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American Citizen Services Newsletter March 2007

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SAFETY AND SECURITY SITUATION

While the security situation in Macedonia today is stable, travelers always should be alert for unusual behavior and other possible indicators that something out of the ordinary might be happening. Americans should avoid demonstrations and other sites, such as roadblocks, where large crowds are gathered, particularly those involving political causes or striking workers. Acts of intimidation and violence against American citizens have not occurred recently but remain possible. While overall levels of crime throughout Macedonia remain low, there have been occasional incidents of home and vehicle break-ins. We remind all American citizens to lock their windows and doors at all times and not to leave any valuables in plain sight in their vehicle.

Acts of violence in recent months in public venues, such as cafes and nightclubs, appear to be isolated incidents; however, all Americans are urged to remain alert and observant when in public. If you are inadvertently caught in this situation, take the following actions: remain calm, seek position of cover (under a table, etc.), avoid confrontation, leave if you can safely do so, try to stay with your group, and call the police.

The Worldwide Caution issued for American citizens abroad by the U.S. Department of State regarding the threat of terrorist acts, remains in effect. For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's

website at <http://travel.state.gov>, where up-to-date [Worldwide Caution Public Announcements](#), [Travel Warnings and Public Announcements](#) can be found.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

The Embassy will be closed for the following holidays:

- Orthodox Easter – Sunday, April 8, observed on Monday, April 9
- Labor Day – Tuesday, May 1
- Sts. Cyril and Methodius Day – Thursday, May 24
- Memorial Day – Monday, May 28

RENEWING U.S. PASSPORTS AHEAD OF SUMMER TRAVEL

U.S. citizens who will be traveling this summer are strongly encouraged to check their passports (and those of their family members) now to confirm that they have not expired. Don't let a long awaited and well deserved vacation become a nightmare because of an expired passport! If your passport has expired or is nearing its expiration date, you should begin the process of applying for a new one as soon as possible in order to beat the summer rush. A passport applied for at the Embassy can take 1 to 2 weeks to process.

Minors, adults applying for renewal or for a first ever U.S. passport, and those who cannot produce their current passport because it is lost or stolen, must apply in person at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje.

Please remember that children under 14 who are applying for a passport must make a personal appearance at the Embassy at the time of application, accompanied by at least one parent. Both parents are required to give their consent to the issuance of a passport to their minor child. This can be achieved by both parents accompanying their child and signing the application in front of a consular officer, or, if one parent cannot appear, have the non-appearing parent complete a "Statement of Consent" form, which must then be notarized. Notarials for this purpose can be done at no charge at the U.S. Embassy. More information on passport applications can be found at <http://travel.state.gov>

OVERSEAS HEALTH INSURANCE FOR VISITING RELATIVES

Before your relatives leave the United States this summer, we urge you to advise them to check with their health insurance company to find out what medical services

overseas are covered and to purchase supplemental overseas health insurance if necessary. Although many Macedonian physicians are trained to a high standard, most hospitals and clinics are generally not equipped and maintained at U.S. or Western European standards. Basic medical supplies are usually available, but specialized treatment may not be obtainable. Travelers with previously diagnosed medical conditions may wish to consult their physician before travel. Uninsured travelers or Americans whose U.S. health insurance does not cover overseas care, such as Medicare patients, who require medical care overseas, often face extreme difficulties.

American Citizen Services can provide information regarding medical care in Macedonia, but there is no special U.S. Government financial assistance available in such cases. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. Many U.S. medical insurance plans do not cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred overseas, including emergency services such as medical evacuations. A list of some of these companies can be found on the State Department's travel website,

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html.

Two agencies that offer short-term policies, including medical evacuation coverage are:

International SOS Assistance: 1-800-523-8930

Access America: 1-800-851-2800

It is a good idea to carry both the insurance policy identity card, as proof of such insurance, and a claim form.

NEW TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS EFFECTIVE AS OF JANUARY

Beginning January 23, 2007, ALL persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document, or an Alien Registration Card, Form I-551, if applicable. For more information, see http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html

The passport requirement does NOT apply to U.S. citizens traveling to or returning directly from a U.S. territory. U.S. citizens returning directly from a U.S. territory are not considered to have left the United States and do not need to present a passport. U.S. territories include the following: Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Swains Island, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

GENERAL TAX INFORMATION FOR TAX YEAR 2006

For information on U.S. taxes, please consult the list of websites and telephone numbers below to help find the forms and answers you need.

