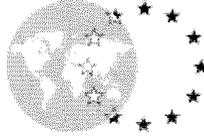


EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



The Head of Division

Directorate : Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation & OSCE

Division: Eastern Partnership -bilateral

Brussels, 07/03/2013
EEAS.III.B.2/ST/

Dear Mr Mrozek

Thank you for your message to Commissioner Stefan Füle of 5 December 2012 on your launching of a Visa Liberalisation Index, to which I have been asked to reply.

The EU attaches great importance to the Eastern Partnership and its objective of accelerating the political association and deepening the economic integration of the Eastern European partner countries with the EU. At the heart of the Eastern Partnership lies a shared commitment to international law and fundamental values

Within this context, the EU remains committed to the shared objective of visa free travel in due course provided that the conditions for well managed and secure mobility are in place and we welcome the progress made by our partner countries in this regard.

The Republic of Moldova has progressed in implementing the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and the assessment of the benchmarks set out under the second phase of the Action Plan has been launched. We encourage Ukraine to increase its efforts towards fulfillment of its first phase benchmarks. The visa dialogue with Georgia has progressed swiftly and, by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in November this year, implementation of the future Visa Liberalisation Action Plan should be under way. Negotiations on both the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements with Armenia have been swiftly concluded. The Visa Facilitation Agreement with Armenia was signed in December 2012 and we look forward to their entry into force. There has also been good progress in the negotiations of Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements with Azerbaijan. The EU also looks forward to the early conclusion of the amended Visa Facilitation Agreements with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. As for Belarus, we have consistently reiterated our readiness to launch negotiations on a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with Belarus, but have so far received no answer from the Belarusian authorities. Meanwhile, the EU Member States continue to make optimal use of the existing flexibilities offered by the Visa Code.

Please rest assured of the European External Action Service's and European Commission's continued commitment to these issues.

Yours sincerely,



John Kjaer

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