



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

2024-039 | February 20, 2024

Finland – Eastern Border to Remain Closed

In response to ongoing concerns about facilitated illegal entries into Finland, the Finnish government has agreed to extend the closure of Finland's eastern border shared with Russia. Any border-crossing point over land between Finland and Russia will remain closed until 14 April 2024.¹

The decision to close Finland's eastern border stems from a significant rise in illegal entries. This closure is essential to tackle the growing threat posed by these illegal entries, reinforcing public safety and national security. The decision to keep the eastern border closed aligns with the Finnish government's previous agreement to close the southeastern border of Finland that came into force last November 2023.² (For prior coverage, see [GMS Flash Alert 2023-221](#), 21 November 2023.)

WHY THIS MATTERS

The closure of the border-crossing points significantly impacts the movement of employees and individuals reliant on these routes, particularly affecting those engaged in cross-border activities or commuting between Finland and Russia. Employees accustomed to using the now-closed border points will need to adapt to alternative ways of commuting between the countries, potentially altering their travel logistics and routines. Employers should be communicating the travel restrictions to employees and other concerned parties and work in concert to explore alternate arrangements.

The closure of the eastern border will have an impact on all commercial traffic trying to cross from Finland to Russia as it will not be possible for the period of time that the decision is in place.³

Finland's Eastern Border and Crossing Restrictions

The Finnish border control (Rajavartiolaitos) has informed that each land border-crossing point will be closed until 14 April 2024. Crossing points in Imatra, Kuusamo, Niirala, Nuijamaa, Raja-Jooseppi, Salla, Vaalimaa, and Vartius will all be closed during the period.⁴

The only crossing points that will remain open are for air and water transportation. Exiting Finland is not affected by the decision as everyone holds the right to leave Finland via open border-crossing points.⁵

The submission of applications for international protection is concentrated at open border-crossing points for air and water traffic.

This decision will extend the total closure of the eastern border by two months.

KPMG INSIGHTS

Why Restrictions?

One reason for the decision given by the Finnish government is that under the current circumstances, it was deemed that Finland shall take necessary and proportionate measures to control migration so as to reduce any serious threat to Finland's national security and public order. According to the Minister of Interior of Finland, Mari Rantanen, there are currently hundreds (if not thousands) of migrants who are staying close to the Finnish border on the Russian side waiting for a chance to cross into Finland.⁶

Next Steps?

The Finnish government has been showing signs of enacting stricter policies toward Russia, which may affect the eastern border being closed for a fixed period possibly in the future. A future decision could be based on the Finnish Border Guard Act (*Rajavartiolaki*) that allows the government to decide whether to close border-crossing points for a fixed period or until further notice in light of public health, public order, and/or national security concerns.⁷

The KPMG International member firm in Finland continues to monitor this matter and will inform readers of *GMS Flash Alert* of any important developments.

For additional information or specific inquiries related to these border-control measures, it is advisable to consult with qualified immigration counsel or a member of the immigration team with KPMG in Finland (see the Contacts section).

FOOTNOTES:

1 (In English) Ministry of the Interior / Sisäministeriö, *Finland's eastern border to remain closed*.

<https://intermin.fi/en/-/finland-s-eastern-border-to-remain-closed-1>.

2 (In English) Ministry of the Interior / Sisäministeriö, *Government decides to close the border in Southeast Finland*.

<https://intermin.fi/en/-/10616/government-decides-to-close-the-border-in-southeast-finland>.

3 (In English) The Finnish Border Guard / Rajavartiolaitos. *Restrictions at the border crossing points on the eastern border of Finland*. <https://raja.fi/en/restrictions-at-the-border-crossing-points-on-the-eastern-border-of-finland>.

4 Ibid.

FOOTNOTES (cont'd):

5 Ibid.

6 (In English) Ministry of the Interior / Sisäministeriö, *Finland's eastern border to remain closed*.

<https://intermin.fi/en/-/finland-s-eastern-border-to-remain-closed-1>.

7 (In English) The Finnish Border Guard / Rajavartiolaitos. *Restrictions at the border crossing points on the eastern border of Finland*. <https://raja.fi/en/restrictions-at-the-border-crossing-points-on-the-eastern-border-of-finland>.

Contact us

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