

2009

# **Immigration Control**

**JAPAN**

Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice

# Introduction

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## Publication of the “2009 Immigration Control”

This year's report is the 15th issue of the “Immigration Control”, first published in 1959. Although the previous issues of the “Immigration Control”, including the 2003 issue, described the five-year trends of immigration control administration, owing to the accelerated pace of the changes in conditions which affect immigration control, a summary of the one-year trend of immigration control administration has been given since 2004 annually.

Looking at recent developments, the environment affecting immigration control administration has been changing in many ways. For example, Japan has been taking measures to achieve the following objectives: establishment of Japan as a country built on tourism by encouraging more foreign travelers to visit Japan; more open acceptance of skilled foreign workers including highly-skilled workers in professional or technical fields; responding to a population-decreasing society; halving the number of illegal foreign residents; and strictly preventing terrorists from entering Japan.

In order to achieve such objectives, it is necessary for the immigration control administration to simultaneously accomplish both smooth acceptance of foreign nationals, who will contribute to the development of international exchange and the Japanese economy, and strict measures against suspect foreign nationals such as terrorists or criminals, who may pose a threat to Japan's safety and security.

In this context, as the first step, we would like to explain to as many people as possible under what conditions the immigration control administration is operating and the specific measures being taken. Therefore, the “2009 Immigration Control” is being published for this purpose. This report shows the trends of immigration control administration during the past five years from FY 2004 to FY 2008 while outlining, in particular, the recent conditions affecting immigration control administration and measures taken in FY 2008.

Part 1, titled “Immigration Control in Recent Years” describes Foreign Nationals Entering and Residing in Japan (Chapter 1), Deportation Procedures for Foreign Nationals (Chapter 2), Recognition of Refugee Status (Chapter 3), Promotion of Measures against Trafficking in Persons

and Proper Protection of Foreigners DV Victims (Chapter 4) and Alien Registration Process (Chapter 5). Part 1 gives numerical information on the state of immigration control administration focusing on 2008, together with data covering the past five years.

Part 2, titled “Primary Measures Related to Immigration Control Administration in FY 2008” describes the Outline of the New System of Residence Management (Chapter 1), Measures on the Training and Technical Internship Programs (Chapter 2), Measures on Acceptance of Foreign College Students and Pre-college Students (Chapter 3), Efforts Toward the Creation of a Society that Prevents Foreign Nationals from becoming Illegal Residents, and that Realizes Multicultural Co-existence (Chapter 4), Implementation of Smoother yet Stricter Immigration Examination (Chapter 5), Addressing the Global Community (Chapter 6), Introduction of Resettlement to a Third Country (Chapter 7), Improvement Public Relations and Administrative Services (Chapter 8). Part 2 presents qualitative information on immigration control administration in FY 2008.

Further, the Data Section includes descriptions of major developments concerning immigration control administration in FY 2008.

We hope this report will help you to discover how closely immigration control administration is related to everyday life and to understand how immigration control administration functions.

November, 2009



Chubu Central Japan International Airport  
(March.2005:Photo Credit,Central Japan International Airport Co.,Ltd.)

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# Points on “2009 Immigration Control”

## Organization of “2009 Immigration Control”

- This booklet is organized into immigration control in recent years (Part 1), primary measures (Part 2), and a data section.
- Part 1 overviews the developments during the five years from 2004 until 2008, and describes the situation in 2008.
- Part 2 describes primary measures in FY 2008.

## Part 1 Immigration Control in Recent Years

- **The Number of Alien Registrations as of the End of the Year 2008 Stands at a Record High.**  
The number of alien registrations as of the end of 2008 was 2,217,426, representing a 3.0% increase, which continues to be a record high every year as foreigners living in Japan on a mid- or long-term basis increase.  
The percentage of foreigners in the total population of Japan is 1.74%, which is another record high.
- **The Number of Overstayers is Decreasing.**  
The number of overstayers as of January 1, 2009 was 113,072, representing a 24.5% decrease as compared to the previous year, by virtue of comprehensive measures against illegal residents such as strict entry examination and detection of foreigners violating the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (the “Immigration Control Act”) in close coordination with concerned agencies. This represents a constant decrease from 298,646 in May 1, 1993, when the number stood at a record high.
- **Promotion of Measures against Trafficking in Persons**  
In December 2004, the “Action Plan for Measures against Trafficking in Persons” was established in an attempt to take general and comprehensive measures against trafficking in persons. The Immigration Bureau implemented a project for the protection, etc., of victims of trafficking in persons by coordinating with concerned agencies in line with said plan. As a result, the number of victims of trafficking in persons who were protected (with special permission of residence) or who were assisted to return to their home country by the Bureau in 2008, was 28 (all of whom were female), which represented a decrease (30.0% decrease) as compared to 40 persons in the previous year.

