



Immigration News Highlights

2026 - 42, 21 October 2026



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

Canada

Canada announced Express Entry changes to prioritize skilled workers in high-wage occupations

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced on 16 October 2026 changes to the Express Entry Comprehensive Ranking System that will take effect on 03 November 2026 to better align immigration selection with Canada's economic and labor market needs. The changes will award additional points to candidates with eligible Canadian work experience or a qualifying job offer in a high-wage occupation, while maintaining existing eligibility requirements and program integrity measures. The department also announced that a Labour Market Impact Assessment will no longer be required for a qualifying job offer to receive the new Express Entry points or to meet job offer requirements under the Federal Skilled Worker Program and the Federal Skilled Trades Program. Candidates already in the Express Entry pool will have their scores automatically recalculated under the new system, although those seeking points for a qualifying job offer must update their profiles with the required information before 03 November 2026. The department stated that invitation rounds will be paused for up to two weeks while the score recalculation process is completed.

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[Canada launched Regional Economic Development through Immigration \(REDI\) initiative for selected Ontario communities](#)

Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program announced on 14 October 2026 the launch of a new round of the REDI initiative, which will operate until the end of 2027. The initiative will allocate nomination spaces to partner communities that have identified a critical need for newcomer talent and demonstrated capacity to support immigration through economic diversification, employer engagement, and settlement services. The program provides a pathway to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers seeking to live and work in participating communities, including Greater Sudbury, Kenora District, Nipissing District, Rainy River District, Renfrew County, and Thunder Bay. The update also clarifies that there is no separate application process for the initiative and that applicants must meet existing Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program eligibility requirements to be considered.

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[Canada announces funding to expand pathways for internationally trained doctors in Manitoba](#)

Health Canada under Government of Canada announced on 14 October 2026 its intention to provide up to CAD6 million over three years to expand family medicine Practice-Ready Assessment opportunities for internationally trained medical graduates in Manitoba. The proposed initiative would support Manitoba's efforts to enhance assessment processes for internationally trained physicians seeking to practice family medicine and is expected to help bring up to 90 new family physicians into the province by 2028-2029. The investment is intended to strengthen health-care services in rural, remote, and northern communities by increasing access to family medicine and emergency care. The funding remains subject to the finalization of an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba. The announcement forms part of broader federal efforts to integrate internationally educated health professionals into Canada's health workforce and address health-care staffing needs.

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United States

[United States implements final rule ending automatic employment authorization document \(EAD\) renewal extensions](#)

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on 14 October 2026 that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) finalized a rule ending the automatic extension of EADs for certain individuals who file EAD renewal applications. The rule confirms provisions introduced through the interim final rule published on 30 October 2025 and requires USCIS to complete eligibility reviews, vetting, and screening before granting renewed employment authorization. Automatic extensions remain available only for eligible renewal applications filed before 30 October 2025 and for situations where extensions are provided by law or Federal Register notices. DHS stated that the change is intended to strengthen program integrity, public safety, and national security by ensuring employment authorization is granted only after USCIS determines continued eligibility. The final rule took effect on 14 October 2026.

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[United States court orders implementation of fiscal year 2027 Diversity Visa Program registration period](#)

US District Court for the Southern District of California ordered on 14 October 2026 the US Department of State to announce and implement the registration period for the Fiscal Year 2027 Diversity Visa Program. The Court directed the Department of State to publicly announce registration details by 15 October 2026 and open the registration period by 18 October 2026 for a period of 30 days. The order also requires the Department to accept eligible electronic entries submitted during the registration period and to follow applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. In addition, the Department must notify selected applicants by 19 November 2026 and continue processing Diversity Visa applications until all available visas are issued or 30 September 2027, whichever occurs first.

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Asia Pacific

Israel

[Israel announced mandatory appointment booking for population administration offices in Netanya and Petah Tikva](#)

Israel Population and Immigration Authority announced on 19 October 2026 that, effective 01 November 2026, all services at its population administration offices in Netanya and Petah Tikva will require a pre-booked appointment. The authority encouraged residents to check whether requested services, such as birth certificates, population registry extracts, and identity card supplements, can be completed remotely through its online services before visiting an office. For services that require an in-person visit, appointments must be scheduled in advance through the Govisit system. The announcement states that, from 01 November 2026, services at the Netanya and Petah Tikva offices will be provided only to individuals with a prior appointment.

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Kazakhstan

[Kazakhstan announces phased implementation of QazETA electronic travel authorization requirement](#)

Government of Kazakhstan announced in October 2026 the phased rollout of the QazETA electronic travel authorization (ETA) system for eligible visa-exempt travelers. The new rules establish a transition period beginning on 01 November 2026, during which travelers without an ETA will not be refused entry but will be informed of the upcoming requirement. ETA checks will gradually expand to additional border crossing points before the authorization becomes mandatory on 01 July 2027. The ETA will be issued free of charge, remain valid for 180 calendar days, and must be obtained at least 72 hours before travel. The requirement will apply to many visa-exempt nationalities, while exemptions will be available for certain travelers, including children under 16, travelers aged 65 or older, valid visa holders, and Kazakhstan residence permit holders.

