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Ministry of Governance, Police and Public Safety
Directorate General of Immigration and Foreignness Services
San Jose, Costa Rica

Directorate

General

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CIRCULATORY NOTE
DG-29-09-2018

TO: All immigration agents abroad, Directorates, Managements, Units, Departments, Delegations and Regional Offices of the Directorate General of Immigration and Foreignness Services

DATE: 14 of September, 2018

FROM: Daguer Alberto Hernández Vásquez
Director General ad interim of Immigration and Foreignness Services

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RE: General Guidelines for Entry Visas for Non-Resident Persons

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signed digitally

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GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY VISAS FOR NON-RESIDENT PERSONS

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

FIRST: LEGAL FOUNDATION

GENERAL ACT ON IMMIGRATION AND FOREIGNNESS SERVICES, LAW N° 8764

ARTICLE 4.-

The following shall be excluded from the scope of this Law:



- 1) Diplomatic agents and consular officers accredited in Costa Rica, as well as other members of permanent or special diplomatic missions and consular offices, by virtue of the norms of international law and treaties ratified by Costa Rica. This provision shall be extended to the immediate family members of the official.
- 2) Officials, representatives and delegates, as well as other duly accredited members of the permanent missions or delegations to international organizations with their headquarters in Costa Rica.
This provision shall be extended to the immediate family members of the official. For the purpose of interpretation of this provision, “immediate family members” is understood to be the spouse of the official, as the case may be, as well as the children of one or the other under twenty-five years of age or older children with a disability, as well as the parents as long as there is a dependency relationship. All foreign nationals must have a diplomatic or official visa to enter and remain in the national territory, unless they have been exempted from this requirement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cult due to the principle of reciprocity or international regulations ratified by Costa Rica. This Ministry shall have exclusive jurisdiction on this matter.

ARTICLE 47.-

The Directorate General will convey the general guidelines for entry visas and permanence for non-residents, for foreigners who come from other countries or geographic regions, based on existing international agreements and treaties and security, convenience or opportunity reasons for the Republic of Costa Rica.

ARTICLE 51.-

Foreign persons who intend to enter under a non-resident immigration category will be required the appropriate entry visa with the exceptions set forth by the guidelines for entry and permanence for non-residents. The length of permanence will be authorized by the Directorate General authority when the foreign person enters the country in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Directorate General. Prior to the granting of a visa, immigration agents abroad shall obtain the appropriate entry authorization from the Directorate General, when applicable, according to the general guidelines for entry visas and permanence for non-residents.

BY-LAWS FOR THE GRANTING OF VISAS, EXECUTIVE DECREE N° 36626-G

ARTICLE 6.-

The General Guidelines for Entry Visas and Permanence for Non-Residents shall contemplate the nationals of those countries who will not be required a visa, those who will be required a consular visa and those who will be required a restricted



visa.

ARTICLE 8.-

For the purpose of these by-laws, non-residents will be considered as those foreign persons to whom the Directorate General grants entry and permanence authorizations for a period that shall not exceed ninety days according to the General Guidelines for Entry Visas as regulated by articles 47 and 48 of the Law.

SECOND: DEFINITION OF ENTRY AND PERMANENCE AS A NON-RESIDENT. Persons admitted in the country in their quality as **NON-RESIDENTS** may carry out those activities, as defined as **tourism** by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), during the term legally determined by the immigration control official, and it shall comprehend any activity carried out during their trip for leisure, business or professional purposes and as long as they are not remunerated or lucrative.

THIRD: ENTRY. In accordance with dispositions of article 42 of the General Act on Immigration and Foreignness Services, Law N° 8764, and the Executive Decree N° 36769-G “By-Laws on Immigration Control”, foreign persons who intend to enter in Costa Rica must bear: **1)** a passport or a valid travel document. Only passports or machine readable travel documents will be accepted, in accordance with the guidelines established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), (see below: validity for each group of countries), **2)** a visa if it is required, **3)** proof of economic sufficiency in a minimum of USD\$100.00 (one hundred American dollars) for each month of legal permanence in the country, **4)** a bill, ticket or voucher for the continuation of their trip, or else, the navigation plan in which the destination port is attested, **5)** Not having an impediment to enter in the Costa Rican territory.

FOURTH: As described in article 55 of the General Act on Immigration and Foreignness Services, a visa implies a mere expectation of a right and it does not entail the unconditional admission of the foreign person into the country nor an authorization for the maximum permanence as arranged for that group of countries or as expected by the individuals, who shall be subject to the immigration control that the competent authority may execute at the port of entry in order to verify the fulfillment of all the legal and by-law necessary requirements for their entry.