Main IRS website: www.irs.gov

IRS tax forms and publications: <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>

Tax guidance for U.S. citizens abroad:

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>

Tax guidance for persons in the military:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/military/index.html>

Electronic payment website: <http://www.eftps.gov/> Refund information: Go to

<http://www.irs.gov/>, click on "Where's my refund?"

Phone Services:

Individuals	1-800-829-1040
Businesses	1-800-829-4933
Customer Service Phone Number	1-215-516-2000
Refund Inquiries	1-800-829-4477
TeleTax	1-800-829-4477
ITINs after 6 weeks	1-800-829-1040
Exempt Organization Help Desk	1-877-829-5500
Tax Offset Program (TOP) Help Desk	1-800-304-3107
E-Services Help Desk	1-512-416-7750

FORMS: The Embassy has only a very limited number of some tax forms for the 2006 tax year. We recommend that you obtain your tax forms online. Please note also that the IRS no longer compiles the "1040 Overseas Filers Package," so there will be no packages available at the U.S. Embassy for the 2006 tax year. All forms from the package are available for download from the IRS website.

DUE DATES FOR OVERSEAS FILERS: A tax return delivered by the U.S. mail or a designated delivery service that is postmarked or dated by the delivery service on or before the due date is considered to have been filed on or before that date. You can use certain private delivery services designated by the IRS to meet the "timely mailing as timely filing/paying" rule for tax returns and payments. See your Form 1040 or Form 1040A instructions for a list of designated delivery services.

Revenue Ruling 2002-23, 2002-18 IRB 811 provides that federal tax returns mailed by taxpayers in foreign countries will be accepted as timely filed if they bear an official postmark dated on or before midnight of the last date prescribed for filing, including any extension of time for such filing.

Individuals will be able to use a single IRS form (Form 4868) to get an automatic six-month extension of time to file. This year's due date without extension for individual income tax returns is April 17. Taxpayers residing overseas are allowed an automatic

extension to June 15 without filing Form 4868. A tax-filing extension does not extend the tax-payment deadline.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) advises that Form 1040X (Rev. December 2006), Amended U.S. Individual Tax Return and the accompanying Instructions for Form 1040X (Rev. December 2006) are being revised. The revision date is located under the form number or title on each product. We do not currently have these forms at the embassy. However, the February 2007 revisions are already posted to www.irs.gov.

STATE TAX RETURNS: For individual state income tax information, visit <http://www.taxadmin.org/>. The Embassy does not have state tax forms or state tax information.

2007 VOTING SLOGAN CONTEST

The 2008 primary and general elections promise to be very exciting. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) needs a slogan to inspire interest and participation. The contest is held biennially in an effort to promote interest in elections among citizens covered under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) - members of the Uniformed Services, the Merchant Marine, their families, and all U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

It is very easy to participate. Just create a simple slogan (or slogans) that expresses in your own words the importance of voting or something that may inspire someone to vote, and submit it to the FVAP.

Upon completion of the contest (April 9, 2007), a panel of independent judges will review slogan submissions and choose the winning slogan on its originality and motivational value. This winning slogan will be featured in the FVAP's 2008 information campaign.

The contest winner and runners-up will not only feel the satisfaction of knowing that their slogan is helping improve voter awareness, but they will also be given a certificate of recognition for their contribution to this important endeavor.

There is no limit to the number of entries an individual may submit, but all slogans must be submitted separately (i.e., only one slogan per entry). The deadline for submission is April 9, 2007. All submissions must include your full name, (Service, if military), mailing address, daytime telephone number, fax number and email address, so that the FVAP may contact you if you win.

Send entries via one of the following methods:

Email:

slogan@fvap.ncr.gov. Text only, one slogan per email with contact information on each email. Enter "Voting Slogan Contest" on Subject line. Due to security concerns, email messages with attachments are subject to deletion.

Fax:

(703) 696-1352 or DSN 426-1352. Visit the FVAP Web site for toll-free fax numbers from 51 countries. Submit separate page for each slogan with contact information on each page. No cover sheet is necessary.

Mail:

Federal Voting Assistance Program Department of Defense Attn.: Voting Slogan Contest 1155 Defense Pentagon Washington DC 20301-1155 If submitting by mail, please type or print (legibly) on regular 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper one slogan per page with contact information on each page.

Please join the FVAP in helping to inspire others to vote by submitting your entry today. You could be one of this year's winners!



This newsletter is an unofficial and informal source of practical information for American citizens residing in Macedonia. If you have comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact the Consular Section at (02) 311-6180, or at consularskopje@state.gov. This newsletter is also available on the American Citizens Services page of our website at <http://skopje.usembassy.gov>