

# American Community Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 3



July 2008

\*\*\*\*\*

## In this issue:

- Voting ..... page 2
- Passport news..... page 4
- Traveling with pets..... page 5
- Students Abroad campaign ..... page 8

---

## Contact Information and Operating Hours

**Address:** Alipašina 43, 71000 Sarajevo

**American Citizen Services Hours:** Monday-Friday 14:00-15:30 and Friday 8:00-10:30  
***It is always preferable to call for an appointment!***

**Non-Immigrant Visa Hours:** By appointment through **Visa Information Service** at  
(387) 33 295 375

**Immigrant Visa Hours:** By appointment only

**Tel:** **(387) 33 445 700** ACS Ext. 2210, 2337. 2130  
NIV ext. 2241, 2466. 2484. 2499  
IV ext. 2453

**Fax:** **(387) 33 221 837**

**E-mail:** **rws@state.gov** (for registration)

**E-mail:** **IVConsularSarajevo@state.gov** (for immigrant visa questions)

---



## **BiH Entry Requirements for Minors**

Beginning in May 2008, the immigration authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have begun to strictly enforce a provision of a Bosnian law that requires any minor (under 18) to have written permission from both parents to enter and leave the country. If traveling with one parent only, the minor is required to have written permission for the trip from the non-traveling parent. The written permission may be in either English or the local language and it must be notarized. If the minor's trip begins in BiH and the destination is the United States, parents' consent form can be notarized either by a Bosnian notary or court or at the Consular Section of the U. S. embassy, where the usual procedures for notarial services apply. Minors whose trips originate elsewhere should have the document notarized by a local notary or at the nearest U. S. embassy or consulate.



## Overseas Absentee Voting

Act now to register to vote and request an absentee ballot for the 2008 presidential and general elections!

### **Eligibility to Vote**

Generally, all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who are residing outside the United States during an election period are eligible to vote absentee in any election for Federal office. Some states allow overseas voters to vote in state and local elections as well.

Voting eligibility and residency requirements are determined by the various U.S. states, and are available on-line at <http://fvap.gov/pubs/vag.html>. Your "legal state of residence" for voting purposes is the state where you last resided immediately prior to departure from the United States. Voting rights extend to overseas citizens even though they may no longer own property or have other ties to their last state of residence, and even if their intent to return to that state may be uncertain. For those who have never resided in the United States, sixteen states allow certain U.S. citizens to register where a parent or spouse would be eligible to vote.

### **Voter Registration & Requesting an Absentee Ballot**

Voters who have not yet registered to vote and requested an absentee ballot should do so now.

1. Complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) using the instructions for your state in the [Voting Assistance Guide](#). You may pick up a hard copy of the FPCA from any U.S. Embassy or Consulate, or use the [online version](#).
2. Sign, date and mail the completed FPCA to the address listed in the Voting Assistance Guide. If you are sending the FPCA through international mail, please affix appropriate airmail postage. Alternatively, you can print out a postage-paid address label and ask any U.S. Embassy or Consulate to send your FPCA postage-paid through diplomatic pouch or the military postal service. Some states allow voters to send in the FPCA by fax, but they also require you to send in the hard copy by mail. Follow your state's regulations precisely.
3. Send in a new FPCA if you have moved or changed your name since the last time you voted.
4. Check your state's voter registration verification website (<http://fvap.gov/vao/stregissites.html>), or follow up directly with your local election officials, to confirm that you are registered.

## **Voting**

Your local voting officials should mail your absentee ballot 30 to 45 days before the November 4 general election. Return your voted ballot as early as possible. Be aware of your state's ballot receipt deadline, as well as any postmarking requirements.

## **Emergency Ballots**

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (**FWAB**) serves as an emergency ballot for voters who registered in time but fail to receive an official ballot from local election officials. **Please note:** You must register to vote and request an absentee ballot by your state's deadline - usually 30 days before the election - to be eligible to use the FWAB. We strongly recommend that voters who have not received their ballot by October 15 complete and return the FWAB to ensure your vote is received in time to be counted.

## **Questions?**

The official U.S. government website for overseas voters is the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

The **Voting Assistance Officer** at U.S. Embassy Sarajevo is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, call (033) 445-700 x 2130 or 2210 or send an e-mail to [rws@state.gov](mailto:rws@state.gov) or [VoteSarajevo@state.gov](mailto:VoteSarajevo@state.gov)

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***REGISTRATION WITH THE EMBASSY***

**If you would like to update your registration with the Embassy, please fax or e-mail us the Registration Form** (available also at <http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov>). Americans registering for the first time should come to the Consular Section in person to present their passport. If you live far away from Sarajevo, you can fax (033 221 837) or e-mail ([rws@state.gov](mailto:rws@state.gov)) the form and a copy of your passport biographic data page to us, and come to the Consular Section later for the full registration.



