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[PANAMA: A New Immigration Category]

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Panama: A New Immigration Category

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By Executive Decree No. 343 of the 16th of May 2012, published in the Official Gazette No. 27038, the government of the Republic of Panama has established a new immigration category, which will enable foreigners of certain nationalities to have a permanent residence in the within the Panamanian national frontiers.

The foreigner must be the citizen of any of the following countries, with which Panama has friendly, professional, economic and investment relations: the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Argentina, the Confederation of Australia, the Republic of Austria, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Kingdom of Belgium, Canada, the Kingdom of Spain, the United States of America, the Republic of Slovenia, the French Republic, the Republic of Finland, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland, Japan, the Kingdom of Norway, the Czech Republic, the Confederation of Switzerland, the Republic of Singapore, the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, the Republic of Chile and the Kingdom of Sweden.

Children under 18 years of age, disabled relatives and parents who are dependent of the foreigner who has applied for or obtained the permanent residence may obtain their permits of residence as dependents. As for children older than 18 and under 25 years of age, it shall be required to evidence that they are actually students and still economically dependent of the foreigner who has applied for or obtained the permanent residence on the basis of Executive Decree No. 343 of the 16th of May 2012.

Any foreigner desiring to obtain his permanent residence permit must submit her/his application to the National Immigration Service through a Panamanian lawyer, and attach the following documents: a complete copy of the passport still valid for at least six months, crime and police record of the country of which she/he is a citizen or where she/he is residing; as for dependents, the respective birth or marriage certificates, identification document of the country of origin or residence, documents evidencing the purpose of obtaining the permanent residence according to the economic or professional activity to carry out and evidence of economic solvency, which shall be evidenced by a certificate issued by a proper bank or a bank statement showing the balance of the last month of four medium digits or other evidence of income. The documents originating abroad must be valid and duly apostillized or legalized by a Panamanian Consul.

Similarly, payment must be made in the amount of two hundred and fifty United States dollars (US\$250.00) for the change in immigration category, if such is the case, and to provide a repatriation deposit in the amount of eight hundred United States dollars (US\$800.00).

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