

# **Visas: third countries whose nationals are subject to or exempt from a visa requirement**

2002/0280(CNS) - 28/11/2002 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE** : to amend Regulation 539/2001/EC listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external border of Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement. **CONTENT** : the European Council in Seville in June 2002 considered as a top priority the review of Regulation 539/2001/EC. The relevant criteria for review are illegal immigration, public policy and security, the EU's external relations with third countries, regional coherence and reciprocity. The new proposal states that: - Ecuador is transferred from Annex II to Annex I on grounds of illegal immigration. Member States will put the visa requirement into effect with regard to nationals of Ecuador by 1/04/03. - East Timor is removed from Part 2 (territorial entities) and added to Part I (States) since it acquired full statehood on 20/5/02 and was admitted to the UN on 27/09/02. - Switzerland is deleted from Annex II. This is because the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons between the EU and its Member States provides for free movement without visas for the Swiss and for EU nationals. The Commission will report no later than 30/06/03 on the implications of reciprocity and present necessary proposals, if necessary.