

Visas: Council confirms agreement on visa liberalisation for Ukrainians

On 2 March 2017, EU ambassadors confirmed, on behalf of the Council, the informal agreement reached on 28 February 2017 between the Maltese Presidency and the European Parliament on visa liberalisation for Ukrainians.

The agreement provides for visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens when travelling to the EU for a period of stay of 90 days in any 180-day period.

We have demonstrated our strong commitment to visa-free travel for Ukrainian citizens, now that Ukraine has met the necessary conditions for a visa free regime. The reform of the suspension mechanism adopted on 27 February enabled us to finalise this agreement.

Carmelo Abela, Maltese Minister for Home Affairs and National Security

Next steps

Now that the agreement has been confirmed by EU ambassadors, on behalf of the Council, the regulation will be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote at first reading, and subsequently to the Council for adoption.

Background

In December 2015 the Commission found that Ukraine had met all the benchmarks of the visa liberalisation plan and was therefore ready for the exemption of the visa requirement. On 20 April 2016 the Commission published the proposal for visa liberalisation for holders of Ukrainian passports.

Once the new visa regime for Ukraine is formally adopted, it will move the country from Annex I of Regulation 539/2001 (countries whose nationals need a visa to enter the Schengen area) to Annex II of the same regulation (visa free countries).

In the context of the current migratory and security situation in the European Union, and taking into account its proposals on visa liberalisation for Georgia, Ukraine, Turkey and Kosovo, the Commission decided in May 2016 to present a proposal for a regulation revising the current suspension mechanism. The revised suspension mechanism allows, in specific circumstances, for the suspension of the visa waiver for the nationals of a specific country.

In its negotiating position on visa liberalisation for Ukrainian citizens, agreed on 17 November 2016, Coreper took the view that the instrument should not enter into force before the entry into force of the revised suspension mechanism. The Council adopted the regulation on the suspension mechanism on 27 February 2017.

Ireland and the United Kingdom will not be subject to the application of these measures, in accordance with the protocols annexed to the EU treaties. The visa regime of these member states remains subject to their national legislation.

[Visas: Council adopts a revision of the visa waiver suspension mechanism](#)

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