



MOLDOVA-UKRAINE VISA LIBERALISATION IN COMPARISON

THE STATE OF REALISATION OF ACTION PLANS ON VISA LIBERALISATION AFTER THE
SECOND PROGRESS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The European Commission has published its second report on the fulfilment of Action Plans on Visa Liberalisation by Moldova and Ukraine. Despite considerable differences in the progress made between the two countries - see the table below¹ - the Commission has decided that both countries need to introduce more reforms and provide more information before they can pass on to the second phase of the Action Plan.

Out of the six Eastern Partnership countries and Russia, so far only Moldova and Ukraine have received Action Plans on visa liberalisation, a sort of road maps setting out the necessary criteria that need to be met before these countries can be granted visa-free regime with the European Union. The recent experience of the Balkan countries shows that visa-free regime with the EU is not only attainable, but also can be achieved within a relatively short period of time, provided the national governments are adequately motivated to introduce the necessary reforms.

¹ This table is based on the methodology developed by the European Stability Initiative. The ESI prepared regular reports for the Balkan countries.

The document comprises four blocs: document security, including biometrics; irregular immigration, including readmission; public order and security; external relations and fundamental rights. Action Plans are divided into two phases: the first one focuses on the introduction of the necessary legislation and the second - on its implementation. Before the Commission decides start the assessment of the implementation set of benchmarks, it needs to be satisfied with the fulfilment of the first set of benchmarks.

Many point out the difference between the situation of the Balkan countries and the Eastern Partnership vis-a-vis visa liberalisation process with the EU. The situation of the Eastern Partnership countries is much less politically favourable: the support for visa-free regime with these countries is lower in the majority of the EU states and the process is not just technical but also political. Meeting all the technical criteria set out in the Action Plans does not guarantee immediate achievement of visa-free regime and is conditioned by the EU's evaluation of the overall situation.

Yet, the considerable progress made by Moldova in contrast to its peer and neighbour, Ukraine, also shows to what extent meeting the technical criteria set out in Action Plan is matter of domestic political will. Moldova's pro-European government has been very keen on achieving visa-free regime with the EU and thus, on meeting all the necessary benchmarks, hence the pace of reforms in Moldova has been much more considerable.

Moldova has met all the necessary benchmark listed in the first and second bloc. However, the EC urges Moldova to approximate the anti-discrimination legislation to the EU standards.

Main achievements and challenges for both countries are presented in what follows.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Adoption of an Action Plan containing a timeframe for the complete roll-out of biometric passports

Between September 2011 (release of First Progress Report, FPR) and February 2012 (release of Second Progress Report, SPR) the clear schedule for the next steps to introducing biometric passports was adopted and attached to the Action Plan covering this area.

Consolidation of the legal framework for border management including adoption of a new Law on the State Border, allowing the Moldovan Border Guard Service to participate in detection and investigation of cross border crime in cooperation with all competent law enforcement authorities and extending its area of responsibility to the whole territory, as well as a legal framework for efficient inter-agency cooperation between the Border Guard Service, law enforcement agencies and other agencies involved in border management

Since FPR, an important change took place:

- The “Law on State Border”, adopted on 4 November 2011, follows the definitions and framework of the Schengen Borders Code. It also provides appropriate framework for further legislation in the matter of border management.
- Three important laws are pending approval by Moldovan Parliament: The “Law on Border Police”, the “Law amending some legislative acts in order to grant the Border Guard Service competencies for prosecution and examination of administrative offences (...)” and the “Law on Carriers”. Coming into force those acts, expected in July 2012, as well as transforming Border Guard Service into Border Police may lay a solid basis for modern and efficient border management

- New law introduces a possibility of more efficient cross border crime cooperation and inter-agency cooperation. Though, as mentioned in the SPR, the rules of inter-agency cooperation need clarification, so it improves the efficiency of border management activities.
- The Moldovan Border Management Service has concluded a number of cooperation agreements with both neighboring countries (Romania and Ukraine) and several other countries of EU (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Poland) and outside of EU (Belarus, Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan).
- As mentioned in FPR, Moldova maintains good relations with FRONTEX and EUBAM

Establishment of a mechanism for the monitoring of migration stocks and flows, defining a regularly updated migration profile for the Republic of Moldova

The complex Extended Migration Profile carried out by International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is well advanced. The cooperation procedures between information systems containing data about migrants need clarifying.

