

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF KAZAKHSTAN AT THE SUPPLEMENTARY
HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING
ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND HUMAN CONTACTS**

***Delivered by Mr. Usen Suleimen , Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign
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**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you know the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 envisages the right to free cross-border movement as one of basic human rights.

Under effective OSCE instruments participating States shall facilitate the free movement and human contacts individually and collectively on a formal and informal basis.

An on-going visa discussion adds to the issue of freedom of movements between countries. It's is back to decades ago when the participating States announced of their intention to "gradually and flexibly simplify the entry and exit procedures, as well as to facilitate regulations concerning movement of citizens from other member states on territories thereof."

As is known, the OSCE participating States have also agreed to focus on "proposals for entering into agreements on reissuance of multiple entry visas and mutual simplification of visa formalities."

In accordance with the multilateral *Agreement on mutual visa-free movement* entered into by and between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and a number of similar bilateral agreements with Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, citizens of the states-signatories may fully enjoy the freedom of movement in the above states without visas.

However, visa barriers established between the OSCE European and Asian parts do still pose significant obstacles to free movement of our people. Due to intensified mutual trips of people and increased number of political, economic, trade and business contacts between Astana and the capitals of European countries this issue is gaining in importance.

Of note is that Kazakhstan has already adopted a suite of measures aimed at creating favourable conditions for foreigners during their stay on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Commencing 2004 Kazakhstan has simplified visa issuance to citizens of 48 politically stable and economically developed countries, including 27 EU Member States.

To date, Kazakhstan has acceded to 57 agreements on cancellation of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic passports, including with the 21 EU member-states. Corresponding work to expand this list is underway. Execution of agreement with the United States on mutual issuance of five-year visas of various categories is expected in the nearest future.

Seeking to avoid migration risks by nationals of third countries, Kazakhstan has signed readmission agreements with Germany, Switzerland, Norway, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Uzbekistan. In addition, we are working on harmonising national legislation in line with European standards. Kazakhstani diplomatic and service passports with electronic data carriers meeting international requirements to MRTDs (Machine Readable Travel Documents) are to be issued shortly.

Visa facilitation is a modality of meetings held on a regular basis between representatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the EU at different levels. The fact that beginning 1 January 2013 EU states have agreed to shorten the period of issuing Schengen visas to RoK government officials and holders of official passports and worked out a uniform list of documents to obtain Schengen visas is but a step forward in visa issue facilitation.

However, Kazakh nationals travelling to Europe are still encountering difficulties in obtaining Schengen visas. Long list of documents, including the information on bank accounts, work reference and documents related to the applicant's private life are required.

Specifically it is still problematic for members of the Kazakhstan official delegations travelling at the invitation of international organizations headquartered in Vienna (IAEA, OSCE and the UN). Frequent lengthy review of documents by the EU embassies accredited in Astana entail cancellation of visits by Kazakhstani delegations heading for international conferences and seminars hosted in Vienna.

Issuance of Schengen visas to Kazakhstani students studying at universities in Austria, Czech Republic, the UK and other EU countries involves difficulties. Time-consuming examination of visa applications and occasional refusals to issue visas result in disruption of planned and pre-paid plans to take long-term educational programs in Europe.

In line with OSCE commitments participating States have repeatedly stressed that "the freedom of movement and human contacts are essential in preserving and developing free societies and prosperous countries." In this regard, Kazakhstan promotes strengthening cooperation among the OSCE participating States to facilitate the visa regime and gradual abolition of visa requirements for Euro-Atlantic region.

Simplified procedure for mutual trips of citizens is the key to successful partnership of member states. This will contribute to strengthening political, economic, business, cultural and scientific relations. We do hope that Kazakhstan initiatives will receive every support. We stand ready to have a constructive dialogue.

Thank you.