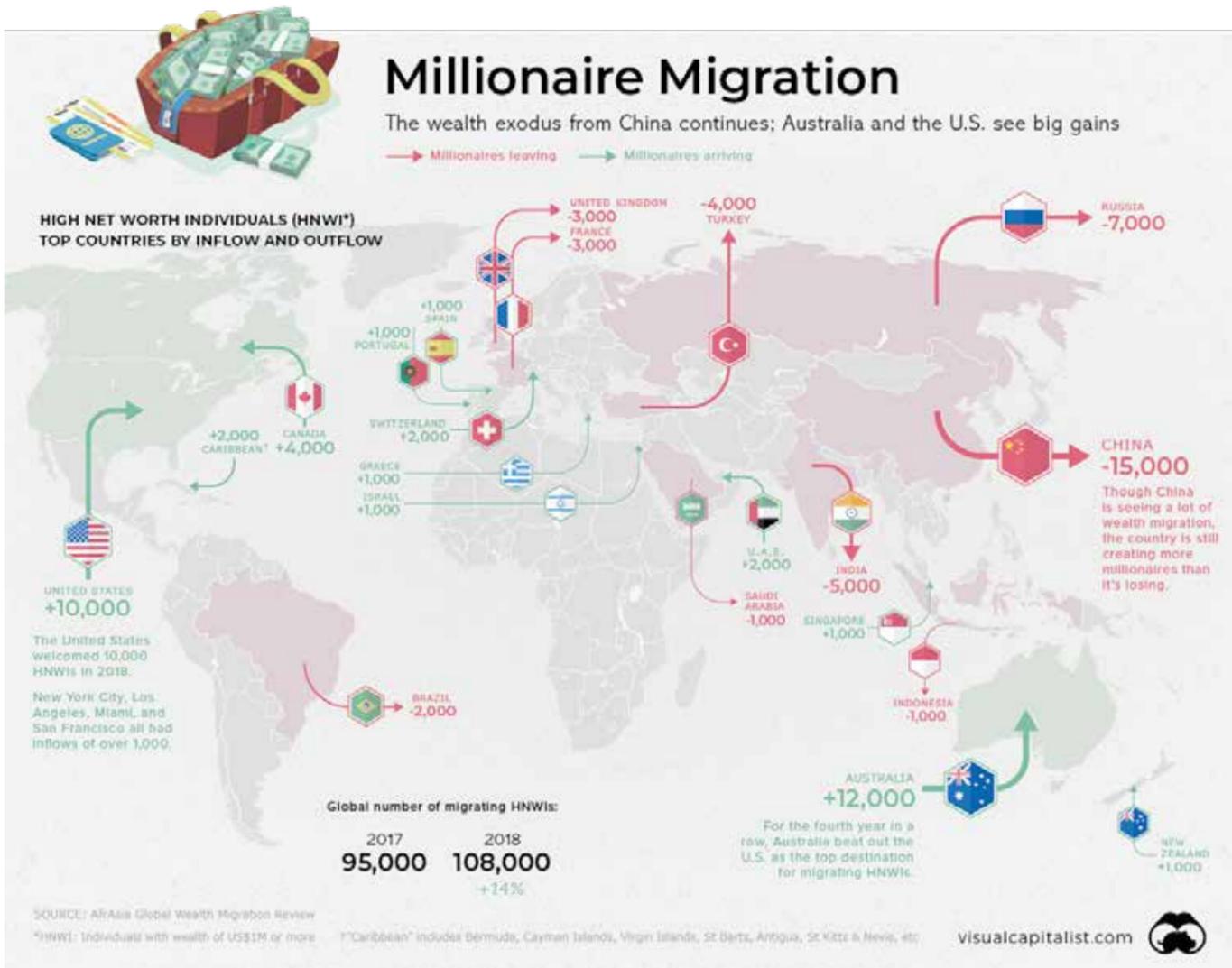
