

Mobility: Immigration alert

March 2023



Kosovo

Kosovo passport holders to soon be able to travel to the EU without a visa

Executive summary

On 9 March 2023, the Council of the EU announced that holders of passports issued by Kosovo will soon be eligible to travel to the EU without a visa for limited periods of stay. This change is expected to go into effect by 1 January 2024.

Background

[Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1806](#) of the European Parliament and the EU Council lists the countries outside the EU (i.e., third countries) whose nationals must have a valid visa to cross the external EU borders, as well as those whose nationals are exempt from this requirement. Currently, holders of passports issued by Kosovo, a third country, require a visa to travel to the EU. In 2016, the Stabilization and Association Agreement came into force, making Kosovo a “potential candidate” to join the EU. Its accession to the EU is still pending.

Key developments

At its meeting on 9 March 2023, the EU Council's Justice and Home Affairs department adopted proposed amendments to Regulation (EU) 2018/1806. The amendments authorize holders of passports issued by Kosovo to travel to the EU without a visa and stay in the EU for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

This exemption is expected to go into effect once the [ETIAS](#) is introduced. The ETIAS, an IT system designed to mitigate irregular migration to the Schengen Area, will apply to most non-EU nationals who do not need a visa to enter the Area and allow them to enter for up to three years without restrictions on the number of their entries.

If the ETIAS is not launched by the end of calendar year 2023, the visa exemption for holders of passports issued by Kosovo will go into effect on 1 January 2024.

Impact on employers

Employers are expected to benefit from reduced immigration requirements, relaxed administrative burdens and speedier deployments when sending impacted individuals to the EU for assignment, employment or business purposes, which may enhance their access to the EU market.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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