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## EU-EaP Visa Liberalisation Summary of recent developments November 2013 – January 2014

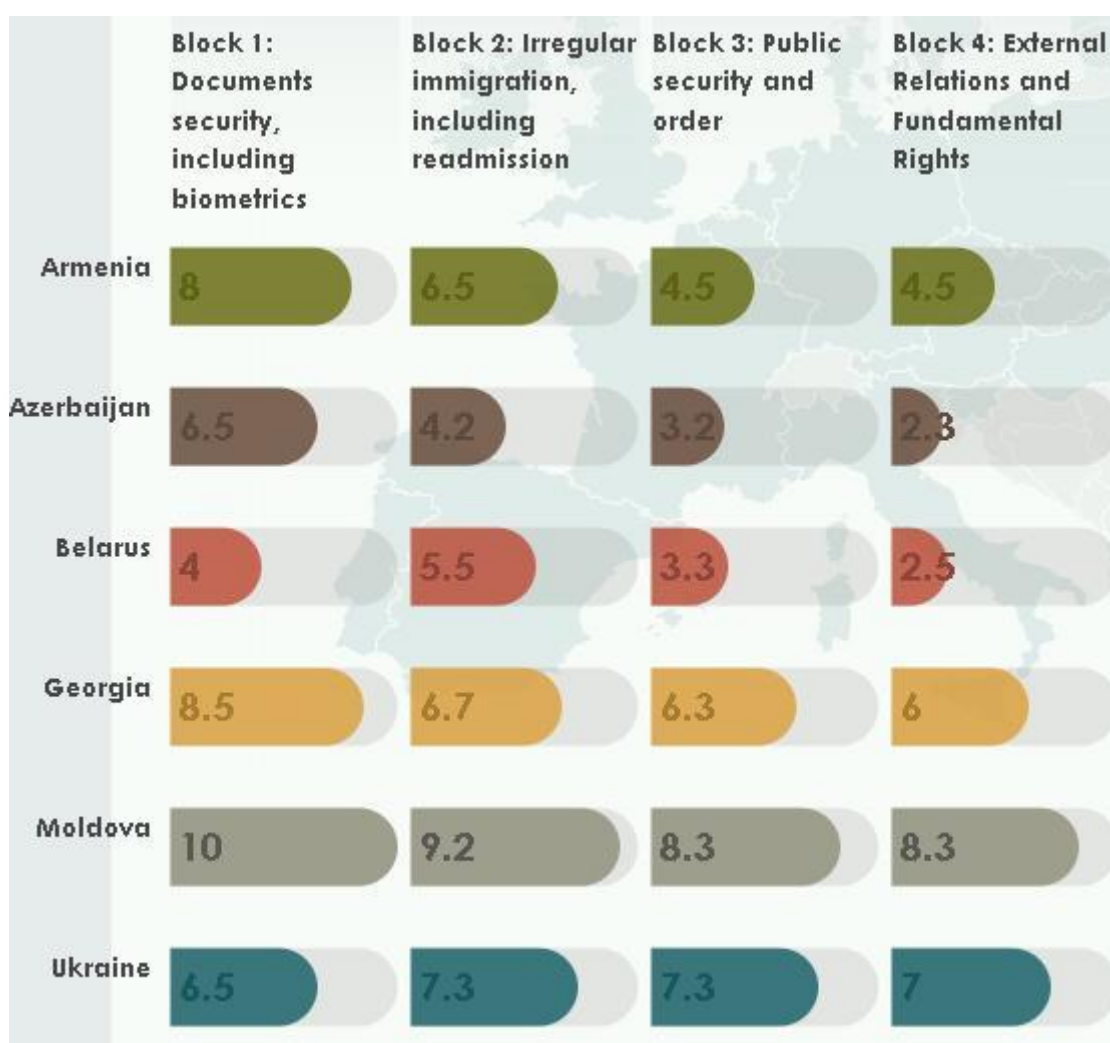
### SUMMARY

The Eastern Partnership Visa Liberalisation Index has recently been updated with the latest version covering the period October 2013 – January 2014. To learn about the principles of visa liberalisation and facilitation, click: [here](#). To read about the methodology of our research, click: [here](#).

