



American Outlook

American Citizen Services

United States Mission, Turkey

January 2012 Newsletter



MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR FRANCIS J. RICCIARDONE

Dear Friends:

As we begin this New Year, I would like to welcome those of you who are new to Turkey and give my greetings to everyone who has made Turkey “home” for some time. My wife and I have had the pleasure of calling Turkey “home” for many of the best years of our lives in what is now our third assignment in this wonderful land. Since I began my diplomatic career here at the Embassy in Ankara more than 30 years ago, I have had the great fortune to watch first-hand the dynamism of the Turkish people and the strong and maturing relationship between our two great nations.

The U.S. and Turkey have enjoyed a long history of mutual friendship and cooperation based on personal, economic, security, military and cultural ties of which you and I are a part. When U.S. and Turkish entrepreneurs work together and grow their respective businesses, the relationship between our two countries is strengthened. When American citizens interact with Turkish citizens, the relationship between our countries is strengthened. Every American citizen living in Turkey is a bridge between Turkey and the United States. On that note, I would like to recall the many victims of the earthquake in Van and commend the efforts of the many concerned private Americans who have volunteered time, money, and property to help the survivors. If you are interested in contributing to the rescue efforts, please visit the Turkish Red Crescent website <http://kizilay.org.tr/english/index.php>

Finally, the most important responsibility of U.S. Embassies is to protect American citizens abroad. As part of this effort, I encourage you, if you have not done so already, to register yourself and your family in the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment program at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html. The small time investment spent enrolling in this program will allow the Embassy to directly contact you via text message or otherwise in the event of emergency situations in Turkey, like the Van earthquake. Furthermore, I encourage you to prepare for your own safety by reading the information at the following earthquake preparedness website, <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/prepare/>.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that as an American citizen living abroad you are able to vote in U.S. elections. Please visit www.fvap.gov to register and obtain additional information.

I wish you health, happiness, and prosperity in this New Year and throughout your stay in Turkey.

Featured in this quarter's issue:

- *Message from Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone*
- *New Turkish Visa 90 Out of 180 Days*
- *New Names for “Warden Messages”*
- *New iPhone App for Travelers*
- *Turkish Residency Permit fees*
- *Turkish Custom Regulation for mailed items*
- *Recent Changes in Filing I-130 Forms*
- *Diversity Visa Scam*
- *IRS Offering Free E-Filing to U.S. Taxpayers Abroad*
- *Upcoming Primaries*
- *Security-Worldwide Caution*
- *Upcoming Holidays and ACS Office Closures*
- *Our Contact Info*

American Embassy

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NEW TURKISH VISA 90 OUT OF 180 DAYS



The Turkish authorities will implement new regulations allowing a maximum stay of 90 days within a 180 day period starting February 1, 2012. The new regulation will not make any changes to the visa requirements for travel to Turkey. The new regulation will be implemented for all foreigners who travel to Turkey. This new regulation will apply to those who travel with a tourist visa obtained at a Turkish Consulate, those who buy a tourist visa stamp at an airport or other port of entry, and also those who are exempt from getting tourist visas.

If you are planning to stay in Turkey more than 90 days within a 180 day period, you will need a Turkish residency permit. The U.S. Embassy strongly urges American citizens to not overstay their visas and to maintain valid residency permits at all times. Turkish authorities do enforce the laws, including those stipulating fines, deportation, and bans on future travel to Turkey for people who overstay their visas or do not maintain valid residency permits.

NEW NAMES FOR “WARDEN MESSAGES”



The “Warden Messages” section on the Embassy website has been replaced by "[Messages for U.S. Citizens](#)". There are now two types of messages in this section: “Messages for U.S. Citizens,” which are routine but important messages such as voting news, town hall meetings, and new passport procedures; and “Emergency Messages for U.S. Citizens,” which are breaking news messages containing advice for the resident community, such as those alerting U.S. citizens to demonstrations, a political crisis, a natural disaster, or a terrorist attack.

In order to receive these messages, please enter your contact information through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html

TURKISH RESIDENCY PERMIT FEES



In April 2011, the Turkish Government reduced the residence permit fees it charges U.S. citizens and citizens of other countries residing in Turkey. A U.S. citizen will now only pay 25 USD for the first month and 5 USD for each additional month. This replaces the old fee schedule of 83.8 TL for the first month and 55 TL for each additional month. The residency permit book fee as of January 1, 2012 is 172 TL. This information can also be found online at the website of the [Turkish Security Directorate-Residency Department](#).

TURKISH CUSTOMS REGULATIONS FOR MAILED ITEMS



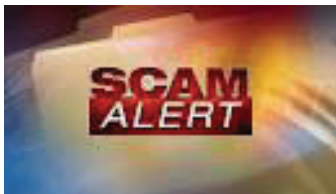
According to the new Turkish customs regulations, a person may receive a package with contents valued up to 75 EUR, by mail from abroad twice in every two months and up to five times in a year in total before it will be considered as trade. Packages containing cosmetics or drugs including vitamins will not be permitted into Turkey and will be returned to the sender.

