

RESIDENCY

We have received hundreds of enquiries which include numerous topics regarding the new Residency Regulations. As you can imagine we simply do not have the time or numbers to deal with everyone individually, but we have the topics recorded and hopefully most of them will be answered in this Newsletter.

Should this not be the case we will identify those topics and raise them with the Government in order to reduce concerns.

Thank you for your understanding as the Team are working hard for you!

Following the release of the second Interim Newsletter we have received many questions regarding clarification required surrounding the new Residency Regulations.

On Monday 28th October, together with Deputy Chairman Mike Diplock, we met the Interior Minister Aysegul Baybars and her Head of Legal Services for the Interior Ministry Ogur Culhaoglu.

I thanked Mr Culhaoglu for joining a Group on Facebook and answering some questions relating to the problems.

The Minister then took the opportunity to reiterate the following points:-

- 🔗 **Those UK Citizens who are over 60 years of age have up to one year to complete the process to obtain Residency.**
- 🔗 Persons under 60 years of age must continue to apply for Residency in the normal time frames using either the online system or previous 'paper' system. The exemption for blood tests did not apply to this group.
- 🔗 There were issues with the Website which meant registration had not been easy, but during the discussion brought Emre Haci, the Director of Immigration into the meeting to provide him with an overview of problems being experienced. The Minister requested that we be patient for a few more days until the IT providers had resolved these issues. The Minister promised that we would be notified once the system was fully operational.
- 🔗 The Minister understood that there had been issues with at the borders with Immigration Officers only giving a 30-day visa but stated that no-one would be fined or penalised should they exceed this limit.

We then raised the following points with the Minister:-

1. When travelling to the TRNC from the South, it was an offence to carry documents of sale or kocans. The Minister admitted she was unaware of this.

2. There are many couples in the TRNC who are co-habiting and as the TRNC has no legal ability to class these persons as married. The Minister stated that they will be prepared to look at introducing some form of document which certifies that they are in a relationship but not married. This would be applicable for both heterosexual and same sex couples. The Minister said they would also look to review the financial requirements of these individuals to bring them in to line with 'family residency'
3. Currently a property owner, who is 60 years or over and married would apply for a residency visa for 'immovable property' (whether the property is in joint names, or not) but this would effectively then be treated based on it being a Family visa. The other spouse's subsequent application would be treated based on it being a part of the same Family visa. Although we have not yet seen how the two applications would be linked together within the online system, there is obviously a procedure for the linking together. The first applicant of a Family visa would be required to prove income equivalent to that of the current minimum TRNC wage which is 3400tl, approximately £458 according to current exchange rates. The second applicant would not be required to prove any income.

For applicants who are 60 years or over, and renting property to live in, the same procedure as outlined above will apply, except for the first applicant, sufficient income equivalent to that of three (3) times the current minimum TRNC wage which would be 9,450TL would need to be proved, with the second and any subsequent applicant under the Family visa, not having to prove sufficient income.

As an alternative to proof of income, applications can be made that demonstrate savings equivalent to 12 times the minimum monthly wage. In the case of a property owner 37,800TL or if renting property 113,400TL.

4. We requested that a 'help desk' be provided for persons still requiring clarity on certain points. The Minister confirmed that she had requested English (and Russian) speaking support workers to provide such help and once in place the contact details would be circulated. Ogur confirmed that he would continue to take Q and A's from the North Cyprus Expat Group.
5. We mentioned the concern this had caused as UK citizens were used to receiving more information prior to the implementation of new Regulations, but she again reiterate that this was why the ONE YEAR transition period had been put in place.

Just to reiterate those points from our previous Interim Newsletter that we have now had confirmed.

A 'guidance' document is currently being translated into English and once we have that it will be circulated. This document will outline the ONLINE system and confirm the current system for those who cannot use the ONLINE system.

It will also contain other useful information.

