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Reducing visa fees for Belarussian citizens

Written declaration No. 412

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

Amongst Europeans, Belarussian citizens have to pay the highest fees to enter countries belonging to the Schengen zone: €60 for a single-entry visa. This sum amounts to almost one third of the average monthly salary in Belarus. This, together with bureaucratic hurdles, creates overwhelming difficulties for ordinary Belarussians, especially students, youth and business people, in travelling to Europe, and reduces even further their chances of coming into contact with other Europeans.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Council of Europe member states and the European Union have constantly and repeatedly stated that the policy applied towards the Belarussian authorities should not have any adverse consequences on ordinary Belarussians, who should not be isolated. However, the EU has made it clear that it will reduce visa fees only once Belarus joins the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

We, the undersigned, considering that the maintenance of such high fees is in contradiction with their undertaking not to isolate ordinary Belarussians, ask the European Union and European governments to reduce visa fees and simplify visa procedures for Belarussian citizens in order to facilitate their mobility as much as possible.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

RIGONI Andrea, Italy, ALDE
AZZOLINI Claudio, Italy
BÉTEILLE Laurent, France, EPP/CD
BIBERAJ Aleksandër, Albania
BRANDE Luc, Van den, Belgium, EPP/CD
ÇAVUŞOĞLU Mevlüt, Turkey, EDG
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OHLSSON Carina, Sweden, SOC
POURGOURIDES Christos, Cyprus, EPP/CD
ROCHEBLOINE François, France, EPP/CD
RUSSELL-JOHNSTON David, United Kingdom
SLUTSKY Leonid, Russian Federation, SOC
SYDOW Björn, von, Sweden, SOC
SZABÓ Vilmos, Hungary
TEKELİOĞLU Mehmet, Turkey, EPP/CD
UMAKHANOV Ilyas, Russian Federation, EDG
ZACCHERA Marco, Italy

Total = 37

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left