

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

2026-268 | 26 October 2026

Belgium – Wallonia Narrows Bottleneck Occupation List for Third Country National Recruitment

The Walloon Region has published a revised list of bottleneck occupations, effective from 1 October 2026 to 30 September 2027. The list has been reduced from 56 to 31 occupations, with additions in healthcare, food production, HVAC, and technical maintenance, alongside removals and reclassifications across construction, transport, automotive, and industrial roles.^{1,2}

The revision may affect employers using economic migration routes to recruit third country nationals in Wallonia and should be factored into workforce and recruitment planning.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The revised list significantly narrows the range of roles eligible under the Walloon shortage-occupation route. Employers should promptly verify whether planned or ongoing third country national hires remain covered, particularly where a role has been removed, consolidated, or redefined.

Positions no longer included will require an alternative work-authorization route and will be subject to different eligibility requirements or processing timelines. Inclusion on the list may facilitate access to the relevant route but does not remove the need to satisfy all applicable conditions for the category in which the employer applies for a “Single Permit.”

Early review of eligibility and alternative routes will help employers limit delays and maintain compliance with regional immigration requirements.

Wallonia updates bottleneck occupation list

Effective period and scope

The revised list applies from 1 October 2026 to 30 September 2027. Occupations included on the list may benefit from the Walloon shortage-occupation route when employers recruit qualified third country nationals. Inclusion does not, however, guarantee approval or remove the need to meet all applicable conditions.

The list identifies professions for which employer demand significantly exceeds the number of qualified jobseekers and may support economic migration applications for foreign workers qualified for shortage roles.

Scale of the revision

The updated list contains 31 occupations, compared with 56 occupations under the previous version.

Newly added occupations

Several occupations are now explicitly included:

- Operator of industrial textile machines
- Meat slaughterer
- Meat cutter/deboner
- Food production line operator
- Nurse
- Family care assistant
- Inland navigation captain

Occupations removed from the list

The removals are concentrated in the following areas:

- **Construction and Installation:** site supervision, residential and industrial electrical work, sanitary and central-heating installation, joinery, tiling, masonry, road construction, and water-pipe installation.
- **Manufacturing and Industrial Production:** chemical-industry installation operation, industrial automation, electromechanical maintenance, communication networks and security systems, maintenance electricity, and general maintenance mechanics.
- **Transport and Logistics:** bus and coach driving, heavy-goods vehicle driving, and driving instruction.
- **Automotive:** vehicle-paint technicians and bodywork preparers.

Employees engaged in a bottleneck occupation that appeared on a previous list of bottleneck occupations, but has since been removed, remain eligible to renew their existing Single Permit on the basis of that former bottleneck occupation, provided that all conditions are met. This includes, in particular, renewal of the Single Permit with the same employer, for the same position, and under the same working conditions, among other applicable requirements.²

Renamed, broadened, or consolidated occupations

Several occupations have been broadened, consolidated, or redefined rather than simply removed.

For example:

Previous Occupation	Updated Occupation	Nature of Change
Heavy Steel Structure Installer/Erector	Steel Structure Installer/Erector	Broadened
Pitched Roof Roofer	Roofer	Broadened
Machine Tool Setter-Operator	One combined category	Consolidated
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Technician	Refrigeration Technician HVAC Technician	Split into two categories
Industrial Maintenance Manager	Industrial Maintenance Technician	Redefined
Automotive Technician	Automotive Maintenance and Diagnostic Technician	Redefined
Accountant	In-house Accountant/Internal Accountant	Narrowed

Key trends

- Construction and industrial skills remain prominent: structural works, roofing, metal construction, piping, industrial maintenance, and manufacturing roles continue to feature.
- Food-processing roles receive greater attention: New entries include meat-processing and food-production occupations.
- Healthcare remains a priority: Nurses are now explicitly included alongside care-related occupations.
- Transport and installation roles left out: Several driving, electrical, plumbing, and heating occupations were removed.

KPMG INSIGHTS

In light of the changes, employers might consider the following:

- Map the actual duties of each vacancy to the wording of the revised occupation list.
- Review planned and pending third country national hires involving roles that were removed, consolidated, or redefined.

- Consider alternative work-authorization routes where the shortage-occupation route is no longer available.
- Build sufficient lead time into recruitment and onboarding plans.

Regional differences remain important

Belgium's regions apply separate shortage-occupation lists and economic migration rules. A role qualifying in Wallonia may not qualify on the same basis in Brussels or Flanders. Timely review of recruitment needs and mobility plans can help employers use available routes while maintaining compliance.

If assignees and/or their programme managers have questions about the scope of this update, its application, potential impact or appropriate next steps, they should consult their qualified professional or a member of the GMS Immigration team with KPMG in Belgium (see the Contacts section).

ENDNOTES:

1 Walloon Government (in Dutch), ["List of Bottleneck Occupations,"](#) effective 1 October 2026.

2 Wallex (in Dutch) ["Arrêté du Gouvernement wallon relatif à l'admission au travail de travailleurs étrangers,"](#) published on 6 June 2024.

* * * *

Contacts

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or one of the following professionals with the KPMG International member firm in Belgium:



Nele Godefroid
Executive Director
Tel. +32 2708 3846
ngodefroid@kpmg.com



Premila Autar
Supervisor
Tel. +32 2708 4191
pautar@kpmg.com

** Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in Belgium.

© 2026 KPMG Central Services, a Belgian general partnership ("VOF/SNC") and a member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved.

www.kpmg.com

Some or all of the services described herein may not be permissible for KPMG audit clients and their affiliates or related entities.

Learn about us:



kpmg.com

© 2026 KPMG LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership, and its subsidiaries are part of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved.

The KPMG name and logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of KPMG International. The KPMG name and logo are trademarks used under license by the independent member firms of the KPMG global organization.

KPMG LLP is the U.S. firm of the KPMG global organization of independent professional services firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. The KPMG global organization operates in 147 countries and territories and has more than 219,000 people working in member firms around the world.

Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients.

GMS Flash Alert is a publication of the KPMG LLP Washington National Tax practice.

KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee and does not provide services to clients. No member firm has any authority to obligate or bind KPMG International or any other member firm vis-à-vis third parties, nor does KPMG International have any such authority to obligate or bind any member firm. The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavor to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. No one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation.