



# Immigration News Highlights

2022-51, 20 December 2022



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.](#)

[Americas](#)

[Asia Pacific](#)

[Europe and Africa](#)



## Americas

### United States

#### Updated wage determination processing times posted

The United States Labour Department posted renewed processing timeframes for permanent labor certification (PERM) applications and ongoing wage determination (PWD) requests. For PERM, the average adjudication duration is 249 days, and audit review duration is 368 days.

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### United States

#### January Visa Bulletin released

The US State Department posted the January Visa Bulletin. China EB-1 and India EB-1 cutoffs for employment-based priority-date will no longer be current, and will be moved to 1 February 2022. All other countries under EB-1 will remain current. China EB-2 will remain at 8 June 2019, and India EB-2 will remain at 8 October 2011. All other countries under EB-2 will remain at 1 November 2022. China EB-3 will remain at 1 August 2018, whereas India EB-3 will remain at 8 October 2011. All other countries under EB-3 will remain current.

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### United States

### [Non-emergency consular operations reduced at various posts across China](#)

The US State Department announced the reduction of non-emergency consular operations across US Embassies in China due to operational difficulties caused by the recent surge of COVID 19 infections in the country. Only the US Consulates in Guangzhou, Shenyang and Wuhan shall stay operational for emergency services until further notice.

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### **United States**

#### [Information provided for nonimmigrant workers post termination of employment](#)

The USCIS provided information for non-immigration workers whose employment was terminated, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. The guidance provides details on the available 60-day grace period, options to change or adjust their non-immigrant status, change their employer, applications qualifying for the expedited criteria and information regarding departure from the US.

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### **United States**

#### [Additional availability of H-2B visas announced for FY2023](#)

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Labour (DOL) announced the availability of supplementary H-2B temporary nonagricultural worker visas for FY2023 through a temporary final rule. This will be in addition to the 66,000 cap-subject HB-2 visas available usually every year.

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### **United States**

#### [USCIS announces trial for updates to the naturalization test](#)

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced their plans of conducting a trial of proposed updates to the currently followed naturalization test. The Department wishes to test an updated civics and English-speaking component of the test via the trial.

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## **Asia Pacific**

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### **Hong Kong**

#### [Rules for select visa categories relaxed](#)

Hong Kong immigration authorities announced the relaxation of rules for the General Employment Policy (GEP) and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMP) visa programs. Applicants meeting certain prescribed criteria will no longer be required

to provide proof of local recruitment advertisements, previous work experience or academic credentials.

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## New Zealand

### Immigration policy updates implemented

The government of New Zealand implemented various immigration policy changes. Amongst other updates, employer accreditations will be automatically extended for 12 months if the application was submitted by 4 July 2023. This expansion will be deferred till 2024. Holders of a post study work visa will issued a 12 month open work visa if they were unable to enter New Zealand during the COVID 19 pandemic, provided they are not already residing in New Zealand on another visa.

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## South Korea

### Korea to retain more skilled foreign workers with visa status upgrade

South Korea announced plans of doubling the skilled foreign worker intake for 2023 to deal with the ongoing workforce shortage faced at its major business hubs due to falling birth rates and an aging population. Upto 5,000 migrants possessing 5 years of relevant Korean work experience will be allowed to extend their visa status and gain citizenship. The current cap for the same was set at 2,000 foreign workers.

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## United Arab Emirates

### UAE to remove visa stamping measure from December 12

The Emirati government announced their decision to discontinue issuing UAE Residence Visa stamps on Residence Visas received in Dubai. Instead, foreigners will be issued an Emirates Identity Card, serving as their proof of residency in Dubai. This card will have to be provided as residency proof in order to reenter the country.

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## Europe and Africa

## Croatia

### Croatia will be joining the Schengen zone

1 January 2023 onwards, Croatia will be added to the Schengen area. This will allow visa free travel for Croatian nationals to other Schengen area countries. Permitted business activities will be determined by Croatian authorities under the Schengen "C" visa type for third country applicants.

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## Denmark

### [Denmark increases monthly allowance rates for au pairs from 1 January 2023](#)

Danish authorities announced the increase of monthly allowance rate granted to au pairs hosted by Danish families. The new rate is set at DKK 4,700 (EUR 632). The one-time payment required to be made by hosting families to the government for covering the expenses of offering Danish lessons has also been increased from EUR 2,449 TO EUR 2,515.

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### **France**

#### [France to end visa restrictions with Morocco](#)

The French government announced the end of visa restrictions for residents of Morocco. The countries will re-establish consular relations and France will no longer limit the number of visas issued to Moroccan nationals.

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### **Gambia**

#### [Gambia lifts COVID-related entry restrictions](#)

The government of Gambia announced the lifting of all COVID related entry restrictions for foreign arrivals. Travelers will no longer be required to provide proof of vaccination and proof of negative PCR tests.

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### **Ireland**

#### [Ireland permits foreigners to travel with expired residence permits due to processing delays until 31 January](#)

Irish authorities will be permitting foreign nationals with expired residence permits and pending renewal applications to continue travelling with such permits, owing to application processing delays. The rule shall be applicable for travel between the period of 9 December 2022 to 31 January 2023.

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### **Spain**

#### [Spain starts to automatically update EU digital covid certificate set to expire before 30 June 2023](#)

The government of Spain has started the process of automatically updating all EU Digital COVID Certificates issued by the Ministry of Health, and are set to expire before 30 June 2023. Those with certificates not qualifying for the auto-update can apply for the same externally through the website of the Ministry of Health.

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### **Switzerland**

#### [Third-country nationals can submit VAT returns & apply for work permits on EasyGov portal](#)

Swiss authorities announced that third country nationals will now be permitted to submit their VAT returns and apply for work permits via the EasyGov portal. This measure has been introduced as a bid to simplify procedures for the same.

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