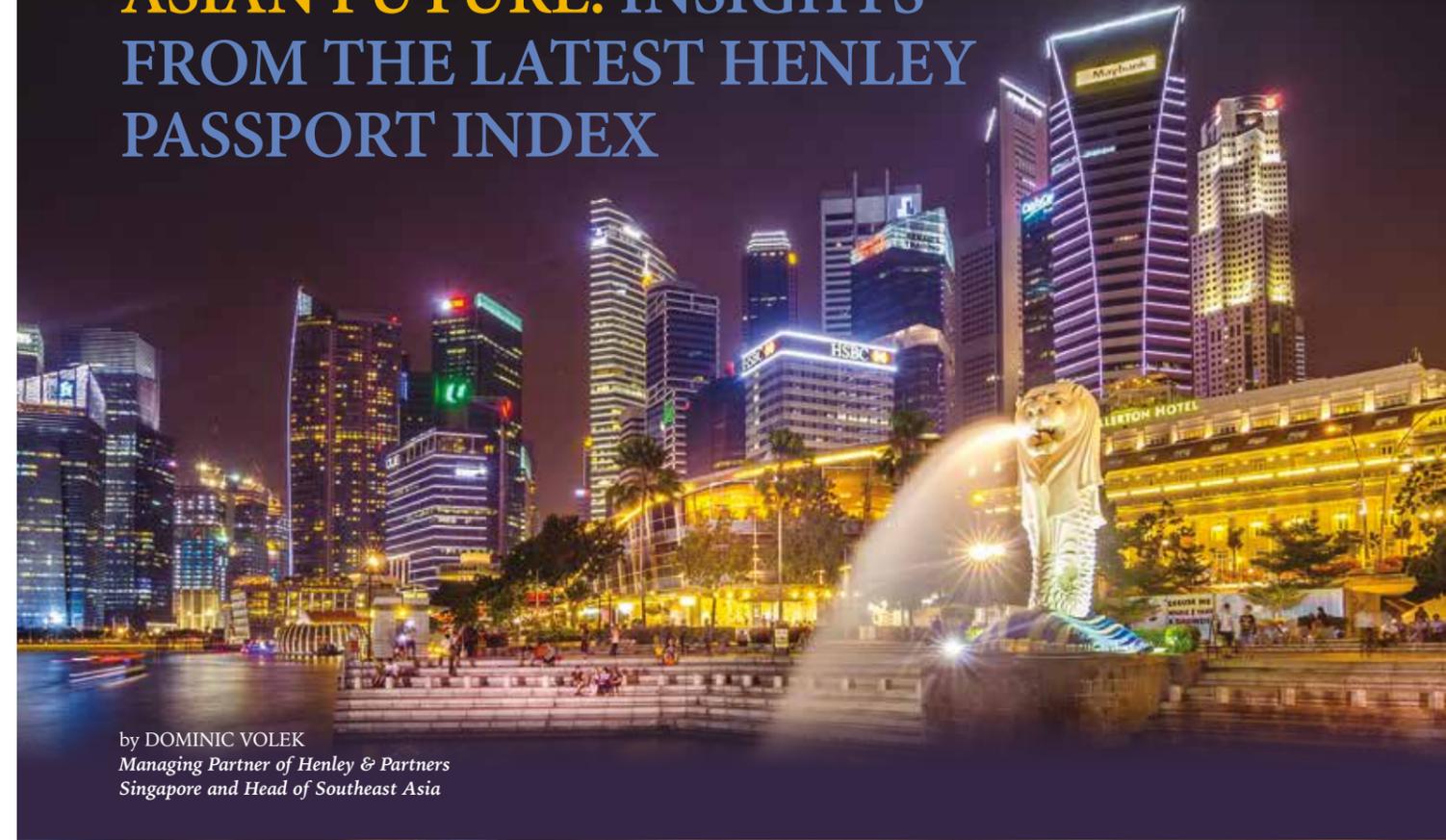


