



Immigration News Highlights

2024-05, 30 January 2024



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](#)

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Americas

Bahamas

Benin and Bahamas abolish visa requirements for each other's citizens

Citizens of Benin and Bahamas will no longer be subject to visas when planning to visit each other's territories after both countries have established diplomatic cooperation relations to put an end to such a requirement.

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United States

USCIS changes fee payment process for filing in-person

The USCIS authorities are implementing a new procedure for most applicants, petitioners, and requesters, as well as their legal representatives and accredited intermediaries, to pay for specific benefit request forms via mail or remotely instead of in person at a field office.

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United States

H-1B visas can be renewed domestically

From January 2024, a total of 20,000 nonimmigrant workers qualified for the H-1B program will be eligible to renew their visas domestically. The new changes come following the Department of State decision to permit domestic visa renewals for certain H-1B visa applicants without requiring them to leave the US.

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United States

USCIS Updates Guidance on Untimely Filed Extension of Stay and Change of Status Requests

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services has revealed a modification to its Policy Manual, which allows the agency to forgive delay in submitting an extension of stay or change of status request from nonimmigrants under specific circumstances, at USCIS' discretion, if the delay was caused by extraordinary events beyond the applicant or petitioner's control.

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Asia Pacific

China

China stops issuing visas to citizens of Lithuania

The Lithuanian authorities have announced that the Chinese mission in Vilnius has decided to halt the issuance of visas to citizens of Lithuania.

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China

China and Singapore scrap visa requirements

Starting from 9 February 2024, citizens of China and Singapore will no longer need visas to visit each other's countries for stays of up to 30 days.

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Hong Kong (SAR), China

Hong Kong ends visa-free access for travelers from Eswatini

Starting February 2024, nationals from Eswatini will be required to apply for a visa when planning to travel to Hong Kong (SAR), China after the government has decided to cancel the visa-free arrangement for visitors from the southern African Kingdom.

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Libya

Libya to launch new E-visa system

The Libyan Committee for granting electronic visas to internationals has announced that it will introduce an e-visa system. The decision comes following the meeting of the Committee held in January 2024, during which it was agreed on the necessity to activate and introduce the electronic visas in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour.

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United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates abolishes minimum down payment required through Golden Visa Program

UAE has abolished the minimum down payment of AED1 million required for those interested in acquiring residency through the Golden Visa Program, thus making it easier for investors and families to come and settle in this country.

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Europe and Africa



European Union

Time spent in Romania and Bulgaria will be counted towards total stay in Schengen areas

As of 31 March 2024, third-country individuals who do not hold a European Union passport will have the duration of their stay in Romania and Bulgaria counted towards their total allowable time in the Schengen area.

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Finland

Changes made to Permit Salary Thresholds

The Finnish immigration authorities have updated salary threshold requirements for Specialist and EU Blue Card permit application types for the year 2024. The salary thresholds were increased from the previous year for both permit types.

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France

No 'Extended Stays' in France for British second homeowners

France's Constitutional Court has rejected the amendment that would allow Britons with second homes in France to stay in the country for more than 90 days, deeming it unconstitutional.

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Germany

[Germany and Morocco agree to increase controlled labour migration and facilitate returns](#)

Germany and Morocco have agreed on a migration partnership that aims to facilitate the return of Moroccans who do not have the right to remain in Germany, while also promoting controlled labor migration of qualified Moroccans who can fill job openings in various sectors across the country.

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Lithuania

[Lithuania won't accept Residency Applications via external services from three countries](#)

The Lithuanian authorities have announced that starting from 1 March 2024, foreigners will no longer have the possibility to apply for residence permits and visas through external visa providers located in three countries – Lebanon, Jordan, and Sri Lanka.

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Netherlands

[Netherlands will no longer host third-country nationals from Ukraine](#)

The Dutch government announced that around 2,760 people who do not have Ukrainian nationality but were staying there with a residence permit will have 28 days left to leave the country after 4 March 2024, as they no longer are eligible to benefit from the Temporary Protection Directive.

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Portugal

[Madeira to introduce EUR2 Tourist Tax from second half of 2024](#)

Portuguese authorities have announced that the travelers planning to reach the Madeira archipelago from the second half of 2024 will be charged a EUR2 tax.

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Spain

[Spain introduces transit visas for Kenyan & Senegalese passport holders](#)

Starting from January 2024, individuals holding Kenyan and Senegalese passports will be required to obtain a transit visa in advance if they intend to travel through Spain to reach their destination.

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Sweden

[Court clarifies income requirement for Permanent Residence Permit applicants](#)

The Swedish Migration Court of Appeal redefined the “certain duration” requirement for employment-based income for permanent residence permit applications. Under the new interpretation, an applicant’s income may be considered to have a certain duration if he or she is employed for at least a year or if there is a likelihood, based on employment history, the employment will be renewed beyond a year.

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United Kingdom

Immigration Health Surcharge fees increased

In January 2024, the UK Parliament approved the Immigration Order 2024, and has been confirmed that the increase in Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) fees will be implemented on 6 February 2024. Currently, adult applicants pay an annual IHS fee of GBP624, which will undergo a substantial 66 percent increase to GBP1,035 per year.

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