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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Compilation des rapports annuels établis en coopération locale au titre de Schengen entre les consulats des États membres  
[cf. Article 48(5) du Code des Visas]

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16/5/2017

## PERU: LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) 2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

In March 2016, the EU-Peru reciprocal short-stay visa waiver agreement entered into force. As a result, the Heads of EU Missions decided that LSC-specific meetings would no longer take place from the second half of 2016 onwards. If necessary, Schengen-related issues will be dealt with in the EU Consular Group meetings.

The EU Member States represented by an Embassy in Peru are: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Each Embassy has a Consular Section/General Consulate. The consular division of the Swiss Embassy is part of LSC.

As regards Schengen representation in Peru, the following agreements are in place:

- Germany represents Lithuania.
- Austria represents Malta and Slovenia.
- Belgium represents Luxembourg.
- Spain represents Slovakia.
- Finland represents Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

### 2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017

Two LSC meetings were held in the first half of 2016. They were attended by most of the European Union consulates present plus Switzerland and the EU Delegation, which chaired the meetings held in its headquarters and drew up the minutes.

The EU Consular Meetings were chaired by the Netherlands in 2016 and by Spain in the first half of 2017.

Schengen issues were also discussed at the meetings of the EU Heads of Mission, Consuls and Political Advisers regarding the Schengen visa waiver process for Peruvian citizens concluded on 14 March 2016 with the signing of the EU-Peru Agreement.

The agendas for these consular meetings include several subjects of common interest, such as the situation of prisoners in Peruvian prisons who are nationals of EU and Schengen

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<sup>1</sup> April 2016-March 2017

countries; the new legislative framework on migration (Law on Migration, Implementing Regulation and Single Text of Administrative Procedures (TUPA)); issues relating to removals of EU tourists who enter the country without having their passport stamped; security risks; management of natural disasters, etc.

In the last year, non Schengen-area EU countries were no longer taking part in LSC meetings. In the past, these countries were invited to attend to discuss issues of common interest.

No LSC meetings are held outside Lima.

### **3. Current situation**

#### **3.1. Implementation of the Visa Code**

The EU Delegation prepared the agendas of the Schengen meetings based on the most recent priorities and major events, while the Acting Chair of the EU Consular Group chaired the meetings.

In 2016, there were two subjects dealt with systematically at the meetings of the LSC and EU consuls: a) the implementation of the EU-Peru Agreement on the Schengen visa waiver for Peruvian citizens; and b) the introduction of biometric passports by Peru.

The exchanges of information and coordination between the Consuls on matters relating to the Visa Code and its application have been *constant* and satisfactory.

#### **3.2. Assessment of the need to harmonise the list of supporting documents used to verify that entry requirements are met**

The list of documents used to prove the purpose and conditions of a planned stay has not been harmonised, but the differences are minor. Harmonisation is complicated since it does not depend on the consulates. For example, the visa fee is set by each capital. However, since the differences in fees are slight, it has not been deemed necessary to harmonise them.

There is no common information sheet, but the information provided by Schengen consulates is similar.

#### **3.3. Exchange of information**

Monthly statistics: statistics are not systematically provided.

Cases of fraud: alteration of visas, alteration of dates of entry and exit stamps, false certificates of employment, alteration of bank data taken from the internet and bigamy.

Travel medical insurance (TMI): there are insurance companies that offer TMI, but the Consuls report on specific instances of failure to activate the insurance and forged TMI documents.

Travel documents issued by Peru - there are three types of passport:

- Ordinary passport ;

- Diplomatic passport;
- Special passport.

On 25 February 2016, Peru began issuing biometric passports and ceased production of conventional/ non-biometric passports on 31 July 2016.

#### **3.4. Other LSC initiatives**

Information was exchanged through LSC on those topics that were needed during the preparation of the signing of the EU-Peru reciprocal short-stay visa waiver agreement for Peruvian citizens.

LSC has drawn up a common information sheet on the requirements for Peruvians to enter the Schengen area without a visa, sharing information with the Peruvian authorities in the process (Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Migration Office). The sheet is available on the websites of the consulates and embassies.

#### **4. Challenges**

The most important development for the Schengen Area Member States in 2016-2017 was the implementation of the EU-Peru Schengen visa waiver agreement.

During the first year of the entry into force of the Agreement, no major problems have been detected at airports/points of entry to the Schengen area.

The main challenges expected for 2017-2018 are:

- Continued monitoring of the impact of the Agreement on Peruvian passenger flows to the Schengen area and potential entry problems.
- Continued direct contact between EU Consuls, and frank and constant dialogue leading to rapid solutions.
- Coordination with the National Authorities to find solutions to any difficulties that may arise in the context of the Agreement.

#### **5. Other issues**

All the Embassies/Consulates involved in Local Schengen Cooperation have approved this Report.



28 June 2017

## LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) in the PHILIPPINES 2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

A total of 14 Schengen members (BE, CH, CZ, DE, HU, ES, FR, EL, IT, NL, DK, NO, SE and AT) are represented in the Philippines. To date, the current representation arrangements on visa matters for the non-resident MS are as follows:

AT represents Lithuania

BE represents Luxembourg, Hungary (HU will start issuing Schengen visas in 2017), Slovenia

CZ represents Slovakia

EL represents Portugal

NL represents Poland and Latvia

NO represents Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Estonia

### 2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017

LSC meetings take place on a quarterly basis at the EU Delegation (EUD). They are well attended. LSC meetings are organised and chaired by the EUD. One ad hoc meeting was organised in November 2016, jointly with the LSC at the Embassy of Canada.

The Minutes/Reports of the meetings are drawn up by EUD.

### 3. State of play

#### 3.1 Application of the Visa Code

The Schengen Visa Code is followed by Members States in the Philippines. A large number of Schengen visas are granted to Filipino seafarers.

#### 3.2 Assessment of the need to harmonise the lists of supporting documents

In September 2014, COM Decision C(2014) 6146 of 3.9.2014 establishing the list of supporting documents to be presented by visa applicants was adopted. For the time being, it is considered that there is no need to amend the existing list.

<sup>1</sup> May 2016 – April 2017

### **3.3 Exchange of information**

#### *3.3.1 Monthly statistics*

Most Schengen MS Embassies submit statistics on a regular basis.

#### *3.3.2 Cases of fraud*

Information regarding specific or suspicious causes of fraud is pro-actively shared between European Embassies and in the LSC framework. Common cases encountered were on document fraud by applicants and/or the authorities, practices of human trafficking, including by several identified travel agencies.

#### *3.3.3 Travel Medical Insurance (TMI)*

The LSC has and MS Embassies have a shared list of TMI agencies that they regularly worked with. Most of these agencies are used by Schengen visa applicants. Only insurance companies offering the requirements of the Visa Code are accepted. A list of recommended insurance companies exists.

#### *3.3.4 Others issues*

Other topics that have been discussed during LSC meetings are the following:

- Admissibility of Philippine passports with validity extension;
- Requested duration of travel insurance coverage;
- Best practices on past cases/refusals and criteria for visa granting;
- Information on visa shopping;
- Duration of visa validity allocated to seafarers;
- Visas on arrival for seafarers in the Schengen area;
- Asylum seekers and refugees visiting the Embassies.

### **3.4 Any other initiative taken in LSC**

#### *Meeting with the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)*

In September 2016, following prior coordination with the LSC, the EU delegation, together with one Schengen Member Country had a meeting with DFA regarding the list of valid Filipino travel documents.

The meeting was an opportunity to clarify the following issues: required length of validity of Filipino passports to enable travel abroad; extension of the length of validity of Philippine passports, family petition request; falsification of identity; recognition of marriage concluded under foreign law; conditions of return to the maiden name for a Filipina who was married under foreign law; length of validity of passport delivered to Filipino infants; problems related to legalization of Filipino documents by the Philippine authorities.

The outcome of the meeting was shared and discussed with the LSC.

### *Cooperation with other groups*

Exchange of good practices with like-minded non-Schengen countries is considered useful by the LSC in the Philippines. On November 4, 2016, there was a joint workshop between the Five Countries Conference (composed of UK, Australia, USA, Canada and New Zealand) and the Local Schengen Coordination Group on visa matters.

