REVISED GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES IN THE PROCESSING OF MANILA ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL OFFICE (MECO) ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (ETA) BY THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION

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Adopted: 11 September 2015
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WHEREAS, the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) is the duly designed instrumentality to promote and protect Philippine interests in Taiwan, with authority to perform functions usually carried out by Philippine foreign missions, including promotion of trade, tourism, economic cooperation, investments, cultural endeavors and visa, legal and consular services;

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) is principally responsible for the administration and enforcement of immigration, citizenship and alien registration laws, including the entry and admission of foreigners into the Philippine in accordance with the provision of Commonwealth Act No. 613 (CA No. 613), as amended, otherwise known as the “Philippine Immigration Act of 1940”, and such rules and regulation as may be promulgated by the Commissioner of Immigration;

WHEREAS, MECO established an on-line electronic visa application processing system, otherwise known as the “Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) System” to facilitate prompt and convenient processing of Philippine tourist visas for Taiwan passport holders in any part of the world;

WHEREAS, MECO and BI need to coordinate and collaborate in the performance of their respective functions, duties, and responsibilities towards the fulfillment of their mandate;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the rule-making power of the Commissioner of Immigration under Section 3, CA No. 613 and Section 29 and 36, Chapter 6, Book IV, Title III Executive Order No. 292, otherwise known as “The Revised Administrative Code of 1987”, the following guidelines and procedures shall be strictly observed:

Section 1. MECO Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). – The MECO ETA is a Philippine Temporary Visitor’s Visa (TVV) under Section 9(a), CA No. 613, obtained through the ETA System in any part of the world by Taiwan passport holders who are fifteen (15) years of age and above, with or without Taiwan Identification Card.

Section 2. Application Systems’ Synchronization and Compatibility. – The BI Management Information Services Division (MISD) shall ensure that MECO’s ETA System and BI’s Border Control Information System (BCIS) are synchronized and compatible in order that ETA’s information details can be verified and validated during immigration primary inspection at Philippine’s international ports of entry and exit. The MECO shall likewise make available to BI the MECO’s Travel Authorization Verification Page for anytime verification and confirmation of all ETAs issued.

Section 3. Validity, Number of Entries and Authorized Stay. – The ETA shall be valid for thirty (30) days from issue and approval date and may be either for single entry or multiple entries with a maximum initial authorized duration stay of thirty (30) days from date of entry to the Philippines.

Attached to form an integral part of this Order and marked as Annexes “A” and “B” are sample templates of the ETA for Single Entry and Multiple Entries, respectively.

Section 4. Form. – ETA holders may either print a hard copy or save an electronic copy of the ETA for presentation to the concerned airline upon flight check-in and to BI for immigration primary inspection upon arrival to the Philippines.

Section 5. Arrival Formalities. – The following immigration arrival formalities shall be observed:

- Immigration Officers at primary inspection shall scan the biographical page of ETA holder’s passport on the passport reader to electronically check and verify the authenticity, validity and information details of the ETA and for derogatory record check. Upon verification and confirmation, the ETA holder shall be admitted subject to Section 6 hereof;

- In case there is no ETA data found in the BCIS or a “No MECO ETA Found/Issued” message from ETA System, the ETA holder shall be referred to the Arrival Area’s Duty Immigration Supervisor (AADIS) for secondary inspection and further verification and confirmation of the ETA issuance with the Management Information System Division (MISD);

- If upon secondary inspection the ETA data is confirmed as issued and is in order, the ETA holder shall be admitted subject to Section 6 hereof;

- If the non-viewing of the ETA data or the cause of the “No MECO ETA Found/Issued” message is due to typographical error by the ETA holder in the encoding of information in the ETA application and such error does not materially affect in totality the identity of the ETA holder as verified and confirmed against his/her other details, the AADIS shall allow him/her to immediately re-apply for an ETA on-line;

- issuance of the new ETA, the formalities in paragraph (a) of this Section shall be performed.

Section 6. Exclusion. – Notwithstanding the validity of the ETA, a holder thereof may be excluded from the Philippines if there exist other ground to deny entry pursuant to Section 29 of CA No. 613, as amended.

Section 7. Extension of ETA. – ETA holders may apply for extension of authorized stay as temporary visitors under Section 9(a) of CA No. 613, as amended, subject to compliance of applicable immigration laws, rules and regulation.

Section 8. Implementation. – To ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the ETA System, the BI Port Operations Division (POD) shall widely circulate this order to all international ports of entry and exit and to all airlines with international flight operation in the Philippines through the Airline Operators Council (AOC).

Section 9. Repealing Clause. - All circulars, memoranda, orders and other issuances are hereby repealed and/ or modified accordingly.

Section 10. Effectively. – This Order shall take effect immediately.

Let a copy of this Circular be furnished to the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR) U.P Law Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

City of Manila, Philippines.
11 September 2015

(SGD) SIEGFRED B. MISON
Commissioner

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