

Consular protection for unrepresented citizens of the Union in third countries

2023/0441(CNS) - 07/10/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament after reconsultation

The European Parliament adopted by 470 votes to 180, with 18 abstentions, following a special legislative procedure (repeated consultation), a legislative resolution on the draft Council Directive amending Directive (EU) 2015/637 on the coordination and cooperation measures to facilitate consular protection for unrepresented citizens of the Union in third countries and Directive (EU) 2019/997 establishing an EU Emergency Travel Document.

The European Parliament approved the Commission's proposal subject to the following amendments:

Access to consular protection

Where a crisis situation results in a **period of more than 48 hours** for citizens to safely reach or be reached by the embassy or consulate of their Member State of nationality, those citizens should be considered **unrepresented**.

In situations of immediate danger, this time limit will not apply, and the Union citizen concerned will be immediately considered unrepresented.

When providing consular protection to unrepresented citizens, Member States should take into account an intersectional approach to the specific needs of **vulnerable groups** and individuals at risk of discrimination on any grounds.

Role of the Union delegations

Members called for the EEAS and the Union delegations to be allocated the necessary **financial and human resources** to cover the operating costs and the additional horizontal administrative workload arising from the provision of consular protection under this Directive.

Local cooperation

Local consular cooperation meetings could include a regular exchange of information on issues relating to unrepresented citizens, possibly including the organisation of **joint consular exercises** as often as necessary and, in any event, at least once a year.

Crisis preparation

Joint consular contingency frameworks should group together aspects relating to unrepresented Union citizens that are necessary to facilitate their protection, including arrangements pertaining to the support to be provided to citizens facing court proceedings, in urgent cases requiring immediate attention.

The joint contingency framework should be **updated annually**, or as often as necessary in light of the local circumstances, in order to facilitate the protection of unrepresented Union citizens.

Member States should, in accordance with national law, provide their citizens with the possibility to register with or to inform competent national authorities, by appropriate means and tools, of their travels to or residence in third countries.

The EEAS should support the exchange of up-to-date information between Member States on crisis situations, including the establishment of **early detection and warning mechanisms** for evolving situations. The EEAS should, in close cooperation with Member States, provide consular crisis preparedness and response training to Union officials.

Crisis response

At any stage of a crisis situation, Member States should **exchange information** relating to their travel advice to citizens and should coordinate to ensure its consistency, using all appropriate means and tools. The EEAS should support the Member States in the coordination of changes to their travel advice to citizens.

Information for citizens of the Union

Member States should inform citizens of their right to consular protection, in particular by:

- a) including information on the right to consular protection in travel advice and campaign;
- b) information campaigns with passenger transport service providers and transport hubs offering travel to third countries;
- c) developing digital platforms or mobile applications providing quick and easy access to consular protection information and contacts;
- d) **short message systems** via telephone networks, to provide all Union citizens with contextualised information on their rights and how to exercise them upon arrival in third countries, as well as **real-time warning messages and recommendations** in the event of a crisis for citizens who have registered in accordance with this Directive.

Data processing

Members consider it necessary to ensure that the competent authorities of the Member States and relevant Union institutions and bodies have access to and can process and exchange **special categories of personal data** and exchange all the necessary information, where doing so is strictly necessary to provide consular protection to the person concerned and is of public interest or of vital interest to the data subject.

The transfer of personal data of Union citizens to third countries or international organisations, such as the United Nations, should be exercised with the greatest caution and only if such collaboration is of direct importance to the provision of consular protection.

By two years after the transposition deadline of the amending directive, the Commission should assess the implementation of this Directive, including whether its personal scope continues to ensure effective consular protection in light of practical experience.