



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 15.7.2022
C(2022) 5156 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - State of play as regards the situation of reciprocity in the area of visa policy {COM(2021) 827 final}.

Visa reciprocity is a fundamental principle of EU visa policy. The Commission is pleased that the Senat shares the objective of achieving full visa-waiver reciprocity with the United States for all Member States, and that it supports the Commission's ongoing efforts to achieve this objective through continued diplomatic cooperation with the United States, in close coordination with the Member States concerned – including Romania.

The Commission underlines that the results achieved so far, with Poland having joined the United States Visa Waiver Program in November 2019 and Croatia in September 2021, provide a clear demonstration that tangible progress in this regard can be achieved through continued engagement and diplomatic contacts with the United States.

The Commission reiterates its intention to actively support the three Member States concerned, including Romania, and to work closely with them to help them fulfil the requirements for United States Visa Waiver Program designation.

Regarding the outstanding United States Visa Waiver Program requirements, the Commission notes that Romania has recorded a steady decrease of the visa refusal rate over the last years, notwithstanding a slight increase of the visa refusal rate in fiscal year 2020, which could be due to statistical irregularities in a year characterised by widespread travel restrictions and low visa issuance numbers. This good work needs to continue to further decrease the refusal rate.

Regarding the United States Visa Waiver Program security requirements, regular tripartite meetings (bringing together representatives of the Commission, the United States and the Member States concerned) are taking forward the technical work based on

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the work-plans provided by the United States, with the aim of assisting these Member States to reach compliance with the security requirements. In this context, the United States have committed to continue reviewing the respective work-plans and give continuous feedback, including to Romania.

The Commission will continue its strong engagement with the United States and with the Member States concerned to accelerate progress towards full visa reciprocity, against the backdrop of renewed momentum in EU-United States relations.

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

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Ylva Johansson
Member of the Commission*