



Immigration News Highlights

2023-32, 8 August 2023



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

Canada

Canada and Iceland sign youth mobility arrangement

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Iceland has announced the establishment of a new Youth Mobility Arrangement between Canada and Iceland. This arrangement allows young individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 from both countries to work and travel in each other's country for a period of up to 12 months through programs like International Experience Canada or the Icelandic equivalent.

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Canada

Canada announces the first-ever Express Entry invitations for newcomers with experience in the trades

The Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship of Canada announced changes to Express Entry through category-based selection. The Express Entry system in Canada has been customized to offer a simplified and efficient route for individuals with specialized skills in critical fields.

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United States

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issues guidance for stateless noncitizens in the US

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), released updated guidelines to support stateless individuals residing in the US who are seeking immigration benefits or have submitted various requests to the USCIS.

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United States

USCIS updates receipts process for Form I-129S

USCIS has announced modifications to the process of issuing receipts for L-1 nonimmigrant intracompany transferees (including executives, managers, or specialized knowledge professionals) who are covered under a previously approved blanket L petition.

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Asia Pacific

China

China relaxes business visa rules in bid to further open borders

The Government of China is making changes to its business visa rules to facilitate easier entry for foreign business travelers and promote economic growth and international cooperation. The changes include allowing travelers to upgrade their single entry visa to multiple entry visas valid for up to three years.

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India

F1 visa slots open in India, enabling Indians to seek jobs in the US

The government of India announced that several slots for F1 visa have been opened at several consulates for students wishing to pursue their Masters in US. The US granted over 411,000 F-1 visas in 2022, representing a 15 percent growth from the previous year, which was the largest non-pandemic increase since 2010.

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Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan allocates 550 scholarships for international students

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education announced on 2 August 2023, that Kazakhstan is offering 550 scholarship program grants to foreign nationals. This includes 490 grants at the undergraduate level, 50 at the master's level, and 10 PhD grants.

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Kuwait

[Visit Visas could return under new conditions](#)

The Government of Kuwait announced that Ministry of Interior plans to introduce new regulations for family visas by the end of the year. These visas have been on hold for more than a year because of ministry orders to reassess and revamp the issuance procedures. The new systems in place aim to prevent visitors from exceeding their visa duration.

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Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Arabia expands visitor e-Visa to eight additional countries](#)

The Government of Saudi Arabia announced that it has expanded its visitor e-visa program to include citizens from eight newly eligible countries: Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, South Africa, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This expansion allows travelers from these countries to apply for a visitor e-visa for leisure, business, and religious travel, specifically for Umrah pilgrimage. The e-visa is valid for one year, grants multiple entries, and allows for a stay of up to 90 days.

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Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Arabia launches visa-free scheme for UK, Ireland nationals](#)

The Government of Saudi Arabia has officially initiated a unique e-visa waiver program that is applicable to all citizens of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. This e-visa waiver allows the applicant a single entry into Saudi Arabia for a duration of up to six months. Nevertheless, the traveler is required to submit a waiver application, which must be filed between three months and at least 48 hours prior to entering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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South Korea

[South Korea improves visa procedures for Philippine market](#)

The government of South Korea is set to inaugurate a Korea Visa Application Center (KVAC) in Taguig, Philippines on 14 August 2023. This development is anticipated to stimulate outbound travel to South Korea, a location that was previously a top choice for Filipino travelers.

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Europe and Africa

Czech Republic

Czech-language exam required for permanent residency will cost more

The Czech Interior Ministry announced that it will stop providing vouchers or subsidies for the language exam and will no longer reimburse them. If approved by both the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, this change is expected to come into effect starting from 1 January 2024. Furthermore, the cost of taking the exam will increase from CZK2500 to CZK3200.

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Greece

Greece's Golden Visa: minimum investment doubled for foreign investors

The government of Greece announced that the Golden Visa Program now requires wealthy foreign nationals to invest a higher amount to acquire residency in several parts of the country. Foreign investors are now required to invest a total of EUR500,000 instead of EUR250,000 in order to acquire residency through the Golden Visa Program in several parts of Greece.

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Hungary

US tightens visa-free rules for Hungarians due to safety concerns

The US government has announced that it will be implementing stricter travel rules for all Hungarian passport holders. The decision to tighten these rules has been made due to concerns that some individuals have fraudulently obtained Hungarian passports.

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Ireland

Ireland granted over 18,000 employment permits in first seven months of 2023

Authorities in Ireland granted a total of 18,367 employment permits were granted in the first seven months of this year. As of 1 January 2023, the salary threshold for the program has been amended to align with the salary requirement for the General Employment Permit.

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Israel

Israel to include Gaza Americans in US visa waiver trial

Israeli authorities announced that they intend to simplify travel procedures for American Palestinians residing in the Gaza Strip. Starting from mid-September, these individuals will have the ability to enter Israel from Gaza using a three-month tourist visa and depart from the country through the Ben-Gurion International Airport.

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Lithuania

Lithuania adopts new fees for passport, identity card & residence permit services

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lithuania declared that new fees for migration services have been approved in the latest government meeting. The services that will be affected by the fee increase include the issuance and exchange of Lithuanian passports, identity cards, residence permits for foreigners, and other related documents.

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Portugal

Portugal offers salary of EUR2800 to Brazilian doctors in attempt to boost skilled worker immigration

The Portuguese authorities have announced that they are now offering a gross salary of €2,863 to doctors from Brazil to address the ongoing shortages in the healthcare sector. This increased salary is intended to attract skilled workers to the country.

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Switzerland

Switzerland stops accepting Schengen visa applications from Indian tour groups until October

The Swiss embassy in New Delhi announced that it will not be accepting new Schengen visa applications for Indian tour groups until October. This decision has been made due to the large number of applications that still need to be processed by the embassy.

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Thomas Wolf
Head of KPMG's Global
Immigration Network
T: +49 30 530 199-300
E: twolf@kpmg-law.com

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