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Office of the Press Secretary
October 17, 2008

Fact Sheet: Extending Travel Opportunities to Our Allies

President Bush Announces Seven Countries Have Met The Requirements To Enter U.S. Visa Waiver Program Under 9/11 Commission Law

[President Bush Discusses the Visa Waiver Program](#) [White House News](#)

Today, President Bush hosted representatives from seven nations that have met the criteria for admission into the United States' Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and six nations on track to be admitted. In about a month, the citizens of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and South Korea will be able to travel to the United States for business or tourism for up to 90 days without a visa. So-called "roadmap" countries, which are on track to qualify for VWP admission, at today's event were Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Poland, and Romania.

- **The 13 countries represented at today's event are close friends and allies whose leaders told the President that their citizens believed it unfair that they had to wait in line and pay for visas to travel to the United States when other allies are allowed to travel visa-free.** The President agreed while pointing out that in the post-9/11 world, expanding visa-free travel would be possible only as travel security measures are strengthened.
- **Today's announcement represents a milestone in the long effort by the Administration to modernize the VWP.** During a November 2006 visit to Estonia, the President announced that he would work with Congress to expand opportunities for visa-free travel as we strengthen the security of the VWP. The President appreciates the bipartisan support this initiative received on Capitol Hill. As part of the "Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007," Congress acted to give the Administration greater flexibility to admit new countries into the VWP provided that they agree to a number of new security enhancements, notably to share information about threats to our people. The law also requires foreign citizens who want to travel under VWP to register through a new online program that screens for potential security threats.

Extending Travel Opportunities To Some Of Our Closest Allies Deepens Our Friendship And Makes All Our Countries Safer

- **The VWP currently allows the citizens of 27 countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business without obtaining a visa.** Nationals participating in the VWP must travel only for business, pleasure, or transit; stay in the United States for 90 days or less; and, if arriving by sea or air, hold a valid ticket for return or onward travel and enter the United States aboard an air or sea carrier designated as a participant in the VWP.
- **President Bush believes the best foreign policy for America is one that lets visitors get to know this great country firsthand.** Throughout history, some of the strongest advocates of freedom have been those who came to America and saw the blessings of liberty with their own eyes. The President is grateful to these 13 countries for seeking to strengthen ties between our citizens and looks forward to an even stronger partnership in the years ahead.

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