E-2 Visas for Israelis Still Delayed

Article By:

Douglas Hauer

Nearly one year ago, President Obama signed legislation that would add Israel to the list of countries eligible for E-2 nonimmigrant investor visas to the United States. The legislation would grant E-2 investor visas to Israelis, allowing them to live and work in the U.S. to be closer to their investments. But the creation of a reciprocal visa for Americans investing in Israel is the hold-up, leaving Israeli companies wishing to secure E-2 visas in an administrative limbo. Both governments need to resolve this issue now. The delay has reached nearly one year.

The U.S. and Israeli governments should collaborate immediately to ensure that all conditions are met to facilitate the issuance of E-2 visas to Israelis. A one-year delay is simply unacceptable. Making E-2 visas available to Israelis will encourage cross-border transactions, grant Israeli companies more access to U.S. markets, and enhance scientific, technology and broader business ties between the two countries. On the U.S. side, an infusion of investments by Israeli companies into the U.S. economy will induce direct and indirect jobs. Israeli companies will benefit from being able to access markets in North and South America. For both countries, an investor visa is a win-win deal.

The U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv has had a static message about the delay on the post's website since last summer: http://israel.usembassy.gov/consular/niv/nonimmigrant.html.

It's time for an update to the public. The U.S. and Israeli governments should explain the reasons for what appears to be a one-year delay, and offer a timeline for implementing this favorable and beneficial program.

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