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AUCP Security Measures

The US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs issued a Travel Alert on October 3rd warning of a potential terrorist threat in Europe. As US citizens, we were specifically reminded of “the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructure.”

In response to the notice, we have stayed in touch with consular officers at the American Consulate in Marseille for guidance and have been informed, as recently as this morning, that on the local level it is “business as usual” and that no special security measures have been deployed.



We are fundamentally reassured by the fact that AUCP students in Aix and Marseille are safely distant from “tourist infrastructures.” They circulate on foot or by bus from their French host families to the AUCP and are largely integrated into the local community.

For emergency contact, all AUCP students are in possession of a French cell phone which they have been instructed to keep with them, fully charged at all times.

Before their departure on vacation, students complete AUCP travel forms, which record their travel itinerary and related contact information. They also insure that their cell phones are functional throughout Europe for both sending and receiving calls and text messages.

In addition, they are reminded to:

- Avoid crowded tourist areas and sights, as well as typically American locations such as McDonalds, Starbucks, Hard Rock Cafe, etc.;
- Walk away at the first sign of trouble (e.g., suspicious persons or packages) and report such activities and persons to authorities from a safe distance;
- Remain alert, cautious and aware of their surroundings.

We are aware that international press coverage can create the impression of imminent and pressing danger. While terrorist warnings are noted and integrated into our collective and individual concerns, life proceeds as normal here in Aix and Marseille, with local noteworthy events centered around the debate over the legal retirement age and related strikes, gasoline shortages, and high school student demonstrations.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to get back to me.

Sincerely,

Lilli Engle,
Founding Director - AUCP