Global Immigration Trends and Highlights

April to June 2026

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Overview

This document provides a snapshot of corporate immigration developments worldwide. It is designed to support conversations regarding policies that have been proposed or implemented in key jurisdictions in the Americas, Asia-Pacific and EMEIA (Europe, Middle East, India, Africa) regions.

Policy changes across the globe are being proposed and implemented daily. This document is updated on a quarterly basis. Not all jurisdictions are reflected in this document. The contents of the articles linked herein are true and accurate as of their publication dates and have not been updated from the time of publication.

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For the latest immigration updates, see here. For further guidance or information regarding immigration policies and/or requirements in specific jurisdictions, contact the EY professional with whom you work.

At a glance

Shawn Orme
EY Global Immigration Markets Leader
EY People Profile

Global mobility in the second quarter of 2026 is increasingly shaped by governments using immigration policy to advance economic, labor market and national security priorities. Across the Americas, heightened scrutiny of immigration benefits in the United States and Canada's growing reliance on provincial selection are creating new challenges for employers seeking to access and retain talent. At the same time, the Ebola outbreak has demonstrated how quickly public health concerns can re-emerge as a workforce mobility issue, triggering targeted travel restrictions, screening measures and quarantine requirements across multiple jurisdictions.

Digital transformation is also reshaping immigration administration worldwide. Across Asia-Pacific and Europe, governments are deploying technology to streamline processes while enhancing oversight and enforcement. Malaysia's centralized expatriate platforms, Vietnam's electronic work permit initiatives and the European Union's Entry/Exit System signal a shift toward more transparent, data-driven immigration frameworks. For employers, success will increasingly depend on stronger compliance processes, accurate reporting and closer alignment between mobility, HR and business functions.

More broadly, immigration systems are becoming increasingly selective. While some jurisdictions are expanding pathways for highly skilled workers, entrepreneurs and priority talent, others are introducing localization measures, tighter eligibility requirements and enhanced compliance obligations. This divergence is creating a more complex global mobility landscape that requires employers to be deliberate in how they deploy talent and build workforce strategies. Organizations that anticipate policy shifts, embed immigration considerations into workforce planning and maintain flexibility in their mobility programs will be best positioned to navigate uncertainty and secure the skills needed for growth.

For information about jurisdictions offering visas and permits for remote workers, explore the latest 2026 edition of the Global Immigration Index: Remote Work and Digital Nomads. For broader business insights, see the June 2026 Geostrategic Analysis for updates on global trade shifts, labor market dynamics, and AI governance trends; and the EY-Parthenon 2026 Geostrategic Outlook for analysis.

Americas

New immigration laws and policies

- Canada extended CUAET-related work permit measures, allowing eligible Ukrainian nationals and dependents in Canada to apply for a one-time open work permit extension until 31 March 2027, with up to three additional years of work authorization. The extension supports workforce continuity but requires early filing and proactive planning, as permits do not renew automatically and processing times remain lengthy.
- In Canada, provinces and territories have exclusive authority to determine the Provincial Nominee Program eligibility effective 30 March 2026, including economic establishment and intent to reside, for new and certain in-process applications. The role of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is narrowed to identity, nomination validity and admissibility checks, eliminating overlapping federal eligibility assessments and increasing the importance of a well-documented provincial nomination stage.
- In Canada, Bill C-12 introduced new asylum ineligibility rules effective 26 March 2026, but a temporary Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) public policy now allows certain individuals with ineligible refugee claims to obtain or keep an open work permit, helping reduce gaps in work authorization while further processing occurs. Employers should identify affected individuals, confirm current work authorization, and assess whether the temporary policy can support workforce continuity, noting that eligibility is limited and the policy may be revoked at any time.
- In Canada, Alberta introduced Bill 26, the Immigration Oversight Act, proposing a new provincial framework to regulate the recruitment and hiring of foreign nationals through mandatory employer registration and licensing of foreign worker recruiters and immigration consultants. If enacted, the legislation would expand provincial compliance, oversight, and enforcement powers, with the stated objective of increasing transparency and accountability and addressing fraud and worker exploitation, rather than limiting the number of foreign workers.
- In Canada, IRCC removed the requirement for eligible post-secondary international students to obtain a separate co-op work permit for mandatory work placements. The change is administrative only and does not expand work eligibility, increase work hours, or alter employer compliance obligations.
- In Canada, IRCC has launched the one-time In-Canada Workers Initiative to accelerate processing of up to 33,000 already filed permanent residence applications for work permit holders living in smaller communities, delivered outside Express Entry. The initiative applies only to certain regional and pilot programs, requires at least two years of residence in a smaller community, and does not require eligible applicants to take any new action.
- Quebec in Canada will temporarily reopen both the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (PEQ) streams from 2 July 2026 to 2 July 2028 for individuals who had already met eligibility criteria by 19 November 2025, providing a limited pathway

