

Visa suspension mechanism agreed for Ukraine and Georgia

Travel

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Under the draft law, both Member States and the European Commission will be able to trigger the suspension mechanism.

From ENPI, Dec 9, 2016: The EU Commission and Member States will be able to reimpose visa requirements under new rules agreed by Parliament and Council on 7 December. This agreement will enable the immediate consideration of the two visa liberalisation proposals for Georgia and Ukraine. According to the deal, visa requirements may be reintroduced for a non-EU country if there is: a substantial increase in the number of nationals of that country refused entry; an increase in unfounded asylum applications; or a lack of cooperation on returns of migrants. Under the draft law, both Member States and the European Commission will be able to trigger the suspension mechanism. The Commission will be in charge of monitoring the situation in visa-exempt countries and reporting to Parliament and the Council on whether they still fulfil visa waiver conditions such as respect for human rights. Following a notification by a Member State or based on its own report, the Commission will have one month in which to decide to suspend the visa waiver for nine months. The Commission may also decide at any point to present a legislative proposal to move a non-EU country from the list of countries exempted of visa requirements to the list of those that are subject to them.

The text of the law still needs to be endorsed by Parliament as a whole, probably next week, and national governments.

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