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Immigration Law Practitioners Association  
Lindsey House  
40/42 Charterhouse Street  
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EC1M 6JN

02 September 2008

Dear Colleagues

**Re: Compulsory English Language Requirement for Tier-1 Entrepreneur Applications**

We are writing to kindly ask for your comments and hopefully support and co-operation on the following matter:

As you are all aware with the introduction of the new Tier-1, Point-Based –System (General, Entrepreneur, Investor, Post-Study categories) into the UK Immigration system, it has become compulsory for all potential applicants in the above categories (with the exception of Investors) to obtain an overall score of 6.5 in the IELTS test in order to obtain the required 10 points in their application form.

Now it is our opinion that although it is perfectly reasonable and indeed necessary to expect Highly Skilled Workers who normally possess a high level of academic / professional training and qualifications to be able to score 6.5 in the IELTS test but to expect the same high level of proficiency in English from overseas entrepreneurs could be seen as rather excessive and or unnecessary. Of course, this is not to say that the latter group do not require a good knowledge of the English language in order to set up a successful /profitable business in the UK and or to join an existing one but it is the level of such knowledge that is debatable.

As we look around we often see many successful businessmen/women in the UK and abroad who have managed to build up an impressive portfolio of work and business activity/body that has made and continues to make a very profitable contribution to national and or indeed global economy in many circumstances. And as we look deeper, we will undoubtedly notice there are a good number of such individuals who have reached where they are mainly as a result of a natural talent/business acumen complemented by hard work, perseverance and determination without necessarily having gone through any particular academic/professional training and or qualifications. It is this realisation that brings us back to the issue of whether it is a reasonable expectation to have from foreign business persons who have achieved a degree of excellence in



their area of activity and are able to and willing to bring their wealth of experience and invaluable know how and indeed substantial capital to this country to set themselves up in business in the UK, to also have a high/academic level knowledge of the English language (i.e. IELTS of 6.5) in order to gain permission to enter in the first place.

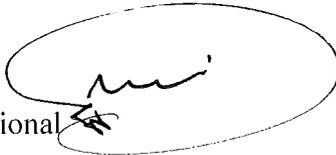
As experience shows, the ability for highly skilled and experienced foreign business people to set up and run profitable business enterprises in this country has a long and impressive history of success, having made a positive contribution to the economy not only by way of injection of a significant capital and job creation but also by creating opportunities for British companies to benefit from their extensive international contacts and opportunities for co-operation. It seems therefore a shame to lose such an opportunity by making it considerably harder for potential business immigrants to come to the UK, by setting up such high standards for their language abilities at the point of entry. It has been our experience that since the introduction of the new Tier-1 System and the compulsory English language requirement, there has been a sharp drop in the level of interest from a large number of business people, mostly with very high credentials, expertise and years of valuable experience with the technical and financial capabilities to set up and run potentially successful businesses in the UK. This has been highly noticeable among potential and often very capable and wealthy applicants from countries such as Iran, Azarbaijan, Russia and Central Asia that offer a great wealth of natural resources and an abundance of opportunities for business/investment and mutual co- operations with the UK.

It is in light of the above that we respectfully ask our esteemed colleagues/members of ILPA who may feel the same way or have had similar experiences of the issue in question, to kindly join us in this call to the UK Border and Immigration Agency to take the matter into consideration and hopefully decide to reconsider its policy/stand on the matter of a compulsory IELTS 6.5 requirement for the entrepreneurs.

We thank you all in advance for your kind support and co-operation.

Best Regards

Mizan International



Cc:

- JCWI, 115 Old Street, London, EC1V 9RT
- UK Border & Immigration Agency, Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2BY
- The Secretary, The Association of Regulated Immigration Advisors, 5 Hawbridge Close, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 4SU
- OISc, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Counting House, 53 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QN