



Highlights of the Irish Employment Permits Bill 2005

The Philippine Embassy in London, which has jurisdiction over Ireland, reported that Ireland's Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Michael Martin, has announced a proposed Irish Employment Permits Bill 2005 which seeks to amend the economic migration policy from one based on quotas or points towards one based on job vacancy demand.

The new employment permits system will be introduced by 2006 and will have three (3) pillars:

1. Pillar One: the establishment of a Green Card for occupations with high level shortages and with annual salary range from Euro 30,000 to 60,000 and above. The Expert Group on Future Skills Need has already indicated these sectors as follows: *information and communications technology, healthcare, construction financial services, engineering, pharmaceutical, and sales and marketing*. The Green Cards will be issued initially for two (2) years and may be applied for permanent or long-term residence. It permits holders to bring their spouses and families to join them immediately and also grants their spouses the right to work without a work permit.
2. Pillar Two: the re-establishment of the Intra-Company transfer scheme for a temporary trans-national management transfer; and
3. Pillar Three: a revised Work Permit scheme for a very restricted list of occupations up to Euro 30,000, where the shortage is one of labor rather than skills. Work Permits will now be granted initially for a period of two (2) years with a fee of Euro 1,000 and maybe extended for a further period of 3 years with a fee of Euro 1,500.

The Filipino community in Ireland has expressed concern over Pillars One and Three. Nurses, which make up more than half of Filipino workers, are concerned on the introduction of minimum salary rates of Euro 30,000 for eligibility into the “green card” system. While many of these nurses now enjoy basic salaries more than the minimum, the entry level for a new Filipino nurse in Ireland is only Euro 27,757. New Filipino nurses would not be eligible for the green card scheme that has a minimum salary rate of Euro 30,000.

Filipino health and social workers, hotel and catering workers, factory and service workers will be classified under Pillar Three. However, it is unclear in the proposed policy whether these Filipino workers who have satisfied the required minimum years of residency will be entitled to bring their family members to join them and settle in Ireland.

Source : Philippine Embassy, London