- 🔗 The registration for the ONLINE process can be accessed via <https://icisleri.gov.ct.tr/>. On the right-hand side of the screen is a 'house' icon. This is your link to the registration part of the process. **This is still not fully operational, and we will inform you once it has been confirmed to be fully working.**
- 🔗 All UK Citizens staying in the TRNC in excess of 90 days will have to register for Residency, irrespective of age.
- 🔗 There will be a ONE-year transition period for persons over 60 to complete the application. This is until 22nd October 2020
- 🔗 Over 60s can elect to apply for either 1,2 or 3 years
- 🔗 Initial requirements **WILL NOT** include a medical check (blood test) for persons over 60 years of age, although those **UNDER 60** years of age will continue to be required to undergo this test.
- 🔗 The financial requirements will be based on either -
 - (a) Savings to the value of the average TRNC **annual** minimum wage OR
 - (b) Income equivalent to ONCE the average **monthly** minimum wage if you own property OR, THREE times the average **monthly** minimum wage if you rent.
 - (c) The cost of residency will be the current yearly fee (currently 447tl per annum)
- 🔗 Application will be online OR as the current 'paper system'
- 🔗 Visitor visa's will be for 30,60 or 90 days depending on the reason for the stay.
 - (a) 30 days purely for tourist holidays
 - (b) 60 days if staying with a relative or
 - (c) 90 days if you own property and wish to subsequently apply for residency
- 🔗 You will only be able to stay 90 days in each 180-day period.

- 🔗 The completed residency permission will NOT be in your passport. If you make your application ONLINE you will be able to print your Residency document at the conclusion of the process. For NON-ONLINE applications it will be a separate paper document.
- 🔗 The ONLINE process will not necessitate a trip to the Immigration Offices in Lefkosa, the NON-ONLINE process will remain as it currently is.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE PREVIOUS 'PAPER' SYSTEM WAS DIFFERENT IF YOU WERE OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE. THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE AND REVERTS TO THE ORIGINAL SYSTEM STARTING AT THE POLICE STATION. PLEASE REFER TO THE WEBSITE FOR THIS INFORMATION.

- 🔗 The Government has come under intense pressure from all Communities regarding the 'upper age' at which you do not need to renew residency, and we are hoping to be able to get this reviewed as we did for the Blood Test.

🔗 Members who currently have Residency will not be required to register on the NEW system until the current document expires.

In relation to our members who are 'swallows' we would advise that you apply for Residency through the online system. It will then allow you unfettered access for the period of that residency.

We have been assured that the Immigration Officers and Police have been informed to be lenient during the transition period and we have seen a document which confirms this fact.

The situation regarding UK citizens who have resided here for many years was also discussed and we were advised that the 'Permanent Residency' rules were also under review to make this easier to obtain.

GOVERNMENT LIAISON

The following information has just been received in respect of 'personal' visits to the Police Immigration office at Girne Police Station.

'We have completed the first part of renewing our residency. We have 8 years uninterrupted residency stamps . This is our experience.'

Firstly, you have to go to the immigration office at Girne police station with all your documents. Don't try Lefkosa first, all they will do is send you to Girne police station.

You must get a numbered ticket from the dispenser just outside of the immigration office. The office is only open 8am to 12 o'clock and they only will see about 45

applications. We arrived 8.10 am and our ticket number was 25. By 8.45 all 45 tickets were issued and no more could be dispensed.

We had to wait about an hour to be seen and after processing we were then issued with a piece of paper and told we would get a phone call in about 25 days' time to go to the Lefkosa immigration office to pay and get our official residency certificate.

The documents we needed were:

- 🔗 passport,
- 🔗 photocopy of passport,
- 🔗 mukhtar letter,
- 🔗 copy of kocan (or registered rental agreement),
- 🔗 marriage certificate in Turkish or English (we gave them photocopies with no problems),
- 🔗 passport photo for the Lefkosa immigration office and 24TI stamp and proof of income or saving in the TRNC. We took UK bank statements and they just ripped them out of our folder and gave them back to us.
- 🔗 We had one copy of everything as spare but did not need them.

Only one person was registered for residency against the kocan the other was registered as a family member which is why we had to produce a marriage certificate. This person does not have to show evidence of income or savings.

I can be of no help to those people that have a different set of condition than we have but people were being turned away because of lack of evidence of income in TRNC or being unable to show a marriage certificate. We will await the phone call.

I hope this is of some help. I will not get into any discussion on this topic. This just our experience'