Declaration on the restoration of reciprocity in the visa regime - solidarity with the unequal status of Czech citizens following the unilateral introduction of visas by Canada

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The European Parliament adopted a Declaration on the restoration of reciprocity in the visa regime – solidarity with the unequal status of Czech citizens following the unilateral introduction of visas by Canada.

The European Parliament recalls that in July 2009 Canada unilaterally imposed a visa requirement for citizens of the Czech Republic, whose status is now therefore unequal to that of other citizens in the EU, and Canada, despite repeated calls to do so, has not given a date on which it will abolish this visa requirement. It states that a further delay in the termination of the unequal status of Czech citizens could threaten the future ratification of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada.

It considers that the Czech Republic cannot autonomously introduce a visa requirement for Canadian citizens and that overall the Commission and Council are not acting with sufficient forcibility in this matter.

Members call on the Commission and Council to increase political pressure on Canada in order to set the earliest possible date for abolishing the visa regime for Czech citizens as well as ending other breaches of visa reciprocity towards citizens of Bulgaria and Romania. It emphasises that unless this breach of reciprocity is resolved soon, equivalent retaliatory measures by the EU are likely to follow.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Commission to establish, rather than bilateral arrangements, a new mechanism that guarantees full visa reciprocity for all Member States while ensuring that if a non-EU country breaches that visa reciprocity, all Member States will immediately restore the visa requirement for nationals of that country.