



Immigration News Highlights

2023-38, 19 September 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](#)

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Americas

United States

October Visa Bulletin released

The US State Department released the October Visa Bulletin. EB-1 visas for China and India will advance to 1 August 2022 and 1 July 2019 respectively, with all other countries becoming current. EB-2 visas for China and India will advance to 1 January 2020 and 15 May 2012 respectively, with all other countries advancing to 1 January 2023. EB-3 visas for China, India and Philippeans will advance to 1 September 2020, 1 August 2012, and 1 January 2023, with all other countries advancing to 1 February 2023.

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United States

Limited digital visa pilot launched in Ireland

The US State Department launched a limited proof of concept digital visa authorization pilot program at the U.S. Embassy in Dublin. Only K-1 (fiancé(e)) visa shall be considered for the pilot, since it is a single entry-visa issued to individuals travelling directly to the US.

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United States

Clarification guidance on eligibility criteria for EB-1 visas released

The USCIS clarified the types of evidence used while determining eligibility for extraordinary ability (E11) and outstanding professor or researcher (E12) EB-1 visa types. The clarification provides examples of evidence and comparable evidence that might be used for satisfying the relevant criteria. It also provides details on considerations for assessing the evidence, emphasizing upon STEM (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) fields.

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Asia Pacific

Australia

[COVID-19 Pandemic event visa suspended for new applicants](#)

The government of Australia has suspended the acceptance of new applications for their pandemic event (subclass 408) visa, as of 2 September 2023. Current holders of the visa will be eligible for a six month extension, at a fees of AUD405, provided the application for renewal is submitted prior to 1 February 2024. They and shall also be permitted to stay in the country until the expiry of their visa.

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China

[China temporarily relaxes visa rules for Indian travelers](#)

Chinese authorities have introduced temporary changes in the visa regulations applicable to Indian nationals, which shall stay effective till 31 December 2023. Visa applicants for the tourism, business, short-term family visits, and transit categories will no longer be required to provide biometric data. The rest of the standard online application process for the visa stays the same.

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India

[Indian embassy issues key advisory for new arrivals in Kuwait](#)

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait published an advisory for Indian nationals arriving in Kuwait. The advisory provides crucial details on several important procedures and obligations to be followed upon arrival, including obtaining residency permits, submitting civil ID applications, and compliance with visa rules and regulations. Failure to conform with the guidelines may result in application of penalties and subsequent deportation, depending on the situation.

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Myanmar

[Myanmar to offer visa on arrival for Indian tourists](#)

The government of Myanmar announced a one-year trial scheme for the provision of visa on arrival to Indian nationals. Holders of the visa shall be permitted to visit all sites, apart for the ones restricted due to security reasons. The start date of the scheme is yet to be announced.

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Thailand

Thailand announces temporary visa exemption for Chinese, Kazakhstani tourists

Thai authorities announced a temporary visa exemption to tourists holding Chinese and Kazakhstani passports. This exemption will be in force from 25 September 2023 to 29 February 2024. The measures are being taken to boost tourism in the country.

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United Arab Emirates

UAE exempts citizens of Armenia from pre-entry visas

The Emirati Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a protocol amending a Memorandum of Understanding, waiving pre-entry visas for Armenian nationals staying in the country for a duration of not more than 90 days. The amendment also introduced special, ordinary and official passports for both countries.

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Europe and Africa

European Union

European Commission adopts more favorable Schengen visa rules for Kuwaitis

The European Commission announced the adoption of a new 'cascade' visa regime for Kuwaiti nationals applying to the Schengen visa. All eligible applicants will now be issued multiple entry visas with a validity of 5 years, conditional to passport validity. In case the validity of the visa exceeds that of the passport, the multiple entry visa issued shall expire three months before the passport.

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Georgia

Georgia adopts visa-free regime for Chinese citizens

The government of Georgia announced the introduction for a visa-free regime for Chinese nationals. The measure was taken in order to attract more Chinese tourists and investments, strengthening trade and economic relations with the country.

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Ireland

Bolivian visitors to Ireland now required to obtain entry & transit visas

The Irish Department of Justice confirmed that 12 September 2023 onwards, Bolivian nationals travelling to Ireland would be required to obtain a visa in advance. Possessing a transit visa shall also be made mandatory for Bolivians intending to transit through Ireland enroute to another destination.

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United Kingdom

UK automatically extends EU Settlement status holders' validity by 2 years

British authorities announced an automatic extension of the settled status for individuals who are pre-settled under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The extension has been granted for a period of two years and shall be reflected in the individual's digital status, with the process being automated by the Home Office.

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United Kingdom

UK increases visa fee for visitors, new rule to be effective from 4 October 2023

The government of UK announced a hike in visa fees, effective 4 October 2023 onwards. Visit visa for a stay of less than 6 months shall cost GBP115, whereas the fees for student visas will increase by GBP127.

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Thomas Wolf
Head of KPMG's Global
Immigration Network
T: +49 30 530 199-300
E: twolf@kpmg-law.com

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