

Categories for authorized travel to Cuba have been expanded to include organizing professional meetings and for professional media and artistic productions such as movies, TV, and music, among others. These are long overdue and will be welcomed by American scholars, artists, and journalists. I am disappointed, however, that American tourists are still prohibited from traveling to Cuba, unlike to any other country in the world.

These are all positive steps, for which I commend the White House. Frankly, it is hard to believe that it has taken so long to finally begin to dismantle a policy of unilateral sanctions against Cuba when it has been obvious for so many years that it has failed to achieve any of its objectives, while it was hurting the people of both countries.

But a great deal remains to be done to reverse 50 years of an ill-conceived, punitive policy. It is for that reason that I urge the Administration to act expeditiously to take further action, including amending regulations that would allow Cuba to use the U.S. dollar in third-party country transactions, which would greatly facilitate U.S.-Cuban commerce.

The Treasury Department should also do what the American people want by letting them travel to Cuba on a people-to-people license as individuals and stop treating them like children and making them pay thousands of dollars to large tour group operators. The U.S. Government is not in the business of requiring costly chaperones for Americans who travel anywhere else overseas, and it should not do so for Americans traveling 90 miles to Cuba.

Allowing all Americans to travel under a general license would significantly boost the number of Americans traveling to Cuba, it would create a much richer travel experience, and it would save taxpayers money.

There are some who will undoubtedly continue to insist that any change in policy is somehow a capitulation to the Cuban Government and that, because Cuba's Communist Party remains in control, we should continue supporting a policy that has helped keep them there. That illogical, myopic view has been repudiated by a huge majority of the Cuban people, including some of Cuba's most outspoken critics of the government, and it is rejected by a large and increasing majority of Americans, including Cuban-Americans.

The White House has all the support it needs from the American public, the business community, farmers, ranchers, energy companies, faith-based groups, academia, the media, the scientific and medical community, and so many others across this country to take bold action to expand engagement with Cuba. There is no time to waste.

TRIBUTE TO STEVEN M. DETTELBACH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to recognize U.S. Attorney Steven

M. Dettelbach for his years of excellent public service as he begins a new chapter in his legal career. Steve has served as the U.S. attorney for the northern district of Ohio for nearly 7 years after the Senate unanimously confirmed him to this position in 2009. Steve is a former member of my Judiciary Committee staff, and I have known him for more than a decade. I am very proud of all that he has accomplished.

Steve earned his undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and his law degree from Harvard Law School. After law school, Steve clerked for Judge Stanley Sporkin of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He went on to serve in the Department of Justice's civil rights division from 1992 to 1997 and then in the U.S. attorney's office for the district of Maryland from 1997 to 2001.

In 2001, Steve joined my Judiciary Committee staff. Steve impressed me with his sound judgment and his outstanding work with both Republican and Democratic offices. Steve worked on a broad range of issues, including drafting and negotiating key whistleblower and criminal fraud provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. He played a central role on our oversight team and helped draft an important bipartisan report on the implementation of FISA. The report, written with Senators GRASSLEY and SPECTER, was the culmination of the committee's first comprehensive oversight effort of the FBI in nearly two decades. After his tenure with my office, Steve served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the northern district of Ohio. He then joined Baker & Hostetler as a partner before he was nominated to his current position.

As the U.S. attorney for the northern district of Ohio, Steve has been at the forefront of enforcing civil rights laws, including bringing some of the first cases under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009. He has organized educational events on issues such as human trafficking, hate crimes, and police use of force, and formed the United Against Hate religious coalition in the wake of a racially motivated arson at a church in his district.

As a member of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, AGAC, Steve led the AGAC's civil rights subcommittee and worked to establish civil rights units in U.S. attorney's offices across the country. His work will ensure that civil rights remain a Department priority for years to come. Steve is a model public servant who approaches his job with integrity, tenacity, good humor, and sharp negotiating skills that I know will serve him well as he moves back to private practice.

