



U.S. EMBASSY HELSINKI AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018

European Travel Alert

The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the heightened risk of terrorist attacks throughout Europe, particularly during the holiday season. U.S. citizens should exercise caution at holiday festivals and events. This Travel Alert expires on January 31, 2018.

Recent, widely-reported incidents in France, Russia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Finland demonstrate that the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS or Da'esh), al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates have the ability to plan and execute terrorist attacks in Europe. Last year, mass casualty attacks occurred at a Christmas market in Berlin, Germany in December and a nightclub in Istanbul, Turkey on New Year's Eve. While local governments continue counterterrorism operations, the Department remains concerned about the potential for future terrorist attacks. U.S. citizens should always be alert to the possibility that terrorist sympathizers or self-radicalized extremists may conduct attacks with little or warning.

(Continued on page 3)

Message from the Consul

Greetings and Happy New Year from U.S. Embassy Helsinki!

As 2018 gets underway I would like to take this opportunity to remind and encourage all qualified U.S. citizens resident in Finland to complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), available online at www.FVAP.gov, to ensure their registration for this year's elections. U.S. citizens who live abroad should complete a new FPCA each year.

While 2018 is not a Presidential election year, there are many races that can impact your life at the local, state, and federal level. We encourage you to be an active voter and register to vote today!

Jeremy R. Wisemiller
Consul, U.S. Embassy Helsinki

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Are you registered to vote?
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Traveling with Children

Parental consent for a child traveling with one parent or someone who is not a parent or legal guardian

If a child (under the age of 18) is traveling with only one parent or someone who is not the child's parent or legal guardian, what paperwork should the adult have to indicate permission or legal authority to have that minor in their care?

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) strongly recommends that in these situations the traveling adult has a letter of consent from the absent parent or legal guardian.

(Continued on page 6)

Register with U.S. Embassy Helsinki
Enroll in STEP at step.state.gov



U.S. Embassy Town Hall Invitation Thursday, February 1, 2018

The U.S. Embassy in Finland is pleased to announce a Town Hall hosted by Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Donna Ann Welton on **Thursday, February 1, 2018**, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event will include presentations from representatives of the Embassy’s Consular Section and Social Security Administration Federal Benefits Unit. The Town Hall is open to U.S. citizens and social security beneficiaries resident in Finland.

The Town Hall will take place at the U.S. Embassy, located at Itäinen Puistotie 14, 00140, Helsinki. Space is limited, so individuals who wish to attend must **RSVP to HelsinkiACS@state.gov no later than Monday, January 22, 2018**. Please include your name, phone number, and email address as part of your RSVP. Individuals who RSVP will receive a confirmation email.

RSVP Today to HelsinkiACS@state.gov



Social Security Administration Services

The Oslo Federal Benefits Unit provides services for the Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Personnel Management and Railroad Retirement Board. The unit provides services to residents of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland.

If you reside in Finland and have questions regarding the services provided by the Oslo Federal Benefits Unit please attend our Town Hall scheduled for Thursday, February 1, 2018, at U.S. Embassy Helsinki.

For additional information on their services and how to contact the Oslo Federal Benefits Unit directly, please visit their website <https://no.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/>

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Questions? Comments? HelsinkiACS@state.gov		INSTAGRAM	https://www.instagram.com/u.s.embassy_helsinki/
		FLICKR	https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembfinland/





TRAVELGOV

European Travel Alert

Extremists continue to focus on tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets/shopping malls, and local government facilities as viable targets. In addition, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, parks, high-profile events, educational institutions, airports, and other soft targets remain priority locations for possible attacks. U.S. citizens should exercise additional vigilance in these and similar locations.

If you are traveling between countries in Europe, please check the website of the U.S. embassy or consulate in your destination city for any recent security messages. Review security information from local officials, who are responsible for the safety and security of all visitors to their host country.

U.S. citizens should also:

- Follow the instructions of local authorities. Monitor media and local information sources and factor updated information into personal travel plans and activities.
- Be prepared for additional security screening and unexpected disruptions.
- Stay in touch with your family members and ensure they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency.
- Have an emergency plan of action ready.
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

For further information:

- Visit U.S. Embassy Helsinki for more information regarding the [European Travel Alert](#).
- See the [Department of State's travel website](#) for the [Worldwide Caution](#), Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and [County Specific Information](#).
- Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Mon. to Fri (except U.S. federal holidays).
- Follow Travel.State.Gov on [Twitter @TravelGov](#) and [Facebook](#).