The focus of the workshop was the Filipino Seafarers movement from a program integrity perspective. It was recalled that the Filipino seafarers comprise 30% of the more than 1.2 million mariners worldwide, making the Philippines the manning capital of the world. While the general consensus was that the seafarer movement in the Philippines is low-risk, it was acknowledged that seafarers faced risk of exploitation.

#### **4. Challenges**

The significant of visas on arrival granted to seafarers has been identified as a topic to follow in the coming years.

**LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC)  
in the REPUBLIC OF KOREA  
2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Introduction**

21 EU Member States (EU MS) out of 28 are present in the Republic of Korea (RoK). Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia cover the RoK from their embassies located in Beijing or Tokyo.

The agreements of representation in consular matters are as follows:

- Embassy of Austria represents Croatia and Malta (Schengen visa issues),
- Embassy of Belgium represents Luxembourg,
- Embassy of Italy represents Slovenia,
- Embassy of Poland represents Estonia (Schengen visa issues),
- Embassy of Slovakia represents Latvia (Schengen visa issues),
- Embassy of Sweden deals with the visa requests that are addressed to Denmark, Iceland and Norway, as part of the agreement of cooperation of the Nordic Council,
- Embassy of Switzerland represents Liechtenstein.

Finland provided consular services to Estonian nationals in the past.

European citizens in the RoK are relatively small in volume and count for almost 18,000 registered foreigners<sup>2</sup>. As elsewhere, it is not easy to assess the exact number of expatriates in real-time given that consular registration is generally not mandatory. EU MS/Schengen countries proceed with their consular work without any particular difficulty.

**2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017**

From April 2016 to March 2017, 4 formal coordination meetings were held, on 10 May, 6 October and 16 November 2016, and on 23 February 2017. In addition, the group visited Incheon International Airport on 7 April 2016.

During the reported period EU MS/Schengen local consular group meetings were chaired by the local chair. The Netherlands exercised the local chair until the end of June 2016, while Slovakia, in the absence of Malta, chairs until the end of June 2017.

Meeting reports were prepared by the local chair in cooperation with the EU Delegation or by the EU Delegation. Participation of MS in these meetings is satisfactory. Among the 21 MS that are present in the RoK, around 18-20 participate in our meetings. Switzerland and Norway attend meetings regularly (Iceland and Liechtenstein do not have diplomatic representations in the RoK). The EU Delegation supports the local chair in its coordination work. All meetings took place at the EU Delegation's premises.

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<sup>1</sup> April 2016 – March 2017

<sup>2</sup> Data of the Korea Immigration Service for 2015



### **3. State of play**

#### **3.1 Application of the Visa Code**

Due to the Visa-free regime with the RoK, the LSC discussions on the application of the Visa Code were fairly limited and discussed only when problematical cases were brought up by EU MS/Schengen countries (as reported below).

#### **3.2 Assessment of the need to harmonise the lists of supporting documents**

The LSC started a process of re-examining the usefulness of preparing a harmonized list of supporting documents. An overview was compiled by the EU Delegation of respective supporting documents required by the EU MS/Schengen countries in order to identify any differences and best practises. Based on this overview, the EU Delegation prepared a summary of supporting documents for further deliberation at the LSC meetings and an eventual decision.

#### **3.3 Harmonisation of practices**

During the process of updating the Consular Handbook, the LSC touched upon the issue of using stamps for VISA requests / refusals, which are still used by some EU MS.

#### **3.4 Exchange of information**

The LSC meetings are appreciated as a good platform to exchange consular-related information. In 2016, the LSC noted an increase of fraudulent applications for Schengen visa mainly from citizens of Pakistan and Bangladesh, who used similar types of exploration visits and arguments to apply for the Schengen Visa.

#### **3.5 Any other initiative taken in LSC**

During the reported period, the LSC also:

- Exchanged experience on increased cases of the screening of diplomatic pouches by Korean authorities and on varying level of VIP treatment at Incheon International Airport;
- Updated its Consular Handbook in 2016 and started discussion on the joint EU Consular Preparedness Framework in Seoul;
- Enhanced relations with the Korean authorities responsible for public safety and security and immigration, respectively while noting continued challenges in dealing with the MOFA;
- Assessed security (DPRK nuclear and ballistic tests; demonstrations) and safety (cases of cholera) situation in the RoK in view of adapting the travel advice according the situation.

### **4. Challenges**

For the period 2017-2018, the LSC will be focusing on following key initiatives:

- Preparation for the Winter Olympic/Paralympic Games to be held in February 2018 in the RoK;
- Elaboration of the joint EU Consular Preparedness Framework in Seoul.

**5. Other issues**

This report has been cleared with the local Schengen Consular group.



24/04/2017

## **LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) in MOSCOW and ST-PETERSBURG 2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Introduction**

All Schengen Member States/associated Member States remain present in Moscow with the exception of Liechtenstein which is represented by Switzerland.

17 Schengen Member States/associated Member States remain present in St. Petersburg<sup>2</sup>, Belgium, Denmark, Malta, Portugal and Sweden only rely on ESPs in St. Petersburg. In addition, in St. Petersburg Austria is represented by Finland, Liechtenstein is represented by Switzerland, Luxembourg by the Netherlands and Slovenia by Latvia.

At the end of April 2017, only few of the Member States do not use external service providers for the collection of visa applications, and representation arrangements have been established at least in Ekaterinburg (consular presence of 5 Member States), Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Murmansk, Petrozavodsk, Pskov, Rostov on Don and Sovetsk.

### **2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017**

During the reporting period, ten regular LSC meetings were organised in Moscow<sup>3</sup>. All meetings were chaired by the EU Delegation (EUD) and well attended by Schengen Member States (as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania).

During the reporting period, two regular LSC meetings were organised in St-Petersburg<sup>4</sup>. After a 1,5 year break, the LSC meetings St-Petersburg were resumed and will be taking place every second month. All meetings were chaired by the EU Delegation (EUD) and well attended by Schengen Member States (as well as Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania).

EUD continued to draw up detailed draft summary reports of all LSC meetings and consulted the LSC groups before transmitting the approved reports to the European Commission. Several of the Member States shared the common reports with their respective capitals and some drew up their own reports.

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<sup>1</sup> April 2016 – March 2017

<sup>2</sup> The Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland

<sup>3</sup> In 2016 on 22 April, 3 June, 17 June, 19 July, 9 September, 14 October, 8 December and in 2017 on 17 January, 22 February, 22 March

<sup>4</sup> In 2017 on 18 January and on 23 March

Alongside EUD's chairmanship of both groups, consulates in Moscow coordinate their practices closely with their colleagues in St. Petersburg and in other locations in Russia. The EUD shares by email all relevant documents, letters, statistics, policy updates from the European Commission, agendas and summary reports simultaneously with all Member States' consulates in Moscow, St-Petersburg, Ekaterinburg and other consulates present throughout Russia. Sensitive documents are shared with the Member States' embassies in Moscow via a special secure channel. Associated Member States collect the documents from the EUD in a sealed envelope.

### **3. State of play**

#### **3.1 Application of the Visa Code**

The Schengen Member States and EUD are generally very well prepared and staffed to ensure the tasks to be carried out in LSC under the Visa Code and the EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement although practical interpretation of many stipulations were discussed in LSC meetings (see below point 3.3.).

#### **3.2 Assessment of the need to harmonise the lists of supporting documents**

The agreed harmonised list of supporting documents is legally binding and is being adequately implemented in Moscow following the COM Implementing Decision of June 2016. Practical implementation was on the LSC meeting agendas intermittently during the reporting period and following the request of one Member State the revision of the list was discussed in detail. Around half of the Member States would like to keep the proof of a hotel reservation on the list, while another half consider that in the case of Russia it is not needed anymore as other supporting documents provide the necessary background information.

