Global Watch

International Assignment Services

April 26, 2012

Ireland

Immigration Alert: Recent Irish Immigration Developments

An International Assignment Services (IAS) Network Publication.

This article is intended to highlight general issues and is not a comprehensive statement of the topic or the laws of that country.

In Brief

Recent Irish immigration developments have been introduced which includes the extension to the Short-stay Visa Waiver Programme and other measures introduced to encourage business and tourism travellers to Ireland.

Short-Stay Visa Waiver Programme Extended

Following positive reviews, the short-stay visa waiver programme originally due to conclude on October 31, 2012, has been extended for a further 4 year period.

The short-stay visa waiver programme allows tourists or business travellers who have lawfully entered the UK on a valid UK visa to travel to Ireland for a short period without the requirement to obtain a separate Irish entry visa.

In addition to the 16 countries already covered by the programme, Bosnia & Herzegovina have now been included in the programme.

In a further move to encourage business and tourism travellers, it has been announced that nationals of participating countries who are long-term residents in the UK or the Schengen area, and who are not eligible for the Short-stay Visa Waiver Programme, will be exempt from paying a visa application fee should they wish to travel to Ireland.

The Minister for Justice has also announced that visa requirements for holders of Olympic Accreditation, including athletes, coaches and officials, will be waived for the period leading up to and including the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London this summer; thereby encouraging participants already travelling to the UK to visit Ireland also.

pwc

Immigrant Investor and Start-up Entrepreneur Programmes Now Open to Applicants

The Immigrant Investor and Start-up Entrepreneur programmes, announced as part of the government's key immigration priorities for 2012 to help stimulate investment and job creation in Ireland, formally opened to applicants on April 15, 2012.

Applications for both programmes will be considered by an independent Evaluation Committee comprising representatives of IDA Ireland and relevant government departments.

Irish residence permission for successful applicants, and their dependant family members, will be granted initially for 2 years and may subsequently be renewed for a further 3 years subject to the applicant continuing to meet the conditions of the relevant scheme. Visa required nationals will also be issued with a multi-entry visa to facilitate multiple travel to Ireland for the duration of the residence permission. The programmes also facilitate a pathway to Long-Term Residence for successful applicants following the initial 5 years of residence in Ireland.

Changes to Immigration Control at Dublin Airport

Implementation of the government plan to transition immigration control at Dublin airport has now commenced, with civil servants from the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service taking over some immigration checking duties from the Gardaí on a pilot basis.

Upon completion of the pilot scheme, it is envisaged that the programme will eventually be expanded to include all airports and ferry ports across the country.

NERA 2011 Review

Compliance checks under employment permit legislation are an integral part of all workplace inspections carried out by the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA). In 2011, NERA inspectors detected breaches of employment permit legislation in 20% of inspections with the main breaches found to be the employment of individuals without valid employment permits.

It is now more important than ever for organisations to review their level of compliance with employment permit legislation to avoid any surprises in the event of a NERA inspection.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact:

Mary O'Hara	*+353 (1) 792 6515*	*mary.ohara@ie.pwc.com*
Anne Bolster	*+353 (1) 792 6209*	*anne.bolster@ie.pwc.com*
Aoife Kilmurray	*+353 (1) 792 6117*	*aoife.kilmurray@ie.pwc.com*

This document is for general information purposes only, and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors.

SOLICITATION

© 2012 PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. All rights reserved. In this document, "PwC" refers to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership, which is a member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited, each member firm of which is a separate legal entity.