NEW travel.state.gov



The Department of State has no greater responsibility than the safety and security of U.S. citizens overseas. Part of that responsibility is providing information to help U.S. citizens make informed decisions about traveling abroad.

The Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, is improving our communications with U.S. citizen travelers to provide clear, timely, and reliable safety and security information worldwide.

Our first improvement launched in December: a newly redesigned travel.state.gov website, which includes easier access to information on mobile devices. Stay tuned as the Department of State launches additional improvements throughout 2018.



Transportation
Security
Administration

National Press Release

TSA Pre✓[®] expands to include Finnair

The Transportation Security Administration announced on October 15, 2017, the expansion of its TSA Pre✓[®] expedited screening program to five additional domestic and international carriers. Now in operation, the five new partnering airlines are All Nippon Airways, Cathay Pacific Airways, Contour Aviation, **Finnair** and Korean Air.

TSA Pre✓[®] is an expedited screening program that enables low-risk travelers to enjoy a smart and efficient screening experience at [200 U.S. airports](#). For TSA Pre✓[®] travelers, there is no need to remove shoes, laptops, 3-1-1 liquids, belts or light jackets.

TSA Pre✓[®] is available when departing from a U.S. airport to a foreign country, and for domestic, connecting flights after returning to the U.S. Travelers who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals and lawful permanent residents of the U.S. can [apply for TSA Pre✓[®]](#) for a cost of \$85 for five years, or \$17 per year through the TSA Pre✓[®] application program. Once approved, travelers will receive a “Known Traveler Number” and will have the opportunity to utilize TSA Pre✓[®] lanes at select security checkpoints when traveling on any of the 42 participating airlines.

For more information, visit tsa.gov or read the [frequently asked questions](#).



U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has a new app that helps streamline travel to the U.S.

Mobile Passport Control (MPC) is a mobile app that allows U.S. citizens and Canadian visitors to expedite their entry process into the United States. It is the first app authorized by CBP for eligible travelers with a smartphone or tablet to submit their passport information and answer CBP inspection-related questions prior to CBP inspection. Much like [Automated Passport Control \(APC\)](#), the app does not require pre-approval and is free to use. The app streamlines the traveler inspection process and enables CBP officers to focus more on the inspection and less on administrative functions.

Eligible travelers can download the Mobile Passport app from the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

Travelers will be prompted to create a profile via the app with their passport information. The profile includes the traveler’s name, gender, date of birth, and country of citizenship. Upon landing in the United States, travelers will complete the “New Trip” section by selecting their arrival airport and airline, taking a self-photo, and answering a series of CBP inspection-related questions. Once the traveler submits their transaction through the app, the traveler will receive an electronic receipt with an Encrypted Quick Response (QR) code. Travelers then bring their passport and mobile device with their digital bar-coded receipt to a CBP officer to finalize their inspection for entry into the United States.

For more information about the MPC app visit the [CBP website](#).





Americans Can Vote Wherever They Are.

It's a new year and a great time to send in your
Federal Post Card Application!

Wherever U.S. Citizens go, FVAP ensures their voice is heard.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so from anywhere in the world.

Questions about voting from overseas?

Email your inquiry to:
VoteHELSINKI@state.gov



Where to get an FPCA

Online—FVAP.gov offers an [online assistant](#) that walks you through completion of the form and provides a populated fillable PDF. Once completed, do not forget to print and sign the form before submitting it to your local election office.

Hardcopy—Hardcopies of the form are also available at the U.S. Embassy.

The Federal Post Card Application

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF-76) allows eligible U.S. citizens to apply to register to vote, request an absentee ballot and/or update their contact information with their local election office.

The FPCA is the primary method of communication between you and your election official. The information you provide on this form is all the local election office has to determine if you meet the State voter registration requirements, which election materials to send you and where and how to send you a ballot.

How and where to submit your FPCA

• Double-check for completion and sign

- ⇒ Look over your completed FPCA to ensure you have provided all of the information required by your State, including a complete voting residence address, current mailing address in that State and all other contact information.
- ⇒ Make sure the information provided is clear and legible.
- ⇒ Don't forget to sign and date the FPCA.

