The capital, Budapest, is vibrant and beautiful, straddling the Danube and attracting lovers of architecture or culture. The country is also blessed with the world's largest reserve of thermal water after Iceland and spa culture is fundamental to the Hungarian people.

The country has attracted significant foreign investment in the past two decades, but in recent years this has shifted away from the textile and food industry to luxury vehicle production, renewable energy systems, high-end tourism and IT. Unemployment has risen in the wake of the financial crisis; the largest numbers of new jobs advertised are for production-line assembly workers, metal workers and technicians, as well as hotel and catering staff.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Most positions in Hungary are filled via personal contacts. Those that are published appear in newspapers and on job portals on the Internet.

### Tips for job applications

Sending a CV with a covering letter is the most typical way to apply, but for blue-collar positions it is often enough to call the employer as an initial step. Larger companies may require candidates to complete an application form (sometimes online).

Applicants should prepare by finding out about the activities and profile of the company and about the position in order to decide if they are really interested and to know what the position is about.

For electronic applications, you should either use the online application form (if there is one), or send (only) the documents requested in the announcement.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

Yes, a photo is generally included.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, do not handwrite your application unless it is explicitly requested.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

It is not widely used, but it is widely accepted.

### Making contact by phone

It might be a good idea to make contact some-time after sending your application to show that you are really interested. It also helps to remind the company of your name.

Always prepare for any telephone contact, as you need to get your questions answered (do not forget them) and also be able to respond spontaneously. Make sure you are told what the next step should be.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

Send a copy if requested. You probably will be required to present them at the interview or before signing the contract. The authenticity of documents is not verified initially, but for certain positions (e.g. for doctors), it must be checked before the contract is signed.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

The employer will usually make their decision within weeks of the application deadline, although this depends on the position and number of applicants. Sometimes it can take months from the application to the start of the job.

### Preparing for an interview

Employers mostly want to see your personality and commitment during the interview. They also want to see how you react in professional situations and in unexpected circumstances.



**Who will be there?**

There will typically be one to three people at the interview.

**Do we shake hands?**

Generally yes, you shake hands with your interviewers.

**Is there a typical interview structure?**

An interview usually takes 1/2 hour, although some companies do several interviews or tests (e.g. one professional, one personal, etc.). Interview structure varies, but the atmosphere is almost always formal (even if it is friendly). You should be slightly reserved unless you see the employer adopt a more relaxed attitude. The content of the interviews is usually job-oriented, but there is an increasing tendency to cover personality, skills and attitude, intelligence and general behaviour. You should always try to sell yourself, explaining your motivation and why they should choose you, without of course being too pushy. Often the CV is referred to during the interview, and candidates are almost always asked why they left their previous job and to name their five best and worst characteristics.

You can ask anything about the job, but you should not start the interview by asking about the salary – this topic is normally raised by the employer. You should, however, be prepared to discuss your salary expectations, in which case it is always better to give a range than an exact figure. Nowadays the applicant is the one who has to state a price for his/her work as an office employee.

**When is a question out of bounds?**

There is anti-discrimination legislation in Hungary, which means that you do not need to reveal 'sensitive' information about yourself (religion, political allegiance or sexual orientation, a planned pregnancy, etc.) to employers. If you are uncertain about a question's relevance to the job, you can simply ask why it is important to disclose this information.

**Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References are not common in Hungary, but may be useful if they are relevant, for example a written statement about your previous employment and an assessment of your abilities. The employer may phone your previous employer if you have no objection.

Letters of recommendation are not common, but they may look good if from a well-known company, especially if in the same field. Some jobs require proof of good conduct (even if it is superfluous), but this is stated in the advert.

**Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Contract negotiations usually take place at the end of the application procedure. You can negotiate pay, but you should always justify this. You should also take into consideration that in some fields (e.g. civil servants) wages are set by law. Salaries are expressed in monthly terms, and the contract should mention holiday entitlements (the minimum is fixed by law). Bonuses are negotiated separately, but if they represent a large proportion of earnings, this is covered in the contract. Remuneration and



non-statutory benefits are discussed with the director.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Yes, almost without exception.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The probationary period is usually 3 months or can be extended to 3 months if it is less. If there is a collective agreement at the company, it can be up to 6 months.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Costs incurred when going to an interview are almost never reimbursed.

### **When will I hear the result?**

You will generally hear within a few weeks, but sometimes within a month or two.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is not usual to ask for feedback – you either get the job or a rejection.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is a must. If you are late, inform the employer if possible. You should confirm that you will attend the interview. If necessary, you can make a new appointment, but you should make sure to be there the second time.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress code depends on the job, but it is usually formal (suit, dress, etc.). Jewellery is tolerated in moderation, but only for women.

### **Any further advice?**

At the interview, make sure you do not appear unmotivated. Only ask about the salary at the end of the interview if you have no information about it.

Listen carefully to the questions and do not give too much information. Answer all questions – try to use three or four longer sentences instead of many short ones. Smile, and do not be afraid. If there is something you do not know, then say so. Be prepared for questions like ‘What would you like to know about us?’



# MALTA

Official languages → **English, Maltese**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **420000**  
Capital → **Valletta**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+356**  
Internet code → **.mt**

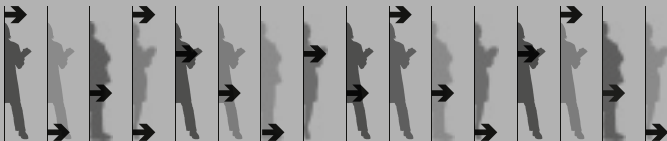
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN MALTA?

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One of the world's smallest and most densely populated states, the archipelago of Malta comprises three inhabited islands plus 18 others. A Mecca for tourists, it attracts three times as many visitors each year as the number of its residents. Despite being so heavily developed, it is testament to the islands' rulers over the years that many historic monuments survive to tell the tale of its 7 000-year history – a fascinating story of conquest in the Mediterranean.

The job market is dominated by the service sector and craft-related jobs. Recent surveys have shown a large number of vacancies for teachers, office staff, sales staff, waiters and waitresses, care workers, construction workers, nurses, cleaners and IT professionals.





## LOOKING FOR WORK

The local public employment service is the Employment and Training Corporation. Vacancies are advertised on the corporation's website and in its job centres around the island. Several private recruitment agencies also promote vacancies through their websites and one-to-one contacts. Local vacancies are advertised by public- and private-sector organisations in local newspapers. You can find all the useful weblinks on the EURES portal's **Links** page.

### Tips for job applications

Applications are usually sent by e-mail or by post, depending on the information given in the advert. You must always attach your personal CV with an application letter. Both the application letter and the CV must be submitted in English, unless it is specified otherwise.

Make sure you include attachments and that these can be opened. Specify clearly which job you are applying for. Avoid using animation or fancy design, especially if the job is a specialised one and design is not relevant for the post.

When applying spontaneously, specify what role you are interested in. Mention your availability. Add relevant qualifications.

*'At the European Job Day in Brussels, most of the candidates who visited our stands were graduates in financial services, law, marketing and communications, and tourism. These are areas where we have a shortage of workers in Malta and the event enabled us to put these young*

*people in touch with local employers with vacancies in these sectors.'*

**Jonathan Brimmer,**  
*EURES Adviser, Malta*

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, CVs in Malta do not usually include a photo.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

Not really. If a handwritten application is required, this will be mentioned in the advert.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Yes, the Europass format CV is accepted.

### Making contact by phone

Usually the employer contacts the applicants by phone for a first interview. Then a face-to-face interview is conducted.

Try to find out the name of the contact person and use the correct name of the company during telephone contacts. You should be polite at all times during the conversation. Talk briefly and to the point, but do not leave out important information. Clarify what the next step will be.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

Proof of your qualifications is not usually required at the application stage. However, you



will need to show original certificates if you attend an interview. Take photocopies of your certificates in case the interviewer requires copies. Qualifications obtained from non-Maltese education institutions, such as foreign universities, must be recognised. You can request this from the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC), which is part of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (<http://www.ncfhe.org.mt>).

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This depends on the company, the selection process and your availability.

### **Preparing for an interview**

The recruiter expects availability, company knowledge and – in the case of a foreign candidate – basic knowledge of the culture of Malta from the applicant. Knowledge of the English language is a must for most companies in Malta.

### **Who will be there?**

Usually the employer is present during the interview, unless it is a large organisation, in which case the HR manager and section supervisor will be present.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, this is the first thing you should do when you meet your interviewers. Shake hands and introduce yourself by stating your name and surname. Remember to smile. Do not sit down before they invite you to do so.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

The interview is usually very friendly and candidates are made to feel at home. Interviews are usually one-to-one. If the job is not specialised, there will be only one interview, but for a specialised occupation that requires experience, shortlisting is the order of the day, followed by one or two additional interviews. You may be expected to make a presentation in this case.

Keep to the point of the discussion/questions and do not invent skills that you do not possess. Show that you are willing to learn. Eye contact is important, as is body language.

You can ask questions, although these are best kept to a minimum and must be relevant. Asking for a job description or about working conditions might be advisable. If there is a second interview, it is better not to discuss pay at this stage.

The more you know about the company, the better. This shows that you have taken an interest in getting to know the company, its past performance and future plans. Your enthusiasm may even enhance your chance of being selected. The most common question an applicant is expected to be able to answer is about the core function of the company. Another is whether the company is a subsidiary of another company or whether it exports its products and to what countries, if this is the case.

One tricky question an employer might ask is what pay you expect. There are various ways of answering this, especially if you have done your research and have sufficient experience.



**When is a question out of bounds?**

The law forbids employers asking questions that may discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic origin or country of origin. If you are asked questions about your personal life, you may politely decline to answer them, telling the interviewer that your personal life will not interfere with your employment and position. The interviewer may ask questions about personal interests and how you spend your free time, or for your opinion on various issues, including current affairs.

**Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References are usually required if the vacancy is connected with the service industry, finance and the like. A previous employer, a reliable professional or a parish priest could be a suitable referee. They usually confirm that the person in question is a reliable person who can be expected to perform this type of job without problems.

Letters of recommendation are only needed if the employer asks for them.

**Negotiating your pay and benefits**

You can negotiate pay, particularly if you have a lot of experience in the job you are applying for. Pay is usually expressed as a weekly or monthly rate. Holiday pay and annual bonuses are included in the remuneration offered.

The staff member who negotiates pay and non-statutory benefits will be the HR manager

if it is a large company or the employer himself/herself if it is a smaller firm.

If you are hired, the company is bound by law to inform the local authorities about your employment by completing the 'engagement of employment form' and submitting it to the Employment and Training Corporation on your first working day. This form must have your signature on it. Make sure that the employer sends this form to the corporation on the first day of your employment.

**Is a trial period likely?**

No, you will not be asked for a work trial because this runs counter to current legislation. This means that you can refuse if asked to do this.

**How long is the standard probationary period?**

It usually varies between 6 and 12 months, but this depends on the company, so find out about this before you start work.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

It depends on the company.

**When will I hear the result?**

Usually the employer will inform you about the result of the interview at a later date. The employer will also tell you if you are invited to a further interview. If you are selected for the job, you will probably be contacted by phone in the case of a small company, or by post if it is a large company.



### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It may be possible to meet for an evaluation or to do this on the phone.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is taken very seriously at an interview. If you do not know the exact place, you should leave early in order to arrive on time.

If you cannot make it on the day, the appointment can easily be changed to another date if the applicant phones the employer well in advance (at least 1 day before).

It is good practice to know who the interviewer will be.

### **Dress-code tips**

Wear smart attire for all interviews. Men are encouraged to wear a dark suit over a white or light colour shirt, with a smart tie. Women are encouraged to wear a suit over a shirt. Do not wear excessive jewellery and make-up. Men should not wear earrings or other piercings. If you have a tattoo, make sure it is well covered with clothing. Tattoos are not well received by local employers. Wearing a light and fresh perfume is advisable, especially in summer.

### **Any further advice?**

Try not to make long speeches in reply to questions and avoid overreacting to possible criticism by the interviewer. Never criticise a previous employer. Try to be positive and, most importantly, be yourself. Employers want to employ honest and mature people above all.



# THE NETHERLANDS

Official language → **Dutch**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **16.8 million**  
Capital → **Amsterdam**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+31**  
Internet code → **.nl**

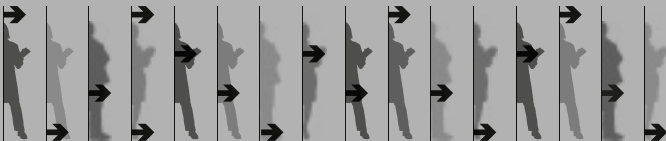
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN THE NETHERLANDS?

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The Netherlands has a number of beautiful cities, a liberal outlook and well-organised and accessible natural areas.

The number of jobs declined in most sectors in 2012 compared to the previous year, most markedly in public administration, construction and the property rental and sales sectors. However, a few sectors expanded, including care/welfare, trade/transport/catering and information/communication. The largest number of unfilled vacancies is for technical and commercial sales representatives, and electrical mechanics and fitters. Agricultural and industrial machinery mechanics and fitters, and plumbers and pipe-fitters also have a good chance of finding work, due to demand outstripping supply. Be aware that knowledge of the Dutch language may be necessary, especially in commercial jobs.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Job vacancies are announced on company websites or specialised jobsites, in newspapers (in general the jobs supplement of a weekend edition), through an intermediate organisation or the public employment service (UWV). It is very common to hand in a spontaneous application to find out about job opportunities in a company.

### Tips for job applications

For low-paid or unskilled jobs (hotel and catering industry, retail industry), it is common to apply by phone or, increasingly, by e-mail. For other jobs, it is standard to send a covering letter and CV by e-mail or post. Make sure to detail your personal data, work experience and education level truthfully.

Intermediate organisations, which may be employed by a company to fill its vacancies, often pre-select candidates and submit selected CVs to the employer.

If you want to apply spontaneously to a company, contact the department or person who can tell you about vacancies. Explain your plans, the job you are looking for and what skills and experience you have. Ask if you can send a covering letter and a CV. If they confirm, you can send a targeted letter to the right person or department. This approach can be very effective in the Netherlands for getting you invited for an interview.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, but it is acceptable to include one.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, handwritten applications are not recommended.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

If you have a Europass CV to prove your job experience, training courses, skills and competences, do not hesitate to use it.

### Making contact by phone

If you contact the company by phone, ask for the contact person or department mentioned in the job advertisement. Make sure the timing of the call is convenient. Say briefly whether you are calling for more information or to apply for a job. If you are a foreign applicant and are calling from abroad, make this clear and ask if the call can be held in your own or in another foreign language. The first impression you make is decisive.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

No, the company will ask for copies of these, if they are required, at the job interview or on your first day at work. It is wise to have your diploma translated into Dutch or English and to have your qualifications validated.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

From 1 day to several months.



## Preparing for an interview

Candidates may be invited for an exploratory interview, possibly with an intermediate organisation. This is more like an opportunity to get to know each other. The atmosphere is somewhere between formal and informal, and based on equality among the discussion partners.

The employer will want you to show that you know about the job conditions, the company and its activities. You will have the opportunity to ask questions too. Use this opportunity to show your motivation and interest in the job, not to ask about the salary.

Questions are mainly related to your experience and your skills. As a result of this interview, your application will either be rejected or you will be invited for a second interview.

A lack of basic information about the company is often one of the main reasons Dutch employers do not invite candidates for a second interview or offer them the job. Consult the company's website, read its annual report and try to get a good idea of the sector the company operates in, its latest news and likely changes. This will help to prove your motivation.

The follow-up interviews are in-depth interviews about the context of the position, your problem-solving skills and your experience. Assessments may be used after the first or second interview.

In most cases, you will be informed whether or not you are hired very shortly after the interview.

Dutch employers are increasingly asking for competences together with diplomas or

testimonials. Prepare for questions about your competences by practising the so-called STAR method (situation, task, action, result) (see page 18).

## Who will be there?

One or two people, typically.

## Do we shake hands?

Yes, a firm handshake is a must in the Netherlands.

## Is there a typical interview structure?

On average, the interview takes 1 to 1.5 hours.

The interviewer presents him- or herself and the company, before inviting you to tell him/her who you are. They will then tell you more about the job, before asking questions about your CV. They may also ask about your private life.

Questions about your qualities, skills and competences follow. After this, you can ask about topics that have not been addressed or for things to be clarified.

The interviewer closes the interview by explaining further steps in the procedure.

Tricky questions include: Do you have an idea of what the position involves? Compare this post with similar ones in other companies. Why should we choose you instead of someone else? Can you explain this gap in your CV?



### **When is a question out of bounds?**

There is legislation to protect against discrimination. Questions about race or skin colour, religion (although a question like 'Do the hours of work fit in with your religion?' is permissible), nationality, birthplace, pregnancy, health or family plans are not permitted.

Many Dutch companies have adopted a code of good conduct in recruitment as laid down by the Dutch union for personnel management and organisation development (NVP). If you feel that a company that is signed up to the code did not treat you well, you can make a complaint. You can also apply to the commission for equal treatment if you think your rights to equal treatment were violated.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References are not obligatory. It is up to you whether you name referees in your CV. Your new employer can only contact them after you have agreed to this. Personal matters or reasons for resigning are not to be discussed in references.

If proof of good conduct is needed, it should be mentioned in the job advertisement.

When you leave a company, the employer must always give you a certificate. This may simply contain neutral content but must never say anything negative about your personality or your work.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

If the company offers you the job, you can negotiate your salary and probationary period. If you are hired through an intermediate organisation, they will probably negotiate your remuneration request and other conditions and benefits. In the Netherlands, both salary and non-statutory benefits can be negotiated. Think twice about your salary request and make sure it is in accordance with your job.

Different kinds of jobs have different salary scales. These scales are divided into what are known as periodicities. Your experience is used to calculate the scale and periodicity you will be paid. All of this can be negotiated. Remember that voluntary work counts as work experience. For many professions and large companies, working conditions are agreed in collective labour agreements. There is a minimum wage for under-23s and for older people. Earning less than this level is prohibited. Remuneration is expressed on a monthly basis.

Holiday entitlement and the formula for calculating holiday pay are fixed by law. Depending on labour agreements or your age, the amount of holiday entitlement may increase. Bonuses may be negotiated when you start the job and in your annual review. Some collective labour agreements include commitments about profit shares or dividends.

Besides remuneration and holiday pay, you can also negotiate other conditions, such as a company car, travel costs, retirement insurance, training costs, etc. In many cases, the collective labour agreements fix these conditions.





**Is a trial period likely?**

Yes, this is likely.

**How long is the standard probationary period?**

The probationary period is 2 months on average.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

This is not automatic. However, asking for compensation is not considered impolite and is possible.

**When will I hear the result?**

Companies that apply the code of good behaviour in recruitment will inform unsuccessful candidates why they were not selected within a fortnight and in writing. It is still possible to ask for more information.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you are not selected, it is normal to contact the interviewer to evaluate your application procedure. You can ask for the things you

did well and what went wrong so that you can learn from these for other interviews.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is necessary. Only for a very serious reason (e.g. illness or the death of a relative) can you ask for a new appointment.

**Dress-code tips**

It is very much appreciated if you are dressed for the occasion and look neat. Try to choose clothing that fits the company culture rather than the latest fashion. In banking, men have to wear a suit and women are expected to wear a two-piece suit.

The modest use of jewellery is advised. It is accepted that men wear a ring, but bracelets are considered to be overkill. For women, one or more rings are acceptable or even favourable. Other jewellery should be adapted to your outfit.

**Any further advice?**

Take care that your answers are short and to the point. It can be an advantage if you already have a translation of your diploma, a validated title or a registered profession.



# NORWAY

Official language → **Norwegian**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **5.1 million**  
Capital → **Oslo**  
Currency → **Norwegian krone (NOK)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EEA**  
Phone code → **+47**  
Internet code → **.no**

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## WHY GO TO WORK IN NORWAY?

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Although a young nation, Norway has a long history and a strong heritage. Over the years, its customs and traditions have merged with impulses and influences from abroad. Characterised by large areas of unspoilt countryside, Norway offers abundant opportunities for outdoor pursuits, including sporting challenges.

Jobseekers who are interested in looking for work in Norway should be aware that recent surveys have shown a decline in vacancies in finance and insurance, construction and management, and mining and production, alongside growth in information and communication technologies. The labour market has a strong demand for engineers and ICT workers, and engineers in petroleum and geosciences. There is also a shortage of health, care and nursing staff, particularly nurses.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Jobs are advertised on company websites, on specialised jobsites, in newspapers, through an intermediate organisation or the public employment service (<http://www.nav.no>).

### Tips for job applications

Send an application in English (or in a Scandinavian language if you speak one) with a covering letter and a CV (maximum one page, although CVs for technical candidates might be longer and more detailed).

If sending a spontaneous application, find out the name of an HR representative to send your application to. Write a covering letter (maximum one page) and enclose a CV.

Make one application per vacancy or company. If you are applying to a large firm, call or e-mail the recruiter a few days after sending your application to ask if they have read your CV and what they think of it, whether they have received many applications, when you can expect a reply, etc.

Be brief and concise in the description of yourself and your qualifications. Be honest and do not exaggerate. Keep your CV simple and modest. Be honest about your language skills, especially in English. 'Good' English skills are not the same as 'school knowledge' of English.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

It is not common to include a photo.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, handwritten applications are not used in Norway.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

No, it is not.

### Making contact by phone

It is common to get in touch with the contact person for more information about the job. Prepare questions relevant to the job/company and call between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

Send copies of diplomas/certificates with your application only if this is requested in the job vacancy. If not, send them when the recruiter asks for them. Employers need a certified copy of your diploma and a certified translation (into Norwegian or at least into English).

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

It varies. Some vacancies indicate 'start as soon as possible'; others have a starting date 3 months ahead.



## Preparing for an interview

In most cases, you will be asked for an interview in person. In some cases, the first direct contact may be a telephone interview.

Remember that your CV and covering letter are your entrance ticket to an interview. This is where your competence has to show. An interview is based more on your personal abilities and personality in a working situation. The chemistry between you and the recruiter might be decisive. Be interested, motivated, ask the right questions and dare to speak for yourself and give your opinion.

