



**EUROPEAN UNION**

DELEGATION TO GEORGIA

Tbilisi, 1 March 2011

## **Simplified visa requirements for Georgian citizens come into force**

***Today a Visa Facilitation Agreement signed between the European Union and Georgia comes into force opening the way for easier travel and people-to-people contact across Europe.***

From 1<sup>st</sup> of March Georgian citizens will benefit from simplified procedures for obtaining short-term visas to the EU foreseen by the Visa Facilitation Agreement signed between Georgia and the European Union on 17 June 2010. The aim of simplified procedures is making it easier for Georgian citizens, in particular those who travel most, to acquire short term visas for the EU<sup>1</sup>.

The Agreement provides a reduced visa fee of €35 instead of €60 for all Georgian citizens and a total exemption from the visa fee for certain categories of applicants (e.g. children below the age of 12, pensioners, disabled persons, students, close relatives and representatives of civil society organisations). The necessary documents proving the purpose of the envisaged travel in support of a visa application are simplified for the following categories of citizens:

- close relatives - spouse, children (including adopted), parents (including custodians), grandparents and grandchildren, visiting citizens of Georgia legally residing in the territories of the Member States.
- members of official delegations who, following an official invitation addressed to Georgia, shall participate in meetings, consultations, negotiations, exchange programmes, as well as in events held in the territory of the Member States by intergovernmental organisations.
- pupils, students, post-graduate persons and accompanying teachers travelling for study or educational training, exchange programmes, as well as other educational or school-related activities.
- persons travelling for medical reasons and necessary accompanying persons
- journalists and accredited persons accompanying them in a professional capacity
- participants in international sport events and persons accompanying them in a professional capacity.
- business people and representatives of business organisations
- members of the professions participating in international exhibitions, conferences, symposia, seminars or other similar events held in the territory of the Member States
- representatives of civil society organisations travelling for educational training, seminars, conferences, exchange programmes.
- persons participating in scientific, research, cultural and artistic activities, including

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<sup>1</sup> The visa facilitation agreement does not apply to UK and Ireland (which do not participate in the Schengen cooperation), and to Denmark. It is applicable towards the rest of the EU. Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland who participate in Schengen are invited to conclude similar visa facilitation agreements.

- university and other exchange programmes.
- drivers conducting international cargo and passenger transportation services to the territories of the Member States in vehicles registered in Georgia
  - participants in official exchange programmes organised by twin cities or municipal authorities
  - persons visiting military and civil burial grounds

Bona fide frequent travellers will be issued multi-entry visas with long periods of validity. Finally, the holders of diplomatic passports are exempt from the visa obligation. The agreement also obliges the Consulates to take a decision within 10 days on whether or not to issue a visa.

## **Background**

In June 2008, the Council invited the Commission to open a dialogue with Georgia to launch a discussion on a Mobility Partnership. The Extraordinary European Council of 1 September 2008 decided "to step up relations with Georgia, including visa facilitation measures". In November 2009, negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements were concluded and the EU and Georgia signed a mobility partnership aiming at promoting a better framework for cooperation on all aspects of migration policy.

Georgia is one of six countries within the European Partnership established by the EU in May 2009 (Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, 7 May 2009). The purpose of the Eastern Partnership is to deepen and strengthen relations between the EU and its neighbouring countries Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Since 2006, the EU has concluded visa facilitation agreements with Russia, Ukraine, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and the Republic of Moldova. Negotiations are ongoing with Cape Verde.

## **For more information:**

[New rules on issuance of visas](#) 

[Agreement between the European Union and Georgia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas](#)