Many developments took place in the period October 2013 – January 2014 under examination. These were linked to the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, held at the end of November 2013. Although assessment of the Summit was dominated by disappointment at the non-signature by Ukraine of an Association Agreement with the EU, it was a fruitful event from the perspective of visa facilitation and liberalisation between the EU and EaP countries. Nevertheless, the **decision of the Ukrainian government** to suspend the process of European integration led to massive protests (“Euromaidan”), riots in Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine, as well as repressions. This harmed EU-Ukraine dialogue. Because of the situation a few proposals have been made by Polish NGOs and politicians for the temporary suspension of visa requirements for the citizens of Ukraine, (please find the statement of the Visa-free Europe Coalition [here](#)). **Moldova**, after a positive assessment of its fulfilment of the criteria listed in the Action Plan for Visa Liberalisation (2<sup>nd</sup> phase), received the European Commission’s recommendation that they be granted a visa-free regime (for holders of biometric passports) as soon as a political decision on this matter is taken. **Azerbaijan** signed a visa facilitation agreement, which – after signing a readmission agreement with the EU (expected in the first quarter of 2014) – will enable Azerbaijani citizens to obtain Schengen visas more easily and cheaply. **Belarus** provided a positive surprise to the European society with its declaration of its willingness to accept the EU’s invitation and commence negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements. Currently, Belarusians pay the highest fee possible for a Schengen visa: €60.

EaP countries introduced reforms in most areas listed in the Action Plans. Among other actions taken, Armenia and Belarus made efforts in the **fight against drugs**, Armenia and Moldova made progress in the sphere of **biometric documents**, while Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine improved their **data protection** systems (connected also to the issuance of new-type identification documents). Belarus and Georgia continued regulation of the **status of foreigners** in the country. Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine made progress in **regulating border** issues, but Kyiv also took a step back by introducing of a demand for financial guarantees from third country nationals entering Ukraine. Azerbaijan, Belarus and Moldova were working on increasing the effectiveness of their battle against **trafficking**. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine improved the legal framework for their **anti-corruption** activity.

Below you will find a list of the most recent developments in the field of visa liberalisation, listed by country and structured as in the Action Plans for Visa Liberalisation. For a detailed description, visit the project website – click: [here](#).



*State of play in January 2014 (summarised results of legislation and implementation)*

[More information:](#)

Eastern Partnership Visa Liberalisation Index: [monitoring.visa-free-europe.eu](http://monitoring.visa-free-europe.eu)

Visa-free Europe Coalition: [visa-free-europe.eu](http://visa-free-europe.eu)

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## ARMENIA

### Block 1:

- Biometric documents are now issued in the whole territory of Armenia (1 January 2014).

### Block 3:

- In order to provide assistance to public agencies fighting with drug trafficking, the decision was taken to establish an Anti-Drug Centre in 2014.

## AZERBAIJAN

### Block 2:

- In 2014 UNHCR will provide [structural consultations](#) to the State Migration Service, Parliament, and Law enforcement agencies in Azerbaijan.

### Block 3:

- The third National Action Plan on the Struggle against Human Trafficking for 2014-2018 is awaiting government approval.
- Progress was reported in anti-trafficking activities.

## BELARUS

### Block 1:

- In 2014 a decision will be taken on when to commence issuing biometric passports.

### Block 2:

- The “Risk Analysis in Border Management in Belarus” (RANBEL) project was launched. The first seminar within RANBEL took place (5 December 2013).
- The first demarcation sign was set up on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border (15 November 2013).
- A project “Supporting the Republic of Belarus in Addressing Irregular Migration and Promoting the Human Rights of Vulnerable Migrants” (AMBEL) was launched (December 2013).
- Belarus declared its willingness to join the negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission. The first round is expected soon (November 2013).
- Amendments to the law “On the granting of refugee status, subsidiary and temporary protection to foreign citizens and stateless persons within the Republic of Belarus” were endorsed by the upper chamber of parliament (December 2013).

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### **Block 3:**

- Belarus acceded to the CoE Convention on action against trafficking in human beings (signature: 26 November 2013, entry into force: March 2014).
- A Presidential decree "On certain aspects of state regulation of the turnover of poppy seeds" was signed on 14 January 2014.
- Amendments to the law "On Information, Informatization and Protection of Information" were adopted (2013).