There may be only one interview (most common), or two or three (for highly qualified staff). An interview lasts 45-90 minutes on average.

### Who will be there?

Anything from one to five people will conduct the interview. This may include a trade union and a staff representative, particularly for public sector jobs.

### Do we shake hands?

A handshake is quite common, and has to be firm.

### Is there a typical interview structure?

The person responsible for the meeting will tell you about the company and the job. Then

you will be given time to present yourself and explain why you have applied. Do not hesitate to ask professional questions about the company and the job. At the end of the interview, you can ask about pay and working conditions. Then the recruiter should inform you about when you will get feedback or a reply.

You will mainly discuss professional items, but the recruiter will evaluate you most on your personal way of presenting your professional qualifications. Keep calm and be yourself. Show that you will add value to the company. Do not try to impress the recruiter; be honest, modest and down to earth.

### When is a question out of bounds?

Discrimination on grounds of political allegiance, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or trade union membership is illegal, unless these topics have direct relevance for the job. You do not have to answer questions about pregnancies or whether you are on some kind of benefit. However, use your common sense. Employers expect you to show initiative, assume responsibility for your own work and be capable of working independently.

### Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?

Norwegian employers check references systematically. List your referees at the end of your CV. They will need to tell the Norwegian recruiter (in English or a Scandinavian language) about



your previous professional duties, and your professional and personal abilities.

Letters of recommendation are not required or even commonly requested, unless you cannot supply any referees.

Jobs in the security and education sectors require you to show proof that you have no previous criminal convictions, but this will be mentioned in the job advertisement.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Pay is generally expressed in monthly terms, or for a seasonal job it may be expressed in hourly terms. It is not often necessary to negotiate, as there are standard contracts. However, it may be wise to check the salary level with the trade union responsible for the field so that you have an idea of what to expect. Negotiation of your salary usually takes place once you have been offered the job.

Holiday pay is regulated by law and included in your pay. Trade unions negotiate pay and extra statutory benefits at national level. Trade union representatives are responsible for local negotiations at the workplace, but only for their members.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

No, it is not common to undertake a 1-day work trial.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

An employer may decide to hire you on a probationary period to start with. This will normally not exceed 6 months.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Many companies do refund travel expenses for interviews. However, this should be checked with the employer beforehand.

### **When will I hear the result?**

If you are hired, you will receive written confirmation and possibly a call beforehand. If you have been rejected, you will be notified by post or e-mail.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you are rejected, you can call the recruiter and ask why, or ask which qualifications the person who got the job had that you did not have. This can give you an idea of where you stand professionally.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

You must be punctual. If you are prevented from attending at the given time, ask as soon as possible for a new appointment.



**Dress-code tips**

Norway has a casual dress code. The 'white shirt and tie' rule applies only to candidates for management-level positions in finance, real estate, consultancy or where being representative is a big part of the job. Check the company's homepage for photos of staff and see how they are dressed.

**Any further advice?**

Generally speaking, do not try to impress recruiters by the way you look. Impress them by your professional and personal skills. Keep things simple and get to the point. Norwegian business culture is somewhat informal compared to that in other European countries.



# AUSTRIA

Official language → **German**  
Government → **Federal parliamentary republic**  
Population → **8.5 million**  
Capital → **Vienna**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+43**  
Internet code → **.at**

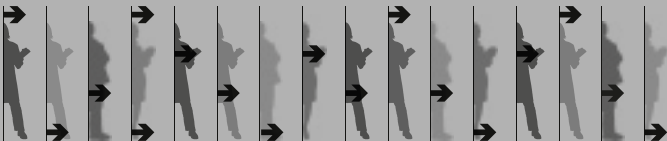
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN AUSTRIA?

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Compact yet varied, traditional yet modern, cultured yet adventurous, Austria is rich in lifestyle options; from the elegance of Vienna in the north to a flavour of the Mediterranean and the mountains in the south. A Mecca for winter-sports enthusiasts, the country is probably most renowned as a historic music capital.

The Austrian economy has been recovering since a decline in 2009. There is work available for those who have completed specialist apprenticeships, such as electrical fitters, pipe fitters, lathe operators, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners. There is also demand for workers in tourism, as well as in the hotel and catering sector. The same goes for sales staff and shop assistants.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Vacancies are published in newspapers or online. For low-skilled jobs, initial contacts are usually made by phone, although online applications are increasing.

For skilled jobs, you need to write a covering letter and send your CV. The company will consider the applications and contact a selection of candidates for interview. For management jobs, you may be invited for an assessment.

### **Tips for job applications**

Covering letters are, in general, computer-printed. Your written application should always contain a formal covering letter in which you indicate the job offer that you are applying for. Make sure to include the correct address and name of the contact person.

Your CV must be short, to the point, chronological and complete. Your personal profile must be adapted to the job offer. No notes should be written on the documents that you send to the employer.

If you apply spontaneously, take the initiative to make sure that if there are no current vacancies your application will be stored in a database of potential candidates. If the company needs someone, this database is often the first to be consulted by the HR department.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

Yes, employers are used to applicants enclosing their photo with their covering letter.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, a company will ask explicitly if they require one.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

Unfortunately not; it is too comprehensive.

### **Making contact by phone**

When you contact a company by phone, it is important to know the name of your contact person. Ask for them by name. Prepare a short, clear, personal presentation, explain what kind of job offer you are calling about and try to make an appointment for an interview. Avoid a noisy background or people talking to you when you are calling, especially if you are using a mobile phone.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Yes, copies of your training certificates should be enclosed (your latest vocational training, additional qualifications, labour certification or at least confirmation of periods of work). All certificates should be translated into German, except when you are applying for a job in an international company.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

Most jobs are filled within 1 or up to 3 months. However, for specialist jobs (in management





or those that require a lot of experience), candidates will need to go through several interviews and possibly take part in an assessment. In some cases, job offers announce that the contract will start 6 months later.

### **Preparing for an interview**

If there are a lot of candidates, companies tend to organise pre-selections or tests. For key positions or management jobs, assessment centres are often used.

Employers are looking for candidates who match the profile described as closely as possible. They expect applicants to show how their qualifications and experiences fit with this profile, talk about their professional and personal strengths and weaknesses, and answer questions about their motivation, social skills and prospects as an employee. You also have to be prepared for questions about your CV (e.g. if you have changed jobs a lot).

You can generally expect employers to be looking for a dialogue in which they can learn more about you, your qualifications and your expectations of the job. There will also be room for your questions about working hours and days, activities and job content. The atmosphere is friendly, but objective and impartial.

Candidates should be well-informed about the company: what it does or produces, its size, whether it is centralised or decentralised and whether it is based abroad, as well as about its image and philosophy.

Verbal communication is important, notably articulation and presentation in line with the job

applied for (clear motivation for the job, social skills, teamwork skills, authority and leadership skills, stress resistance, flexibility). Pay attention too to non-verbal communication: punctuality, attitude, eye contact, gestures and facial expressions.

The interview usually takes about 1 hour. A video-conference may be used, but Skype is used only in exceptional circumstances and when recruiting for academic positions.

### **Who will be there?**

The following people may attend: head of the department offering the job, HR manager, representative of the employees' council.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, it is standard to shake hands.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

In a normal interview, it is obligatory that questions relate to the conditions as described in the job ad and aim to find out if you have the right skills and qualifications. For the sake of objectivity, all the applicants should be asked the same questions. However, the employer may ask for more information on an individual basis or according to the candidate's responses.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Federal legislation on equal treatment forbids discrimination on grounds of age, sex, religion, sexual orientation or ethnic origin. The law regulates all the procedures for the publication of



job offers, application procedures and the relationships between employer and employees. You do not have to answer questions about pregnancy, family planning or illness and diseases. Discrimination against disabled people is forbidden. Be aware that some employers may not be aware that they are asking prohibited questions.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

If requested, you should be able to supply references from former employers, translated into German, to confirm your qualifications and experience.

A copy of your latest and most advanced diploma should be handed to the company at the latest during the interview. Letters of recommendation are only used when you apply for an academic post. If proof of good conduct is required, this will probably be mentioned in the job ad.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Normally there is room to negotiate pay and working conditions, except in the public sector, where there are fixed pay scales. Negotiations take place with the head of the department that offered you the job.

In general, wages are expressed in monthly terms, including holiday pay and Christmas bonuses. Other non-statutory benefits need to be negotiated individually. For some jobs,

the employer will offer you a fixed minimum remuneration and add a variable remuneration that depends on your performance or results at work. For those jobs where it is common to receive a tip from customers (e.g. guesthouses, hotels, etc.), you are often offered a low minimum wage. The tip is considered to be a way of increasing your wage, depending on your own efforts.

There is often room to negotiate your hours of work, flexibility about times and work locations, adapting working time to childcare (kindergarten) availability, etc.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

You may be asked to undertake a 1-day work trial. The employer must pay you for it.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

One month at the most. During this period, the contract can be ended at any point without any reason being given.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, but if you can prove financial hardship, public employers may offer you financial help for the application procedure.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Employers expect you to contact the company by phone for information on the results of the



interview after a specific time. Companies will not always take the initiative to inform you of the results.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you have not been selected, you can ask for more information. If you can prove that the law on equal opportunities was not respected, an official intervention is possible.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Employers take punctuality very seriously. Do not arrive late and only postpone or cancel the meeting if you have a valid reason. In such cases (e.g. illness), employers expect you to inform them in advance and to arrange a new appointment for an interview yourself.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress code depends on the job, the sector, the position, customer contact, representation, company culture, etc. It is important to be authentic when presenting yourself. For men who are applying for responsible positions, a suit is still obligatory. A tie is no longer required.

*'I already knew some things about life in Hungary, as I had studied there, but EURES helped me with the more "technical" details of living between two countries, such as the differences between tax systems and social security systems. When you move somewhere new, you don't know what to expect. Each country has its own uniqueness, and it's invaluable to get this advice.'*

**Marcel, jobseeker from Germany, living in Hungary, commuting to work in Austria**



# POLAND

Official language → **Polish**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **38.5 million**  
Capital → **Warsaw**  
Currency → **Polish złoty (PLN)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+48**  
Internet code → **.pl**

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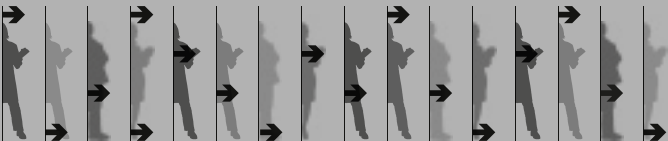
## WHY GO TO WORK IN POLAND?

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Poland is blessed with natural beauty, with its 500 km Baltic Sea coast, extensive lakes district and dense forest covering nearly a third of its territory to the mountains in the south.

It is also the only country in Europe to have confidently withstood the widespread financial and economic crisis. Efforts have been made lately to attract international capital and investors to launch new ventures in Poland.

The country has a dynamic and growing ICT sector, with a demand for developers, web designers, software engineers and database administrators. International companies, meanwhile, need people with language skills to work as helpdesk agents, call-desk agents, customer service advisers, content reviewers, game testers, project managers, and financial and logistical specialists.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Jobs are advertised by public employment services (regional and local labour offices), private employment agencies, in newspapers and on online job portals.

