

GLOBAL brief

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UNITED KINGDOM: NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT FOR APPLICANTS SEEKING SETTLEMENT IN THE UK

FROM 2 APRIL 2007, ALL ADULTS APPLYING FOR SETTLEMENT IN THE UK (ALSO KNOWN AS "INDEFINITE LEAVE TO REMAIN" OR "PERMANENT RESIDENCE") WILL NEED TO PASS A "LIFE IN THE UK" TEST OR AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE.

The Government has announced that this new condition will be in addition to the usual requirements for settlement and will affect applicants aged 18 to 65. The requirement aims to ensure residents have the requisite language skills and citizenship knowledge to integrate successfully into British society. It also forms part of the Government's managed migration five-year strategy.

To meet the new requirement, from 2nd April 2007, applicants must either:

- Pass a "Life in the UK" test, if they already possess a good standard of English (ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) Entry 3 standard or above); **or**
- Pass an "ESOL with citizenship course", if their standard of English is below ESOL Entry 3 standard.

This change will not affect any applicants applying for settlement prior to the 2nd April 2007.

SINGAPORE: CITIZENSHIP ON OFFER

THE NEW SCHEME IS A MAJOR BREAK FROM THE EXISTING SITUATION IN WHICH THE BALANCE OF POWER LIES WITH EMPLOYERS. CURRENTLY, IF AN EP HOLDER LEAVES HIS COMPANY, HIS EP IS CANCELLED AND HE MUST LEAVE SINGAPORE UNLESS HE FINDS A NEW JOB.

The personalized employment pass (PEP) is given to individuals, and not the company that hires them. It enables them to switch jobs with ease, but also comes with a time frame of five years. After that, the individual can either go on working on a regular Employment Pass— which is tied to a specific employer — or apply for Permanent Residence (PR) status.

It is granted on the strength of the EP holder's individual merits. It allows the holder to remain in Singapore for up to six months between jobs. Unlike the current EP, which can be renewed after fixed periods, the PEP is non-renewable. This means that after five years, if he hasn't already become a PR the PEP-holder must make a key choice. He can either go back to the regular EP — and his dependence on an employer — or apply for Permanent Residence Status.



*Wishing you Happy Holidays,
from all of us at Pro-Link Global*

ITALY: POST OFFICE NOW HAS IMMIGRATION FUNCTION FOR ALL NON-EU NATIONAL PERMITS OF STAY

FROM DECEMBER 11, 2006 THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO IMPLEMENT A NEW PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUANCE AND RENEWAL OF THE PERMIT OF STAY FOR NON EU NATIONALS.

According to the new procedure, applications will have to be made through the Italian post office network and no longer through the local *Questura*. The applications will be registered, monitored and approved using a new and innovative informative Police system.

The role of the post office personnel is limited only to the acceptance of the request. The Questura will remain responsible for the issue/refusal of the permits. All foreigners will have to fill in specific machine readable forms provided by the post office.

Once the application has been submitted at one of the 5.332 authorized post offices in Italy, it will be sent to the Central Service Post Office that will proceed in scanning the documents and will forward the request to the local authorized Questura.

The application forms can be collected by anyone at one of the 14.000 Italian post offices, but only 5.332 offices are authorized to accept the requests.

The applicant will then be invited by the Questura to visit their office for an interview. The applicant will have to be fingerprinted (for stays exceeding 90 days) and to file any additional documents, such as photographs, and will later receive a notice from the Police to pick up the original Permit of Stay once it has been approved.

The new system is mandatory for all non EU nationals. EU citizens can decide whether to request the Permit of Stay at the post office or continue to apply for it at the local Questura. According to the Italian Ministry of Interior Office the processing time will be longer than expected for the initial phase of the new procedure.

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In this issue

U.K.

New English language requirement for Applicants Seeking Settlement

SINGAPORE

Citizenship on offer via Personalized Employment Pass

ITALY

Post Office Now Has Immigration Function For All Non-EU National Permits Of Stay

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