

# SPAIN IS OVERHAULING ITS IMMIGRATION PROCESS: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MULTINATIONAL EMPLOYERS

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## Spain Is Overhauling Its Immigration Process: What This Means for Multinational Employers

Spain is preparing to modernize and standardize its historically fragmented immigration system with a centralized digital platform that is set to roll out in 2026. For employers recruiting foreign talent, this overhaul is expected to reduce regional inconsistencies, streamline documentation requirements, and improve processing times. Companies with hiring plans in Spain should understand how the new system will work and what it means for workforce planning and compliance. Here's what employers need to know and four steps you can take to prepare.

### Moving Away from Regional Variability

The visa application process in Spain has been notoriously difficult to navigate. An applicant's experience – as well as their employer's – has often hinged on which regional office was handling the application. Both the requirements for supporting documentation and the application processing time have varied significantly by region, making compliance both an elusive and lengthy process.

Additionally, the process has required manual paperwork and physical appointments. With wait times varying by region from days to months, Spain has faced serious backlogs for initial applications, renewals, and status updates.

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In an attempt to both modernize and standardize the application process, Spain's Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration is planning a major overhaul. Starting in 2026, Spain will begin rolling out a centralized digital platform where applicants can submit documents, track their application status, and receive official messages and notifications.

## Service Focus

Global Mobility

Immigration

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### Key Features of the New Digital System

The new online system is expected to create a consistent national framework and reduce the errors and confusion often associated with physical paperwork. Another anticipated result of this streamlined process is increased application processing speed. The website is also expected to include key features such as:

- Centralized digital submission of supporting documentation
- Real-time application status tracking
- Electronic receipt of official communications and notifications
- Automatic document verification tools

While the portal should digitize the majority of the application process, certain steps such as biometric data capture and the issuance of TIE (Tarjeta de Identidad de Extranjero) cards will likely still require in-person visits.

### 3 Key Takeaways for Multinational Employers

For employers seeking to recruit talent to Spain in 2026, the global mobility outlook is about to improve significantly.

1. Employers will no longer need to navigate inconsistent regional standards and varying documentation practices.
2. Application processing times should become more predictable. Employers will likely see fewer delays tied to clerical inconsistencies and a reduction in time spent coordinating physical appointments. Some estimates put future overall processing times for highly qualified professional (HQP) visas at 45 days (down from the current average of 90).

This predictability is particularly important for multinational employers managing cross-border transfers, project-based assignments, and time-sensitive recruitment needs.

3. The shift away from manual paperwork and region-specific requirements is expected to decrease the administrative costs that can accompany prolonged case management and repeated submissions. The new system has the potential to cut administrative costs for businesses by up to 40%.

Employers should be mindful, however, that as with any major system overhaul, the 2026 rollout may involve transitional adjustments as regional offices and users adapt to the centralized platform.

#### **4 Action Items for Employers to Take Now**

Businesses planning to hire or transfer employees to Spain should consider the following steps:

**1. Review current Spain immigration processes** to identify where regional inconsistencies have created delays or compliance risks.

**2. Evaluate document management systems** to ensure readiness for fully digital submission and tracking.

**3. Build flexibility** into 2026 hiring timelines to account for potential transition-period adjustments.

**4. Stay in close contact with immigration counsel** to monitor implementation guidance and procedural updates.

As Spain moves toward a centralized, technology-driven immigration framework, employers who prepare early will be best positioned to benefit from greater consistency, improved processing times, and reduced administrative complexity.

#### **Conclusion**

We will monitor these developments and provide updates as warranted, so make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to get the most up-to-date information directly to your inbox. Please contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the authors of this Insight, or any attorney on our [Global Mobility Team](#) or [International Practice Group](#) to learn more.

