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From:	Presidency
To:	Visa Working Party/Mixed Committee (EU-Iceland/Norway and Switzerland/Liechtenstein)
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Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EC) No 810/2009 and (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulations (EC) No 1683/95, (EC) No 333/2002, (EC) No 693/2003 and (EC) No 694/2003 and Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, as regards the digitalisation of the visa procedure - Presidency compromise text

With a view to the meeting of the Visa Working Party of 8 and 9 December 2022, delegations will find in in the Annex the Presidency compromise text concerning the whole abovementioned proposal.

The old changes to the Commission's proposal are marked in underline for additions and ~~striketrough~~ for deletions. The new changes are marked in **bold underline** for addition and ~~**bold**~~ ~~striketrough~~ for deletions.

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
amending Regulations (EC) No 767/2008, (EC) No 810/2009 and (EU) 2017/2226 of the
European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulations (EC) No 1683/95, (EC) No
333/2002, (EC) No 693/2003 and (EC) No 694/2003 and Convention implementing the
Schengen Agreement, as regards the digitalisation of the visa procedure

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 Articles 77(2), point (a), and 79(2), point (a), 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,

Whereas:

- (1) The Union's common visa policy has been an integral part of the establishment of an area without internal borders. Visa policy should remain an essential element in helping counter security risks and the risk of irregular migration to the Union, while facilitating tourism and business. The common visa policy should contribute to generating growth and be consistent with other Union policies, such as those concerning external relations, trade, education, culture and tourism. In March 2018 Commission communication on visa policy addressed the concept of “e-visas” and announced a feasibility study on digital visa procedures and the intention to assess options and promote pilot projects to prepare the ground for future proposals. When revising the EU Visa Code in 2019, the European Parliament and the Council explicitly stated the aim of developing a common solution in the future to allow Schengen visa applications to be lodged online, thereby making full use of recent legal and technological developments¹.

¹ Recital 20 in Regulation (EU) 2019/1155

- (2) The initiative is in line with the general EU approach to encourage the modernisation and digitalisation of public services and the Commission communication on the *2030 Digital compass: the European way for the digital decade*². Since the entry into force of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council³ in 2010 and the start of operations of the Visa Information System (VIS) in 2011 under Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁴, migration and security challenges faced in recent years have considerably transformed the visa policy context. In addition, significant technological developments provide new opportunities to make the Schengen visa application process smoother and more effective for third-country nationals and Member States authorities.
- (3) The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the slowing down of Schengen visa operations worldwide partly due to the difficulty of receiving visa applicants in consulates and Visa Application Centres, prompted Member States to call upon the Commission to speed up work on digitalisation of visa procedures.
- (4) The New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the Commission on 23 September 2020 set the objective of making the visa procedure fully digitalised by 2025, with a digital visa and the ability to submit visa applications online.
- (5) While visa processing is already partially digitalised, with applications and decisions recorded in the VIS, two important steps remain paper-based: the visa application process and the issuance of the visa to the applicant by means of a visa sticker. This creates a burden for all stakeholders, in particular for Member States authorities issuing visas and visa applicants. Member States are aware of this and some of them have already implemented digital solutions in order to provide applicants with a modern and user-friendly application procedure and to improve the efficiency of handling visa applications.
- (6) Visa applicants should be able to apply for a visa online through a single EU platform, regardless of the Member State of destination. This tool should automatically determine which Member State is competent to examine an application, in particular where the applicant intends to visit several Member States. Member States will only need to check whether the tool determined the correct competent Member State.

² COM(2021) 118 final, Commission communication on the 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade

³ Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243 15.9.2009, p. 1).

⁴ Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 concerning the Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas, (OJ L 218, 13.8.2008, p. 60).

- (7) The EU online application platform should provide the applicant with up-to-date information on Schengen short-stay visas and a guidance tool with which the applicant can find all the necessary information regarding the requirements and procedures, such as, but not limited to, whether a visa is required and what type of visa; the amount of the visa fee; the Member State competent for handling the application; the supporting documents required; the need for an appointment to collect biometrics or the possibility to apply online without an appointment. **The platform should also include a chatbot to answer questions of the applicants and a printing function.** The EU application platform should also allow to establish a secure electronic communication between the applicant and the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State by electronic means, should additional documents or an interview be required.
- (8) Visa applicants should be able to submit their application, provide data required in the application form, provide ~~an electronic scanned~~ copy of the travel document, and provide supporting documents and travel medical insurance in digital format through the EU application platform. In order to enable applicants to save information relating to their application, the online application platform should be able to store data temporarily. Once the applicant has submitted the online application and the Member States perform the appropriate checks, the application file will be transferred to the national system of the competent Member State and stored there. Consulates would consult the information stored at a national level and push only the required data to the central VIS.
- (9) Appearing in person at the consulate or external service provider should, in principle, be mandatory only for first time applicants and applicants who have acquired a new travel document, which needs to be verified, and for the collection of biometric identifiers. **However, in justified individual cases, or in cases where there is a high incidence of fraudulent documents in a particular location, Member States should retain the possibility to ask to the applicant to appear in person.**
- (10) Repeat applicants should be able to apply fully online within a period of 59 months after their initial ~~successful~~ application provided that they apply with the same travel document. Once this period of time has elapsed, biometrics should be collected again, as referred to in Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, under which biometric data are, in principle, to be collected every 59 months, starting from the date of the first collection.

