



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Foreign Affairs

2012/0334(NLE)

27.6.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the proposal for a Council decision concerning the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the facilitation of the issuance of visas
(05835/2013 – C7-0112/2013 – 2012/0334(NLE))

Rapporteur: Tomasz Piotr Poręba

PA_Leg_Consent

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

In its Communication on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of 4 December 2006¹, the Commission had recommended that negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation should be initiated with ENP countries.

The Prague Summit Joint Declaration of 7 May 2009 establishing the Eastern Partnership has set the long term objective of visa liberalisation, a gradual process that has to be accompanied by improvement in security conditions to fight cross border crime and irregular migration. At the Warsaw Summit of 29-30 September 2011, the Heads of State and of Government renewed their commitment to the objectives and continued implementation of the Eastern Partnership.

The proposed decision takes into account and reflects the existing framework for cooperation with Armenia, in particular Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which entered into force in 1999, the EU-Armenia European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan adopted in November 2006, the Declarations from the Eastern Partnership Summit, as well as the ongoing negotiations for the EU-Armenia Association Agreement.

The negotiating directives for the conclusion of a visa facilitation agreement with Armenia were adopted by the Council on 19 December 2011. The negotiations were opened in Yerevan on 27 February 2012 and the final text of the Agreement was initialled on 18 October 2012. By the decision of the Government of Republic of Armenia of 4 October 2012, as of 10 January 2013, EU citizens, as well as those from the Schengen associated countries, are exempt from the visa obligation.

The proposed decision concerning the conclusion of the agreement includes standard elements of EU visa facilitation agreements, establishing the delays for the decision on issuing the visa, the fees and exemptions thereof, the required documentation and the exemptions, as well as simplification of criteria for certain categories of persons. Furthermore, the proposal includes Declarations on cooperation on travel documents and regular exchange of information on travel document security and on documents to be submitted when applying for short-stay visas. The provisions do not apply to the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Kingdom of Denmark, which are invited to conclude bilateral visa facilitation agreements, as are the countries non EU Members, but party to the Schengen agreement.

The improvement of mobility will facilitate people-to-people contacts, an essential element for development of economic, social, cultural and other ties. It is thus a key for the realisation of Eastern Partnership, recalling that the long-term objective is full visa liberalisation.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament give its consent.

¹ COM(2006)0726

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	27.6.2013
Result of final vote	+: 28 -: 0 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Bastiaan Belder, Michael Gahler, Ana Gomes, Anna Ibrisagic, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jelko Kacin, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Eduard Kukan, Vytautas Landsbergis, Marusya Lyubcheva, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Bernd Posselt, Hans-Gert Pöttering, Tokia Saïfi, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Marek Siwiec, Charles Tannock, Eleni Theoharous, Geoffrey Van Orden, Boris Zala
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Antonio López-Istúriz White, Marietje Schaake, Traian Ungureanu, Ivo Vajgl, Janusz Władysław Zemke
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Leonidas Donskis, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Gabriel Mato Adrover