

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

**2007/0069(CNS)**

21.9.2007

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement  
between the European Community and Ukraine on the facilitation of issuance  
of short-stay visas  
(COM(2007)0190 – C6-0187/2007 – 2007/0069(CNS))

Draftsman: István Szent-Iványi

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## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Your draftsman believes that the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on the facilitation of issuance of short-stay visas, in parallel to the readmission agreement, demonstrates a considerable step forward in implementing the ENP Action Plan endorsed by the EU-Ukraine Co-operation Council on 21 February 2005 as well as in fulfilling the objectives of facilitating mobility, managing migration and promoting people-to-people exchanges as outlined in the communication of the European Commission on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (COM(2006)726).

The "package deal" on the two agreements is mutually beneficial for the EU and Ukraine. The agreement is the second in line following the one negotiated with the Russian Federation. It is broader in its scope that duly reflects the more ambitious co-operation agenda pursued by the parties in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Your draftsman welcomes that the agreement on the facilitation of issuance of short-stay visas introduces strict procedural deadlines, sets preferential visa fees including a full visa fee waiver for certain categories of persons (e.g. close relatives, students, journalists, children, pensioners and persons participating in cultural, educational exchange programmes and sport events), and provides for a simplified procedure in a number of cases. The agreement also includes a reference to the introduction of a visa-free travel regime for the citizens of Ukraine as a long term perspective. Your draftsman is of the view, that in the framework of the new enhanced agreement which is now being negotiated with Ukraine, a road-map of necessary steps towards visa facilitation for broader groups of the Ukrainian society, and, in the longer term, towards a visa-free travel regime should be envisaged.

Your draftsman calls on both parties for a speedy ratification so that the two agreements can enter into force on 1 January 2008.

Your draftsman draws attention to the fact that on 31 March 2005 President Yuschenko signed a decree "On Temporary Introduction of the visa-free regime for citizens of the Member States of the European Union and the Swiss Confederation". The decree established a visa-free regime of entry for 25 Member States of the EU and the Swiss Confederation. The visa-free regime in its present form is extended to an unlimited period and also introduced for Iceland and Norway's citizens. However, it does not apply to citizens of Bulgaria and Romania. While recognising that the visa-free regime introduced by Ukraine is a unilateral gesture of goodwill and its automatic extension to the Member States of the EU that joined after its introduction is not compulsory according to the principle of reciprocity, your draftsman considers that the EU, guided by the principle of solidarity, rightly insists on the inclusion of Bulgaria and Romania in the visa-free regime thus ensuring equal treatment for all EU Member States. Such extension would greatly contribute to a speedy ratification process of the two agreements as well as give new impetus to the ongoing negotiations on an enhanced co-operation agreement between the European Community and Ukraine.

Your draftsman welcomes the fact that the governments of Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia declared their willingness to enter into negotiations of bilateral agreements with

Ukraine for the purpose of implementing the local border traffic regime established by Regulation (EC) 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Your draftsman considers that the proper implementation of the agreement is highly important, and calls on the Joint Committee for management of the Agreement to closely monitor it. Your draftsman also expects the European Commission to regularly inform the European Parliament on the implementation of the agreement, consult it before suggesting amendments or additions and take into due consideration the European Parliament's suggestions of amendments.

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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 approval of the Commission proposal.

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	Agreement between the EC and Ukraine on the facilitation of issuance of short-stay visas						
<b>References</b>	COM(2007)0190 - C6-0187/2007 - 2007/0069(CNS)						
<b>Committee responsible</b>	LIBE						
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	AFET 21.6.2007						
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	István Szent-Iványi 5.6.2007						
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	12.9.2007						
<b>Date adopted</b>	12.9.2007						
<b>Result of final vote</b>	<table> <tr> <td>+:           </td><td>39</td></tr> <tr> <td>–:           </td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>0:           </td><td>0</td></tr> </table>	+:	39	–:	0	0:	0
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<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Christopher Beazley, Monika Beňová, Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Véronique De Keyser, Alfred Gomolka, Klaus Hänsch, Anna Ibrisagic, Jelko Kacin, Ioannis Kasoulides, Helmut Kuhne, Vytautas Landsbergis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Raimon Obiols i Germà, Vural Öger, Justas Vincas Paleckis, Ioan Mircea Paşcu, Alojz Peterle, João de Deus Pinheiro, Hubert Pirker, Samuli Pohjamo, Michel Rocard, Libor Rouček, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, István Szent-Iványi, Antonio Tajani, Charles Tannock, Inese Vaidere, Geoffrey Van Orden, Josef Zieleniec						
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Milan Horáček, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Jaromír Kohlíček, Doris Pack, Aloyzas Sakalas, Adrian Severin, Csaba Sándor Tabajdi						