- (11) Specific provisions apply to third-country nationals subject to a visa requirement, who are family members of citizens of the Union to whom Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁵ applies or of third-country nationals enjoying the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country, on the other, and who do not hold a residence card pursuant to Directive 2004/38/EU, or of UK nationals who are beneficiaries of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community⁶ (EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement) in relation to their host State, and who do not hold a EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement residence document.
- (12) Article 21(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union stipulates that every citizen of the Union shall have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, subject to the limitations and conditions laid down in the Treaties and by the measures adopted to give them effect. The respective limitations and conditions are to be found in Directive 2004/38/EC. As confirmed by the Court of Justice of the European Union, family members referred to under recital 11 have not only the right to enter the territory of the Member State but also to obtain an entry visa for that purpose. Member States must grant such persons every facility to obtain the necessary visas which must be issued free of charge as soon as possible and on the basis of an accelerated procedure and with due regards to the procedural safeguards that apply to them. Against this background, in particular, such family members should be entitled to lodge their visa application, their application for a confirmation of a valid visa in a new travel document or their application for the extension of their visa without using the EU application platform, as this may facilitate their visa application. In such a case, they should be entitled to choose to lodge their applications in person at the consulate or at the external service providers. In addition, the EU online visa application platform should fully take into account the rights and facilitations granted to the beneficiaries of the free movement *acquis*. The same applies with regard to family members of UK nationals who are beneficiaries of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in relation to their host State, by virtue of Article 14(3) of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement.
- (13) Special provisions should apply in ~~individual cases because~~ of humanitarian reasons, in justified individual cases, in cases of force majeure, or to Heads of State or government and members of a national government with accompanying spouses, and the members of their official delegation when they are invited by Member States' governments or by international organisations for an official purpose, sovereigns and other senior members of a royal family, when they are invited by Member States' governments or by international organisations for an official purpose.

⁵ Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amending Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and repealing Directives 64/221/EEC, 68/360/EEC, 72/194/EEC, 73/148/EEC, 75/34/EEC, 75/35/EEC, 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 93/96/EEC (OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 77).

⁶ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (OJ L 29, 31.1.2020, p. 7).

- (14) Special provisions which should apply in individual cases because of humanitarian reasons could cover digital accessibility issues.
- (15) A third party **duly** authorised by the visa applicant or empowered by law to represent them should be able to lodge an application on their behalf, provided this person's identity is included in the application form. ~~It should be possible for travellers to authorise commercial intermediaries to create and submit an application on their behalf.~~
- (16) Each applicant should submit a completed application form using the EU application platform. **The online application form**, including a declaration of the authenticity, completeness, correctness and reliability of the data submitted and a declaration of the veracity and reliability of the statements made, **should be signed electronically by ticking an appropriate box in the application form**. Each applicant should also state that they have understood the conditions for entry referred to in Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁷ and that they could be requested to provide the relevant supporting documents at each entry. **Applicants should confirm that they agree to receive communications via the EU platform. For that purpose they should access the platform on a regular basis.** Application forms for minors should be submitted and electronically signed by a person exercising permanent or temporary parental authority or legal guardianship.
- (16a) When applying for a visa, applicants should provide proof of holding supporting documents. For the purposes of this Regulation, this encompasses both the digital and physical submission of documents.**
- (17) }The payment of the visa fee should be made by using a third-party gateway linked to the online application platform and the payments would be directly transferred, **in their entirety**, to the appropriate Member State. The data required for securing the electronic payment should not form part of data stored in VIS. **In cases where an electronic payment is not possible, the visa fee should be collected by the consulates or the external service provider entrusted with this task.**
- (18) The EU application platform will also contain ~~the-an~~ appointment tool, which the Member State may decide to use to manage appointments at their consulates or the external service providers. While the use of such tool should remain optional, as it might not be appropriate across all locations and for all consulates, Member States should nevertheless use local Schengen cooperation to discuss whether a harmonised approach regarding the use of the appointment tool could be followed in specific third countries or specific locations.
- (19) The system should notify the applicant if information is missing and ~~the system should~~ provide the applicant with the possibility of correcting the application. The EU application platform should indicate to the applicant of the admissibility of his/her application via an automated admissibility pre-check. The pre-check should ensure that the information provided fulfils the admissibility requirements for the requested visa.

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code)

- (20) Where the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State finds that it is responsible to examine the application, it should accept it and the data should be imported into the national system from the temporary storage as established by the VIS Regulation and deleted from the temporary storage with the exception of contact data.
- (21) Applicants should be notified by electronic means that there is new information regarding their application or visa. ~~of the~~ The decision taken by the competent Member State ~~on their application by electronic means,~~ indicating whether the visa is issued; refused; confirmed to a new travel document; extended; annulled or revoked, in accordance with Regulations (EC) No 810/2009 and (EC) No 767/2008: should be made available to the applicant in a secure account service in the EU application platform. Access to the secure account included in the platform should be protected by technical means, e.g. by means of a multi-factor authentication. The requirements regarding the functioning of the secure account should be defined by the Commission in an implementing act.
- (22) In order to reduce security risks related to counterfeited and stolen visa stickers, a visa should be issued in digital format and no longer as a visa sticker affixed to the travel document. Only the Member States which do not apply the Schengen *acquis* in full, and therefore do not have access to VIS to enter visa applications and store digital visas, should continue issuing visa sticker.
- (23) In order to ensure maximum security and prevent counterfeiting or forgery, the notification of digital visa should be in the form of a 2D barcode, cryptographically signed by the Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA) of the issuing Member State. In case VIS is unavailable or unreachable, checks would rely on a 2D barcode from the signing authority.
- (24) In case the travel document of the visa holder is lost, stolen, ~~or~~ has expired or has been invalidated and the visa is still valid, the visa holder could apply via the EU application platform for the confirmation of the visa in a new travel document under the condition that the new travel document is of the same type and issued by the same country as the lost, stolen, ~~or~~ expired or invalidated travel document. The visa holder should appear in person to the consulate or the external service provider to present the new travel document in order to verify the authenticity of the new travel document.
- (25) Data stored in the EU application platform should be safeguarded using privacy-enhancing implementation measures.
- (26) External service providers should have access to the EU application platform only to retrieve and review submitted applications; verify the data temporarily stored (for example, scan of travel document); check and upload the relevant personal data from the chip of the travel document; collect and upload biometric identifiers; perform quality checks of the uploaded supporting documents; confirm that an application has been reviewed and thus making it available to the consulate for further processing; external service providers should not have access to data stored in VIS.