#### **3.3 Harmonisation of practices**

During the reporting period, the LSC discussions on the harmonisation of practices were dominated by questions relating to the issuance of MEVs, Crimea non-recognition policy and visas for human rights' defenders:

- *Issuance of MEVs to first time applicants* – During the reporting period it was confirmed that practices regarding the issuing of MEVs to first time applicants widely differ between Member States. The groups were reminded, in line with the conclusions of several Visa Committee meetings in Brussels, that the systematic issuing of MEVs to first time applicants on the ground that "Russian nationals do not present a migratory risk" leads to 'visa shopping' and is not compatible with the Visa Code and the Visa Facilitation Agreement. For these reasons, several Member States made calls for the establishment of common practices/internal guidelines for the issuance of Schengen MEVs.
- *Crimea non-recognition policy* – The groups looked at how to better implement the June 2016 guidelines on the non-recognition of certain Russian passports as Russian authorities changed their practices and issuance codes following their discovery of the guidelines. Regarding the territorial competence, all MS confirmed that they refer Crimean residents who attempt to apply in Russia to the EU consulates in Ukraine;

- *Schengen visas issued to human rights' defenders* – The groups discussed in detail the issue of people-to-people contacts, namely how to better implement the existing flexibilities for human rights' defenders, how to define the target group and reviewed the guidelines under preparation by the European Commission and the EEAS;

Some LSC meetings in Moscow were followed by the dedicated consular protection meetings organised by the respective rotating Presidencies.

### 3.4 Exchange of information

The LSC discussed regularly monthly statistics; in 2016 a 8.4% drop in applications in the Russian Federation was registered, coming on top of an almost 40% decrease in 2015. Nonetheless, the 3.2 million visa applications lodged in Russia still made it the top source country for Schengen visa applications. The visa refusal rate has slightly decreased from 1,3% in 2015 to 1,2% in 2016. The LSC agreed to start gathering and discussing statistics on a quarterly basis. Many Member States do not have the technical capacity to provide MEVs statistics according to the length of their validity

The share of MEVs issued in Russia has strongly increased yet once again from 70% in 2015 to 80,6% in 2016, which is a new record for Russia. This stands in strong contrast with the share of MEVs issued to EU citizens by Russia in 2015 which was at only 45%. Several MS expressed concern regarding this lack of reciprocity regarding the issuance of MEVs, due to Russia's restrictive consular policies and national legislation. This large and increasing gap might undermine the implementation of the EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement.

Another area of perceived lack of reciprocity in the implementation of the EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement was identified - several MS reported on increasing cases of EU citizens who are requested supporting documents outside the scope of the VFA, namely for the categories of journalists, cultural exchanges and civil society.

A third area that could undermine the reciprocity of the EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement was Russia's decision to grant unilateral preferential treatment for tourist MEVs for citizens from 6 Member States. The Member States were not consulted by Russia on this decision and will not reciprocate.

In terms of Russia's visa policy were discussed the potential introduction by Russia of fingerprinting for EU citizens, the issue of the crossing interdiction of the Belarus-Russia border by EU citizens, the slight increase of Russian passports issued to residents of the non-recognised entities of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as to residents of Donbass.

Information on cases of fraud and refusals was regularly exchanged within the LSC (and through the local anti-fraud group). Falsified proof of economic activity, fake hotel bookings and financial documents are still wide-spread among applicants, while some local tour operators are helping applicants to get falsified supporting documents. Cases of medical insurances used for expensive treatment in the EU are ongoing. Additionally, assessment of migratory and security risks, use of false/counterfeit/forged documents, illegal immigration routes and interruptions of airport transit were discussed mainly, but not exclusively at the meetings of the EU-Immigration Liaison officers network (EU-ILOs) in Moscow, in which several of the Member States' consuls take part.

On the topic of VIS implementation feedback and fine-tuning were discussed the issue of double fingerprinting in VIS or insufficient quality of the data, issue of nationality at birth in passports, issue of fingerprints transfer in IT systems, VIS quality requirements, refusal of fingerprinting by Russian officials.

Cooperation with external service providers, travel agencies and travel insurance companies such as the monitoring and mapping of external service providers (ESPs) and the opening of new ESPs offices were discussed.

The groups were informed of relevant events and developments such as expert meetings under the EU-Russia Migration Dialogue, EU-Russia Joint Readmission Committee and the EU-Russia Joint Visa Facilitation Committee). The Moscow LSC group was associated and provided input for the preparation of the December 2016 EU-Russia Joint Visa Facilitation Committee.

The Member States reported that very few asylum seekers are applying at the Member States consulates for refugee status or national humanitarian visas.

### **3.5 Any other initiative taken in LSC**

A joint meeting of the Moscow Local Schengen Cooperation group with the EU Member State Science Counsellors group with external guest speakers was organised to present short-stay visa and legal migration provisions and their practical applications for the mobility of scientists, researchers and students between the European Union and Russia.

## **4. Challenges**

As regards the challenges indicated in previous reports, the implementation of the amended EU-Russia Visa Facilitation Agreement based on a reciprocity principle and the full integration of Bulgaria or Romania into Schengen were challenges also for 2016-2017 and they will remain for the next reporting period as well.

The full and proper implementation of the rules regarding the issuance of MEVs with long validity and MEVs for first time applicants will remain high on the agenda.

The legal and practical consequences of the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation would require particular vigilance and coordination by the Member States and EUD in order to make sure that appropriate and timely responses are devised for new measures implemented by Russia aiming at circumventing the non-recognition policies and guidelines.

In terms of staffing of the consulates, the peak months for each consulate vary, but might require for some of them the allocation of temporary reinforcements from the Member States' headquarters or consulates in the region. This was especially the case in the beginning of 2017 when several Member States experienced an increase of visa applications ranging from 50% to 200%.

It seems that some Member States were not systematically consulted by their capitals when policy documents relating to visa and mobility are being discussed in working groups in the Council.

## 5. Other issues

With around 60 consulates and 350 authorised visa centres across Russia from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok the Schengen Member States aims at making the process simple, fast and safe for citizens applying for visa, but the Russian Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR) demanded to extend the network of visa centres further due to geographical size of the country. The Schengen member states will continue to test some technical mobile alternatives, but member states believe that the current network of visa centres already covers over 90% of the Russian territory in terms of demand. In the light of challenging economic situation in Russia and visa applications in 2016 remaining broadly at the 2015 levels, the Schengen consulates and their visa centres will carefully assess how best to continue to ensure high quality of service for visa applicants in Russia.

The geographical size of the Russian Federation and the high number of applications continues to pose particular problems for the Schengen cooperation, which requires extensive coordination efforts on the side of the Member States and the EUD. Furthermore, given that the EU's visa policies and issuance are matters of high public and political interest in the Russian Federation, regular negative and somewhat distorted reporting in the Russian media and statements by the Russian authorities render the working conditions of the Schengen consulates and EUD more difficult. This situation has become worse with the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the consequent introduction of travel bans to a number of Russian individuals.

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*This LSC Moscow and St-Petersburg 2016-2017 report has been approved by all Member States present and EUD.*



Dakar, le 10 mai 2017

**COOPERATION LOCALE AU TITRE DE SCHENGEN ENTRE LES CONSULATS  
DES ETATS-MEMBRES (LSC) AU SENEGAL  
RAPPORT<sup>1</sup> 2016-2017**

**1. Introduction**

Au Sénégal 13 Etats membres de l'UE sont représentés, 10 au niveau Ambassadeur : Allemagne, Autriche, Belgique, Espagne, France, Italie, Pays-Bas, Portugal, Roumanie, Royaume-Uni et 3 au niveau Chargés d'affaires a.i.: le Luxembourg, la République Tchèque et la Pologne. La Suisse est représentée au niveau Ambassadeur.

Les consulats de AT, DE, BE, ES, FR, IT, NL, PT, RO, CH délivrent des visas aux ressortissants du Sénégal et des pays qui se trouvent sous leur juridiction. La plupart des Ambassades des Etats membres au Sénégal sont accrédités pour plusieurs pays de la région, pour certaines jusqu'à 9 pays.

Concernant les Etats Membres non-représentés à Dakar, 5 Etats Membres (GR, HU, LT, MT, SI) disposent des accords pour la délivrance des visas avec les EM représentés. Le service consulaire et le service de visa de la Pologne dont l'Ambassade s'est ouverte récemment sera prochainement opérationnel.

**2. Réunions LSC organisées pour la période 2016-2017**

Les réunions de coordination sont tenues trimestriellement. Durant la période couverte par le rapport, trois réunions de coordination Schengen se sont tenues (juillet 2016, novembre 2016, mars 2017), avec une très bonne participation des Etats membres et de la Suisse. Entre les réunions, la circulation de l'information est assurée grâce à une liste de diffusion constituée à cet effet. Des réunions thématiques sont parfois organisées (prochainement un séminaire avec les banques, des réunions sur la fraude documentaire).

