EU/Armenia Agreement: facilitation of the issuance of visas

2012/0334(NLE) - 22/10/2013 - Final act

PURPOSE : to conclude an Agreement between the European Union and Armenia to facilitate the issuance of visas.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT : Council Decision 2013/628/EU concerning the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

BACKGROUND : in accordance with Council Decision 2013/2/EU, the Agreement between the European Union and Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas was signed on 17 December 2012, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

The Agreement should now be concluded on behalf of the EU.

CONTENT : this Decision approves, on behalf of the EU, the Agreement between the European Union and Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas. It establishes the technical rules regarding the application of the Agreement.

Main provisions of the Agreement:

- **visa applications:** in principle, a decision on whether or not to issue a visa will have to be taken within 10 calendar days. This period may be extended up to 30 calendar days when further scrutiny is needed. In urgent cases, the period for taking a decision may be reduced to two working days or less;

- **visa fee:** the fee for processing applications of Armenian citizens shall amount to **EUR 35**. This fee will be applied to all Armenian visa applicants and concerns both single and multiple-entry visas. Moreover, certain categories of persons benefit from a full waiver of the visa fee: pensioners, close relatives, members of national and regional governments, members of official delegations participating in government activities, pupils and students, persons with disabilities, journalists and the technical crew accompanying them, representatives of civil society and persons invited by Armenian Community non-profit Organisations, children under the age of 12, humanitarian cases and persons participating in scientific, cultural, artistic activities and sport events;

- **documents:** the documents to be presented regarding the purpose of the journey have been **simplified for some categories of persons** specified in the Agreement, such as close relatives, business people, members of official delegations, pupils and students. For these categories of persons, only the documents listed in the agreement can be requested for justifying the purpose of the journey. No other justification, invitation or validation provided for by the legislation of the Member States is required;

- **multiple entry visas**: there are also simplified criteria for issuing multiple-entry visas for the categories of persons listed in the Agreement: (a) for members of governments, Constitutional and Supreme Court, permanent members of official delegations and spouses and children visiting citizens of Armenia legally residing in the Member States or EU citizens residing in the territory of the Member States of which they are nationals: visas valid for five years; (b) participants in

scientific, cultural, official exchange programmes and sport events, provided that during the previous two years they have made good use of 1 year multiple-entry visas and the reasons for requesting a multiple-entry are still valid: visas valid for a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 5 years are issued;

- **diplomatic passports**: citizens of Armenia who are holders of valid diplomatic passports are exempted from the visa requirement for short-stays.

Territorial provisions: the specific situations of Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland are reflected in the preamble. The close association of Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the implementation, application and development of the Schengen acquis is reflected in a Joint Declaration to the Agreement.

It should be noted that the Agreement is linked to the Agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation concluded with Armenia.

These Agreements will enter into force simultaneously.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : the Decision enters into force on 22 October 2013. The date of entry into force of the Agreement will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union by the General Secretariat of the Council.