EU/Moldova Visa Facilitation Agreement: amendments and additions

2012/0140(NLE) - 13/05/2013 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and Moldova amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Moldova on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2013/296/EU on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Moldova on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

BACKGROUND: in accordance with Council Decision 2012/353/EU, the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Moldova on the facilitation of the issuance of visas was signed on 27 June 2012, subject to its conclusion.

It is now appropriate to approve the agreement on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: by means of this Decision, the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Moldova on the facilitation of the issuance of visas, which entered into force on 1 January 2008, is amended as follows:

- a visa waiver for Moldovan citizens who are holders of biometric service passports;
- simplified requirements for documents to be presented regarding the purpose of the journey for certain categories of applicants;
- clarification of the provisions on the period of validity of multiple-entry visas for certain categories of applicants;
- a full waiving of the visa fee for certain categories of applicants;
- the possibility for an external service provider, with whom a Member State cooperates in view of issuing a visa, to charge a service fee of up to EUR 30;
- the possibility to waive the requirement to appear in person when lodging an application;
- the exemption from the visa requirement for short stays for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova who are holders of biometric service passports.

Furthermore, the amending agreement includes:

- a Joint Declaration on the cooperation on travel documents and regular exchange of information on document security;
- replying to a specific request formulated by the Republic of Moldova, a European Union Declaration is attached on documents to be submitted when applying for short-stay;
- replying to a specific request formulated by the Republic of Moldova, a European Union Declaration is attached on facilitations for family members not covered by the legally binding provisions of the Agreement.

Territorial measures: the specific situations of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom are reflected in the preamble of the amending agreement. The association of Switzerland and Liechtenstein in the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* is reflected in a Joint Declaration annexed to the amending Agreement.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision enters into force on 13.05.2013. The date of the entry into force of the agreement shall be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.