La Délégation de l'UE, représentée au niveau du Chef de la section Politique, Presse et Information, préside les réunions, qui se tiennent à tour de rôle dans les locaux des Ambassades des Etats membres volontaires pour les accueillir ou à la Délégation de l'UE. Les comptes rendus des réunions sont préparés par la Délégation de l'UE, qui établit également l'ordre du jour, incluant les contributions des Etats membres.

**3. Etat des lieux**

**3.1 Application du Code des Visas**

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<sup>1</sup> Avril 2016 – Mars 2017



Les Etats membres appliquent le code des visas. L'Espagne, la France, l'Italie, les Pays-Bas et le Portugal ont externalisé la réception des demandes de visas (sous-traitance avec la société VFS Global pour FR, IT, NL et la société BLS pour l'Espagne). Le nombre des demandes de visa augmentent. Les pays qui reçoivent le plus de demandes sont la France, l'Italie et l'Espagne. Le taux de refus de visas reste élevé (autour de 40% en général).

### **3.2 Estimation du besoin d'harmonisation de la liste des documents justificatifs.**

L'harmonisation des pratiques concernant les documents justificatifs devant être fournis par les demandeurs de visas est acquise. Les réunions de coordination permettent d'échanger les informations sur les critères communs pour l'examen des demandes, sur les documents justificatifs devant être produits par les demandeurs, sur les pratiques des Etats membres, sur les cas de fraude documentaire et sur les filières d'immigration clandestine. Sont également échangés les statistiques des visas.

Les Etats membres ont discuté l'application de l'article Art. 48.3 (d) du Code des visas prévoyant l'échange d'information concernant les compagnies d'assurances spécialisées en assurance maladies de voyage. Les Etats membres ont conclu que compte tenu de l'absence de difficultés rencontrées dans la coopération avec les compagnies d'assurance au Sénégal et du risque de répercussions judiciaires en cas de publication d'une liste exhaustive des compagnies fournissant des assurances maladie adéquate, il n'est pas jugé nécessaire d'avoir une telle liste au Sénégal. Le Code des Visas prévoyant uniquement une coopération et un échange d'information dans ce domaine, un échange de vues informel lors des réunions de coordination est pratiqué. Certains Etats membres ont suggéré que le groupe pourrait recevoir le courtier en assurance utilisé par la société VFS Global pour un partage d'expérience.

### **3.3 Harmonisation des procédures**

Les EM prendront désormais en charge à tour de rôle la collecte des statistiques en matière de visa sur une base trimestrielle. Ces informations seront transmises au siège chaque année.

### **3.4 Echange d'informations**

Conformément aux dispositions du code des visas, les réunions de coordination et la liste de diffusion servent à échanger les informations notamment sur les aspects suivants:

- La mise à jour des statistiques sur le nombre de demandes des visas et des les taux de refus.
- Les cas de fraude documentaire, le partage d'expériences sur la vérification d'authenticité des documents délivrés par l'Etat civil du Sénégal.
- La coopération avec les compagnies d'assurance qui offre une assurance de voyage supposément conforme au code des visas.
- L'évolution du contexte sécuritaire, socio-économique du pays partenaire et des pays de la région auprès desquels les Ambassades des EM sont accrédités.
- Les voies d'immigration illégales empruntées.

### **3.4 D'autres initiatives prises en LSC**

Participation de l'Officier de Coopération Régionale Schengen (RSCO)

Dans le cadre du projet de renforcement de l'efficacité de la coopération Schengen, l'Officier de Coopération régionale Schengen (RSCO), basé à Accra et ayant dans son mandat le Sénégal, a été invité à participer aux deux réunions de coordination Schengen au Sénégal pendant la période couverte par le présent rapport.

Le RSCO a présenté aux Etats membres son mandat dans le cadre du projet financé par le Fond de sécurité intérieure de l'Union européenne, il a tenu des rencontres bilatérales avec un certain nombre des Etats membres lors de ses deux visites au Sénégal. Il a lancé un questionnaire pour recueillir des opinions sur l'utilité et l'efficacité de la coordination locale Schengen et pour identifier des opportunités d'amélioration de cette coopération (retour positif sur la fréquence des réunions et le partage des informations; feedback utile sur le rôle du Regional Schengen Cooperation Officer pour assister la DUE dans l'amélioration de la coopération Schengen locale: proposer des points à discuter lors des réunions; assister dans la compilation des statistiques; RSCO communiquera au groupe les rapports ou les newsletters de ses missions dans les autres pays de la région.

Les résultats de ce questionnaire ont été partagés lors de la dernière réunion de coordination et certaines suggestions ont été déjà mises en pratique.

#### Séminaire avec les principales banques établies au Sénégal

Il a été convenu qu'il serait utile d'organiser un séminaire avec les représentants des principales banques établies au Sénégal pour qu'elles présentent les caractéristiques de sécurité des relevés bancaires qu'elles fournissent. Ceci permettrait aux Etats membres de distinguer les documents authentiques des faux documents. Ce séminaire sera organisé fin mai.

#### **4. Défis**

La fraude consulaire continue à constituer un défi important. Le Sénégal reste l'un des principaux pays d'origine des filières d'immigration illégale en provenance de l'Afrique vers l'Europe.

La fraude documentaire reste importante, et concerne notamment: l'usurpation d'identité, création des comptes en banque factices, alimentés sur une très courte période; faux extraits bancaires, fausses réservations de vols et d'hôtel. Les demandes de visas effectuées par des artistes et des sportifs sont souvent susceptibles d'être fausses. Concernant les fraudes liées à l'état civil, le manque de formation des autorités locales dans la détection des faux documents est déploré.

Un autre défi que la Délégation a signalé auprès des services compétents de la DG HOME est le besoin de formation de la Délégation sur le rôle de coordonnateur local Schengen. Des conseils pratiques de la DG HOME sur les réunions, leur animation, les informations à échanger etc., ainsi que des échanges des pratiques entre les délégations de la région seraient bienvenus.

#### **5. Divers**

Le Sénégal étant l'un des 5 pays prioritaires dans le cadre du Cadre de Partenariat sur les Migrations, un officier de liaison Migration a rejoint la DUE en février 2017. Elle a été présentée au groupe LSC lors de la réunion de mars 2017 et a partagé avec les EM les

informations recueillies lors de sa participation à une réunion sur la fraude documentaire organisée par le Consulat du Canada au Sénégal. Elle participera désormais aux réunions LSC.

Ce rapport a été préparé par la Délégation de l'UE au Sénégal et partagé avec les Etats membres de l'Espace Schengen. Il a été approuvé le 10 mai.



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
Political Section  
The Head of Section

15/05/2017

**LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) SERBIA  
2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Introduction**

Nineteen States applying common visa policy are represented in Serbia, i.e. 17 Member States (BE, CZ, DK, DE, GR, ES, FR, IT, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, SK, FI, SE) and 2 associated States (NO, CH).

All the consular and visa offices are sections of the Embassies and are located in the capital, Belgrade. IT and HU also have a Vice-Consulate and Consulate General in Subotica.

The 4 MS that do not yet apply the common visa policy but have committed to doing so (BG, RO, CY, HR) are also present in Belgrade. RO also has two Consulates General in Vršac and Zaječar, BG has a Consulate General in Niš, while HR has a Consulate General in Subotica.

Among States which decided not to apply the visa policy, only the UK is represented in Belgrade.

**2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017**

The EU Delegation to Serbia has been coordinating the LSC meetings since April 2010. The meetings are regularly organised usually once per semester and prepared and chaired by the EUD.

Two meetings were held in the reporting period. The first one took place on 08/06/2016 (the meeting was attended by 13 States applying the common visa policy and 2 States committed to applying it) and the second one on 02/03/2017 (the meeting was attended by 10 States applying the common visa policy and 2 States committed to applying it). Both meetings were chaired by the EUD's Head of the Political Section.

Reports of LSC meeting were drawn by the EUD, and then distributed to MS for comments and once cleared, circulated again for forwarding to the respective capitals and to DG Home. Invitations were also sent to locations outside the capital of the countries applying the common visa policy or which are committed to doing so, as well as reports.

