



EMAIL BULLETIN

UPDATE ON CHANGES IN VISA REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES: URUGUAY TERMINATED FROM VISA WAIVER PROGRAM; BELGIUM PLACED ON PROBATION; U.S. CONSULATE IN PERU NOW REQUIRING NONIMMIGRANT VISA INTERVIEWS; VISA PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATIONS CHANGE

21 March 2003

Uruguay Terminated From Visa Waiver Program; Belgium on Probation

In response to the Attorney General's periodic review of the Visa Waiver Program and the compliance record of approved participatory countries, Uruguay has been designated for removal from the Visa Waiver Program effective April 15, 2003. This means that all citizens of Uruguay must obtain B-1/B-2 visas for entry into the United States as a business visitor or tourist on or after April 15, 2003 prior to traveling to the U.S. Applicants for entry on or after this date who do not have visa stamps in their passports should be denied admission into the United States.

Upon review of Belgium's compliance record as a Visa Waiver participant, the Attorney General has announced that Belgium will continue under the Visa Waiver program on only a "probationary" basis, which means that, effective May 16, 2003, Belgian nationals seeking admission under the Visa Waiver Program must present a machine-readable passport.

These latest adjustments to the Visa Waiver participant list underscore the new sense of urgency which is being placed on security and on the enforcement of immigration laws relating to violations of the Visa Waiver rules limiting the duration and purpose of stay in the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. All immigration - related planning should assume that the days of government officers exercising discretionary waivers as to "minor" violations are over, if the exercise of governmental discretion could be associated, in any way, as lessening Homeland Security.

U.S. Consulate in Lima, Peru Now Requiring Nonimmigrant Visa Interviews

The U.S. Consulate in Lima has joined the growing number of U.S. Consulates abroad which require nonimmigrant visa interview appointments of all applicants. Effective March 3, 2003, all nonimmigrant visa applicants applying for visas at the Embassy in Lima, with the exception of applicants over age 65 or under age 12, will be required to appear for a personal interview prior to visa issuance. This move continues the growing

trend toward visa interviews at U.S. Consulates around the world in this era of heightened security. As this trend continues, applicants must prepare for delays in visa issuance as consular resources are stretched to accommodate personal interviews of applicants.

Visa Application Photograph Specifications Change

The Department of State has changed the Form DS-156 Nonimmigrant Visa Application to a format requiring additional information as well as a change in the visa photograph to be affixed to the application. Photographs must now be 2x2 inches or 5x5 centimeters. The applicant must be facing the camera with a white or light background for the photograph.