



Immigration News Highlights

2023-42, 17 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

United States

USCIS reaches H-2B cap for first half of FY24

The USCIS confirmed that the H-2B visa application intake cap for temporary non-agricultural workers has been reached for the first half of FY24. New cap-subject applications received after 11 October 2023 requesting for an employment start date before 1 April 2024 shall henceforth be rejected.

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United States

PERM, prevailing wage processing times updated

The US Department of Labour published the updated processing times for permanent labour certification (PERM) applications and the prevailing wage determination (PWD) requests. As at 30 September 2023, applications filed in November 2022 and earlier were being resolved by the Department, and applications filed in July 2022 were being audited.

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United States

USCIS launches new online change of address tool

The USCIS announced the launch of a new tool, Enterprise Change of Address (E-COA), enabling individuals to update their address for pending applications online. The tool was introduced with the objective of streamlining the process of updating addresses, thus increasing efficiency and reducing wait times for applications processing.

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United States

[USCIS provides additional guidance for EB-5 required investment timeframe and investors associated with terminated regional centers](#)

The USCIS published additional guidance on the interpretation of changes introduced to the EB-5 program as per the EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022 (RIA). The guidance provides explanations regarding the required investment timeframe and how investors associated with a terminated regional center are treated.

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Asia Pacific

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

[GCC tourist visa approved](#)

GCC Ministers announced the approval of a unified visa, enabling individuals to visit all six GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) with a single visa. Tourists would no longer be required to obtain separate visas to visit each of these countries. The visa is also expected to increase the duration of stay granted to tourists.

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Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Arabia will treat Premium Residency holders like citizens regarding levy for house workers](#)

Saudi Arabian authorities confirmed that expatriates bearing Premium Residency shall be treated the same as Saudi Arabian citizens with regards to the payment of an annual levy for domestic workers. An annual fee of SR9,600 shall be levied on such individuals if the number of house workers employed by them is more than four, the same as Saudi Arabian nationals.

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Sri Lanka

[Sri Lanka to issue visas free of charge to tourists from five nations](#)

The government of Sri Lanka shall be issuing visas free of charge to tourists from China, Russia, India, Thailand, and Indonesia. Travelers from these countries have not been exempted from the need to secure a visa before visiting Sri Lanka, however, the visa shall be issued free of charge. The measure was taken to attract more tourists and boost the Sri Lankan tourism industry.

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Europe and Africa



France

French Embassy in Cabo Verde inaugurates service for long-term visas

The French Embassy in Cabo Verde announced the launch of a new service 'Balcão França', introduced specially to process long term applications and other types of visas for travelling to France and other French territories. Short term visa applications shall continue to be processed through the country's representation in Portugal.

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Germany

Germany makes it easier to obtain an ID & passport starting November 2023

German authorities have implemented a new regulation, set to enter into force in November 2023. The new regulations are meant to make the process of obtaining ID cards, passports and residence permits easier for individuals. From 1 November 2023 onwards, applicants shall be able to confirm the receipt of the PIN letter regarding their online ID over text, eliminating the need to collect documents in-person.

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Kenya

Kenya to impose local health insurance requirement for foreign visitors

The government of Kenya announced that travelers visiting Kenya will soon be required to purchase local health insurance, regardless of the duration of their stay in the country. The measure shall be introduced with the objective of impacting the local insurance industry, with the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and private insurance service providers anticipated to benefit positively.

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Ireland

Non-EEA nationals residing in Ireland advised to renew their expiring permits before holiday period

Irish authorities have issued an advisory for non-EEA nationals legally residing in the country, whose residence permits are to expire soon, encouraging them to submit an application for renewal of their permits before the commencement of the Christmas holiday season. Without a valid permit, such individuals may not be permitted to travel outside the country.

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Italy

Italy to open new visa office in Morocco in February 2024

Italian authorities have confirmed the opening of a new visa processing office in the Moroccan capital city of Rabat. The office shall be operational February 2024 onwards, accepting visa applications from Moroccan citizens wishing to travel to Italy.

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Portugal

Portugal accelerates recognition of foreign medical degrees

Portuguese authorities shall be expediting the recognition of medical degrees obtained from foreign educational institutions. Individuals holding such degrees shall be processed under a 'special recognition regime', which is aimed at hiring doctors for the country's National Health Service. The measure is expected to reduce the ongoing work shortage being experienced in the country's health sector.

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Tunisia

Tunisia implements visa-free entry for Chinese travelers

The government of Tunisia introduced a visa-waiver for Chinese nationals travelling to the country directly from China, or from any other country. However, Chinese tourists would be required to arrange for accommodation reservations and travel tickets prior to entering Tunisia.

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United Kingdom

UK to launch electronic travel authorization on 25 October in trial with Qatar nationals

British authorities are set to launch the trial phase of the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) on 25 October 2023. The trial shall be carried out with nationals of Qatar who will officially require authorization to travel to the UK from November 25 2023. Nationals of Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE will subsequently be required to obtain an ETA from 22 February 2024 onwards.

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