to permanent selection for impacted workers. At the same time, Quebec continues prioritization under the Programme de sélection des travailleurs qualifiés (PSTQ) and a federal work permit policy offers short-term extensions, but employers must still proactively manage expiring work authorization due to limited scope and no guaranteed processing timelines.

- In Canada, Alberta has scheduled a provincewide, non-binding referendum for 19 October 2026, releasing all nine ballot questions, five of which relate to immigration policy and access to provincially funded services. The vote does not trigger immediate change; any impact on immigration, healthcare, education, or social services would require future legislation, and employers face no current compliance obligations.
- The United States Department of Labor (DOL) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposing revisions to the computation of prevailing wage levels used for prevailing wage requests for the PERM Labor Certification Program and the Labor Condition Applications for the H 1B, H 1B1 and E 3 nonimmigrant visa programs.
- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services released a new Policy Memorandum outlining the agency's intent to approve adjustment of status (AOS) applications "only in extraordinary circumstances." This may create uncertainty for employers, as employees relying on pending AOS applications and related work permits may face higher denial risks, potentially disrupting workforce planning and work authorization continuity.
- The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a Final Rule updating registration and fingerprinting requirements for certain foreign nationals. The rule establishes modernized compliance procedures, expands and clarifies acceptable proof of registration, removes outdated regulations, and aligns requirements with current DHS practices.

Employer obligations and benefits

- Canada tightened recruitment requirements for low-wage Labour Market Impact Assessments applications under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program by doubling the mandatory advertising period to eight weeks and adding a new obligation to demonstrate targeted recruitment of youth. At the same time, temporary, location-specific relief is available for certain rural employers through a higher low wage cap, subject to provincial/territorial participation.
- The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issued updated guidance on its Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, inspection and enforcement framework.
- A United States court invalidated USCIS policies that paused application adjudications and mandated re-reviews of previously approved petitions, restoring greater predictability to case processing in the near term. The court, however, declined to issue a permanent injunction, indicating that USCIS may introduce similar policies in the future, which may need to be challenged through appropriate legal channels if implemented.
- A United States court issued an administrative stay on the ruling that invalidated the $100,000 payment requirement for new H-1B petitions. As a result, USCIS may continue to lawfully require this payment while the court case remains under review.

Individual obligations and benefits

- Brazil has announced that nationals of the Chinese Mainland may enter the country without a visa for business visits, tourism, artistic and sports activities, or transit. This exemption is limited to stays of up to 30 non-extendable days; longer stays still require the appropriate visa.
- Canada has imposed a 90-day suspension of visas and eTAs (effective 27 May 2026) for residents of high-risk Ebola countries (DRC, Uganda, South Sudan). Enhanced measures will also require a 21-day quarantine for travelers (including Canadians and PRs) who were in these countries within the previous 21 days.
- A recent Ebola outbreak in Central and East Africa prompted multiple jurisdictions to introduce targeted travel restrictions and enhanced border control measures for individuals with recent presence in high-risk countries (primarily Congo, DRC, South Sudan and Uganda). Countries including Canada and the United States, as well as certain African and Middle Eastern jurisdictions, introduced entry bans, immigration restrictions and quarantine requirements. Most jurisdictions, including the EU, continue to rely on screening and monitoring measures rather than broad travel bans.
- In the United States, the American Immigration Lawyers Association reported that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) imposed a new processing hold on certain applications, including green card and asylum cases, pending completion of newly required enhanced security checks.

- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a 60-day notice proposing to re-instate broader information collection requirements as part of Form AR-11 (Alien Change of Address), which would require certain foreign nationals to report information on means-tested public benefits, as well as their employment or education status. If these changes are implemented, errors, omissions or inconsistencies in AR-11 filings may carry greater risk if the information is used for enforcement or eligibility assessments.
- The United States Department of State issued all EB 2 visas for applicants chargeable to India for FY2026, which ends on 30 September 2026. No further visa issuance or adjustment approvals are available for this group unless unused visas are reallocated.
- Venezuela implemented a mandatory electronic visa (e-Visa) application process for United States nationals traveling to the country in the Business Visa and Tourist visa categories.
- Venezuela introduced an electronic visa (e-Visa) application process for nationals of all countries traveling to the country under the Business Visa and Tourist visa categories.

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Across Americas, workforce mobility continues to be shaped by tighter compliance and evolving access pathways. In the United States, stricter adjustment of status approvals and proposed prevailing wage changes are creating uncertainty for employers, while Canada is shifting greater control to provinces and has announced a one-time approval of 33,000 permanent residence applications for work permit holders in smaller communities. Elsewhere, Brazil's visa-free entry for nationals of the Chinese Mainland and Venezuela's new e-Visa requirements signal continued regional divergence in entry and mobility frameworks.

— George Reis, EY Americas Immigration Leader, *EY People Profile*

Looking ahead

- Looking ahead, tightening policies, expanded reporting obligations, and heightened enforcement are set to make the United States immigration environment more complex and less predictable, increasing compliance risks and costs for employers while creating greater uncertainty and reduced stability for foreign talent.

Asia-Pacific

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Digitalization is accelerating across Asia-Pacific immigration systems, but with it comes materially higher compliance expectations. Malaysia's new expatriate platforms are embedding end-to-end digital control, while tighter in-jurisdiction presence, declaration and departure rules in Hong Kong and Vietnam are increasing employer accountability. The rollback of visa exemptions in Thailand underscores a wider shift toward more restricted entry pathways and heightened scrutiny of short-term mobility.

– Linda Rowe, EY Asia-Pacific Immigration Leader

New immigration laws and policies

- Hong Kong announced that individuals who are subject to a limit of stay must depart Hong Kong before the expiry of their current stay regardless of whether they are in the process of a visa extension application, unless exceptional circumstances are approved by the Director of Immigration.
- Malaysia has introduced temporary flexibility for certain Employment Pass rules. The succession plan requirement for EP Categories II and III is postponed until 1 January 2027, and MDEC-regulated GBS companies can continue using current EP Category III salary thresholds for roles requiring native or near-native language skills until 1 June 2027, subject to approval.
- Malaysia revised the process for Foreign Knowledge Worker headcount declarations. Under the updated framework, companies registered with the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) must undergo a formal evaluation process for headcount approvals and submit additional supporting documentation prior to filing individual applications.
- Thailand plans to tighten its visa exemption framework following Cabinet approval on 19 May 2026. Proposed changes will end the 60-day visa exemption for 93 jurisdictions and will limit visa-free entry to 54 countries for tourism-only stays of up to 30 days. Business visits and short-term work will require a non-B visa or, for eligible nationals, entry under the tourism exemption followed by an urgent work permit on arrival. The new regulations will take effect 15 days after publication in the Royal Gazette.
- Vietnam proposed changes to its framework for foreign employees and is currently seeking public feedback, aiming to address implementation challenges, increase flexibility for short-term work, and streamline administrative procedures.

