

## PH, Switzerland sign guidelines on trainee exchange

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 04 December 2014 14:22

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**Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz (right) and Swiss ambassador to the Philippines Ivo Sieber (left) shake hands upon the signing of the Guidelines on the documentation and deployment of Filipino trainees to Switzerland, with officials of DOLE-POEA and the Swiss Embassy. □ (DFA photo)**

Filipinos aged 18 to 35 who want to work in Switzerland may soon find their dream come true after Philippine and Swiss officials formally set the guidelines for the documentation and deployment of Filipino trainees there.

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“These guidelines will certainly boost the chances of our workers of gainfully learning and experiencing our respective cultures and work ethics and discipline,” said Labor Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz, who signed the guidelines on behalf of the Philippines on Nov. 13.

Signing on behalf of the Swiss Government was Swiss ambassador to the Philippines Ivo Sieber, according to a news release from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

Under the guidelines, Filipinos 18 to 35 years old who have completed secondary or tertiary education, and desire to train and work in Switzerland, are eligible to apply under the trainee exchange program once they have found a suitable Swiss employer.

The employment arrangement between the Filipino trainee and the Swiss employer will involve a signed prescribed standard employment contract, which should include the following provisions:

- **type of employment;**
  
- **18-month employment duration;**
  
- **salary, trial period, and period of notice;**
  
- **working hours and holiday entitlement;**
  
- **health and accident insurance; and**
  
- **information who is to shoulder the trainee’s travel expenses.**

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The employment contract is subject to the review and approval of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

Once approved, the POEA will issue the exit clearance for the Filipino trainee's departure.

The Swiss Embassy in Manila will likewise issue the visa to Filipino trainees after their documents have been approved and endorsed by the Swiss Federal Office for Migration (FOM).

The FOM is tasked to notify the POEA of its approved visa applications and will provide the POEA a copy of the FOM-stamped employment contract between the Swiss employer and the Filipino trainee.

The Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia with which the Swiss Government has signed a bilateral traineeship agreement.

The agreement gives qualified young professionals of the Philippines and Switzerland the opportunity to work in gainful occupation for up to 18 months, receive remuneration due them and enrich the exchange of the rich culture and heritage of the respective countries and peoples.

In its 2013 Migration Report, the Swiss FOM reported that out of a total of 118 permits issued to foreign nationals for traineeship in Switzerland, the Philippines accounted for 25 percent of the total foreign young trainees under the program.

More than 50 Filipino trainees have benefited from the agreement since its signing, with most training in pharmaceutical, chemical, finance and health care sectors.

***(Rie Takumi/KBK, GMA News)***