



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 18 February 2015
(OR. en)

6012/15

VISA 34
COEST 55

"I/A" ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. prev. doc.:	5679/1/15 REV 1 VISA 27 COEST 28
No. Cion doc.:	16330/10 VISA 276 COEST 349 (SEC(2010) 1400 final) (RESTREINT UE)
Subject:	Negotiations with a view to an Agreement between the EU and Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas

1. On 28 February 2011 the Council adopted its Decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement between the European Union and Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas as set out in 6355/11 VISA 28 COEST 53, containing the negotiating directives.
2. During the negotiations Belarus insisted on the inclusion in the agreement of a possibility which is explicitly excluded from the negotiating directives.
3. The issue of whether or not to agree with the request from Belarus has been discussed in the Visa Working Party and in the Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia (COEST) in order to take account of the wider political aspects of relations between the EU and Belarus.

4. On 22 January 2015, the Presidency and the Commission reported at the Visa Working Party on the state of play of the discussions in COEST. The Chair concluded that the Presidency would follow closely the development of that issue in COEST and would inform the Visa Working Party accordingly.
5. Following the approval by Coreper on 28 January 2015 of the list of possible additional concrete measures to deepen the EU's policy of critical engagement with Belarus¹, the Presidency suggested in a written procedure certain amendments to the above mentioned negotiating directives accordingly, as set out in 5679/1/15 REV 1 (RESTREINT UE). No delegation has objected to the suggested amendments.
6. The Permanent Representatives Committee is on this basis invited to recommend that the Council approves, by qualified majority, the above text of the amendments to the negotiating directives as set out in 6331/15 (RESTREINT UE) as an "A" item of the agenda of a forthcoming meeting.

¹ See 5544/15 PESC 69 COEST 18 NIS 3 (RESTREINT UE), in particular measure 11.