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Welcome to the Greenberg Traurig (GT) Business Immigration & Compliance Practice's newsletter. Our newsletter provides information and commentary on key developments that impact companies with an international workforce. In addition to being an informative source of news, we hope to introduce our group of experienced immigration attorneys and professionals through the inclusion of select published articles, the announcement of public presentations and media coverage, and other notable developments.

Update from the Field

Companies operating with an international workforce are subject to constantly changing regulations in U.S. business immigration and foreign jurisdictions around the world. We recognize the inherent stress of staying ahead of the curve in an ever-changing market. In our "Update from the Field" section, a GT Immigration team member will cover recent developments that impact the movement of personnel around the globe.

- > 2014 appeared to close out with a bang as President Obama announced his plan for Executive Action on Immigration in late November 2014. As we discussed on our [blog](#) and in two [webinars](#), President Obama's plan appeared to be an early Christmas present for the business community. In addition to expansion of his Deferred Action program, the President plans to make national interest waivers available to entrepreneurs and investors, expand the H-1B cap-exemption provision so more employers will not be subject to the cap, improve the adjudication process for L-1 intracompany transfer visas, improve and streamline the PERM labor certification process, and issue a memorandum on modernizing and streamlining the visa application process. Through regulatory changes, the President announced that he wants to enable entrepreneurs to be paroled into the U.S., expand availability of Optional Practical Training (OPT) for foreign students, and allow individuals in the green card process with backlogged priority dates to file for adjustment of status and work authorization. The administration had indicated that the above items, along with [work authorization for certain H-4 visa holders](#), which is pending only release of the final regulation, were a top priority, but nothing was released beyond related agency memos echoing the President's plan. We are hoping for a quick start to implementing the President's plan in 2015.
- > Executive Action and its Early Adjustment Program cannot come soon enough for those who are waiting for their priority dates to become current. As expected, the [Visa Bulletin retrogressed significantly in November 2014](#) for Indian nationals in the EB-2 category, while worldwide movement in the EB-3 category continued to advance throughout the quarter.
- > The Department of State and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced significant changes for business visitors to the U.S. It was a welcome change for [business visitors from China](#), who may now receive B-1/B-2 visas that are valid for ten years, rather than one year. Similarly, the validity of visas for Chinese students and trainees increased from one year to five years. [Business travelers who use Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) to visit the U.S. will now need to provide additional information to allow CBP to cross-check the data with additional security databases.



- > The Ebola outbreak in West Africa resulted in travel and immigration changes for many countries. [Canada, Australia, Singapore](#) and [Israel](#) imposed visa restrictions on nationals from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In response to the pandemic, the United States implemented [enhanced passenger screening](#) and also granted [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#) to certain [nationals of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone](#) for 18 months while those countries.

Rebecca Schechter is an associate serving clients from the firm's Northern Virginia office. She represents multi-national corporations and companies, as well as individual clients, in all areas of employment-based immigration. Rebecca regularly assists clients with global immigration matters, including business and work visas to countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. Rebecca has a thorough understanding of third party contractor issues and experience handling complex naturalization, deportation defense, family and employment-based adjustment applications. Rebecca may be reached by email at schechterr@gtlaw.com or by phone at +1 703.903.7578.

On the Blog

Included below are key blog posts from the last quarter that reflect notable developments in the field. For additional blog posts, please visit www.gtlaw-insidebusinessimmigration.com.

- > [Hiring Undocumented Workers May Cost Companies Their Healthcare Plans](#) | [Nataliya Binshteyn](#)
- > [U.S. Department of Homeland Security Extends REAL ID Document Enrollment Dates Affecting State-Issued Driver's Licenses and IDs](#) | [Nataliya Binshteyn](#)
- > [Malaysia Extends 350,000 Work Permits](#) | [Rebecca Schechter](#)
- > [Judge Issues Injunction Permanently Barring Implementation of the H-2B Program Rule](#) | [Laura Reiff](#)
- > [January 2015 Visa Bulletin: Some Good News, But Executive Action Benefits Cannot Come Soon Enough](#) | [Ian Macdonald](#)
- > [A New Judge is in Town to Rule on I-9 Violation Penalties](#) | [Scott Decker](#)
- > [17 States Pull the Trigger and File an Action in Federal Court to Enjoin the Obama Administration's Deferred Action Program](#) | [Laura Reiff](#)
- > [DHS Secretary Extends Temporary Protected Status to Nationals of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone in Response to Ebola Pandemic](#) | [Shaun Staller](#)
- > [Announcement of Express Entry by CIC Results in Increased Number of Applications Under Current Program](#) | [Avani Patel](#)
- > [India to Implement Electronic Visa System in Time for the Holidays](#) | [Shaun Staller](#)
- > [United Kingdom Implements Significant Changes to Immigration Laws](#) | [Avani Patel](#)
- > [Canada's 'Express Entry' Permanent Residence Program Beginning in January 2015](#) | [Rebecca Schechter](#)
- > [South Africa Tightens its Immigration Laws](#) | [Rebecca Schechter](#)
- > [Where do Social Security Payments Made by Undocumented Workers Go?](#) | [Ian Macdonald](#)

In the News

- > [Laura Reiff](#), Quoted, "Hospitality Legislation And Regulation To Watch in 2015," *Law360*, January 2, 2015
- > [Kate Kalmykov](#), Guest Speaker, [The Stoler Report](#), December 10, 2014
- > [Ian Macdonald](#), Quoted, "Obama Immigration Plan: New Perils Could Await Some Workers," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2014
- > [Ian Macdonald](#), Featured, "Avoiding the Pitfalls: Companies Expanding Globally Can Learn from These Five Lessons," *Corporate Counsel*, November 1, 2014
- > [Ian Macdonald](#), Quoted, "China: Shanghai Issues Preferential Visa Policies to Attract Multinational Companies," *Bloomberg BNA*, October 9, 2014
- > [Laura Reiff](#) and [Kate Kalmykov](#), Featured, *Immigration Times* magazine, Fall 2014

Recent & Upcoming Events

The GT Immigration team has recently presented and will be presenting at several industry events in various markets across the United States and around the world. For more information about these events, please [click here](#).

