

Leading residence- and citizenship-by-investment programs

Jennifer Lai, Managing Partner and Head of North Asia at Henley & Partners, organized a workshop on the world's leading residence- and citizenship-by-investment programs. During the workshop, she highlighted seven key countries.

[Link to Article on website](#)
[Link to Event Homepage](#)
[Link to Content Summary page](#)
[Link to Photos](#)
[Link to Video Highlights](#)

WHY IS SECONDARY RESIDENCE OR CITIZENSHIP so compelling for wealthy business people and families from the Asia region? In an unsettled, ever-changing world, acquiring a second residence or citizenship is a wise Plan B for the future.

Henley & Partners is a global leader in residence and citizenship by investment, with a history of more than 20 years and 300 staff across the world in over 30 offices.

Visa-free travel is a core motivation compelling many clients to seek residence in selected countries elsewhere in the world. And for those who also seek and attain citizenship overseas, the possibility of dual nationality under certain circumstances means there is often no need to give up their present nationality whilst enjoying the benefits of a legal second passport.



JENNIFER LAI
Henley & Partners

Global mobility is not the only reason that people seek the advice of Henley & Partners. There are many other reasons that give people cause for concern about future

stability as well as other issues relating to finances, race, religion, politics and so forth.

Another driver is the global initiatives towards fiscal and tax

transparency. Tax issues are increasingly important as people ponder the effects of the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) and legacy planning.

Security and potential

But whatever the motivating factors for Henley & Partners' clients, there are immense additional benefits of safety and security for those clients and their families. The firm provides a highly valuable advisory service on residence and citizenship planning for private clients. Henley & Partners prides itself on its expertise at identifying the best solution for each client, given their personal circumstances and future objectives.

Lai explained that Henley & Partners is a leading global expert in analyzing the options available to each client, advising on the appropriate course of action, and guiding clients through what is often a complex process. Taking the steps towards a new residence or citizenship must be carefully considered and professionally managed.

The 'chosen' seven countries

Henley & Partners offers clients access to the world's top seven programs that provide a direct legal route to citizenship based on a significant capital contribution. Three of these countries are within the European Union and four are in the Caribbean.

In Europe, the three key countries the firm currently promotes are Austria, Malta, and Cyprus due to their combination of regulatory accessibility, cost, and the reasonable demands placed on the applicants.

In the Caribbean, the firm focuses on four countries that currently offer citizenship-by-investment programs: Grenada, Antigua and

Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia.

Henley & Partners is protective of its reputation and pays great attention to the integrity of the host countries' programs. The firm requires that any clients go through a thorough, internal due diligence and compliance process.

"This is a vital phase of the process for our clients," Lai noted.

Lai spent a portion of the workshop referring to the programs of countries such as Australia and Canada that are very popular with so many wealthy Asian families. She also briefly explained some of the advantages of residence in Hong Kong and Singapore. She noted that physical residence requirements are a key concern nowadays, with varying timeframes of days or months' residence required by the authorities in each jurisdiction for private clients. But her central focus throughout was on the seven countries Henley & Partners currently promotes.

Malta and Cyprus shine in the EU

Malta has one of the lowest capital requirements to gain EU citizenship and there are no laws currently restricting the passing of citizenship down to future generations. It is the only European citizenship-by-investment program currently endorsed by the EU and nationality is protected by European law.

The processing of the application takes around 12 months before citizenship documents and passports are issued and a EUR 650,000 non-refundable contribution and EUR 150,000 in government bonds are required to begin the process.

Fellow EU member state, Cyprus, offers various additional advantages over Malta but requires a more substantial minimum capital

requirement of EUR 2 million.

Turning her attention to the four Caribbean citizenship options, Lai explained certain key advantages, even though these countries do not have the advantages of access to living and working in any of the EU countries, like the programs of Australia, Cyprus, and Malta.

The Caribbean Four

The Grenada Citizenship-by-Investment Program requires either a contribution to the National Transformation Fund of USD 150,000 for a single applicant or the purchase of government-approved and designated real estate with a value of at least USD 350,000. If an applicant chooses the real estate option, there is an additional flat government fee of USD 50,000. There are other smaller fees associated with these applications.

Lai highlighted certain the key advantages of Grenada, including fast processing time, competitive pricing, visa-free travel to 131 countries including China, an E-2 Investor Visa Treaty (which has some advantages for the US), zero wealth, gift, inheritance, foreign income, or capital gains tax.

Lai then proceeded to compare the four options Henley & Partners currently promotes in the region, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia.

Regardless of the option a Henley & Partners client chooses, Lai always recommends that individuals and families considering such a step should take the time and effort to fully understand the issues in advance. "Pre-immigration planning is vital," she explained, "it is important to engage tax advisors and appropriate professionals to understand what is needed before they obtain their residence or citizenship." ■