*To receive*

*Warden Messages*

*by e-mail*

*you need to be*

*registered*

*with the Embassy !*

# Passport news

## Applications for the U.S. passport card are now being accepted!



Passport card applications are currently being accepted in anticipation of land border travel document requirements. Based on current projections, we expect to begin production of the passport card in June, and be in full production in July. We will provide additional updates as available.

The passport card will facilitate entry and expedite document processing at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. **The card may not be used to travel by air.** It will otherwise carry the rights and privileges of the U.S. passport book and will be adjudicated to the exact same standards.

**Note:** A previous passport book holder, eligible to use [Form DS-82](#), may apply for a passport card as a [Renewal](#). [First time applicants](#) for a U.S. Passport, and those not eligible to use the DS-82, should apply for a passport card using [Form DS-11](#).

The Department of State is issuing this passport card in response to the needs of border resident communities for a less expensive and more portable alternative to the traditional passport book. The card will have the same validity period as a passport book: 10 years for an adult, five for children 15 and younger. Adults who already have a fully valid passport book may apply for the card as a passport renewal and pay only \$20. First-time applicants will pay \$45 for adult cards and \$35 for children.

To facilitate the frequent travel of U.S. citizens living in border communities and to meet DHS's operational needs at land borders, the passport card will contain a vicinity-read radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. This chip will point to a stored record in secure government databases. **There will be no personal information written to the RFID chip itself.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## Passport application forms online

Before you come for your appointment to apply for a passport, please fill out the required form (DS-11, DS-82, etc.) ONLINE, using the [passport application wizard](#) at <https://pptform.state.gov/>. Then print the form out and a bar code will be created on the page. This saves you time when you come to your appointment, as you are already prepared, and also speeds up the processing as the information you entered can be scanned from the bar code created.

## Checking the Status of Your Passport Application Online

Currently, it is taking 5-7 days for passport applications to be tracked online. Please allow at least that time before checking the status of your application.

To check the status of your application online you will need:

- Your last name, including suffixes without punctuations except the hyphen, (for example: Jones III, Patton Jr, Jackson-Smith, O Brien, Mc Queen, Varela Garcia),
- Date of birth in the following format: MM/DD/YYYY, **and**
- The last four digits of your Social Security Number.

Securely input your information at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/status/status\\_2567.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/status/status_2567.html).

**Note:** For security reasons, we recommend that you close your browser after you have finished accessing your passport application status.

**Of course, you can always phone the Consular Section at (033)445-700 x 2337 to inquire about the status of your application. If you have provided an e-mail address on the passport application form, you will automatically be notified when your passport is ready for pickup at the Consular Section.**

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Returning to the U.S. with Pets**

For returning to the United States with pets, check the specific requirements that must be fulfilled by referencing the websites of the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and the [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#). The [United States Customs](#) service also publishes a booklet in PDF format.

Note: For those in particular returning with birds, check the following USDA sites:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/pet-bird-non-us.html>

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/returning-pet-bird-import.html>

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/bird-leg-bands.html>

**The following are the basic U.S. requirements for entry of cats and dogs:**

## **Dogs**

Pet dogs are subject to inspection at ports of entry for evidence of infectious diseases that can be transmitted to humans. If a dog appears to be ill, further examination by a licensed veterinarian might be required. In addition, dogs must be vaccinated against rabies at least 30 days prior to entry into the United States, except for puppies younger than 3 months of age and dogs originating or located for 6 months or more in [areas that are free of rabies](#). A dog with an unexpired vaccination certificate meets these requirements. Following entry into the United States, all dogs are subject to state and local vaccination requirements. All pet dogs arriving in the state of [Hawaii](#)\* and the territory of [Guam](#),\* even from the U.S. mainland, are subject to locally imposed quarantine requirements.

## **Cats**

Pet cats are subject to inspection at ports of entry for evidence of infectious diseases that can be transmitted to humans. If a cat appears to be ill, further examination by a licensed veterinarian might be required. There is no rabies vaccination requirement for cats. Following entry into the United States, all cats are subject to state and local vaccination requirements. All pet cats arriving in the state of [Hawaii](#)\* and the territory of [Guam](#),\* even from the U.S. mainland, are subject to locally imposed quarantine requirements.

## **The Basics of the EU Pet Scheme**

The European Union Pet Scheme was implemented July 2004 and formally enforced as of October 2004. The scheme sets in place a set of health requirements for the movement of pets within the EU member countries and from third countries. The set of requirements for pet owners coming from "favored" third countries are not as complicated and lengthy as those that are not in that category with some important exceptions (listed toward the end of this handout).