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

<sup>1</sup> April 2016 – March 2017

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<http://www.europa.rs/>

### **3. State of play**

#### **3.1 Application of the Visa Code**

According to Regulation (EC) No 1244/2009, since 19 December 2009 biometric Serbian passports (excluding those issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate - *Koordinaciona uprava*, which undertook the competence of issuing passports to residents in Kosovo\*) are visa free.

Visas are almost exclusively issued to third country nationals residing in Serbia.

#### **3.2 Assessment of the need to harmonise the lists of supporting documents**

Following a discussion on the Visa Committee's finding, NL as coordinator of the working group on the harmonized list of supporting documents, drafted a new version which was circulated to the MS and afterwards submitted to DG Home.

#### **3.3 Exchange of information**

Information is exchanged among Schengen States on monthly statistics. EUD also timely exchanged information coming from HQs.

#### **3.4 Any other initiative taken in LSC**

There have not been taken any other initiatives in the reporting period. There was however common agreement that a training on forged documents, as has been provided by FRONTEX last year, could be beneficial.

### **4. Challenges in 2017-2018**

As has been seen by previous discussions, the unification of issuing policies regarding third country nationals holding diplomatic or service passports will be the next topic to deal with.

### **5. Other issues**

The present LSC report has been circulated among LSC Serbia and has been cleared on 15/5/2017.



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
DELEGATION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS  
AND VANUATU  
Head of Administration – local point LSC

Honiara, le 10 mai 2017.

**COOPERATION LOCALE AU TITRE DE SCHENGEN ENTRE LES CONSULATS  
ET LES ETATS-MEMBRES (LSC)  
ILES SALOMON & REPUBLIQUE DU VANUATU  
RAPPORT 2016-2017**

**1. Introduction**

La Délégation couvre les Iles Salomon et la République du Vanuatu.

Aux Iles Salomon, seul le Royaume-Uni est représenté au niveau de "High Commission". On trouve également un Consul Honoraire de France, Allemagne et Suède qui n'est pas investi des pouvoirs de délivrer des visas.

A Vanuatu, Seule la République Française est représentée au niveau d'ambassade. On trouve également des Consuls Honoraires de Belgique, Espagne, Suède, Allemagne, Finlande (à confirmer) et Italie qui ne sont pas investis des pouvoirs de délivrer des visas.

**2. Réunions LSC organisées en 2015-2016**

Il n'y a pas d'état "Schengen" représenté aux Iles Salomon avec pouvoirs de délivrance de visa. A Vanuatu, l'Ambassade de France est la seule habilitée à délivrer des visas Schengen. Il n'y a donc pas de réunions LSC.

**3. Etat des lieux**

**3.1 Application du Code des Visas**

Compte tenu qu'un accord de "visa waiver" a été conclu tant avec les Iles Salomon qu'avec la République de Vanuatu et que cet accord a été rendu applicable par provision au 10 octobre 2016, le problème est considérablement simplifié.

**3.2 Estimation du besoin d'harmonisation de la liste des documents justificatifs.**

Non applicable en raison du point 3.1.

**3.3 Harmonisation des procédures**

Non applicable en raison du point 3.1.

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### **3.4 Echange d'informations**

Pendant la période courant du 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2016 au 10 octobre 2016 (date d'entrée en vigueur du "visa waiver agreement"), l'Ambassade de France à Port-Vila (Vanuatu) a délivré 20 visas "Schengen". Il n'y a pas eu de cas de fraude rapporté.

### **3.4 D'autres initiatives prises en LSC**

*Non applicable*

### **4. Défis**

*Non applicable*

### **5. Divers**

*Non applicable.*



## LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) IN SOUTH AFRICA

### Draft Report – 2016 – 2017<sup>1</sup>

#### I. Introduction

There are 19 out of the 26 Schengen members present in South Africa – Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania have diplomatic missions in the country and are invited to attend both Schengen and Consular Coordination meetings.

Ireland and the United Kingdom do not attend the Schengen Cooperation Group meetings.

The cities in South Africa receiving highest numbers of applications for Schengen visas Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. While most of the Schengen Members States issue visas at their Embassies in Pretoria, many also maintain Consulates in Johannesburg, which is a larger urban and economic centre.

Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain have a permanent consular presence and deal with issue visas in Cape Town, while 4 others (Visegrad countries) do it on a "part time" basis. Sweden has a permanent consular presence in Cape Town but does not issue visas from there. Switzerland also has a permanent consular presence and deals with visa issues in Cape Town.

Denmark has a Consul in Durban while many others have Honorary Consuls.

Local Schengen cooperation takes place in Pretoria, involving Gauteng based consuls.

Some Member States represented in South Africa cooperate with outsourcing companies in visa matters. The precise functions (and fees) contracted to external service providers vary from Member State to Member State.

On Schengen visa matters, agreements regarding those countries not represented are as follows:

Italy represents Malta, Sweden represents Estonia, Denmark represents Iceland, Hungary represents Latvia, Switzerland represents Lichtenstein, Belgium represents Luxembourg, and Germany represents Slovenia

The European community in South Africa is relatively large and count for approximately 3725.000 people registered. It remains challenging to determine the exact amount of ex-

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<sup>1</sup>April 2016 – March 2017



patriates as not everybody register with their respective Embassies. Many EU nationals in SA have dual citizenship –South Africa and European.

## **2. LSC meetings held from April 2016 to March 2017**

From April 2016 to March 2017 the Local Schengen Coordination (LSC) group met twice. The meetings on 15 June 2016 and 9 December 2016 combined the Consular- and Schengen Group meetings (back to back but with different participation) in order to accommodate agenda items for both groups before the holiday period.

During this report period the LSC meetings were chaired by the EU Delegation. The EU Delegation also prepared, drafted and distributed all relevant documents. The EU Delegation also liaised with the South African authorities in preparation and follow up of all the meetings.

The LSC Group meetings discussed issues of relevance to consular work in South Africa. These included amongst others the outcome of the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation Diplomatic Immunities Workshop for Foreign Missions hosted on 30 November 2016, issues related to dual citizenship, discussion and redrafting of the "List of supporting documents to be submitted by applicants in South Africa for short stay visas in Schengen countries", exchanges on experiences with VSA Global in Schengen visa matters, role of MS consular teams in South Africa regarding visa requests from neighbouring countries where no consular representation exists on the ground, among others.

## **3. State of play**

### **3.1 Application of the Visa Code**

Member States are implementing the Visa Code in compliance with instructions from their respective headquarters. Exchanges in the group hinted that there is no significant visa-shopping practice in South Africa as all the Schengen countries seem to be well harmonised.

The LSG provided the opportunity for the Member States exchange information on practices regarding visa regulations and the fees applied in local currency, use of external service providers, capturing of biometric data for visa applicants, issues related to fraud, fake documentation, challenges in obtaining official documents e.g. unabridged birth certificates issued by South African competent authority, and to discuss issues regarding specifics of South African requirements on travel documents and residence permits, among others.

### **3.2 Assessment of the need to harmonise the lists of supporting documents**

The information sheet submitted was reviewed and revised by the LSC group in line with comments received from the Visa Committee on 28 October 2016 and submitted to the Visa Committee in Brussels on 14 December 2016. The document was again revised on 7 April incorporating the comments received from the Visa Committee on 17 March 2017.

### **3.3 Exchange of information**

The EU Delegation disseminated the important information and relevant guidelines issued from Brussels.

Locally, statistics are gathered on regular basis, and the EU Delegation facilitates the sharing of this information. These include Consular Emergency Coordination, Consular Dossier, Visa

Statistics and the collection of Worldwide Statistics on Consular Assistance given to unrepresented EU Citizens in Third Countries.

#### **4. Challenges**

The implementation of the latest South African Immigration Law that come into effect on 1 June 2015 and the subsequent new amendments to the Immigration Act continue to pose challenges particularly regarding the different practices by the South Africa authorities at border posts regarding the list of necessary documentation or even the different practises by SA foreign missions processing visas abroad.

The implementation of this law, however, didn't facilitate the issuance of unabridged birth certificates to children born in South Africa applying for Schengen visas – a document needed for the abstention of Schengen visa.

The implementation of the SA regulations remains a key issue and one that will be re-visited with the South African authorities on a regular basis.