## **GEORGIA**

### **Block 2:**

- An Interagency Council on an Integrated State Border Management Strategy was established in order to prepare a new draft of the Strategy by 1 March 2014 (14 January 2014).
- A new draft law "On the Legal Status of Foreigners and Stateless Persons" was approved by Government and sent to parliament (20 October 2013).
- Migration profiles for the years 2005-2010 and 2011-2013 were adopted (September 2013).

### **Block 3:**

- A National Strategy on the Fight against Organized Crime for 2013-2014 was approved (October 2013).
- An Action Plan on the Fight against Organized Crime was adopted (4 November 2013).
- An Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 2003 was ratified (10 January 2014).
- A Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, 2001 was ratified (10 January 2014).
- An Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data regarding supervisory authorities and representatives of international information flows, 2001 was ratified (10 January 2014).
- The Inspector for Personal Data Protection was appointed by Prime Ministerial decree (28 June 2013).

### **Block 4:**

- A draft law "On Georgian Citizenship" was prepared by the working group on the reduction of statelessness.

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# MOLDOVA

## Block 1:

- An Action Plan was adopted on the phasing out of Soviet type passports by 1 September 2014 (4 October 2013).
- The decision was taken to introduce electronic IDs beginning on 1 March 2014.

## Block 2:

- The Regulation “On Border Police mobile units” (secondary legislation) was adopted in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Border Police (20 September 2013).
- The decision on creating points of contact on the Ukrainian-Moldovan border was approved (30 October 2013).
- The decision on the control of migration flows on the border between Moldova and Ukraine within the Transnistrian perimeter has been adopted (11 October 2013).
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania offered 150,000 EUR to Moldova for improving their migration and asylum system (Autumn 2013).
- Protocols were approved on the implementation of the EU-Moldova readmission agreement with Spain and Slovenia.
- Secondary legislation aimed at combating corruption among judges was adopted (Autumn 2013).
- The government of Moldova and the Government of Ukraine initiated negotiations on an Agreement on cooperation in the protection and repatriation of victims of trafficking (adults and children), unaccompanied children and migrants in need (6 November 2013).
- A Framework Regulation “On Whistleblowers” was adopted (9 September 2013).
- The structure of the National Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC) was approved by Government (30 December 2013).
- A Regulation on the functioning of anticorruption hotlines was adopted by Parliament (25 October 2013).

## Block 3:

- The evaluation mission on personal data protection, carried out on behalf of Europol, visited Moldova (28-31 October).
- A draft of a Memorandum of Understanding on privacy and information security between Moldova and the European Police Office was presented (27 December 2013).
- Law enforcement cooperation was established with Macedonia (22 October 2013).
- A Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2018) for the reform of the Information and Security Service (Intelligence service) was adopted (10 October 2013).
- A new National Strategy in the area of Data Protection for 2013-2018, accompanied by an Action Plan, was adopted by Parliament (10 October 2013).

## Block 4:

- The law “On Foreigners” was amended to partially implement Regulation No 810/2009/CE of the European Parliament and EU Council (1 November 2013).

[More information:](#)

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- The Government and Parliament deflected an attempt by several MPs to challenge the anti-discrimination framework (11 October 2013).

## UKRAINE

### Block 2:

- The second meeting of the Ukrainian-Belarusian Joint Demarcation Commission was held (5-7 November 2013).
- The first border markers were installed on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border (October and November 2013).
- The Ukrainian-Moldovan border demarcation process was completed (Autumn 2013).
- A by-law was introduced establishing high demands for financial guarantees (€400) on entry to Ukraine regardless of the duration of stay (December 2013).
- An updated migration profile was issued in 2013.

### Block 3:

- The National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2011-2015 was amended (15 January 2014).
- An Action Plan for 2014 for the prevention and counteracting of the legalisation (laundering) of incomes from crime and terrorist financing was adopted (14 January 2014).
- Law №. 2803 “On the Introduction of Amendments into the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code (regarding the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan for Ukraine)” entered into force (15 December 2013).
- Rules were issued on the positions of Governmental Commissioner for Anti-Corruption Policy (4 December 2013).
- The law “On amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine concerning the improvement of the institutional system of protection of personal data” entered into force (1 January 2014).

### Block 4:

- The Strategy of Activity of the Commissioner in the sphere of the prevention and counteracting of discrimination in Ukraine for 2014-2017 was approved (15 November 2013).

#### More information:

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