



PREVENTIVE LAW SERIES

THE SOJOURNER PERMIT



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Upon transferring to Naples, one of the first tasks that military dependents, civilian employees and their family members must accomplish is obtaining a **Sojourner Permit**, or the *Permesso di Soggiorno*. We understand that this process can be a stressful and confusing way to start your first week in Italy, so the following information is offered to help you through it with some great tips for both before and after you obtain your Sojourner Permit.

What is a Sojourner Permit? A Sojourner Permit is an Italian government document that certifies that a NATO-Force military dependent or member of the civilian component is a temporary legal resident of Italy. It is *different* from the *missione visa* that is placed in your passport prior to arriving in Italy. The visa is only an *entry approval* and is the first step necessary to obtain a Sojourner Permit upon your arrival in Italy. The requirement to get a Sojourner Permit exists in addition to the *missione visa* that is already in your passport.

Who must obtain a Sojourner Permit? Italian law requires all foreign personnel entering Italy, other than an active duty member under military orders, to obtain a Sojourner Permit. Application must be made within eight days of arrival in Italy. Sojourner Permits are required for all military dependents, all members of a civilian component (DOD civilians, NAFI employees, technical representatives, Red Cross, NFCU, USO, and employees of other organizations providing services to and enjoying a special status with the U.S. military) and their dependents. Citizens of the Schengen Area are not required to obtain a *missione visa* or Sojourner Permit; however, there may be other requirements for you to enter and reside in Italy (consult with your embassy).

How do I obtain a *missione visa*? Visas are obtained before entry to Italy. This is usually done in the United States, but if you are currently stationed overseas you'll need to go to your nearest Italian Consulate or Embassy. Our office cannot obtain one for you, and we cannot expedite the process in obtaining a *missione visa* as it's handled by the individual consulate. Contractors and non-U.S. citizens will use their tourist passport for the *missione visa*; all other applicants will need an official or no-fee passport in order to obtain a *missione visa*.

Can I apply for a Sojourner Permit without a *missione visa*? No! Our office is only permitted to process Sojourner Permit applications for applicants with a valid *missione visa*. If you do not have a *missione visa* or it is expired, you must return to your country of residence to obtain one from an Italian Consulate or Embassy. *There is no way to obtain the missione visa while physically in Italy.*

How do I obtain a Sojourner Permit? The Region Legal Service Office, Europe, Africa, Central (RLSO EURAFCENT) Legal Assistance Office assists in the preparation of Sojourner Permit applications and oversees the acquisition of a Sojourner Permit for all personnel attached to U.S. Navy commands in the Naples/Caserta area. Please see the 'Sojourner Permit First Time Application Checklist' for a full list of documents needed to apply for a Sojourner Permit. Remember, you must enter Italy on the correct *missione visa* before you can apply for a Sojourner Permit! Additionally, we are not permitted to accept applications in advance of your arrival.

NOTE: Army and Air Force personnel stationed at AFSOUTH must apply for Sojourner Permits through the AFSOUTH Provost Marshall's Office.

What are the Sojourner Permit office hours at RLSO EURAFCENT? Sojourner's Permit application packages (all documents listed above) can be delivered to the RLSO EURAFCENT Front Desk (Admin II, 1^o

piano) during regular service hours. You may also submit the documents during your initial Area Orientation. **All other Sojourner Permit services are by appointment.** You can set up an appointment or send questions/concerns to our office by emailing simona.illiano.LN@us.navy.mil or napleslegalassistance@us.navy.mil. One member of a family may submit packages on behalf of the whole family.

What about fingerprints? The Italian Bossi-Fini Immigration Law of July 30, 2002, requires fingerprints to be collected from all Sojourner Permit applicants who are age 14 years or older. For new arrivals, the Italian Forensic Team will take fingerprints at the Capodichino base **by appointment only** after you have submitted your application package. Fingerprinting appointments are scheduled two to four weeks after submitting the package, subject to available time slots.

I need my receipt before the fingerprinting to apply for a job/obtain a CAC/etc. If you have a time-sensitive need for your receipt of application prior to your fingerprinting appointment time, please contact us to let us know. We can schedule appointments for application receipts on a case-by-case basis. However, be advised that you are still obligated to attend a later fingerprinting appointment to complete your application for a Sojourner Permit, and your application will not be submitted to the immigration office if you fail to attend. This will result in the denial of a Sojourner Permit until the fingerprints are collected.

NOTE: Processing of Sojourner Permit applications by the Italian authorities takes six weeks to three months, so please be patient. When ready, an e-mail will be sent notifying you to pick up your permit.

What do I do with my Sojourner Permit? Make a copy of your Sojourner Permit and carry it with you at all times. Keep your original permit with your passport in a secure location. Make sure your original permit accompanies you whenever you travel outside Italy. You may fold the permit, but do not cut or laminate it.

What if my sojourner's permit is misspelled? If there is a mistake or misspelling in the name/last name, date/place of birth, or citizenship, then the sojourner's permit must be returned to the Immigration Office for correction. Notify the front desk at the time of pick-up or as soon as you notice. You will receive a notification e-mail when the permit is ready for pick up.

How do I renew my expired Sojourner Permit? No greater than two months before the expiration date (written in Italian date format DD/MM/YYYY) you must visit RLSO EURAFCENT (Admin II, 1° piano) to request a renewal of your permit. Please see the Sojourner Permit Renewal Application Checklist for a full list of documents needed to renew. The immigration office will not accept renewals submitted more than two months before the expiration date.

What if I have a newborn? If you have a newborn while in Italy, your baby needs a Sojourner Permit as well. To add the baby, the permit of one of the parents must be renewed. If the parent's permit includes other children, their permits must be renewed as well. You will need to bring all the standard documents required for renewal (as if the permits were expired) in addition to a copy of the newborn's official or no-fee passport, two passport-sized photos, and a copy of the *Italian Birth Certificate* (Certification of Birth Abroad is not accepted).

If you go to the United States to give birth to your newborn, you will need to request and obtain a Mission Visa for your newborn placed in the U.S. passport **BEFORE** coming back to Italy.

Lost or Stolen Sojourner Permits must be reported to the Italian Polizia where you reside. Reports must be made in-person. Upon report, you will be provided a *denuncia di smarrimento*, which must be carried with you in place of the permit while a new one is being issued. It is important that the document indicate it was produced on behalf of the Italian Questura with the words *rilasciato dalla Questura di Napoli/Caserta*. You can contact I-7 Security Department for assistance with filing a report.

What do I do with my Sojourner Permit when I PCS out of Italy? You are required to check-out at RLSO EURAFCENT before departing Italy on Permanent Change of Station orders. Upon check-out, all Sojourner Permits must be turned-in to the RLSO or check-out will not be authorized.