

REGULATION (EU) 2017/372 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**of 1 March 2017****amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (Georgia)**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular point (a) of Article 77(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure ⁽¹⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 ⁽²⁾ lists the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement. The composition of the lists of third countries in Annexes I and II should be, and should remain, consistent with the criteria set out in Regulation (EC) No 539/2001. References to third countries in respect of which the situation has changed as regards those criteria should be transferred from one annex to the other, as appropriate.
- (2) It is considered that Georgia has met all the benchmarks set out in the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan presented to the Georgian Government in February 2013, and therefore fulfils the relevant criteria for its citizens to be exempted from the visa requirement when travelling to the territory of Member States. The continuous fulfilment by Georgia of such criteria, especially on the fight against organised crime, will be duly monitored by the Commission in accordance with the relevant mechanism set out in Regulation (EC) No 539/2001.
- (3) The reference to Georgia should thus be transferred from Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 to Annex II thereto. That visa waiver should apply only to holders of biometric passports issued by Georgia in line with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
- (4) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which the United Kingdom does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2000/365/EC ⁽³⁾; the United Kingdom is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (5) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which Ireland does not take part, in accordance with Council Decision 2002/192/EC ⁽⁴⁾; Ireland is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application.
- (6) As regards Iceland and Norway, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the latter's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* ⁽⁵⁾, which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of Council Decision 1999/437/EC ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Position of the European Parliament of 2 February 2017 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and decision of the Council of 27 February 2017.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (OJ L 81, 21.3.2001, p. 1).

⁽³⁾ Council Decision 2000/365/EC of 29 May 2000 concerning the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 131, 1.6.2000, p. 43).

⁽⁴⁾ Council Decision 2002/192/EC of 28 February 2002 concerning Ireland's request to take part in some of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 64, 7.3.2002, p. 20).

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 36.

⁽⁶⁾ Council Decision 1999/437/EC of 17 May 1999 on certain arrangements for the application of the Agreement concluded by the Council of the European Union and the Republic of Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning the association of those two States with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 31).

- (7) As regards Switzerland, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* ⁽¹⁾, which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of Decision 1999/437/EC, read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2008/146/EC ⁽²⁾.
- (8) As regards Liechtenstein, this Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* within the meaning of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* ⁽³⁾, which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of Decision 1999/437/EC read in conjunction with Article 3 of Council Decision 2011/350/EU ⁽⁴⁾,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 is amended as follows:

- (a) in Annex I, Part 1 ('STATES'), the reference to Georgia is deleted.
- (b) in Annex II, Part 1 ('STATES'), the following reference is inserted:

'Georgia (*)

(*) The visa waiver is limited to the holders of biometric passports issued by Georgia in line with standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).'

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in the Member States in accordance with the Treaties.

Done at Brussels, 1 March 2017.

For the European Parliament

The President

A. TAJANI

For the Council

The President

C. AGIUS

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 52.

⁽²⁾ Council Decision 2008/146/EC of 28 January 2008 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis* (OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 1).

⁽³⁾ OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 21.

⁽⁴⁾ Council Decision 2011/350/EU of 7 March 2011 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol between the European Union, the European Community, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on the accession of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the Agreement between the European Union, the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the Swiss Confederation's association with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*, relating to the abolition of checks at internal borders and movement of persons (OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 19).