

# GMS Flash Alert

## Immigration Edition

2023-220 | November 20, 2023



## European Union – Digital Visa Procedures Adopted

On 13 November 2023, the Council of the European Union (EU) adopted rules to digitalise visa procedures.<sup>1</sup> (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2023-125](#), 21 June 2023.) This means, among other things, that a single EU visa application platform will be created and in-person appearance at a consulate will be necessary only for first-time applicants.

The two regulations containing new rules about the digitalisation of visa procedures will enter into force on the 20<sup>th</sup> day after publication of the regulations in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

The date of publication of the new rules will be decided when technical work on the visa platform and the digital visa have been concluded.

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### WHY THIS MATTERS

The creation of a website for applications for Schengen visas will create a single access point for visa applicants to file their applications, upload travel and other supporting documentation, and pay visa fees. In-person appearances in a consulate will be necessary only for first-time applicants, people whose biometric data are no longer valid, and people with new travel documents.

The current visa sticker will be replaced with a cryptographically signed barcode.

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### Background

Recent migration and security challenges have changed the context of the EU's visa policy. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down visa operations considerably calling for more efficient and modernised procedures for visa applications.

Applications for a visa can entail an often administratively burdensome process; it is paper-based, and applicants are required to travel to submit their applications at consulates and collect their visas afterwards, which can be inconvenient and time-consuming, as well as costly.

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## MEIJBURG & CO. INSIGHTS

In the field of immigration, the EU has introduced a digital system for pre-approval of passengers travelling to the EU from visa-exempted non-EU countries, which is called “ETIAS.” ETIAS will apply from 2024. (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2023-119](#), 24 January 2023.)

The EU has also introduced e-gates that will automatically record border crossings into and out of the EU called the “EES system.” EES is expected to be operational later in 2023. (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2023-119](#), 24 January 2023.)

Legislation for the digitalisation of application systems for visas is now in place, so it is only a question of when this project can be technically executed for the rules to be implemented.

Digitalisation of different procedures is expected to diminish administrative burdens and may lower costs of administration; but also it could inevitably increase requirements for accuracy and timeliness of information and documents submitted to the authorities. Digitalisation is expected to allow the relevant authorities to perform checks and assessments more efficiently than is the case today with paper-based processes.

Employers should be aware of and keep an eye on the progress of digital transformation in the EU that is relevant to cross-border work.

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## FOOTNOTE:

1 European Council: [Council gives green light to the digitalisation of the visa procedure](#), 13 November 2023.

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## **2023 KPMG Global Assignment Policies and Practices Survey Report.**

We are pleased to share the **new 2023 KPMG Global Assignment Policies and Practices Survey Report**. For global-mobility leaders of multinational organisations, benchmarking their global-mobility policies and practices against those of other global organisations can be a powerful tool for reflecting on their current approach and preparing their talent-mobility program for the future. Each year we conduct an ongoing survey of global-mobility policies and practices of multinational organisations to help shed light on how global-mobility programs are continually evolving, across a number of areas including: Talent-mobility policy trends and practices, immigration compliance, assignment-management technology/data and analytics, automation and robotics. Access the [2023 KPMG Global Assignment Policies and Practices Survey Report](#).

## Contact us

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*\* Please note the KPMG International member firm in the United States does not provide immigration or labour law services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

**The information contained in this newsletter was submitted by the KPMG International member firm in the Netherlands.**

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