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Latvian eID card for foreigners and mandatory e-address for legal persons

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On 17 June 2021, the parliament of Latvia adopted in the final reading urgent amendments to the Personal Identification Documents Law, which provide for an identity card of foreigners or otherwise known as eID card for foreigners to be introduced in Latvia. The recently introduced possibility to also apply for foreigner's eID card in numerous countries outside of Latvia further simplifies the access of foreigners to public administration services in Latvia.

The right to apply for foreigner's eID card

According to the Personal Identification Documents Law and the Law on the Register of Natural persons, a foreigner will be able to receive a foreigner's eID card if:

- he has a legal relationship with Latvia on the basis of which mutual rights and obligations are forming or have been established in the fields of immovable property, commercial activity, health, taxation, benefits and education;
- he wishes to receive a Latvian identity card (eID) in order to promote the development of economic, scientific, educational or cultural relations;
- he wishes to receive state administration services in Latvia electronically by means of electronic identification issued by an EU member state, a state of the EEA or the Swiss Confederation;
- he is an asylum seeker in Latvia.

The foreigner, who is eligible to receive the foreigner's eID card, must first register in the Register of Natural persons and receive Latvian personal identification code before he can apply for the eID card.

A foreigner's eID card is not a mandatory personal identification document, but the eID card allows foreigners, especially the ones holding positions in companies operating in Latvia, to remotely access – by using a card reader or a mobile device – government e-services, use an e-address, verify their identity and sign documents electronically, serving as a gateway to a wide range of public administration services offered in the Republic of Latvia.

Technically remote access to state e-services can be achieved by authenticating with the foreigner's eID card and entering the relevant PIN codes. However, if a foreigner is a regular in Latvia and uses a phone number registered in Latvia, he/she can also apply for eParaksts Mobile.

Where to apply for foreigner's eID card

Since 18 October 2021, foreigners in Latvia can apply for the eID card in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP). And, as of this year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has determined that the foreigner's eID card can also be issued in the diplomatic representations of the Republic of Latvia with the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Australia, Georgia, Ireland, Japan, Canada, Ukraine, Moldova and Russia.

Validity of the foreigner's eID card and state fee

The validity period of a eID card for foreigners will be 5 years and for asylum seekers 1 year.

The amount of the state fee for issuing eID card for foreigners is 80 euro, however, for asylum seekers this service is free of charge. If the foreigner applies for the eID card at one of the designated diplomatic representations of Latvia, additional fees for the use of consular services must be taken into account.

The newly introduced eID card for foreigners would be a tool to consider, if accessing public administration services in Latvia is or becomes of importance to your business, including innovations to reach businesses electronically.

→ Mandatory e-address for legal persons

Starting 1 January 2023, the use of an e-address for registered legal persons will become mandatory. As a result, all communication with providers of public sector services will be done only electronically.

E-address for merchants

In order to ensure an effective and safe exchange of documents between state authorities and private individuals, starting 1 January 2023 it will be mandatory for businesses and other legal persons registered in the Republic of Latvia to use an e-address. By introducing the e-address all communication with state and municipal authorities and their corporations, as well as prosecutor's office, courts, insolvency administrators, sworn bailiffs and notaries will be done via the e-address and the traditional paper mail will not be sent. The creation of an e-address for a natural person is optional, and the communication with other natural or legal persons by means of the e-address will for now not be possible.

The e-address of a business can only be created by its signatories, but a specific e-address can be accessed by other persons or employees too, if a corresponding power of attorney has been issued. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate which type of e-address is more suitable for each business and if any employee, except for the signatories, shall have access to it.

The creation and use of an e-address

There are two ways in which the legal person can create and use an e-address, and they depend on the volume of the company's documents:

- on the website [Latvija.lv](https://latvija.lv), where the company's e-address can be accessed by identifying with electronic identification means - an identity card (eID card), mobile app eParaksts Mobile, eParaksts card or
- by integrating the solution into the company's own system.

When integrating the e-address into the company's own system specific technical characteristics must be taken into account, for which the information is accessible [here](#).

If the e-address is connected to the company's own system, it won't be possible to use it on the website [Latvija.lv](https://latvija.lv).

The use of an e-address has benefits such as quick communication with different authorities, it is possible to only send information to secure, verified and active users, as well as reduced costs for postal/courier services.

Detailed information is available [here](#).

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