### Tips for job applications

The most usual application method is to send a CV and covering letter. The employer usually asks for applications to be sent via e-mail or regular mail.

When sending an application electronically, make sure to indicate which vacancy you are applying for, preferably in the subject line. The CV should be typed and should list work experience, skills and education in reverse chronological order. The covering letter should be up to one page and the CV up to two pages long. The Europass CV template is a good example.

When applying spontaneously, the jobseeker should also send a CV together with a covering letter. They should also be prepared for an interview.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

A photo is an advantage, but it is not obligatory.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

There is no preference for handwritten applications.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

It is accepted, but not widely used.

### Making contact by phone

In telephone contacts, applicants should introduce themselves and state why they are calling. Do not ask anybody to call on your behalf, and be prepared to note down information that you receive from the employer.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

In some cases, copies of your certificates, diploma, etc. should be attached to your CV. Employers take these into consideration when deciding whether or not to invite you for an interview.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

It usually takes up to a month or two.

### Preparing for an interview

Applicants should gather as much information as possible about the company before the interview. They should be prepared to show their motivation and discuss what they can do, what they know and who they are, as well as have questions of their own.



Employers focus on whether a candidate has appropriate knowledge and can think creatively. They look for communicative people with a positive attitude. The employer may hire a specialist in non-verbal communication for the interview to verify the coherence between a candidate's verbal and non-verbal communication.

### Who will be there?

Usually two representatives of the employer are present at the interview. If there are tests, the candidate may be alone or attend a group session.

### Do we shake hands?

The employer or recruiter will decide whether to shake your hand. You should not take the initiative.

### Is there a typical interview structure?

Usually the meeting takes 45 minutes to an hour. If there are tests, it can take 2 to 3 hours. In general, each interview has a specific structure.

- **Introduction:** the first part of the interview is informative. The person conducting the interview informs the applicant about the conditions of the meeting, the job, range of duties, etc. and tries to build a good atmosphere.
- **Exploration of work experience:** in this stage, the recruiter will ask factual questions to gain information. These will focus on personal data, work experience, education, profession, etc.

- **Interpretation of facts:** this stage consists of an interpretation of facts collected during the second stage. The interviewer asks applicants about how they feel their educational and work experience relates to the job in question. This helps to reveal a candidate's motivation, attitudes and the value they attach to the job.

- **Personal opinions, thoughts, points of view:** during this stage, candidates give their personal opinion and show the way they think in relation to work decisions made (the employer or person who conducts the interview asks questions about the motives for personal decisions).

- **Summing up:** in this stage, candidates can ask questions on topics that have not been covered. The interviewers should give information about the subsequent stages of the recruitment process.

Prepare for tricky questions, such as the following.

- What will you be doing in 5 years' time?
- How would you solve a conflict at work?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What are your salary expectations?

### When is a question out of bounds?

There are laws against discrimination on grounds of sex, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious affiliation and trade union membership. An applicant has the right to refuse to answer discriminatory questions.



Questions about your sexual preferences, political allegiance, pregnancy or religion are not acceptable.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References are not commonly used. Instead, submit confirmation of your employment in written form and documents connected with your education. If you wish to submit references anyway, cite former employers or teachers as referees. You normally do not need letters of recommendation, although these can be helpful if written by a prominent employer. Jobs in the public sector require a statement that applicants have no criminal or tax offence record.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Terms of remuneration are fixed in:

- company agreements or collective bargaining agreements (made by the employers with active company trade union organisations);
- pay regulations (in the case of employers with at least 20 employees who are not subject to a company agreement or a collective bargaining agreement); and/or
- employment contracts.

Employees are usually paid per unit of time worked (hour, day or month) or, in some cases, per unit of work completed (piecework). The employee is paid at least once a month, on a fixed pre-arranged date.

Candidates should negotiate their pay with the employer before signing the contract.

Bonuses depend on results achieved. During holiday leave, an employee receives the normal pay agreed on in the employment contract. Non-statutory benefits may include meal vouchers, a pension scheme, health insurance, a Christmas bonus, a reward for special achievements and performance, and an encouragement of personal development, especially in the private sector.

There is limited room for negotiation in the public sector.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Employers prefer to ask for a 1- to 3-month probationary period rather than a 1-day work trial.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

See above.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Not usually. This should be negotiated.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Within 1 or 2 weeks. If you do not, call the employer.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you were told that you would be contacted after the interview and the deadline has passed, call and ask for the result of the interview. There is nothing wrong with asking. It proves that you are interested in the job.



If you are not offered the job, you may ask for the reason for this decision. Try to find out what factors made them decide to reject you. This may help you in the future.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Always be on time; respect your interviewer's time.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual.

For men: a suit in an unobtrusive colour, a long-sleeved shirt and tie, dark socks and conservative leather shoes; little or no jewellery; a neat, professional hairstyle; not too much after-shave; neatly trimmed nails; and a portfolio or briefcase.

For women: a dark suit with a skirt long enough so you can sit comfortably, coordinated blouse, conservative shoes, neutral tights; a modest amount of jewellery (no dangling earrings or arms full of bracelets); professional hairstyle; make-up and perfume in moderation; clean, neatly manicured nails; and a portfolio or briefcase.





# PORTUGAL

Official language → **Portuguese**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **10.5 million**  
Capital → **Lisbon**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+351**  
Internet code → **.pt**

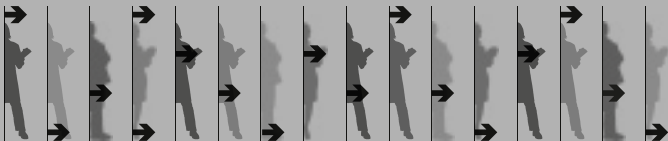
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN PORTUGAL?

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Portugal and its territories – the Azores and Madeira – are popular tourist destinations. Besides tourism, services are the largest employers. Manufacturing employs less than 20% of the workforce. It is based on traditional products such as textiles, clothing, footwear, cork, wood products, beverages, ceramics, glass, fish canning, metalworking, oil refining and chemicals. The country has increased its role in Europe's automotive sector and has a world-class mould-making industry.

Almost 4 in 10 young people are out of work and wages are among the lowest per capita in the EU. Nevertheless, there is demand in specific sectors, including seasonal work in tourism and agriculture; doctors; specialist IT workers; and professionals with language skills that are difficult to find in Portugal.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Job vacancies are published in newspapers, at job centres, private employment agencies, professional and trade union associations, supermarkets, municipalities, parishes, other public facilities and, increasingly, via (public and private) online job banks.

Some jobseekers are increasingly adopting a proactive approach, applying spontaneously, placing adverts, posting CVs on websites and at university careers offices, using social media, and even setting up web pages.

In a country where more than 90% of firms are small, personal contacts are still one of the most effective means of finding out about vacancies and reaching a potential employer. If you have a social network in Portugal, don't be shy to use it.

### Tips for job applications

It is almost impossible to meet all the requirements set out in some job adverts. Do not be put off by this; if you meet most of them, do not hesitate to apply. Portuguese employers can be flexible on this matter.

Most applications require a covering letter and a CV (although the letter may be omitted if it is not explicitly requested). Prepare your CV in Portuguese if possible. It should be clear and short (no more than two pages) and adjusted to each application.

When applying by e-mail, include the covering letter directly in the body of the e-mail. Only the CV should be attached. Write short paragraphs,

and avoid informal symbols and abbreviations commonly used in e-mail and text messages. If applying by post, the covering letter should be no longer than one A4 side and typed.

Take care to respect deadlines, particularly if you are applying from abroad. And aim to submit your application early, in order to participate from the beginning of the selection process and be sure that the company has not already chosen a candidate.

Spontaneous applications can be very useful. Many Portuguese companies will archive CVs they receive and look first through these when they have a vacancy, to save on the time and cost of placing adverts.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

A passport-sized professional-style photo on the CV may be useful, although it is not general practice.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

Handwritten applications have gradually been abandoned in recent years, although some employers may still prefer them. Try to check this if you have a preliminary phone contact.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Portuguese employers are getting used to the Europass CV format, although they still might prefer the Portuguese style CV, on two to three pages maximum.



### **Making contact by phone**

Call only if this approach is suggested in the advertisement. If you do so, try to speak Portuguese and present yourself clearly; ask whom you should speak to and address them by name. Have your CV to hand and be ready to present yourself and answer questions. Prepare your own pertinent questions and note down any interview arrangements. If arranging an interview, ask which documents you need to bring with you.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Not unless it is mentioned in the advertisement. Take a copy to the interview, however. If your application is successful, documents may be requested when formalising the contract.

When taking copies of diplomas or qualifications to the interview, be selective, and be aware that Portuguese employers may be unfamiliar with your country of origin's education and training system and the relevant knowledge and skills content. Documents such as the Europass diploma supplement or certificate supplement may be more useful.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

Job adverts may indicate the job is to start 'as soon as possible', but a selection procedure takes on average 2 to 3 months. Low-skilled or temporary jobs can be filled in under a week.

### **Preparing for an interview**

An interview typically takes no longer than 45 minutes. Tests may take half a day, breaks included.

### **Who will be there?**

Generally one interviewer.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, you should shake hands on invitation.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

There is no typical structure, although you might expect questions on:

- personal background (where you were born, where you studied, family, etc.);
- your CV: your educational/professional background, professional experience and other activities/hobbies;
- your motivation with regards to the company and the job; and
- your personal and social skills (open questions on yourself, your attitudes, your qualities, your weaknesses).

At the second stage, the interviewer will give you more information on the company and the role. At this point, you may ask about autonomy and responsibility levels, travelling requirements, working hours, expected wage, etc.



At the end, the employer will usually say when you will be informed of their decision. You should then thank them for the opportunity to meet.

Recruitment interviews using video-conferencing and Skype are not very common, but are likely to be increasingly used for the first selection with international candidates.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Questions about religious affiliation, political preferences and sexual orientation are considered to be strictly private matters. There is, however, a general perception that these are more frequently addressed (even though in a subtle way) than in some other European countries.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

It is not common practice in Portugal to ask for references or to go through letters of recommendation, although some employers might see these as a plus.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

Pay is usually expressed on a monthly basis. Remember that in regular employment in Portugal, you are paid for 14 months per year (i.e. including holiday pay and Christmas bonuses, usually paid in May/June and November/December respectively), although this is presently taking other forms following exceptional measures by the government. If you are recruited by a multinational company, pay may be negotiated as an annual package, including subsidies and other fringe benefits.

Annual productivity bonuses are not common, although there may be scope for a bonus payment at the end of the year depending on profits. Only in medium-sized to large companies, mostly multinationals, are annual bonuses well integrated in remuneration policies.

Other benefits might be: improved health insurance cover or medical services, in the case of larger companies; and a mobile phone and company car, mostly for senior staff (managers and directors), although this practice is declining.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

It is becoming increasingly common. Some employers prefer to use short-term (e.g. 3- to 6-month) contracts to trial an employee.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The legal probationary period varies according to contract length and complexity of the role. For short-term contracts, it may be up to 1 month. For permanent contracts, it is usually between 3 and 6 months.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

This is not common, unless the employer is desperately looking for your particular skills, professional qualification or profile.

