EU Visa Policy: A Barrier to Trade

Presentation to Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs,
European Parliament, 28th February 2007
U.S. decline in visitor numbers: top five origin markets

Source: Travel Industry Association
“The U.S. has the ‘world’s worst’ entry process”

“We are citizens of a country regarded as one of the closest allies the U.S. has. Yet on arrival we are treated like suspects in a criminal investigation and made to feel very unwelcome,”

- Ian Jeffrey, a British visitor
Tourists have a choice

Total cost to the US economy
$135.5 billion

Source: “A Blueprint to Discover America” (Discover America Partnership)
Europe is perceived as unwelcoming

“There is no privacy for applicants. They are asked to provide a letter from their employer to prove they have leave for the proposed period of travel and they are also asked to state where they will be going in the letter. This would never happen in Europe, which is a private society – people would be so offended!”

- Travel agent in China
Survey of travel agents in China

• Europe was more difficult to travel to than the US
• European visas were more difficult to obtain than US visas
Outbound Chinese travellers, 1999-2005
Europe’s market share

Source: China National Tourism Administration
2005 - UK increased its fees by 39%

Source: UK Visas
Tourists from Europe’s main growth markets need visas

New entry criteria

• American in their severity
• British in their cost