Adoption of a law and comprehensive strategy on preventing and fighting organised crime, together with an action plan containing a timeframe, specific objectives, activities, results, performance indicators and sufficient human and financial resources

The major progress since FPR has been made. The legislation in the field of preventing and fighting organised crime is in the stadium of finalisation. Accordingly, the specific Strategy for preventing and fighting organised crime for 2011-2016 was adopted, together with the following Action Plan (11th November 2011). The draft “Law on Preventing and Combating Organised Crime” is to establish a legal framework for the state activity in those matters. As regarded in SPR, all mentioned regulations respect the international standards. The rules making the General Prosecutor responsible for coordination of fighting against organised crime raise doubts of SPR authors.

Adoption of legislation on preventing and fighting corruption and consolidation of the anti-corruption function of the Centre for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption; strengthening coordination and information exchange between authorities responsible for the fight against corruption

A good progress has been made since FPR. A legal framework is considered to be finalised soon, as well as the regulations regarding cooperation of national authorities. Moldova is working on realising GRECO recommendations. A National Integrity Commission was set up to solve the conflicts of interests, though it was not empowered with specific rights and methods of action. New regulations on public procurements came to force, increasing transparency of public contracts. Nevertheless, the sanction system may be considered as inefficient. As indicated in SPR, the integrity of regulations in corruption-fighting matters deserve further attention. This also refers to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2011-2015, which defines main principles in this field, but does not contain specific ideas, nor budget and funding issues. The problem of prior consultations with stakeholders seems to be unclear as well. The anti-corruption service, called the Centre for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption (CCECC), is being consequently empowered with new prerogatives, but the problem of refractory exchange of information is still substantial.

Consolidation of the legal framework for the prevention and fighting of money laundering and financing of terrorism in line with international standards set by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (FATF); regular updating of the respective national strategy; establishment of an independent Financial Intelligence Unit

The FPR considered a legal framework as broadly consolidated. Since then, an amendment to anti-laundering law was adopted (7th April 2011). Also the 2010-2012 Strategy and following Action Plan (approved in 2010) seem to constitute a solid basis for state's activity in the matters of preventing money laundering and financing of terrorism. An independent Financial Intelligence Unit, the Office for Preventing and Combating Money Laundering was set up as a specialised independent division within the CCECC and the SPR consider it as promising. Since summer 2011 Moldova is no longer observed by FATE.

Conclusion of an operational cooperation agreement with Europol ensuring an adequate level of data protection

Europol still has not finished the procedure of assessment of Moldova. Even though, the Liaison Agreement is about to be signed and there is a view of extension of SIENA to Moldova.

Consolidation of the legal framework for the protection of personal data, including accession to the 2001 Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data, regarding supervisory authorities and transborder data flows

“Very good progress” SPR says. Firstly, the “2001 Additional (...)” had been ratified and came to force on 1st January 2012. Also the new laws, adopted in July and October created a new framework for modern data protection standards. Further efforts are taken in the area of consolidation of legal framework. The National Centre for Personal Data Protection operates from mid-2009 and its independence and powers are being consequently strengthened.

Adoption of a comprehensive National Human Rights Action Plan; actively pursue in the respective National Human Rights Action Plan the specific recommendations of UN bodies, OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe/ECRI and international human rights organisations notably in implementing anti-discrimination policies, protecting minorities and private life and ensuring the freedom of religion

The National Human Right Action Plan was endorsed in May 2012, tasking Government to publish annual progress reports. Another Action Plan touching the field of Roma integration

was adopted in July 2010. The legal and political framework seems to make a good progress, but the main obstacles in practice, still were not eradicated.

Establishment of training programmes and adoption of ethical codes on anti-corruption targeting the officials of any public authority that deals with passports, as well as identity cards and other breeder documents.

Regulations for organising trainings and formulating ethical codes were specified, as recommended. In 2011 a number of trainings was organised, with a positive evaluation.