### **When will I hear the result?**

It is not unusual to receive no reply to an application. If you are interviewed, you might ask when you can expect to be informed of the decision. If the employer does not respond



within this period, a polite reminder phone call can reiterate your interest. You should not be too insistent though.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is not common to ask for feedback following an interview.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Try to arrive at least 10 minutes before the interview.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress for the occasion. Even if smart dress is not important for the job, it will show your professionalism and respect for the employer or interviewer. Avoid too much make-up or jewellery, piercings, visible tattoos and radical hairstyles.



# ROMANIA

Official language → **Romanian**  
Government → **Presidential republic**  
Population → **20.1 million**  
Capital → **Bucharest**  
Currency → **Romanian leu (RON)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+40**  
Internet code → **.ro**

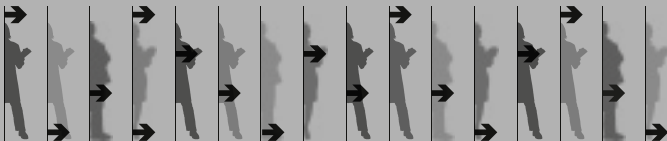
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN ROMANIA?

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Natural attractions are the Danube delta, the Black Sea coast and the Carpathian mountains. West of the mountains lies the historical region of Transylvania, home to medieval towns and fairy-tale castles, and a must for fans of vampire fiction.

Romania has attracted considerable foreign investment and seen a rapid growth of its private sector in recent years, partly thanks to it having one of the lowest tax rates in the European Union – a flat 16%. While wages are among the lowest in Europe, unemployment is also low. It has a larger industrial and agricultural base, but these sectors are declining in favour of services – commerce and a fast-growing tourism sector. Job vacancies most often posted are in the textile industry, freight handling, parts assembly, packaging, construction and sales.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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The best way to look for low-skilled or unskilled work is in newspapers or via the local public agencies for employment. Highly qualified and highly educated jobseekers tend to look via the Internet.

### **Tips for job applications**

A candidate interested in a job vacancy can apply to the employer directly by sending an e-mail or making a phone call.

The recruiter will decide whether to interview you based on the extent to which your CV matches their requirements. A covering letter is important for highly skilled posts (doctors, engineers) and should be no more than two pages long. For jobs that require a low level of qualification/education, a letter is not so important.

Employers may organise more than one interview, in which case they commonly conduct the first interview by phone. In phone interviews, the recruiter verifies that the information on the CV is authentic and asks for more detailed information about the candidate's skills, abilities and professional experience. A phone interview lasts approximately 10-15 minutes.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

Generally a photo is not necessary, unless the employer mentions it in the advertisement.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, the preference nowadays is for printed applications.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

The Europass format CV is not widely used and accepted, although we do recommend it. People with a higher education tend to use it; those with a lower educational attainment prefer not to, as it is seen as quite long and complicated.

### **Making contact by phone**

The aim of a phone call would generally be to fix an appointment for an interview. You can also call if you sent your CV a few weeks previously and have not had a reply. Prepare what you want to say in advance, and be brief and to the point. Introduce yourself, remind the employer that you recently submitted a CV and mention which job you are interested in. The conversation should be short. Do not call several times.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Only if you are asked to. Some employers ask for a copy of your diploma at the beginning of the procedure; some recruit applicants without seeing it.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

Two to four weeks in general, but it varies. Sometimes the employer wants to interview more candidates or asks for more documents about the candidate's previous work or studies.



## Preparing for an interview

Many companies propose a phone interview before deciding if they want to meet you face to face. In this case, it is important to prepare as you would for a proper interview, and express your personality clearly from the start. Do not interrupt when the person is speaking and be sure you understand the question before answering.

Make sure you know the field in which the company operates and the requirements of the position. The recruiter will expect a professional attitude and will want to have an honest and frank discussion with you. Focus on the details of your CV. Employers know that the skills and abilities section of a CV is usually somewhat exaggerated.

### Who will be there?

Commonly, a representative of the HR staff in charge of the recruitment process, the head of the department for which the company is recruiting and, in some cases, the general director/president of the company.

### Do we shake hands?

Yes, it is polite to shake hands in Romania.

### Is there a typical interview structure?

Once the recruiter has decided they want to meet you in person, the interview can last from 30 minutes to 2 hours. All aspects of verbal and

non-verbal communication are important. The recruiter will observe your positive and negative communication skills and analyse them in order to form their assessment.

Most employers use semi-structured interviews. The structure may be as follows at the first meeting:

- small talk to put you at ease;
- presentation by the recruiter and the applicant;
- questions about your experience, skills and knowledge; verification of information in the CV;
- the recruiter informs you about the requirements and main duties of the job and about the company in general: which sectors it operates in, its achievements, etc.;
- the recruiter checks that you have understood all the aspects discussed;
- your questions, for example: What is the work schedule? What salary are you offering? Is there a lunch break?

You are advised to prepare questions before the meeting, but be flexible and try to think of others that may crop up during the interview.

The atmosphere should be open, relaxed and communicative. Make sure you adopt a professional attitude and that you explain your motivation for the job.





**When is a question out of bounds?**

Romania has anti-discrimination legislation.

**Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Employers normally ask for references or letters of recommendation.

All employers require proof of good conduct (i.e. whether you have a criminal record). Normally you need to be able to prove this for every job.

**Negotiating your pay and benefits**

You can negotiate the pay and the non-statutory and other benefits. Remuneration is expressed in monthly rates. Holiday pay and annual bonuses are negotiated separately. If they are offered, the most common non-statutory benefits are meal vouchers and holiday pay. Usually the HR department is responsible for the negotiation. They know the maximum salary the company can offer for a particular position. The final decision rests with the company management.

**Is a trial period likely?**

The Romanian labour code mentions the possibility to establish a trial period of up to 90 days for non-managerial posts and up to 120 days for managerial roles.

**How long is the standard probationary period?**

According to the labour code, every category of worker has a probationary period.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, the employer will not cover these costs in Romania.

**When will I hear the result?**

The recruiter will tell you at the interview whether or not you have been accepted or when you will be contacted again.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you do not hear anything shortly after the interview, you can assume that you have not been selected. Employers do not usually inform unsuccessful candidates of the outcome. However, it is acceptable to call the employer for feedback.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is very important; you must respect the interview schedule. However, if you are a few minutes late, the employer may understand if you have a very good reason for this.



**Dress-code tips**

Be decently and respectably dressed.

**Any further advice?**

Do not lie about your qualifications, experience, skills or knowledge during an application procedure. Be realistic and honest. Candidates need to be reasonable and sincere if they are to be successful.



# SWITZERLAND

Official languages → **French, German, Italian, Romansh**

Government → **Representative direct democracy**

Population → **8 million**

Capital → **Bern**

Currency → **Swiss franc (CHF)**

Member EU or EEA → **EFTA**

Phone code → **+41**

Internet code → **.ch**

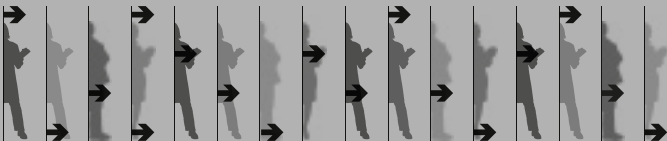
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN SWITZERLAND?

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Switzerland has one of the most powerful economies in the world. Its largest sector is manufacturing – of chemicals, health and pharmaceutical products, and scientific and precision instruments.

Highly skilled foreign workers have been in demand following changes to freedom of movement rules. Over a quarter of permanent employees are foreign nationals, and many more are short-stay workers or cross-border commuters. Most jobs in Switzerland are in the service sector, a quarter in industry and trade and 4% in farming. Vacancies in banking have fallen steeply, but those in insurance have risen. The strong currency has led to a decline in tourist numbers, with an impact on jobs in the sector. The most frequently advertised posts are for skilled building-trade workers and nursing professionals.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Besides newspapers and the Internet, in Switzerland it is common to ask people in your personal network if they have contacts in a company who can let you know about staff needs. Based on this information, you can write a simple application letter.

### **Tips for job applications**

Written application forms are widely used to recruit staff for specialised profiles and management functions. For less-skilled profiles, initial contact is usually made by phone or via the Internet. Do not send documents that give the impression of having been prepared for general use. Never mention references or letters of recommendation in your covering letter or CV.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

Yes, a good quality photo is welcome.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

On the contrary, they are not welcome.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

No, it is totally unknown.

### **Making contact by phone**

In the tourism, construction and cleaning sectors, this is the best way to get a job.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

If specified in the advertisement, include a copy of your highest-level diploma with your covering letter. However, never include this if you apply spontaneously. Hand it over at your first meeting at the company.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

Anything from 1 week for jobs in hotels and restaurants, to several weeks for management jobs in public administration or a multinational.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Research the company in advance: find out about the composition of the management board, the number of employees, the economic sector in which it operates, its competitors and its customers. Look up its environmental policy, its attitude to fair trade and the existence of a social or ethical charter. Be aware of its image overall, and as an employer.

The most topical questions you can expect about your personal competence are questions about your strengths and weaknesses, your flexibility and geographical mobility, your availability and pay expectations.

Interviewers take into account your knowledge of the language used for the job, clothing, politeness, tone of voice and the respect shown to the interviewers. Make sure you are well prepared and can give positive answers to tricky questions.



It is important to give specific examples of situations that refer to the answers required and prove that you really do have experience of these situations. For job offers that require knowledge of different languages, the interviewers might switch to one of these languages during the interview, so be honest when you indicate your level of proficiency in a language on your CV.

### **Who will be there?**

Depending on the job and whether there is an HR department, there may be two or three people. In small companies, it may just be the employer.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, shake hands with all those present at the interview.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

An interview has a very specific structure: the interviewer introduces himself/herself, sets the time frame for the interview and its goals, and gives a brief presentation of the company and the job. They then ask candidates to present themselves and explain their motivation. After that come more detailed questions. At the end of the interview, applicants are asked to state their pay expectations and, if they are still interested in the job, a new meeting may be scheduled.

A minimum of two interviews is usual. Each takes 90 minutes on average (under an hour for less-skilled jobs).

If the interviewer is an HR professional, about half the questions will focus on your social and personal competencies. Use the opportunity to show your motivation for the job and try to highlight all your skills and strengths.

The candidate must show a real interest in the job, be frank and honest, and listen actively. They should ask at the first interview if taking notes is possible. They should also wait to be invited to ask their own questions.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

The following subjects are considered private: sexuality, intention to marry, political allegiance, pay in previous jobs, state of health and forced resignation from previous jobs. Nevertheless, some employers may ask a female candidate about her family plans.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

You should be able to provide names of people who can act as referees, if asked. Letters of recommendation are rarely used. If you need proof of good conduct, this is usually mentioned in the job announcement.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

To negotiate a good contract and working conditions, you should be familiar with normal practice in the sector and not be too fussy. In sectors where pay is agreed officially, such as the public and semi-public sectors, there is little room to negotiate.

