

Movement of Citizens

<http://www.eu-nato.gov.ge/en/eu/persons-movement>

Georgia–EU Cooperation on Migration and Visa Issues

Visa facilitation opportunities were mentioned first in the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan (ENP AP) in 2006.

As envisaged by the ENP Action Plan a Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security was created, first meeting of which was held on April 30, 2008 in Brussels.

Necessity of starting negotiations on visa facilitation with Georgia was emphasized in conclusions of the special meeting of the European Council held on September 1, 2008.

On November 27, 2008 the EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council approved a mandate for the European Commission to start negotiations with Georgia on the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.

On April 2-3, 2009, the first round of the EU-Georgia negotiations on Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements took place in Brussels.

The Visa Facilitation Agreement and Readmission Agreement between the EU and Georgia were signed respectively on June 17, 2010 and on November 22, 2010. Both agreements entered into force on March 1, 2011.

The Visa Facilitation Agreement covers the following issues:

- The visa fee is reduced to EUR 35 for all applicants. A list of necessary documents for official invitation is specified.
- Long term visas (1-5) are used more frequently.
- Certain visa categories are issued free of charge, including for pensioners, children, persons traveling for medical reasons, close relatives, pupils, students, sportsmen, scientists, representatives of cultural sphere etc.;
- Holders of diplomatic passports are exempt from visa requirements;
- Maximum duration of visa application procedure is 10 days;
- The Joint Georgia-EU Committee has been set up to monitor implementation of the agreement, where Georgia is able to settle unjustly denied visa cases.
- For the following categories of citizens of Georgia, the following documents are sufficient for justifying the purpose of the journey to the other Party:
- For close relatives – spouse, children (including adopted), parents (including custodians), grandparents, grandchildren – who are visiting citizens of Georgia legally residing in the territory of the Member States:

- a written request from the host person; For members of official delegations who, following an official invitation to Georgia, shall participate in meetings, consultations, negotiations or exchange programmes, as well as in events held in the territory of the Member States by intergovernmental organizations:

- a letter issued by a Georgia authority confirming that the applicant is a member of a delegation travelling to the territory of the Member States to participate in the aforementioned events, accompanied by a copy of the official invitation For pupils, students, post-graduate persons and accompanying teachers who undertake trips for the purposes of study or educational training, including in the framework of exchange programmes as well as other school-related activities:

- a written request or a certificate of enrolment from the host university, college or school or student cards or certificates of the courses to be attended; For persons travelling for medical reasons and necessary accompanying persons:

- an official document of the medical institution confirming necessity of medical care in this institution, the necessity of being accompanied and proof of sufficient financial means to pay for the medical treatment; For journalists and accredited persons accompanying them in a professional capacity:

- a certificate or other document issued by a professional organization proving that the person concerned is a qualified journalist or accompanying person in a professional capacity and a document issued by his/her employer stating that the purpose of the journey is to carry out journalistic work or assist in such work; For participants in international sport events and persons accompanying them in a professional capacity:

- a written request from the host organization, competent authorities, national sport federations or national Olympic committees of the Member States; For business people and representatives of business organizations:

- a written request from the host legal person, or company, organization or an office or a branch of such legal person or company, state or local authorities of the Member States or organizing committees or trade and industrial exhibitions, conferences and symposia held in the territories of the Member states, endorsed by the State Chamber of Registration of Georgia; For members of the professions participating in international exhibitions, conferences, symposia, seminars or other similar events held on the territory of the Member States:

- a written request from the host organization confirming that the person concerned is participating in the event; For representatives of civil society organizations when undertaking trips for the purposes of educational training, seminars, conferences, including in the framework of exchange programmes:

- a written request issued by the host organization, a confirmation that the person is representing the civil society organization and the certificate on establishment of such organization from the relevant register issued by a state authority in accordance with the national legislation; For persons participating in scientific, cultural, artistic activities, including university and other exchange programmes:

- a written request from the host organization to participate in the activities; For drivers conducting international cargos and passenger transportation services to the territories of the Member States in vehicles registered in Georgia:

- a written request from the national company or association of carriers of Georgia providing for international road transportation, stating the purpose, duration and frequency of the trips; For participants of the official exchange programmes organized by twin cities:

- a written request of the Head of Administration/Mayor of these cities or municipal authorities; For visiting military and civil burial grounds:

- an official document confirming the existence and preservation of the grave as well as family or other relationship between the applicant and the buried.

Note: the agreements do not apply to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark.

The Readmission Agreement aims to enhance cooperation between Georgia and the EU in fighting illegal migration. Also, the Agreement specifies a legal framework for return process of illegal migrants.

Under the Agreement, Georgia commits itself to receive all persons illegally residing on the EU territory, provided that their Georgian citizenship is proven.

Georgia takes responsibility to readmit third-country nationals, who: - Illegally and directly entered a territory of the Member State after having stayed, or transited through the territory of Georgia ; - Hold at the time of submission of the readmission application, a valid visa or residence permit issued by Georgia.

All Georgian Consulates accredited on the EU territory are involved in the Readmission process and their obligations are specified in detail that ensures protection of rights of Georgian citizens residing even illegally.

The Agreement also covers issues related to readmission procedures: - List of documents providing the citizenship; - Citizenship certificates which clearly indicates citizenship(Third country or stateless person); - Deadlines of readmission process; - Issues about handing over and transportation of persons who are subjects to readmission.

In the framework of Visa Facilitation Agreement and Readmission Agreements, the Georgia-EU joint Committees were created, which ensure fulfillment of obligations and regular exchange of information.

Following effective implementation of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements and successful implementation of reforms in the field of Justice, Liberty and Security visa liberalisation dialogue between Georgia and the EU was officially launched on June 4, 2012.

Furthermore, Georgia carried out wide range of reforms fostering implementation of the Visa Liberalisation process successfully. As a result, on February 25, 2013, during the visit of the Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom, the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan was handed over to the Government of Georgia.

The Action Plan defines further steps to be undertaken by Georgia for the visa liberalisation in accordance with four standard blocks (document security; illegal migration; public order and security; foreign affairs and human rights). Successful implementation of these steps will enable the Government of Georgia to start negotiations on visa free regime with the EU.

The Visa Liberalisation Action Plan consists of two phases: Legislative and Implementation. The aim of the Government of Georgia is to finalize first phase of the Action Plan and move to the implementation of second phase by the end of 2013.