

Open Letter to President Barack Obama

Romanian Visa Waiver Program

President Obama,



The US Department of Homeland Security signed an interim declaration with Romania last November that stated will allow Romanians to enjoy the benefits of the American Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

The signing of the declaration was a clear indication Romania was showing signs of sharing common security and freedom values with America. The declaration was part of a necessary process to help Romanians secure visa-free access to the States and becoming a member of the VWP.

After the signing of the interim declaration, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff stated:

"I commend the Romanian government for its commitment to these security enhancements and our shared value of freedom". "This achievement builds on the strong relationship our nations share and brings us closer to the day when the citizens of Romania can travel without a visa."

The VWP permits citizens of specific countries to travel to the U.S. without a visa. The program has been in effect for over 20 years and has always excluded Romanians.

However for years Romania has shown its commitment to common interest shared with US and also as being one of the closest allied of United States in Eastern Europe, specially in a sensitive region such as The Black Sea. Romania's action speak loudly of its commitment to its partnership with U.S.

Romania was a partner to the allied forces during the [Gulf war](#), particularly during its service as president of the [UN Security Council](#). Romania has been active in peacekeeping operations in [Afghanistan](#) and has sent troops to [Iraq](#) after the invasion led by the [United States](#).

Romania enforced [United Nations'](#) sanctions against [Yugoslavia](#). Despite divisions within the Parliament and among the people, Romania supported NATO in the [Kosovo campaign](#) and granted approval for NATO to overfly Romanian airspace. It was the first country to enroll in NATO's [Partnership for Peace](#) program, later joining NATO in 2004.

Romania also is a a NATO member, and the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](#) (OSCE) and the [North Atlantic Cooperation Council](#) (NACC).

In 2005, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her Romanian counterpart signed a historic pact establishing the first American military bases in a former Warsaw Pact country. The U.S. takeover of bases near the Black Sea - putting U.S. forces within closer striking distance of potential targets in the Middle East and Central Asia - would help "take terrorists off the streets" and save lives around the world, Rice said on Tuesday. She called Romania "a strong friend with whom we share common values."

Rice, hailing Romania as one of the United States' "best allies," signed the agreement with Romanian Foreign Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu.

"We have a great committed partner in Romania to make a more peaceful world," Rice said before a signing ceremony in the ornate Cotroceni Palace. "This is a symbol of burgeoning and brightening relations."

As a result of that agreement between Romania and the United States, the U.S. will soon establish several military facilities within Romanian territory.

On July 27, 2006, Romanian President Basescu visiting the White House and meeting with US President George W. Bush talked about U.S. visa requirements for Romania, urging the United States to drop visa requirements for Romanian citizens traveling to the U.S.

In contrast, New Zealand qualified Romanian citizens for that country's visa waiver program, since July 30, 2007.

Despite Romania "importance", "commitment" and "partnership" with U.S., the perception is that there does not exist a go ahead for the U.S Romanian Visa Waiver program to be put in effect, that maybe its process of enactment remains facing a not end in sight, trapped victim of a red tape vicious circle as a result of being now a low priority to U.S. policies

Mr. President, we respectfully request your help into a needed oversee of the program that could expedite the process that will allow Romanians citizens to be part of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.

God bless America and those that defend her.

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