
For Immediate Release

Launch of the Henley & Partners Online Visa Restrictions Index 2016

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Henley & Partners launches the online Visa Restrictions Index 2016 with unique insights on trends over the last 11 years.

As the world becomes ever more globalized, individuals are increasingly living and conducting business on an international scale, with a second or even third residence or citizenship becoming an increasingly attractive option. For individuals who hold passports of countries with fewer visa waiver agreements, a second passport can open up travel to countries previously restricted by time-consuming visa application requirements and processes. This second passport gives a business person access to the global market, which in turn creates opportunities for growth.

But there continues to be a huge disparity in the levels of travel freedom between countries, despite the world becoming more mobile and interdependent. Generally, visa requirements reflect strongly on each country's relationships with others, and will take into account diplomatic relationships between the countries, reciprocal visa arrangements, security risks, and the risks of visa and immigration rules violations.

Henley & Partners, the global leader in residence and citizenship planning, is now launching the Visa Restrictions Index online, offering viewers a comprehensive analysis of the countries' progress and development since the Index was first published in 2006.

The interactive website, along with the unique cumulative data from the last 11 years, gives an unprecedented and inimitable insight into the development of visa policies over this time. Viewers may scroll through a list of 218 countries, compare multiple countries' rankings and scores, and alternate between a graph and map view.

The 2016 Visa Restrictions Index

Comparing the 2016 Index to previous years shows many interesting results.

Germany has retained its position in the top spot, with visa-free access to 177 countries out of a total of 218, while Sweden remained in second place with a ranking of 176. The UK meanwhile, dropped from first to third place this year, after three consecutive years in first

place. A larger group of countries sit in third place, with Finland, France, Italy, Spain and the UK all having visa-free access to 175 countries.

Generally, there was significant movement across the board with only 21 of the 199 countries listed remaining in the same rank. No country however, dropped more than three positions, indicating that overall, visa-free access is improving around the world. Four countries in particular made huge gains; Tonga rising 16 spots, Palau by 20, Colombia by 25 and Timor Leste, a Southeast Asian nation, being the highest climber with an increase of 33 ranks.

Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan meanwhile, continue to hold the bottom four positions on the Index, and thus have again been labelled the worst passports in the world.

The number of countries in the 'Top 10' remained static in this year's Index at 28 countries, with Hungary joining the category after one year of being pushed out, and Malaysia dropping to 12th position after three years in the premier group.

The Importance of Investment Migration

The growing importance of investment migration can be seen in steady growth of those countries offering residence and citizenship-by-investment programs. Those countries with relevant programs continue to perform strongly and all now feature in the top 30 of the Index.

Malta, the European Union member country which runs the world's most successful citizenship-by-investment program with over EUR 1 billion in capital raised since its launch in 2014, has gained visa-free access to another two countries since 2015, making it the 8th most powerful passport in the world. The other key location of citizenship-by-investment in Europe, the Mediterranean island nation of Cyprus, also added two countries to its basket, ranking 17th on the Index with visa-free access to 159 countries. The leading Caribbean citizenship-by-investment location, Antigua and Barbuda, ranked 30th and its passport-holders may now travel to 134 countries visa-free.

Portugal, which holds the most attractive residence-by-investment program through its Golden Visa Program, has taken 6th position in the 2016 Index, gaining two countries to total 172 countries its citizens may travel to visa-free.

The continued development of these countries demonstrates the critical nature of good visa-free access to countries offering investor migration programs. In turn, this speaks of

the importance of due diligence in such programs, since the reputation of a country's passport and its relationship with other countries is only as good as its newest citizens.

Henley & Partners' powerful insight and experience continues to lead the industry, supporting both governments to create and manage the top immigration programs in the world, and individuals to improve their lives by achieving alternative residence or citizenship.

To view the Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index 2016, containing the detailed scores and rankings, please visit visaindex.com

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Notes to Editors

Notes on the Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index 2016

Since 2006 the Index has been produced in collaboration with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which maintains the world's largest database of travel information. In compiling the index, the unique global ranking methodology by Henley & Partners is applied to data provided by IATA's proprietary passport and visa database.

Headlines 2016 vs 2015

- Germany holds the top position with a score of 177 out of a total of 218
- Sweden is ranked 2nd with visa-free access to 176 countries
- The UK dropped from 1st to 3rd place, after three consecutive years in the top spot
- A larger group sits in 3rd place: Finland, France, Italy, Spain and the UK, which all tied with visa-free access to 175 countries
- Only 21 countries out of 199 remained in the same rank as in 2015
- No country lost more than three ranks. Those among the biggest losers included Luxembourg, Norway and New Zealand
- Timor Leste was the biggest climber, rising 33 ranks to 82 countries with visa-free access
- Three other countries also made great strides: Tonga ascending 16 places, Palau (20), and Colombia (25)
- The four worst passports in the world remain Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan
- The size of the 'Top Ten' remained static at 28 countries, with one joining and one leaving: Hungary moved back up into the top ten after one year out of it, and Malaysia dropped out to 12th after three years in the top ten

General Headlines

Those countries who offer the most important residence or citizenship-by-investment programs in the world continue to perform strongly:

- Malta has gained two countries and is 8th with visa-free access to 168 Countries
- Antigua and Barbuda is ranked 30th with 134, gaining one country
- Portugal is 6th with 172, gaining two countries
- Cyprus is 17th with 159, gaining two countries
- All key programs feature in the top 30: the UK, the US, Belgium, Canada, Portugal, Austria, Singapore, Switzerland, Malta, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Monaco, Antigua and Barbuda

About Henley & Partners

Henley & Partners is the global leader in residence and citizenship planning. Each year, hundreds of wealthy individuals, families and their advisors rely on their expertise and experience in this area.

The concept of residence and citizenship planning was created by Henley & Partners in the 1990s. As globalization has expanded, residence and citizenship have become topics of significant interest among the increasing number of internationally mobile entrepreneurs and investors who work with Henley & Partners.

The firm also runs a [government advisory practice](#), and have been involved in strategic consulting and the design, set-up and operation of several of the world's most successful residence and citizenship programs which attracted have more than USD 4 billion in foreign direct investment to date.

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