Third countries whose nationals are subject to or exempt from a visa requirement when crossing the external borders: holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (Koordinaciona uprava)

2023/0418(COD) - 16/11/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 as regards holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (Koordinaciona uprava).

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation 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: Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council lists the third countries whose nationals are to be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders of the Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement for stays of no more than 90 days in any 180-day period.

Serbia was transferred to the list of countries whose nationals are exempted from the visa requirement by Council Regulation (EC) No 1244/2009. That Regulation included an exclusion to the visa exemption concerning Kosovo Serbs holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (in Serbian: Koordinaciona uprava).

Following the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2023/850 of the European Parliament and of the Council transferring Kosovo to Part 4 of Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/1806, holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate would remain the only citizens of the Western Balkan region required to be in possession of a visa for the crossing of Member States' external borders.

With the entry into force of the visa exemption for Kosovo passport holders, the Commission considers that the reasons behind the exclusion of holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate from that visa exemption no longer exist, and that all citizens of the Western Balkan region should benefit from visa-free travel to the Schengen area.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes to amend Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 to **exempt holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate from the requirement to be in possession of a visa** when crossing the external borders of the Member States for stays of no more than 90 days in any 180-day period.

Annex II to the Regulation 2018/1806 will be amended, by including the holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (in Serbian: Koordinaciona uprava)' within the reference to Serbia.