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## Eight New Countries Added to Visa Waiver Program

As we reported in June 2008, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) introduced a new component of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) called the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). ESTA is **required** for all VWP travelers seeking to enter the United States **on or after January 12, 2009**.

On November 17, 2008, the VWP was expanded to include passport holders from seven additional countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and South Korea. VWP travelers from these countries were required to possess an e-passport and obtain ESTA authorization as of November 17, 2008. On December 22, 2008, DHS announced that citizens of Malta will be able to use the VWP beginning on December 30, 2008.

To apply for ESTA authorization, or to obtain further information about ESTA and VWP (including a complete list of eligible countries), please visit this [web site](#).

All foreign nationals planning to enter the United States should be reminded of the importance of verifying their travel documents as soon as possible, and before making specific travel arrangements. It is especially important for those who are already living and working in the United States pursuant to a work visa not to make holiday travel plans before verifying that they possess the documents needed for an uneventful return.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.