



# Immigration News Highlights

Issue 04 – 25 January 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.



## Americas

### Brazil

#### **[Brazil outlines visa rules for digital nomads](#)**

Brazil's National Immigration Council, of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security intends to grant temporary visas and residence permits for immigrants with no formal employment registered in the country. The permit will allow these immigrants to work for a foreign employer up to one year. The permit can be renewed for an additional year. [Read more.](#)

### Canada

#### **[Canada pausing intake of highly skilled immigrant workers amid heavy backlog](#)**

Canada plans to pause new invitations for high-skilled foreign workers because of already existing backlogs and inability of the immigration department to process all the applications. The application time for processing these applications is expected to rise to 36 months in 2022. [Read more](#)

### US

#### **[Announcement of F/M/J Processing Posts for Applicants Resident in Russia](#)**

The US State Department has advised Russian student visa and academic exchange applicants under the F, M, and J categories to file their applicants at US missions in Kazakhstan and Serbia due to limited operations in Russia. [Read more](#)

### US

#### **[Update to the Department of Homeland Security STEM Designated Degree Program List](#)**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has added 22 new qualifying fields of study to its STEM Designated Degree Program List. The government uses this List to determine F-1 students' eligibility for the 24-month extension of their post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), based on their science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree. [Read more](#)

### US

#### **[State Department exempts some immigrant visa applicants denied under Trump-era bans from paying visa fees](#)**

The State Department issued a final rule exempting visa fees for some immigrant visa applicants whose applications were denied under Trump-era entry bans. Applicants who were denied immigration visa on or between 8 December 2017, and 19 January 2020, solely because of Trump era policies, can reapply for their visa without paying the normal application and affidavit of support fees. [Read more](#)

### US

#### **[USCIS Updates Guidance on National Interest Waivers](#)**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services updated the guidance on adjudicating requests for "National Interest Waivers" regarding job offer and labor certification requirements for professionals and individuals holding certain advanced degrees. USCIS is clarifying how the national interest waiver

can be used by STEM graduates and entrepreneurs, as well as the significance of letters from governmental and quasi-governmental entities. [Read more](#)

US

**[USCIS Provides Clarifying Guidance for O-1 Petitions with a Focus on STEM Fields](#)**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services issued a policy guidance to clarify the evaluation process to determine eligibility for O-1A nonimmigrants of extraordinary ability, especially for individuals in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) fields. The guide provides the process on how USCIS determines whether an O-1 beneficiary's prospective work is within their area of extraordinary ability or achievement. [Read more](#)

US

**[FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Actions to Attract STEM Talent and Strengthen our Economy and Competitiveness](#)**

The White House announced a series of measures to attract STEM talent into the country. The measures included addition of 22 new fields to the STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) program, introduction of an exchange-based program, guidance on processing J-1 visas, etc. The measures aim to remove barriers to legal immigration and promote educational exchange. [Read more](#)



**Asia Pacific**

Australia

**[Temporary changes to visa work conditions for Students and Working Holiday Makers](#)**

The Australian Government is providing an incentive for Student and Working Holiday Maker visa holders to return to Australia to address the labor shortage problem arising due to the pandemic. A refund of the visa application charge (VAC) will be provided to Student visa holders who travel to Australia between 19 January 2022 and 19 March 2022, and to Working Holiday Maker visa holders who travel to Australia between 19 January 2022 and 19 April 2022. [Read more](#)

India

**[COVID-19: Deadline for reissued OCI cards extended](#)**

The Indian government has extended the deadline for those needing to obtain reissued Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards. OCI card holders who turned 20 and have an Indian passport must have their OCI card reissued. Individuals who currently have an OCI card have until 31 December 2022 to obtain reissued OCI card. Further, OCI card holders do not need to carry their passports while arriving in India. [Read more](#)

Kuwait

**[Kuwait Justice Mins: Work permits granted for expats aged 60](#)**

Kuwait will recommence issuing work permits for expatriates who are 60 years old and older. Expatriates who are 60 or above who hold a high school degree, or a lower educational degree can obtain the permit which will be issued for KD250 (\$826). Workers must have full health insurance from one of the Bursa Kuwait-listed insurance companies. [Read more](#)

Saudi Arabia

**[Saudi Arabia changes visa procedures for foreign truck drivers](#)**

Foreign truck drivers must now obtain an entry visa to Saudi Arabia through the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Sultanate of Oman instead of from the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). [Read more](#)

Thailand

**[Cabinet approves visa changes to woo wealthy foreigners](#)**

Thai cabinet approved visa changes intended to attract affluent foreigner to increase investment in the country and boost the economy. The visa will be valid for five years allowing the immigrants to seek employment opportunities in Thailand. [Read more](#)

