

Global BRIEF



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U.S.A: H-1B CAP OF 65,000 VISAS NEARLY FULL

On 1 August 2005 the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that 49,040 new H1B petitions had already been filed against the fiscal year (FY) 2006 cap.

The H1B cap for regular cases is 65,000 for each fiscal year (October 1 to September 30). 6,800 H1Bs are set aside for nationals of Chile and Singapore under terms of the U.S.-Chile and U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreements and to the extent unused can first be made available for general use on October 1, 2006, the start of FY 2007.

Established by the Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT), the H-1B nonimmigrant visa category allows U.S. employers to augment the existing labor force with highly skilled temporary workers. H-1B workers are admitted to the United States for an initial period of three years, which may be extended for an additional three years.

INDONESIA: OFFERS AN AIRPORT VISA ENTRY TO MALDIV AND RUSSIAN NATIONALS

Indonesia has granted Russian and Maldivian passport holders the right to travel to Indonesia on a waiver program i.e. without having to obtain a visa prior to entry. This change in the immigration policy will be effective from August 5, 2005.

This waiver program offers a 30-day entry visa which will be issued to applicants on arrival at the airport. The restrictions on the 30 day visa are that it may not be used for purposes other than stated thereon nor extended.

BRUNEI: VISA OVERSTAYER WHIPPED

The Immigration Prosecutor Office in Brunei charged a Filipino man with overstaying his visa by 130 days. His sentence? 3 months jail and physical punishment of 3 strokes with a whip.

CHINA: EASES ENTRY FOR TAIWAN RESIDENTS

China's government has made it easier for Taiwan residents to visit the mainland. Taiwan residents can now apply for multiple-entry permits valid for as long as five years. This is a change from the current position which requires Taiwan residents to apply for a visa each time they wish to visit mainland China.

GHANA: FREE VISA ENTRY TO "GLOBAL AFRICAN COMMUNITY"

The government of Ghana was said to be "Calling all Africans in the Diaspora" when they announced the government's intention to grant all Africans free visa entry to Ghana.

The government has taken steps towards fulfilling this intent by incorporating a provision dubbed "Right of Abode" for the Africans in the Diaspora in the Ghana Immigration Act.

This "right" considers only the payment of visa fees by those visiting the country for the first time, while subsequent visits would be free.

IRAN: AIRPORT VISAS FOR UAE CITIZENS

UAE citizens traveling to Iran can now get visas at the port of entry according to Foreign Ministry's Department of Consular Affairs Director. A seven-day entry visa will be granted on the condition that that applicant's passport has more than six months to run. Iran has designated the Imam Khomeini, Mehrabad, Shiraz and Tabriz airports for the entry visas.

UKRAINE: VISA FREE REGIME FOR U.S. CITIZENS

According to a recent President's Decree #1008/2005 "On Introduction of Visa Free Regime for U.S. Citizens", U.S. citizens are now eligible to travel to the Ukraine without a visa for business purposes up to a period of 90 days within a six month period. This regulation is not extended to the immigrant visas, student

visas, work at the U.S. diplomatic or consular missions in Ukraine nor to cases where the U.S. citizen has to stay in Ukraine more than 90 days within the period of six months.

There was initial confusion with the introduction of this new visa - free entry with certain Ukraine Consulates interpreting the Decree as meaning a visa is still needed for the first trip and any subsequent trips were visa - free.

However this interpretation is not accurate, and people experiencing this interpretation should contact their Pro-Link Global professional for assistance.

SADC: ARE MEMBER STATES READY FOR VISA FREE ENTRY?

This is the question being asked in the study that was launched by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). SADC has launched a study to explore the level of preparedness of member states to introduce a new visa regime next year. The new visa regime as explained in the SADC treaties will be to implement a visa exemption system for regional travelers and the single visa for international travelers into the SADC region. This would mean for example, that a Zimbabwean traveling to South Africa or Mauritius would not need a visa prior to traveling which is currently the case.

The ongoing study is also to assess the challenges that member states were facing in making their immigration laws consistent with the expectations of the envisaged visa requirements.

The proposal is a mirror of the Schengen Treaty that was signed in Luxembourg in 1985 and groups 15 EU countries in a common visa policy. Travelers from other countries beyond the region would just need to obtain a single SADC visa to enable them to travel in any of the grouping's member states. The member states of the SADC Treaty are Angola, Seychelles, Botswana, South Africa, DR Congo, Swaziland, Lesotho, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia.

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Comment: I am a Canadian citizen and I am currently in the U.S. I am interested in the SADC visa free entry for U.S. citizens. I would like to know more about the SADC visa free entry for U.S. citizens. I would like to know more about the SADC visa free entry for U.S. citizens. I would like to know more about the SADC visa free entry for U.S. citizens.

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