For minimum and low-wage jobs, it may be possible to agree an increase of about 5-10%



on the company's proposal. For management jobs, it is often the candidate who makes the first proposal on pay. For this to be acceptable, it is important to know the sector and company habits. Remember also that there are big regional differences in pay in Switzerland. In many enterprises, women are paid at least 15% less than men.

A 13th month's wage is considered a normal part of remuneration. Some companies even offer a 14th month's wage. Bonuses are only given if you achieve your targets.

Pay in Switzerland is quite high but does not include many non-statutory benefits, except for top management jobs. The most common non-statutory benefits that you can negotiate are: part of your travel to work may be considered as work time, medical insurance, additional employer contributions to a retirement fund and a company car. These benefits are negotiable except when they have already been negotiated in general agreements between employers' associations and trade unions.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Work trials are common for low-skilled jobs. For hotel and cleaning jobs, a 1-day trial is usual. This must be paid. You can refuse a trial only if the employer asks you to do it unpaid. Assessments may take 1 or 2 days, but you will not be paid for them.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

At the start of any contract there is a probationary period, which is often used as a test

period. This can last for 3 months at most. During this period, you can resign or be fired immediately as long as contractual leave times are respected.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, except in the case of some public services.

### **When will I hear the result?**

You will hear by phone, letter or e-mail. Only when you have written confirmation can you consider the procedure to be concluded.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

The employer does not expect you to follow up on the interview or test results, but you can always say that you would like to have feedback and see how the employer reacts.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Arrive a little in advance of the interview. You can expect the employer to be on time as well.

### **Dress-code tips**

Find out about the dress code for the sector and the job and do not overdress. Flashy clothes and jewellery are only appropriate for particular jobs such as saleswomen for jewellery or luxury products.



# SLOVENIA

Official language → **Slovenian**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **2.1 million**  
Capital → **Ljubljana**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+386**  
Internet code → **.si**

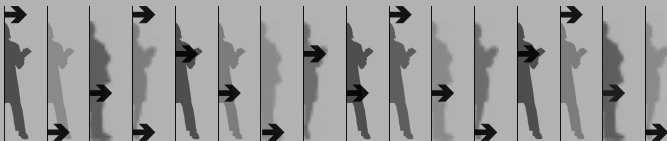
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN SLOVENIA?

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Slovenia appeals to hikers and skiers thanks to its beautiful landscapes and enviable climate. Lying on the south of the Alps, it boasts sunny alpine meadows covered in wildflowers, a good stretch of balmy Mediterranean coastline and lush forest coverage on 58% of its territory.

Slovenia is heavily dependent on exports and suffered from the global recession. Signs of recovery translated into a growth in the job market in 2011, but in 2012 economic conditions began to decline again. There is still demand for mechanical, electrical and electronics engineers; medical professionals; software developers; catering staff; heavy goods vehicle drivers; and welders. Humanities and social science graduates without work experience and unskilled workers are among those facing the most difficulties finding work.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

As well as advertising job vacancies online, in the media or through recruitment agencies, employers in Slovenia are obliged to notify the employment service of all vacancies. They also indicate if they wish to recruit international workers from EEA or non-member countries.

The employment service of Slovenia publishes vacancies on its notice boards or its ESS website, the EURES portal and other media. Job-seekers can also register in the employment service CV database, which enables employers to get in touch with suitable candidates.

*'The recent cross-border Slovenian–Austrian Job Day in Maribor attracted over 6 000 jobseekers – with employers and employment agencies presenting over 600 vacancies. The Slovenian–Italian Job Day in Koper drew 2 000 jobseekers and 46 representatives from employers, employer associations and employment agencies.'*

**Darja Grauf, EURES Adviser, Slovenia**

### Tips for job applications

Most job applications comprise a covering letter and CV. The letter should make the employer want to invite you for an interview. It should not go into too much detail about experience and qualifications; this is provided in the CV.

Your CV should consist of two or, even better, one A4 sheet. Previous periods of employment should be arranged in reverse chronological order. This also applies to the section that covers your education and training.

An application is usually written in Slovenian, but for workers from other countries, it may be written in another language, most frequently English, German or Italian, especially for cross-border positions or when applying for a job in an international company.

If making a spontaneous application, consider the following opening suggestions.

- 'I have been a customer of yours for a long time and I think I know your field of work very well. That is why I would like to join your company.'
- 'Perhaps in the near future you will need a colleague with the experience and abilities that I have. Please allow me to introduce myself.'

Go on to list your professional training, employment experience, skills, achievements and knowledge of foreign languages. Explain why you believe you could be useful.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, although it may be useful for certain roles, such as in marketing or working with clients.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

This is very rare in Slovenia.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

Yes, especially for applications from abroad.





### **Making contact by phone**

If you call about a job, be friendly and relaxed, have your questions prepared as well as answers to questions you may be asked, and be sure to close the conversation with optimistic and stimulating words.

The employer may wish to conduct an interview by phone or Skype if the applicant lives abroad. They might also discuss the content of an employment contract with suitable candidates and send it to the potential worker for review by e-mail or fax. After that they can arrange for the candidate to go to Slovenia.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Copies of educational certificates and qualifications usually need to be enclosed, or can be enclosed voluntarily. You can also state that documents will be forwarded later if necessary. It is advisable to bring the original documents to the interview. Proof of linguistic competence, computer skills, documents about work experience and achievements in any competitions you took part in are important.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This can be anything from 2 weeks to a month or more.

### **Preparing for an interview**

The recruiter will focus on experience, motivation and interpersonal social skills. Psychological, intelligence, aptitude and psycho-

metric tests are widely used, especially for jobs requiring a high level of education.

Candidates should: prepare a list of their achievements; have an understanding of what the employer does in significant detail; speak about competences and practical experience gained through work elsewhere; identify a realistic working ambition; and be able to communicate the abovementioned ideas clearly and effectively.

Candidates should prepare for questions about their medium- and long-term career aims. Having a clear plan about your own self-development is key. Some Slovenian recruiters also expect you to say what your pay expectations are.

### **Who will be there?**

Tests are usually taken in groups and are handled by a psychologist. A group meeting may also be held initially to present the company and the posts. A single interview is usually enough for the employer to decide about the candidate, but further interviews may be required. The interview usually takes 15-45 minutes.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, shake hands at the beginning and end of the job interview

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

Introductions are followed by a short presentation of the company and the post. After that, the employer can interview the candidate to clarify information in the application documents. This



is the stage where the candidate can show the original versions of documents sent as copies when applying for the job. At the end of this part, the jobseeker can ask questions, if they have any. To end the interview, the interviewer usually tells the candidate how the process will continue. The atmosphere is business-like.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

The candidate only has to answer questions that are relevant to the job applied for.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

References are expected. A former employer, lecturer or tutor can write a letter of recommendation or you should give their contacts, so that potential employers can call them and ask for their impression of you. Letters of recommendation are welcome and can be very helpful. If proof of good conduct is needed, it is mentioned in the vacancy.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

There is an unwritten rule that during the interview it is the employer who should bring up the subject of pay, not the jobseeker. You can then state the range (minimum and maximum) that would be suitable for you.

Pay consists of the basic wage or salary, part of the wage or salary for job performance and extra pay. Pay is expressed as a monthly rate. Holiday pay and annual bonuses are included in the remuneration listed.

Employers are obliged to enrol their workers in a pension, invalidity, health and unemployment

insurance scheme within 8 days of the job start date. They are also required to deliver a photocopy of the registration to the employee within 15 days of commencing work.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Yes, you may be asked to undertake a work trial.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

It varies, but is usually between 3 and 6 months long.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, this is not common practice in Slovenia.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Employers usually tell candidates when they will contact them to let them know their decision.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If the employer said that he/she would decide within a week, you can call them after 1 week, not sooner. It is not common to call for feedback after the decision has been made.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is important. Arrive 5-10 minutes early.



**Dress-code tips**

Look business-like, neat and clean. Shoes should be in good condition and hair neatly styled.

**Any further advice?**

Be original and honest. Don't interrupt the interviewer. Never say things about yourself that are not true (skills, qualifications, experience) and never say bad things about your former employers.



# SLOVAKIA

Official language → **Slovakian**  
Government → **Parliamentary republic**  
Population → **5.4 million**  
Capital → **Bratislava**  
Currency → **euro (EUR)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+421**  
Internet code → **.sk**

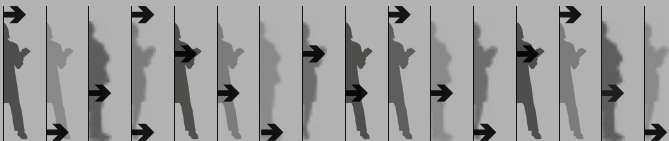
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN SLOVAKIA?

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Dubbed the ‘Tatra Tiger’, Slovakia’s economy experienced sustained growth before the global recession. Since then there have been slower indications of recovery. However, recent years have seen a growth in the number of people working and in the number of jobs. Besides the IT sector, there was growth in transport and storage, information and communication activities, and industrial manufacturing. Car manufacturing and electrical engineering are the main industry sectors – Slovakia is the world’s largest producer of cars per capita.

Besides work considerations, this compact landlocked country has extensive transport links and numerous natural and cultural attractions, including historic towns, spectacular caves, stunning mountain scenery and a lively winter-sports scene.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Job adverts are published on the Internet, in newspapers and regional papers. Online job portals, private recruitment companies and the public employment service (PES) show vacancies in Slovakia on their websites. These give all details of the jobs and requirements for applicants.

### **Tips for job applications**

Follow the instructions given in the job vacancy announcement. Do not send the same application to several employers. Address each employer individually. The content of an application sent by e-mail should be the same as for a handwritten application. The usual practice is to send a covering letter explaining why you want to work for the company, attaching a CV and a copy of your diploma.

### **Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?**

No, this is only usual in applications to a foreign employer.

### **Is there a preference for handwritten applications?**

No, typed applications are fine. If handwritten, ensure that the script is legible.

### **Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?**

Yes, it is often used.

### **Making contact by phone**

Be pleasant and friendly during any contacts with the employer. Respond to all questions and tactfully describe your expectations.

### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

Not always. Sometimes they must be enclosed with the application, sometimes they should be taken to the interview.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

From 2 weeks to a month or longer.

### **Preparing for an interview**

For specialist positions, expect to be asked to take a skills test. For unskilled roles, you are expected to demonstrate a willingness to work.

Prepare well for the interview. Take copies of your diplomas, licences and other documents needed, demonstrate your work results and display evidence of your experience and skills. Be polite and answer clearly and truthfully.

### **Who will be there?**

There will usually be between one to three company representatives on the interview panel. They will interview 10-30 applicants. There may sometimes be group interviews.



**Do we shake hands?**

No, this is reserved usually for the successful candidate at the end of the recruitment process.

**Is there a typical interview structure?**

In most cases, employers start by introducing the company and what they expect from the new employee. They will then ask applicants to set out their reasons for wanting the job and to describe their knowledge and skills. The employer can also ask applicants to take a test or fill out forms. At the end of the interview, the employer can give candidates the opportunity to ask questions.

The atmosphere is formal. Remember this, and take care with your choice of words. Most of the interview time is dedicated to professional topics. The employer is not usually interested in personal aspects.

