Basic information

2019/0182(NLE) NLE - Non-legislative enactments	Procedure completed
EU/Belarus Agreement on facilitation of issuance of visas **Subject** 7.10.04 External borders crossing and controls, visas **Geographical area** Belarus	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	KOVAŘÍK Ondřej (Renew)	06/02/2020
	Shadow rapporteur BLAGA Vasile (EPP) VITANOV Petar (S&D) BREYER Patrick (Greens/EFA) WIŚNIEWSKA Jadwiga (ECR) VANDENDRIESSCHE Tom (ID) REGO Sira (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	AUŠTREVIČIUS Petras (Renew)	30/09/2019

Council of the European Union

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Migration and Home Affairs	AVRAMOPOULOS Dimitris

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
30/08/2019	Preparatory document	COM(2019)0403	Summary
21/01/2020	Legislative proposal published	12362/2019	Summary
29/01/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/04/2020	Vote in committee		
27/04/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A9-0090/2020	
13/05/2020	Decision by Parliament	T9-0062/2020	Summary
13/05/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/05/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
15/05/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
27/05/2020	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
09/06/2020	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2019/0182(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consent by Parliament
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 077-p2 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 218-p6a
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/9/01191

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE644.818	13/12/2019	
Committee opinion	AFET	PE646.757	21/02/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A9-0090/2020	27/04/2020	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T9-0062/2020	13/05/2020	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	12362/2019	21/01/2020	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Preparatory document	COM(2019)0403	30/08/2019	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2019)0405	30/08/2019	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Decision 2020/0752
OJ L 180 09.06.2020, p. 0001

EU/Belarus Agreement on facilitation of issuance of visas

2019/0182(NLE) - 30/08/2019 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: signature, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: in the context of the Eastern Partnership Summit Declaration of 7 May 2009, the Union and the partner countries expressed their political support towards liberalisation of the visa regime in a safe and secure environment and reaffirmed their intention to take gradual steps towards a visa free regime for their citizens in due course.

On 28 February 2011, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with the Republic of Belarus on an Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas ('the Agreement'), in parallel with the negotiations of an Agreement on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation.

Negotiations with Belarus resulted in an agreement initialled on 17 June 2019. In the meantime, Belarus, the European Union and seven participating Member States (Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Finland and Latvia) signed a joint declaration on a mobility partnership on 13 October 2016. The European Parliament was informed about the conclusion of negotiations on both the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decides that the Agreement be signed on behalf of the Union and authorises the Council Secretariat General to establish the respective instrument of full powers.

The purpose of the Agreement is to facilitate, on the basis of reciprocity, the issuance of visas to citizens of the Union and Belarus for intended stays of no more than 90 days in any 180-day period.

The Commission considers that the objectives set by the Council in its negotiating directives have been achieved and that the draft agreement is acceptable to the Union.

The main elements of the final agreement are as follows:

- for all visa applicants, a decision on whether or not to issue a visa must, in principle, be taken within 10 calendar days. This period may be extended to a maximum of 30 calendar days when further examination is required. In urgent cases, it may be reduced to two working days or less;

- the amount of fees charged for processing visa applications from citizens of the European Union and Belarus shall be EUR 35. These fees shall apply to all visa applicants. In addition, the following categories of persons shall be exempt from these visa fees: children under 12 years of age, persons with disabilities, close relatives, members of official delegations;

- the documents required to justify the purpose of the trip have been simplified for certain categories of applicants (e.g. close relatives, business people, members of official delegations, primary and secondary school pupils, students, persons participating in scientific, cultural and sporting events, journalists, etc.);

- simplified conditions are provided for the issue of multiple-entry visas valid from 1 to 5 years to certain categories of persons (e.g. members of governments, parliaments and courts, permanent members of official delegations, spouses and children visiting European Union citizens legally residing in the territory of Belarus, or citizens of the Republic of Belarus legally residing in a Member State, persons participating in official, scientific or cultural exchange programmes or cross-border programmes, international sports events);

- citizens of the European Union and citizens of Belarus holding a valid biometric diplomatic passport and holders of a valid EU laissez-passer are exempt from the visa requirement for short stays. However, the final assessment of Belarus' system of issuance will have to be made by the Commission, in consultation with the Member States, before the conclusion of the Agreement.

The importance of the fundamental principles governing the cooperation between the Parties as well as the obligations and responsibilities, including the respect of human rights and democratic principles, stemming from the relevant international instruments to which they are bound, is underlined in a preamble to the Agreement.

The Parties may suspend the Agreement in whole or in part for any reason, including grounds for suspension such as breach or abuse of a provision of the Agreement, human rights and democracy considerations.

The United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark are not participating in the adoption of the decision.

