

Jacques Barrot

Vice-président de la Commission européenne

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MS dg D(08)2280

Michael,

As you know, we have been considering the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) in our discussions with you and in internal deliberations within the European Union. I understand that you will be responding soon to my letters on this and related subjects.

My department wrote to yours on August 4 on the important issue of the protection of personal data in the context of ESTA.

Unfortunately, the reply of August 29 fails to answer any of the specific questions we asked. These questions are the ones I am being asked by Members of the European Parliament and national data protection authorities. I need your input in order to deal with the data protection issues arising from ESTA.

As we are well aware, important work has been done and is still ongoing in the "high level contact group" on data protection principles, but it has always been clear that those principles will never be sufficiently detailed to solve particular cases as we go about the collection of information for specific policy purposes.

I should be grateful if you would see to it that I receive a full answer as soon as possible. I do not want to report to Parliament that the U.S. simply declines to answer our legitimate questions.

I am writing to you personally and trust that we can resolve this matter quickly. I need your input so that I can explain the ESTA mechanism to Parliamentary and public opinion in Europe.

Allow me to express my admiration for your leadership in dealing with hurricane Gustav in your southern States.

Finally, I am delighted that we are going to receive the "Transatlantic Leadership Award". It is an honour for me to be your European partner in this endeavour.

Jacques BARROT

c.c.: H. E. Mr John Bruton, Ambassador, European Commission delegation to the U.S.
H.E. Ms Kristen Silverberg, Ambassador to the EU

H.E. Mr Michael Chertoff
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