



## DUAL CITIZENSHIP AND PENSIONS: COMPATIBLE OR IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

Peter Adamis 11 September 2014

**Baby boomers.** There are many of us who are of the Baby boomer generation reaching an age of retirement and will soon be considering their lifestyle options. Challenges and paradigms in need of change.

There are many challenges to be overcome, of which the paradigms of the past will need to be reviewed and restructured to meet the needs of the baby boomers. For those of us who live in the Diaspora and in our region of Australia may wish to return to spend our remaining days in a country other than the one we grew up in and yearn to be buried among our ancestors of old. Others may wish to return and remain for long periods of time returning occasionally to Australia where they spent most of their lives. Should they sever their ties with Australia even they are no longer in a position to contribute due to their age and circumstances.

**Not a new phenomenon.** This is not a new phenomenon as our early Anglo/Saxon brethren before us who made America, Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and other countries home also wished to return back to their ancestral origins to be buried amongst their ancestors. It was their children and grandchildren that decided that the country they grew up kept them rooted to the soil and the bonds with the old country dissipated with time.

There are numerous stories of our Anglo/Saxon brethren returning back to mother England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland to reclaim their ancestral rights and/or retain their links with their origins. This is not a bad thing and contrary to some beliefs strengthens the bonds between the mother country and the country one grows up with. It has benefits in cultural, economic and diplomatic circles which if managed well goes hand in hand with long term interests of both countries collectively.

**Diaspora.** To make it easier to follow the discussion, let us for the sake of the argument let me use Australia as the example to represent the Hellenic Diaspora. What if Australians, who have contributed to the economic security of Australia and have assets in both countries, should they be forced to choose and any benefits from Australia be withdrawn? Can a citizen who has worked in both countries draw a pension from both countries and travels between the two throughout their lifetimes.

We will see more and more Australians wishing to live a life of tranquillity in Greece or other parts of the world in an environment where living standards and access to services may not

be at the level we currently enjoy. However having said this the cost of living maybe much lower than Australia which attracts people to migrate for short and long term periods. Is this wrong to make such life changing decisions. Is it wrong for any government to penalise these Australians who decide to live elsewhere after a life time of being in Australia.

**Overseas for extended periods.** I am of the opinion that if Australians wish to live overseas for extended period and returning back home periodically, they should not be penalised and should not have any restrictions placed upon them. They should be allowed to enjoy the fruits of their labours and continue to draw pensions even though in their latter years they have decided to live elsewhere. Even for those who have spent less that 20 years and have contributed to Australia, have a dual citizenship and have some ties still in Australia should be allowed to draw upon their pensions.

**Penalising pensioners.** On the other hand I am in two minds whether Australians should be penalised if they decide to live permanently in another country, especially when they have Australian citizenship. In my mind, citizenship of any country is one of the most important aspects of belonging and identification of who that person is, even they may have dual citizenship on having lived two countries for considerable periods of time.

This will create new challenges for Australia to find solutions and there will come a time when governments will be looking at its own citizens to ensure that they who have contributed to its economic security are still eligible for pensions and services despite their citizenship. In this case I am referring to the compatibility and/or irreconcilable differences if any between the baby boomer generation and the nation's long term interests . Whatever the case may be, each generation is free to choose its own path in life and subsequent generations need to be aware of the challenges they face in the future.

**Baber boomers greatest impact.** We the baby boomers can stand tall amongst the current generation in the knowledge that it was our generation that made the biggest impact on mankind's history and as such would prefer that we are not judged or treated harshly by the weathering of time. Where we decide to live the remainder of our lives should not be an impediment to any monetary enumeration. After all is not the world but a global community where the paradigms of the past are no longer relevant and new rules may need to be implemented.

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