KPMG

Immigration News Highlights

2026 - 44, 03 November 2026



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.**

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Americas | Asia Pacific | Europe and Africa

Americas

Chile

Chile digitalizes Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Travel Card (ABTC) application process for business travel

Chile's National Migration Service (SERMIG) announced on 30 October 2026 the launch of a fully digital application process for the ABTC. Chilean nationals can apply for the card online through SERMIG's Digital Procedures Portal using ClaveÚnica, free of charge and without needing to complete the process in person. The digital ABTC is valid for five years and enables eligible holders to enter 18 of the other 20 APEC economies for business purposes without a visa, with maximum stays ranging from 60 to 90 days depending on the destination economy. The new digital process replaces paper-based procedures and manual document scanning with electronic submission of applications and documents, reducing processing times and administrative burden. The ABTC also provides access to priority immigration lanes at major airports and, in economies granting prior authorization, entry without the need to apply for a short-term visa.

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United States

United States expands Global Entry eligibility to citizens of Saudi Arabia

US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced on 27 October 2026 that Saudi Arabia has become an official Global Entry partner, making Saudi Arabian citizens eligible to apply for Global Entry membership. Eligible applicants will undergo vetting by both United States and Saudi Arabian authorities, including an in-person interview conducted by CBP before enrollment. Approved members can receive expedited clearance at United States airports and access Transportation Security Administration Precheck (TSA Precheck) for eligible domestic flights. Saudi Arabian applicants may also use the Trusted Traveler mobile application to apply for Trusted Traveler Programs, check membership status, schedule enrollment interviews and manage or renew memberships. Global Entry membership is valid for five years, subject to continued compliance with all program requirements.

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Asia Pacific

Australia

Australia expands biometric requirements for visa applicants residing in India

The Australian High Commission in India clarified on 29 October 2026 that expanded biometric requirements apply to most temporary and permanent visa applicants residing in India for applications lodged on or after 26 October 2026. The requirements cover applicants under visitor, student, skilled-worker and permanent-migration visa programs, but not every applicant will automatically need to provide biometrics. The Department of Home Affairs will notify applicants who are required to provide fingerprints and a facial image after they lodge a valid visa application. Applicants required to provide biometrics may need to visit one of 16 Australian Biometrics Collection Centers across India or, depending on their circumstances, may be eligible to use the Australian Immi App. Indian government officials travelling to Australia in an official representative capacity are among those exempt from the requirements. Applications lodged before 26 October 2026, and visas already granted are not affected by the expanded requirements.

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Hong Kong

Hong Kong extends visa-free stay for Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Business Travel Card (ABTC) holders

The Immigration Department announced on 30 October 2026 that the maximum visa-free period of stay in Hong Kong for eligible ABTC holders will be extended from 60 days to 90 days, effective 01 November 2026. The extension applies to ABTC holders who have obtained pre-clearance from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, while other immigration arrangements for their entry will remain unchanged. The change follows an announcement that five participating economies will extend the maximum stay for visiting ABTC holders from 60 days to 90 days to enhance the effectiveness of the scheme. ABTC holders must continue to meet applicable entry requirements, including obtaining necessary visas where required. The ABTC is normally valid for five years and allows holders with relevant pre-clearance to benefit

from visa-free stays and use special service lanes at selected control points for expedited immigration clearance.

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India

India makes Air Suvidha Self-Declaration Form mandatory for all international arrivals

The Bureau of Immigration announced on 02 November 2026 that all international passengers arriving in India must complete the Air Suvidha Self-Declaration Form before their journey amid the ongoing Ebola outbreak. The requirement applies to Indian passport holders, Overseas Citizen of India cardholders and foreign nationals, regardless of nationality or travel history. Passengers must provide personal and travel information, including passport details, flight information, first airport of entry in India and travel history for the previous 21 days. They must also disclose foreign transit stops, provide contact and address details, and complete a health declaration covering possible Ebola exposure and relevant symptoms. Passengers should submit the form before boarding their flight and keep the acknowledgement accessible during their journey. On arrival, passengers may be required to present the acknowledgement at the International Travel Health Desk, and additional screening may be conducted based on the information provided in the declaration.

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New Zealand

New Zealand announces changes to Green List residence pathways for skilled occupations

Immigration New Zealand announced on 03 November 2026 changes to the Green List that will take effect from 08 March 2027, following the introduction of new Skilled Migrant Category (SMC) pathways. Under the changes, 17 occupations will be removed from the Tier 2 Green List Work to Residence Visa pathway because they are covered by the new SMC pathways, while transitional arrangements will apply to eligible people already progressing towards residence through the existing pathway. Four special education teaching occupations will move from the Work to Residence Visa pathway to the Straight to Residence Visa pathway, allowing eligible applicants to apply directly for residence without completing two years of qualifying work in New Zealand. Green List eligibility for Sterilization Technicians will be limited to graduate and registered members of the New Zealand Sterile Sciences Association, while Career Counsellor will be removed from the Tier 1 Green List Straight to Residence Visa pathway. Employers may continue recruiting migrants in the 17 affected occupations through the Accredited Employer Work Visa, subject to relevant requirements, although the Green List settings currently applicable to these roles will no longer apply.

