

UK: TB checks and points-based visa system in pipeline

The UK is to introduce tuberculosis (TB) screening this year for visitors from four high-risk countries: Bangladesh, Tanzania, Sudan and Thailand (which also processes visas for Cambodia and Laos). Next year, the screening strategy will be rolled out to other countries "which represent the source of the highest potential numbers of migrants with infectious TB", according to UK Visas.

The decision will mean an increased cost for visa applicants from these countries, as, for other countries with similar checks, there is an additional fee for the tests required. A spokesperson from the Home Office told *Language Travel Magazine* that the charges would be kept as low as possible. "We expect our tests to be significantly cheaper than those in the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand," they said. "Charges will vary according to operational costs in individual countries."

Visa applicants to the UK who are found to have infectious TB will not be granted entry to the UK until they have been successfully treated. "[The initiative] is part of our firm but fair policy on immigration, and will also support the Department of Health's TB Action plan," stated the UK immigration service.

Meanwhile, as the UK government ushers in more aspects of its five-year strategy for asylum and immigration, it has also announced that a 16-week consultation is taking place on a new points-based migration system. The consultation is targeting employers, educational institutions and prospective migrants, and results are expected in spring next year.

Immigration Minister, Tony McNulty, said the new system would include a web-based self-assessment programme so that visa applicants could understand if they met the criteria or not. "Our

proposals would mean that those who benefit from migration – employers, educational institutions and migrants themselves – must play a part in helping to ensure the system is not abused," he added. "This country needs migration – tourists, students and migrant workers make a vital contribution to the UK economy."

The government hopes the resulting system will ensure fair entry to the UK, that visa applicants stick to their terms of entry, and that they leave at the end of their stay. McNulty explained that it would be a five-tiered system and only those applicants in the suggested top two tiers (skilled and highly skilled workers) would be granted settlement rights after five years of work – increased from four.

Meanwhile, France is considering tightening its own rules on settlement. Catherine Vautrin, State Secretary for Social Cohesion and Women's Rights, said that the government wanted a link between linguistic competence and a 10-year residence permit, because language aided integration. France has also announced its intentions to set up a 600-strong immigration police force, in charge of chasing up and exposing visa overstays. An overseeing body will also liaise between police, local authorities and government departments. ●



Immigration Minister Tony McNulty wants a clear yet firm visa system that benefits Britain

NZ signs deal with Chile, Brunei and Singapore

A NEW BILATERAL FREE TRADE agreement between New Zealand and Brunei, Chile and Singapore could mean new opportunities for New Zealand institutions looking to set up English language teaching links in these countries. In particular, Chile has been singled out by Education New Zealand (EdNZ) as providing potential for new business pathways.

"The Chilean government is investing a considerable sum of money for in-country English language training as part of a wider bilingual education initiative," said Robert Stevens at EdNZ. "The agreement gives [our] educational institutions the status of national treatment, meaning that the government cannot discriminate between New Zealand providers and local Chilean institutions." ●

New language ability benchmarking in UK

OXFORD CAMBRIDGE and RSA Examinations (OCR) in the UK has launched a new voluntary assessment scheme to reward and encourage language learners. Asset Languages, as the scheme is known, launched in September and enables learners to be assessed separately in the four key skills areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with an emphasis on assessment rather than tuition.

Barrie Hunt at OCR said, "Asset Languages is a new language initiative for a new era, where increased emphasis will be placed on language achieve-

ments at every level. We aim to boost motivation and enthusiasm for languages."

The Asset scheme can be undertaken in addition to current exams such as the GCSE and is designed to support the National Languages Strategy to boost language study across the UK. It also matches up with the national scale of achievement, the Languages Ladder.

"Asset is about providing short-term goals for language students, which will encourage them to continue their studies and therefore improve their skills," said Hunt. ●



Fedeles Annual Meeting
Date: 30 September - 2 October
Venue: Valladolid, Spain
Email: info@fedelespain.com
Web: www.fedelespain.com

Expo Estudiante
Date: 1-2 October
Venue: Lima, Peru
Date: 4 October
Venue: Cartagena, Colombia
Date: 6 October
Venue: Cali, Colombia
Date: 8-9 October

Venue: Bogota, Colombia
Date: 11-12 October
Venue: Panama City, Panama
Email: rupert@csglobal.net
Web: www.csglobal.net

Scope on the Globe
Date: 5-8 October
Venue: Utrecht, Netherlands
Email: scope@aromedia.nl
Web: www.scopeontheglobe.com

WYSTC 2005
Date: 10-16 October
Venue: Toronto, ONT, Canada
Email: ks@wystc.org
Web: www.wystc.org

International Education Fairs of Turkey
Date: 18-23 October
Venue: Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul - Turkey
Email: info@ieft.net
Web: www.ieft.net

The Icef Asia Workshop
Date: 17-19 October
Venue: Shanghai, China
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

International Education Fair
Date: 22-23 October
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
Email: admin@tieca.com
Web: www.tieca.com

Malta gets tough on Chinese students

MALTESE IMMIGRATION authorities have amended Chinese visa procedures, in response to the incident in which six Chinese and Mongolian immigrants were drowned off the coast of Sicily after allegedly entering Europe in Malta to study, before heading to Italy (see *Language Travel Magazine*, June 2005, page 7).

Language schools in Malta will now be subject to surprise inspection visits, and language school staff will be required to inform the immigration authorities about any absenteeism among their students. Departure details of Chinese students must now also be sent to the immigration authorities one week before their departure, and visa extensions will only be granted to Chinese students with good attendance records and sufficient funds to remain.