- (27) It is necessary to determine the date from which operations start, including the digital visa and the EU application platform. A Member State may, for a period of 5 years from the date of start of operations, decide not to avail itself of the online EU application platform. Nevertheless, a Member State may notify that it wishes to join the online EU application platform before the end of the transition period. During the transitional period, if the Member State processing its visa applications decided not to avail itself of the online EU application platform, visa holders will still be able to verify the digital visas using the web-service of the EU application platform.
- (28) **The EU application platform should contain a functionality for applicants and other entities, such as employers or universities,** to verify their digital visas.
- (29) The Member States which do not apply the Schengen *acquis* in full, and therefore do not have access to VIS to enter visa applications and store digital visas, should continue to issue visas in the form of a uniform format (sticker).
- (30) In order to enable the application of Decision No 565/2014/EU, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania should have read-only access of digital visas stored in VIS.
- (31) The European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA) should be responsible for the technical development and operational management of the EU application platform and its components, as part of VIS.
- (32) The system architecture of the EU application platform should reuse the existing and upcoming systems that are part of the new framework for interoperability to the full extent possible, and in particular European Travel Authorisation Information System (ETIAS) and Entry-Exit System (EES), while respecting the current limitations of technology and the current investments made by Member States in their own national systems.
- (33) Checking of digital visas at the border should rely on the existing and upcoming EU system architecture for border management and should consist of the visa holder's information stored in the VIS. This information should be verified with biometric data by Member States authorities.
- (34) The format for short-stay visas, as set by Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95⁸, is also used for long-stay visas. Therefore, the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement⁹ should be amended to enable that long-stay visas are also issued in digital format.

⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 of 29 May 1995 laying down a uniform format for visas (OJ L 164, 14.7.1995, p. 1).

⁹ Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders (OJ L 239, 22.9.2000, p. 19).

- (35) Since the introduction of digital visas would obviate the need for affixing the physical visa sticker, the Regulation Council Regulation (EC) No 333/2002¹⁰ setting the uniform format for forms for affixing the visa issued by Member States to persons holding travel documents not recognised by the Member State should be modified accordingly.
- (36) Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) and Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD) constitute documents having the value of transit visas authorising their holders to enter in order to pass through the territories of Member States in accordance with the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* concerning the crossing of external borders. Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) and Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD) are issued in uniform formats and the application procedure is paper-based. In order to reflect digitalisation developments, and Council Regulation (EC) No 693/2003¹¹ and Council Regulation (EC) No 694/2003¹², should be amended to enable the issuance in digital format, as well as digital applications.
- ~~(37) In order to ensure that the application form and the refusal forms cater for the possibilities when a visa applicant submitted their application via the EU application platform or not, the power to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union should be delegated to the Commission to amend the list of information that the EU application platform should contain and to amend the appropriate standard forms and formats. It is of particular importance that the Commission carry out appropriate consultations during its preparatory work, including at expert level, and that those consultations be conducted in accordance with the principles laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law Making¹³. In particular, to ensure equal participation in the preparation of delegated acts, the European Parliament and the Council should receive all documents at the same time as Member States' experts, and their experts should systematically have access to meetings of Commission expert groups dealing with the preparation of delegated acts.~~

¹⁰ Council Regulation (EC) No 333/2002 of 18 February 2002 on a uniform format for forms for affixing the visa issued by Member States to persons holding travel documents not recognised by the Member State drawing up the form (OJ L 53, 23.2.2002, p. 4).

¹¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 of 14 April 2003 establishing a specific Facilitated Transit Document (FTD), a Facilitated Rail Transit Document (FRTD) and amending the Common Consular Instructions and the Common Manual (OJ L 99, 17.4.2003, p. 8).

¹² Council Regulation (EC) No 694/2003 of 14 April 2003 on uniform formats for Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) and Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD) provided for in Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 (OJ L 99, 17.4.2003, p. 15).

¹³ ~~OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1.~~

- (38) Since the objectives of this Regulation, namely, the establishment of the European online visa application platform and the introduction of a digital visa builds on other initiatives aiming, on the one hand, at streamlining and harmonising the procedures in the context of the common visa policy and, on the other hand, at aligning travel, entry requirements and border checks within the Schengen Area with the new digital era, the amendments of the related legislation are only possible at Union level and are part of the Schengen *acquis*. The Union may adopt measures in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives.
- (39) This Regulation is without prejudice to the application of Directive 2004/38/EC and of Part Two of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement.
- (40) This Regulation respects fundamental rights and observes the principles recognised in particular by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The introduction of an EU application platform and of a digital visa will fully respect the right to protection of personal data, the respect for private and family life, the rights of the child, and the protection of vulnerable persons. All safeguards on fundamental rights included in the Visa Information System Regulation will remain fully applicable in the context of the future EU Visa application platform and of the digital visa, in particular regarding to the rights of child. The platform will have to take into account requirements laid down in the Accessibility Directive¹⁴ to ensure an easy access for people with disabilities.
- (41) In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol No 22 on the Position of Denmark annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Denmark is not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application. Given that this Regulation builds upon the Schengen *acquis*, Denmark shall, in accordance with Article 4 of that Protocol, decide within a period of six months after the Council has decided on this Regulation whether it will implement it in its national law.
- (42) This Regulation constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which Ireland does not take part¹⁵; Ireland is therefore not taking part in the adoption of this Regulation and is not bound by it or subject to its application.