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New Zealand publishes estimated selection dates for Parent Resident Visa expressions of interest

Immigration New Zealand announced on 30 October 2026 that estimated queue selection dates for Parent Resident Visa expressions of interest are available, and people with an expression of interest have received information about their queue entry and estimated selection date. Approximately 90 percent of expressions of interest will be selected from the queue, while about 10 percent will be selected through regular ballot draws, meaning an expression of interest may be selected through the ballot before its estimated queue selection date. The estimated dates are intended as a guide and may change as selection rounds take place and applications progress through the system. The estimates will be updated after each

quarterly selection round, and applicants are advised to regularly check the information as their positions may change. Applicants whose expression of interest is selected and who receive an invitation to apply will have four months to submit their residence application.

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Philippines

Philippines simplifies Alien Employment Permit application process and shortens processing time

The Department of Labor and Employment announced on 28 October 2026 measures to simplify the Alien Employment Permit application process under Department Order No. 248-C, Series of 2026. The measures reduce documentary requirements by removing the need to submit certain permits, licenses and proof of application from government agencies when filing, while compliance with applicable laws remains mandatory. The requirement for applicants to pay for broadsheet publication of Labor Market Test notices has also been discontinued, with notices instead permitted through designated government channels. The standard processing period for permit applications is reduced from 15 to 10 working days, with a one-time 10-day extension allowing a maximum processing period of 20 working days. Employers may process applications through their own human resources officers or personnel, and application fees will be collected only after approval following technical evaluation. The order will take effect 15 days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

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United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates announces tourist visa applications through Visit Dubai from November 2026

The General Directorate of Identity and Foreigners Affairs – Dubai (GDRFA Dubai), Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) and Digital Dubai announced on 01 November 2026 new initiatives to enhance visitor access and the tourism experience in Dubai. During November 2026, Visit Dubai, the city's official tourism website, will introduce the option to apply for single-entry and multiple-entry tourist visas as part of the Shared Digital Channels Initiative. The platform will integrate tourist visa applications with other visitor information and services through a single digital channel, reducing the need to navigate multiple websites, applications or entities. GDRFA Dubai will remain responsible for assessing visa applications and issuing visas, while further service details will be announced in due course. The initiatives also include the Dubai Access Club, an invitation-only membership program that will provide repeat visitors with exclusive experiences, services and benefits.

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Europe and Africa

Austria

Austria opens Working Holiday Programme to Indian citizens aged 18 to 30

The Austrian government announced on 02 November 2026 that Indian citizens aged 18 to 30 can apply for Austria's Working Holiday Programme. The program allows participants to travel across Austria while taking up limited employment and accessing educational opportunities

during their stay. It is primarily intended as a cultural and tourism opportunity, with employment and formal training serving as additional benefits rather than the main purpose of the program. Austria has Working Holiday Programme agreements with 12 countries and territories, including India, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Israel, the United States, Canada, Argentina and Chile. Indian citizens interested in the program should contact the nearest Austrian embassy or consulate in India to begin the application process and check applicable visa conditions and documentation requirements. Austrian authorities will make the final decision on eligibility, and meeting the age and nationality requirements does not automatically guarantee approval.

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Ireland

Ireland advises non-EEA nationals to renew expiring residence permits ahead of holiday travel

Immigration Service Delivery announced on 29 October 2026 that non-EEA nationals whose Irish Residence Permit cards will expire before or during planned international travel over the holiday period should submit renewal applications online as soon as possible. The current processing time for renewal applications is six to nine weeks, with delivery of a new card potentially taking a further two weeks after the renewal is completed. An in-date residence permit card may be required for travel to and from Ireland. The Registration Office cannot guarantee that applications submitted close to planned travel will be processed and the new card delivered in time. Applicants are advised not to rely on re-entry visas, which will generally be considered only where appointments are available, the applicant is awaiting delivery of the new card and there is a genuine emergency need. The validity period of a renewed permission will continue to be based on the expiry date of the existing residence permit card, regardless of when the application is submitted or processed.

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Switzerland

Switzerland approves adoption of new EU Return Regulation for irregularly residing third-country nationals

The Swiss Federal Council announced on 28 October 2026 that it approved the new EU Return Regulation, subject to national approval. The regulation standardizes and accelerates procedures for the compulsory and voluntary return of third-country nationals residing irregularly in the Schengen Area. It allows Schengen states to recognize removal orders issued by other Schengen states and provides for forced transfers to third countries under specified conditions, including compliance with human rights and the principle of non-refoulement. The regulation also allows key elements of removal orders to be recorded in the Schengen Information System and extends the maximum duration of administrative detention from six to 12 months, with possible extensions of up to 24 months. Entry bans can generally be issued for up to 10 years and, under certain conditions, for longer periods. Schengen states will also be required to provide return counselling and ensure access to return assistance programs. The Federal Council will launch a consultation on the required legislative amendments and approval of the new regulation at the end of January 2027.

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United Kingdom

United Kingdom announces new earned settlement rules for migrants

The Home Office announced on 02 November 2026 new earned settlement rules under which the time migrants must wait for settlement will depend on their contribution and character. The reforms introduce a default settlement period of 10 years, while the highest earners may qualify after three years and individuals earning more than GBP50,271 and certain public service workers may qualify after five years. Applicants will need to meet four mandatory conditions covering criminal records, English language proficiency, debt owed to the taxpayer and sustained National Insurance contributions. The rules also establish different settlement periods for refugees, care workers and individuals who have breached immigration rules or entered the country through clandestine means. Existing settled status will not be removed, while family members of British citizens, Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) and members of the armed forces will retain their current settlement pathways.

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