

Visa policy: Council agrees negotiating mandate on the amendment of the visa code

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On 19 June 2018, EU ambassadors endorsed, on behalf of the Council, a mandate for negotiations on a proposal amending the visa code. On the basis of this mandate, the Council Presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament once the latter has adopted its position.

An efficient management of migration includes ensuring we are able to return those who do not have a right to stay. The new visa code rules will give us another tool to respond to those third countries who are not willing to take their own nationals back.

Valentin Radev, Bulgarian minister of interior

The updated regulation will modernise the EU visa policy, allow for improved security and increase the available tools to respond to migration challenges.

Better conditions for legitimate travellers

It will provide **faster and more clear procedures for legitimate travellers**, notably by:

- allowing for the lodging of applications up to 6 months and no later than 15 days before the trip
- providing for the possibility of filling in and signing the application form electronically
- defining more clearly which member state is competent for examining an application when the intended visit covers several member states
- introducing a harmonised approach to issuing multiple entry visas to regular travellers with a positive visa history for a gradually increasing period going from 1 to 5 years.

Covering costs of processing

To ensure **member states can better cover costs of visa processing** without

representing a deterrent for visa applicants, the visa fee will be increased to 80 euros. The regulation also introduces a mechanism to assess every three years the need to revise the amount of the visa fee.

Better cooperation on readmission of irregular migrants

The regulation also aims to contribute to **improve cooperation with third countries on readmission**. It will introduce a new mechanism for using visa policy as leverage to readmission, which will be used when a third country does not cooperate with member states on the readmission of irregular migrants.

The Commission will regularly assess third countries' cooperation on readmission. Where a country is not cooperating, it will propose to the Council to adopt an implementing decision applying specific restrictive visa measures related to visa processing and visa fee.

Background

The visa code entered into force in 2010. It covers the rules regarding processing of applications and issuance of short stay visas to the EU, that is, visas for stays not exceeding 90 days in any 180 days period.

The Commission presented its proposal for the reform of the visa code on 14 March 2018.

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