How tycoons can go shopping for a new passport

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. What citizenship(s) do you have?

I’m a citizen of …

b. Have you ever had a different one?

I used to be a citizen of …

c. If you could get any citizenship, which country would you choose and why?

I would like to be a citizen of … because …

2 Key words

Match the key words with the definitions. Then, find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bonds</th>
<th>citizenship</th>
<th>property</th>
<th>invest</th>
<th>tycoon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. a rich and powerful person who is involved in business (para 1)</td>
<td>2. the legal right to live permanently in a particular country (para 3)</td>
<td>3. use your money and hope to make a profit from it, for example by buying property (para 4)</td>
<td>4. land and the buildings on it (para 4)</td>
<td>5. documents given to someone who puts money into a government or company (para 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>rejected</th>
<th>protectionism</th>
<th>Schengen zone</th>
<th>instability</th>
<th>independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. freedom from control by another country (para 6)</td>
<td>7. an area of 26 European countries that have officially ended passport and all other types of border control at their borders (para 6)</td>
<td>8. a system in which a country helps its own industries by putting taxes on foreign goods (para 9)</td>
<td>9. a situation that keeps changing so that you are worried about what might happen (para 9)</td>
<td>10. not accepted for something or not given something that you have asked for (para 11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citizenship for sale: how tycoons can go shopping for a new passport
Jon Henley
2 June, 2018

1 It’s what every twenty-first-century tycoon wants and many multimillionaires, too: a second – and sometimes a third or even a fourth – passport.

2 There are more than 20 countries, including some in the EU, where someone with lots of money like Russian billionaire and Chelsea football club owner Roman Abramovich can get a new passport and a new nationality.

3 Citizenship-by-investment programmes (CIPs) are becoming very popular.

4 The details of each programme – and the costs, ranging from $100,000 to €2.5 million – may be different but the idea is the same. Basically, wealthy people invest in property or businesses, buy government bonds or give money directly and, in exchange, they get citizenship and a passport.

5 The programmes are not new but they are growing quickly. They are popular with wealthy private investors from countries such as China, Russia, India, Vietnam, Mexico and Brazil, as well as the Middle East and Turkey.

6 The first programme started in 1984, a year after the Caribbean island of St Kitts and Nevis won independence from the UK and needed to make money. Slow at the beginning, it quickly became popular after 2009 when people with St Kitts and Nevis passports were allowed visa-free travel to the Schengen zone.

7 Wealthier countries such as Canada, the UK and New Zealand have also seen the possible advantages of CIPs. The EB-5 programme brings the USA about $4 billion a year.

8 Experts from the many companies that specialize in CIPs say that only a few people buy citizenship to move immediately to the country.

9 For most of them, the new citizenship is like an insurance policy because nationalism, protectionism and fears of financial instability are increasing around the world.

10 But critics say the programmes could be major security risks and allow wealthy individuals to hide their money and avoid punishment in their own countries.

11 Some people say that it is wrong to give citizenship to super-rich individuals when people with less money must wait their turn for citizenship – and, in many cases, be rejected.

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3 Rich people

Find all the words and phrases in the article that describe rich people.

4 Comprehension check

Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What does CIP stand for?
2. What must people do to ‘buy’ citizenship?
3. When and where did the first CIPs start and why?
4. Why are CIPs popular with rich business people?
5. Why aren’t CIPs popular with everyone?

5 Discussion

Read this text from paragraph 11:

Some people say that it is wrong to give citizenship to super-rich individuals when people with less money must wait their turn for citizenship – and, in many cases, be rejected.

What do you think: is it fair to give citizenship to people who can pay for it and not to others?

Imagine you are rich. Would you pay to get citizenship of another country?

6 Citizenship test

Is there a citizenship test for your country (or the country you live in)?

If so, find out:

• some of the questions from the test;
• how people can prepare for the test;
• where people can take the test;
• how much it costs to take the test.

If not:

• say what people should know about the country before they can live there.
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KEY

2 Key words

1. tycoon
2. citizenship
3. invest
4. property
5. bonds
6. independence
7. Schengen zone
8. protectionism
9. instability
10. rejected

3 Rich people

tycoons (para 1)
multimillionaires (para 1)
billionaire (para 2)
wealthy people (para 4)
wealthy private investors (para 5)
wealthy individuals (para 10)
super-rich individuals (para 11)

4 Comprehension check

1. citizenship-by-investment programme
2. invest in property or businesses, buy government bonds or give money directly to the government
3. St Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean. After they won independence from the UK in 1984, they needed to find a way to bring money into their country.
4. They can get visa-free travel within the Schengen zone. Many are worried about the increase in nationalism, protectionism and financial instability around the world. Having additional citizenships is like an insurance policy to protect themselves and their businesses.
5. They cost a lot of money which most people cannot afford. Some people say that this is unfair. Some people say that they could be security risks and they also give rich people a way to hide their money.