

Revision of the Visa Suspension Mechanism

2023/0371(COD) - 07/10/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 518 votes to 96, with 24 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 as regards the revision of the suspension mechanism.

As a reminder, the suspension mechanism, established by Regulation (EU) 2018/1806, is a safeguard against the abuse of visa-free travel. In order to effectively address the multitude of challenges resulting from visa-free travel in a constantly evolving geopolitical context, this proposal aims to adapt the suspension mechanism to such challenges.

The European Parliament adopted its position at first reading by amending the Commission's proposal as follows.

Triggering the suspension mechanism

The suspension mechanism may be triggered for the following reasons: (a) a substantial increase in the number of third-country nationals listed in Annex II who have been refused entry or who are found to be staying on the territory of a Member State without the right to do so; (b) a substantial increase in the number of asylum applications lodged by nationals of a third country listed in Annex II for which the recognition rate is low; (c) a significant risk or imminent threat to public policy or the internal security of the Member States related to a third country listed in Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 (third countries exempt from the visa requirement).

The threshold for assessing 'substantial' increases in the number of people staying without authorisation or serious criminal offences will be set at 30%. The threshold for calculating a low rate of recognition of asylum applications will be set at 20%. In duly justified cases, the Commission may also deviate from these thresholds.

New grounds for suspension

The grounds for suspension will include the deterioration of the Union's external relations with a third country listed in Annex II, due to:

- **grave violations** by that third country of: (i) the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations; (ii) fundamental freedoms or of the obligations deriving from international human rights law or (iii) international humanitarian law;
- **non-compliance** by that third country with international court decisions and rulings; or
- that third country carrying out **hostile acts** against the Union or Member States with the aim of destabilising or undermining society or institutions which are key for the public policy and internal security of the Union or Member States.

Implementing acts

The Commission may adopt an implementing act suspending for a period of 12 months the exemption from the visa requirement for nationals of a country. Where the Commission considers suspending a visa exemption on the basis of its own analysis or following a notification by a Member State, it should take

into account, in its assessment, the impact of the suspension on civil society in the third country concerned, in particular where the human rights situation in that third country has deteriorated.

Where justified by the urgency of the matter, the Commission will adopt an implementing act temporarily suspending the exemption from the visa requirement for all nationals of the third country concerned or for certain categories thereof for a period of 12 months, where it has concrete and reliable information on the existence of any circumstances constituting grounds for suspension and decides that measures must be taken rapidly.

During the period of suspension, the Commission will establish an enhanced dialogue with the third country concerned with a view to remedying the circumstances in question and will inform the European Parliament and the Council of the progress and outcome of the dialogue and of the effectiveness of the suspension.

Extended suspension

If the grounds for suspension persist at the end of an initial 12-month suspension period, the Commission will adopt a **delegated act** to extend the suspension of the visa waiver for a **further 24 months**. This suspension will apply to all nationals of the third country concerned. By way of derogation, if the initial suspension concerns violations of fundamental rights or external relations, the Commission may limit the suspension to **certain categories of third-country nationals** (e.g. holders of diplomatic or official passports).

Before the end of the period of application of a delegated act, the Commission will submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the temporary application of the suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement, on the dialogue between the Commission and the third country concerned, as well as on the measures taken to address the circumstances which led to the temporary suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement. Where the circumstances constituting grounds for suspension persist, the Commission may indicate, in the report related to that delegated act that there is a need to adopt a further delegated act in order to extend the period of suspension by another period of 24 months. In that case, the first and second subparagraphs of this paragraph shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.