¹⁴ Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies, (OJ L 327, 2.12.2016, p. 1–15).

¹⁵ This Regulation falls outside the scope of the measures provided for in 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).

- (43) 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 association of those two States with the implementation, application and development of the Schengen *acquis*¹⁶ which fall within the area referred to in Article 1, point B of Council Decision 1999/437/EC¹⁷.
- (44) 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*¹⁸ 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/EC¹⁹.
- (45) 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*²⁰ 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/EU²¹.

¹⁶ OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 36.

¹⁷ 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).

¹⁸ OJ L 53, 27.2.2008, p. 52.

¹⁹ 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).

²⁰ OJ L 160, 18.6.2011, p. 21.

²¹ 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).

- (46) **As regards Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia,** ~~t~~This Regulation constitutes an act building upon, or otherwise relating to, the Schengen *acquis* within, respectively, the meaning of Article 3(2) of the 2003 Act of Accession, Article 4(2) of the 2005 Act of Accession and Article 4(2) of the 2011 Act of Accession,
- (47) The European Data Protection Supervisor was consulted in accordance with Article 42 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council²² and delivered an opinion on ~~XX~~**21 June 2022**²³.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1
Amendments to Regulation (EC) No 810/2009

Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 is amended as follows:

- (1) in Article 1(2), the following point (c) is added:

“(c) the residence rights enjoyed in the host State by third-country nationals who are family members of UK nationals who themselves are beneficiaries of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community* (‘EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement’).

* Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (OJ L 29, 31.1.2020, p. 7).”;

- (2) ~~in~~ Article 2 is amended as follows:-

- (a) point 6 is replaced by the following:

“6. ‘visa sticker’ means the uniform format for visas as defined by Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 for Member States not issuing visas in digital format;-”;

²² Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39–98).

²³ [OJ C ...].

(aa) the following points 10a and 10b are inserted:

“10a. ‘application form’ means the uniform application form set out in Annex I, either available online via the EU application platform or on paper;

10b. ‘digital visa’ means visas issued in digital format as a record in VIS;”;

(b) point (13) is replaced by the following:

“13. ‘electronically signed’ means the confirmation of agreement through the ticking of an appropriate box in the application form or the request for consent;”;

(c) points (14) and (15) is are inserted:

“14. ‘notification by electronic means’ means a communication to the applicant that there is new information regarding the application in the secure account;”

15. ‘chatbot’ means a software that simulates human conversation or "chatter" through text or voice interactions.”;

(3) in Article 3(5) is amended as follows;

~~(a) — points (b) and (c) are replaced by the following:~~

~~“(b) third country nationals holding a valid residence permit issued by a Member State which does not take part in the adoption of this Regulation or by a Member State which does not yet apply the provisions of the Schengen acquis in full, or third country nationals holding one of the valid residence permits listed in Annex V issued by Andorra, Canada, Japan, San Marino, the United Kingdom or the United States of America guaranteeing the holder's unconditional readmission, or holding a valid residence permit for one or more of the overseas countries and territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba);~~

~~“(c) third country nationals holding a valid visa for a Member State which does not take part in the adoption of this Regulation, or for a Member State which does not yet apply the provisions of the Schengen acquis in full, or for Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom or the United States of America, or holders of a valid visa for one or more of the overseas countries and territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba), when travelling to the issuing country or to any other third country, or when, having used the visa, returning from the issuing country;”;~~

~~(b)~~ point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) family members of citizens of the Union referred to in Article 1(2), point (a), and family members of UK nationals who themselves are beneficiaries of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement ~~referred to in Article 1(2), point (c);~~”;

(4) in Article 5(1), point (b) is replaced by the following:

“(b) if the visit includes more than one destination, or if several separate visits are to be carried out within a period of two months, the Member State whose territory constitutes the main destination of the visit(s) in terms of the length of stay, counted in days; or”;

(5) in Article 8, the following paragraph ~~4a~~ is inserted:

“4a. Bilateral representation arrangements shall be displayed in the EU application platform referred to in Chapter Ia of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.”;

(6) Article 9 is amended as follows:

(a) the following paragraphs ~~1a and 1b~~ are inserted:

“1a. ~~Applicants~~ Applications shall be lodged an application via the EU application platform, as referred to in Chapter Ia of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

1b. By derogation from paragraph 1a, Member States may allow the following categories of persons ~~may to~~ lodge an application without using the EU application platform:

(a) third-country nationals ~~in individual cases~~ for humanitarian reasons;

(aa) third-country nationals in justified individual cases or in cases of *force majeure*;

(b) heads of State or government and members of a national government with accompanying spouses, and the members of their official delegation when they are invited by Member States’ governments or by international organisations for an official purpose, sovereigns and other senior members of a royal family, when they are invited by Member States’ governments or by international organisations for an official purpose;

(c) third-country nationals to whom visas are issued at the external border in accordance to Chapter VI.”;

(b) in paragraph 4 the following point ~~(d)~~ is added:

“(d) by another person, duly authorised by the applicant, where ~~when~~ it is lodged via the EU application platform.”;

(7) Article 10 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

“1. When lodging an application, applicants shall, where required in accordance with Article 13, appear in person to provide their fingerprints and facial image.