• Submit by email, fax or postal mail

- ⇒ Check the Voting Assistance Guide at FVAP.gov to determine if your State allows the FPCA to be submitted by either email or fax. Follow the instructions for electronic submission provided.
- ⇒ Hardcopy FPCAs can be folded and sealed using the form's adhesive edging; online FPCAs printed must be placed in an envelope for mailing.
- ⇒ If mailing the FPCA through the U.S. Postal Service, APO/FPO or diplomatic pouch, it can be sent postage-paid using the mail indicia available at FVAP.gov. Mailing the FPCA using a foreign country's postal service requires local postage and should have "USA" in the address line of the mailing envelope or folded hard-copy form.

• Follow up to check registration status

- ⇒ You can contact your local election officials to confirm that your FPCA was successfully processed. Find current contact information at FVAP.gov.



Traveling with Children (Continued from page 1)

While CBP may not ask to see this documentation, if they do ask, and you do not have it, you may be detained until the circumstances of the child traveling without both parents can be fully assessed. If there is no second parent with legal claims to the child (deceased, sole custody, etc.) relevant documentation, such as a court decision, birth certificate naming only one parent, death certificate, etc., would be useful.

What should a parental consent/permission letter look like?

Is there a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) form?

There is not a CBP Form letter. This is a letter you create. The "Parental Consent Letter" should include the following elements: **Who, What, Where, When, Why** and **contact information** for the absent parent(s).

Example of consent/permission: "I acknowledge that my wife/husband/etc. is traveling out of the country with my son/daughter/group. He/She/They has/have my permission."

Having the letter notarized is not necessary but highly recommended. For frequent border crossers, the letter should not exceed one year. It is recommended to have the letter in English.

Adults traveling with children should be aware that, while the U.S. does not require this documentation, other countries may have a requirement and failure to produce notarized permission letters and/or birth certificates could result in travelers being refused entry (Canada has very strict requirements in this regard).

For more information regarding traveling with children go to the [CBP web page](#).

Federal Income Tax Return 2017

January marks the start of a new year and the time to start collecting your tax information for your 2017 filing



If you are a U.S. Citizens or resident alien, the rules for filing income, estate, and gift tax returns and paying estimated tax are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad. Your worldwide income is subject to U.S. income tax, regardless of where you reside.

Tax assistance is available from the Internal Revenue Service

- [IRS Taxpayers Living Abroad Website](#)
- [IRS International Taxpayers Videos](#)
- [IRS International Taxpayers Press Releases](#)
- [IRS International Taxpayers Interactive Tools](#)
- IRS International Customer Service in Philadelphia (12:00 noon to 02:00 AM)
Tel: 001-267-941-1000
Fax: 001-941-1055, from 12:00 noon – 2:00 AM.

New and Expecting Parents

Registering Your Child Born Overseas



The Department of State recommends that a child born abroad be registered at the nearest U.S. Embassy in order to record a claim to the child's U.S. citizenship. Upon approval of required documentation, the State Department issues a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA). The CRBA is equivalent to a birth certificate issued in the United States and therefore is an important document to have for your child. The CRBA can only be requested while the child is under the age of 18. The embassy also recommends that you apply for your child's first U.S. passport at the same time you apply for the CRBA as both parents and child are required to appear in person and provide many of the same documents for each of these services.

Method of Application

Required Documentation for the Consular Report of Birth Abroad

All documents must be originals or certified copies of the originals and need to be in English or translated to English by an authorized translator.

- Form [DS 2029](#) – Application for Consular Report of Birth Abroad.
- Birth certificate that is given at the time of your child's birth by the hospital.
- The birth certificate (virkatodistus) for your child that is given by the local magistrate (maistraatti).
- Official marriage certificate for the parents if they were married at the time of the child's birth.
- Divorce or death certificate if previously separated or widowed.
- Passports or Finnish identity card for any non-citizen parent.
- Proof of parent(s) citizenship (passport, birth certificate, or naturalization certificate).
- Proof of physical presence in the United States. Required if only one parent is a U.S. citizen or the child was born out of wedlock. Please review our website to learn more about the proof of physical presence requirement.
- Self-addressed prepaid A-3 size return envelope with postage for envelope weight of 250g. Registered mail recommended.

Once you have all the required documents on hand

- Please complete, scan, and email form DS-2029 to HelsinkiACS@state.gov and request an appointment.
- You will need to bring all original documents with you to your appointment.

