



Immigration News Highlights

2023-14, 4 April 2023



The KPMG team regularly monitors recent developments across the globe in the Immigration space and publishes them as Immigration News Highlights. Please find the key developments that occurred over the last week enumerated below. [Click here to find all issues of the Immigration News Highlights on the GMS Flash Alert: Immigration page.](#)

[Americas](#)

[Asia Pacific](#)

[Europe and Africa](#)



Americas

United States

US to increase tourist & student visa fees by 15 percent

The US government announced increased visa processing fees for certain non-immigrant visa category applications. The processing fee for business and tourism visas and border crossing cards for Mexicans aged 15 years and above has been increased from US\$160 to US\$185, and the fees for temporary worker visas (H,L,O,P,Q and R categories) has been increased from US\$190 to US\$205.

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United States

USCIS removes 60-day rule for civil surgeon signatures on Form I-693

The USCIS announced the removal of the civil surgeon signature requirement on Form I-693, Report of Immigration Medical Examination and Vaccination Record, acquired no more than 60 days prior to applying for the immigration benefit. As of 31 March 2023, the USCIS has begun accepting Forms I-693 for up to two years after the Form was signed by the civil surgeon, regardless of when the application was made.

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United States

Cap reached for additional returning worker H-2B visas for the early second half of FY 2023

The USCIS has reached the cap limit for additional 16,500 H-2B visa applications. These applications were opened with the window of 1 April 2023 to 14 May 2023, and were available for returning workers in the second half of FY2023. Applications will still be accepted for the additional 20,000 H-2B non-immigrant worker visas allotted to the nationals of Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras for the first and second halves of FY 2023 .

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United States

USCIS updates policy on time frames for paper-based filings and responses falling on weekends and federal holidays

The USCIS issued a guidance clarifying the deadlines for filing or responding to a USCIS notice if the same falls on the weekend or a federal holiday. The application for a paper based benefit request shall be accepted by the authorities even if it is received by the end of the next business day. In case of mailing a request for evidence or a notice of intent to deny, revoke, rescind or terminate, the response will be accepted even if it is received by the end of the next business day.

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Asia Pacific

Australia

Australia-India Treaty Enables 1,800 Indian Chefs & Yoga Instructors to Receive 4-Year Visas

The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) signed between Australia and India will enable a total of 1,800 Indian chefs, yoga instructors, students and millennials to receive visas valid for four years. The treaty is also expected to enable the mutual recognition of professional qualifications between the two countries, allowing for workers to move to either country with relative ease.

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Australia

Skilled Work Regional visa (subclass 491) now open to metropolitan Melbourne applicants

The government of Australia announced the expansion of availability of Skilled Work Regional visas (subclass 491) to applicants from Melbourne. Foreign nationals living in this regions can now submit a nomination for a Registration of Interest for the Skilled Work Regional visa. The eligibility criteria include a minimum of 3-year residency in Victoria while working or studying.

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Egypt

Egypt announces 5-year visit visas

Egyptian authorities have launched a new multiple-entry visa with a validity of 5 years which will be issued for a fees of US\$700. The measure was taken in order to boost tourism in the country. Nationals from turkey, Algeria and Morocco will also be able to obtain urgent entry visas from various ports and airports in Egypt.

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Japan

Japan to issue Certificates of Eligibility electronically

Japanese authorities announced the decision to begin issuing Certificates of Eligibility (COE) electronically to foreign nationals. Applicants who filed their applications or completed their user registration online before visiting a regional Immigration Services Bureau office are now eligible to receive their COE online, via e-mail.

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Mongolia

Mongolia extends visa-free travel to 34 countries

The government of Mongolia temporarily extended the eligibility for visa free travel up to 31 December 2025 to an additional 34 countries, including Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The country already permanently offers visa free travel to 27 other countries, including US, Canada, Singapore and turkey.

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South Korea

22 countries to be exempted from K-ETA

The South Korean government announced their decision to temporarily exempt 22 countries from the K-ETA requirement. For the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023, travelers from Australia, Singapore, Canada, amongst others, will not be required to apply for the K-ETA before visiting to the country. The measure was taken to increase tourism to the country, in relation to the Visit Korea Year (2023-2024).

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Thailand

Thailand reverts back to 30-day entry rule for visa-free arrivals

The government of Thailand announced a retraction of the 45-day visa exemption for nationals of several eligible countries. The nation will go back to the original 30-day period for visa exemptions for foreign arrivals. However, those arriving in Thailand without obtaining a visa can extend their 30-day entry stamp for a period of additional 30 days.

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Europe and Africa

Denmark

Denmark extends deadline for Brits to apply for residence permits until end of 2023

Danish authorities extended the deadline for British nationals to submit their applications for right of residency. The new deadline has been extended to the end of December 2023. However, applications where no reasonable grounds can be found for submitting them late shall be put on hold.

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Denmark

Denmark amends its aliens act in a bid to lure more foreign workers & students

The government of Denmark approved several changes in the country's Aliens Act, making it easier for foreign workers and students to move to the country. Businesses will now be allowed to apply for certification to the Fast Track scheme, enabling them to bring foreign workers to the country faster through the simplified procedures. The Positive List for People with a Higher Education has also been extended, allowing for a broader range of applicants.

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Germany

German cabinet approves changes to the skilled immigration act in a bid to attract more foreign workers

German authorities have introduced an updated version of the Skilled Immigration Act, allowing for a higher number of third country citizens to come to the country easily for employment. The changes include broader availability of the EU Blue Card to specialists with a university degree, abolition of recognition procedures for professional qualifications and the introduction of a new Job Seeker visa for people wishing to visit the country to scout for a job in their field, amongst other changes.

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Romania

Romanian president signs bill providing tax benefits for digital nomads

The government of Romania has introduced a new bill providing digital nomads with several tax incentives and benefits. Digital nomads would no longer be required to contribute to social security, wage taxes or social health insurance in the country. In order to be eligible for the benefit, the digital nomad would have to have been residing in the country for 183 days within 12 consecutive months.

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