



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 20 October 2014

Commission assesses progress by Turkey in visa dialogue

Today the Commission presented its first report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements set in its visa liberalisation roadmap.

"This first report shows that Turkey is doing effective efforts to meet the criteria identified in its visa liberalisation roadmap and I welcome in particular the progress achieved in the fields of migration and international protection, as well as in document security. Work is still needed in areas like, among others, border management, and police and judicial cooperation. I am convinced that Turkey will keep a steady pace towards the fulfilment of the benchmarks by bringing forward several essential legislative and administrative reforms", said Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström.

The Commission report assesses the situation of the legislation, administrative capacities and practices of Turkey in the areas addressed by the benchmarks of the roadmap, and makes a set of recommendations for the Government of Turkey to fulfil these benchmarks.

It acknowledges the progress made regarding the Turkish passport and civil registry systems, the importance of the reforms recently adopted in the field of migration and international protection, some positive developments in border cooperation with the EU Member States and FRONTEX, as well as the encouraging initiatives taken to reform anti-terror legislation.

At the same time, further steps remain necessary to fully comply with the requirements of the visa roadmap. The report recommends *inter alia* that:

- On document security, Turkey will need to start issuing new passports that include biometric data, in line with the EU *acquis*, and develop cooperation with EU Member States in detecting forged and fraudulent travel documents.
- On migration management, Turkey will need to ensure the effective implementation of the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and will need to complete the setting up of the General Directorate for Migration Management.
- Measures should be taken in Turkey to set up a more modern, effective and integrated border management system, to strengthen the visa system, as well as to develop stronger border cooperation with EU Member States.
- The EU expects full and effective implementation vis-à-vis all Member States of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement that has entered into force on 1 October 2014. Meanwhile, the bilateral readmission obligations already in place between Turkey and the EU Member States should be more effectively fulfilled.
- On public order and security, the Turkish authorities need to sign, ratify, and start implementing several international conventions, to adopt national legislation in line with European and international standards, and to continue the reform of Turkey's justice system, in view of safeguarding its independence and efficiency. These actions will help support Turkey's law enforcement agencies in the fight against

organised crime, and foster police and judicial cooperation with their counterparts in the EU Member States and with the relevant EU agencies.

- In the area of fundamental rights, Turkey should continue to revise anti-terrorism legislation and work on ensuring that this legislation is implemented in line with ECHR provisions and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Turkey will also need to adopt and implement a comprehensive strategy and action plan to improve the situation for people with Roma heritage living in Turkey, as well as legislation to prevent discrimination and facilitate social inclusion.

Background

The European Commission launched a visa liberalisation dialogue with Turkey on 16 December 2013, in parallel with the signature of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement ([IP/13/1259](#)).

On that occasion a visa roadmap was handed over to Turkish authorities. It sets out a comprehensive list of areas, divided in 5 chapters (called "blocks") on which Turkey was requested to develop legislation and administrative capacities and practices, as well as adequate cooperation with the EU.

The requirements listed in the roadmap aim:

- at enhancing the quality of Turkey's travel and identity documents, as well as the cooperation with the EU in detecting false documents and impostors (block 1 of the Roadmap);
- at improving the quality of Turkey's migration, international protection, borders and visa policy as well its border cooperation with the EU (block 2);
- at strengthening Turkey's capacity to prevent and combat against organised crime, and to cooperate with the EU in police and judicial matters (block 3);
- and at protecting the fundamental rights of citizens, with a specific attention to the rights and needs of minorities (block 4).

The visa roadmap also includes a separate block listing requirements related to the need for Turkey to fully and effectively implement the readmission agreement signed with the EU ([STATEMENT/14/285](#)), as well as the readmission obligations taken by Turkey at bilateral level with the EU Member States.

Today's first report was prepared by the Commission on the basis of information provided by Turkish authorities, as well as through field visits and technical missions, which took place in Turkey between March and June 2014 and included experts from the Commission, the EU delegation in Turkey, Turkey, the EU Member States and the relevant EU agencies (FRONTEX, EASO, EUROPOL).

The visa liberalisation dialogue is a merit-based process. Turkey should meet all the requirements set out in the visa roadmap and demonstrate that there is no substantial migratory and security risk associated with lifting the visa obligation. Once this process is successfully completed, the Commission can recommend to the European Parliament and the Council lifting the visa obligation for Turkish citizens.

Useful Links

First [report](#) on Turkey

Cecilia Malmström's [website](#)

Follow Commissioner Malmström on [Twitter](#)

DG Home Affairs [website](#)

Follow DG Home Affairs on [Twitter](#)

Contacts :

[Michele Cercone](#) (+32 2 298 09 63)

[Tove Ernst](#) (+32 2 298 67 64)

For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by [e-mail](#)