CHALLENGES

Establishment of a mechanism for the monitoring of migration stocks and flows, defining a regularly updated migration profile for the Republic of Moldova, with data both on irregular and legal migration, and establishing bodies responsible for collection and analysis of data on migration stocks and flows

Although the work on establishment of an appropriate mechanism seems to be well advanced, the major problems still appear in the matter of creating legal bodies responsible for both collection and analysis of data on migration stock and flows. The “Migration and Asylum” Informational Integrated Automatic System has not been established yet, as SPR indicates. The rules of inter-agency cooperation in this matter still need clarifying.

Ratification of relevant UN and Council of Europe instruments in the fight against discrimination

No further ratifications in this field took place after 2010. Moldova is to consider issuing a declaration under Article 14 of CERD only after adoption anti-discrimination legislation on the national level. There is a need to ensure clear legal mechanisms during the legislation and implementation process, to provide best legislation possible.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Adoption of a legal framework for migration policy providing for an effective institutional structure for migration management, rules for entry and stay of foreigners, measures for the reintegration of Ukrainian citizens (returning voluntarily or under the EU-Ukraine readmission agreement), monitoring of migration flows, the fight against illegal migration (including return procedures, rights of persons being subject thereto, detention conditions, efforts to conclude readmission agreements with main countries of origin, inland detection of irregular migrants)

The new law on the “Legal Status of Foreigners and Stateless Persons” was adopted in September 2011, as well as amendments to the Code of Administrative Legal Procedures and the Action Plan on Integration Migrants in Ukraine and Reintegration of Ukrainian Migrants. (15th June 2011). As mentioned in SPR, all acts from above follow European standards, however, they are too general, not including specific regulations. Further legislation is needed in this field. The same applies to the action of State Migration Service, gradually taking up its functions, but with some permits still unclear. Ukraine is still working on implementation protocols to 2008 Readmission Agreement. Seventeen bilateral Readmission Agreements are in place.

Establishment of a mechanism for the monitoring of migration flows, defining a regularly updated migration profile for Ukraine, with data both on illegal and legal migration, and establishing bodies responsible for collection and analysis of data on migration stocks and flows

Some efforts are being taken in the field of establishing the proper mechanism, though the procedure remains at conceptual stage. There is a plan to run so called Migration Flow Management System. Internal rules and codes are expected to follow the “Methodology of risk analysis to combat illegal immigration” (June 2011) in order to improve the quality of acquired statistical data. Further efforts are needed to allow Contact Analysis Centre cover all fields touching immigration statistics.

Adoption of a comprehensive strategy to fight organised crime, together with an action plan containing a timeframe, specific objectives, activities, results, performance indicators and sufficient human and financial resources

The legislation on fighting organised crime was supplemented by the Strategy (Concept), adopted on 21st October 2011. The following Action Plan is under preparation. In SPR the need to clarify the timetable of implementation is indicated, as well as clarification of some provisions in the adopted laws. The legal framework ought to be put in a wider context, amendments of further acts are required. SPR shows the promising progress in creating institutional structures and inter-agency cooperation. “The Law on the organisational and legislative framework for fighting organised crime” is broadly in line with international standards.

Conclusion of an operational cooperation agreement with Europol with special emphasis on data protection provisions

A good progress has been made since FPR. Consequent strengthening cooperation with Europol is expected to bring Ukraine to the establishment of an operational cooperation agreement.

Ratification of relevant UN and Council of Europe instruments in the fight against discrimination

Ukraine ratified majority of UN and CoE documents regarding human rights and fighting discrimination. Further efforts are still needed in national level legislation in those fields.

Adoption of a legal framework on mutual legal assistance

Since the ratification of the main international Conventions in the field of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, the process of adoption of a legal framework is regarded as finished.

CHALLENGES

Adoption of a legal framework for the issuing of machine readable biometric international passports in full compliance with highest ICAO standards on the basis of secure identity management (civil registry and breeder documents) and taking into account adequate protection of personal data

The essential “Law on Documents Identifying a Person and Confirming Citizenship of Ukraine” has not been signed by President and will be proceeded by Parliament one more time. The “Regulation on the State Registration Service of Ukraine” was approved in April 2011, establishing a structure of this body.

