

# The Foreign Chambers of the Philippines

American Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (Phils.), Inc.  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc. ♦ European Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc.  
Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of the Phils., Inc. ♦ Korean Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Inc.  
Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters, Inc.



31 January 2005

HON. CESAR PURISIMA  
Secretary  
Department of Trade and Industry  
Makati City



Dear Secretary Purisima,

We refer to the letter of Datatrail Corporation on the **ACR I-Card issue** dated 24 January 2004 addressed to all foreign chambers which came as a reaction to our letter to H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo dated 17 January 2005, a copy of which was furnished your office.



We are happy to note that our letter to the President has immediately resulted in the delivery to the foreign chambers of more detailed information on the ACR I-Card project that the Technical Working Group (TWG) has been requesting for so long.



Despite the provision of new information by Datatrail, major issues remain unclear. The Joint Foreign Chambers (JFC) would like to reiterate the following points:

1. The JFC would like to make certain that the new service works according to the promises made by BI and Datatrail and to ensure an effective and smooth implementation throughout the Philippines.
2. Following the official figure of 87,500 ACR holders provided by the Alien Registration Division (ARD), we find it hard to believe that it will be possible to complete the registration of aliens using the new ACR I-Card system by 31 March 2005. Given that 9000 of the 87500 have already registered, according to Datatrail, 78,500 more will have to apply for their new ACR I-cards. This means BI/Datatrail will have to process about 2000 applications a day. The fact that data capturing stations have not been set up to this date in the different district offices around the country as listed by Datatrail on item 6 of its letter, makes it even harder to believe that the deadline is realistic.



Moreover, the JFC's request for the BI to set up a data-capturing station in BOI Makati on 11 Jan 2005 itself has taken already more than 2 weeks to follow-up and now still without results. The BI would have to adjust the deadline to 30 September 2005 at the earliest to be fair to all applicants who will suffer and be penalized due to the expected delays in rolling out this project nationwide.



We would like to clarify the issue raised at item 3 of the Datatrail letter. We are not in any way disputing the BI certification of 87,500 ACR holders currently in the country. The point we were making is that, based on reasonable estimates of the foreign business community, the total number

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of aliens currently in the country, who should be subject to an ACR, is in the region of 400,000. The implication here is that there are potentially 300,000+ aliens in the Philippines who have not registered in accordance with the rules of the BI. This clearly represents an opportunity for the BI to clamp down on non-compliant aliens and to increase the number of ACR holders.



3. In item 4 of the letter of Datatrail, it referred to the question on what information is included in the ACR I-Card that is valued at US\$ 50. The reply was not exactly what we were expecting. We are actually referring to the documents that should be immediately included in the ACR I-Card. We reiterate our expectation that the new ACR I-Card would include the ACR, among others, the Special Return Certificate and Re-entry Permit upon issuance. If this is the case, the fee is reasonable.



4. Datatrail claims it has processed 9,000 ACR I-Card applicants to date. The foreign chambers believe that the processing of the ACR I-Card remains incomplete unless the card is functioning.

For many chamber members who have applied and have been issued their cards months ago, these cards remained useless. We expect card readers to be in place at all airports and ports for this purpose. There are no special lanes that will make it convenient for ACR I-Card holders to go through immigration. Proper implementation means rolling out the infrastructure for the ACR I-Card before cards are issued.



If foreigners pay for this new service of the BI/Datatrail, then we expect the card to work upon issuance. This cannot be a revenue-generating project for the government only. The project has to offer immediate service to cardholders.

We again reiterate our expectation that the ACR I-Card, upon issuance, should contain the other immigration documents required at the airport/port such as SRC and re-entry permit.



5. We are also of the opinion that the Annual Report of ACR cardholders with the BI should be integrated into the ACR I-Card. This would avoid double-reporting and paying twice.



6. Finally, we expect a written confirmation from the BI/Datatrail that:

- a. the ACR I-Card will include the SRC and the Re-entry permit, among others;
- b. upon issuance, the ACR I-Card will immediately function and could be used by any ACR I-Card holder in any international airport or port;
- c. that the ACR I-Card infrastructure will be ready in all international airports and ports even before the issuance of any ACR I-Card is made;
- d. that data capturing stations will be in place in Intramuros, BOI Makati office and the district offices of the ports of San Fernando, Aparri, Subic and Angeles, Batangas, Legaspi, Iloilo, Cebu, Tacloban, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, Surigao and Davao before any deadline is set; and
- e. that a new deadline will be provided to allow realistic implementation of the project.



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In behalf of the JFC, we thank you for your offer to look into these concerns once again.


Sincerely yours,




  
**RICK M. SANTOS**  
President  
American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines


  
**RICHARD BARCLAY**  
President  
Australia – New Zealand Chamber of Commerce



  
**STEWART HALL**  
President  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines

  
**WILLIAM BAILEY**  
President  
European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines



  
**RYUKICHI KAWAGUCHI**  
President  
Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
of the Philippines

  
**ILL KYOUNG PARK**  
President  
Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry



  
**SHAMEEM QURASHI**  
President  
Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters, Inc. (PAMURI)

