



Immigration News Highlights

2023-50, 12 December 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.](#)

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[Americas](#)

[Asia Pacific](#)

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Americas

Brazil

Electronic Visas (e-Visas) for Tourists from US, Canada, and Australia

Citizens of the United States, Canada, and Australia can now request an electronic visit visa (e-visa) to travel to Brazil, without the need to visit a Brazilian embassy or consulate to obtain it. The e-visa requests must be submitted exclusively through a link to VFS Global.

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Canada

International Experience Canada opens the 2024 season to welcome international youth

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that the 2024 season of the International Experience Canada (IEC) Program is now open, which will allow nearly 90,000 young people from IEC partner countries and territories to come to Canada and participate.

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Canada

[Revised requirements to better protect international students](#)

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that starting January 1, 2024, the cost-of-living financial requirement for study permit applicants will be raised so that international students are financially prepared for life in Canada. Moving forward, this threshold will be adjusted each year when Statistics Canada updates the low-income cut-off.

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Canada

[Canada opens global immigration processing center in Romania](#)

Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced the launch of a new global operations center in Romania, located in the Canadian Embassy in Bucharest. The center will employ 20 new staff members, both from Canada and locally, and is the second such center outside of Canada, with the first one opening in the Philippines in March. The centers support IRCC's processing network, extend work hours across multiple time zones, and increase overall processing capacity for applicants.

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Asia Pacific

Australia

[Australia tightens student visa rules, plans to halve migrant intake](#)

Australia has announced visa rules for international students and low-skilled workers, which could reduce its migrant intake by half over the next two years. The changes include higher English language requirements for students and more thorough assessments for second visa applications, which will extend their stay.

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Australia

[Government releases Migration Strategy with eight key actions](#)

The Australian government has released a policy roadmap containing eight key actions and over 25 new policy commitments and areas for future reform. The Migration strategy is expected to return migration back to near pre-pandemic levels by next financial year.

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China

[Visa-free entry scheme expanded to six additional countries](#)

China's Foreign Ministry has announced that citizens from France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Spain can now enter China without a visa for various purposes such as business, tourism, family visits, and transit. This visa-free entry is valid for up to 15 days and will be implemented for a minimum of one year.

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China

[China loosens visa policies for foreign travelers](#)

The Chinese foreign ministry announced that it will cut visa fees by 25 percent for travelers from countries such as Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam until 31 December 2024.

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Hong Kong (SAR), China

[Chinese mainland travelers to Hong Kong airport will be exempted from entry permits](#)

The new policy allows mainland residents to take international flights directly from Hong Kong International Airport without an entry permit through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

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Indonesia

[Indonesia visa regulation updates effective 31 December 2024](#)

Indonesia has announced a series of significant changes to its visa regulations. The amendments detailed under Peraturan Menteri Hukum dan Hak Asai Manusak Nomor - 22 Tahun 2023, will be effective from 31 December 2024.

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South Korea

[South Korea will offer free group visas to multiple countries from 1 January 2024.](#)

The Prime Minister announced that South Korea will broaden the range of countries offering free visas for groups and modify tax refund policies for international tourists at shopping destinations. Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia will now qualify for free visas for groups.

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Sri Lanka

[Visa policies announced to boost tourism and foreign investment](#)

Sri Lanka has announced new visa policies, including a one-time payment option for foreign students, a digital nomad visa for high-earning foreigners, and the introduction of an "investment visa" category. Additionally, new residence visa categories will be created for expatriate staff and foreign spouses of Sri Lankan nationals.

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Europe and Africa



Cyprus

Cyprus introduces Golden Knowledge Program to attract tech talent

The authorities have announced a Golden Knowledge Program and highlighted that the new program, which enables faster citizenship for individuals involved in research and innovation, is different from the Golden Passport Program. This initiative has been introduced through an amendment to the Civil Registry Law.

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Greece

Greece to end in-country Digital Nomad visa applications from 2024

Authorities in Greece have announced that they will not allow in-country applications for the Digital Nomad Visa starting from 1 January 2024.

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Hungary

Hungary's new Golden Visa to start from January

Hungary will launch its new "golden visa" program earlier than expected, in January 2024 instead of September 2024. The program will offer residency bonds to foreign investors starting from €250,000, with a minimum stay requirement of one day per year.

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Ireland

Initiative to facilitate travelling at Christmas

The Minister for Justice in Ireland is issuing a Travel Confirmation Notice to help Non-EU/EEA Nationals who need to renew their permission to stay in the country. This notice allows individuals to travel internationally during the Christmas and New Year period even if their Immigration Residence Permit card has recently expired, if they have submitted an application to renew their permission in advance.

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Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe and Botswana introduce visa-free travel deal

Zimbabwe and Botswana have announced a bilateral deal to eliminate passport requirements for each other's citizens, fostering a new era of unrestricted travel between the two nations.

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