GROUP OF ENTRY WITH NO CONSULAR VISA

- **ENTRY: NO CONSULAR VISA**
- **PASSPORT: ONE DAY MINIMUM VALIDITY**
- **MAXIMUM PERMANENCE: UP TO NINETY NATURAL DAYS. NON-EXTENDIBLE.**

ANDORRA
ARGENTINA
AUSTRALIA *
AUSTRIA
BAHAMAS (THE)
BARBADOS
BELGIUM
BRAZIL
BULGARIA
CANADA
CROATIA
CHILE
CYPRUS
CZECH REPUBLIC
DENMARK *
ESTONIA
FINLAND
FRANCE *
GERMANY
GREECE (HELLENIC REPUBLIC)
HUNGARY
ICELAND
IRELAND
ISRAEL
ITALY
JAPAN
KOREA (REPUBLIC OF)
LATVIA
LIECHTENSTEIN
LITHUANIA
LUXEMBOURG
MALTA

MEXICO
MONACO (PRINCIPALITY OF)
MONTENEGRO
NORWAY *
NEW ZEALAND *
NETHERLANDS (THE; HOLLAND) *
PANAMA
PARAGUAY
PERU
POLAND
PORTUGAL
PUERTO RICO
QATAR (STATE OF)
ROMANIA
SAN MARINO
SERBIA
SINGAPORE
SOUTH AFRICA
SLOVAKIA
SLOVENIA
SPAIN
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND NORTHERN
IRELAND (THE) **
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA *
URUGUAY
VATICAN (THE; HOLY SEE)

* Their territories with same treatment

** Includes: England, Scotland and Wales



PASSPORT: VALIDITY OF THREE MONTHS

- **ENTRY: NO CONSULAR VISA**
- **MAXIMUM PERMANENCE: UP TO NINETY NATURAL DAYS. NON-EXTENDIBLE.**

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
BELIZE	PALAU
BOLIVIA	PHILIPPINES (THE)
BRUNEI (STATE OF)	RUSSIAN FEDERATION (THE)
DOMINICA	SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS
EL SALVADOR *	SAINT LUCIA
FIJI	SAINT VINCENT AND THE
GRENADA	GRENADINES
GUATEMALA	SAMOA
GUYANA	SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE
HONDURAS	SEYCHELLES
KAZAKHSTAN	SOLOMON ISLANDS
KIRIBATI	SURINAM
MALAYSIA	TAIWAN (REGION)
MALDIVES	TONGA (KINGDOM OF)
MARSHALL ISLANDS	TUVALU
MAURITIUS	TURKEY
MICRONESIA (FEDERATED STATES OF)	UKRAINE
NAURU	VANUATU
	VENEZUELA

* See section with specific regulations for the Republic of El Salvador.

DEPENDENCIES

	BRITISH
ANGUILA	FALKLANDS (THE; ISLAS MALVINAS)
ASCENSION	GIBRALTAR
BERMUDA	MAN ISLAND
BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY	MONTSERRAT
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	PITCAIRN ISLANDS
CAYMAN ISLANDS	SAINT HELENA
CHANNEL ISLANDS	TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS



FRENCH

FRENCH GUYANA
FRENCH POLYNESIA
FRENCH SOUTHERN AND ANTARTIC
LANDS
GUADELOUPE
MARTINICA

MAYOTTE
NEW CALEDONIA
REUNION
SAINT MARTIN
SAINT PIERRE AND MIQUELON
WALLIS AND FUTUNA

THE NETHERLANDS (HOLLAND)

ARUBA
BONAIRE

CURAÇAO
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

DANISH

FAROE ISLANDS

GREENLAND

AUSTRALIAN

COCOS ISLANDS
CHRISTMAS ISLANDS

HEARD AND MCDONALD ISLANDS
NORFOLK ISLANDS

AMERICAN

AMERICAN VIRGIN ISLANDS
AMERICAN SAMOA
GUAM

UNITED STATES MINOR OUTLYING
ISLANDS

NEW ZEALANDER

COOK ISLANDS
NIUE

TOKELAU

NORWEGIAN

BOUVET ISLAND

SVALBARD AND JAN MAYEN



GROUP OF ENTRY WITH CONSULAR OR RESTRICTED VISA

- **ENTRY: WITH A CONSULAR VISA**
- **VISA VALIDITY: UP TO SIXTY DAYS FROM DATE OF STAMP ON PASSPORT FOR ENTERING IN COSTA RICA, VALID FOR ONE SINGLE ENTRY**
- **PASSPORT: MANDATORY VALIDITY OF SIX MONTHS**
- **MAXIMUM PERMANENCE: UP TO THIRTY NATURAL DAYS. EXTENDIBLE FOR UP TO NINETY NATURAL DAYS.**

Foreign persons authorized entry into the country and permanence for a period under ninety days under an immigration category of non-residents, shall have the possibility to extend their permanence **for up to ninety days** when they request an authorization prior to the expiry date of their originally authorized legal permanence and prove their sufficient means of economic support. Please check requirements at www.migracion.go.cr

