



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Gander, NL - March 7, 2008**

**Visa-free travel to boost business at Gander**

Gander Mayor Claude Elliott welcomed the announcement this week by the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, on the lifting of visa restrictions for airline passengers originating in four of the newest European Union (EU) member states.

“This is fantastic news for Gander and for many of the airlines which have traditionally used Gander International Airport as a technical stop on their transatlantic routes,” Mayor Elliott said.

Canada had earlier required that travelers from seven of the 12 countries which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 obtain temporary resident visas if their aircraft were to touch down at Gander en route to a third country. Restrictions on passengers from Estonia were lifted in 2006 and for citizens of the Czech Republic and Latvia in 2007. In her March 1 announcement, Minister Finley released citizens of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Lithuania from the visa requirement.

“Gander has paid a high price for this policy in terms of both direct revenue for the airport and the spin-off employment and other economic activity throughout the community and region,” the Mayor explained. “The airport alone has seen a significant loss of revenue from airlines which have been forced to change their routes to by-pass Gander, but we estimate the losses to the overall regional economy to be far greater, in the millions of dollars annually, so this announcement feels like a tremendous weight being lifted off our shoulders.”

The Mayor recognized the continuing efforts of this province’s federal cabinet representative, the Honourable Loyola Hearn, to resolve the visa issue.

“We have met a number of times with Minister Hearn on this and other issues, and we know that he understands how important this issue is to our community and region, and we are grateful for his support and perseverance,” Mayor Elliott said.

Meanwhile, two of the EU’s 27 member states remain under the visa requirements and Mayor Elliott said the Town will continue to monitor bilateral efforts to have Bulgaria and Romania granted similar exemptions.

**Town of Gander • 100 Elizabeth Drive • Gander, NL • A1V 1G7**

*Visa-free travel - 2*

**For more information, please contact:**

**Claude Elliott, Mayor**  
**Tel. 709-651-5920**