

9 June 2016

Ms Federica Mogherini,
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr Bert Koenders,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Mr Klaas Dijkhoff,
Minister for Migration of the Netherlands

Dear Federica,
Dear Bert,
Dear Klaas,

We are writing to you on the issue of visa liberalization for Georgia that is currently being discussed at the Council. We do hope our agreement on it may be reached at the upcoming JHA Council meeting already this Friday (June 10), and we strongly count on everyone's good will and result-oriented approach in this regard.

We also wish to thank the High Representative for taking into account our request to include Georgia's visa liberalization item into the agenda of the next FAC meeting (June 20), in case we cannot strike an accord beforehand.

In the recent years, the EU and its Member States have been working closely with our partners across the neighbourhood, trying to incentivize them to deliver more on reforms. For this purpose, differentiation based on "more-for-more" principle has become one of the key principles of the Eastern Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy in general. Thus, it is not only our partners who have to deliver. We need to deliver on our side as well.

Throughout the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP) implementation process, Georgian government has made major efforts to implement a wide range of reforms in order to meet the criteria for short-term visa free travels to the Schengen area. As from the very first day, Georgia's progress was duly monitored by the European Commission and the Council. Numerous EU expert missions were sent to Georgia in order to assess actual progress on the ground. Finally, on March 9, 2016, the European Commission put forward a respective legislative proposal that has already been negotiated by various preparatory bodies of the Council and the JHA Council itself.

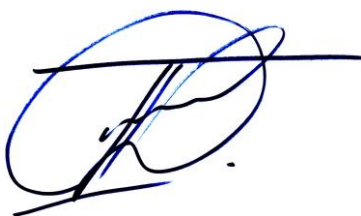
Regretfully, no decision by the Council has been reached yet, despite a number of additional safeguards agreed in this regard.

We are convinced that it is now time for us to fulfil our commitment. Any further postponement to take a decision will undermine our credibility and might have adverse effects on European integration related reforms in Georgia as well as in other partner countries.

It is our strong conviction that the revised suspension mechanism (including its non-regression clause) agreed at the JHA Council last month, and the very strong commitment by the Georgian authorities to further strengthen law enforcement cooperation with the EU and individual Member States, provide us necessary conditions to move forward.

We are ready to contribute to further collective efforts to achieving this goal.

We do send a copy of this letter to the EU Foreign and Interior ministers as well.



Daniel Mitov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria

/signed/

Rumiana Bachvarova
Minister of the Interior of Bulgaria



Marina Kaljurand
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia



Hanno Pevkur
Minister of the Interior of Estonia



Edgars Rinkēvičs
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia



Rihards Kozlovskis
Minister of the Interior of Latvia

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Linas Linkevičius
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

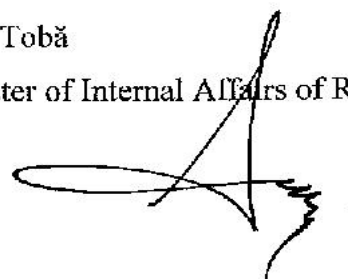
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Tomas Žilinskas
Minister of the Interior of Lithuania

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Lazăr Comănescu.

Lazăr Comănescu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

Petre Tobă
Minister of Internal Affairs of Romania

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