**When is a question out of bounds?**

Candidates are not obliged to answer questions about their private life, religion and political affiliation, or marital status.

**Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Provide the recruiter with recommendations about your work experience and skills, and the contact details of a person who can attest to the accuracy of this information. References should confirm the period of work, evaluate the work of a jobseeker and also recommend him/her to another employer.

Teachers and people who work with weapons or with dangerous substances, for example, would need proof of good conduct.

**Negotiating your pay and benefits**

The jobseeker rarely has much leeway in negotiating the contract and in most cases can only agree or disagree. The most common non-statutory benefits are, for example, accommodation, company car and mobile phone.

**Is a trial period likely?**

You may be asked to do a 1-day work trial. As it is not legal, it is possible to refuse, but this may be a reason for the employer not to accept the jobseeker, as it can be taken as a demonstration of unwillingness to cooperate.

**How long is the standard probationary period?**

Three months is the average.

**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

This could happen, but it is rare.

**When will I hear the result?**

One or two weeks after the interview.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is not common to ask for feedback about your interview. The result is announced to successful candidates by e-mail or a phone call.



**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Arrive a minimum of 30 minutes before the appointment.

**Dress-code tips**

Be tidy, clean and neatly dressed. If the job is a white-collar position, both men and women should wear a suit. Jewellery is acceptable, but it should not be overdone and should be restricted to a few items.



# FINLAND

Official languages → **Finnish, Swedish**

Government → **Presidential republic**

Population → **5.4 million**

Capital → **Helsinki**

Currency → **euro (EUR)**

Member EU or EEA → **EU**

Phone code → **+358**

Internet code → **.fi (mainland Finland) / .ax (Åland Islands)**

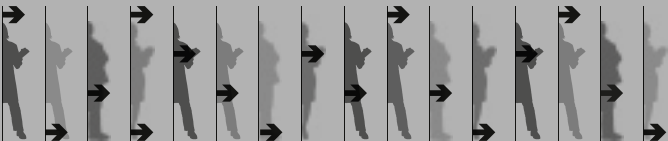
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN FINLAND?

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Finland appears with striking regularity at or near the top of global rankings for quality of life, education standards and economic competitiveness. The most popular national pastime is taking a sauna, but the Finns are also keen on hosting wacky world championships: for wife carrying, air guitar and mosquito catching, amongst others. Inhabitants can also easily escape to the wilderness, be it forest, lake or one of the country's 180 000 islands.

Despite Finland's record for competitiveness, the recent economic uncertainty has put a brake on recruitment. However, there is still demand for skilled workers in the service sector, including nurses, doctors, psychologists and dentists, nursery school and special education teachers, social workers, accountants, sales staff and telemarketers, and cleaners.





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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Jobs are posted on the website of the labour administration, on private jobsites and in newspapers. The EURES portal has links to all of these.

### Tips for job applications

Make sure that you fill in the application carefully; if it is not complete, it might not be taken into consideration. The employer is likely to receive hundreds of applications. Try to stand out positively from the rest.

A covering letter should not be longer than one page. Describe briefly why you would be the best candidate. Name one or two referees, and give their contact information; the employer may be interested in calling them (possibly even before an interview) to ask what kind of employee you are. Remember to sign the letter.

The length of the CV should not exceed two A4 sheets.

Before making a spontaneous application, look at the company's website to see what kind of career opportunities you can expect and how the employer usually hires new staff. If there is an electronic application form for spontaneous applications, use it. If not, contact the employer by e-mail or phone. If you make the first contact by e-mail, call the company after approximately 1 week and ask whether the people in charge of recruitment have received your application and had time to consider it.

In smaller companies especially, there may not be enough staff to advertise vacancies, handle applications, organise interviews, etc. Therefore,

it is worth contacting the employer directly and applying for a post spontaneously.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, but in some cases it is possible.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, handwritten applications are not used at all.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

It is rarely used in national applications, but for international applications it may be used.

### Making contact by phone

Some employers expect applicants to contact them by phone or e-mail to ask for further details before sending the application. They see the contact as an expression of interest. However, other employers do not have time to answer calls or e-mails and do not expect the jobseekers to make contact.

If you do call, prepare beforehand. Think carefully why you are applying for the position and why you should be chosen. Speak clearly and try to be relaxed.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

Enclose copies of your diplomas only if stated in the job advertisement. Take original diplomas to the interview, as the employer may want to scrutinise them.



### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

It varies, although the period is usually longer in the case of international recruitment.

### **Preparing for an interview**

One of the first questions the employer asks is your motivation: why you are applying for this job and why you should be chosen. Be prepared to clearly explain your motivation and make a list of your professional and personal strengths.

To make a good impression, visit the company's website before the interview to make sure you know the basic facts about the company.

### **Who will be there?**

It is normal that at least two people from the company will be at the interview.

### **Do we shake hands?**

Yes, shake hands with everyone present.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

The employer usually interviews between 3 and 10 candidates. They may make their decision after one interview, or conduct further interviews or aptitude tests.

Greetings are followed by an introduction about the job and the company by the employer. Introduce yourself clearly and look everyone in the eye. Before questions begin, you are normally expected to say something about

yourself – why you applied for the job and why you think you should be chosen. At the end of the meeting, you have the opportunity to ask any questions that were not answered.

Interviews are generally relaxed. However, do not be surprised if there are silences, as the interviewers may be taking notes.

During the interview, stay calm and speak clearly. Set out what you have achieved, but try not to be over-confident. It is important that you show interest in the position by being active, listening carefully and asking for clarification if you do not understand what the employer means. However, do not interrupt the interviewer. Above all, be honest and do not criticise former employers.

If you are asked to take a psychological or aptitude test, you can take it as a good sign, as it means that you are among the best candidates. You cannot really prepare for the tests; the best thing is to get a good night's sleep and to be honest. Do not try to pretend to be someone you are not.

It is important for the employer to find out about your professional background and capabilities. However, they also want to know about your personality; your strengths and weaknesses; and how your previous employer would describe you. You may also need to describe how you react to stress and deadlines or how you cope with difficult situations.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

The non-discrimination act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religious affiliation, political allegiance, state of health, disability,



sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. The applicant does not need to answer questions dealing with his/her religious or political persuasion, illnesses, pregnancy, family planning or trade union activities. Employers can make precise enquires about health if a good physical condition is vital in order to carry out the required duties of the job.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

You should mention in your application or your CV the names of a couple of referees the employer can contact. Make sure in advance that these referees are willing to recommend you, as references are usually requested. Some employers ask the applicants to enclose copies of any letters of recommendation in the application. Bring these to the interview, as many employers are interested in studying them closely.

It is usually mentioned in the advertisement if you need to prove that you have no criminal record. Only successful candidates will need to do this.

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

In Finland, contracts are based on collective labour agreements. Almost every field has its own labour agreement. However, pay is sometimes negotiable. If it is, this is mentioned in the job advertisement, and candidates are usually asked to indicate their expectations in their application.

Pay is usually expressed in hourly or monthly terms. Holiday pay is based on the statutory requirement. In some fields or enterprises

(especially in executive positions), you may negotiate annual bonuses, which are likely to be performance-related.

Extra benefits are very common in Finland and include luncheon vouchers, sports and cultural discount vouchers, and occupational health-care. In some companies, you may be supplied with a leased car. Some advantages are negotiable. Consult your new superior, who can tell you the right person to negotiate these extra benefits with.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

A trial period is usual, but not in all positions.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The probationary period normally lasts no longer than 4 months.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

Probably not, but for some positions it might be negotiable.

### **When will I hear the result?**

Normally at the end of the interview the employer tells you when you can expect to get the results/follow-up.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you are not asked for an interview, you can contact the employer approximately 2 weeks after the application deadline.



Following an interview, if the employer does not contact you after 1 or 2 weeks, you can enquire about the results by phone or e-mail. If you are not selected, you can contact the employer and ask for feedback about your interview and application.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Punctuality is the norm in Finland, both for the candidate and the employer.

### **Dress-code tips**

Dress neatly and appropriately. Normally smart casual is enough. However, in the business world, men tend to wear a suit. Wear simple jewellery in order to give a good, clean-cut appearance.



# SWEDEN

Official language → **Swedish**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **9.6 million**  
Capital → **Stockholm**  
Currency → **Swedish krona (SEK)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+46**  
Internet code → **.se**

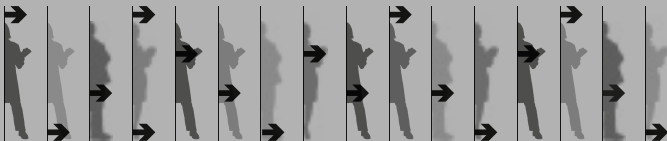
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN SWEDEN?

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Sweden routinely comes top worldwide for health, literacy and human development, and its economy ranks in the top 10 most competitive globally. The Swedish people are known for neutrality and consensus building. Also known for its high taxes and generous welfare, income inequality is low and trade unions are powerful.

The largest industries are engineering, telecoms, the automotive industry and pharmaceuticals. Forecasts predict job losses in manufacturing, agriculture and forestry, but job creation in public and private service industries and construction. For graduate jobs in journalism, competition is fierce. There has been less competition recently for qualified civil engineers, specialist IT and construction industry specialists, and medical professionals including doctors, midwives and nurses.



## LOOKING FOR WORK

Qualified candidates – especially in the IT and financial sectors – typically look for vacancies on company websites. It is also becoming common to apply for jobs spontaneously. The public employment service recruits mainly for unskilled work and works closely with recruitment agencies. Its website (see the EURES portal's **Links** page) is the largest for advertising vacancies in Sweden.

### Tips for job applications

Candidates usually get in touch with the contact person for more information about a job before they apply. It is also common to contact the trade union representative for information about salaries.

Always follow the instructions in the job advertisement. Electronic application forms are very common. If sending a covering letter and CV by e-mail, do not attach any other documents unless the advert requests this. Computers are available in all public employment services and libraries.

For all written applications, be sure to relate the information to the job you are applying for. The application should be brief, neat and informative. Write dynamic applications tailored to the requirements in the advertisement. Keep it short and relevant: a one-page covering letter and a CV of one to two pages.

Applicants are advised to call the employer to check if they have received the application.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

It is not standard, but sometimes the employer may ask for one.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, handwritten applications are not used in Sweden.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

It is not used often, but employers accept it.

### Making contact by phone

While it is essential to be polite during telephone contacts, attitudes generally are fairly informal. Sweden is not a country where you use titles in conversation.

### Do I need to send diplomas with my application?

It is not common to attach documents to the application. If the employer requests a copy of your diploma, bring it along to the interview.

### Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job

From 1 week to several weeks, although in some sectors, such as the service and the hotel/restaurant sector, the procedure can be much shorter.



## Preparing for an interview

An interview normally takes about 90 minutes. You may be invited back for a second round. If you are prevented from attending the interview, you must inform the employer as soon as you can and ask if it is possible to make a new appointment.

### Who will be there?

One or two people, and often a representative from the trade union.

### Do we shake hands?

Yes, definitely. This is usual practice.

