



# An Introduction to Bulgarian Employment Law

## Insights

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Given its geographic location, educated workforce, and well-developed energy sector, Bulgaria is an attractive location for multinational employers. Although a member of the European Union, Bulgaria has its own labor and employment laws, which derive primarily from the Labour Code, which was adopted in 1986 and subsequently modified, most recently in December 2008. For employers planning to do business on Bulgaria, here are a few quick tips on employment laws in Bulgaria.

### **Background**

The Republic of Bulgaria is a parliamentary democracy in central Europe, bordering the Black Sea. Bulgaria is the 16th largest country in Europe, and a member of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and the World Trade Organization. Bulgaria's currency unit is the Lev.

### **The Labour Code**

The Labour Code governs relationships between employers and employees in Bulgaria, including relationships between Bulgarian citizens and foreign companies doing business in Bulgaria.

Under the Labour Code, the terms of the employment relationship is usually memorialized in a written employment contract at the outset, and should address the following topics, at a minimum:

- A description of the job, including duties required;
- The hours of work (both daily and weekly);
- The start date for the job, including the time;
- Location of the work;
- Holidays;
- Duration of the employment contract;
- Salary; and
- Notice period.

The Labour Code sets out specific rules governing termination, and protects employees from “unlawful dismissal.” An unlawful dismissal is any discharge that violates either the employer’s contract with the employee or violates provisions of the Labour Code. Employees who believe they

were unlawfully dismissed may take their employer to court and demand repeal of the unlawful dismissal, reinstatement, back wages, and modification of the employee's service records.

In addition, the 2008 amendments mandate certain changes to the Labour Code, including increasing maternity leave from 315 to 410 calendar days; establishing paternity leave; requiring employers to provide ongoing vocational training and education, particularly after an employee returns from a leave of absence; provisions governing severance pay; and providing for enhanced oversight and enforcement of Labour Code provisions, among other provisions.

### ***Related People***

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