Non-recognition of Russian travel documents issued in occupied foreign regions

2022/0274(COD) - 06/09/2022 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to ensure that Russian travel documents issued in or to persons resident in the occupied foreign regions, irrespective of the geographical location, are not recognised by the Member States for the purposes of issuing of a visa and of crossing the external borders.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: in reaction to the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation in 2014 and to its continued destabilising actions in eastern Ukraine, the EU has already introduced economic sanctions in response to Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine, linked to the incomplete implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

Since the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula, Russia has issued Russian international passports to residents of Crimea. In May 2022, Russia introduced a simplified Russian naturalisation procedure for orphan children from the so-called Donetsk People’s Republic and the so-called Luhansk People’s Republic, as well as Ukraine. The decree also applies to children without parental care and legally incapable persons who are inhabitants of these two occupied regions. The systematic issuance of Russian passports in these occupied regions constitutes a further **infringement of international law** and Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence.

Therefore, in view of the breaches of international law and military aggression against Ukraine by Russia, and in order to ensure a **common visa policy** and a common approach to checks to which persons crossing the external borders are subject, **all Russian travel documents issued in or to persons resident in occupied foreign regions should not be recognised as valid travel documents** for the purposes of issuing of a visa and of crossing the external borders. The same applies to travel documents issued in the Russian-occupied Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Similarly, this measure of non-recognition would apply to all travel documents issued by Russian authorities in any foreign regions Russia possibly and illegally invades or occupies in the future.

CONTENT: the proposal aims to ensure that Russian travel documents issued in or to persons resident in the occupied foreign regions, irrespective of the geographical location, are not recognised by the Member States for the purposes of issuing of a visa and of crossing the external borders. Its overarching aim is to ensure a well-functioning common visa policy and policy on external border checks as well as to **safeguard the security of the Union and its Member States**.

For reasons of legal certainty, clarity and transparency, the Commission should establish a **list of those Russian travel documents** that should not be recognised for the purposes of travel into the Schengen area. This list will be publicly available on the Commission website as part of the table of recognition of travel documents and list of travel documents issued by third countries, as established by Decision 1105 /2011/EU.