Applicants shall also appear in person for the verification of their travel document in accordance with Article 12.”;

(b) the following paragraphs ~~1a and 1b~~ are inserted:

“1a. Without prejudice to the provision of paragraph 1, Member States may, in justified and individual cases, or in cases where there is a high incidence of fraudulent documents in a particular location, Member States may require, on the basis of a preliminary assessment of the application, that the applicant presents a travel document and/or provides supporting documents, or both. This shall be possible in exceptional cases and in cases where there is a high incidence of fraudulent documents in a particular location.

1b. Consulates shall, within local Schengen cooperation, assess the implementation of the conditions laid down in paragraph 1a, to take account of local circumstances.”;

(c) paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

“3. When lodging the application, the applicant shall:

(a) ~~provide data referred to~~ submit an application form as provided for in Article 11;

(b) provide proof of holding the travel document in accordance with Article 12;

(c) allow his or her facial image to be taken live in accordance with Article 13 or, where the exemptions referred to in Article 13(7a) apply, present a photograph in accordance with the standards set out in Regulation (EC) No 1683/95;

(d) allow the collection of his or her fingerprints in accordance with Article 13, where applicable;

(e) pay the visa fee in accordance with Article 16;

(f) provide proof of possession of the supporting documents in accordance with Article 14;

(g) where applicable, provide proof of possession of adequate and valid travel medical insurance in accordance with Article 15.”;

(8) Article 11 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

“1. Application form shall be submitted **and signed electronically** via the EU application platform. In cases referred to in Article 9(1b), the applicants may submit a manually or electronically completed application form set out in Annex I.

~~The Commission shall adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 51a in order to update the application form as set out in Annex I or submitted via the EU application platform.~~

~~**The application form shall be signed. It may be signed electronically.** It shall be signed manually in cases referred to in Article 9(1b). Persons included in the applicant’s travel document shall submit a separate application form. Minors shall submit an application form signed by a person exercising permanent or temporary parental authority or legal guardianship.”;~~

(b) paragraph 1a and 1b ~~is~~are deleted;

(c) the following paragraph ~~4e~~ is inserted:

“1c. Each applicant shall submit a completed application form including a declaration of the authenticity, completeness, correctness and reliability of the data submitted and a declaration of the veracity and reliability of the statements made. Each applicant shall also state that he or she has understood the conditions for entry referred to in Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 and that he or she may be requested to provide the relevant supporting documents at each entry.”;

(9) Article 12 is replaced by the following:

*“Article 12
Travel document*

1. The applicant shall provide proof of holding a valid travel document satisfying the following criteria:

(a) its validity shall extend at least three months after the intended date of departure from the territory of the Member States or, in the case of several visits, after the last intended date of departure from the territory of the Member States. However, in a justified case of emergency, this obligation may be waived;

(b) it shall have been issued within the previous 10 years.

2. Without prejudice to Article 10(1a) ~~t~~The applicant shall only be required to present the travel document in person in case of a first application with that travel document, or if the applicant needs to provide biometrics.

~~The first subparagraph shall not affect the application of Article 10(1a).~~

3. **Where required under paragraph 2, the authenticity, integrity and validity of the travel documents shall be checked and verified using the appropriate technology.**

The Commission shall, by means of an implementing act, adopt the minimum standards regarding state-of-the-art technology methods and procedures to be used when travel documents are checked and verified by the consulate or the external service provider in order to make sure that the travel document provided or presented is not false, counterfeit or forged. This implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 52(2).

4. ~~Where the application is submitted via the EU application platform, t~~The consulate or the external service provider shall verify that the ~~presented~~ travel document, which is presented in person in accordance with paragraph 2, corresponds to the ~~scanned electronic copy of the biographic data page of the travel document~~ uploaded by the applicant.

If the verification is done by the external service provider, the external service provider shall use the external service provider gateway referred to in Article 7e Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

5. **Where the travel document presented contains a storage medium, the consulate or the external service provider shall check the authenticity and integrity of the chip data, read the chip and upload the relevant personal data limited to the data included in the machine-readable zone and the photograph, electronic certificates and the protocols of the check to the EU application platform.**

The Commission shall, by means of an implementing act, adopt the minimum standards regarding state-of-the-art technology, methods and procedures to be used when processing the chip data. This implementing act shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 52 (2).

6. **Where the external service provider has doubts about the identity of the applicant, the authenticity, integrity and validity of the presented travel document, it shall communicate those doubts to the consulate and send the travel document to the consulate for further verification.**

- ~~57.~~ ~~Where the quality of the scanned copy referred to in paragraph 4 is unsatisfactory or w~~Where there are doubts on the electronic copy of the travel document, notably regarding ~~authenticity~~ its correspondance with the original, the competent consulate or the external service provider shall take a new ~~scan~~ electronic copy and upload it to the EU application platform.”;

(10) ~~in~~ Article 13 is amended as follows:-

(a) paragraph 6 is replaced by the following:

“6. The biometric identifiers shall be collected by qualified and duly authorised staff of the authorities competent in accordance with Article 4(1), (2) and (3). Under the supervision of the consulates, the biometric identifiers may also be collected by qualified and duly authorised staff of an external service provider as referred to in Article 43. ~~The Member State(s) concerned shall, where there is any doubt, provide for the possibility of verifying at the consulate of~~ Fingerprints which have been taken by the external service provider may be verified at the consulate.”;

(b) the following paragraph 7e is added:

“7c. Where the biometric identifiers are collected by an external service provider in accordance with Article 43, the external service provider gateway referred to in Article 7e Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 shall be used for this purpose.”;

(11) Article 14 is amended as follows:

(a) in paragraph 1, the introductory words are replaced by the following:

“When applying for a uniform visa, the applicant shall provide ~~proof of~~:

(a) proof of documents indicating the purpose of the journey;

