

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

DIRECTORATE OF TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

STATUS REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The I Meeting of the Working Group on Business Visas was held on 25th January 2013 to provide a forum for discussion on strategies that can be implemented in order to achieve an ideal environment for trade and investment, with emphasis on the ease of obtaining business visas. The meeting also served to identify existing obstacles in the bureaucratic procedure for obtaining the relevant documentation permitting the business and investment community to legally operate in the ACS Region.

In an effort to combat issues faced by business persons, investors and host countries alike, the Working Group recommended that there is need:

- To clearly define a business person and an investor, and give a detailed explanation of the type of activities he/ she can engage in, as well as the services the individual is entitled to.
- To consider introducing an investor visa.
- To do a comparative study of an investor and a business person.

- To marry the immigration and trade policies so that administrative procedures coincide with amount of time business people and investors take to conduct their transactions.
- For all Member States to send their immigration information to the ACS to be compiled, tabulated and published on the ACS website. [The Director of Trade requested that all Member States send their information so that an accurate and detailed analysis of the situation can be rendered.]
- To establish links to all legislation and procedures pertaining to visas, embassies and immigration authorities of Member States on the ACS website.
- To inform the ACS Secretariat on a regular basis of any updates to the immigration laws and regulations related to business persons and/or investors.

Update of Activities Undertaken

Following the conclusion of the I Meeting of the Working Group on Business Visas the Directorate of Trade retransmitted the request for information related to the issuance of business visas and/or the treatment of investors, as well as the retransmission of the country questionnaire to those member States who had not made submissions, as well as those countries desirous of updating and amending information..

To date new responses have been received from one Member State.

The Directorate of Trade has also prepared a comparative table of Requirements in Each member State as it relates to the entrance of business persons and investors, which is annexed to this report.

Research continues in this area, and the Directorate encourages member States to provide the relevant information requested in order to advance work in this area.