Following up on previous exchanges regarding South Africa Department of Home Affairs requests for exchanges on forensics, the EU delegation pursued the matter forwarded. Several Member States volunteer to offer such exchanges but to the date the SA DHA has not responded.

Member States are committed to continue the dialogue with the national authorities on issues that affect the issuance of Schengen visas and the LSC is continued to be perceived as a good platforms to do so.

Challenges and progress are reported and discussed at HoMs meetings, who are kept regularly informed on the work of both the LSC and LCC meetings. The inverse also happens and the Groups are kept informed on the policy dialogues with SA authorities particularly regarding visa and migration matters.

#### **5. Other issues**

The report has been agreed with the Member States and includes the inputs received.



EUROPEAN UNION  
DELEGATION TO THAILAND

1<sup>st</sup> May 2017

## LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) in Thailand 2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

In 2016-2017, the number of EU Member States and Schengen Associated States remained unchanged in Thailand. In total, there were nineteen Schengen embassies represented in Bangkok, namely Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Italy (IT), Luxembourg (LU), The Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Slovakia (SK), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE) and Switzerland (CH). Visas are issued by FI on behalf of Estonia, by DE for Lithuania, by HU on behalf of Latvia, by AT on behalf of Malta and Slovenia. Romania (RO) is invited to the LSC meetings as observer, but does not take part in decision making of the LSC.

As mentioned in previous reports, a growing number of Schengen embassies have had to outsource their visa application processing services to private companies in order to cope with the increasing number of visa applications. Currently VFS Global processes visa applications for Austria (AT), Belgium (BE) (since 28.11.2016), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), Italy (IT), The Netherlands (NL), Norway (NO), Spain (ES) and Sweden (SE) while TLS Contact manages for France (FR) and Switzerland (CH).

The EU Delegation to Thailand coordinates the Local Schengen Cooperation meetings in Thailand and is responsible for preparing the agenda and minutes. EU Member States and Schengen Associated States are invited to provide input for the upcoming meetings' agendas.

### 2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017

LSC meetings have been held at regular intervals at the premises of the EU Delegation in Bangkok. During the 2016-2017 reporting period, a total of seven LSC meetings have been held, on 29 February 2016, 27 April 2016, 19 May 2016, 28 July, 6 October 2016, 21 December 2016 and 21 March 2017. Most meetings were well attended. The meetings are chaired by EUDEL. Reports of the meetings are drawn up by EU Delegation and shared with EU Member States and Associated Schengen States and with Headquarters.

Several MS share the common report with their capitals, adding their own comments. A few MS do not share any reports with the capitals. There is no co-ordination with the LSC in locations outside the capital as those locations deal solely with consular cases.

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<sup>1</sup> March 2016 – March 2017

### **3. State of play**

#### **3.1 Application of the Visa Code**

The Visa Code is applied according to the regulations. No major deficiencies or problems were noted.

#### **3.2 Assessment of the need to harmonise the lists of supporting documents**

There are two points outstanding before the list of supporting documents can be harmonized. These concern the requirement of translating supportive documents and the requirement of providing complementary information of travel behaviour to what is shown in VIS. The two points have been thoroughly discussed at several LSC meetings. The last draft lists was agreed upon and forwarded to headquarters on 15 December 2016.

#### **3.3 Harmonisation of practices**

There have been discussions on harmonising the issuing of long-validity MEVs. These discussions are ongoing. The validity of MEV varies from 1 to 4 year, with most long term MEVs being issued for a 1 year term.

#### **3.4 Exchange of information**

Information regarding statistics is exchanged between the EU member states via email and discussed during the meetings. The EU delegation compiles the data and circulates yearly statistics among the EU Member states. The table prepared by DG HOME, which asks for statistical information on visas A, C and LTV is used.

EU Member States exchange information regarding fraud cases.

EU Member States and Schengen Associated States have a common list of travel and health insurance companies and new applications are accepted twice a year. There are currently around 50 companies on the list. There have been no reports from insurance takers of misconducting travel insurance companies to the EUMS or EUDEL during 2016-2017.

One EUMS brought the attention to the fact that most travel insurances companies reimburse their clients only upon return to Thailand. However, the Handbook for the organisation of visa sections and local Schengen cooperation (H2, Part II, point 2.3) states that, if the insurance only covers a posteriori reimbursement, this could call into question the objective of the requirement of an insurance. The LSC group has thus decided to send a kind reminder to the insurance companies to encourage them to adapt their offer.

The Visa Information System is fully implemented and works well.

Few MS to use VIS mail, and those who do often find it necessary to call the recipient and notify that a VIS-mail had been sent. MS agree that the purpose to ensure safe communication is very important, but find VISmail to be difficult to use.

### 3.4 Any other initiative taken in LSC

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## 4. Challenges

The main challenge faced by the LSC group concerns the creation of the harmonised list of supporting documents for short stay visas. The work with this list will continue.

## 5. Other issues

### *EUDEL met with business representative*

A business representative contacted EUDEL to inquire about the possibilities and developments of Thai visa waiver negotiations. He represented several major Asian companies (e.g., King Power, Air Asia, Central Pattana). The representative's main message was that if Thai citizens would be granted a visa waiver, Thai private companies would increase their investments in Europe and Thai tourism in Europe would increase. EUDEL informed that a potential review of the visa list would need to be initiated through an official request from Thai authorities, rather than from private companies.

### *Asylum seekers and refugees visiting the Embassies*

Several MS have been approached by asylum seekers and refugees with requests to apply for asylum, be part of resettlement programmes or receive funding from MS. One MS received more than 800 asylum requests in 2016. Other MS have not received any requests/applications at all. The groups that request to apply for asylum are mainly Christians from Pakistani or Buddhist monks from Bangladesh. Some have been granted refugee status by the UNHCR. All MS have informed the applicants that it is not possible to apply for asylum at the embassies.



Lomé, 8 juin 2017

**COOPERATION LOCALE AU TITRE DE SCHENGEN ENTRE LES CONSULATS  
ET LES ETATS-MEMBRES (LSC) TOGO  
RAPPORT<sup>1</sup> 2016-2017**

**1. Introduction**

Seul la France et l'Allemagne sont représentées par une mission diplomatique et un consulat au Togo. Une partie des EMs sont accrédités au Togo sans représentation sur place au-delà des Consuls honoraires. Outre des demandes pour se rendre sur son territoire, la France traite les demandes de visas Schengen pour les pays suivants : AT, BE, CZ, EL, ES, LT, HU, NL, PT, SL, SE et CH. L'Allemagne traite, outre les demandes pour se rendre sur son territoire, celles pour se rendre en MT. De ce fait, le nombre de demandes de visas traitées annuellement par les deux consulats est très différent (environ 7.000 pour FR et 1.000 pour DE).

**2. Réunions LSC organisées en 2016-2017**

A l'invitation de la Délégation de l'UE (DUE), une réunion formelle LSC a eu lieu à la DUE le 09/02/17. Les participants ont été les consuls FR et DE (ainsi que des collaborateurs à eux), personnel de la DUE et le Regional Schengen Coordinator pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest, basé à Accra. La DUE a présidé la réunion et a fait un projet de rapport, adopté par les EMs. La réunion suivante a eu lieu le 08/06/17.

Outre cette réunion, des contacts ad hoc ont eu lieu entre la DUE et les services consulaires FR et DE pour traiter de cas concrets au long de la période.

**3. Etat des lieux**

**3.1 Application du Code des Visas**

La présence de seulement deux sections consulaires des EMs et la différence décrite ci-dessus dans le nombre d'autres EMs pour lesquels elles délivrent de visas est un élément de contexte important. Dans la période couverte, la coordination consulaire locale au titre de Schengen a été centrée sur le renforcement de la communication entre les deux sections consulaires, soumises à une charge de travail important. L'arrivée en 2016 d'un Regional Schengen Coordinator, basé à Accra mais couvrant le Togo, a eu un impact positif, avec deux missions au Togo pendant la période couverte.

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<sup>1</sup> Avril 2016 – Mars 2017

### **3.2 Estimation du besoin d'harmonisation de la liste des documents justificatifs.**

L'harmonisation est en cours

### **3.3 Harmonisation des procédures**

Les sections consulaires de deux Etats membres suivent de procédures différentes concernant la prise de rendez-vous pour le dépôt de dossiers (demande au préalable). Tous les deux consulats font des entretiens aux demandeurs et ont des procédures rapides pour des VIPs et des diplomates.