## Part 2 Primary Measures Related to Immigration Control Administration in FY 2008

- **Outline of the New System of Residence Management**
  - The Immigration Bureau submitted a bill to the No. 171 Diet amending a part of the Immigration Control Act and other legislature that drastically reviews the existing residence management system including the alien registration system, that amends the current system for collecting information by the Immigration Control Act and the Alien Registration Act, and that creates a system enabling the Minister of Justice to collect information, which is necessary for managing, accurately and continuously, the residence situation of foreigners lawfully residing in Japan on a mid- or long-term basis (the said bill was approved and enacted on July 8, 2009, and promulgated on July 15 of the said year).
  - The new system is expected to facilitate the following processes for foreign nationals residing in Japan for a medium to long term: (1) Issuance of a residence card after obtaining some permits, such as landing permission, permission for extension of period of stay, and permission for changes of status of residence; (2) Report of changes during the period of stay from foreign nationals to the Minister of Justice; (3) Provision of information about foreign nationals from organizations at which they study or receive training to the Minister of Justice. This will enable the Minister of Justice to more precisely and continuously keep monitor the information related to the residence conditions of foreign nationals.
  - Information about the situation of foreign nationals residing for the medium to long term, which will be precisely kept under the system, will be reflected in the Basic Residents' Register for Foreign Nationals in, which will be newly established in accordance with the Act for Partial Amendment of the Basic Residents' Registration Act. As a result, these foreign nationals will be able to receive enhanced administrative services. Along with the introduction of the system to keep precise information, provisions to enhance convenience for these foreign nationals, including extension of the maximum period of stay and alleviation of the re-entry permit system, will be established.
- **Measures on the Training and Technical Internship Programs**
  - For the purpose of strengthening protection for trainees and technical interns, the Immigration Control Act, as amended, established the status of residence of “Technical Intern Training” and others.
  - Under the provisions of the ministerial ordinance of the Ministry of Justice, the Immigration Bureau may identify a “misconduct” with regard to organizations that have acted inappropriately regarding training and technical internship and suspend such organizations from accepting trainees and technical interns for three years. The number of organizations that were recognized to engage in “misconduct” during the year 2008 was 452, which stands at a record high.
- **Measures on Acceptance of Foreign College Students and Pre-college Students**
  - In July 2008, the gist of the “300,000 Foreign Students Plan”, which aimed to accept 300,000 foreign students for studying in Japan by the year 2020, was developed by concerned ministries headed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy submitted a report entitled “Proposal on Acceptance of College Students and Pre-college Students”, relating to the ideal immigration control administration for realizing the “300,000

Foreign Students Plan”, to the Minister of Justice in January 2009.

- Based on the report, the Immigration Bureau made it possible for foreign students graduating from a college, etc., to engage in job-finding activity for one year at the longest, and took measures to integrate the status of residence of “College Student” and “Pre-college Student” together with other measures by amending the Immigration Control Act.

#### ○ Promoting comprehensive efforts to halve the number of illegal residents

In an attempt to decrease illegal residents to half in five years by the year 2008 and in line with the “Action Plan for the Realization of a Crime-Resistant Society” decided in December 2003, the Immigration Bureau actively tackled the problem of illegal residents by coordinating closely with concerned agencies, under the three principles of “not permitting foreigners intending to stay illegally to come to Japan”, “not permitting them to enter Japan” and “not permitting them to stay in Japan”. This was done by means of strict pre-entry examination relating to the application for issuance of the Certificate of Eligibility, strict landing examination, better identification of fraudulent/altered documents, effective detection and so on. As a result, illegal residents decreased by 106,346 persons (48.5% decrease) in five years.