Adoption of legislation on preventing and fighting corruption and establishment of a single and independent anti-corruption agency; strengthening coordination and information exchange between authorities responsible for the fight against corruption

The situation in this field is bad and Ukrainian authorities seem to act generally in the field of legislation, not paying enough attention to implementation and introduction of internal rules and ethical guides for officials. 1st July 2011 the “Law on the principles of preventing and combating corruption” entered into force, followed by some other acts from the same package. Likewise the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for years 2011-2015 (adopted 21st October 2011), it is considered in SPR as too general document, that do not consist of important, specific provisions. Since that, considering that an independent anti-corruption agency has not been established yet, the conclusions from GRECO evaluation were clear: “the current system falls short of the CoE standards”.

Adoption of a national strategy for the prevention and fighting of money laundering and financing of terrorism; adoption of a law on the prevention of financing of terrorism

Although Ukraine is doing well in this field, consolidating legal framework to fight against money laundering and financing of terrorism, there are still legislation gaps to fill. There is no information of any plans to adopt an Action Plan for 2012. Ukraine has though implemented the FATF Action Plan, to strengthen introducing international standards in the field of money laundering. In December 2010, the Financial Intelligence Unit was renamed as the State Service for Financial Monitoring.

Adoption of relevant UN and Council of Europe conventions in the areas listed above and on fight against terrorism

Ukraine is a party of all international conventions in this matter, though the problem of ratification the “2001 Protocol against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms

(...)” remains unsolved. The joint commission has been set up to examine the possibility and conditions of accession to this agreement.

Establishment of an adequate coordination mechanism between relevant national agencies and a common database guaranteeing direct access in the entire territory of Ukraine

Even though Ukraine has a number of databases used by law enforcement agencies and legislation providing cooperation and data exchange between them, in practice information exchange among all concerned is not sufficient. As indicated in SPR, establishing a common, unified database is not essential, but creating a unified data model is needed, as well as improving the practical, everyday inter-agency cooperation.

Adoption of adequate legislation on the protection of personal data and establishment of an independent data protection supervisory authority

There is some progress in this field. The “Law on personal data protection” entered into force on 1st January 2012 and the “Law of amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine on violation of legislation on personal data protection” entered into force on 1st January 2012. The latter introduces administrative and criminal sanctions for violation of laws on data protection. Nevertheless, the major problems occur in approximation to international standards, touching the fields of definitions, powers of independent supervisory, etc. The State Service of Ukraine on Protection of Personal Data began its operations in July 2011 as data protection supervisory authority, though it is still at the level of recruiting crew.

Ratification of relevant international conventions, such as the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Automatic Processing of Personal Data and its 2001 Protocol

Ukraine accessed most of the conventions and is at the level of amending national law in accordance to them. As indicated in SPR, the amendment to the “Code of Administrative Justice of Ukraine on peculiarities of proceedings in cases of expulsion of foreigners and stateless persons” do not respect and guarantee ensuring rights of foreigners or stateless persons.



TABLE

Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation	MD I	UA I	MD II	UA II
Progress reports on implementation of the Action Plan: (1) September 2011 and (2) February 2012	09.11	09.11	02.12	02.12
Scale: 1 (no progress observed), 2 (initial stage of progress), 3 (active stage), 4 (legislative/policy framework almost in place), 5 (legislative/policy framework in place)				
n/a - not applicable (not required in Action Plan); no info - not enough information was provided to assess this benchmark				
Block 1: Document security, including biometrics	3	2	5	2
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Legal framework for machine readable biometric passports	4	2	5	2
Adopting Action Plan with timeframe for roll-out of biometric passports	1	2	5	2
Establishment of anti-corruption trainings & ethical codes for officials (passports, ID's, etc.)	4	3	5	3
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Gradual roll-out of biometrical passports				
High level of integrity and security in passport (and other breeder documents) issuing process				
Sharing lost and stolen passport database with Interpol/LASP				
Regular exchange of passport specimens and cooperation on document security with the EU				

