**UPDATE ON THE ‘SINGLE PERMIT’ IN BELGIUM**

As you are aware, the introduction of the ‘single permit’ in Belgium since the beginning of 2019 has been difficult. Its processing time has become very long, which impacted negatively on the business and HR planning of Japanese companies with activities in Belgium.

On 3 December 2019, the BJA issued a letter to the Federal and Regional authorities and proposed several recommendations to streamline and shorten the process of issuing single permits. The letter was co-signed by Nihonjinkai and JETRO. Furthermore, the BJA has contacted the authorities at both Federal and Regional levels in order to follow up the recommendations in the letter and to improve the situation swiftly.

The BJA is happy to inform you that Mrs Maggie De Block, Federal Minister of Immigration, announced certain reforms yesterday, which reflect the recommendations in the letter and which will positively contribute to the improvement of the processing time of single permits.

The main reforms are:
- 20 additional staff at the Federal level (Ministry of Internal Affairs), which will spread the workload and decrease the processing time;
- Internal streamlining of the process at the Federal level (Ministry of Internal Affairs), which will also decrease the processing time;
- Building a digital platform that will link applicants and their proxy holders with the Regional & Federal authorities; and,
- Allowing to continue employment upon the approval by the Regional authorities without waiting for the approval by the Federal authorities.

The implementation of the first two measures should decrease the processing time to 6 to 8 weeks.

The BJA will further closely follow up this matter and will keep you informed as more information becomes available.

Wim Eynatten, Chair Legal & Tax Committee
&
Masatomo Nomura, Chair Investment Committee

dd. 21 February 2020