

Visa Waiver Program Expanded to Include Seven Additional Countries

October 20, 2008

President Bush announced on October 17 that seven countries have met the eligibility criteria for admission into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). In approximately one month, citizens of these countries will be eligible to travel to the United States for business or tourism for periods of up to 90 days without a visa. The seven countries are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and South Korea. An additional six countries are currently on track to qualify for the VWP: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Poland, and Romania.

The VWP allows the citizens of participating countries to travel to the United States for business, pleasure, or transit for a period not exceeding 90 days. Beginning in January 2009, all travelers participating in the VWP will be required to be screened prior to travel. The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), which began accepting voluntary applications in August 2008, is an automated, electronic system for screening passengers before they begin travel to the United States under the VWP. For more information on ESTA, please see http://morganlewis.com/pubs/ImmigrationAlert_ElectronicSys_VisaWaiver_06jun08.pdf.

How This Affects You

The expansion of the VWP will allow nationals of all participating countries to travel to the United States for business or pleasure for up to 90 days without first obtaining a visa. The VWP will save qualified participants significant time and money by bypassing the visa application and interview process.

Morgan Lewis will continue to monitor the process and will update you with any new information. If you have any questions about any of the issues raised in this Morgan Lewis Immigration Alert, please contact any of the following attorneys:

San Francisco

A. James Vázquez-Azpiri
Lance Nagel

415.442.1343
415.442.1345

ajvazquez@morganlewis.com
lnagel@morganlewis.com

Washington, D.C.

Eleanor Pelta
Eric S. Bord

202.739.5050
202.739.6040

epelta@morganlewis.com
ebord@morganlewis.com

About Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

Morgan Lewis is a global law firm with more than 1,400 lawyers in 22 offices located in Beijing, Boston, Brussels, Chicago, Dallas, Frankfurt, Harrisburg, Houston, Irvine, London, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, Palo Alto, Paris, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Princeton, San Francisco, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C. For more information about Morgan Lewis or its practices, please visit us online at www.morganlewis.com.

This LawFlash is provided as a general informational service to clients and friends of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP. It should not be construed as, and does not constitute, legal advice on any specific matter, nor does this message create an attorney-client relationship. These materials may be considered Attorney Advertising in some states. Please note that the prior results discussed in the material do not guarantee similar outcomes.