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/nocomm\\_third\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/nocomm_third_en.htm)

## **Transiting Pets**

Pets transiting an EU country for only a few hours (on their way to the U.S. or elsewhere) are usually not required to meet all of the requirements below. However, a current rabies shot and health certificate will be required of all. It is advisable that you determine what contingent plans will be necessary and what facilities will be available if your pet must remain in a European airport for longer than a typical transit time.

## **Pet Passports**

An EU Pet Passport cannot be obtained until a pet owner lives in an EU country. However, the requirements listed below will be required to obtain one.

### **A. Basic Requirements for all cats and dogs traveling to EU countries**

The first three requirements are basic for all:

- 1.) **The pet must have a microchip or tattoo.** Tattoos will be phased out by July 2011. If the microchip does not comply with ISO Standard 11784 or 11785, the pet owner will need to carry a microchip reader (transponder) for your particular microchip.
- 2.) **The pet must have a current valid rabies vaccine.** Under the least stringent requirements, the vaccine will have to be at least 30 days old and no older than a year.
- 3.) **The pet must have a current valid health certificate.** It is important to check each post to see if this health certificate will need to be a specific form and how old the certificate can be. The

OBC has some of the translated pet health certificates that various posts have provided. It is important to check the TMTWO or the post directly to see if the health certificate also needs to be certified by a government official such as the APHIS-USDA in the US. The EU website also has a copy of an acceptable health certificate on its site:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/nocomm\\_third\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/nocomm_third_en.htm)

## **B. Additional Requirements for Animals Entering from Outside EU Countries (Third Countries)**

The list of all countries including Third Countries is located on this site:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/list\\_third\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/list_third_en.htm)

- If a pet has been in the US or one of the other “**avored**” third countries for 180 days or longer the titre/titer test will **not** be required.
- If a pet is coming from other than a “avored” third country:
  - A titre antibody blood test will also be required. The blood sample for this test cannot be obtained until 30 days after a rabies inoculation is administered. For most EU countries, the required waiting period for the results of this test is 90 days. There are very few approved labs around the world where these blood samples can be sent.

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/approval\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/approval_en.htm)

## **C. Countries with more stringent entry requirements:**

The UK, Sweden, Ireland and Malta requirements are lengthier even if you are coming from a favored third country. For exact details, go to the three national websites

- Irish website: <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/index.jsp?file=pets/travel.xml>
- Swedish website: <http://www.sjv.se/home/amnesomraden/animalhealthwelfare/importexportofliveanimals/newrulesregardingimportofpetsfrom3july2004.4.7502f61001ea08a0c7fff126668.html>
- British website: [http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/PETS/Regulation/eu\\_regq&a.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/PETS/Regulation/eu_regq&a.htm) and/or
- Maltese website: <http://www.mrae.gov.mt>

**You should also find out what the pet shipping policy of the airline is.**





## *Students Abroad* Encourages College Students to Travel Safely

### **OVERVIEW OF CAMPAIGN**

The Bureau of Consular Affairs has launched a new public affairs campaign that targets American citizen college students and young people studying and traveling internationally. The campaign is designed to promote safe, smart travel to college students and spring-breakers.

The Students Abroad campaign includes a new website, flyers called *go! guides* and a *Tips to Go Wallet Card*. The campaign's slogan "go from here" signals that Students Abroad should be the first stop on a student's trip.

### **WEB SITE SERVES AS CENTRAL RESOURCE**

Through a new comprehensive website created for the campaign, [studentsabroad.state.gov](http://studentsabroad.state.gov), the State Department offers college students a one-stop reference for international travel. The website offers country specific information, tips for safe travel, and other important information, such as:

- Who to contact if the student is victim of a crime;
- What to do in case of a natural disaster or emergency;
- Where the nearest U.S. embassy is located;
- When to apply for a passport and visa; and
- How to vote in U.S. elections from abroad.

### **THE NEED FOR INFORMATION IS SIGNIFICANT**

The number of college students and young people studying and traveling abroad is growing rapidly. Over 200,000 college students now study abroad annually, and hundreds of thousands more travel internationally for spring break and other vacations. Since many are traveling unsupervised for the first time, college students are at particular risk when overseas.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about the campaign to encourage college students to travel safely abroad, log onto [studentsabroad.state.gov](http://studentsabroad.state.gov), or send an email to [studentsabroad@state.gov](mailto:studentsabroad@state.gov).



\*\*\*\*\*

***Embassy Closures:***

- **July 4(Friday):**                   **Independence Day**
- **August 15 (Friday):**           **Assumption Day**
- **September 1 (Monday):**      **Labor Day**
- **September 30 (Tuesday):**   **Ramadan Bajram**

*There is always an Embassy duty officer available to assist U.S. citizens with serious emergencies. The duty officer can be reached at (033) 445 700.*

\*\*\*\*\*