European Leaders Challenge New U.S. Entry Screening

June 10, 2008

In August 2008, the U.S. is expected to implement a Web-based pretravel authorization process for foreigners entering the country, the Associated Press/*International Herald Tribune* reports (iht.com, 6/5). The screening form, which will be mandatory for all visa-free travelers by January 2009, will ask them if they suffer from communicable diseases, including HIV.

Some European leaders call the questions regarding HIV status unnecessary, since the virus cannot be spread through casual contact. The United States has already placed restrictions on foreigners with HIV who wish to enter the country.

“Whether a sexually transmitted disease is contagious in the stricter sense is a question that you could write a doctoral thesis about,” German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said at a meeting between European Union (EU) justice and interior affairs ministers.

The AP adds that U.S. officials have assured the EU that the new system will merely replace the current forms that Europeans already complete upon entering the U.S. and will not require a new visa.

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