Additional information

- We recommend that you apply for your child's passport at the same time. Fill out, but don't sign, the Form [DS 11](#) and bring this with you to your appointment. Additional guidance for [applying for a minor child's passport](#).
- The application fee for the CRBA is \$100 or €85. The application fee for the CRBA and passport is \$205 or €175. Please note that we only accept USD or Euros. Cash payments are requested to be made using exact change. You may also pay by credit card at the time of your appointment. More information on application fees are found [here](#).
- **Please note that we no longer accept Social Security Number (SSN) applications.** If you reside in Finland and have questions regarding services provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA), you must contact the SSA Federal Benefits Unit located in Norway. For more information on their services and how to contact them, please visit the website for the [Oslo Federal Benefit Unit](#). The application for a Social Security Number can be found [here](#).

We will provide you with a free notarized copy of your child's CRBA and Passport to supply to the SSA for your child's SSN application. These copies will be mailed back to you along with the CRBA and passport.

American Citizen Services Appointment System

The American Citizen Services (ACS) section of U.S. Embassy Helsinki provides consular services to American citizens by appointment only. For CRBA services, please collect all of the required documentation listed in the above article regarding *New and Expecting Parents* and schedule an appointment by emailing your request to HelsinkiACS@state.gov. For passport services please review the [U.S. Citizen Services website](#) to learn about required documentation and schedule your appointment [here](#). Need something notarized? Review our [notarial services page](#) for information regarding services and fees and schedule your appointment [here](#).

Do you know the ARC yet?

If not, you should. The [American Resource Center \(ARC\)](#) is a special library that is open to the public and managed by the U.S. Embassy in Finland. The library is conveniently located in Helsinki University's main library in downtown Helsinki.

The ARC was founded in 1946 and since 1993 has operated under a partnership agreement with the University of Helsinki.

The ARC specializes in providing local audiences with the latest and most accurate information about the U.S. government and its policies, American history, culture, and character. The collection is strong in foreign policy and international relations, government and politics, American history, and literature, including fiction. Holdings are comprised of more than 10,000 printed books and 80 subscriptions to periodicals. All collections are in English.

The ARC collection can be accessed through the [HELKA online catalog](#). To borrow books from the library, a Helsinki University Library [Helka card](#) is required. To obtain a library card, [apply](#) at the library customer service center at the main entrance by presenting an official ID. Cards can be issued to those over the age of 15 who have a valid street address in Finland.

Contact Information/Hours of Operation

American Resource Center at the Kaisa House, P.O.Box 53 (Fabianinkatu 30), 00014 University of Helsinki Telephone: +358-50-448 5704, E-mail: arc@usembassy.fi

Check the Kaisa Library opening hours: <http://www.helsinki.fi/kirjasto/en/library-locations/main-library/>. The ARC staff is available Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00. *(Exceptions to reference service hours may apply.)*



AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER

AT THE HELSINKI UNIVERSITY KAISA LIBRARY
Fabianinkatu 30, 2nd floor

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in person or online!**





U.S. Embassy Helsinki to Hold Foreign Service Officer Test

What does it mean to be a Foreign Service Officer?

The mission of a U.S. diplomat in the Foreign Service is to promote peace, support prosperity, and protect American citizens while advancing the interests of the United States abroad.

If you're passionate about public service and want to represent the United States around the world, a challenging and rewarding career is waiting for you. The opportunity to work and experience cultures, customs and people of different nations is truly a career unlike any other.

The work you will do will have an impact on the world. You will be asked to serve at one of any of the more than 270 embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions in the Americas, Africa, Europe and Eurasia, East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia. Some of these posts are in difficult and even dangerous environments, but working in them affords great challenges and rewards.

Explore a career in the Foreign Service and start your journey with the Department of State today. Start by looking at [where we work](#), or taking the quiz to find out if the [Foreign Service is right for you](#), or [what career track is the best fit](#).

U.S. Embassy Helsinki will offer the Foreign Service Officer Test on January 31, 2017.

Registration for the exam is now open. To learn about how and when to register please go to the U.S. Department of State [Foreign Service Officer Test Information and Selection Process page](#).

Embassy Holiday Closures

U.S. Embassy Helsinki will be closed in observance of the following Finnish and U.S. holidays:

Friday, January 5, 2018	Epiphany	(Finnish Holiday)
Monday, January 15, 2018	Martin Luther King Jr.	(U.S. Holiday)
Monday, February 19, 2018	President's Day	(U.S. Holiday)
Friday, March, 30, 2018	Good Friday	(Finnish Holiday)
Monday, April 2, 2018	Easter Monday	(Finnish Holiday)

U.S. Embassy Helsinki
American Citizen Services
Itäinen Puistotie 14 B

Email: HelsinkiACS@state.gov
Web: <http://fi.usembassy.gov>
<http://travel.state.gov>