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The Visa-free Europe Coalition is calling upon the European Commission to propose progression of the Republic of Moldova to the second phase of the implementation of the Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation (APVL).

The move would be a fair recognition of the progress made by Chisinau in fulfilling the conditions previously agreed with the European Union. A monitoring report¹ by members of the Coalition – the Romanian Center for European Policies (CRPE) and the Foreign Policy Association (APE, Chisinau) – showed that, by mid-May 2012, Moldova was fulfilling 86% of the conditions required in the first phase. Considering the complexity of the reforms included in the Action Plan, this result alone spoke volumes about the high commitment of the Moldovan authorities. The abovementioned report also drew attention to the two areas where Chisinau had still to work on: a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and a new strategy to reform the Anti-corruption Centre. On 25 May 2012 the Parliament finally adopted the two laws. Independent ongoing monitoring² by the Stefan Batory Foundation (Warsaw) and the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS “Viitorul”, Chisinau) also demonstrates the fulfilment of the criteria required by the EU. Now we can surely attest that Moldova made sufficient progress to pass to the second phase of the Action Plan.

¹ http://www.crpe.ro/library/files/paper_vize_en.pdf

² www.monitoring.visa-free-europe.eu

The current government adopted progressive anti-discrimination law (renamed 'law on assuring equality') despite high political costs and after months of political campaign against the law by the Party of Communists and extremist religious groups. It is the right moment for the EU to reward the pro-European government for its courage and commitment and to send a positive message to the Euro-optimistic citizens of Moldova. Moving to the second phase of the APVL would mean that the EU is keeping its promise to progress with each country on visa dialogue according with its own merits. It would be a fair use of the 'more for more' principle, which is so vocally advocated by the EU in its relations with the Eastern Partnership countries.

Moreover, the list of laws adopted by Chisinau during the first phase is long and foresees implementing such complex and costly measures as combating human trafficking and reforming the Ministry of Home Affairs. Postponing the second phase of the APVL risks also delaying the implementation of these reformist laws.

We therefore urge the European Commission and the Council to advance Moldova to the second phase of APVL implementation as soon as possible.

Coalition for the European Continent Undivided by Visa Barriers (Visa-free Europe Coalition) was launched in 2010 on the initiative of the Stefan Batory Foundation. Today more than 40 non-governmental organizations from different parts of Europe are its members. The coalition takes joint actions to speed up the process of EU visa liberalization with the countries of the Eastern Partnership (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Russia. It is the outcome of many years of collaboration between the member organizations. Jointly we have prepared reports and policy papers, recommendations and advocacy tools. The activities of the Coalition are coordinated by the Friendly EU Border project within the Open Europe Program of the Stefan Batory Foundation.

On behalf of the Coalition,



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coordinator of the Visa-free Europe Coalition

CC: Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement

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Association for International Affairs (AMO), Prague, Czech Republic
Belarus Watch, Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania
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Open Society Institute, Brussels, Belgium
Östgruppen – Swedish Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, Stockholm, Sweden
Our Choice Foundation, Warsaw, Poland
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