Employer obligations and benefits

- Malaysia revised the Investor Pass application category by removing the "Existing Investor" category from the Xpats Gateway system and launched the MIDA Expatriate System for manufacturing and selected services sectors.
- Malaysia announced an extension of the 1:3 Internship Policy pilot stage until 31 May 2026.

- Malaysia's Digital Economy Corporation issued a reminder on the stricter enforcement of existing endorsement requirements for applications under its eXpats system, including one-month payment deadlines and the requirement to remain in Malaysia until endorsement is completed.
- Malaysia expanded the MIDA Expatriate System, with its mandatory use from 1 June 2026. Eligible companies in manufacturing and selected services sectors are required to submit applicable expatriate applications through MES. MIDA also introduced the Employment Pass – Foreign Graduate (EP-FG), enabling international fresh graduates of higher education institutions within Malaysia to seek employment in the country, with applications also required to be submitted via MES.
- Malaysia reduced the online appeal window for rejected Employment Pass (EP) and Professional Visit Pass (PVP) applications to 14 days, down from the six months previously. This tighter deadline requires faster compliance and directly impacts employers managing foreign workforce applications.
- Malaysia intensifies enforcement efforts targeting visa misuse and unauthorized employment by foreign nationals, focusing on improper use of tourist, student and other short-term passes. Increased inspections and penalties are expected, heightening compliance risks for companies employing foreign workers, business travelers or student interns.

Individual obligations and benefits

- Vietnam revoked the additional documentation requirements introduced on 24 March 2026 for foreign nationals employed as experts, technical workers, managers or executive directors. Under the new decision, the documentation requirements are reverted to the standard provisions, which vary depending on the case type.
- Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam announced the implementation of electronic issuance of Work Permits and Work Permit Exemption certificates effective 15 June 2026.
- In Vietnam, foreign nationals and holders of overseas Vietnamese visas are required to complete a personal information declaration, which may be completed prior to arrival or on arrival, and present it at Tan Son Nhat International Airport prior to entry.
- Vietnam announced a mandatory health declaration requirement for all individuals entering, exiting, or transiting through the country's border checkpoints effective 1 July 2026.
- The Ho Chi Minh City Immigration Office in Vietnam announced that, effective 1 June 2026, organizations must use a Vietnam electronic identification (VNeID) account as the official authentication method for all online immigration procedures. Legacy accounts on the National Public Service Portal using digital signatures (tokens) are no longer accepted.

Looking ahead

- Malaysia's immigration landscape is set to become more streamlined but increasingly time bound, with mandatory expatriate system usage and significantly shorter appeal timelines. As digital platforms become central to application and compliance processes, companies will need to strengthen internal coordination and real-time tracking to avoid delays and maintain workforce continuity.

Europe

Compliance and digitization are reshaping mobility across Europe, with the EU's Entry/Exit System introducing enhanced border controls with some operational delays, while countries like Poland and the United Kingdom are expanding employer reporting, monitoring and right-to-work obligations. At the same time, France and Spain are prioritizing faster processing and regularization pathways, demonstrating a dual focus on enforcement and access.

Across the Middle East and Africa, workforce strategies are being recalibrated with Saudi Arabia intensifying nationalization quotas and contract documentation rules and Angola strengthening entry controls for foreign workers. In parallel, the UAE is investing in long-term national workforce programs, highlighting a shift toward stricter compliance alongside strategic localization of talent.

