EU/Georgia Agreement: facilitation of the issuance of visas

2010/0106(NLE) - 05/05/2010 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: to **sign** the Agreement between the European Union and Georgia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: following the August 2008 conflict in Georgia, the Extraordinary European Council held in Brussels on 1 September 2008 decided to step up relations with Georgia, including visa facilitation measures.

On 27 November 2008, the Justice and Home Affairs Council formally authorised the Commission to negotiate a visa facilitation agreement between the European Union and Georgia. In February 2009 the Commission informed the Georgian authorities on the basic elements of a visa facilitation agreement and the first round of formal negotiations could be held in Brussels on 2 April 2009. Two further formal rounds of negotiations took place, the last one in Brussels on 24-25 August 2009.

Following a consultation and approval process on both sides as well as further clarification of a few additional points, the agreed text was initialled on 25 November 2009 in Brussels by the Chief Negotiators of both Parties.

The Commission considers that the objectives set by the Council in its negotiating directives were attained and that the draft visa facilitation agreement is acceptable to the Union. The consent from the European Parliament is necessary.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 77(2a), in conjunction with Article 218 (5) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: this proposal constitutes the legal instrument for the **signature** of the visa facilitation agreement.

For details of the **final content of this Agreement** please refer to the summary of COM(2010)0198 of 5 May 2010.

Since the two agreements on visa facilitation and readmission are linked, both agreements should be concluded and enter into force simultaneously.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: this proposal has no implication for the Union’s budget.