External borders: simplified regime for the control of persons based on the unilateral recognition by Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania of certain documents as equivalent to their national visas for the purposes of transit through their territories

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The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report by Michael **CASHMAN** (PES, UK) amending, under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure, the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council introducing a simplified regime for the control of persons at the external borders based on the unilateral recognition by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia of certain documents as equivalent to their national visas for the purposes of transit through their territories. The committee adopted a series of technical amendments aiming to take into account the new situation in the Schengen zone and also the fact that from 21 December 2007, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will be members of the Schengen zone.

The new system will enable Bulgaria and Romania to recognise unilaterally certain documents issued by Schengen zone countries for individuals making visits of less than five days. The report states that Bulgaria and Romania are required to issue national visas for entry or transit through their territory to third country nationals holding a uniform visa or long stay visa or residence permit issued by a Member State fully implementing the Schengen acquis or similar document issued by the Member State not yet fully implementing the Schengen acquis (**Cyprus**).

Lastly, amendments have been made to the annexes to take account of a certain number of changes in Romanian and Bulgarian national legislation as regards visas.