

A New Lease on Life Abroad: New Global Index Ranks the World's Best Residency Routes

2026 Global Residency Programs Index scores 48 residency routes across 46 countries with Switzerland, the UAE and Portugal topping the table.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Global Citizen Solutions](#) (GCS), a leading global residency and citizenship planning advisory firm, today released its [2026 Global Residency Programs Index](#), an independent evaluation scoring 48 leading residency programs across 46 jurisdictions. Quality of life is one of the highest-weighted pillars measured, tied with procedure, ahead of mobility, investment and compliance.

The top five, at a glance
Switzerland, Lump-Sum Taxation (91.9, No. 1 overall)
Switzerland's edge comes from a perfect Compliance & Credibility score, the decisive factor, paired with near-elite quality of life, top-tier mobility and a strong fiscal profile. It ranks among

the safest, most politically stable countries in the world; the trade-off is one of the highest costs of living anywhere, offset by exceptional healthcare, world-class schools and a family-friendly outdoor culture across four distinct Alpine seasons. It sits outside the European Union.

UAE, Golden Visa (91.5, No. 2)

The UAE is the fiscal standout of the Index, with zero personal income tax and a comparatively low entry threshold, available through routes including property investment. It pairs that with



GLOBAL CITIZEN SOLUTIONS

Global Residency Programs Index 2026 — Top 10 Overall

The true strength of a residency — mobility, investment and quality of life in one score.

GLOBAL RESIDENCY INDEX	PROGRAMME	ENHANCED MOBILITY INDEX	INVESTMENT INDEX	QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX
1 st	 Switzerland Lump-Sum Taxation	1 st	11 th	3 rd
2 nd	 UAE Golden Visa	8 th	4 th	18 th
3 rd	 Portugal Golden Visa (ARI)	1 st	11 th	9 th
4 th	 Italy Investor Visa	1 st	38 th	16 th
5 th	 Greece Golden Visa	8 th	38 th	24 th
6 th	 New Zealand Active Investor Plus	13 th	25 th	5 th
7 th	 Portugal D2 Visa (Entrepreneur)	1 st	13 th	9 th
8 th	 Singapore Global Investor Programme	1 st	18 th	4 th
9 th	 Luxembourg Golden Visa	13 th	35 th	11 th
10 th	 Canada Quebec Investor + PNP	13 th	37 th	2 nd

Standard Competition Ranking (tied scores share a rank; the next is skipped). Sub-index columns show each programme's rank on that pillar across all 48 programmes. Mobility positions updated from the 2025 dataset — seven programmes tie for 1st on a perfect mobility score.

Top 10 residency programmes worldwide

strong mobility and one of the lowest-crime environments anywhere, plus a large, international expat community and family-friendly infrastructure. Its GV offers a renewable residency status only, with UAE nationality reserved for exceptional, government-nominated cases rather than something an investor can work toward.

Portugal, Golden Visa / ARI (91.3, No. 3)

Portugal's Golden Visa provides a strong quality of life, near-ceiling mobility via a full EU/Schengen passport, and a citizenship pathway of seven to ten years depending on nationality. Portugal's Golden Visa can be secured through a qualifying investment fund (minimum €500,000 in a private equity or venture capital fund investing in Portuguese companies), a cultural donation (from around €200,000), a research-funding contribution, or an investment tied to job creation. It remains Europe's value leader, a moderate cost of living, a mild Atlantic climate, and a welcoming culture for families relocating from abroad, and is the highest-ranked EU route.

Italy, Investor Visa (90.3, No. 4)

Italy earns its ranking on process and passport strength rather than price. Its Investor Visa offers a fast, flexible menu of qualifying investments, government bonds, company shares, start-ups or a philanthropic donation, paired with strong EU mobility. That combination offsets a costlier, less tax-efficient entry. Family life is notoriously rich in food, culture and history. As a non-EU national, an Investor Visa holder can pursue Italian citizenship after ten years of legal residence under standard naturalization rules.

Greece, Golden Visa (89.5, No. 5)

Greece is the Index's fastest-processing programme by a wide margin, paired with strong mobility. Its Mediterranean climate, welcoming culture and relaxed, community-centered lifestyle make it a strong pick for families prioritizing sun and hospitality. Of the top five, it is the only one where real estate remains the primary route, with the qualifying property threshold raised to €800,000 in prime areas in September 2024, though a startup-investment alternative is now also available.

The Americas, North, South and Central

The US EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program (83.9) and E-2 Treaty Investor visa (82.6) remain solid performers, but both sit outside the global top ten this year, in 27th and 32nd position respectively.

Canada's Quebec Investor and Provincial routes round out the global top ten at No. 10 (88.6), posting quality-of-life scores among the highest anywhere on the Index, a relevant comparison for Americans weighing a move within the region.

Panama, Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic offer accessible, lower-cost residency with fast processing and strong lifestyle appeal, though none scores highly enough to reach the global top tier.

"For a growing number of our clients, a residency abroad isn't merely a financial instrument, it's also about quality of life. Cost and compliance matter, but so does the everyday texture of life in a new country: schools, healthcare, and community. That's exactly what this year's Index was built to capture: destinations like Italy, Portugal and Greece top the table on combined strengths, and on how good daily life actually feels."

Patricia Casaburi, CEO, Global Citizen Solutions

"We built this year's Index around five weighted pillars: quality of life, procedure, mobility, investment, and compliance and credibility, because no single number tells the whole story of a residency program. That's also why quality of life carries the largest weighting of any pillar in our model, tied with procedure."

Dr. Laura Madrid, Lead Researcher, Global Intelligence Unit, Global Citizen Solutions

Methodology

The 2026 Global Residency Programs Index scores programs on a 0–100 scale across five weighted pillars: quality of life (30%), procedure (30%), mobility (20%), investment (10%), and compliance and credibility (10%). Program details were current at the time of writing; terms change frequently and applicants should confirm current requirements with official sources before making any decision or contact a trusted advisor. To read the full report, visit:

<https://www.globalcitizensolutions.com/report/2026-global-residency-programs-report/>

About Global Citizen Solutions

Global Citizen Solutions is a leading global residency and citizenship planning advisory firm, helping high-net-worth clients and their families secure greater control over where they can live, travel, do business, and operate across jurisdictions, globally.

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