



Commission Visa Progress Report: Turkey makes progress towards visa liberalisation

Brussels, 4 March 2016

The Commission has today adopted the second report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its Visa Liberalisation Roadmap, highlighting the steps made by Turkey since the last report in October 2014. At the [EU-Turkey Summit](#) of 29 November, Turkey committed to accelerating the fulfilment of the Roadmap, including by anticipating the application of all the provisions of the EU-Turkey Readmission agreement, with the objective of completing the visa liberalisation process by October 2016, provided all the benchmarks have been met by then. Today's report welcomes the new level of engagement and determination demonstrated by the Turkish authorities.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris **Avramopoulos** took note of a number of important steps forward and encouraged further acceleration of the reform process: *"I commend the efforts made by Turkey., While being on the frontline of the Syrian refugee crisis, the Turkish authorities have showed a renewed determination and commitment to the visa liberalisation dialogue since the EU-Turkey Summit. I trust Turkey will implement as a matter of urgency the priority measures identified in today's report and that we can continue the efforts towards fulfilling the visa liberalisation conditions together. The Commission will continue to assist Turkey in the implementation of the Roadmap"*.

The Report notes that, especially after the EU-Turkey Summit of 29 November 2015, Turkey has accelerated the reform process aimed at fulfilling the requirements of the Roadmap. In particular, Turkey, which is offering hospitality and assistance to more than 2.5 million refugees from Syria, has recently made it possible for these refugees to access the labour market, which is expected to facilitate their social inclusion and self-reliance. Turkey also took important measures to ensure access to public services for refugees, including schooling for children. In parallel, Turkey has started to introduce more strict visa and admission rules in respect of nationals coming from countries which are sources of significant irregular onward migration from Turkey to the EU. In addition, Turkey has continued to strengthen its overall border surveillance and management capacities.

The report also identifies the measures that Turkey should take in order to fulfil all the requirements of the Roadmap. Amongst other things, Turkey needs to start issuing passports that include the fingerprints of the holders, in line with EU standards. The Turkish authorities are confronted with an immense challenge. Nevertheless, it is necessary and urgent that the Turkish authorities continue putting in place measures tackling the different aspects of the problem of irregular migration in a comprehensive manner.

The report also calls on Turkey to reduce backlogs in implementing asylum procedures, to intensify cooperation with all the Member States it shares borders with, notably as concerns readmission, police and judicial matters and to step up the fight against corruption and organised crime. Other necessary steps in the roadmap are the adoption of legislation on personal data protection that is in line with EU standards and the conclusion of cooperation agreements with Europol and Eurojust, as well as the development of comprehensive measures to facilitate social inclusion of its Roma population. The report underlines the need for Turkey to align its legislation on terrorism to EU and Council of Europe standards and to adopt and transpose several international conventions.

Background

The European Union launched the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue with Turkey on 16 December 2013, in parallel with the signature of the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement. The Visa Liberalisation Dialogue is based on the Roadmap towards a visa free regime with Turkey, a document setting out the requirements that Turkey needs to meet in order to enable the Commission to propose to the European Parliament and the Council an amendment to the Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 which would allow Turkish citizens to travel without a visa for short stays of 90 days within any 180-day period for business, touristic or family purposes, in the Schengen area.

The 72 requirements listed in the Roadmap are organised in five thematic groups: document security; migration management; public order and security; fundamental rights and readmission of irregular migrants.

On 20 October 2014, the Commission adopted its First report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap. The First Report assessed the fulfilment of each requirement and issued recommendations for making further progress in all of them.

At the EU-Turkey Summit of 29 November 2015, the EU welcomed the commitment by Turkey to accelerate the fulfilment of the Visa Roadmap benchmarks vis-à-vis all participating Member States. The joint declaration agreed at the Summit requested the European Commission to present the second progress report on the implementation by Turkey of the visa liberalisation roadmap by early March 2016. Both sides agreed that the EU-Turkey readmission agreement would become fully applicable from June 2016, anticipating the entry into application of the provisions related to third-country nationals, in order for the Commission to be able to present its third progress report in autumn 2016 with a view to completing the visa liberalisation process and lifting visa requirements for Turkish citizens in the Schengen zone by October 2016, provided all the requirements of the Roadmap are met by then.

The enhanced mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment is one of the core objectives of the European Union in its relations with partner countries. The EU has been pursuing this objective by launching Visa Liberalisation Dialogues, in particular with interested neighbouring and candidate countries.

For More Information

[Second report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap](#)

[Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Second report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap](#)

FACTSHEET: [EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan - Implementation report](#)

[AGREEMENT](#) between the European Union and the Republic of Turkey on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation

FACTSHEET: [Relocation and Resettlement](#)

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