



# Immigration News Highlights

2024-18, 30 April 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

### Canada

#### Changes made to the Start-up Visa and Self-Employed Persons programs

The Canadian government has implemented changes to federal business programs to reduce processing times and application backlogs. These changes, effective from 30 April 2024, include capping the number of permanent residence applications for the Start-up Visa Program and prioritizing entrepreneurs supported by Canadian capital or a member of Canada's Tech Network.

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### Canada

#### Canada introduces new rules around off-campus work hours for international students

The Canadian government has announced that a temporary policy allowing international students to work more than 20 hours per week off campus will come to an end on 30 April 2024. The policy, implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, will not be extended. Starting in the fall, the number of hours students may work off campus per week will be increased to 24.

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### United States

#### [USCIS announces open application period for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program](#)

USCIS announced the application period for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, which provides funding for citizenship preparation programs in communities across the council. Applications are due by 21 June 2024. Citizenship Instruction and Naturalization Application Services, will provide up to US\$10 million in grants to prepare legal immigrants for naturalization and promote civic integration through increased knowledge of English, US history, and civics.

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### United States

#### [USCIS to open International Field Offices in Qatar and Turkey](#)

USCIS announced opening of international field offices in Doha, Qatar, and Ankara, Turkey, to increase capacity for refugee processing, strengthen strategic partnerships, and facilitate interagency cooperation. With the opening of the Doha Field Office on 7 May 2024, and the Ankara Field Office on 9 May 2024, USCIS will have 11 international field offices.

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## Asia Pacific

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### Australia

#### [Australia exempts Hong Kong, British National \(Overseas\) passport holders from stricter age limit for graduate visas](#)

The Australian government has announced that it will waive the stricter age limit for temporary graduate visas for holders of Hong Kong and British National (Overseas) passports. This means that individuals from Hong Kong and BN(O) passport holders under the age of 50 will still be eligible to apply for five-year graduate visas, while other applicants must not exceed the age limit of 35.

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### Bhutan

#### [Bhutan removes mandatory travel insurance requirement for tourists](#)

The government of Bhutan has abolished the mandatory travel insurance requirement for visitors, to make travel to the country more convenient. The insurance requirement was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic as a precautionary measure against unforeseen emergencies, including medical expenses related to the pandemic.

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### Japan

## [Japan changes rules on international student enrollment](#)

The Japanese government has introduced stricter regulations on foreign student enrollment to address issues of negligence. The new rules no longer allow foreigners to study Japanese as "research students" or "auditing students" and require universities and vocational schools to properly manage foreign student enrollments to prevent inappropriate recruitment and illegal employment.

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## **Namibia**

### [Namibia introduces visas upon arrival for travelers](#)

The Namibian authorities have introduced visas on arrival at Walvis Bay Harbour port as of 18 April 2024. Apart from Walvis Bay Harbour, foreign travelers can also get visas on arrival services at other main entry points like Hosea Kutako International Airport and Walvis Bay Airport.

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## **Saudi Arabia**

### [Honduras exempts Saudi visitors from entry visa](#)

The Honduran government has introduced a visa exemption for Saudi citizens visiting Honduras. However, Honduran citizens planning to visit Saudi Arabia still need to apply for a visa in advance, as Honduras is not exempt from Saudi visa requirements. Honduran citizens have two options for applying for a Saudi visa: either in person at the Embassy or a Saudi consulate, or through authorized travel agencies affiliated with the Embassy for a faster application process.

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## **Saudi Arabia**

### [Saudi Arabia, Cyprus agrees visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and special passports](#)

Saudi authorities announced that Saudi Arabia and Cyprus have signed a mutual visa exemption agreement, allowing holders of diplomatic and special passports from both countries to travel to each other's countries without a visa. The agreement was signed by the foreign ministers of both countries in Riyadh on 25 April 2024. Citizens of Saudi Arabia and Cyprus still need a visa to enter each other countries.

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## **Tajikistan**

### [Tajikistan and Italy sign agreement on visa waiver for holders of diplomatic passports](#)

The government of Tajikistan has announced that Tajikistan and Italy have reached an agreement to abolish visa requirements for holders of diplomatic passports. Under the terms of the agreement, nationals from both countries with diplomatic passports will be able to enter and leave each other's countries without a visa for up to 90 days. For Tajik citizens, this 90-day period begins when they first enter the Schengen Zone.

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## **Thailand**

### [Thai citizens can provide their biometrics for Australian visas at new centre in Phuket](#)

Australian immigration authorities have announced that starting from 29 April 2024, Thai applicants for Australian visas will be able to provide biometrics and access other services in Phuket. Previously people needed to travel to Bangkok or Chiang Mai to provide biometrics.

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## Europe and Africa

### European Union

[Schengen countries offering 5-year Multiple-Entry Visas for nationals of Saudi Arabia, Oman & Bahrain](#)

The European Union has announced that citizens of Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain will now be able to apply for multiple-entry Schengen visas with a validity period of five years. The five-year multiple-entry visa will allow for multiple entries into the Schengen area during its validity period. However, holders of this visa must still adhere to the 90/180-day rule, which limits their stay in the Schengen area to a maximum of 90 days within any 180-day period.

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### European Union

[Schengen visa rules eased for Indians: Multiple entry & longer validity visas available](#)

The European Union has introduced more favorable Schengen visa rules for Indian nationals. As of 18 April 2024, Indians can apply for multiple entry visas with a longer validity period. Under the new rules, Indian applicants can access visas that remain valid for an extended period, as long as they meet specific conditions.

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### Finland

[Finland launches automated post-decision monitoring of permits granted to startup entrepreneurs](#)

The Finnish immigration service has announced that startup entrepreneurs in Finland who have obtained residence permits after January 2023 will have their documents monitored starting from 24 April 2024. This is due to the launch of a post-decision monitoring system. The purpose of this new practice is to ensure that startup entrepreneurs with residence permits continue to comply with the requirements even after obtaining the document.

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### Italy

[Venice introduces fines for unpaid tourist fee](#)

The Italian government has introduced a new rule for tourists visiting Venice. From April to mid-July, travelers will have to pay a EUR5 entrance fee or face fines ranging from EUR50 to EUR300 if they do not pay. This measure is temporary and aims to control the number of visitors during peak season. Tourists will need to reserve their spots in advance and pay the fee to experience Venice's charm.

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