#### ○ Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime

In December 2008, the “Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime 2008” was formulated at the Council of Ministers for Measures against Crime, as it is necessary to take continuous and more fundamental measures against crime to revive “the world’s safest country, Japan” in the true meaning of the words.

Under the said action plan, response to globalization and countermeasures to the threat of terrorism are listed with other items as crucial tasks required to deal with the crime situation, and the Immigration Bureau is required to make efforts from the position of being responsible for immigration control administration.

#### ○ Daily life Support for Foreign Nationals through the Establishment of Comprehensive Consultation Counters

Under the “Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime 2008”, it was decided to provide foreigners with daily life support by establishing comprehensive consultation counters to maintain a social infrastructure that enables multicultural coexistence. Furthermore, in cooperation with local authorities etc. in the region where many foreign settlers live, the Immigration Bureau decided to establish a “One-stop General Information Center for Foreign Nationals”, which offers one-stop services, including administrative procedures for entry, immigration, etc., counseling on daily life, and provision of information. It was established in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture on April 1, 2009, and is planned to be established in Tokyo and Saitama Prefectures during the year.

#### ○ Addressing the Global Community

- The Immigration Bureau held the Seminar on Immigration Control in December 2008 by inviting executive officers, etc., of immigration control administration authorities of Southeast Asian countries (regions), and exchanged views on “introduction of biometrics into entry and departure and residence management for immigration control”, “difficulties and countermeasures regarding repatriation/deportation”, and “cooperative relationship with related foreign authorities”.
- The Immigration Bureau held the Seminar on Document Examination in February 2009 by inviting experts in the examination of forged or altered documents from Southeast Asian countries (regions), introduced techniques for examining forged or altered documents that Japan has accumulated, and promotes effective technology transfer and information exchange in cooperation with other countries such as the U.S. and Canada.
- The Immigration Bureau actively participated in negotiations for concluding EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) with various countries.

#### ○ Introduction of Resettlement to a Third Country

The Government reached a Cabinet understanding on the introduction of resettlement to a third country (“Concerning the Implementation of Pilot Cases relating to the Acceptance of Refugees by Resettlement to a Third Country” on December 16, 2008) to cope with various problems relating to refugees that were prevalent in the Asian region.

From now on, the Immigration Bureau will proceed to accept refugees by resettlement to a third country and offer support for resettlement as pilot cases as from FY 2010 with the cooperation of concerned administrative agencies in accordance with the content of the said Cabinet understanding and “Detailed Measures for Implementing Pilot Cases relating to the Acceptance of Refugees by Resettlement to a Third Country” (Decision by the Liaison and Coordination Conference for Countermeasures for Refugees on December 19, 2008).

#### ○ Improvement of Administrative Services

- The Immigration Bureau will make efforts to alleviate congestion at the time of immigration examination by taking measures such as flexible allocation of immigration inspectors. Also, the Immigration Bureau will make efforts to accelerate procedures, and improve administrative services by taking measures such as establishment of priority lanes for elderly persons, persons with disability, pregnant women or other needy persons.
- The Immigration Bureau is tackling the “Comfortable Administrative Services Campaign” for the purpose of realizing a friendly and caring administration. Regional immigration bureaus will also make continuous efforts to improve the attitude of staff toward administrative services, and improve their reception manner by holding seminars to cultivate a humanitarian approach, and upgrading the environment of the reception counter or using ingenuity in providing various kinds of guide services friendly to users.

## Explanatory Note

<b>Registration Act</b>	Alien Registration Act
<b>Registration Card</b>	Alien Registration Card
<b>Registration Certificate</b>	Alien Registration Certificate
<b>Convention</b>	Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
<b>Protocol</b>	Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
<b>Japan-us Status of Forces Agreement</b>	Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America,Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan
<b>Immigration Control Act</b>	Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act
<b>APIS</b>	Advance Passenger Information System
<b>ASEM</b>	Asia-Europe Meeting
<b>ED Card</b>	Embarkation Card and Disembarkation Card
<b>EPA</b>	Economic Partnership Agreement
<b>IATA · CAWG</b>	International Air Transport Association · Control Authorities Working Group
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organization
<b>ICPO</b>	International Criminal Police Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# 2009 Immigration Control

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