

25 March 2015



Touring Visa - HOTREC considerations

HOTREC fully welcomes the Touring Visa ([COM \(2014\) 163 final](#)), in order to allow legitimate travellers (tourists, business people, pensioners) to stay for more than three months in Schengen, provided that the applicant does not intend to stay for more than three months in any 6 month period in the same Member State.

The aforementioned legitimate travellers are likely to generate considerable revenue and boost the economic activity in the EU.

The proposed legislation goes in line with anti-terrorism mechanisms implemented in the EU and does not cope with the entrance of illegal migrants in the Schengen area.

- A legal framework does not exist nowadays for legitimate travellers (tourists, pensioners, artists) to stay in two or more Member States for more than 3 months in any 6 month period, provided that the applicant does not intend to stay for more than 90 days in any 6 month period in the same Member State. Due to the lack of legislation, travellers staying for more than 3 months in Schengen need to present different requests to obtain a visa, which is burdensome, costly and time consuming;
- After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty the limitation to stay in Schengen for three months has been deleted – according with the Commission it is exactly to allow legitimate travellers to come to Schengen for longer periods. This constitutes the legal basis that allows the Touring Visa to exist;
- The impact assessment presented by the Commission showed that Administrative costs for processing the new type of authorisation would not be significant, given the limited number of applications expected and the fee to be charged;
- The Parliament could hold more meetings with the Commission to have access to the data regarding the impact assessments done so far. **A new impact assessment on the touring visa would delay tremendously the entire visa package procedure.** In any case, the estimated numbers presented by the Commission are significant: Europe should not throw away the possibility of having 120 000 more applicants to enter Schengen. This could

represent an economic impact of EUR 1 billion. These “big spenders” are likely to generate considerable revenue and to boost economic activity in the EU;

- Travelers need to go through a much more difficult application if they are applying for a Touring visa. For this reason, if the visa applicant is not in good faith, he/she will not apply for a Touring Visa. In fact, travellers will need to show different documents, such as: proof of sickness insurance; proof that they intend to stay only for the allowed time period; salary slips or bank statements covering a period of 12 months prior to the application;
- Regarding the phasing out of bilateral agreements with third countries, HOTREC considers that:
 - A common EU policy on visa cannot be based on the bilateral agreements from the past;
 - Due to existent bilateral agreements (e.g. USA, New Zealand Canada), travellers stay indefinitely in the Schengen area (this situation for security reasons is not positive);
 - The proposal presents a five year transitional period for Member States to phase out the impact of their bilateral agreements, which gives time for Member States to adapt;
 - Third countries, when asked by visa travellers, usually advise them to apply for a short term Schengen Visa and not the bilateral in place.

CONCLUSION:

HOTREC strives for the swift adoption of the Visa Package (both Visa Code and Touring Visa) by the European Parliament and the Council. Delays in the procedures will mean a loss in growth and jobs in the tourism sector.

*

*

*