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*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

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**2011/0199(COD)**

13.10.2011

## **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 as regards the inclusion of the Kaliningrad area and certain Polish administrative districts in the eligible border area  
(COM(2011)0461 – C7-0213/2011 – 2011/0199(COD))

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## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The cooperation between the European Union and Russia deserves particular attention when applying different instruments concerning the movement of persons. This is a complex matter in particular when applied in the Kaliningrad Oblast. This specifically situated enclave, fully surrounded by the EU Member States, has great importance both for the Baltic Sea cooperation in its political, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions as much as for the good neighbourly contacts between people living in this area. One solution has already been found to this end – in 2003 the Council Regulation No 693/2003 was adopted and laid grounds for the issuance of the Facilitated Transit Document (FTD) and the Facilitated Rail Transit Document (FRTD).

The search for the concrete instruments allowing for the good neighbourly relations between EU and Russia allowed the Commission to propose the amendment of the Local Border Traffic (LBT) rules as stated in the Regulation No 1931/2006. In the light of the previous suggestion from Poland the Commission suggested enlargement of the scope of coverage of the LBT to the whole territory of the Kaliningrad Oblast and the corresponding area on the Polish side. This solution will prove to be sound not only from the perspective of the security of the Schengen zone but also pays particular tribute to direction taken under ENP cooperation by the Member States and the Commission. To this end it deserves full support as a tool allowing for the avoidance of the artificial inter division of the Kaliningrad Oblast into territories covered and uncovered by the present LBT present Regulation (up to 30 kilometres and in specific case up to 50 kilometres in-land). The proposal for an amendment of the Regulation No 1931/2006 proves to be of an essence also from the perspective of cross border cooperation developed under the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The bettering of the conditions of cross-border flow of people deserves support on behalf of the EU institutions. It supplements but never replaces the visa movement – to this end one shall bear in mind the on-going renegotiations of the Visa Facilitation Agreement as well as preparations to launch the Visa Dialogue between the EU and Russia. As an outcome the amendment to the Regulation No 1931/2006 will help reaching better neighbourly relations between the EU and Russia the European Parliament sees it as a correct opportunity to make use of.

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament adopts its position at first reading taking over the Commission proposal.