

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0127/06

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Simon Busuttil, Milan Cabrnoch, Petr Duchoň, Hynek Fajmon, Miroslav Ouzký, Nina Škottová, Ivo Strejček, Oldřich Vlasák, Jan Zahradil, Jaroslav Zvěřina, Valdis Dombrovskis, Aldis Kušķis, Rihards Pīks, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Vytautas Landsbergis, Konstantinos Hatzidakis, Etelka Barsi-Pataky, Zsolt László Becsey, Antonio De Blasio, Kinga Gál, Béla Glattfelder, András Gyürk, Livia Járóka, Péter Olajos, Csaba Óry, Pál Schmitt, György Schöpflin, László Surján, József Szájer, Edit Bauer, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi, Milan Gaľa, Ján Hudacký, Miroslav Mikolášik, Zita Pleštinská, Anna Záborská, Tunne Kelam, David Casa, Jerzy Buzek, Zdzisław Kazimierz Chmielewski, Małgorzata Handzlik, Stanisław Jałowiecki, Filip Kaczmarek, Barbara Kudrycka, Jan Olbrycht, Jacek Protasiewicz, Jacek Emil Saryusz-Wolski, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Bogusław Sonik, Zbigniew Zaleski, Tadeusz Zwiefka, Panayiotis Demetriou, Ioannis Kasoulides, Yiannakis Matsis and Peter Šťastný
to the Commission

Subject: US visa requirement for EU citizens from 10 Member States

To date the USA continues to require entry visas for citizens coming from nine of the 10 new Member States (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia) as well as Greece.

This situation is one of non-reciprocity, whereby these countries grant US citizens visa-free travel but this is not reciprocated.

More significantly, this situation is discriminatory in that the visa requirement is imposed on 10 out of 25 EU countries, thereby creating an unjustified distinction between EU citizens coming from different EU countries. Citizens from the affected EU countries rightly expect to be treated equally as citizens from the other 15 countries.

Despite the Commission's efforts, the last report on cases where visa waiver non-reciprocity is maintained by certain countries - COM(2006)0568 final - reports no progress. In the light of the above:

1. What action is the Commission prepared to take in order to redress this situation?
2. When does the Commission expect the requirement for US entry visas on the affected 10 countries to be lifted?

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Deadline for reply: 01.12.2006