

### **Greece to Join the Visa Waiver Program**

**March 11, 2010**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced yesterday that Greece has been added to the list of approved Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries. Greek citizens will be able to visit the United States under the VWP beginning in approximately 30 days.

#### **What Is the VWP?**

The VWP allows nationals and citizens of VWP countries to travel to the United States as visitors for business or pleasure for a temporary period of 90 days or less without first obtaining a B-1/B-2 visa stamp from a U.S. consulate. VWP travelers are required to have a valid authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to travel, are screened at the port of entry into the United States, and are enrolled in the Department of Homeland Security's [US-VISIT](#) program. In addition, all VWP travelers must present a machine-readable passport. Depending on when the passport was issued, other passport requirements may apply.

For more detailed information, please visit

[http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without\\_1990.html#mrprequirements](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html#mrprequirements).

Eligible VWP countries are as follows: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

#### **What Is ESTA?**

ESTA is an automated system that determines the eligibility of nationals and citizens from a VWP country to board a carrier for travel by air or sea to the United States. If approved, the authorization will be valid for multiple entries for up to two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever is shorter. ESTA does not guarantee admission to the United States. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers will still make a determination of admissibility at the U.S. port of entry. For detailed information regarding ESTA, please go online to [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id\\_visa/esta/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/esta/).

#### **How to Apply for ESTA Authorization**

Nationals and citizens of a VWP country, regardless of age, must complete the ESTA application online at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. A third party, including a relative or travel agent, is allowed to submit an application on the traveler's behalf. Should the application be denied, the traveler will need to apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate. DHS recommends that ESTA approval be obtained as soon as travel plans are begun and no later than 72 hours prior to departure. Accommodation for emergency and last-minute travel may be possible. Travelers may update their information, including itineraries, through the ESTA website.

For more information, or if you have any questions regarding the issues discussed in this Immigration Alert, please contact any of the following attorneys:

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