

Sell passports and make money?

3 January 2019

By Antonis Loizou F.R.I.C.S. – Antonis Loizou & Associates Ltd – Real Estate Valuers & Estate Agents

Our support to the Cyprus investment program (passports/ visas) is there, as is our objection to placing provocative adds and this especially after the E.U. warnings on the subject.

This program has earned Cyprus more than €4.5 billions and as such it is not something that we want to fool around with, but on the contrary to use this investment program and to direct interest to locations/areas that have not benefited from this influx of fresh money. We have recorded in a previous article of ours how this could be done by distributing the 700 p.a. passports under a quota system to the various districts. This could benefit Nicosia and the mountain areas which are left behind of this unexpected bonanza.



The overdoing it with the passports/visas measure got the previous Minister of the Interior/Government (Mr S. Hasikos) to prepare some sort of a guide line of things not to do, more detailed due diligence by appointed firms, more details regarding laundering of money etc.

You do remember the Hilton add on the subject (reported in our previous article), as well as the large posters on the airports. Yet those who are the main benefactors of this measure are the same who will destroy it – i.e. the Developers, who if they are not following the guidelines they should be charged with a hefty penalty.

Our objection came about when we read an add by a Pafian based developer saying that “earn good income by selling your customers the Cyprus citizenship...”. What does this mean? Anyone from a taxi driver, pub waiters, agents and others are invited to enter into this game of all sport?

We will be sending this report to the new Minister of Interior (together with the add) so that we are not taken by surprise as Cyprus. We are suggesting that anyone who uses such adds to bear a hefty penalty not less than €500.000 (bearing in mind the Cyprus wide economy).

We are not learning dear readers by our past mistakes and warnings and we fear that we must protect ourselves (as Cyprus economy) from those money hungry developers and others. We are all benefiting from this investment program (including our Office) but there is a limit on how one promotes this.

Going back to passports numbers and our idea of the quota we suggest that out of the 700 passports the following quota is adopted:

Nicosia	100 p.a.
Limassol	200 p.a.
Larnaca	150 p.a.
Pafos	150 p.a.
Famagusta	100 p.a.

In addition, for the mountain areas a relaxation could be given both regarding the numbers as well as the speed of examination of the applications (e.g. instead of 6 months – 3 months thus getting a head start). Renovation of old buildings/hotels and infrastructure projects within the mountain regions to have a priority on all other applications. We are aware of that we are suggesting something which does not necessarily reflect market want, but we doubt that these foreign investors are particularly interested (in their majority) of the location (see empty units) and our suggestion could be re-examined depending on response/results.

The way this “sport” is evolving is very dangerous for all of us and it must be checked before it is too late.