

GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

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European Union – Visa Requirement for Holders of Certain Serbian Passports Removed

On 22 July 2024, the European Council concluded the legislative process by adopting a regulation ensuring that the whole Western Balkan region is subject to the same visa regime.¹ Therefore, it decided to remove the exclusion previously applied to passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate.

Holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate will be able to travel visa-free to the [Schengen area](#).

The amended regulation will apply 20 days after its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

WHY THIS MATTERS

When implemented, this change will simplify entry requirements for employees that hold passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate in Belgrade and who travel to the Schengen area.

Background

Serbia is not a member country of the European Union (and it is not a part of the Schengen area). It applied for EU membership in 2009, and in 2012 it was deemed a candidate country. Negotiations between the EU and Serbia for enlargement are ongoing.²

Since December 2009, holders of Serbian biometric passports were exempted from the visa requirement when travelling to the Schengen area. However, one category of holders of Serbian passports was excluded from the visa requirement exemption, namely the holders of passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate in Belgrade.

The European Commission proposed in November 2023 to amend the regulation on visa exemption³ and to remove this exclusion thus enabling all citizens of the countries in the Western Balkan region to benefit from visa-free travel to the Schengen area.

MEIJBURG & CO. INSIGHTS

In the run-up to implementation, and beyond, should employers or Serbian nationals affected by the policy change have questions about how they may be impacted by, and/or how to avail of, the change, they may wish to contact their usual immigration counsel or a professional with the [KPMG Immigration network](#).

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 European Council: "[Council decides to remove visa requirement for holders of Serbian passports issued by Serbian Coordination Directorate](#)," 22 July 2024.
- 2 See the European Commission's webpage: "[Serbia: Membership status: candidate country](#)."
- 3 European Union: [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1806 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visa when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement \(codification\)](#), 28 November 2018.

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Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or the following professional with the KPMG International member firm in the Netherlands:



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