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THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE COUNCIL

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REGULATION
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
AMENDING COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 539/2001
LISTING THE THIRD COUNTRIES WHOSE NATIONALS MUST BE
IN POSSESSION OF VISAS WHEN CROSSING THE EXTERNAL BORDERS
AND THOSE WHOSE NATIONALS ARE EXEMPT FROM THAT REQUIREMENT

REGULATION (EU) No .../2013
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 11 December 2013

**amending Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries
whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders
and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular point (a) of Article 77(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure¹,

¹ Position of the European Parliament of 12 September 2013 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and decision of the Council of 5 December 2013.

Whereas:

- (1) The reciprocity mechanism to be implemented if a third country listed in Annex II to Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001¹ applies a visa requirement for nationals of at least one Member State needs to be adapted in the light of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and of the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union on secondary legal bases. In addition, that mechanism needs to be adapted to provide for a Union response as an act of solidarity, if a third country listed in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 applies a visa requirement for nationals of at least one Member State.
- (2) Upon receipt of a notification from a Member State that a third country listed in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 applies a visa requirement for nationals of that Member State, all Member States should react in common, thus providing a Union response to a situation which affects the Union as a whole and subjects its citizens to differing treatment.
- (3) Full visa reciprocity is an objective which the Union should pursue in a proactive manner in its relations with third countries, thus contributing to improving the credibility and consistency of the Union's external policy.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (OJ L 81, 21.3.2001, p. 1).

- (4) This Regulation should establish a mechanism for the temporary suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement for a third country listed in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 ("the suspension mechanism") in an emergency situation, where an urgent response is needed in order to resolve the difficulties faced by at least one Member State, and taking account of the overall impact of the emergency situation on the Union as a whole.
- (5) For the purposes of the suspension mechanism, a substantial and sudden increase indicates an increase exceeding a threshold of 50 %. It may also indicate a lower increase if the Commission deems it applicable in the particular case notified by the Member State concerned.
- (6) For the purposes of the suspension mechanism, a low recognition rate indicates a recognition rate of asylum applications of around 3 or 4 %. It may also indicate a higher recognition rate if the Commission deems it applicable in the particular case notified by the Member State concerned.
- (7) It is necessary to avoid and counter any abuse resulting from exemption from the visa requirement for short-stay visits for nationals of a third country where they pose a threat to the public policy (ordre public) and internal security of the Member State concerned.
- (8) This Regulation should provide a legal basis for the visa requirement or for the exemption from that requirement for holders of travel documents issued by certain entities recognised by the Member State concerned as subjects of international law which are not intergovernmental international organisations.

- (9) As the rules applicable for refugees and stateless persons introduced by Council Regulation (EC) No 1932/2006¹, do not apply to such persons when they are residing in the United Kingdom or Ireland, it is necessary to clarify the situation concerning the visa requirement for certain refugees and stateless persons who reside in the United Kingdom or in Ireland. This Regulation should leave Member States free to decide on the exemption from the visa requirement for that category of persons in compliance with their international obligations. The Member States should notify such decisions to the Commission.
- (10) Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 should be without prejudice to application of international agreements concluded by the European Community before the entry into force of that Regulation which imply the need to derogate from the common visa rules, while taking into account the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1932/2006 of 21 December 2006 amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (OJ L 405, 30.12.2006, p. 23).

- (11) In order to ensure the adequate involvement of the European Parliament and of the Council in the second phase of application of the reciprocity mechanism, given the particularly sensitive political nature of the suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement for all the nationals of a third country listed in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 and its horizontal implications for the Member States, the Schengen associated countries and the Union itself, in particular for their external relations and for the overall functioning of the Schengen area, the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union should be delegated to the Commission in respect of certain elements of the reciprocity mechanism. Conferring such power on the Commission takes into account the need for political discussion on the Union policy on visas in the Schengen area. It reflects also the need to ensure adequate transparency and legal certainty in the application of the reciprocity mechanism to all the nationals of the third country concerned, in particular through the corresponding temporary amendment of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 539/2001. It is of particular importance that the Commission carry out appropriate consultations during its preparatory work, including at expert level. The Commission, when preparing and drawing up delegated acts, should ensure a simultaneous, timely and appropriate transmission of the relevant documents to the European Parliament and to the Council.

- (12) In order to ensure the efficient application of the suspension mechanism and of certain provisions of the reciprocity mechanism and in particular in order to allow for all relevant factors and the possible implications of the application of those mechanisms to be adequately taken into account, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission with regard to the determination of the categories of nationals of the third country concerned who should be subject to a temporary suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement within the framework of the reciprocity mechanism, and of the corresponding duration of that suspension, as well as the powers to implement the suspension mechanism. Those powers should be exercised in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹. The examination procedure should be used for the adoption of such implementing acts.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13).