La durée de validité des visas à entrées multiples varie de 1an à 4 ans. Tous les deux consulats délivrent des MEVs à des conjoint(e)s togolais(es).

### **3.4 Echange d'informations**

Les services consulaires des deux EMS présents échangent directement cas par cas, notamment concernant les raisons de refus de visa. Des statistiques ont été échangées en février 2017 et il a été convenu de régulariser cet échange de statistiques.

La réunion de coordination consulaire de février 2017 a été l'occasion pour échanger des informations et des procédures sur les risques liés aux cas de fraude, assurances médicales de voyage et les informations bancaires fournies par des demandeurs de visa. Il a été convenu que, lors des prochaines réunions LSC, il y aurait des échanges sur des « éléments à risque » (blacklists).

### **3.4 D'autres initiatives prises en LSC**

None

### **4. Défis**

Lors du prochain exercice 2017-18, les défis seraient de consolider et de rendre plus automatiques les échanges d'information ainsi que l'avancement dans l'harmonisation de procédures.

### **5. Divers**

None

Ankara, 30 March 2017

## LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION TURKEY 2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

The reporting period of this report relates to the period from April 2016 until March 2017 and covers all locations in Turkey where Schengen countries issue visas, namely Ankara, Istanbul, Edirne and Izmir.<sup>2</sup> The representation of Schengen states remained the same.<sup>3</sup> All MS States except Slovakia are outsourcing their visa application service.

### 2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017

The Local Schengen Cooperation (LSC) meetings were well attended. On average attendance of the Schengen countries was as follows:

- **In general:** 88,50%
- **In Ankara:** 87,00%
- **In Istanbul:** 90,00%

The participation of Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia is not included in these statistics. However, all three countries always were invited and frequently participated. Ireland and the United Kingdom were also invited to attend the meetings as observers.

In the reporting period 13 regular LSC meetings were held: seven in Ankara and six in Istanbul.

- 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016, LSC meeting in Ankara;
- 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016, LSC meeting in Istanbul;
- 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016, LSC meeting in Ankara;
- 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016, LSC meeting in Istanbul;
- 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016, LSC meeting in Ankara;
- 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016, LSC meeting in Istanbul;
- 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016, LSC meeting in Ankara;
- 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016, LSC meeting in Istanbul;
- 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016, LSC in Ankara;
- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, LSC meeting in Istanbul;

<sup>1</sup> April 2016 – March 2017

<sup>2</sup> Turkish citizens also have the possibility to apply for a visa in Bursa, Gaziantep and Antalya for Italy and Germany at an ESP.

<sup>3</sup> **In Ankara:** Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland (totally 23 Schengen countries).

**In Istanbul:** Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland, Finland is represented by a honorary consul, a Finnish citizen tasked to collect visa applications and to participate in LSC. (Totally 17 Schengen countries).

**In Izmir:** Germany, Greece and Italy (3).

**In Edirne:** Greece (and Bulgaria).



- 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017, LSC meeting in Ankara;
- 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017, LSC meeting in Istanbul;
- 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017, LSC meeting in Ankara;

The EUD included Edirne and Izmir MS representations (General Consulates) in the LSC mailing list and shared the minutes of LSC meetings and the statistics with all Schengen consulate locations in Turkey. Schengen States consulate staff in other locations was free to participate in the LSC meetings organized in Ankara and Istanbul.

Reports/minutes were drawn up by the EUD. The MS have been encouraged to share the LSC meeting minutes with their central authorities.

Meetings were chaired by the EUD. Slovakia was representing the LCC members as part of the rotating Presidency of the Council in the second semester of 2016. As Malta, which is presiding the Council in the first semester of 2017, does not have a representation in Ankara, Slovakia offered to continue its representation function for the first semester of 2017 in a constructive approach.

### 3. State of play

#### 3.1 Application of the Visa Code – April 2016-March 2017

*Given the number of visas issued and the geopolitical importance of the EU-Turkey relations, the LSC is considered an important platform for the exchange of information and experiences enabling Member States to ensure a harmonised approach when it comes to visa issuance.*

*On several occasions, during discussions among the MS it became apparent that there are some potentially divergent practices in respect of the implementation of the EU-Visa Code and the Handbook for the processing of visa applications and the modification of issued visas. These discrepancies mostly relate to the issuance of multiple-entry visas and the determination of bona fide applicants, with the practice of several Embassies/Consulates to sign local "facilitation" agreements with chambers of commerce and similar structures. Therefore, the EUD offered to conduct a study – "LSC-Turkey 2014" – to highlight the discrepancies in terms of a harmonised approach towards implementing the Visa code.*

*The study was finalised and forwarded within the hierarchy for approval to publish.*

*It is not clear yet in what format or forum the Study will be published.*

#### 3.2 Assessment of the need for common VFS audits and a common approach on issuing multiple entry visas

After several discussions and assessments, the need for common VFS audits as well as a common approach on issuing multiple entry visas has been addressed by the EUD. For these purposes, two working groups have been installed and met on 20 January 2017.

The MS have expressed their general interest to adapt and participate in the common VFS audits. Denmark, Lithuania and Slovenia would be ok with someone else assessing on their behalf.

Greece expressed the concern that its ministry will not recognize the auditing of other countries.

For each visit at least two MS should be designated to audit. There are 9 VFS locations in total. Two visits per location each year are foreseen. Meeting will follow and the first audits will be conducted soon.

Concerning the common approach to issuing multiple entry visas to Turkish nationals, the working group should work on harmonizing the existing practices which are at the two ends of the spectrum at the moment. DG Home supports these endeavours.

### **3.3. Exchange of information**

Monthly statistics have been collected by each MS consulate/embassy location. There are comprehensive monthly statistics since 2010, allowing the EUD and the MS to carry out monthly and yearly comparisons and analyses at the local level.

Several information requests have been circulated among the LSC, aiming at better coordination and harmonization of practices. Information on fraudulent visa requests has also been regularly shared with the aim of preventing illegal migration.

A regular information exchange on different methods of handling visa requests from Syrian nationals at MS' embassies in Turkey took place within the LSC platform, including the exchange of statistics relating to both visa and asylum requests by Syrian nationals.

Besides taking notice of Member States bilateral resettlement programs for Syrian refugees, LSC regularly addressed several aspects of the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on the Schengen visa practice in Turkey, notably on:

- i) how family reunion is being interpreted and applied in "Syrian cases";
- ii) in what circumstances Member States are resorting to "visas with limited territorial validity" in this context;
- iii) how to assess documents presented by Syrian nationals in support of their visa requests;
- iv) the impact of "usurpation of identity documents" in the assessment of a Syrian visa request.

### **3.4 Other initiatives taken within the LSC framework**

Public outreach meetings as were organised in the previous years were cancelled due to decrease in interest and, to a minor degree, because of security concerns. These meetings aimed to present and explain the Schengen visa system to a wider public and, particularly, to businessmen, associations and local chambers of commerce in different locations throughout Turkey.

- LSC has been following the developments of the Visa Liberalization Dialogue (VLD) between Turkey and the EU and the adoption of the Readmission Agreement. Several colleagues of the LSC group also attended the meetings and de-briefing sessions organised during the VLD expert missions.

Other relevant news regarding VFS is the determination of the contract between the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the company VFS for Visa externalization services as of 16 December. From 17 December on the new contract with the company BLS International entered into effect.

Furthermore, Latvia has announced its cooperation with VFS. The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ankara and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Istanbul announced

the cooperation with the VFS GLOBAL Company for handling visa applications. VFS GLOBAL Visa Application Centres opened in Ankara and Istanbul on 29 September 2016. This service is available for Turkish residents and other country nationals legally residing in Turkey who wish to apply for a Schengen visa to the Czech Republic.

EUD organised five Document Security Training sessions in order to train Visa staff in the Embassies on different aspects of document controlling especially in the light of the current high influx of refugees into Turkey and the EU-Turkey Agreement. The trainings took part at EUD and were conducted by the German and Austrian Document advisers attached to their Embassy's in Ankara, Mr. Dirk Stagege, Mr. Gerhard Bogner and Mr. Florian Stassl.