Block 2: Illegal immigration, including readmission	4	4	4	4
<u>2.1 Border management</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Implementation of law improving law enforcement agencies cooperation in the field of border protection	3	3	4	4
Adoption of a National Integrated Border Management Strategy (with timeframe and specific objectives for future law amendments); MD: AP for NIBMS implementation	5	4	5	4
Anti-corruption trainings & ethical codes for border guards, customs any othe border-managing officials	4	4	5	5
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Effective implementation of legislation on border control				
Creation of adequate infrastructure				
Effective implementation of training programmes and anticorruption measures				
Improvement of inter-agency cooperation				
High level of international cooperation including working arrangements with FRONTEX				
<u>2.2 Migration management</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Adoption and consolidation of the legal framework for migration policy	4	3	4	4

Adoption of a National Migration Management Strategy	3	3	5	3
Establishment of a migration stock and flows monitoring mechanism	3	2	4	2
Establishment of bodies responsible for collecting data on migration stock and flows	2	no info	2	2
2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)				
Continued effective implementation of the EU-state readmission agreement and measures for the reintegration of MD/UA citizens				
Effective implementation of legal framework for migration management (human resources, administrative structures, etc.)				
Migration profile established and regularly updated and effective analysis of data on migration stock and flows				
Consistent implementation of an effective methodology of detection and investigation of illegal migration inland				
Provision of adequate infrastructure & strengthening the responsible bodies				
<u>2.3 Asylum policy</u>				
1st phase (legislative and policy framework)				
UA: Adoption of international standards and procedures in examination of applications for international protection, rights of asylum seekers and refugees	n/a	3	n/a	3
MD: Adoption of legislation on the integration of refugees or beneficiaries of other forms of protection	4	n/a	4	n/a
2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)				

Effective implementation of asylum legislation				
MD: Ensuring that beneficiaries of international protection have access to travel documents foreseen by the legislation				
Block 3: Public order and security	4	3	4	3
<u>3.1 Preventing and fighting organised crime, terrorism and corruption</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Adoption of law and comprehensive strategy on preventing and fighting organised crime	3	3	4	4
Adoption and consolidation of law on preventing and fighting trafficking in human beings, implementation the State Programme for Combating Trafficking (UA) / National Plan (MD)	4	2	5	3
Adoption of legislation on preventing and fighting corruption	3	2	3	2
UA: Establishment of a single, independent anti-corruption agency	n/a	1	n/a	1
MD: Consolidation of the anti-corruption function of the Centre for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption	2	n/a	4	n/a
Strengthening cooperation and information exchange between corruption-fighting authorities	no info	1	3	2
Adoption of law / national strategy for fighting money laundering and financing of terrorism	4	4	4	4
MD: Establishment of an independent Financial Intelligence Unit	5	n/a	5	n/a
Adoption of National Strategic Programme on drugs (UA) / National Anti-drug Strategy (MD) and its action plans	5	3	5	3

UA: Ratifying the Memorandum of Understanding with EMCDDA	n/a	5	n/a	5
MD: Establishing cooperation with EMCDDA	4	n/a	4	n/a
Adoption relevant UN and CoE conventions in the matters of Block 3	5	4	5	4
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan to fight against organised crime				
Implementation of legislation on preventing trafficking in human beings (and the respective National Plan)				
Implementation of legislation on preventing and fighting corruption (ensuring well functioning of anti-corruption body, development ethical codes and training)				
Implementation of the legislation (MD) and Strategy and Action Plan (UA) for the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism				
Implementation of the National Strategic Programme on drugs (UA) / National Anti-drug Strategy (MD) and its related action plan, making information accessible at border crossing points				
Implementation of the relevant UN and CoE Conventions & GRECO recommendations in the matters of Block 3.1				
<u>3.2 Judicial co-operation in criminal matters</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Adoption of a legal framework on mutual legal assistance	4	4	4	5