- (13) As regards Iceland and Norway, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the latters' association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*¹ which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point (B), of Council Decision 1999/437/EC².
- (14) As regards Switzerland, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*³ which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point (B), of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2008/146/EC⁴.

¹ OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 36.

² Council Decision 1999/437/EC of 17 May 1999 on certain arrangements for the application of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the association of those two States with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 31).

³ OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 52.

⁴ Council Decision 2008/146/EC of 28 January 2008 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 1).

- (15) As regards Liechtenstein, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*¹ which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point (B), of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2011/350/EU².

¹ OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 21.

² Council Decision 2011/350/EU of 7 March 2011 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*, relating to the abolition of checks at internal borders and movement of persons (OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 19).

- (16) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which the United Kingdom does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2000/365/EC¹; the United Kingdom is therefore not taking part in its adoption and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (17) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which Ireland does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2002/192/EC²; Ireland is therefore not taking part in its adoption and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (18) Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

¹ Council Decision 2000/365/EC of 29 May 2000 concerning the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 131, 1.6.2000, p. 43).

² Council Decision 2002/192/EC of 28 February 2002 concerning Ireland's request to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 64, 7.3.2002, p. 20).

Article 1

Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 is hereby amended as follows:

(1) Article 1 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 4 is replaced by the following:

"4. Where a third country listed in Annex II applies a visa requirement for nationals of at least one Member State, the following provisions shall apply:

(a) within 30 days of the implementation by the third country of the visa requirement or, in cases where the visa requirement existing on ...⁺ is maintained, within 30 days of that date, the Member State concerned shall notify the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission thereof in writing.

That notification:

(i) shall specify the date of implementation of the visa requirement and the types of travel documents and visas concerned;

⁺ OJ: please insert the date of entry into force of this amending Regulation.

- (ii) shall include a detailed explanation of the preliminary measures that the Member State concerned has taken with a view to ensuring visa-free travel with the third country in question and all relevant information.

Information about that notification shall be published without delay by the Commission in the Official Journal of the European Union, including information on the date of implementation of the visa requirement and the types of travel documents and visas concerned.

If the third country decides to lift the visa requirement before the expiry of the deadline referred to in the first subparagraph of this point, the notification shall not be made or shall be withdrawn and the information shall not be published;

- (b) the Commission shall, immediately following the date of the publication referred to in the third subparagraph of point (a) and in consultation with the Member State concerned, take steps with the authorities of the third country in question, in particular in the political, economic and commercial fields, in order to restore or introduce visa-free travel and shall inform the European Parliament and the Council of those steps without delay;

- (c) if within 90 days of the date of the publication referred to in the third subparagraph of point (a) and despite all the steps taken in accordance with point (b), the third country has not lifted the visa requirement, the Member State concerned may request the Commission to suspend the exemption from the visa requirement for certain categories of nationals of that third country. Where a Member State makes such a request, it shall inform the European Parliament and the Council thereof;
- (d) the Commission shall, when considering further steps in accordance with point (e), (f) or (h), take into account the outcome of the measures taken by the Member State concerned with a view to ensuring visa-free travel with the third country in question, the steps taken in accordance with point (b), and the consequences of the suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement for the external relations of the Union and its Member States with the third country in question;

- (e) if the third country concerned has not lifted the visa requirement, the Commission shall, at the latest six months of the date of the publication referred to in the third subparagraph of point (a) and subsequently at intervals not exceeding six months within a total period which may not extend beyond the date on which the delegated act referred to in point (f) takes effect or is objected to:
 - (i) adopt, at the request of the Member State concerned or on its own initiative, an implementing act temporarily suspending the exemption from the visa requirement for certain categories of nationals of the third country concerned for a period of up to six months. That implementing act shall determine a date, within 90 days of its entry into force, on which the suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement is to take effect, taking into account the available resources in the consulates of the Member States. When adopting subsequent implementing acts, the Commission may extend the period of that suspension by further periods of up to six months and may modify the categories of nationals of the third country in question for which the exemption from the visa requirement is suspended.

Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 4a(2). Without prejudice to the application of Article 4, during the periods of suspension all the categories of nationals of the third country referred to in the implementing act shall be required to be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States; or

- (ii) submit to the committee referred to in Article 4a(1) a report assessing the situation and stating the reasons why it decided not to suspend the exemption from the visa requirement and inform the European Parliament and the Council thereof.