(b) proof of documents in relation to accommodation, or proof of sufficient means to cover his accommodation;

(c) proof of documents indicating that the applicant possesses sufficient means of subsistence both for the duration of the intended stay and for the return to his country of origin or residence, or for the transit to a third country into which he is certain to be admitted, or that he is in a position to acquire such means lawfully, in accordance with Article 6 of the Schengen Borders Code;

(d) information enabling an assessment of the applicant’s intention to leave the territory of the Member States before the expiry of the visa applied for.”;

(b) ~~in paragraph 2, the introductory words are~~ is replaced by the following:

“When applying for an airport transit visa, the applicant shall provide ~~proof of~~”;

(a) proof of documents in relation to the onward journey to the final destination after the intended airport transit;

(b) information enabling an assessment of the applicant’s intention not to enter the territory of the Member States.”;

(12) in Article 15(2), the second subparagraph is replaced by the following:

“In addition, such applicants shall declare, ~~as part of~~ in the application form, that they are aware of the need to be in possession of travel medical insurance for subsequent stays.”;

(13) in Article 16(7), the first subparagraph is replaced by the following:

~~“For applications submitted via the EU application platform, t~~The visa fee shall be charged in euro or in the national currency of the third country or in the currency usually used in the third country where the application is lodged and shall not be refundable except in the cases referred to in Article 18(2) **and (4)** and Article 19(3).

The payment tool referred to in Article 7d of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 shall be used.

In cases where an electronic payment is not possible, the visa fee may be collected by the consulates or the External Service Provider entrusted with this task.

~~For application not submitted via the EU application platform, w~~When charged in a currency other than the euro, the amount of the visa fee charged in that currency shall be determined and regularly reviewed in application of the euro foreign exchange reference rate set by the European Central Bank. The amount charged may be rounded up and it shall be ensured under local Schengen cooperation that similar fees are charged.”;

(14) ~~in~~ Article 18 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 2 is deleted;

(b) the following paragraphs ~~3 and 4~~ are added:

- ~~“3. For applications submitted via the EU application platform, f~~Following the notification by the EU application platform on the automated competence and admissibility pre-check pursuant to Article 7c(9) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, the consulate or the central authorities of the Member State notified by the system shall verify whether they are competent to examine and decide on it.
- ~~4. In cases~~If, after the verification referred to in paragraph 3, if the notified consulates or central authorities of the Member State finds that it is they are not competent, it they shall, without delay, notify the applicant through using the secure account service in the EU application platform, and indicateing which Member State **or consulate** is competent.

If the application is not re-submitted **by the applicant** to the competent **Member State or consulate** ~~consulates or central authorities~~ The applicant may withdraw the application. If the application is withdrawn, the application data shall be **automatically** deleted from temporary storage-, pursuant to Article 7c of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, within 15 days.”;

5. For applications not submitted via the EU application platform, the consulate **or the central authorities** shall verify whether ~~it is~~ **they are** competent to examine and decide on it in accordance with the provisions of Articles 5 and 6. If **they are consulate is** not competent, ~~it they~~ shall, without delay, return the application form and any documents submitted by the applicant, reimburse the visa fee, and indicate which **Member State or** consulate is competent.”;

(15) ~~In Article 19 is amended as follows~~the following paragraph is inserted:

(a) ~~the following paragraph 1a is inserted:~~

“1a. ~~For applications submitted via the EU application platform, a~~**After the notification by the EU application platform, on the automated admissibility pre-check**~~Upon the notification of a positive result of the automated admissibility pre-check~~ pursuant to Article 7c(9) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, ~~indicating that the application is appears to be admissible~~, the consulate or the central authorities of the Member State notified by the system shall conduct the checks in paragraph 1 without delay.”;

(b) ~~the following paragraph 2b is inserted:~~

“2b. ~~For applications submitted via the EU application platform, where the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State find that the conditions referred to in paragraph 1 have been fulfilled, the application shall be admissible and the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State shall accept the application.”;~~

(c) ~~the following paragraph 4a is added:~~

“4a. ~~For applications submitted via the EU application platform, the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State shall be able to accept an application which has not been lodged within the period referred to in Article 9(1), notably in justified cases of urgency referred to in Article 9(3).”;~~

(16) Article 20 is deleted;

(17) Article 21 is amended as follows:

(a) in paragraph 3, point (a) is replaced by the following

“(a) that the travel document provided ~~or presented~~ is not false, counterfeit or forged;”;

(b) in paragraph 6, point (a) is replaced by the following

“(a) that the travel document provided ~~or presented~~ is not false, counterfeit or forged;”;

(18) Article 24 is amended as follows:

- (a) in paragraph 1, third subparagraph, the reference to “point (a) of Article 12” is replaced by reference to “Article 12(1), point (a)”;
- (b) in paragraph 2 first subparagraph, the introductory words are replaced by the following:
“Provided that the applicant fulfils the entry conditions set out in Article 6(1), points (a), (c), (d) and (e), of Regulation (EU) 2016/399, multiple-entry visas with a long validity shall be issued for the following validity periods:”;
- (c) the following paragraph ~~2aa~~ is inserted:

“2aa. The validity of the multiple-entry visas ~~with a long validity periods~~ shall not be restricted by the validity of the travel document.