Vietnam

**[Vietnam further eases entry rules for some foreign travelers](#)**

Foreigners holding permanent or temporary residence cards, visas and visa exemptions may enter Vietnam without a prior approval from the government authorities or undergoing pre-clearance procedures. [Read more](#)



### Austria

#### **[Austria to Shorten Vaccination Certificates' Validity to 180 Days from February 1](#)**

The Austrian authorities announced that they will shorten the validity of vaccination passes to 180 days to prove their '2-G rule' starting from 1 February 2022. Travelers who have taken their vaccines within 270 days from arrival can't meet the '2-G rule' and thus, will be subject to additional restrictions like pre-entry RT-PCR test. [Read more](#)

### Austria

#### **[Austria Increases EU Blue Card Salary Requirements for 2022](#)**

Austria has increased the minimum salary by 1.5 times from EUR 65,579 to EUR 66,593 that an employer in Austria must pay a third-country national for them to obtain an Austrian EU Blue Card. Other criteria include having a university degree, a job offer, and a labor market test, which shows that there is no equally qualified Austrian jobseeker registered with the Public Employment Service (AMS) to work on the job offered. [Read more](#)

### Austria

#### **[Austria Has Removed UK, the Netherlands, Denmark & Norway From List of Virus Variant Countries Today](#)**

From 24 January 2022, travelers from the UK, Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway are subject to milder entry restrictions while entering Austria. Citizens from these countries are not subject to quarantine rules if they have received the third booster jab or have recovered from the virus within the past 180 days. All passengers are still required to present a negative test taken at most 48 hours before their arrival in Austria. [Read more](#)

### Belgium

#### **[Belgium to Remove Non-essential Travel Ban on April 19](#)**

The Belgian authorities will lift the non-essential travel ban from 19 April 2022. From this date, nationals of Belgium will no longer be subject to the travel ban when reaching other European Union and Schengen Area countries. The ban was put into place to control the spread of COVID-19. [Read more](#)

### Bulgaria

#### **[Bulgaria Extends Current Entry Restrictions Until March 31](#)**

The Bulgarian authorities announced that travelers coming from the European Union Member States and the United Kingdom that are found on the red category must present their vaccination or recovery certificate, along with a negative PCR test result, performed at most within 72 hours of departure to enter Bulgaria. The measure was introduced considering the increased Omicron infection rates. [Read more](#)

### Bulgaria

#### **[Bulgaria to Abolish Its Golden Visa Program](#)**

Bulgaria's golden visa program may be abolished due to shortcomings like money laundering, unlawful practices, and corruption. The plan has not been successful in bringing real investments in Bulgaria for job creation activities in the country. [Read more](#)

### Cyprus

#### **[Cyprus Introduces New Entry Rules & Abolishes Color-Coded Categorization System](#)**

The Cypriot authorities have updated the national and entry rules allowing all vaccinated travelers coming from an epidemiologically safe country to enter Cyprus. Fully vaccinated and recovered travelers will be exempt from quarantine requirements. The new rules will enter into force in 1 March 2022. [Read more.](#)

### Czech Republic

#### **[Czechia Continues to Keep Strict Entry Rules Due to Omicron Variant](#)**

The Czech Republic's authorities will keep entry rules in place due to increased Omicron cases. All travelers entering from a high-risk country must furnish an Arrival form while all travelers are required to undergo an RT-PCR test prior to entry in the Czech Republic. [Read more.](#)

### Estonia

#### **[Estonia Continues to Keep in Place Travel Restrictions for Arrivals from All European Countries](#)**

Estonia will keep in place the travel restrictions and mandatory ten-day quarantine requirement for unvaccinated travelers from all European countries except the Vatican City. Travelers from all the European countries except the Vatican City are required to fill a passenger declaration form before their arrival. [Read more](#)

#### European Union

#### [Travel to & Within EU to Become More Difficult for Persons Holding Expiring Vaccination Passes](#)

A new set of additional rules for the vaccination certificate will be applicable for all travelers in the European Union/Schengen Area from 1 February 2022. Fully vaccinated travelers with an expired vaccination pass may face stricter testing and quarantine rules. The entry testing and quarantine requirements will be reduced for those who have taken an additional vaccine dose or have taken the second dose of action not long ago. [Read more](#)

#### Italy

#### [Italy Abolishes Travel Ban Imposed Against Southern African Countries](#)

The Italian Ministry of Health abolished the travel ban against southern African countries of South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. The ban was imposed in late November due to high number of Omicron cases, but the ban was lifted as Omicron infections are now widely spread throughout the Europe. [Read more](#)