Ohio is a safer and better place because of Steve's tireless effort and dedication. I commend Steve for his years of service and wish him and his wonderful family the best in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO ESTHER OLAVARRIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize Ms. Esther Olavarria, an extraordinary public servant who has worked for decades to build an immigration system that is fair and just for all. I know Esther from her time in the Senate as Senator Kennedy's lead advisor on immigration matters for the Judiciary Committee. In the Senate and more recently in the administration, Esther's intelligent, thoughtful advice and analysis has been invaluable. She is stepping down this week after serving as senior counselor to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Johnson. I have no doubt the Secretary will miss her, as I do here in the Senate.

Esther was an early appointee of the Obama administration, serving first as a member of the President's transition team on immigration, then as the Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Border Security and later as counselor to Secretary Janet Napolitano. During that time she advocated fixing our Nation's broken immigration system and the pressing need to provide protection for asylees and refugees, improve detention conditions, and ensure accountability and transparency in immigration enforcement.

In 2013, Esther was asked to serve as the White House Director of Immigration Reform. Her wealth of experience made her an invaluable asset in our bipartisan effort to pass the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act in 2013. The bill overwhelmingly passed the Senate with the bipartisan support of 68 Senators. I remain disappointed that that important bill was not taken up in the House, and I hope the Senate will one day turn again to this legislation. When we do, I know that Esther will be ready to provide her support once again as she has so many times when the Senate has turned its focus to the issue of immigration.

In the Senate, Esther understood the importance of working across the aisle to get something done. Like her boss, Senator Kennedy, Esther forged unlikely partnerships and found partners who were drawn to her passion, her sense of humanity, and her dedication. She was a key adviser for the comprehensive immigration reform bills of 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Many of us remember Senator Kennedy turning to Esther during the 2007 negotiations not only so that he could seek her counsel, but so that other Senators could benefit from her expertise. Everyone—Republicans, Democrats, advocates, journalists—listened, and everyone was better off for having Esther nearby.

Esther, like her late boss, has always been driven by a deep commitment to making our communities stronger and more vibrant. She has advocated on behalf of immigrant children and she has fought to reform inhumane detention practices. And she has underscored the critical importance of the relationship

between law enforcement and the immigrant community so that all our communities are safe.

A Cuban immigrant who came to the United States at the age of 5, Esther has always sought to advance immigration policies rooted in the American values of fairness and family. Her life experiences as a child led her to a career in immigration law, first helping low-income immigrants in Florida through direct client representation and by cofounding the not-for-profit legal assistance organization Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center, and then coming to Washington, DC.

I have no doubt that Esther will continue to be an important adviser, but more importantly a devoted friend to so many who have been fortunate to know her. She is an exemplary public servant. I commend Esther for her years of service and wish her and her family the best in their future endeavors.

STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to speak about the European Union, to both recognize the peace and prosperity that it has brought to Europe for more than 75 years and the unprecedented challenges confronting the union today.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently held a hearing on the threats to the European Union and the implications for U.S. foreign policy. Our committee was also briefed this week by Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland on these issues.

Coming out of these discussions, I am absolutely convinced that the U.S. has an obligation to stand with our friends in Europe during these challenging times in support of the principles that we all share: democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, economic prosperity, and peace and security.

I would like to lay out how I see these challenges threatening the cohesion and stability of the EU. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but is intended to create a sense of urgency among my colleagues regarding the crises faced by the EU and our transatlantic alliance.

First, I want to reiterate the remarkable trajectory of the democratic process and peace in Europe since the World Wars of the last century. Emerging from the ashes of World War II, what started as the European Coal and Steel Community expanded to become the European Economic Community, which created a single market for the free movement of goods, people, capital, and services. The ideal of a single market guaranteeing freedom of movement for all member citizens still underpins the EU today, as it has grown from 6 to 28 members.

