



**Homeland
Security**

Secretary Napolitano Announces Greece's Designation as a Member of the Visa Waiver Program

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Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today announced the designation of Greece as a member of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP)—strengthening passenger information sharing and ensuring strict security standards while streamlining travel for Greek citizens visiting the United States.

“Our efforts to guard against terrorism while enhancing legal travel and trade depend upon close collaboration with our international partners,” said Secretary Napolitano. “I commend our partners in Greece for committing to strong screening and security standards and enhanced information sharing for travel by Greek citizens to the United States as we work together to protect our citizens and strengthen our economies.”

Greece’s VWP designation represents a major step forward in the continued and long-standing economic and security partnership between the United States and Greece—reflecting more than two years of coordination between the two countries on Greece’s entry into VWP.

In accordance with the VWP designation process, DHS determined that Greece complies with key security and information-sharing requirements—such as enhanced law enforcement and security-related data sharing with the United States; timely reporting of lost and stolen passports; and the maintenance of high counterterrorism, law enforcement, border control, aviation and document security standards. In turn, Greek citizens will be permitted to travel to the United States for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa.

With this announcement, Greece joins the 35 nations already participating in VWP—established as a pilot program in 1986 to help eliminate unnecessary barriers to travel and made permanent on October 30, 2000. Like VWP travelers from other countries, Greek citizens will be required to apply for an Electronic System Travel Authorization (ESTA) through the Web-based system. Greek citizens will be able to visit the United States without visas in approximately 30 days.

Today’s announcement augments Secretary Napolitano’s ongoing efforts to bolster the international aviation security system—including recent joint declarations to strengthen the international civil aviation system between the United States and Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Panama on Feb. 17, and between the United States and the European Union on Jan. 21.

Secretary Napolitano will travel to Tokyo later this week to meet with her counterparts from the Asia/Pacific region and officials from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)—the third in a series of major international meetings attended by the Secretary to build consensus on strengthening global aviation security and identify specific steps which nations can take individually and collectively to protect all passengers.

Since January, Secretary Napolitano has met frequently with top government and private sector officials from across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North America on ways to strengthen the international aviation security system.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov or esta.cbp.dhs.gov.

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