– Ben J Willis, EY Global Immigration Competency Leader, *EY People Profile*

New immigration laws and policies

- France identified workers' rights continuity as a national priority in response to long processing times in many prefectures, and introduced measures to expedite renewal applications, simplify procedures and support uninterrupted work authorization.
- Georgia introduced new immigration reforms, including introduction of a Type C5 visa for remote workers, exemptions from work authorization for certain remote and short-term activities, and clearer rules for foreign nationals working for overseas employers.
- Gibraltar introduced significant reforms to its residency regime, establishing stricter and more structured criteria. The updated rules will apply to new applicants from 6 October 2025 onward, and to individuals residing in Gibraltar without formal residence status prior to 6 October 2025, although discretion may be exercised where there is a valid justification.
- Ireland announced several immigration changes. From 1 June 2026, short-stay visa refusals can no longer be appealed and require a new application. A transition pathway for Ukrainian nationals under Temporary Protection is expected to launch in September 2026 to support longer-term residence. Updates to the Employment Permits Occupations Lists also expanded eligibility for key roles experiencing labor shortages.
- Ireland revised its family reunification policy for non-EEA nationals by increasing financial thresholds, introducing stricter accommodation requirements, and establishing additional criteria for international protection applicants.
- A revised EU Single Permit Directive entered into force in the Netherlands, introducing more consistent decision timelines, defined deadlines for change-of-employer procedures and extended job search periods in certain cases of unemployment. The Directive applies to combined residence and

work permits (GVVA), covering categories such as paid employment, highly skilled migrants, EU Blue Card holders, researchers and other specified groups.

- Poland proposed amendments that may tighten employment planning and compliance requirements. Priority processing may become more limited due to stricter investment value criteria, employers may benefit from simpler labor market access but must meet mandatory electronic notification and monitoring requirements, and work permit exemptions may require expanded reporting obligations.
- Poland has proposed introducing a "silent procedure" for certain temporary residence permit applications, under which permits would be deemed approved if authorities do not issue a decision within the statutory deadline.
- Portugal introduced changes to its Nationality Law, which extend the required residence period, tighten the method for calculating this period and strengthen the integration requirements.
- Spain approved a one-time regularization pathway allowing certain undocumented residents to obtain legal residence and work authorization.
- Switzerland's voters rejected a proposal to cap their permanent resident population at 10 million inhabitants, leaving the current immigration framework unchanged. While this avoids immediate policy changes, the strong public debate underscores increasing political sensitivity around population growth and immigration, which employers may continue to monitor.
- The United Kingdom introduced a series of updates to sponsor guidance that significantly expand right-to-work obligations, replace the longstanding "genuine vacancy" test with a new "eligible role" framework, and strengthen sponsor compliance and record keeping expectations.
- The United Kingdom published a report on proposed "earned settlement" and citizenship reforms, offering a detailed assessment of measures to extend settlement pathways and reform Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), alongside a broader critique of the immigration system.

Employer obligations and benefits

- Romania introduced new rules to regulate employment and secondment of third-country nationals and prevent exploitation, while also safeguarding the interests of Romanian workers as well as workers from the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) Member States and the Swiss Confederation.
- The United Kingdom updates confirm right-to-work checks apply only to sponsored workers and employees, excluding contractors, with removal of engaged individuals references on a temporary basis pending clarification from authorities. Digital-only status means employers must rely on online verification for work authorization.

Individual obligations and benefits

- On 10 April 2026, European Union's digital Entry/Exit System became fully operational across 29 Schengen countries. Under the EES, days spent in the Schengen Area are calculated automatically based on recorded entry and exit events. To avoid a perceived overstay, travelers must ensure their exit from the Schengen Area is formally registered by border authorities. The implementation resulted in substantial delays at major airports, including missed flights and extended queues at border controls.
- Ireland introduced visa requirements for nationals of Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia. From 15 June 2026, impacted individuals are required to obtain a visa before traveling to or transiting through the country.
- Norway announced increased salary thresholds for residence permits for work purposes. The revised compensation thresholds took effect retroactively on 1 May 2026.
- Poland introduced MOS 2.0, a new electronic system for submitting most residence permit applications.

Looking ahead

- With the full rollout of the EES, employers should be mindful of employees' time spent in the Schengen Area, as automated entry and exit tracking increases the likelihood of overstays if departures are not properly recorded, particularly given potential border delays.

