Resolution on the future of EU visa policy

2014/2586(RSP) - 27/02/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the future of EU visa policy.

It called for steps to be taken towards **further harmonisation of visa procedures**, including common rules on the issuing of visas.

General visa policy and review of the Visa Code: Parliament welcomed the progress made in the field of the visa *acquis*, but also called for **enhanced local Schengen cooperation** in order to improve the implementation of the Visa Code in the short term. It regretted the fact that the Commission had not presented a study on the possibility of establishing a **common European issuing mechanism for short term visas,** including an examination of to what degree an assessment of individual risk could supplement the presumption of risk associated with the applicant's nationality, as it was invited to do in the Stockholm Programme.

Members stressed the need for more frequent use of **multiple-entry visas** with a longer duration for bona fide travellers and the need to make use of the current provisions of the Visa Code and the Schengen Borders Code allowing the issuing of **humanitarian visas**, for temporary shelter for human rights defenders at risk in third countries.

They also regretted the fact that the Commission had not presented an **overall evaluation of the Visa Code**, and looked forward to the proposal on review of the Code, whilst stating their regret that the Commission had not presented the evaluation before the review to allow time for discussion.

Visa facilitation: Parliament asked for a systematic evaluation of existing visa facilitation agreements in order to assess whether they achieve their intended objective.

Regulation (EC) No 539/2001: welcoming the recent updates of the lists of third countries subject to a visa requirement, as contained in Regulation (EC) No 539/2001, Parliament recalled the importance of visa-free travel for third countries and in particular their civil societies, but **also for the EU's own interests**. In this context, it felt that a **visa-free agreement between the EU and Ukraine** was a way to respond to the calls of Ukrainian civil society and the students who demonstrated over the last few days, and it called on the Commission to present **a proposal in order to put Ukraine on the list of third countries whose nationals are not subject to a visa requirement**. It also called for:

- Member States to fully implement the current visa facilitation agreement in order to facilitate access to the EU, in particular for students and scientists;
- the Council and the Commission to ensure that Parliament is more fully informed regarding the situation of third countries under discussion, so as to allow proper democratic scrutiny;
- Member States to trigger the suspension mechanism in good faith and only as a last resort in an emergency situation.

Visa Information System (VIS): eu-LISA was asked to present the expected VIS evaluation report as soon as possible.

Involvement of the European Parliament: lastly, Parliament called on the Council and the Commission to improve the flow of information to Parliament as regards negotiations for international agreements in the visa field, and announced its intention to set up a **contact group on visa policy** within the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.