



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 26.10.2018
C (2018) 6632 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) {COM(2018) 252 final}.

While migration- and security-related objectives have become increasingly important, the vast majority of visa applicants pose no security or migratory risk and can bring significant economic benefits.

Therefore, the proposal amending the Visa Code focuses on streamlining and improving operational aspects of the visa procedure and takes account of the results of negotiations on the proposal for a recast of the 2014 Visa Code that was later withdrawn. The new proposal includes provisions giving more flexibility for applicants to apply for a visa and better organisation of the work of consulates. New elements have been added such as the need for sufficient financial resources to support Member States' visa processing or clear rules on the issuing of multiple entry visas with a long period of validity.

The aim of the proposal is also to update the visa procedures to better respond to the changed migratory and security situation, including the leverage role that visa policy can exert in the Union's readmission policy. To further consolidate the procedure, the Visa Information System legal basis was also reviewed on 16 May 2018 in order to both facilitate the application process and entry onto European Union territory for legitimate travellers, and to raise the level of security of the checks made.

The Commission is pleased that the Senat supports the proposed changes intended to maintain security at the external borders and facilitate legitimate travel.

Discussions between the European Parliament and the Council on the proposal are now underway. The Commission remains hopeful that an agreement can be reached in the near future.

*Mr Călin POPESCU-TĂRICEANU
President of the Senat
Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 1-3, sector 5
RO – 050711 BUCHAREST*

Visa waiver reciprocity is a core principle of the Union's common visa policy and an objective pursued in a proactive manner in the European Union's external relations. The Commission welcomes the fact that, as of 1 December 2017, sustainable visa-free travel has been established between Romania and Canada. In achieving this, dialogue was key. The Commission is actively engaged in dialogue with the United States of America, most notably through tripartite meetings with the representatives of the Commission, the United States and the five Member States concerned – including Romania. The Commission believes such engagement is the only way forward towards full visa waiver reciprocity between the European Union and the United States of America.

Finally, the Commission highly appreciates the efforts of Romania to protect the Union's external border and keeps supporting the full accession of Romania to the Schengen area. This position has been strongly reiterated on several occasions, amongst others by President Juncker who in his State of the Union address in September 2017 called for 'opening the Schengen area of free movement to Bulgaria and Romania immediately'. The Commission is convinced that Romania's full accession to the Schengen system will enlarge the area of free movement and, at the same time, make the Schengen tools more performant and increase security. For instance, the full implementation of the Schengen acquis will allow drawing the full benefits of systems such as the Visa Information System and the Schengen Information System in the relations between Romania and the other Schengen States. However, the final decision lies with the Council, and unanimity is required.

The Commission hopes that these comments address the issues raised by the Senat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*