In China, students applying for a visa to enter Malta will be interviewed by more than one person at the Maltese Embassy in Beijing, and police checks on the applicants will be carried out prior to interview. The Embassy will also maintain lists of agents working with local schools in order to blacklist those that are unregistered or

who deal with students who discontinue their studies on a regular basis. Language schools in Malta with consistent attendance discrepancies will also be blacklisted.

At language school association, Feltom, the association's President, John Dimech, said that he welcomed the new regulations and hoped they would not just bring the situation back to normal, but enhance it. According to a report in *The Times* of Malta, very few visas have been issued to Chinese nationals pending the police investigation. Dimech also underlined that Feltom advocates the introduction of a specific student visa, which does not currently exist for Maltese immigration purposes.

The Minister of Justice & Home Affairs, Tonio Borg, commented that he felt language schools should restrict their student recruitment to preferred regions in China, as there was a growing problem with students not returning to China after entering Malta. Visa applicants who have had a visa request to another European Union country turned down will also not receive a Maltese visa. ●

Australia signs working holiday deal with Chile

NEW WORKING OPPORTUNITIES in Australia are now accessible for some young Chilean graduates, since the signing of an agreement in July that gave certain nationals from both countries reciprocal work rights. The Work and Holiday visa will enable university-trained candidates aged between 18 and 30 to work and holiday in the other country for up to 12 months. However, initially, the visas will be limited to 100 per country.

Australian Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone, said, "This is the first such arrangement Australia has with a Latin American country. It is an important investment in future relations with Chile." Vanstone added that tourist arrivals from Chile had increased by 30 per cent in the year ending in May, compared with the previous year. The limit on the visas will be reviewed annually. ●

Language school founder's book sales rise

JOACHIM GRAFF, Co-Founder of Sprachinstitut Treffpunkt in Bamberg, Germany, has had his German language book, *Mind Your Manners*, reprinted for the third time. The business aid for professionals in Germany was printed again in September, featuring some new material, after it was initially launched in bookshops in 2003 and was reprinted in January this year.

The latest edition lists the top 10 blunders that one should avoid when attempting to engage in business in Germany. Advice includes remembering not to take off a sports jacket before your host has done so;

holding a stemmed glass by the stem; and being punctual, as well as more obvious pointers such as paying attention and not drinking too much at a social function.

Graff said that he had the idea for the book, which he co-wrote with a US student at the school, after finding that students at Sprachinstitut Treffpunkt always asked the same questions. "I wanted to prepare students from abroad perfectly for the professional world, and also enable people [to learn] privately," he said, adding, "I wanted to enable people to have an idea how to avoid difficulties and not be frustrated."

The book, which is available at €29 (US\$35), is also supported by a website, www.german-business-etiquette.com. ●



Authors Joachim Graff and Gretchen Schaupp, an ex-pupil, with the successful book, *Mind Your Manners*

Currency

1xUS\$ =currency*

Argentinean	Pesos	2.858
Australian	Dollar	1.298
Brazilian	Real	2.318
British	Pound	0.563
Bulgarian	Leva	1.587
Canadian	Dollar	1.214
Chilean	Pesos	558.25
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	8.105
Czech	Koruny	24.26
Danish	Kroner	6.062
Egyptian	Pound	5.769
EU	Euro	0.812
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.772
Hungarian	Forint	198.34
Icelandic	Kronur	63.626
Indonesian	Rupiah	9,742.1
Israeli	New Shekels	4.480
Japanese	Yen	111.40
Maltese	Lira	0.348
Mexican	Peso	10.574
New Zealand	Dollar	1.449
Norwegian	Kroner	6.383
Polish	Zloty	3.310
Russian	Rubles	28.486
Singaporean	Dollar	1.652
Slovakian	Koruny	31.51
South African	Rand	6.458
South Korean	Won	1,011.7
Swedish	Kronor	7.606
Swiss	Franc	1.265
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	31.820
Thai	Baht	41.204
Turkish	Lira	1,315,501.5
Venezuelan	Bolivar	2,147.3

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 04/08/05.

The Alphe Russia Workshop

Date: 1-3 November
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

Expolingua Praha

Date: 11-12 November
Venue: Prague, Czech Republic
Email: prague@expolingua.com
Web: www.expolingua.cz

21st International Fair "Education and Career"

Date: 11-12 November
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Date: 17-19 November
Venue: Moscow, Russia
Email: rtv@znanie.info
Web: www.znanie.info

The Icef Berlin Workshop

Date: 13-15 November
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

CIEE Annual Conference

Date: 16-19 November
Venue: New Orleans, LA, USA
Email: conference@ciee.org
Web: www.ciee.org

Education & Career 2005

Date: 17-18 November
Venue: Kiev, Ukraine
Date: 19 November
Venue: Odessa/Kharkiv, Ukraine
Date: 20 November
Venue: Dnyepropetrovsk/Donetsk, Ukraine

Email: uief@dteducation.com
Web: www.dteducation.com/fair

Expolingua Berlin

Date: 18-20 November
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Email: info@expolingua.com
Web: www.expolingua.com

Oriente European Ed. & Employment Fair

Date: 24-26 November
Venue: Brussels, Belgium
Email:

orienta.international@cpexpo.com
Web: www.cpexpo.com

The Icef Americas Workshop

Date: 11-13 December
Venue: Miami, FL, USA
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

Fitur 2006

Date: 26-30 January
Venue: Madrid, Spain
Email: fitur@fema.es
Web: www.fitur.fema.es