



Brussels, 14 July 2016
(OR. en)

11065/16

LIMITE

VISA 232
COMIX 510
COEST 186
COWEB 67

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: Visa Working Party/Mixed Committee (EU/Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, Liechtenstein)
On: 14 June 2016
Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Draft regulations of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement, as regards Ukraine (8271/16), Kosovo (8670/16) and Turkey (8671/16)

The Chair opened the discussions by giving a brief update on last developments in the negotiations on the **revision of the suspension mechanism** (see 9117/16).

With respect to **Georgia** (see 9622/16), the Commission (COM) presented the available figures on criminality, and invited the five Member States which had not yet provided their figures to do so as soon as possible. The Chair concluded that this file would be further discussed within the Council at the appropriate forums.

As regards **Ukraine**, COM explained that all the benchmarks had been fulfilled and presented orally the state of play of implementation, in particular as regards the five commitments to tackle corruption. BE, DE, MT, PT and SI asked COM to provide this information in writing, including answers to some questions raised by FR.

Whilst most delegations were in favour of visa liberalisation with Ukraine, BE, DE, FR, SE and CH expressed concerns related to corruption, organised crime, and unfounded asylum requests. FR maintained a reservation on the proposal.

Following a request from several Member States, the Chair concluded that the text of the proposal concerning Ukraine (8271/16) would be aligned with the proposal concerning Georgia (see 9622/16) in order to ensure that the revised suspension mechanism (see 9117/16) enters into application before, or simultaneously with, the visa liberalisation.

As regards **Turkey**, COM confirmed that there are still seven benchmarks to be fulfilled, and gave a brief update on the ongoing discussions. This file would be followed up at the next meeting, depending on the progress achieved.

As regards **Kosovo**, COM confirmed that there were two outstanding requirements still to be fulfilled. As COM does not intend to present further reports in writing, it would deliver oral reports in order to keep VISA WP and COWEB WP updated.

COM clarified that the visa liberalisation would apply to biometric passports only.

The Chair concluded that the discussions on this file would be resumed once the pending benchmarks had been fulfilled.

2. Draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Union Code on Visas (Visa Code) (recast)

The outcome of the discussions on this issue is set out in 10726/16 VISA 222 CODEC 975 COMIX 488.

3. Any other business

a. Guidelines on the non-recognition of certain categories of Russian ordinary international passport

COM presented the new version of the guidelines and explained that they constituted a living document, which can be adapted if need be.

b. New visa requirement imposed by Honduras

RO reported on cases of a visa requirement being imposed on Romanian citizens travelling to Honduras for tourist purposes, although Honduras was included in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 39/2001 and should therefore respect reciprocity. COM said that it would follow up the issue.

c. External service providers (ESPs) - EU competition policy requirement

EL reported that the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs had received a letter from an International Law Group, which raised a series of issues concerning cooperation with ESPs as regards the EU competition policy. COM and several delegations said they had received the same letter and reported on how they had dealt with it.

d. Greek Islands - Pilot programme for granting visas to visitors arriving from Turkey

NO requested information on the temporary entry/exit system for persons referred to in 10008/16, which had been presented in the Frontiers Working Party, and asked whether this temporary system was related to the pilot programme introduced in 2012 with special scheme for issuing visas to visitors coming from Turkey in high season. COM explained why this system was not the same as the pilot programme.

e. World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendations for yellow fever vaccination

DE wondered whether Member States intended to instruct their consulates in Angola to implement the WHO recommendations regarding mandatory vaccination against yellow fever for travellers from Angola. On the basis of information from EUDel in Luanda, COM confirmed that only one Member State present in Luanda required visa applicants to present proof of yellow fever vaccinations, which is not in line with the harmonised list of supporting documents established for that country. COM recalled the general guidelines (Visa Code Handbook) according to which central authorities are to instruct their consulates about how to handle situations of threats to public health (cf. Part II, point 7.7).

f. Access to consulates in Ukraine

COM reported on a letter sent to the Commission by Ukrainian NGOs complaining about difficult access to the consulates of the Member States in Ukraine for disabled people. AT, LT and LV informed about the measures they had taken with a view to facilitating access to their consulates for those people. The Chair invited delegations to forward further information to the Commission.

g. Saudi Arabia

AT explained that Saudi Arabia had sent a letter to Austria with a view to being provided with the biometric data from their nationals travelling to that country. EL said that Greece had received the same letter and stressed that this was not allowed in accordance with data protection rules.

h. Presentation of the programme of the incoming Presidency

SK presented the programme of the Slovak Republic for the last semester of 2016.