### Is there a typical interview structure?

Usually you are asked to start the interview by introducing yourself (be brief); next you tell the employer why you have applied for the job and what you know about the company. Be relaxed but attentive.

Common questions include: Do you find it easy to learn new things? How do you react to criticism? Are you a problem-solver? How do you tackle a problem? What are you proud of? Can you tell me something really good that you have done? What do you expect to be doing in 5 years' time? What do you think a good colleague should be like? Describe a situation where you made a mistake and what you learnt from it. How would your friends describe you? How would your manager describe you? How do you function in a group? What are your strong and weak points? How do you handle stressful situations? Why should we employ you?

During the first interview you can ask what an ordinary working day is like, when you will hear the result of the interview, when the job starts, if there is an introductory programme, etc. Do not talk about pay at the beginning of the application procedure. Wait until the employer raises the subject.

### When is a question out of bounds?

There are anti-discrimination laws (on gender, religion, ethnic origin, disability). You can decide if you want to answer these types of questions during an interview. Questions that are not relevant for the job (your age, whether you have any children, your origin) are private.

### Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?

If you have up-to-date referees, give their details on your CV. Otherwise, write: 'References will be provided on request'. A former employer is most often used as a reference. The reference supports your application and describes you and your ability to work.

Letters of recommendation are needed and can help you. Bring them when you attend the interview. They should be written by a former boss, team leader or HR officer. If you don't have work experience, you can provide a letter of recommendation from a teacher or a sports leader.

### Negotiating your pay and benefits

The more qualified the role, the more leeway there is to negotiate the salary. Most employment conditions in Sweden are regulated by collective agreements, with the result that there



is little room for individual negotiations, at least for lower skilled jobs.

Pay on a monthly basis is the most common. For management positions there may be scope to negotiate non-statutory benefits; these would be discussed with the HR department.

For jobs in government and with children, proof of good conduct is required. This will be stated in the ad or the employer will inform you.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

You may be asked to do a 1-day work trial, but you have the right to be paid for this.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

The standard probationary period is 6 months.

### **Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, this is not usual, but if you are highly specialised it might be possible.

### **When will I hear the result?**

If you haven't heard anything within 2 weeks, you should contact the recruiter and ask when you can expect feedback.

### **Getting feedback and further follow-up**

It is always possible to contact the employer after the interview and ask about the next step in the application process. If you did not get the job, you can ask for the reason.

### **How early should I arrive for the interview?**

Be on time. Five minutes early is always OK. You should never be late for an interview in Sweden.

### **Dress-code tips**

There is no need to dress too formally for most jobs, but be sure you are clean and tidy. It is no longer usual to wear a tie. Good trousers and a jacket are always acceptable – for both men and women.





# UNITED KINGDOM

Official language → **English**  
Government → **Constitutional monarchy**  
Population → **63.9 million**  
Capital → **London**  
Currency → **Pound sterling (GBP)**  
Member EU or EEA → **EU**  
Phone code → **+44**  
Internet code → **.uk**

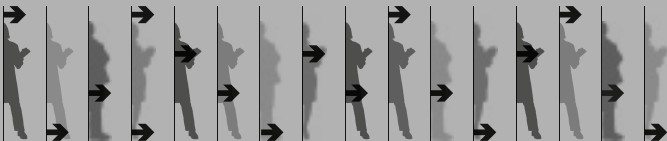
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## WHY GO TO WORK IN THE UNITED KINGDOM?

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The United Kingdom has one of the world's largest economies. The service sector accounts for over 70% of GDP, although manufacturing in the automotive, aerospace and pharmaceutical sectors remain significant.

The global downturn and high government debt have squeezed public finances, with significant job losses in both public and private sectors. Nevertheless, engineers for the automotive, electricity and green industries; engineers and technicians for the energy sector; chefs in Japanese, Thai and Asian cuisine; hospital consultants and operating-theatre nurses; certain IT professionals; and heavy goods vehicle, bus and coach drivers are still in demand. The care sector has unfilled vacancies for care workers and there is a shortage of social workers specialised in children and family work.



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

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Most employers advertise vacancies on their company website or on recruitment websites such as Monster or fish4jobs. Recruitment agencies such as Adecco and Reed are also commonly used. Vacancies can also be found on the government website <http://www.gov.uk> and on the EURES portal. Some high-skilled jobs are advertised in national newspapers such as *The Guardian* and *The Times*. In some industries, such as construction and horticulture, vacancies are often advertised by word of mouth.

### Tips for job applications

The rule is to follow instructions closely. The employer may provide a phone number or e-mail address for you to obtain more information about the vacancy. Do not use this first contact as an opportunity to present yourself if this has not been requested.

It is quite common for employers to accept a limited number of applications, and to close the vacancy once that number has been reached, so make sure your application is sent in good time, and always before the closing date.

When completing an application form, be sure to save it and send it in a compatible file format. Include the vacancy reference number and proofread the form carefully. Spell-check the form using a British rather than an American dictionary and pay close attention to grammar and sentence structure.

If the application procedure calls for a CV and a covering letter, keep the letter brief (one side of an A4 paper) and factual. Say why you are

writing in the first paragraph; give details of your suitable skills and experience in the second paragraph; give your availability for an interview in the third paragraph and any other important details about existing commitments; finish with a short sentence to say that you are looking forward to their reply. Try to include key words from the advertisement in your application.

### Is it standard to include a photo on the CV?

No, neither should your date of birth be included.

### Is there a preference for handwritten applications?

No, handwritten applications should be avoided unless they are requested in the advertisement.

### Is the Europass format CV widely used and accepted?

The Europass CV is not normally recognised by British employers. Several websites give good advice on completing CVs for the British job market, including the National Careers Service, Prospects AC and Monster.

### Making contact by phone

Only make telephone contact if requested to do so and after identifying that you have the skills and experience that the employer is looking for. Some employers may conduct a preliminary interview by telephone. If this is the case, the employer will call you at a pre-arranged time. Prepare for a telephone interview as thoroughly as you would a face-to-face interview.



### **Do I need to send diplomas with my application?**

No, these will normally be requested at a later stage.

### **Usual length of time between publication of the vacancy and start of the job**

This is typically 4 to 6 weeks.

### **Preparing for an interview**

Recruiters expect applicants to be available for interview at short notice. They will expect the applicant to be motivated and to have good enough English to enable effective communication (with the exception of some low-skilled jobs, for example fruit picking, where the interview may be conducted in the applicant's native language, particularly if it takes place in their own country). Applicants should be polite, punctual, smartly presented and capable of expressing themselves clearly.

Employers and recruiters have a legal requirement to check the identity of every applicant before they are offered a job. The applicant must bring their original passport or national identity card to the interview to prove that they are an EEA (or Swiss) national or family member.

### **Who will be there?**

Interviews are usually led by two to three panel members, including the line manager for the vacant post and a representative from HR.

### **Do we shake hands?**

It is normal to shake hands with the members of the interviewing panel.

### **Is there a typical interview structure?**

The atmosphere is formal but friendly. The candidate should be attentive, responsive and positive about their application. He/she should try to relax and answer the questions confidently and as fully as possible.

The employer will be looking for examples that demonstrate the applicant's competencies to do the job. Punctuality, presentation and motivation are also important factors.

Usually only one round of interviews is carried out, sometimes with an accompanying test to gauge the applicant's technical abilities and problem-solving skills. The interview is usually 30-40 minutes maximum. Tests are 20-30 minutes. The applicant's presentation, posture and attentiveness may not be scored, but they will create an impression and are therefore important.

Because the emphasis is on competence and matching the job profile there is very little, if any, discussion on non-professional subjects. The motivation should be clear from the application form or from answers given to the interviewers' questions. You do not have to give details of your interests outside work unless you are using these as examples of your ability to do a task in reply to one of the questions.

Common questions include asking the candidate to give examples of when he/she has been in a particular situation and how he/she



dealt with it. You may be asked to give examples of a time when something has gone wrong and what you did to put it right or to describe your weaknesses. In this case, show that you are aware of how to deal with your weakness.

Towards the end of the interview, you will be asked if you have any questions. Prepare one or two questions in advance, for example you may want to ask about opportunities for progression within the company or what types of training the company offers.

### **When is a question out of bounds?**

Employers cannot discriminate on grounds of gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation or age. Employers and recruiters are responsible for ensuring that their questions are non-discriminatory and will not ask you to disclose information about private matters unrelated to work. You may, however, have to disclose information about any previous conviction for a criminal offence.

### **Should I supply references, letters of recommendation or proof of good conduct?**

Referee contact details should be supplied on the application form or listed on your CV. The employer will check the information you have provided with your referee. It is best to use your most recent employer, but make sure he/she can respond in English. Letters of recommendation are usually not needed.

Jobs in the security industry or with vulnerable people (children/elderly people) will require proof that you do not have previous criminal convictions (Disclosing and Barring Service check).

### **Negotiating your pay and benefits**

It is unlikely that there is any flexibility with the employer's terms and conditions unless stated in the vacancy advert. The best attitude is to place trust in the employer's offer and to only apply for jobs that offer satisfactory pay and working conditions.

Contract negotiations mostly apply to highly skilled and highly paid jobs. The applicant will need to justify his/her salary demands by demonstrating that they are in accordance with market rates and their skills and experience. You can ask for a pay rise after working for a company for a while, if your pay appears to be out of line with employees doing similar work. You will normally have an annual pay review. Holiday pay is included and remuneration is usually expressed as an annual gross salary. Trade jobs, e.g. carpenters and bricklayers, often show wages as hourly.

The most common non-statutory benefits are: flexible working arrangements; private health-care or healthcare insurance; subsidised travel; London weighting (extra pay if working in the capital compared to the national average); use of a company car; subsidised meals at an office canteen; subsidised membership of a gym or club; pay bonuses.

### **Is a trial period likely?**

Work trials are not common. It is more likely that you will work for a trial period, after which your pay rises to the full rate.

### **How long is the standard probationary period?**

Between 3 and 6 months.



**Will the employer cover my costs for attending an interview?**

No, not usually.

**When will I hear the result?**

If you reached the interview stage, employers and recruiters will confirm whether or not you are being offered the job, usually within 1 to 3 weeks of the interview.

**Getting feedback and further follow-up**

If you are unsuccessful, you may receive feedback on your performance at the interview when you are notified in writing. Otherwise you can call or write to the employer to request feedback on your interview.

**How early should I arrive for the interview?**

You should arrive 15-20 minutes before the interview. Expect the employer to be punctual.

**Dress-code tips**

Business dress (a suit) is recommended. Men should wear a tie. Women should wear only modest amounts of make-up and jewellery. Whatever you wear, your clothes should be clean and well pressed.

**Any further advice?**

Some employers may arrange pre-interviews by video-conference, but it is still very rare. The majority of interviews are face to face. Electronic pre-sifting of applications is becoming more common, as is psychometric testing.





European Commission

### **Ready to make the move?**

### **What you need to know about living and working abroad – and so much more**

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This booklet is designed for anyone who is thinking of moving to live and work abroad – or else commuting daily to work in a neighbouring country, as a cross-border worker. It includes tips on looking for and applying for work in each European Union Member State, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. All these countries have an agreement to allow each other's citizens to travel and work in any of the other countries.

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