



Immigration News Highlights

2024-15, 9 April 2024



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](#)

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Americas

Brazil

Brazil to impose visas on citizens of US, Australia & Canada

Brazilian authorities have announced that starting 10 April 2024, citizens of Australia, Canada, and the US would require visas to enter Brazil. eVisas shall be available upon arrival, which shall be valid for a period of 90 days, extendable to 180 days annually.

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Canada

Canada hikes permanent residency fees by 12 per cent

The government of Canada has announced an increase in permanent residence application fees, from CAD515 to CAD575, enforceable from 30 April 2024. Dependent children of applicants will be exempt to reduce financial burden on families. Some individuals, such as sponsored children, will not be affected by the fee increase.

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Canada

Canada sets limits on study permit applications for 2024

Canadian authorities announced a national cap on study permit applications in 2024 in order to regulate the number of international students. The target is set at 485,000 approved permits, with a cap of 606,000 applications received, allowing for extensions and variations. Some groups of international students, like those in primary and secondary schools, as well as those pursuing master's or doctoral degrees, are not subject to the limit.

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El Salvador

El Salvador to offer 5,000 free passports to highly skilled workers

The government of El Salvador announced their plans to grant 5,000 free passports to skilled individuals, investing US\$5 billion in the passport program. Recipients will gain citizenship rights and support for relocation. This initiative has been taken with an aim to attract diverse talent for innovation and progress in the country.

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United States

USCIS increases automatic extension of certain employment authorization documents to improve access to work permits

The USCIS introduced a temporary final rule extending certain employment authorization documents' (EAD) automatic extension from 180 days to 540 days. This aims to prevent work disruptions for noncitizens awaiting EAD renewals, supporting US employers and the economy.

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United States

USCIS announces new guidance on Form I-693 validity period

USCIS announced that Form I-693, completed by a civil surgeon on or after 1 November 2023, will not expire and can be used indefinitely to prove an applicant's health status. Officers may request for updated forms if needed. Prior policies apply to forms completed before 1 November 2023.

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Asia Pacific

Australia



[Australia eases criteria for skilled work regional visa \(Subclass 491\)](#)

Australian authorities announced a reduction in the minimum work experience requirement for the subclass 491 visa (Skilled Work Regional) Pathway 1, reduced from 12 to 6 months, making it easier to obtain permanent residency in Australia. This change aims to increase accessibility for skilled workers in regional areas, particularly in New South Wales.

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Japan

[Japan launches new e-visa system](#)

The government of Japan launched a new e-Visa system, offering 90-day stays with a single entry, focusing on travelers with ordinary passports. This streamlined process is now open to nationals from different countries, facilitating short-term tourism. Travelers would be required to complete online applications, book appointments, and present an electronic visa issuance notice at the airport.

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New Zealand

[New Zealand implements changes to the employment visa program](#)

The government of New Zealand announced changes to the country's employment visa program, aiming to attract higher-skilled workers. The changes set renewed English language requirements, and limit stays for lower-skilled roles. Employers would also be required to consult with Work and Income for level 4 and 5 positions.

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Europe and Africa

Bulgaria

[Bulgaria applies new visa rules since becoming a Schengen country](#)

The government of Bulgaria implemented new visa rules upon joining the Schengen Area on 31 March 2024. Travelers with short-term visas issued before 31 March 2024 can enter Bulgaria, Romania, and Cyprus, but not other Schengen countries. Third-country nationals can apply for Bulgarian visas in 60 locations across nine countries.

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Greece

[Greece's Golden Visa will allow property purchases under old rules until 30 August 2024](#)

Greek authorities have confirmed that investors can avail Greece's Golden Visa Program until 30 August 2024. A transition period shall allow for finalization of investments by 31 December 2024. New rules for the Golden Visa mandate owning property valued at at least EUR800,000 in specific areas for a five-year residence permit.

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Greece

[Greek islands launch special visa program for Turkish tourists](#)

The government of Greece introduced a special visa scheme for Turkish citizens to visit nearby Greek Islands, applicable from 1 April 2024. Visas shall cost EUR60 at designated ports, allowing a seven-day stay with single entry, exclusive to Greece.

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Ireland

[Ireland announces changes in residence permit procedures in 3 of its counties](#)

Irish authorities announced that starting next month, the Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) will handle initial registrations and renewals of Irish residence permits in Meath, Kildare, and Wicklow. Residents would be required to register at the Burgh Quay office in Dublin, with appointments arranged via Freephone by sharing passport details and an email.

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Morocco

[Morocco no longer accepting 24-hour Spanish visas issued for Ceuta & Melilla](#)

Moroccan authorities shall no longer be accepting 24-hour visas issued by Spanish consulates in Morocco for entry into Ceuta and Melilla. This change, implemented two years after the visa's introduction, shall impact cross-border workers who relied on it for enclave access.

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Portugal

[Brazilians can now obtain Portuguese citizenship faster thanks to new law](#)

The government of Portugal confirmed that foreigners that have been residing in the country for five years can now seek Portuguese citizenship. The time from expressing interest to authorization will be considered as legal residency. This change is expected to benefit Brazilians, the largest foreign nationality group in Portugal.

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Turkey

[Turkey enforces visa requirement for Tajikistan citizens](#)

The government of Turkey announced that Tajikistan nationals traveling to Turkey with regular foreign passports must now obtain visas beforehand. The restriction shall be imposed from 20 April 2024. It is unclear whether the visas can be acquired upon arrival or through embassies.

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