

Relocating to Holland 22/04/2008 00:00



A Canadian couple plan to relocate to the Netherlands, one to set up a business, the other a doctor, hopes to find work in the medical profession. They ask immigration expert Patrick Rovers about permits and work possibilities.

"We would like to relocate our family to the Netherlands. We really adore your country and want to live there for at least five years. I intend to set up the Dutch branch of our IT business (of which I am a minority shareholder). My husband wants to practice medicine (he is a paediatrician). Our two daughters are already studying economics at Rotterdam University and will probably graduate in the summer of this year. What are our possibilities?"

"PS: we are from Canada (Vancouver)"

Immigration expert Patrick Rovers replies:

Plenty of options. Let's start with your daughters. They are currently studying in Rotterdam, so I assume they have valid Dutch study-based residence permits.

This summer, once they have graduated from Erasmus University, they are entitled to look for jobs in the Netherlands as knowledge migrants. More than 3500 Dutch employers are registered with the Dutch knowledge migrant (KM) scheme. This scheme falls under the responsibility of the Dutch immigration service, part of the Dutch department of Justice.

The main perk of the knowledge migrant scheme is that it allows its registered employers to employ non-EU nationals without a work permit. I strongly recommend your daughters to aim their job search efforts to these employers. If and when a Dutch KM employer offers them a suitable job, they can subsequently arrange for KM residence permits. The assistance of the KM employer is required.

The minimum annual gross KM salary for 'Dutch' graduates is EUR 25.000 (instead of the regular EUR 34.881 or EUR 47.565 minimum annual gross salaries under the KM scheme). The Dutch immigration service will - amongst other documents - demand to see certified copies of their Erasmus university degrees.

Non-EU doctors

With regard to your husband. As such the Netherlands allows non-EU doctors to practice medicine here but the rules and regulations are strict. In general a non-EU doctor will first have to go through a kind of assessment aimed to grade and check his/her qualifications and experience.

The procedure is not that difficult but can be time-consuming. A certain command of the Dutch language is required (not surprising if one wants to work in the Dutch healthcare system). Perhaps your husband received his medical degree from a recognised university within the European Union? If that is the case, there is a possibility that his medical degree is automatically recognised.

Surprisingly, a lack of Dutch language skills is - in that scenario - not a barrier. Given the fact that your husband is Canadian, a Dutch residence permit is required. Quite a few Dutch hospitals participate in the KM scheme so it should not be too difficult to get your husband a KM residence permit if he gets a position in a KM-registered hospital. All will depend on either a credible 'EU source' of his medical degree or his ability to quickly and successfully pass the assessment.

Setting up a company

You want to branch out the IT business of which you are a co-owner. Depending on the size of the business (annual turnover) and the specific ownership percentage, there are several options. An intra-company work permit plus an employment-based residence permit may be an option. A regular work permit plus an employment based residence permit may be another option. Arranging for a regular work permit can be a challenge because certain recruitment efforts and registrations are mandatory. It may also be possible to apply for a self-employment based residence permit. The application procedure for such a permit has changed considerably over the years and is currently under review as the Netherlands is looking to attract more entrepreneurs.

Kindly note that I will be on the First Virtual Expat Fair, scheduled to take place on the 24th of April.

Visiting this fair is free but you will have to sign up beforehand. Sign up now on <http://nlshow.icongolive.com/>, or [check out this page](#).

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21 April 2008