This basis in an economic union was always intended to grow into a polit-

ical union as well. Jean Monnet, often regarded as the father of the European Union, stated that “we are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting men.” This principle serves as the basis for cooperation amongst member states as they have pooled diplomatic resources to address some of the most pressing issues around the world, usually in concert and in lock-step with the United States. In capitals around the world, the U.S. works with EU representatives to address vexing regional challenges, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and support for values that we hold dear.

The allure of EU membership has served as a powerful incentive, especially for countries in Central and Eastern Europe, to reform and adopt high governance standards in preparation for EU membership. Nowhere else in the world does such an incentive exist; and, while not without its challenges, this accession process has improved the economic circumstances, political rights, and civil liberties of millions across the continent.

Today, however, the EU is confronting its most serious crises, which collectively threaten the future of the European project. These threats to European cohesion are both internal and external, between north and south and east and west, as well as within and outside individual member states.

First, the refugee and migrant crisis today consumes policymakers in Brussels and across Europe. Tensions have grown among member states on the right approach to accepting them, as more than 1 million entered Germany alone in 2015, with the prospect of more in 2016. The heated debate within the Union on how to deal with the crisis has called into question the ability of Brussels to enforce commitments by its member states on borders, Schengen visa-free travel, and quotas associated with resettlement.

In recent months, member states have agreed to resettlement quotas and border protocols, only to see those agreements fall apart in quick succession. Some are now concerned that this trend could extend to other EU member states’ commitments in areas like sanctions on Russia.

Second, the 2008 financial crisis and the possibility of Greece exiting the Eurozone drew attention to the fiscal policy differences between Europe’s industrialized north and less developed south and shook the foundations of the monetary union. The EU has not yet weathered this particular storm, and while perhaps not as prominent in the news due to other challenges, the fiscal situation in Greece remains very precarious. Member states and the IMF remain focused on resolving the crisis, but the natural tension between painful economic reforms and the associated political and humanitarian costs remains.

Third, governments across the EU are contending with the very real threat of domestic terrorism and for-

eign fighters. Horrific attacks have galvanized European leaders to action, but significant challenges remain as the necessity for enhanced counterterrorism and intelligence measures interact with real concerns regarding privacy.

Fourth, an alarming nationalist trend has emerged in several countries across the Union. Although nationalism has, of course, existed for years across the Continent, it has been exacerbated by the migrant crisis. In some countries, governments have embraced a brand of “illiberal democracy” which calls into question the very democratic values of the EU and the four freedoms that make up its core.

Every member state signed up for these values when they joined the Union—many of which had to enact difficult reforms to make them a reality. It is unfortunate and worrying that we have seen an erosion of support for these principles in some corners, a dynamic that deserves increased attention and understanding.

Fifth, Russia continues to place pressure on the EU and poses a threat to the security of EU countries in the east. Ukraine is the clearest example, where Ukrainian aspirations for an association agreement with the EU were met with the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea and subsequent invasion of eastern Ukraine.

We have worked closely with the EU to establish and maintain a sanctions regime on Russia that is having a measurable impact. We must stay united on sanctions until the Minsk II agreement is fully implemented and Crimea is returned to Ukrainian control.

For years, Russia has also sought to erode support for EU institutions through a sustained propaganda campaign across the Union. We understand that Russia works to fund and influence anti-EU political parties, think tanks, NGOs, and media voices within the Union and among aspirant countries.

Russia is using the very strengths of Europe’s democratic societies against it—free press, civil society, and open debate. We should be prepared to push back against these revanchist efforts, not through propaganda, but a clear and forceful debate on facts.

Russia has not been reluctant to use its energy resources as a weapon as it seeks to pursue its ambitions, including by withholding energy exports to Europe in order to extract concessions on other issues. Much of Europe imports a considerable share of its oil and gas supplies from Russia.

The EU plays an important role in negotiating energy deals with Russia and must constantly contend with the threat that the country poses to the energy needs of member states. The collective negotiating power the EU wields with Russia is critical to ensuring the individual energy security of all EU nations.