



# Immigration News Highlights

2023-40, 3 October 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 announces new measures to fast-track PGWP and work permit extensions

The Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) shall be expanding the use of automation technologies to address delays in processing the growing backlog of applications for work permit extensions and post-graduation work permits (PGWP). The Fast-track process is expected to reduce processing wait times by 80 percent.

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### United States

Designation of Israel into the Visa Waiver Program announced

The Biden Administration announced the accession of Israel to the US Visa Waiver Program. From 30 November 2023 onwards, Israeli nationals wishing to travel to the US for business or tourism purposes can apply through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, and can stay in the country for a period of 90 days, without obtaining a visa first.

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### United States

US to start pilot program for domestic H-1B visa renewal early next year

US authorities shall be commencing a pilot program allowing domestic renewals of select H and L category visa applications in early 2024. This shall improve overall visa processing and increase efficiency.

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## United States

### [USCIS continues fee exemptions and expedited processing for Afghan nationals](#)

The USCIS announced the extension and expansion of the filing fee exemptions and expedited application processing granted for select Afghan nationals, enabling faster resettlement and family reunifications of applicants. Requests for employment authorization, Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), long-term status and status for immediate relatives, amongst others, are included in the fee exemption and expedited processes.

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## United States

### [USCIS increases Employment Authorization Document validity period for certain categories](#)

The USCIS announced the extension of the maximum validity period for some Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) to five years. The maximum validity for EADs for noncitizens with pending applications for adjustment of status has been extended from two years to five years. Similarly, the maximum validity for EADs issued to noncitizens seeking suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal has been increased from one year to five years.

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## Asia Pacific

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## Australia

### [Money required for Australia student visa revised upwards from October 1 2023](#)

The government of Australia announced a hike in the required minimum savings account balance for international students to obtain an Australian student visa. From 1 October 2023 onwards, applicants would have to provide evidence of a minimum of AUD24,505 in savings to cover annual costs of living.

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## New Zealand

### [Work to residence visas opening for applications](#)

New Zealand authorities commenced accepting applications for Work to Residence Visa, Care Workforce Work to Residence Visa, and Transport Work to Residence Visas from 29 September 2023 onwards. Individuals meeting the necessary prerequisite criteria and qualifications are encouraged to apply. There is no maximum cap on the number of visas that shall be granted.

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## New Zealand

### Changes to work rights for Student Visa holders

Kiwi authorities introduced changes to in-study work rights granted to students, to be entered into effect from 9 October 2023 onwards, in tandem with the enforcement of the Skilled Migrant Category Resident Visa. The references in-study work instructions shall be replaced with the programme level and type for each eligible qualification. The references for determining the relevancy of a course for ANZSCO occupation at skill levels 3-5 shall also be removed.

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## Singapore

### Singapore's Changi Airport is going passport-free in 2024

Singapore authorities shall be replacing manual passport checks with automated immigration and boarding processes, with the new system to be implemented in 2024. Passengers shall be allowed to travel without passports or boarding passes, enabled by biometric technology and facial recognition.

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## Europe and Africa

## Finland

### Finland starts automatic post-issuance monitoring of student residence permits

Finnish immigration authorities announced the commencement of the automatic post-decision monitoring of student residence permits. The monitoring aims to determine if the students still qualify for the residence permit granted to them. Permits granted after 1 June 2022 shall be monitored under this measure.

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## Kosovo

### Kosovo citizens eligible to travel to Schengen Area visa-free as of January 1

The embassy of Kosovo in Germany confirmed the eligibility of Kosovar nationals to travel to the Schengen area visa free for short-term stays. The visa-free regime shall be enforced from 1 January 2024 onwards.

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## Netherlands

### Netherlands to abolish golden visa from 1 January 2024

The Immigration and Naturalization Service in the Netherlands (NLS) confirmed that foreign investors shall no longer be able to avail the benefits of the Golden Visa Program of the Netherlands, starting 1 January 2024.

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## Portugal

### Portugal's new Golden Visa regulations unveiled

The Portuguese government introduced the “More Housing” law, introducing new regulations for the Golden Visa in Portugal. The changes include the implementation of new investment options, incentives for low-density territories, and the abolition of real estate investments.

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