

10 February 2017

Exit-Entry Administration Bureau of
Shanghai Public Security Bureau
1500 Minsheng Rd,
Pudong Xinqu,
Shanghai
China, 200135

To whom it may concern

Employment authorisation of spouses of talented foreign employees in China

Dear Officials,

I am writing to you on behalf of Permits Foundation, an independent, not-for-profit organisation that promotes access to employment of accompanying spouses of staff on an international assignment. We are supported by 40 international companies and organisations, and our research has been used by a number of countries when developing business-related migration policy and work permit regulations for highly skilled staff and their family members.

In co-operation with our advisors at PwC China, we kindly request a meeting with you to explore the possibility of simplifying employment authorisation for spouses of talented foreign employees (Categories A and B) under the new work permit scheme being piloted in Shanghai and other cities in the PRC.

Already 30 countries, including the European Union, the USA, Brazil and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the PRC, grant employment authorisation for spouses of highly skilled staff. These countries recognise the positive impact that this has on attracting international talent and investment to support economic growth. Chinese international professionals and their family members working abroad benefit from these arrangements.

In making this request, we recognise the helpful steps that the PRC and the Shanghai authorities have already taken to improve the clarity and efficiency of visa processes, thereby improving the attractiveness to international employers and investment in all sectors. We hope you will find that our proposal dovetails well with your new strategies to support economic growth.

We attach a brief discussion paper with further background and hope you will find this useful. Our local advisor, Ms Gertie Chen of PwC International Assignment Services (Shanghai) Limited (Tel: 021 2323 2628) will be in touch with your office.

Yours sincerely,
Michiel van Campen


Executive Director, Permits Foundation

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Discussion Agenda

Objective - Employment authorisation of spouses of talented foreign employees in the PRC.

About Permits Foundation

Permits Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation campaigning globally to improve work permit regulations to make it easier for partners of expatriate staff to gain employment during an international assignment. Our website (<http://www.permitsfoundation.com/>) gives further details of our work and a list of our sponsors.

The issue

The question of whether the partner can work in the host country is often a major factor in the decision to accept an international job offer. It reflects the growing trend of dual careers, where both couples expect to work for a combination of economic, social and personal development reasons. It affects men and women of all nationalities, including Chinese families abroad. And it impacts on international employers in both the private and public sectors, who experience restrictions to employee mobility, diversity and equal opportunity.

Economic impact

Our global surveys show that countries that allow spouses to work are more attractive to the highly skilled staff who are associated with international business, investment and development that contribute to economic growth. Facilitating spouse employment also positively impacts on the host country economy through the increased fiscal contribution and spending power of families.

International best practice and comparisons

The best practice has been adopted by thirty countries, which allow spouses to work and the list continues to grow. Currently, we are also in discussion with the governments of India and South Africa. We will be pleased to share further information and resources with you on this.

China New Work Permit System

We would like to clarify a few points in relation to spouses of foreign talented employees under the new pilot scheme. For example, are there any special arrangements or green channel for these spouses if they get a job offer in China? e.g. May they apply for a work permit under the dependent visa rather than completing the full process for an A or B permit? And will they be able to complete the process in China, without having to return to their home country?

Our proposal

Permits Foundation proposes that legally resident spouses of foreign talent visa holders (Category A and B) be granted work authorization under their dependent visa. This would give them immediate access to the employment market for the same duration as the main work permit holder, once they have obtained their accompanying family member visa. They can then apply for jobs and take temporary project work or part-time work, including self-employment, without the uncertainty and separate procedures of a work permit application, including reverting back to a dependent visa if their employment stops. It also reduces bureaucracy for the authorities and helps employers fill urgent and temporary vacancies.