- > [Invest in America Summit and Exhibition](#) | March 2015 – China. *Greenberg Traurig* is co-chair of the largest USA-

themed investment conference and exhibition in China hosted in three cities for 2015 (March 14th - 15th in Shanghai, March 18th in Shenzhen, March 21st in Beijing)

- > [Totally Expat Show - Houston](#) | February 12, 2015 - Houston, Texas. *Greenberg Traurig is a sponsor of the 2015 Totally Expat Show in Houston and will host a comprehensive panel addressing global mobility challenges in international markets.*
- > [Navigating the Maze of U.S. Immigration Compliance Webinar](#) | February 5, 2015 – Webinar. *This complimentary webinar will provide insight and best practices on vital immigration issues facing employers.*
- > [Second Annual EB-5 Conference](#) | January 15, 2015 - Las Vegas Nevada. *Greenberg Traurig attorneys Kate Kalmykov and Laura Reiff will serve as presenters.*
- > [Executive Action Webinar](#) | November 2014 – Webinar. *Greenberg Traurig hosted a webinar addressing areas of impact for business following the President’s executive action on immigration reform.*
- > [Global Immigration and Potential Implications in Key Markets Webinar](#) | November 17, 2014 – Webinar. *Greenberg Traurig hosted a webinar covering immigration and employment developments in key markets abroad, including South Africa, Canada, The United Kingdom and Australia.*
- > [Post-Graduate Immigration Options with a Focus on the USCIS EB-5 Visa Program](#) | November 12, 2014 – New York, New York. *Greenberg Traurig hosted a lecture about the various non-immigrant visa and immigrant visa options allowing them to remain in the United States post-graduation.*

Greenberg Traurig’s Immigration Practice Ranks Tier 1 in The U.S. News-Best Lawyers 2015 Best Law Firm Rankings

We are pleased to announce that the [Business Immigration & Compliance Practice](#) of international law firm [Greenberg Traurig, LLP](#) earned a first-tier ranking from the *U.S. News-Best Lawyers 2015 Best Law Firm* rankings nationwide, as well as the Washington, D.C. and Miami metropolitan areas. The Immigration Practice has consistently been ranked in the first-tier for the past five years.

According to the publication, achieving a high ranking is a special distinction that signals a unique combination of excellence and breadth of experience.

For the fourth consecutive year, Greenberg Traurig has received the most overall first-tier rankings and the most first-tier metropolitan rankings. Additionally, the firm received the “Law Firm of the Year” designation for its [Real Estate Practice](#) as a result of an impressive overall performance in the evaluation process.

To read a firm-issued press release announcing the rankings, please click [here](#).

Greenberg Traurig Expands Asia Practice, Opens Office in Tokyo

International law firm [Greenberg Traurig, LLP](#) announced this week the opening of a new office in Tokyo, Japan. The [Tokyo office](#) is the firm’s third in the Asia region and will work collaboratively with existing teams in [Shanghai, China](#) and [Seoul, Korea](#). As [Greenberg Traurig’s 37th office worldwide](#), [Greenberg Traurig Tokyo Law Offices](#) will be operated by Greenberg Traurig Horitsu Jimusho, an affiliate of Greenberg Traurig, P.A. and [Greenberg Traurig, LLP](#).

The [Tokyo office](#) will be led by an award-winning team of English-speaking Japanese lawyers. Shareholder [Koji Ishikawa](#), managing shareholder of the new office, joins from DLA Piper, and shareholders [Yuji Ogiwara](#) and [Koichiro Ohashi](#), co-chairs of the firmwide Japan Practice, join from White & Case.

The office opening is responsive to client needs and the global business community’s growing interest in Japan. Against the backdrop of the questionable viability and time horizons of various so-called “emerging markets” and major investments therein, the long-term strength and stability of the Japanese economy, government, and culture paint a compelling picture for [Greenberg Traurig](#) and its client base.

The attorneys opening this office are experienced practitioners in their fields and licensed in both Tokyo and New York. [Ishikawa](#) advises clients on corporate finance and capital markets transactions. [Ogiwara](#) focuses on Japanese employment litigation, labor negotiations, and compliance matters. [Ohashi](#) is an expert in the world of investment funds and also specializes in advising financial institutions, both Japanese and international, on a variety of financial matters, particularly M&A transactions.

While the team will pay particular attention to helping clients navigate their needs outside Japan by utilizing the firm's expansive resources and platform elsewhere in Asia and in the United States, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East, they will also help clients navigate Japanese opportunities, with a particular focus on corporate & securities, capital markets, fund & invest management, dispute resolution, labor & employment, intellectual property, energy and infrastructure.

Our Team

Greenberg Traurig's Business Immigration & Compliance practice includes nearly 100 attorneys and professionals serving clients from nearly a dozen markets. For more information, please contact one of our attorneys or directors listed below.

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To learn more about GT's Business Immigration & Compliance Practice and to stay up to date on market trends and industry news, please visit <http://www.gtlaw-insidebusinessimmigration.com/>.



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