

**STATUS OF VISA RELATED ISSUES RAISED BY STAKEHOLDERS FROM
TRAVEL TRADE**

SI. No.	ISSUES RAISED BY THE TRAVEL TRADE	CURRENT STATUS
1.	Size of the photograph in the Visa application form for US nationals different from the one that is commonly used and as per standard photo sizes available in those countries.	Issue was resolved and the standard 2 x 2 inches size photo which is the standard photo size used across the world is asked for at present. MHA has stated that specific instructions have been sent to Missions abroad. Letter No F.25022/02/2012-Imm dated 03.01.2012 from Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA); Visa application forms have been standardized. Integrated online visa application system implemented in 44 Indian Missions abroad including USA, UK, France and Germany.
2.	The on – line visa application forms not bilingual or available in local language of the country, especially, in France and Germany. Facility for filling forms in other foreign languages (those recognized by UN) to be considered.	Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had earlier directed their Missions in Paris and Berlin to consider either addition of local language or continue with personal application procedure. MEA anticipates that by 2014 visa application forms would be available in all languages.
3.	Visa forms being lengthy. Fears were raised of applicants not being able to fill the form at one stretch and thereby information being lost.	NIC (MHA) has clarified that auto save facility is available. Therefore information submitted would not be lost.
4.	Requirement of submission of birth certificates, especially in the US, where there is a large immigrant population.	The requirement for submission of birth certificates by US nationals for obtaining Indian visa has been withdrawn by MEA.
5.	Delays in processing / issuance of visa	A circular has been sent by MEA to 59 Indian Missions / Posts abroad requesting them to explore the possibility of streamlining the procedures regarding issuance of visa

		wherever required in consultation with MEA and MHA.
6.	Visa applications being accepted through outsourced agencies e.g. Cox & Kings in Germany which is also a tour operator, raising fears that it would lead to conflict of interest and misuse of data.	IATO had raised the issue in September 2010 and the then ADG (T) had written vide letter No. 2 TT II (36)/2006 – Vol I dated November 2, 2010, to Joint Secretary (PV), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Vide letter dated 04 th April 2012, JS, MEA had written to the President IATO stating that M/s Cox & Kings Global Services (CKGS) had won the contract for outsourcing visa services in Berlin & Munich whereas the contract for Frankfurt & Hamburg was awarded to IGCS in an open tender process as per Government of India guidelines. IATO had been requested to mention specific objections against CKGS. IATO has also written to MOT on the issue again on 26 th March 2012. M/s Cox & Kings have written to MEA stating that these are false allegations. MOT has requested for comments from IATO.
07.	Acceptance of direct applications at a premium rate by Embassies for emergency situations and Issuance of visa at short notice of one or two days.	The suggestion would be explored by MEA.
08.	Issue tourist visa of at least 30 days duration.	MEA has already issued directions to overseas missions in this regard. TVOA allowed for maximum of two times in a calendar year with a minimum gap of two months between each visit. (Chapter 3b of visa manual). TVOA is a single entry visa.

Note:

- Additional Director General (Tourism), Joint Secretary (CPV), Ministry of External Affairs, Joint Secretary (Foreigners), Ministry of Home Affairs have been nominated as nodal officers responsible for attending to any visa related

complaints / representations received in their respective Ministries. (Letter dated 08th February 2012)

- **Bureau of Immigration (BoI)** to sensitize FRROs at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata appropriately about TVOA facility and treat passengers with due sensitivity and courtesy.
- **Visa fees can now be paid either in Indian Rupee or US Dollars by incoming passengers**
- Basic streamlining must be done to ensure that we don't miss out on the opportunities to expand India's tourism horizon to people who are willing to explore it. If not, then we are missing out on vital revenue but also loosing on the image of a hospitable India.

Specific Instances visa issues of Tourists / Groups sorted out:

1. Request dated 27.12.2010 from Shri Sarab Jit Singh, Managing Director, Minar Travels, regarding problem faced by 30 pax group due to requirement of birth certificates. MEA issued instructions to Missions to not insist on birth certificates.
2. Request dated 14.04.2011 from Shri H.S.Duggal, Managing Director, Minar Travels (India) Pvt Ltd, regarding restrictions on issuance of visa to Iranian tourists and resultant reduction of flight frequency by Mahan Air of Iran. Embassy of India, Tehran, informed that they have taken necessary action to resolve the issue.
3. Request dated 15.12.2011, from Shri Vikram Madhok, MD, Abercrombie & Kent India Pvt Ltd, regarding visa issues of M/s Viages Felgueres, USA against Travisa, San Fransisco, outsourced agency for visa processing. The tourists received visa on time.