# MAPPING THE GLOBAL MIGRATION OF MILLIONAIRES



# VISA-OPENNESS AND AN ASIAN FUTURE: INSIGHTS FROM THE LATEST HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX



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Recently, global headlines have been dominated by the rise of neo-isolationism in an era of globalism: Donald Trump’s wall, Brexit, the impact of the Sino-US trade war, ultra-nationalism in Poland and Hungary, elections being won on anti-immigration platforms, a changing Brazil under Bolsonaro, and constantly reanimated border disputes. It is almost inevitable that along with these headlines comes the perception that countries around the world are less interested in engagement and collaboration. Although this belief is understandable, it does not align with reality. The truth of the matter, which is that global networks of collaboration are more expansive than ever before, is clearly illustrated by the latest rankings from the Henley Passport Index.

Originally invented in 2004 by Chairman of Henley & Partners Dr. Christian H. Kälin, who designed the first ranking of all the world’s countries according to how many destinations their citizens can travel to visa-free, the index is the original, authoritative, and most widely used of its kind.

The latest rankings show we are witnessing a fundamental geopolitical shift, but not the headline-friendly shift regarding borders and the rise of nationalism. Instead, the index shows that Asia’s growing power is transforming trade and tourism networks, and that travel freedom and visa-openness in Asia and around the world are very much the model of the future. Analysis of historical

data from the index’s 14-year history indicates that we have been heading in this direction for some time: in 2006, a citizen, on average, could travel to 58 destinations without needing a visa from the host nation. This number has now almost doubled, with the average citizen able to travel to 107 destinations without a prior visa.

Japan, Singapore, and South Korea now hold joint top spot on the Henley Passport Index, with a visa-free/visa-on-arrival score of 189. These latest results consolidate 12 months of Asian dominance, after Japan first climbed to the top spot in February last year, unseating Germany. Following a visa-exemption from Uzbekistan, Germany

currently sits alone in 2nd place, with a score of 188. Five countries now share 3rd place on the index — which is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) — with a score of 187: Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, and Sweden. The UK and the USA look increasingly unlikely to regain the top spot they jointly held in 2015, as the UK now sits in 5th place with a visa-free/ visa-on-arrival score of 185, and the USA in 6th, with a score of 184. Afghanistan and Iraq remain at the bottom of the ranking, a position one or both countries have occupied throughout the index’s 14-year history, with a score of 30.

The UAE continues its upward trajectory and is now just one spot away from entry into the index’s top 20. After the recent formalization of a mutual visa-waiver agreement signed with Russia, UAE passport holders are now able to access 165 destinations around the world without a prior visa. This current score marks an extraordinary ascent from the position the UAE held a decade ago, when the country shared joint 61st place with Thailand and Zimbabwe and had a visa-free/ visa-on-arrival score of just 52.

The UAE’s ascent is one of many success stories on the Henley Passport Index. Albania, for instance, has moved up 28

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places on the index over the past ten years, with citizens of this once closed-off nation now able to access 116 destinations without a prior visa. China’s ascent is less dramatic, but it is a change that experts believe to be far more significant from a geopolitical point of view: the country now sits in 67th spot, having moved up 11 places since 2008.

According to Dr. Parag Khanna, Founder and Managing Partner of FutureMap and author of *The Future Is Asian: Global Order in the Twenty-first Century*, the 21st century belongs to Asia. “With all Asian countries topping the index for the first time, there is a clear momentum behind the region taking center stage in globalization. The rise of China through its visa-waiver agreements shows how incremental and reciprocal measures can lead to significant progress in trust and recognition. I fully expect other countries to follow these examples as they seek to benefit from global flows of talent and capital.”

Commenting further on the impact of China’s multi-trillion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the largest infrastructure project in history, Dr. Khanna observed that “with the Belt and Road Initiative expanding its constellation of member states and cross-border projects, we can expect Asian, European, Arab, and African countries to continue to seek more seamless access to



each other’s countries. This will benefit both China and all countries participating in the rising trade along the new Silk Roads.”