They raised awareness of the circulation of fake Syrian passports and stolen Iraqi passports and pointed out specific features to look for in order to identify accuracy of the documents. Additionally, the events served as networking grounds as present Visa staff could discuss different national approaches and cases as well. The overall reception of these trainings was very positive and participants asked for more of these formats so that more staff can participate and learn in the near future.

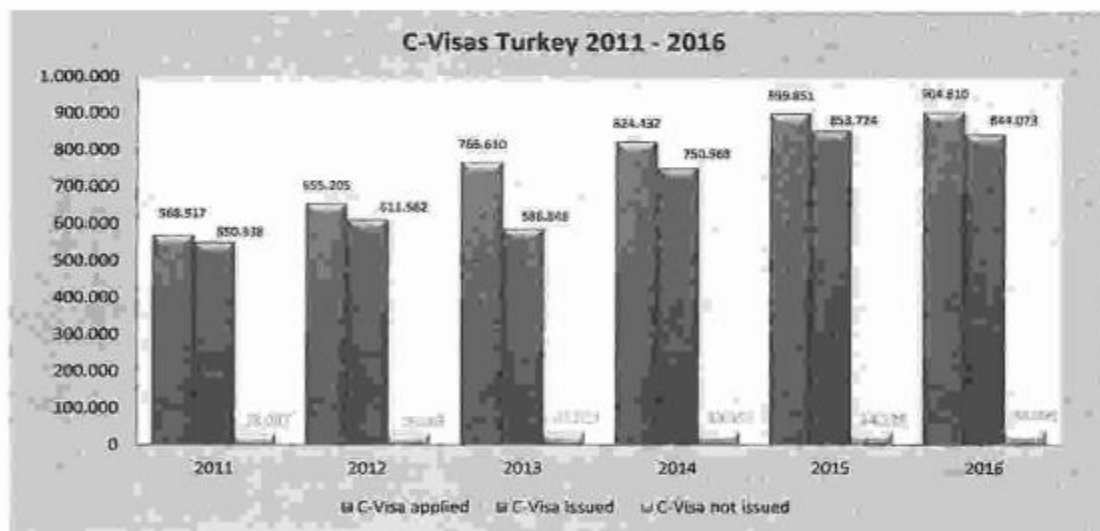
In total 120 staff were trained at five sessions:

08.11.2016  
24.11.2016  
08.12.2016  
25.01.2017  
15.02.2017

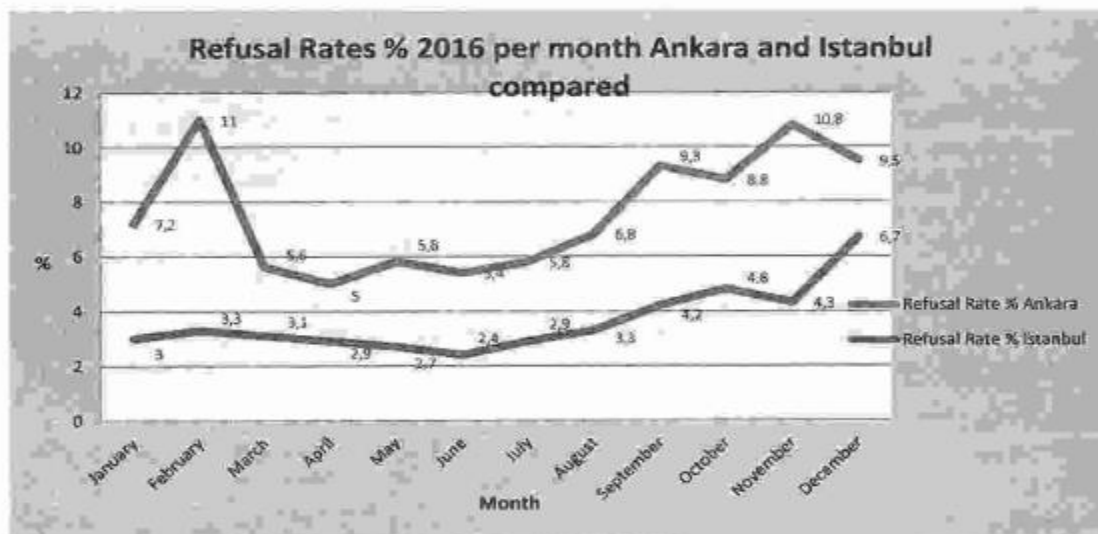
### 3.5 Miscellaneous

After the happenings of the 15<sup>th</sup> of July (Coup Attempt) the LSC network expected a significant increase of VISA applications and refusal rates.

The number of C-Visas applied for has increased, but in such a number that no relation can be seen to the mentioned happening. The numbers are within the usual increase rate of the past years.



The refusal rates increased a bit, what is against the trend of the past years. We could monitor a decreasing number of refusals since 2011. Although some MS report a raise of the refusal rate of 30%, the total figures remain within the trend.



The network will monitor this development closely.

#### 4. Challenges in 2017-2018

An increase in emigration intentions of higher educated Turkish families to EU MS was monitored after the coup attempt. Due to the political development in the country it can be forecasted that this phenomenon will not stop in the near future. The network will closely monitor the developments in this direction. On this matter, all countries reported a general increase in refusal rates of visa applications in 2016, especially regarding applications in the South East. This is also related to the rising number of asylum seekers in this part of Turkey. Especially in the summer the refusals went up, though there was no direct relation to be made to the coup d'état attempt of 15 July. In general, anything under 10% of refusal for the whole country is acceptable.

	applied	rejected	rejected %
Q1	149540	4652	3.11
Q2	183075	4804	2.62
Q3	136607	4738	3.47
Q4	126160	6654	5.27

	applied	refused	refused %
Q1	43798	3414	7.8
Q2	51385	2747	5.35
Q3	39824	2898	7.28
Q4	44783	4333	9.68

The Initiatives "common approach on issuing long-term VISA" and "Common VFS audits" were just started and EUD will work closely with the MS in order to come to a common conclusion regarding the future approach towards this topics.

The LSC in Turkey will continue the harmonization work within the framework of the EU Visa Code. The approach of the Turkish public administration towards the Schengen Visa Regime remains critical especially given the ongoing visa liberalization dialogue and the entry into force of the Readmission Agreement.

The LSC will closely follow the VLD process, till the Visa Liberalization will be finally decided.

The same applies to the general perception by the Turkish public of the system, which requires LSC to devote resources for public diplomacy purposes, possibly through a systematic campaign directed at target groups, including pro-active, public information sessions with businessmen and advertisements in the media.



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO UKRAINE

15/05/2017

## LOCAL SCHENGEN COOPERATION (LSC) IN UKRAINE

### 2016-2017 REPORT<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

**Present in Kyiv:** Republic of Austria, *Republic of Bulgaria*, Kingdom of Belgium, *Republic of Croatia*, *Republic of Cyprus*, Czech Republic, Kingdom of Denmark, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Finland, French Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, Republic of Italy, Republic of Latvia, Republic of Lithuania, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Poland, Portuguese Republic, *Romania*, Republic of Slovakia, Republic of Slovenia, Kingdom of Spain, Kingdom of Sweden, Swiss Confederation, *United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*.

**Representation from Prague:** *Ireland*, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

**Representation from Helsinki:** Republic of Iceland

**Representation from Warsaw:** Republic of Malta

**Visa Application Centres** are run by:

- **VFS GLOBAL** for the following Schengen countries: Republic of Austria, Republic of Croatia, Czech Republic, Kingdom of Denmark, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Finland, French Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, Republic of Lithuania, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Poland, Republic of Slovenia, Kingdom of Sweden, Swiss Confederation;
- **Visa Management Service** for Republic of Italy;
- **BLS international** for Kingdom of Spain
- **Pony Express** for Republic of Latvia, Republic of Slovakia;
- **TLScontakt** for Kingdom of Belgium, Swiss Confederation.

#### 2. LSC meetings held in 2016-2017

The **EU Delegation** is in charge of the coordination of regular LSC meetings.

- Number of regular meetings held during the reporting period: 10
- Meetings were well attended. Croatia and Romania join regularly the LSC meetings.
- Meetings are chaired by the EU Delegation.
- At some meetings relevant guest speakers are invited.
- Minutes of meetings are drawn up by the EU Delegation.
- Sharing common reports with capitals: YES.

<sup>1</sup> April 2016 – March 2017