

Warsaw, 21 June 2012

Cecilia Malmström

Commissioner for Home Affairs
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

The Visa-free Europe Coalition is calling upon the European Commission to propose progression of the Republic of Moldova to the second phase of the implementation of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation (APVL).

The move would be a fair recognition of the progress made by Chisinau in fulfilling the conditions previously agreed with the European Union. A monitoring report¹ by members of the Coalition – the Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE) and the Foreign Policy Association (APE, Chisinau) – showed that, by mid-May 2012, Moldova was fulfilling 86% of the conditions required in the first phase. Considering the complexity of the reforms included in the Action Plan, this result alone spoke volumes about the high commitment of the Moldovan authorities. The abovementioned report also drew attention to the two areas where Chisinau had still to work on: a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and a new strategy to reform the Anti-corruption Centre. On 25 May 2012 the Parliament finally adopted the two laws. Independent ongoing monitoring² by the Stefan Batory Foundation (Warsaw) and the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS “Viitorul”, Chisinau) also demonstrates the fulfilment of the criteria required by the EU. Now we can surely attest that Moldova made sufficient progress to pass to the second phase of the Action Plan.

The current government adopted progressive anti-discrimination law (renamed ‘law on assuring equality’) despite high political costs and after months of political campaign against the law by the Party of Communists and extremist religious groups. It is the right

¹ http://www.crpe.ro/library/files/paper_vize_en.pdf

² www.monitoring.visa-free-europe.eu

moment for the EU to reward the pro-European government for its courage and commitment and to send a positive message to the Euro-optimistic citizens of Moldova. Moving to the second phase of the APVL would mean that the EU is keeping its promise to progress with each country on visa dialogue according with its own merits. It would be a fair use of the 'more for more' principle, which is so vocally advocated by the EU in its relations with the Eastern Partnership countries.

Moreover, the list of laws adopted by Chisinau during the first phase is long and foresees implementing such complex and costly measures as combating human trafficking and reforming the Ministry of Home Affairs. Postponing the second phase of the APVL risks also delaying the implementation of these reformist laws.

We therefore urge the European Commission and the Council to advance Moldova to the second phase of APVL implementation as soon as possible.

Coalition for the European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers (Visa-free Europe Coalition) was launched in 2010 on the initiative of the Stefan Batory Foundation. Today more than 40 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. It 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 Program of the Stefan Batory Foundation.

On behalf of the Coalition,



Joanna Fomina
coordinator of the Visa-free Europe Coalition

CC: Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement

AEGEE, European Students Forum, Brussels, Belgium
Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation, Yerevan, Armenia
Association for International Affairs (AMO), Prague, Czech Republic
Belarus Watch, Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania
Civic Belarus, Prague, Czech Republic
Centre for Economic and Social Development, Baku, Azerbaijan
Centre for International Relations, Warsaw, Poland
Centre for Social Innovations, Minsk, Belarus
Caucasian Institute for Peace, Development and Democracy, Tbilisi, Georgia
DEMAS, Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights, Prague, Czech Republic
Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania
European Citizen Action Services, Brussels, Belgium
European Initiative of Liberal Academy Tbilisi, Tbilisi, Georgia
Education for Democracy Foundation, Warsaw, Poland
Europe without Barriers, Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
EUROBELARUS International Consortium, Vilnius, Lithuania
EUROPEUM, Institute for European Policy, Prague, Czech Republic
Foreign Policy Association, Chisinau, Moldova
Foundation for Development Beyond Borders, 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
Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Kyiv, Ukraine
Institute for Public Policy, Chisinau, Moldova
Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw, Poland
MitOst, Association for Language and Cultural Exchange in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, Berlin, Germany
Office for Democratic Belarus, Minsk, Belarus/Brussels, Belgium
Open Society Institute, Brussels, Belgium
Östgruppen – Swedish Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, Stockholm, Sweden
Our Choice Foundation, Warsaw, Poland
PASOS, Policy Association for an Open Society, Prague, Czech Republic
PAUCI, Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation, Warsaw, Poland
Public Movement "Multinational Georgia", Tbilisi, Georgia
Stowarzyszenie Projekt: Polska, Warsaw, Poland
Research Center of Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava, Slovakia
Romanian Centre for European Policies, Bucharest, Romania
Soros Foundation Latvia, Riga, Latvia
Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw, Poland
Ternopil'ska Foundation, Żyrardów, Poland
Young Europe, International Network, Moscow, Russia
Youth Human Rights Movement, Voronezh, Russia