ALBANIA
ANGOLA
ARGELIA
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
BAHRAIN
BENIN
BELARUS
BHUTAN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
BOTSWANA
BURKINA FASO (ALTO VOLTA)
BURUNDI
CAPE VERDE
CAMBODIA
CAMEROON
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CHAD
COLOMBIA *
CONGO (REPUBLIC OF)
CONGO (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF, AFTER ZAIRE)

CÔTE D'IVOIRE
COMOROS
CHINA (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF)
*
DJIBOUTI
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
ECUATOR
ECUATORIAL GUINEA
EGYPT
GABON
GAMBIA
GEORGIA
GHANA
GUINEA
GUINEA BISSAU
INDIA
INDONESIA
JORDAN
KENYA
KYRGYZSTAN
KOSOVO
KUWAIT



LAOS (PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF)
LEBANON
LESOTHO
LIBERIA
LIBYA
MACEDONIA (REPUBLIC OF)
MADAGASCAR
MALAWI
MALI
MAURITANIA
MOLDOVA
MONGOLIA
MOROCCO
MOZAMBIQUE
NAMIBIA
NEPAL
NICARAGUA *
NIGER
NIGERIA
OMAN
PAKISTAN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

RWANDA
SAHRAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
SAUDI ARABIA
SENEGAL
SIERRA LEONE
SUDAN (NORTH)
SUDAN (SOUTH)
SWAZILAND
TANZANIA
TAJIKISTAN
THAILAND
TIMOR-LESTE
TOGO
TUNISIA
TURKMENISTAN
UGANDA
UZBEKISTAN
VIETNAM
YEMEN
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

* See section with specific regulations for: Colombia, China and Nicaragua.



- **ENTRY: WITH A RESTRICTED VISA**
- **PASSPORT: MANDATORY VALIDITY OF SIX MONTHS**
- **VISA VALIDITY: UP TO SIXTY DAYS FROM DATE OF STAMP ON PASSPORT FOR ENTERING IN COSTA RICA, VALID FOR ONE SINGLE ENTRY**
- **MAXIMUM PERMANENCE: UP TO THIRTY NATURAL DAYS. EXTENDIBLE FOR UP TO NINETY NATURAL DAYS**
- **CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON RESTRICTED VISAS FOR THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:**

AFGHANISTAN
BANGLADESH
CUBA
ERITREA
ETHIOPIA
HAITI
IRAN
IRAK

JAMAICA
MYANMAR (AFTER BIRMANIA)
NORTH KOREA (PEOPLE'S
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF)
PALESTINE
SYRIA (ARAB REPUBLIC OF)
SOMALIA
SRI LANKA

SECTION I: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

According to the reciprocal Administrative Agreement between the DGMI (Directorate General of Immigration and Foreignness Services) of El Salvador and the DGMI of Costa Rica signed in San Jose on April 23, 2008, entry of nationals of El Salvador will be allowed with their valid passport until the date of expiry. The term of permanence to be granted by the immigration control official shall not exceed the validity of the passport.

REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA

1. The term of legal permanence for Nicaraguan persons shall be of up to 90 days and they shall meet all applicable requirements for entry into the national territory. This term will be upheld until the Directorate General of Immigration and Foreignness Services deems it necessary.
2. Nicaraguan nationals traveling to Panama for commercial or work purposes may



obtain a “**double visa**” (two entries) at the Consulates of Costa Rica in Nicaragua and Panama. Both visas must be used within a maximum period of 90 days. They will be valid for entering into Costa Rica by air or land. The requirements that must be submitted to the aforementioned consulates, will be the following:

- a) Fill out the "VISA APPLICATION FORM".
- b) Submit proof of payment of consular fees.
- c) In the case of applications for work reasons, a letter from the employer must be provided, indicating the duty or task that the Nicaraguan national will perform in their job.
- d) Criminal record certificate.

PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS

1. Nationals of Hong Kong and Macau who bear a valid British or Portuguese passport shall receive the same treatment as nationals of the “group of entry with no consular visa”. Therefore, they shall not be required a visa for the purpose of entering in the country and their permanence shall be of up to ninety days. Nationals of Hong Kong and Macau who do not bear the aforesaid travel document shall be required a consular visa and will be applied the corresponding regulations for the People’s Republic of China.
2. Chinese persons who bear a passport for public affairs will not require an entry visa into national territory.
3. Visa applications for children under age of Chinese nationality will be processed exclusively by the Commission on Restricted Visas. These applications must be presented by the children’s parents or their legal guardians, who shall demonstrate possession of the custody of the minors. The process for these applications for persons under age of Chinese nationality is as stipulated in the By-laws for the Granting of Visas (“Reglamento para el Otorgamiento de Visas”), Executive Decree N° 36626-G, Chapter 6, articles 125 et seq. Visa waivers and exceptions for entering in national territory as established in Section II of these Guidelines will also be applicable to children under age of Chinese nationality.

REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA:

The term of legal permanence for Colombian persons shall be of **up to 90 days**. This term will be upheld until the Directorate General of Immigration and Foreignness Services deems it necessary.



SECTION II: WAIVERS FOR THE ADMISSION FOR THOSE IN THE “GROUP OF ENTRY WITH A CONSULAR OR A RESTRICTED VISA” INTO NATIONAL TERRITORY

Nationals of those countries with a consular or restricted visa requirement that may fit in any of the waivers or conditions for entry which are stipulated as follows, may be dispensed from the consular or restricted visa procedures to Costa Rica:

1. Nationals of those countries with a consular or restricted visa requirement who possess a multiple entry visa (tourism visa, crewmember visa or business visa) to the United States of America (exclusively a B1-B2, B1 or B2 type visas, a D type visa or a C1/D multiple entry visa) or Canada (exclusively a multiple entry visa), may be dispensed from the consular visa for the purpose of entering into Costa Rica. Their maximum term of permanence will not be longer than that of validity of such visa once it is presented and it shall not exceed 30 days with the exception of the specific regulations for Colombian and Nicaraguan nationals. Any other visa type (that is expressed under any format of letter and number) shall be considered a “legal permanence”, with the exception of C1, C2 and C3 type visas.
2. Nationals of those countries with a consular or restricted visa requirement with a legal permanence that allows for multiple entries and a minimum validity of six months in the United States of America, Canada and the countries of the European Union, may be dispensed from the consular visa for the purpose of entering into Costa Rica. Such term of six months must be counted as of the date of entry into Costa Rica. Those foreign nationals with whether a consular or restricted visa requirement who do not meet the legal permanence of six months as minimally required, may choose to apply for a Costa Rican consular visa in the corresponding country and which may be granted under the guidelines of the Executive Decree N° 36626-G, “By-laws for the Granting of Visas”. The application -or not- of this modality will be of the Consul’s discretion. The maximum permanence will be of 30 natural days and the validity of the passport shall be of six months with the exception of the specific regulations for Colombian and Nicaraguan nationals.
3. **ATTENTION:** Legal permanences shall be reliably demonstrated to the immigration control official. Legal permanence documents must contain the security measures established mandatorily by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Stamps, handwritten documents, sheets, documents that attest for residencies in process or documents with alterations, shall not be admitted. **Mandatorily, the documents must include a duly apostilled or legalized translation into Spanish. This provision will not be applicable in**



case of documents in English language or those which contain a translation into English language.

4. In the case of foreign nationals who meet any of the visa waivers or exceptions for entry into national territory and whose identity documents -visa, permanence or passports- do not match the name or surname of their bearer, the immigration control official may conduct a wider and more extensive research and will be entitled to request the marriage certificate, the certificate of naturalization or any other document that may be deemed necessary in order to demonstrate the name change or suppression under a new legal condition.
5. These waivers and exceptions are not applicable to those who have a legal permanence as refugees or stateless persons, in which case they shall obtain a **consulted entry visa** according to the procedure described in the Executive Decree N° 36626-G, "By-laws for the Granting of Visas".
6. If the foreign person does not meet a waiver or exception for the admission into national territory as described in these Guidelines, they may file for an entry visa according to the regulations of the By-laws for the Granting of Visas ("Reglamento para el Otorgamiento de Visas"), Executive Decree N° 36626-G.

SECTION III: REGULATIONS FOR CONSUL-GENERALS AND HONORARY CONSULS AS IMMIGRATION AGENTS ABROAD

- A. Costa Rican Consul-Generals, Consuls, Vice-consuls and diplomatic staff in consular duties may issue exclusively tourism visas and provisional visas under those categories as authorized in the By-laws for the Granting of Visas ("Reglamento para el Otorgamiento de Visas") in favor of any national of the "group of entry" which requires a consular visa, in accordance with the regulations described in the By-laws for the Granting of Visas ("Reglamento para el Otorgamiento de Visas") and accordingly with the General Act on Immigration and Foreignness Services, article 22, paragraph 5.
- B. Honorary Consul-Generals, Honorary Consuls and Honorary Vice-Consuls shall only issue those visas that the Directorate General of Immigration and Foreignness Services may authorize. Hence, with no exception all requests shall be consulted with this authority.



TRANSITORY PROVISION I

Nationals of those countries not stipulated in the aforesaid groups shall be included in the group of restricted visas.

TRANSITORY PROVISION II

The Circulatory Note DG-0042-11-2016 is derogated as of the date of publication of these new Guidelines in the Official Gazette Journal.