

U.S. MISSION

GERMANY

ADDRESSES & CONTACT INFO:

- **BERLIN:**
Clayallee 170
Tel: 030-8305-0
0830-1200 M-F
- **FRANKFURT:**
Giessenerstr. 30
Tel: 069-7535-0
0730-1130 M-F
- **MUNICH:**
Königinstrasse 5
Tel: 089-2888-0
[see website for public hours](#)

[For more information, click here.](#)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Newsletter Greetings	1
Proposed Consular Fee Changes	2
Important Tax Payer Information	2
Absentee Voting	3
World-wide caution	4
Travel Info for non-US citizens	4
Frankfurt Info	5

American Citizen News

Greetings from Mission Germany's Acting Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs Lawrence Mire

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.” **Anne Bradstreet (1612 - 1672)**, *'Meditations Divine and Moral,' 1655*

Let me congratulate you all for making it through one of the toughest winters on record. Judging by the amount of snow we had this year, we should be due for a very pleasant spring indeed! I hope the new season finds all of you in good health and good spirits. I am sure you share our hope that after the past year's economic adversity we will see a welcome return of prosperity and more cheerful times.

2010 will be a good year for all of you who plan on voting overseas this year. Voting is the most precious right of every citizen and we have a moral obligation to see to it that those who want to exercise this right can do so in a convenient, secure manner. According to the U.S. Census, the most common reason people give for not *voting* is that they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedules. Those of us who live overseas can add the extra layer of inconvenience that has been posed by the maze of absentee voting requirements. I urge all of you to read the article we have on recent legislation that takes a big step towards simplifying absentee voting procedures for our overseas citizens.

As Black History month reminded us, America is very much a work in progress. Our own journey toward equality is nowhere near complete. But thanks to so many who have come before us, we have made progress. Today, with President Obama, that progress has taken another giant step forward. The President has inspired countless millions of people, both at home and far beyond our own borders. Now these heroes of the civil rights movement do not belong just to us; they are viewed as universal. They've inspired people to raise their own sights around our world, and especially those who have taken up the cause of freedom and equality in their own countries.

Our ability to stand for democracy in other countries depends, in part, on how well we fulfill the dream of democracy at home. So as we call for inclusive governments that reflect the will of their people, we must ensure that our own government at the federal, state, and local level reflects the views and backgrounds of the American people. Making voting easier and more transparent is just one more demonstration of our commitment to more inclusive government.



Proposed Changes for Consular Fees

The Department of State has published a proposed rule on [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) to increase the fees charged for a number of consular services including passports, passport pages, immigrant visas and other services to American citizens. These proposed fee increases are an attempt to ensure that fees for consular services reflect costs to the United States Government of providing the services.

The proposed change in fees will not take effect until after the Department reviews the public comments received, at which point the Department may make further changes in response to those comments. Please visit the Department's website for information concerning these proposed fee changes (http://www.travel.state.gov/news/news_1735.html).

Comments on those proposed fees must be submitted to the Department directly. We recommend applying for any foreseen needed consular services now, while the present rates are still in effect.

Important Tax Information for U.S. Citizens



Don't forget - April 15th is rapidly approaching. With tax season well upon us, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has developed a brochure to assist taxpayers living overseas in locating useful tax information to help in the preparation of their tax returns and/or in resolving tax account problems. Publication 4732, Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad, is available on the Web at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf>.

Of particular note for U.S. citizens living abroad is the reporting requirements for activities from foreign bank accounts. Enforcement of the requirement is becoming tougher. If you have overseas financial accounts, you may be required to report your activities on the IRS Form 1040 Schedule B as well as to the U.S. Treasury Department via Form TD F 90-22.1.

To learn more about this or other tax issues, please review Publication 4732 and the IRS website at www.irs.gov. You can also contact the IRS Office at the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt for more information about this or other questions you may have at <http://germany.usembassy.gov/acs/irs.html>, email irs.frankfurt@irs.gov or by telephone at 49 69 7535-3834 or 3823.



NEW Rules for VOTING Overseas



On October 28, 2009, Congress enacted the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. This legislation amends existing law regarding overseas voting in federal elections to make voting easier for overseas Americans.

New Procedures for 2010 Elections

Beginning with the November 2010 general election, states will be required to mail out ballots at least 45 days prior to any election for a federal office. This requirement may cause some states to select earlier primary dates in order to comply with the 45 day mailing deadline, or to request waivers due to special circumstances.

In addition to mailing ballots to overseas voters, the states will be required, at the voter's request, to provide registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, and blank ballots via fax or email. However, each state's laws determine whether ballot requests or voted ballots can be returned via fax or email. The new law prohibits states from rejecting marked ballots based on notarization, paper size, or paper weight requirements. The witnessing requirements of individual states remain in place.

Overseas Absentee Ballot Requests

Effective immediately, states will no longer be required by federal law to continue to mail election materials to overseas addresses (even when they are determined to be invalid) for two complete general election cycles on the basis of a single ballot request. It will now be up to each state to determine how long to continue to send out election materials before requiring overseas voters to submit new ballot requests. This change, sought by local election officials, should greatly decrease the volume of voting materials sent abroad to addresses where Americans no longer reside.