EU/Belarus Agreement on facilitation of issuance of visas

2019/0182(NLE) - 30/08/2019 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: in the context of the Eastern Partnership Summit Declaration of 7 May 2009, the Union and the partner countries expressed their political support towards liberalisation of the visa regime in a safe and secure environment and reaffirmed their intention to take gradual steps towards a visa free regime for their citizens in due course.

On that basis, the Commission presented on 12 November 2010, a recommendation to the Council with a view to obtaining directives to negotiate Agreements with the Republic of Belarus on, respectively, the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas, and readmission of persons residing without authorisation.

Negotiations with Belarus were officially opened in Brussels on 30 January 2014 and resulted in an agreement initialled on 17 June 2019. In the meantime, Belarus, the European Union and seven participating Member States (Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Finland and Latvia) signed a joint declaration on a mobility partnership on 13 October 2016.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council approve the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

The purpose of the Agreement is to facilitate, on the basis of reciprocity, the issuance of visas to citizens of the Union and Belarus for intended stays of no more than 90 days in any 180-day period.

The Commission considers that the objectives set by the Council in its negotiating directives have been achieved and that the draft agreement is acceptable to the Union.

The main elements of the final agreement are as follows:

- for all visa applicants, a decision on whether or not to issue a visa must, in principle, be taken within 10 calendar days. This period may be extended to a maximum of 30 calendar days when further examination is required. In urgent cases, it may be reduced to two working days or less;

- the amount of fees charged for processing visa applications from citizens of the European Union and Belarus shall be EUR 35. These fees shall apply to all visa applicants. In addition, the following categories of persons shall be exempt from these visa fees: children under 12 years of age, persons with disabilities, close relatives, members of official delegations;

- the documents required to justify the purpose of the trip have been simplified for certain categories of applicants (e.g. close relatives, business people, members of official delegations, primary and secondary school pupils, students, persons participating in scientific, cultural and sporting events, journalists, etc.);

- simplified conditions are provided for the issue of multiple-entry visas valid from 1 to 5 years to certain categories of persons (e.g. members of governments, parliaments and courts, permanent members of official delegations, spouses and children visiting European Union citizens legally residing in the territory of Belarus, or citizens of the Republic of Belarus legally residing in a Member State, persons participating in official, scientific or cultural exchange programmes or cross-border programmes, international sports events);

- citizens of the European Union and citizens of Belarus holding a valid biometric diplomatic passport and holders of a valid EU laissez-passer are exempt from the visa requirement for short stays. However, the final assessment of Belarus' system of issuance will have to be made by the Commission, in consultation with the Member States, before the conclusion of the Agreement.

The importance of the fundamental principles governing the cooperation between the Parties as well as the obligations and responsibilities, including the respect of human rights and democratic principles, stemming from the relevant international instruments to which they are bound, is underlined in a preamble to the Agreement.

The Parties may suspend the Agreement in whole or in part for any reason, including grounds for suspension such as breach or abuse of a provision of the Agreement, human rights and democracy considerations.

EU/Belarus Agreement on facilitation of issuance of visas

2019/0182(NLE) - 13/05/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 634 votes to 48, with 4 abstentions a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

Following the recommendation of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the European Parliament gave its consent to the conclusion of the agreement.

The purpose of the Agreement is to facilitate, on the basis of reciprocity, the issuance of visas for an intended stay of no more than 90 days during any period of 180 days to citizens of the Union and Belarus.

Negotiations with Belarus were formally opened in Brussels on 30 January 2014 and resulted in an agreement initialled on 17 June 2019. In the meantime, Belarus, the European Union and seven participating Member States (Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Finland and Latvia) signed a Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership on 13 October 2016.

The importance of the fundamental principles governing cooperation between the Parties and of the obligations and responsibilities, including respect for human rights and democratic principles, arising from the relevant international instruments to which they are bound is underlined in the preamble to the Agreement.

The Parties may suspend the Agreement in whole or in part for any reason whatsoever, in particular in case of violation or misuse of any provision of the Agreement or for human rights and democracy considerations.

EU/Belarus Agreement on facilitation of issuance of visas

2019/0182(NLE) - 21/01/2020 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: in the Eastern Partnership Summit Declaration of 7 May 2009, the Union and the partner countries expressed their political support towards liberalisation of the visa regime in a safe and secure environment and reaffirmed their intention to take gradual steps towards a visa free regime for their citizens in due course.

The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas, once signed subject to its conclusion at a later date, should now be approved.

The Commission carried out an assessment of the security and integrity of the Belarusian system for issuing biometric diplomatic passports and their technical specifications.

CONTENT: the Council draft is aimed at approving, on behalf of the Union, the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of visas.

The purpose of the Agreement is to facilitate, on the basis of reciprocity, the issuance of visas for an intended stay of no more than 90 days out of a total period of 180 days to citizens of the Union and Belarus.

The proposed decision constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen acquis. The United Kingdom and Ireland are therefore not taking part in its adoption. This is also the case for Denmark.