All relevant factors, such as those referred to in point (d), shall be taken into account in that report. The European Parliament and the Council may have a political discussion on the basis of that report;

- (f) if within 24 months of the date of the publication referred to in the third subparagraph of point (a), the third country concerned has not lifted the visa requirement, the Commission shall adopt a delegated act in accordance with Article 4b temporarily suspending the application of Annex II for a period of 12 months for the nationals of that third country. The delegated act shall determine a date, within 90 days of its entry into force, on which the suspension of the application of Annex II is to take effect, taking into account the available resources in the consulates of the Member States and shall amend Annex II accordingly. That amendment shall be made through inserting next to the name of the third country in question a footnote indicating that the exemption from the visa requirement is suspended with regard to that third country and specifying the period of that suspension.

As of the date when the suspension of the application of Annex II for the nationals of the third country concerned takes effect or when an objection to the delegated act is expressed pursuant to Article 4b(5), any implementing act adopted pursuant to point (e) concerning that third country shall expire.

Where the Commission submits a legislative proposal as referred to in point (h), the period of suspension referred to in the first subparagraph of this point shall be extended by six months. The footnote referred to in that subparagraph shall be amended accordingly.

Without prejudice to the application of Article 4, during the periods of that suspension the nationals of the third country concerned by the delegated act shall be required to be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States;

- (g) any subsequent notification made by another Member State pursuant to point (a) concerning the same third country during the period of application of measures adopted pursuant to point (e) or (f) with regard to that third country shall be merged into the ongoing procedures without the deadlines or periods set out in those points being extended;
- (h) if within six months of the entry into force of the delegated act referred to in point (f) the third country in question has not lifted the visa requirement, the Commission may submit a legislative proposal for amending this Regulation in order to transfer the reference to the third country from Annex II to Annex I;

- (i) the procedures referred to in points (e), (f) and (h) shall not affect the right of the Commission to submit at any time a legislative proposal for amending this Regulation in order to transfer the reference to the third country concerned from Annex II to Annex I;
- (j) where the third country in question lifts the visa requirement, the Member State concerned shall immediately notify the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission thereof. The notification shall be published without delay by the Commission in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Any implementing or delegated act adopted pursuant to point (e) or (f) concerning the third country in question shall expire seven days after the publication referred to in the first subparagraph of this point. Where the third country in question has introduced a visa requirement for nationals of two or more Member States, the implementing or delegated act concerning that third country shall expire seven days after the publication of the notification concerning the last Member State whose nationals were subject to visa requirement by that third country. The footnote referred to in the first subparagraph of point (f) shall be deleted upon expiry of the delegated act concerned. The information on that expiry shall be published without delay by the Commission in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Where the third country in question lifts the visa requirement without the Member State concerned notifying it in accordance with the first subparagraph of this point, the Commission shall on its own initiative proceed without delay with the publication referred to in that subparagraph, and the second subparagraph of this point shall apply.";

(b) paragraph 5 is deleted;

(2) the following Articles are inserted:

"Article 1a

1. By way of derogation from Article 1(2), the exemption from the visa requirement for nationals of a third country listed in Annex II shall be temporarily suspended in emergency situations, as a last resort, in accordance with this Article.
2. A Member State may notify the Commission if it is confronted, over a six-month period, in comparison with the same period in the previous year or with the last six months prior to the implementation of the exemption from the visa requirement for nationals of a third country listed in Annex II, with one or more of the following circumstances leading to an emergency situation which it is unable to remedy on its own, namely a substantial and sudden increase in the number of:
 - (a) nationals of that third country found to be staying in the Member State's territory without a right thereto;

- (b) asylum applications from the nationals of that third country for which the recognition rate is low, where such an increase is leading to specific pressures on the Member State's asylum system;
- (c) rejected readmission applications submitted by the Member State to that third country for its own nationals.

The comparison with the six-month period prior to the implementation of the exemption from the visa requirement as referred to in the first subparagraph shall only be applicable during a period of seven years from the date of implementation of the exemption from the visa requirement for nationals of that third country.

The notification referred to in the first subparagraph shall state the reasons on which it is based and shall include relevant data and statistics as well as a detailed explanation of the preliminary measures that the Member State concerned has taken with a view to remedying the situation. The Commission shall inform the European Parliament and the Council immediately of such notification.

3. The Commission shall examine any notification made pursuant to paragraph 2, taking into account:
 - (a) whether any of the situations described in paragraph 2 are present;

- (b) the number of Member States affected by any of the situations described in paragraph 2;
- (c) the overall impact of the increases referred to in paragraph 2 on the migratory situation in the Union as it appears from the data provided by the Member States;
- (d) the reports prepared by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, the European Asylum Support Office or the European Police Office (Europol) if circumstances so require in the specific case notified;
- (e) the overall question of public policy and internal security, in consultations with the Member State concerned.

