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1612 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, D.C. 20006
www.CEECoalition.org

CEEC Statement on NATO Enlargement and Supporting the Open Door Policy

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From the beginning of its formation in the 1990s, the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC) has steadfastly supported the continued engagement of the United States in Central and East Europe as the best policy to advance American geo-strategic interests in the region. This engagement requires, among other things, U.S. support for democratic institution building and promotion of security and stability throughout the region. The prerequisites for security and stability include respect for the rule of law; respect for human and minority rights; and the integration of the new democracies into Western institutions.

Paramount among these institutions is NATO, whose enlargement the CEEC has vigorously supported by the inclusion of those states that want to join NATO and are able to assume the responsibilities associated with membership. Georgia and Ukraine are sovereign states that have the right to petition for membership to NATO. The CEEC urges NATO to decide on their membership without discrimination and on the same basis as its acceptance of all other members of the alliance without non-member interference.

An indispensable step is to move such candidate countries to the MAP stage of the enlargement process, and the CEEC strongly expects NATO to fully implement the 2008 Bucharest Summit decision with respect to Ukraine and Georgia.

The CEEC strongly applauds NATO's enlargement in 1999 and 2004. The inclusion of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in NATO in 1999, and Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania in 2004, has resulted in the integration of these re-established democracies into the transatlantic community of nations. United States policies and support of these countries' NATO membership have been prescient, as they have become staunch American allies. As such, the CEEC reiterates its support for the Alliance's continued open door policy to include countries which are ready, able and willing to join the Alliance and which are democratic and respect the rule of law, including human and minority rights.

The CEEC is comprised of 18 national membership organizations representing more than 20 million Americans who trace their heritage to that part of the world. The CEEC strongly believes that the long-term national security and economic interests of the United States demand an unwavering commitment to and sustained engagement with the Central and East European countries, including continued support for the inclusion into NATO of all who are qualified and who wish to join.