For Member States not issuing visas in digital format, the validity of the visa shall be restricted by the validity of the travel document.”;

- (d) the following paragraph is inserted:

“4. As soon as the decision on the issuance of a visa is available, the applicant shall be notified by electronic means in accordance with Article 7f(1) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

The decision shall be made available to the applicant in the secure account.”;

(19) in Article 25, the following paragraph ~~6~~ is added:

- “6. Issuing a visa in digital format shall not affect the competence of Member States in relation to the recognition of travel documents. This includes those travel documents that are not recognised by one or more, but not all Member States.”;

(20) the following Article ~~26a~~ is inserted:

*“Article 26a
Digital visas*

Visas shall be issued in digital format as a record in VIS, ~~including~~. Digital visas shall have a unique visa number.”;

(20a) the title of Article 27 is replaced by the following:

“Filling of the visa stickers by Member States not issuing visas in digital format”;

(20b) the title of Article 28 is replaced by the following:

“Invalidation of a completed visa stickers by Member States not issuing visas in digital format”;

(20c) the title of Article 29 is replaced by the following:

“Affixing a visa stickers by Member States not issuing visas in digital format”;

(21) Article 32 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

~~“2. For applications submitted via the EU application platform, information regarding decisions on refusal and the reasons on which it is based shall be notified to the applicant by secure electronic means in accordance with Article 7f(1) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008. The notification will contain the same information as set out in Annex VI, in the language of the Member State that has taken the final decision on the application and another official language of the Union.~~

~~Member States may add additional documents to the standard notification, justifying the refusal.~~

~~For applications not submitted via the EU application platform in cases referred to in Article 9(1b), a decision on refusal and the reasons on which it is based shall be notified to the applicant by means of the standard form set out in Annex VI in the language of the Member State that has taken the final decision on the application and another official language of the Union.~~

As soon as the refusal decision is available in the secure account, the applicant shall be notified by electronic means in accordance with Article 7f(1) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008. **Where an applicant is represented by another person, a message confirming that the decision has been issued and is available in the EU platform is sent to each of them.**

A decision on refusal and the reasons on which it is based, as sets out in Annex VI, shall be made available to the applicant in the secure account. The refusal decision shall be in the language of the Member State that has taken the final decision on the application and another official language of the Union. Member States may add additional documents that justify the refusal decision.

The period of the appeal shall be initiated once the visa applicant consults the decision in the secure account in the EU platform. The time limit for lodging an appeal under national law against the decision shall begin from the moment the applicant accesses the decision in the secure account. The relevant time is the time in the timezone where the applicant resides as indicated in the application form.

From the end of the seventh day following the day on which the communication about the availability of the decision in the applicant's secure account was sent to the applicant the decision shall be deemed to have been accessed by the applicant

The date of actual or presumed notification of the decision is indicated in the EU platform. Where a presumed notification applies, the applicant shall be informed by secure electronic means of that presumed communication.

If the secure account cannot be used for technical reasons, applicants are invited to contact the competent consulate or ESP.

For applications not submitted via the EU application platform in cases referred to in Article 9(1b), a decision on refusal and the reasons on which it is based shall be notified to the applicant by means of the standard form set out in Annex VI in the language of the Member State that has taken the final decision on the application and another official language of the Union.

The Commission shall adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 51a in order to amend the refusal form, as set out in Annex VI or as a notification as referred to in Chapter Ia of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.”;

- (b) in paragraph 3, the third sentence is replaced by the following:

“Member States shall provide applicants with information regarding the procedure to be followed in the event of an appeal, as specified ~~as specified in Annex VI or in the refusal notification sent via the EU application platform~~”;

- (22) the following Article 32a is inserted:

*“Article 32a
Confirmation of a valid visa in a new travel document*

1. Visa holders whose travel document has been lost, stolen, ~~or has expired~~ or has been invalidated and whose visa is still valid ~~may~~shall apply for the confirmation of the visa linked to a new travel document, if they wish continue using the visa. The confirmation of the visa can shall be done confirmed, at by the authority which issued the visa or by another authority under the ~~terms conditions~~ communicated by the Member State which issued the visa.

2. The visa holders referred to in paragraph 1 shall apply for confirmation of the visa in a new travel document via the EU application platform referred to in Chapter Ia of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008. They shall provide the following personal data:
- (a) first surname, last surname at birth, first name, date and place of birth, sex, nationality;
 - (b) number of the visa;
 - (c) data of the lost, stolen, ~~or~~ expired or invalidated travel document;
 - (d) data of the new travel document;
 - (e) ~~scan~~ electronic copy of the biometric data page;
 - (f) proof of loss or theft of the travel document ~~or expiry~~;
 - (g) where applicable, identity changes since previous visa issuance.
3. The visa holder shall pay the visa confirmation fee of EUR ~~30~~40.
4. The visa holder shall be required to appear in person under the conditions communicated by the Member State. for the to presentation of the new travel document for the purpose of verification of the identity of the holder of the travel document, . This will require verification in order to verify that this the travel document corresponds to the scanned electronic copy uploaded via the EU application platform, and that the bearer holder of the travel document corresponds to the person for whom a visa was issued.
5. The new travel document shall fulfil the conditions laid down in Article 12 and shall be verified in accordance with that article.
- 5a. Without prejudice to the respective consultation rights, the competent consulate or central authorities of the competent Member State may consult the databases mentioned in art. 9a(3) of Regulation (EC) 767/2008 when a confirmation of visa is requested.**
6. Where the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State determines that the valid visa can be confirmed in a new travel document, it shall enter the data in the application file in VIS ~~pursuant to~~ in accordance with Article 12a of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.
7. The ~~fact that a confirmation of the visa is confirmed~~ in a new travel document shall be notified to the applicant by ~~secure~~ electronic means in accordance with Article 7f of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

The confirmation of a visa in a new travel document shall be made available to the applicant in the secure account.

