



### **DRAFT RULES ON THE IMMIGRATION LAW OF SPAIN ANNOUNCED**

The Philippine Embassy in Madrid has reported that Secretary of State for Immigration and Emigration Anna Terron y Cusi has announced the draft rules on the immigration law of Spain or ley de extranjeria.

In a meeting with the Ambassadors and Embassy officials of countries with large migrant communities in Spain, Secretary Terron discussed the following points of interest of the immigration law:

- **Consolidate a model linked to the labor market and based on regularity of stay.** An adequate time for the processing of residence and work permits will prevent migrant workers from becoming irregular workers when they change their migration status.
- **Promote social integration and equal rights.** Promotion of social integration and management of cultural diversity in Spanish communities. Those that will be most affected are those under the **reagrupación familiar (family unification)** regime wherein the children of migrants will have to be enrolled in local schools.
- **Strengthen cooperation with the local and autonomous community administrations.** Improve cooperation between the autonomous community governments and the local governments will ensure the same treatment of migrants all throughout Spain and avoid different interpretations of the law.
- **Promote mechanisms to guarantee mobility and voluntary return.** Migrants who voluntarily return to their home countries will be allowed to return to Spain and maintain their rights and status provided all documentary requirements are complete. As such, a migrant worker who left Spain after living in the country for 3 years may return to Spain and have 3 years of residency when counting the number of years when applying for a permanent residency or Spanish citizenship.

- **Promote transparency and objectivity in the procedures.** Processing of work and residence permits will be lessened and new technologies will be integrated in the process.

The Spanish immigration law is beneficial to the Philippines because as a labor sending country, it provides numerous benefits not only to the migrant workers but also to those unemployed in Spain. The benefits include Spanish citizenship for migrants and education for their children in Spanish schools. However, given the severe economic crisis in Spain and its 20% unemployment rate, the immigration law may not receive the support of the Spanish nationals.

The number of immigrants in Spain has increased from 500,000 in 1996 to 5.5 million in 2008 out of a total population of 46.7 million people. Romanians make up Spain's largest foreign community with 796,576 members followed by Moroccans with 710,401 and Ecuadorians with 413,715 members.

As of 2010, the Department of Foreign Affairs has reported that there are 56,585 overseas Filipinos in Spain, consisting of 26,053 permanent migrants, 25,202 temporary migrants, and 5,330 irregular migrants.