Uzbekistan’s significant shift in visa policy and the promise of a new Central Asian ‘Silk Visa’ are emblematic of this progressive approach. The once isolated nation has been re-energized by BRI-led development, with China heavily involved in rail construction in the country. In February of this year, Uzbekistan dramatically relaxed its once highly restrictive and arcane visa policy in a bid to embrace both tourism and further foreign direct investment. Nationals of 45 countries can now obtain a visa on arrival, and it is expected that tourism will flourish.

While growing passport strength seems inevitable for some countries, uncertainty abounds for others, with Brexit being the most obvious example, as Prof. Dr. Florian Trauner, Research Professor at the Institute for European Studies at the Free University of Brussels, observed. “Post-Brexit, it is likely that UK citizens will retain their (short-stay) visa-free travel for the Schengen area. If the UK and EU manage to maintain a close political and trade relationship, the actual impact of Brexit on the travel freedom of British citizens may remain limited. However, the picture gets different with regard to long-term mobility given that the free movement rights for UK citizens in the EU (and vice versa) will cease to apply.”

Overall, the latest rankings from the Henley Passport Index show that global headlines suggesting

increasing isolationist sentiment do not tell the full story. The index has always been an important tool for global travelers, but it reveals more than just the relative strength of the world’s passports. Crucially, it is also a prism through which one can examine both the world in which we live and global policy trends that shape it. With some notable exceptions, there is a growing acknowledgment that policies of engagement, collaboration, and openness yield the greatest results, for both individual nations and the global community as a whole.



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## Top 100 Countries on the Henley Passport Index

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Passport Index

1	Japan	189	13	Malaysia	177	34	Dominica	137
	Singapore		14	Chile	176		El Salvador	
	South Korea		15	Monaco	174		Honduras	
2	Germany	188		Poland		35	Guatemala	135
3	Denmark	187	16	Cyprus	173		Venezuela	
	Finland		17	Argentina	171	36	Peru	134
	France			Brazil		37	Samoa	132
	Italy		18	Romania	170	38	Serbia	131
	Sweden		19	Bulgaria	169		Solomon Islands	
4	Luxembourg	186		Hong Kong (SAR China)		39	Vanuatu	129
	Spain			San Marino		40	Nicaragua	128
5	Austria	185	20	Andorra	168		Tuvalu	
	Netherlands			Croatia			Ukraine	
	Norway		21	Brunei	165	41	Colombia	126
	Portugal			United Arab Emirates		42	North Macedonia	125
	Switzerland		22	Israel	161		Tonga	
	United Kingdom		23	Barbados	159	43	Marshall Islands	124
6	Belgium	184	24	Mexico	158		Montenegro	
	Canada		25	Uruguay	155	44	Kiribati	123
	Greece		26	Bahamas	154	45	Micronesia	121
	Ireland		27	St. Kitts and Nevis	152		Moldova	
	United States of America		28	Antigua and Barbuda	150	46	Bosnia & Herzegovina	119
7	Czech Republic	183		Costa Rica		47	Palau Islands	118
8	Malta	182		Seychelles			Russian Federation	
9	Australia	181		Trinidad and Tobago		48	Albania	116
	Iceland			Vatican City		49	Georgia	114
	New Zealand		29	Taiwan	148	50	Turkey	110
10	Hungary	180	30	St. Vincent & Grenadines	146	51	Belize	100
	Latvia		31	Mauritius	145		South Africa	
	Lithuania			St. Lucia		52	Timor-Leste	97
	Slovakia		32	Grenada	143	53	Ecuador	93
	Slovenia			Paraguay		54	Kuwait	92
11	Estonia	179	33	Macao (SAR China)	142			
12	Liechtenstein	178		Panama				

The information provided here reflects the 2019 Henley Passport Index ranking on 26 March 2019.

