

Homeland Security and European Commission Reach Agreement on PNR Data

Release Date: 12/16/03 00:00:00

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
December 16, 2003

In an historic effort to keep the United States' and European Union's borders safer from terrorism and international crime while protecting travelers' privacy, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Tom Ridge and European Commissioner Frits Bolkestein have reached an agreement regarding the legal transfer of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data to Homeland Security. The agreement finds that Homeland Security's handling of the PNR data is sufficient for an "adequacy finding."

"This determination by the European Commission enhances the Homeland Security mission of fighting terrorism and crime while still ensuring that the privacy of travelers will be protected," said Ridge. "After a year of frank and earnest negotiations, this outcome shows the world that the United States and the European Union share the goals of keeping our people safe and our air travel network secure."

This finding by the European Commission affirms under European law that protections to be implemented by Homeland Security are appropriate to guard passenger privacy. By using 34 key elements of PNR data at borders and ports of entry, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers will be able to better screen passengers for the purposes of preventing and combating terrorism and transnational crimes. The PNR data will be generally retained for no longer than three and one-half years.

Additionally, the Department will continue to negotiate with the European Commission to reach a permanent agreement for the transfer of PNR data to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for operational use by the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System II (CAPPS II), which will identify high-risk passengers for additional screening.

After review by the European Parliament, the agreement will enter into effect and be in place for three and one-half years with renegotiations beginning in two and one-half years.

[PNR Agreement Fact Sheet](#)

This page was last modified on 12/16/03 00:00:00