#### Germany

#### [Germany plans to attract 400,000 foreign workers per year](#)

Germany's plans to attract 400,000 qualified workers from abroad each year to maintain a demographic imbalance between the workers and the retired along with reducing labor shortages in key sectors. [Read more](#)

#### Germany

#### [Germany Added Over 90 Countries to List of High-Risk Areas Within 2 Weeks](#)

On 21 January 2022, Germany added 19 more countries to its high-risk country list taking the total to 90 countries must provide either complete vaccination against COVID-19, recovery from the virus, or negative test results, in order to be eligible to enter the country without a ten-day quarantine. [Read more](#)

#### Greece

#### [Greek Authorities Announce Extension of Current Entry Requirements Until February 7](#)

The Greek Aviation Authority (CAA) announced an extension of the current entry rules for international travelers until 7 February 2022. All travelers above the age of five reaching Greece must present a PCR test taken at most 72 hours before departure or undergo a rapid test within 24 hours of arrival. Arrivals from third countries are still banned unless for an essential reason and exceptions for a few countries. [Read more](#)

#### Lithuania

#### [Lithuania to Keep Strict Entry Measures into Place for Another Week](#)

The Lithuanian authorities announced that arrivals from all countries will continue to be subject to strict entry rules as the list of affected countries has not been changed. The list categorizes countries in four different lists green, yellow, red and grey, and black based on the rate of infections in a country. Entry requirements differ based on the category of the country. [Read more](#)

#### Netherlands

#### [Netherlands Reclassifies South Africa as Very High-Risk Zone](#)

The Dutch authorities have reclassified South Africa as a very high-risk zone. Effective 16 January 2022, all South African travelers who have completed their immunization program are exempt from the EU entry ban. These travelers still need to provide a negative COVID-19 test prior to entry into Netherlands. Further, all passengers above the age of 12 must observe a ten-day quarantine period. [Read more](#)

#### Norway

#### [Norway: No New Changes on Entry Rules for Arrivals from Other Countries](#)

The Ministry of Health and Care Services confirmed that there has been no change in the entry requirements for arrivals from other countries. All the European countries except the Vatican City are in the red or dark-red category. [Read more](#)

**South Africa** [\*\*New rules planned for foreign workers in South Africa\*\*](#)

The Department of Employment and Labor in South Africa proposed changes to the country's immigration policies. The Department plans to introduce quotas on the total number of documented foreign nationals with work visas along with the sections in which foreign workers cannot be employed. Further, the Department plans to prioritize certain skills for immigrants. [Read more.](#)

**Spain** [\*\*Spain Removes 7 Third Countries from Its Safe List\*\*](#)

Spain removed Bahrain, Colombia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Peru, Qatar, and Uruguay from the safe third countries list requiring travelers from these countries to provide a valid vaccine certificate before entering Spain. [Read more](#)

**Spain** [\*\*Spain to Shorten Vaccination Certificates' Validity from February 1\*\*](#)

The Spanish authorities will change the validity of vaccine certificated to 270 days from 1 February 2022. Thus, all travelers must have received their last vaccine does 270 days prior to the entry into Spain. [Read more.](#)

**Spain** [\*\*Spain Travel: Balearic & Canary Islands Tighten COVID-19 Rules\*\*](#)

The Spanish Authorities have imposed entry restrictions on travelers entering the Balearic and Canary Islands. All European Union/Schengen Area travelers above the age of 12 coming from risk countries must fill health control form before their trip. Travelers arriving from third countries must fill a health form and provide a vaccination certificate prior to entry. [Read more](#)

**Sweden** [\*\*Amendments to the entry ban for people who travel to Sweden\*\*](#)

The Swedish Government eased the testing requirements for all travelers entering the country. From 21 January 2022, travelers from the from EU/EEA countries must have a valid EU Digital COVID Certificate, proof of full vaccination, a negative PCR test taken with 72 hours of arrival or proof that they have recovered from COVID in the past six months. Third country from a country exempt from entry bans must provide a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of arrival. [Read more](#)

**Switzerland** [\*\*Switzerland Abolishes Pre-Departure Testing Requirement & Shortens Vaccination Certificates' Validity\*\*](#)

Swiss authorities abolished the pre-departure testing requirement for travelers who have been vaccinated against COVID or recovered from the virus in the last 270 days. The new rules entered into force on 22 January 2022. Unvaccinated or unrecovered arrivals are still required to take a test before entry into Switzerland. [Read more](#)



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