State Department Recommendations

In light of these changes, the Department of State recommends that all U.S. voters residing abroad request absentee ballots from their local election officials at the start of each calendar year, and whenever there is a change of address, change of e-mail address, or change of name, by completing and sending in a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). To locate information on your specific state's requirements, and to obtain an on-line version of the FPCA, please visit www.fvap.gov. Voters may also pick up a hard copy of the FPCA from any U.S. embassy or consulate. FPCAs may be mailed to your local voting officials in the United States via international mail or from any U.S. embassy or consulate. Many states allow U.S. citizens overseas to submit the FPCA by e-mail or fax.

The Department of State strongly encourages all U.S. overseas voters to provide email addresses or fax numbers on their FPCAs to enable local election officials to transmit election materials in the fastest manner available, which should then allow sufficient time for the return of voted ballots. For information regarding your specific state, please visit www.fvap.gov.

Emergency Ballots

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) serves as an emergency ballot for the November general elections for federal offices, although some states also permit its use for elections for state and local offices. Beginning in January 2011, the new law allows use of the FWAB for primary, special, and runoff elections for federal offices. Voters who request an absentee ballot in advance of their state's ballot request deadline, but who fail to receive an official ballot from local election officials in time to vote, should complete the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot and send it back to local election officials in time for it to be counted. An on-line version of the FWAB, together with instructions for its use, is available at www.fvap.gov.

Questions?

The Voting Assistance Officer at the Frankfurt Consulate is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, send an e-mail to: VoteFrankfurt@state.gov.



Public Announcement: Worldwide Caution

The State Department released a new Worldwide Caution Public Announcement on February 12, 2010 alerting American citizens about the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against Americans and American interests throughout the world. American citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. For a full text of the Worldwide Caution, click [here](#).

Important Travel Information for non-U.S. Friends and Relatives

The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), implemented on January 12, 2009, is now mandatory and airlines may deny boarding to Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers who do not have an approved ESTA registration. Friends and family of American citizens who qualify for the VWP program should register with ESTA in advance of any planned trip. Seventy-two hours is the recommended timeframe. Waiting until the last minute could leave you stranded if your ESTA registration is denied and you then need a visa. ESTA registrations remain valid for two years and the entire process takes five minutes. ESTA registration is available through a secure website, <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>. For more information, please check www.CBP.gov/ESTA.

As of March 1, Mission Germany began using **the DS-160**, an on-line non-immigrant visa application. The electronic DS-156 will no longer be available and all posts worldwide will convert to the DS-160 by mid-April. Applicants are urged to save the DS-160 early and often to their home computers as there have been problems reported with bandwidth and timing out. We expect a small appointment backlog as we transition to the new form. As staff and officers adapt to handling the new electronic form, more March appointments will be added.

Links to the new form are available at www.germany.usembassy.gov and www.travel.state.gov. Once completed **and submitted**, the information in the DS-160 will be electronically transmitted to us. The applicant need only print out the confirmation page with basic biographical information and a bar code confirmation number and bring it to their interview. The form must be filled out in English, but there is a German tooltip feature that has the corresponding German translation. Note that completing the DS-160 does not automatically schedule an appointment. Please follow the easy, step-by-step instructions described on our website: germany.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.

ESTA registration is required for German citizens traveling to the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program [Click here](#) for more Information.

To apply for a Non-Immigrant Visa using the new DS-160 form, [Click here](#).

Düsseldorf Consular Outreach



No time to drive to Frankfurt?? Need a new Passport? Want to register your children as American Citizens? The U.S. Consulate Frankfurt will conduct an outreach day for American citizens in **Düsseldorf**. Services offered include:

- Applying for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- Applying for U.S. Passports
- Notarial Services
- Representatives from the Consulate's Federal Benefits Unit (Social Security and Veterans Affairs), Citizenship and Immigration Services and Immigrant Visa Section

Where? **U.S. Consulate General Düsseldorf, Willi-Becker-Allee 10, 40227 Düsseldorf**

When? **Wednesday, 17th March 2010 from 10:00 am—2:00 pm**

Who can participate? **U.S. citizens who need consular services.**

How do I pay? **Cash: in either Euros or U.S. Dollars or Credit Card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express)**

Opening Hours and Contact Information

U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt

Giessener Strasse 30

60435 Frankfurt am Main

<http://frankfurt.usconsulate.gov>

Passport Unit

Open by appointment: 7:30am to 11:30am, M-F

Tel: (069) 7535-2100, 2:00pm to 4:00pm only

Special Consular Services

Open by appointment: 7:30am to 11:30am, M-F

Tel: (069) 7535-2102

Holiday Closures

Thursday, March 25:

Friday, April 2:

Monday, April 5:

Thursday, April 29:

Thursday, May 13:

Thursday, September 24:

Staff Administrative Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Staff Administrative Day

Ascension Day

Staff Administrative Day

Upcoming Events

Calling all U.S. Military personnel (retired or active duty), DOD Dependents, and anyone with base access in need of Consular Services! The U.S. Consulate Frankfurt will conduct the following military outreach days:

March 9th at Wiesbaden Army Air Field, 9:30am -2:00pm

March 30th at U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt, 9:30am - 2:30pm