

EU visa liberalisation

Final obstacle cleared for belated inclusion of Bosnia and Albania in EU visa-free scheme

EU justice ministers today unanimously endorsed a proposal to include Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania in the EU visa liberalisation scheme, clearing the way for their inclusion by the end of the year. Green MEPs welcomed the belated decision but called for Kosovo to be included. Commenting on the Council decision, Dutch Green MEP **Marije Cornelissen** said:

"The final obstacle has been cleared for the belated but welcome inclusion of Bosnia and Albania in the EU's visa-free travel scheme. We welcome that the opposition in Council - notably from France - was overcome and that ministers approved the decision unanimously. This important decision will give a crucial boost to the citizens of these two countries - giving them the same rights and privileges as their neighbours - and it is important that the EU has decided this with one voice. "

Greens/EFA foreign affairs spokesperson and EP rapporteur on Kosovo **Ulrike Lunacek** added:

"Today's decision is another step in the progress of the Balkan countries towards their European destiny but the case of Kosovo is now all the more pressing. It is now the last remaining exception to the rule of the inclusion of Balkan countries in the EU's visa-free travel scheme. We urge the Commission to move to immediately resolve this anomaly. While a small minority of member states still does not recognise Kosovo as an independent state, this is no reason to deny its citizens the right to visa-free travel that is now offered to all others in the region."

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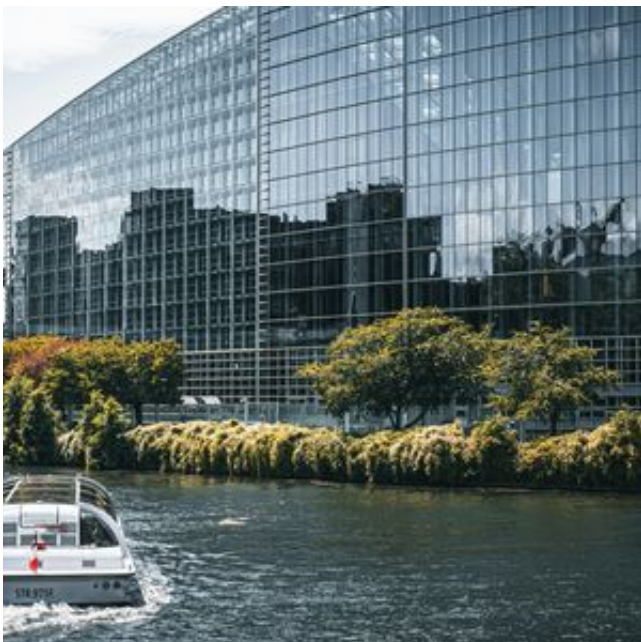


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Responsible MEPs



Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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