

GLOBAL brief

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SOUTH AFRICA: CHANGES TO INTRA COMPANY TRANSFER WORK PERMIT UNDER REVIEW

Currently an Intra-company transfer work permit is issued for a maximum of 2 years and cannot be extended. The South African authorities have been working with multinational companies to get this time limit extended as it is not practical for employees on longer term assignments. The Immigration Delegation will be requesting Parliament to implement changes to the Immigration Act before the end of the year with respect to the conditions for Intra-company transfer work permits.

Until the legislation is approved, the Ministerial Liaison Officer for Immigration advised that interim measures will be established to facilitate this.

An intra-company transfer work permit currently cannot be extended. Once the employee has been in South Africa for 2 years, the work permit expires. In order to assist employers who need employees to remain longer than the 2 years specified, the employer will now be able to apply for a general work permit once the intra-company transfer permit has expired. This means, that the Immigration category of work permit will change from intra-company transfer to general.

Under a general work permit there are local labor certification conditions to be met, such as advertising the post in the national newspapers and ensuring that there are no local South Africans who can fill the position. As an interim solution, the authorities are considering exempting the condition of advertising the post for 2nd intra-company work permit applications.

A number of experienced officials have already been selected to deal with the outstanding applications for exemptions and the Parliament has undertaken to treat this matter with the utmost urgency.

CHINA: NEW PASSPORT LAWS TAKE EFFECT 1 JAN 07

As of January 1, 2007, China will put its Passport Law into action. According to the new passport law, there will be two kinds of passports: one with a five-year validity, and the other a ten-year validity. The former will be issued to citizens under 16 years old and the latter for older citizens. Both kinds of passport can not be extended once they expire, and the bearer must apply for a new passport.

In addition, the passport law redefines visa refusal saying that those who do not have a Chinese nationality, can not prove their identity and those who provide false documents during the application process shall not obtain a passport.

SAUDI ARABIA: INTRODUCING ELECTRONIC IQAMA CARDS

Electronic iqama cards will soon be made available to expatriate workers in the Makkah Region as the passport department is currently installing the equipment to issue such smart cards, according to the director general of the department.

The department decided to issue electronic iqama cards in place of booklets as part of efforts to prevent forgery and provide advanced services to both Saudis and expatriates.

More than 16,000 passport and card applications are handled daily by the department in Jeddah, especially during the summer when a large number of Saudis and expatriates travel abroad to spend their holidays.

The new smart card will carry all personal information about the holder such as the full name of the worker in both Arabic and English, the number, expiry date, photo, date of birth, nationality, profession, religion and the employer's full name.

RUSSIA: IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES IMPROVED

Russian President Putin has enacted legislation designed to remove entry barriers for skilled foreign workers and boost the government's ability to identify labor shortages and vet candidates for work visas for the necessary skills required to fill those shortages.

The changes will allow foreigners not requiring a visa to enter Russia to get a temporary residency permit not subject to quotas and remove a requirement for annual re-registration of residency status. These individuals can also obtain a work permit within 10 days of applying for one, while employers will no longer have to obtain official permission from the government to hire them.

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CANADA: SIMPLIFIED PERMANENT RESIDENCE PROCESS

As of September 1st, 2006, most Canadian immigration applications for permanent residence under the Federal Skilled Worker and Business Class immigration programs are to be submitted under the new 'Simplified Application Process'. The simplified application process will require skilled worker and business class applicants to submit only an amended basic Application form, the Use of Representative form and government processing fees.

Reproduced from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/notice/notice-simple.html>

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