RECENT CHANGES IN FILING I-130 FORMS



Effective August 15, 2011, U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents residing abroad in Turkey may no longer routinely file I-130 forms—Petitions for Alien Relative—with U.S. Embassies or Consulates. U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents residing in Turkey are now required to file their I-130 forms by mail with the [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)' Chicago lockbox. U.S. Embassies and Consulates in Turkey will only be able to accept and process Forms I-130 in exceptional circumstances. Those who believe that their situation merits an exception should contact the Consular Section at [the nearest Embassy or Consulate](#).

DIVERSITY VISA SCAM



Following the issuance of 2012 diversity visas this past spring, an email scam began targeting Turkish citizens. Targeted individuals received DV-2012 “winning notification” emails which asked them to transfer money via Western Union in order to obtain a diversity visa. **Any email** purporting to be a “winning notification” is a scam. Successful DV applicants are notified by the Department of State, Kentucky Consular Center (KCC) by letter, **NOT email** and are provided instructions on how to proceed to the next step in the process. **The KCC will not ask you to send money to them or to this Embassy or any other U.S. Embassy by mail or by services such as Western Union.** [Online registration](#) for the 2013 Diversity Visa Program begins October 4.

IRS OFFERING FREE E-FILING TO US TAXPAYERS ABROAD



Taxpayers with an AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) of \$57,000 or less can electronically file their tax return for free using [freefile](#). Taxpayers with an AGI greater than \$57,000 can either use the [Free File Fillable Forms](#) or [efile by purchasing commercial software](#). A limited number of companies provide software that can accommodate foreign addresses. To determine which will work best for you, get help [choosing a software provider](#).

More information can be found at

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>

UPCOMING PRIMARIES



Submit your registration/ballot request form (FPCA) timed according to your State's election date requirements as listed below for the January, February and March 2012 Presidential Preference Primaries (P), and State Primaries (S):

The following U.S. states allow you to submit a registration/ballot request form (FPCA) now for the 2012 Primary. NOTE: To ensure your request is valid for other 2012 elections, including the November General Presidential election, you must submit ANOTHER FPCA after December 31st!

- New Hampshire (P): January 10 (P) denotes presidential primary
- South Carolina (P): January 21 (S) denotes state-level primary



The following states allow you to submit a registration/ballot request form (FPCA) now, which will be valid through the 2012 November Presidential election.

- Florida (P): January 31
- Missouri (Republican P): February 7 - NOTE: No delegates to the Republican National Convention will be selected based on the outcome of this primary.
- Arizona (P): February 28
- Georgia (P): March 6
- Ohio (S): March 6
- Oklahoma (P): March 6
- Tennessee (P): March 6
- Virginia (P): March 6
- Alabama (P,S): March 13
- Mississippi (P,S): March 13
- Louisiana (P,S): March 24



For the following States, the registration/ballot request form (FPCA) is valid only in the year it is submitted. To ensure your request is valid for all elections in 2012 submit a registration/ballot request form (FPCA) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE after December 31st.

- Michigan (P): February 28
- Massachusetts (P): March 6
- Texas (P,S): March 6
- Vermont (P): March 6
- Illinois (P,S): March 20



Please visit [Federal Voting Assistance Program's website](#) to get more detailed information.



SECURITY- WORLDWIDE CAUTION

The Department of State has issued a Worldwide Caution to update information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world, which can be found [here](#).

PARTIAL AND FULL CLOSURE OF CONSULAR SERVICES

In an effort to improve our consular facilities for our clients, the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy, Ankara will be undergoing a renovation from **January 25, 2012 to March 19, 2012**. During this period, the Section's facilities will go through periods of partial and full closure.

The Consular Section will be closed for all but emergency American Citizen Services on January 26 and 27. If you are an American citizen with an emergency during this period, please call +90-312-455-5555 for assistance. For more details, please see: <http://turkey.usembassy.gov/emergency.html>.

The respective units of the Consular Section (American Citizen Services, Immigrant Visas, Non-Immigrant Visas) are making the following arrangements for our clients for the duration of this project:

American Citizen Services (ACS)

Emergency Services: The ACS Unit will continue to offer emergency services throughout the entire reconstruction period.

Passports and Non-Emergency Services: The ACS Unit will be offering limited services for this period, with a reduction in the number of ACS appointments available from March 5 through March 19. At some points during the project the ACS Unit will be operating from an alternative location adjacent to the Embassy. When this is the case signs will be posted. Specific information about the alternative location and the dates it will be used will be announced as soon as possible.

Correspondence: There will be no interruption in regular ACS correspondence during the renovation. Please continue to submit your inquiries through <http://turkey.usembassy.gov/acs-form5.html>.

Please see our website for the most up to date information.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

The Embassy will be closed on the following American and Turkish holidays:

February 20 (Monday) – Washington's Birthday



OUR CONTACT INFO



Ankara: 110 Ataturk Boulevard

Tel: (90)(312) 455-5555

Fax (90)(312) 468-6131

<http://ankara.usembassy.gov>

Istanbul: Uc Sehitler Sokak No. 2, 34460, Istinye, Sariyer,

Tel: (90) (212) 335-9000

Fax (90) (212) 335-9102

<http://istanbul.usconsulate.gov>

Adana: Girne Bulvari No. 212, Guzelevler Mahallesi, Yuregir

Tel: (90)(322) 346-6262

Fax (90)(322) 346-7916

<http://adana.usconsulate.gov>

Izmir Consular Agent:

Tel: (90)(232) 464-8755