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New Zealand

[New Zealand encouraged investor visa applicants to submit transfer and investment documents early](#)

Immigration New Zealand encouraged applicants who have received approval in principle for the Active Investor Plus Visa or Parent Retirement Resident Visa to submit their transfer and investment documents as early as possible ahead of the Christmas and summer holiday period on 15 October 2026. The agency noted that the holiday period is one of the busiest times of the year and that early submission provides more opportunity to assess applications and resolve any issues before planned travel dates. It advised that complete documentation could help reduce delays, particularly where applications involve complex financial information and evidence relating to fund transfers and investments. The update also outlined the types of supporting evidence applicants should provide and reminded applicants that resident visas cannot be guaranteed before planned travel dates if documents are submitted close to departure or additional information is required.

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[New Zealand implemented new visa commitments under the India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#)

Immigration New Zealand announced on 20 October 2026 that the India–New Zealand FTA has entered into force with new visa commitments supporting New Zealand's economic and workforce needs. The agreement introduces two new Temporary Employment Entry visa categories available from 20 October 2026, allowing up to 5,000 visa holders in New Zealand at any one time, with most places allocated to occupations on New Zealand's Green List. The agreement also expands post-study work rights from 16 November 2026 for Indian graduates with New Zealand PhDs, making them eligible for post-study work visas of up to four years instead of three years. In addition, the agreement includes a commitment regarding in-study work rights for Indian students and provides for a new working holiday scheme for Indian nationals aged 18 to 30, capped at 1,000 places annually and to be introduced within two years of the agreement entering into force.

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[New Zealand court clarified prohibition on charging migrant workers fees for employment opportunities](#)

Immigration New Zealand announced that a decision by the Employment Court clarified that charging migrant workers fees to secure employment in New Zealand is prohibited under the Wages Protection Act 1983, regardless of whether the payment is made in New Zealand or overseas. The decision also confirmed that the prohibition applies to payments made on behalf of prospective employees by family members, friends, agents, or other third parties, as well as payments received by agents or others acting on behalf of employers. According to Immigration New Zealand, the ruling provides greater clarity regarding the application of employment protections to overseas recruitment arrangements and supports efforts to address non-compliant recruitment practices involving migrant workers. The agency encouraged individuals who believe they have been asked to make payments for employment opportunities or visa-related support to contact Immigration New Zealand and reminded employers and recruitment intermediaries to ensure their recruitment practices comply with New Zealand employment requirements.

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Europe and Africa

European Union

European Union initiates process for potential Schengen visa-free travel for five Gulf countries

Council of the European Union adopted conclusions on 19 October 2026 supporting the European Commission's intention to begin visa waiver procedures for citizens of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar. The conclusions mark a step toward potential visa-free travel to the Schengen Area for short stays but do not grant any immediate visa exemption. The Council stated that any future visa waiver will depend on the countries meeting required assessment criteria and on further decisions by European Union institutions. The assessment process is expected to examine areas such as travel document security, border management, migration issues, and security cooperation. Until any legal changes are adopted, citizens of the five countries must continue to follow existing Schengen visa application requirements.

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Netherlands

Netherlands approved legislation to abolish judicial penalty payments for residence permit decisions

Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) announced on 13 October 2026 that the Dutch Senate approved a legislative amendment abolishing judicial penalty payments related to residence permit applications. The change means the IND will no longer be required to pay judicial penalty payments to applicants when decisions on residence permit applications are not made within the statutory timeframe. According to the IND, the legislative change follows the abolition of administrative penalty payments in 2025 and is intended to reduce the administrative burden associated with processing penalty payment claims. The IND stated that it paid approximately EUR79 million in penalty payments during 2025 and more than EUR112 million during 2026. The legislative amendment will take effect the day after its publication in the Dutch Government Gazette.

[Read more](#)

Turkey

Turkey published student residence permit guidance for international students

Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management published student residence permit application guidance and related informational materials on 15 October 2026 for foreign nationals enrolled in higher education programs in the country. The publication states that foreign nationals studying in higher education programs in Türkiye under Law No. 6458 are required to obtain a student residence permit. The Directorate also made available brochures and booklets in five languages regarding the student residence permit application process and the obligations that international students must fulfil during their lawful stay in the country. In addition, the publication provides access to documents explaining how to apply for a student residence permit in multiple languages.

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United Kingdom

United Kingdom updated guidance on examining identity documents and digital immigration status records

UK Visas and Immigration, Immigration Enforcement, Border Force, and the Home Office updated guidance on 21 October 2026 on examining identity documents and identifying fraudulent documents. The guidance outlines the identity documents used in the United Kingdom, including passports, application registration cards, residence permits, biometric residence permits, Home Office travel documents, and eVisas. It explains document security features, methods for identifying counterfeit, forged, and pseudo documents, and basic checks that can be used to verify document authenticity and identity. The guidance also states that eVisas have replaced physical immigration documents and that biometric residence permits have been replaced by eVisas. Additionally, it includes checklists for document examination and information on reporting suspected false documents.

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

[social.kpmg](#)



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