Adoption the 2nd Protocol to the European Convention on mutual legal assistance	1	4	2	4
Conclusion of an agreement with Eurojust	4	3	4	4
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Implementation of international conventions concerning judicial cooperation in criminal matters (in particular CoE Conventions)				
High level of effectiveness of judicial co-operation in criminal matters of judges and prosecutors with the EU MS				
<u>3.3 Law enforcement co-operation</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Establishment of an adequate coordination mechanism (between national agencies and a common database); UA: access in the entire territory of Ukraine; MD: access to the relevant officers	no info	3	3	3
Conclusion of an operational cooperation with Europol	3	3	4	3
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Obtaining high level of capacity of law enforcement services in tackling cross-border crime				
High level of effectiveness of law enforcement cooperation among agencies and with judicial authorities				
Strengthening bilateral, multilateral and regional operational law enforcement cooperation agreements (with EU MS)				
<u>3.4 Data protection</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				

UA: Adoption of personal data protection legislation and creation of independent agency for this matters	n/a	4	n/a	4
Consolidation of the legal framework (MD) and ratification of several international conventions in this matter, including the 2001 Additional Protocol (...)	4	5	5	5
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Implementation of the legislation on protection of personal data				
Block 4: External relations and fundamental rights	4	3	4	3
<u>4.1 Freedom of movement within the state</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Revision of a legal and regulatory framework to avoid unjustified restrictions for legally staying foreigners	3	2	4	3
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Ensuring that freedom of movement within state of citizens, legally staying foreigners and stateless persons is not subject to unjustified restrictions				
UA: Providing accessible information for foreigners on conditions of legalizing their residency in Ukraine	n/a		n/a	
<u>4.2 Condition and procedures for the issue of identity documents</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
UA: Revision of the legal and regulatory framework to ensure effective access to ID's without discrimination	n/a	2	n/a	3

<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Full, effective access to travel and ID documents for all state citizens				
<u>4.3 Citizen's rights including protection of minorities</u>				
<i>1st phase (legislative and policy framework)</i>				
Adoption anti-discrimination legislation, as recommended by the UN and CoE	3	2	3	2
MD: Adoption of a comprehensive National Human Rights Action Plan	3	n/a	4	n/a
Actively pursue specific recommendations of the UN bodies, OSCE/ODHR, CoE/ECRI, etc.	3	3	4	3
Ratification of relevant UN and CoE instruments in fight against discrimination	4	3	4	4
Specify conditions and circumstances for the acquisition of the state citizenship	4	5	4	5
<i>2nd phase (benchmarks for effective implementation)</i>				
Effective implementation of legislation and policies on anti-discrimination implementation of relevant UN and CoE instruments				
Effective implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan measures (MD) / the Action Plan against discrimination				
UA: Provision of specific training to law enforcement officials involved in the prosecution of hate crimes				
<u>Overall average</u>	3,48	3,03	4,09	3,33

Coalition for the European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers was launched at meeting in Warsaw on November 26, 2010 on the initiative of the Stefan Batory Foundation. Today more than 30 non-governmental organizations from different parts of Europe are its members.

The coalition takes joint actions to speed up the process of EU visa liberalization with the countries of the Eastern Partnership (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Russia. We want to make ourselves better heard by decision-makers and make a stronger stand for visa-free Europe.

The Coalition is the outcome of many years of collaboration between the member organizations. Jointly we have prepared reports and policy papers, recommendations and advocacy tools. The activities of the Coalition are coordinated by the “Friendly EU Border” project within the Open Europe Programme of the Stefan Batory Foundation.

The members of the Coalition’s Steering Committee are Joanna Fomina from The Stefan Batory Foundation, Olga Stuzhinskaya from Office for a Democratic Belarus and Oleksandr Sushko from Europe without Barriers.

Stefan Batory Foundation is an independent private Polish foundation established in 1988 by American financier and philanthropist George Soros and a group of Polish democratic leaders of the 80’s. The mission of the Foundation is to support the development of an open, democratic society in Poland and other Central and East European countries. Our priorities include: enhancing the role and involvement of civil society in public life; promoting the rule of law and transparency in public life; developing international cooperation and solidarity. The Foundation works proactively, encouraging long-term thinking, partnership between the public and private sectors, innovative approaches, and coalition building in addressing social problems. In its activity, the Foundation is guided by the principles of transparency, openness and accountability.