

# The Cabinet of Ministers approved amendments to the Immigration Law to strengthen the national security

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To strengthen the national security, the Cabinet of Ministers today, 6 September 2022, approved amendments to the Immigration Law, which provide for stricter conditions for issuing residence permits to Russian and Belarusian citizens.

The amendments to the Immigration Law stipulate that Latvian citizens and non-citizens who wish to become a citizen of another country and continue to reside in Latvia will now have to pass a state language test and prove regular and sufficient financial resources. The law also requires former Latvian citizens and non-citizens who have received permanent residence permits before the entry into force of the draft law to prove their knowledge of the state language. The requirement to prove proficiency in the state language could apply to around 22,3 thousand foreigners. If a person cannot prove adequate knowledge by presenting a document issued by the National Centre for Education and Content on compliance with the A2 level of the state language, the permanent residence permit will be cancelled and a temporary residence permit will be issued for one year.

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☞ “The entry into force of the legislation could increase the number of state language tests carried out by the National Centre for Education and Content, which would make it necessary to consider strengthening the capacity of the National Centre for Education and Content,” says the Minister of the Interior Kristaps Eklons.

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The amendments to the Immigration Law also provide that until 30 June 2023, the issuance of repeated temporary residence permits to Russian and Belarusian citizens will be discontinued, except for persons who have been long-term residents of Latvia, such as former Latvian citizens or non-citizens who do not qualify for a permanent residence permit or EU permanent resident status due to their lack of knowledge of the state language. Former students or researchers who wish to continue to reside in Latvia after the end of their studies or research project are also exempt under the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council. Also, in response to the request of the Latvian Investment and Development Agency, other business associations and

entrepreneurs, the exception would apply to persons who have been granted the right to employment in Latvia, who wish to continue to reside in Latvia and for whom regular personal income tax payments have been made, as well as members of the board of directors of start-up companies would be entitled to receive temporary residence permits after the expiry of the temporary residence permit issued in connection with the start-up company's establishment. Persons falling into this category will be subject to a thorough vetting process by the competent state security authorities.

The provisions of the legislation are without prejudice to the right of applicants for international protection to obtain the corresponding international protection status.

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<https://www.iem.gov.lv/en/article/cabinet-ministers-approved-amendments-immigration-law-strengthen-national-security>