The Commission shall inform the European Parliament and the Council of the results of its examination.

4. Where the Commission, on the basis of the examination referred to in paragraph 3, and taking into account the consequences of a suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement for the external relations of the Union and its Member States with the third country concerned, while working in close cooperation with that third country to find alternative long-term solutions, decides that action is needed, it shall, within three months of receipt of the notification referred to in paragraph 2, adopt an implementing act temporarily suspending the exemption from the visa requirement for the nationals of the third country concerned for a period of six months. That implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 4a(2). The implementing act shall determine the date on which the suspension of the exemption from the visa requirement is to take effect.

Without prejudice to the application of Article 4, during the periods of that suspension the nationals of the third country concerned by the implementing act shall be required to be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States.

5. Before the end of the period of validity of the implementing act adopted pursuant to paragraph 4, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member State concerned, shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council. The report may be accompanied by a legislative proposal for amending this Regulation in order to transfer the reference to the third country concerned from Annex II to Annex I.

6. Where the Commission has submitted a legislative proposal pursuant to paragraph 5, it may extend the validity of the implementing act adopted pursuant to paragraph 4 by a period not exceeding 12 months. The decision to extend the validity of the implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 4a(2).

Article 1b

By ...⁺, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council assessing the effectiveness of the reciprocity mechanism provided for in Article 1(4) and the suspension mechanism provided for in Article 1a and shall, if necessary, submit a legislative proposal for amending this Regulation. The European Parliament and the Council shall act on such a proposal by the ordinary legislative procedure.";

- (3) Article 4 is amended as follows:

- (a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

"1. A Member State may provide for exceptions from the visa requirement provided for by Article 1(1) or from the exemption from the visa requirement provided for by Article 1(2) as regards:

- (a) holders of diplomatic passports, service/official passports or special passports;

⁺ OJ: please insert date: 4 years after entry into force of this amending Regulation.

- (b) civilian air and sea crew members in the performance of their duties;
 - (c) civilian sea crew members, when they go ashore, who hold a seafarer's identity document issued in accordance with the International Labour Organisation Conventions No 108 of 13 May 1958 or No 185 of 16 June 2003 or the International Maritime Organisation Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic of 9 April 1965;
 - (d) crew and members of emergency or rescue missions in the event of disaster or accident;
 - (e) civilian crew of ships navigating in international inland waters;
 - (f) holders of travel documents issued by intergovernmental international organisations of which at least one Member State is member, or by other entities recognised by the Member State concerned as subjects of international law, to officials of those organisations or entities.";
- (b) in paragraph 2 the following point is added:
- "(d) without prejudice to the requirements stemming from the European Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Refugees signed at Strasbourg on 20 April 1959, recognised refugees and stateless persons and other persons who do not hold the nationality of any country who reside in the United Kingdom or in Ireland and are holders of a travel document issued by the United Kingdom or Ireland, which is recognised by the Member State concerned.";

(4) the following Articles are inserted:

"Article 4a

1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee. That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council*.
2. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.
3. Where the committee delivers no opinion, the Commission shall not adopt the draft implementing act and the third subparagraph of Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

Article 4b

1. The power to adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission subject to the conditions laid down in this Article.
2. The power to adopt delegated acts referred to in point (f) of Article 1(4) shall be conferred on the Commission for a period of five years from ...⁺. The Commission shall draw up a report in respect of the delegation of power not later than nine months before the end of the five-year period. The delegation of power shall be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months before the end of each period.

⁺ OJ: please insert the date of entry into force of this amending Regulation.

3. The delegation of power referred to in point (f) of Article 1(4) may be revoked at any time by the European Parliament or by the Council. A decision to revoke shall put an end to the delegation of the power specified in that decision. It shall take effect the day following the publication of the decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union* or at a later date specified therein. It shall not affect the validity of any delegated acts already in force.
4. As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council.
5. A delegated act adopted pursuant to point (f) of Article 1(4) shall enter into force only if no objection has been expressed either by the European Parliament or the Council within a period of four months of notification of that act to the European Parliament and the Council or if, before the expiry of that period, the European Parliament and the Council have both informed the Commission that they will not object. That period shall be extended by two months at the initiative of the European Parliament or of the Council.

* Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13)."

Article 2

Article 1a of Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 as amended by this Regulation, and in particular the provisions of the second subparagraph of paragraph 2 thereof, shall apply also to third countries with regard to whose nationals the exemption from the visa requirement was introduced before ...⁺.

Article 3

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in the Member States in accordance with the Treaties.

Done at Strasbourg,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

⁺ OJ: please insert the date of entry into force of this amending Regulation.