Africa, Middle East and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)

New immigration laws and policies

- India now requires foreign nationals who intend to stay beyond 180 days in the country to register with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer before reaching this threshold. Late registrations will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Effective 1 June 2026, Jordan suspended the recruitment of foreign workers across most economic sectors to prioritize employment for Jordanian nationals.
- Saudi Arabia announced that certain administrative support roles are subject to a mandatory 100% Saudization requirement, limiting these positions exclusively to Saudi nationals in the private sector.
- Saudi Arabia introduced the next phase of the Developed Nitaqat framework, which applies to private sector establishments in the country. The new phase builds on the existing Nitaqat system for assessing and classifying establishments based on their Saudization levels, with minimum requirements determined by their economic activity.
- Saudi Arabia introduced changes on the Qiwa platform, which impact the use of Instant Work Visas and require Premium Residency holders to obtain a work permit.
- The United Arab Emirates revised the eligibility conditions for its two-year property-linked residence visa for investors by removing the minimum property value requirement for sole property owners and by relaxing eligibility conditions for jointly owned properties.
- The United Arab Emirates announced amendments to the Emiratization framework for the private health care sector. Under the updated framework, employers must allocate their existing mandatory annual 2% Emiratization target equally between specialized health care roles and other skilled positions.

Employer obligations and benefits

- Angola strengthened immigration controls affecting foreign professionals entering the country, especially those working in the oil, gas, maritime and offshore sectors.
- Saudi Arabia announced changes that significantly increase the importance of documenting employment contracts on the Qiwa platform. Under the new rules, Qiwa-documented contracts will directly impact access to immigration and labor services, as well as Saudization calculations.
- Saudi Arabia announced the results of its compliance and inspection activities for the first quarter of 2026, highlighting intensified monitoring and enforcement across private sector establishments.
- The United Arab Emirates announced the extension of the Nafis programme, a long-term national framework for Emirati talent development and private-sector employment, until 2040.

Individual obligations and benefits

- Ghana introduced an e-Visa platform for business travelers and tourists, with decisions expected within 48 hours for complete applications. Additionally, all African nationals traveling to Ghana for business and tourism are exempt from visa fees.
- Iraq's Ministry of Interior of the Kurdistan Regional Government announced a 90-day facilitation measure for foreign nationals whose visas or residency permits expired.
- Nigeria introduced enhanced scrutiny for e-CERPAC and e-TWP applications for Russian nationals in response to recent geopolitical developments.
- Qatar suspended the visa-on-arrival facility for Pakistani nationals.
- Qatar suspended the visa-on-arrival facility for nationals of Lebanon.
- Qatar ended automatic one-month extensions for expired or near-expiry entry visas as of 7 June 2026, with standard validity rules, extension processes, and fees now reinstated.
- On 15 June 2026, Qatar announced that individuals whose residence permits are canceled must depart the country within 14 days from the date of cancelation. This change is effective immediately.
- South Africa extended the temporary concession period until 30 June 2027 for eligible foreign nationals with pending waiver, long-term visa and appeal applications effective 1 April 2026.
- The United Arab Emirates canceled the waiver of overstay fines for individuals who were unable to exit the UAE due to exceptional circumstances in the region. Effective 10 June 2026 to 9 July 2026, individuals have a temporary 30-day grace period to regularize their immigration status or exit without incurring overstay fines.
- The United Arab Emirates expanded its visa-on-arrival program to include nationals of six additional countries. Eligible individuals may obtain entry visas upon arrival, provided they hold valid residence permits issued by specified countries.

Looking ahead

- Saudi Arabia and the UAE are tightening labor market controls, with expanded nationalization mandates and stricter contract documentation requirements shaping access to foreign talent. As compliance becomes increasingly tied to documented employment and Saudization targets, employers will need to enhance workforce planning, ensure full alignment with local hiring quotas, and strengthen documentation processes to sustain mobility programs.

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