

Global Immigration alert

November 2025

Germany

New salary thresholds for EU Blue Card and Distinct Professional Experience applicants

Executive summary

The German Federal Cabinet recently approved new thresholds for the annual contribution assessment ceiling in the general pension insurance for 2026. These thresholds generally determine the minimum salary requirements for EU Blue Card and Distinct Professional Experience applications. The new thresholds will become effective on 1 January 2026.

Key developments

Following the Cabinet's decision, the contribution assessment ceiling in the general pension insurance scheme will increase to EUR 8,450 per month (EUR 101,400 annually) up from EUR 8,050 per month. The 2026 salary thresholds are expected to apply to the application categories as outlined below:

- **Standard EU Blue Card applicants:** The minimum gross annual salary is set at 50% of the general pension insurance contribution ceiling. For 2026, this implies a minimum gross salary of EUR 50,700 per year (up from EUR 48,300 in 2025).
- **Other EU Blue Card categories:** The minimum gross annual salary is set at 45,3% of the general pension insurance contribution ceiling. For 2026, this implies a minimum gross salary of EUR 45,934.20 per year (up from EUR 43,759.80 in 2025). This threshold will apply to individuals who hold shortage occupations, young professionals (i.e., individuals who obtained a recognized university degree in the three years prior to submitting their application), and IT professionals (i.e., individuals who do not hold a university degree but have at least three years of relevant professional experience, equivalent to a university degree, in the seven years prior to submitting their application). In addition to meeting the minimum salary threshold, these individuals are also required to

earn an amount equaling or exceeding the comparable salary level for their job position.

- **Distinct professional experience:** The minimum gross annual salary is set at 45% of the general pension insurance contribution ceiling. For 2026, this implies a minimum gross salary of EUR 45,630 per year (up from EUR 43,470 in 2025). In addition to meeting the minimum salary threshold, these individuals are also required to earn an amount equaling or exceeding the comparable salary level for their job position.

Impact on employers

Employers may review the applicable salary thresholds for the foreign workers they sponsor and make adjustments as needed to continue to meet eligibility requirement and mitigate potential business disruptions.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.



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