

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Finland - Tourist Visas from Russia Limited, New Humanitarian Visa Proposed

Finland has decided to limit the issuance of short-term Schengen visas based on tourism from Russia to Finland.¹ This is to be implemented by reducing the availability of visa appointments to half and setting quotas for appointments. The changes are to be applied starting 1 September 2022.

The Finnish government has also decided to start preparing a proposal for a new type of national humanitarian visa. This visa type would not be limited to Russian citizens.² If passed, the national humanitarian visa would be a new national visa type to Finland. The application criteria for the potential visa type are not known yet.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Starting 1 September, visa appointments based on tourism will be scarcer, which should be considered by anyone planning to apply for a tourist visa from Russia to Finland.

More Details

The Finnish government discussed the restriction of tourism from Russia to Finland on 16 August 2022, and adopted a policy which will be applied starting 1 September 2022. Tourism from Russia will be limited by reducing the number of available visa appointments and setting quotas for appointments per visa type. The number of daily appointments will be reduced from approximately 1,000 to 500, out of which 100 are reserved for tourism and 400 for other categories. Finland is prepared to adjust the quotas if deemed necessary.

Finland also supports efforts to reach a common European Union (EU) policy regarding the restriction of visas available to Russians and the suspension of the visa facilitation agreement between the EU and Russia. Suspension of the

agreement would mean, for example, an increase in the visa application fee from EUR 35 to EUR 80.³ The visa facilitation agreement between the European Union and the Russian Federation has been in force since 1 June 2007.⁴

In addition to the new visa restrictions, the Finnish government announced on 16 August 2022 that it will start drafting a proposal for a national humanitarian visa.⁵ According to the Action initiative on the introduction of a humanitarian visa (*Toimenpidealoite TPA 94/2021 vp*) published on 16 November 2021, the purpose of the humanitarian visa is to help people in a particularly vulnerable position and people under a particularly high threat, by enabling them a safer journey to Finland to seek asylum. Internal refugees, people under persecution, and relatives of persons from high-risk countries already staying in Finland are mentioned as potential beneficiaries of the visa type.

According to the Action initiative, with the issued visa, applicants could travel to Finland at their own expense and seek asylum. The applicant would also cover visa and interpreter costs at his/her own expense. The visa would be valid for a limited amount of time and would not automatically lead to obtaining a residence permit. The asylum application would be processed by the Finnish Immigration Service in accordance with normal procedures.

The initiative also states that the legal prerequisites for introducing the national humanitarian visa already exist in the Finnish Aliens Act and in the EU visa regulations.⁶

KPMG NOTE

The limited number of visa appointments does not have an impact on residence permit processes from Russia to Finland.

The KPMG International member firm in Finland continues to monitor these matters closely.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release (in English) "Foreign Ministry to cut visa application appointments in Russia by half" (16.8.2022) at: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/foreign-ministry-to-cut-visa-application-appointments-in-russia-by-half> ; (in Finnish) "Ulkoministeriö rajoittaa viisumihakemusaikojen päivittäisen määrän puoleen Venäjällä" at: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/foreign-ministry-to-cut-visa-application-appointments-in-russia-by-half?languageld=fi_FI .

For reports in the press, see: J. Aaltonen, E. Saarilahti, and T.Luukka, "Haavisto: Suomi rajoittaa venäläisten turistiviisumeita kymmenes-osaan nykyisestä – Duuman edustaja: Päätös voi vaikuttaa negatiivisesti maiden suhteisiin" in *Helsingin Sanomat* (online) (16.8.2022 at: <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000009006640.html>); also see "Finland limits visas to Russians amid rush of Europe-bound tourists" in *Reuters* (online) (August 16, 2022) at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/finland-will-limit-number-visas-russians-2022-08-16/> ; also see "Here's where EU countries stand on tourist visa bans for Russians" in *Euronews* (online) (19 August 2022) at: [euronews.com/my-europe/2022/08/19/heres-where-eu-countries-stand-on-tourist-visa-bans-for-russians](https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/08/19/heres-where-eu-countries-stand-on-tourist-visa-bans-for-russians) . *Please note, that by clicking on the afore-noted links, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site, that KPMG is not affiliated or nor is KPMG endorsing its content. The use of the external site and its content may be subject to the terms of use and/or privacy policies of its owner or operator.*

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

FOOTNOTES (cont'd):

4 See (in English) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Visa facilitation agreements" at: <https://um.fi/visa-facilitation-agreements#Russian> and on the EU's Eur-Lex website [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22007A0517\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22007A0517(01)&from=EN) .

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release (in English) "Foreign Ministry to cut visa application appointments in Russia by half" (16.8.2022) at: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/foreign-ministry-to-cut-visa-application-appointments-in-russia-by-half> ; (in Finnish) "Ulkoministeriö rajoittaa viisumihakemusaikojen päivittäisen määrän puoleen Venäjällä" at: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/foreign-ministry-to-cut-visa-application-appointments-in-russia-by-half?languageId=fi_FI .

6 See (in Finnish) Parliament of Finland, Action initiative on the introduction of a humanitarian visa "Toimenpideoite TPA 94/2021 vp" at: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/EduskuntaAloite/Documents/TPA_94+2021.pdf .

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Key highlights of the 2022 KPMG Global Assignment Policies and Practices Survey will be made available later in the year.

Contact us

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