

COALITION FOR THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT UNDIVIDED BY VISA-BARRIERS

Our main goal is to achieve Visa-Free Europe as soon as possible. In our activities we focus on the Eastern Partnership countries of the EU (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) as well as the Russian Federation.

We support the process of visa liberalization that is based on clearly defined technical criteria, strict but fair. The EU visa policy liberalization is a win-win situation for both the EU as well as the Eastern neighbours and Russia. It will promote:

- ▶ trust-building – by encouraging people-to-people contacts;
- ▶ innovation and development – by helping the exchange of knowledge and ideas;
- ▶ economic development – by promoting economic exchange as well as tourism;
- ▶ security – by institutionalizing cooperation between the police and border guarding services;
- ▶ democratisation – by encouraging reforms in the EaP states.

Our cooperation within the Coalition helps us to:

- ▶ strengthen our stand, by demonstrating wide international support for visa-free movement for the EU Eastern neighbours;
- ▶ bridge different kinds of research projects, advocacy and monitoring activities related to visa liberalization (including knowledge and good practice sharing);
- ▶ provide reliable information about the visa-liberalisation process, bust myths as well as put forward arguments for the abolition of visa regime;
- ▶ enable quick transfer of “visa-related information”, foster debate and raise awareness about the need for visa-free Europe.

SELECTED ACTIVITIES

AWARENESS RAISING BY MEANS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

These activities aim at making the public and decision-makers realize how visa barriers affect the lives of ordinary citizens through the means of various forms of artistic expression. **“Border Land”** is a short documentary showing the absurdity of living immediately next to a state border which had never existed before. After Lithuania entered the Schengen area, it has become extremely difficult for Lithuania-Belarus borderland residents to cross the frontier and visit their families and friends in a neighbouring village. (ByWatch) **“Eastern Neighbours and Visas. Friendly EU Relations?”** is a photo exhibition showing that visa issuance is not only a technical process, but also a personal experience of individuals forced to spend a significant amounts of their time, energy and money to receive documents necessary to visit an EU country (Batory Foundation).

EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

The aim of these activities is to shape visa policy, visa issuance and border crossing practice by employing hard data collected through research, monitoring and data analysis. Activities within the **„Paving the Road towards Visa-free Travel between the Eastern Partnership countries and the EU”** included assessment of the fulfilment of the technical criteria for visa liberalisation by the EaP states, mapping supporters and opponents of visa-free regime in the EU, relevant policy recommendations for EaP governments as well as for the EU (PASOS, ICHD, CESD, BISS, IDIS, EWB, CIPDD, ODB). A number of these partner organisations are also taking part in a follow-up to this project, **an ongoing monitoring of the fulfilment of technical criteria by the EaP states** (Batory Foundation). We also conduct **regular monitoring of visa issuance by Schengen consulates** (e.g. EWB in Ukraine, ECAS on 3rd country nationals, members of an EU family).

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY BY EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE

We also contribute to policy development and implementation by promoting knowledge and experience sharing between countries that have already introduced necessary reforms and those that are in the process of doing so. The project **“Improving mechanisms of migration control and coordination of migration policy in Georgia by reference to the Polish experience”** is based on a partnership of Polish-Georgian institutions. It aims at limiting the scale of illegal migration, reinforcing border control and implementing a systematic approach toward the issue of targeted and transit migration. Representatives of specific Georgian institutions engaged in the planning, implementing and monitoring of migration management have had an opportunity to specify their needs and meet with their Polish colleagues in order to exchange experience and develop new solutions (IPA and CIPDD).

MEMBERS OF THE COALITION:



Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation, Yerevan, Armenia



Association for International Affairs, Prague, Czech Republic



Belarus Watch, Vilnius, Lithuania



Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Tbilisi, Georgia



Civic Belarus, Prague, Czech Republic



Center for Economic and Social Development, Baku, Azerbaijan



Center for International Relations, Warsaw, Poland



DEMAS, Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights, Prague, Czech Republic



Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania



European Citizen Action Services, Brussels, Belgium



EUROBELARUS, International Consortium



Education for Democracy Foundation, Warsaw, Poland



Europe without Barriers, Kyiv, Ukraine



EUROPEUM, Institute for European Policy, Prague, Czech Republic



Foundation Our Choice, Warsaw, Poland



Free Belarus Initiative, Warsaw, Poland



Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Tbilisi, Georgia



Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest, Hungary



Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, “Viitorul”, Chisinau, Moldova