8. Where the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State cannot determine whether the valid visa can be confirmed in a new travel document, notably because of doubts regarding the identity of the visa holder, it shall:
- (a) —refuse the confirmation; and
 - (b) —revoke the valid visa, in accordance with Article 34.
9. The ~~procedure~~ **negative decision** regarding the confirmation of a valid visa in a new travel document shall not preclude the visa holder ~~to submit~~ from submitting a new visa application.”;

(23) Article 33 is amended as follows:

- (a) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

“2. The period of validity and/or the duration of stay of an issued visa may be extended if the visa holder provides proof of serious personal reasons justifying the extension of the period of validity or the duration of stay. A fee of EUR 40 shall be charged for such an extension.”;

- (aa) paragraph 6 is replaced by the following:

“6. Member States may allow ~~V~~visa holders ~~may to~~ apply for extension ~~online~~ via the EU application platform. **In this case, visa holders** ~~They~~ shall provide the following:

- (a) personal data,
- (b) the number of the visa and the travel document,
- (c) ~~upload~~ an electronic copy of the supporting documents proving force majeure, humanitarian reasons and/or serious personal reasons ~~preventing~~ which prevent them from leaving the territory of the Member States before the expiry of the period of validity or of the duration of stay authorised by the visa.

~~;~~ and Those visa holders shall pay the fee of EUR ~~30~~40 only in case of serious personal reasons referred to in paragraph 2.”;

- (b) the following paragraph ~~8~~ is added:

“8. ~~When~~ The decision on the extension of the visa ~~a visa is extended pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 7 of this Article~~ requested via the EU application platform; the extension shall be notified to the applicant by ~~secure~~ electronic means in accordance with Article 7f of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

The decision whether a visa is extended shall be made available to the applicant in the secure account.”;

(24) ~~In Article 34 is amended as follows:~~

(a) ~~—~~ paragraphs 5 and 6 are replaced by the following:

- “5. If a visa not issued in digital format is annulled or revoked, a stamp stating ‘ANNULLED’ or ‘REVOKED’ shall be affixed to it and the optically variable feature of the visa sticker, the security feature ‘latent image effect’ as well as the term ‘visa’ shall be invalidated by being crossed out.
6. A decision on annulment or revocation of a visa and the reasons on which it is based shall be issued in digital format by entering the data into the VIS, ~~pursuant to~~ in accordance with Article 132 of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008,

As soon as the decision on the annulment or revocation is available in the secure account, the applicant shall be notified by electronic means in accordance with Article 7f(1) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008. **Where an applicant is represented by another person, a message confirming that the decision has been issued and is available in the EU platform is sent to each of them.**

A decision on annulment or revocation and the reasons on which it is based, as sets out in Annex VI, shall be made available to the applicant in the secure account. **The annulment or revocation decision shall be in the language of the Member State that has taken the final decision on the application and another official language of the Union. Member States may add additional documents that justify the refusal decision.**

The time limit for lodging an appeal under national law against the decision shall begin from the moment the applicant accesses to the decision in the secure account. The relevant time is the time in the timezone where the applicant resides as indicated in the application form.

From the end of the seventh day following the day on which the communication about the availability of the decision in the applicant’s secure account was sent to the applicant the decision shall be deemed to have been accessed by the applicant.

The date of actual or presumed notification of the decision is indicated in the EU platform. Where a presumed notification applies, the applicant shall be informed by secure electronic means of that presumed communication.

If the secure account cannot be used for technical reasons, applicants are invited to contact the competent consulate or ESP.

For applications not submitted via the EU application platform, a decision on annulment or revocation of a visa and the reasons on which it is based shall be notified to the applicant by means of the standard form set out in Annex VI **in the language of the Member State that has taken the final decision on the application and another official language of the Union.** and notified to the applicant by secure electronic means in accordance with Article 7f of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 or by means of the standard form set out in Annex VI for applications not submitted via the EU application platform. The notification shall contain the information set out in Annex VI.”;

- (b) in paragraph 7, the third sentence is replaced by the following:

‘Member States shall provide applicants with information regarding the procedure to be followed in the event of an appeal, as set out in Annex VI ~~or in the notification sent via the EU application platform.~~’;

- (25) Article 37 is amended as follows:

- (a) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

“2. For Member States which do not issue visas in digital format, the storage and handling of visa stickers shall be subject to adequate security measures to avoid fraud or loss. Each consulate shall keep an account of its stock of visa stickers and register how each visa sticker has been used. Any significant loss of blank visa stickers shall be reported to the Commission.”;

- (b) in paragraph 3, the first sentence is replaced by the following:

“~~As a general rule, c~~Consulates or central authorities shall keep archives of applications in electronic format.”;

- (26) Article 38 is amended as follows:

- (a) paragraph 1a is replaced by the following:

“Member States shall ensure that the entire visa procedure in consulates, including the lodging and handling of applications, the printing of visa stickers, if applicable, and the practical cooperation with external service providers, is monitored by expatriate staff to ensure the integrity of all stages of the procedure.”;

- (b) the following paragraph 3e is inserted:

“3c. Based on training materials developed by eu-LISA or the Commission, Member States’ central authorities shall provide appropriate training to each of their staff and external service providers regarding the EU application platform.”;

- (26a) In Article 40, paragraph 2 point (a) is replaced by the following:

“(a) equip their consulates and authorities responsible for issuing visas at the borders with the requisite material for the collection of biometric identifiers;”;

- (27) Article 42 is deleted.

(28) Article 43 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 4 is replaced by the following:

“4. The examination of applications, interviews, (where appropriate), ~~and the decision on applications and, if applicable, the printing and affixing of visa stickers,~~ shall be carried out only by the consulate or the central authorities.”;

(b) in paragraph 5, the following second subparagraph is added:

“By way of derogation, only duly authorised staff of external service providers may have access to the EU application platform via the external service provider gateway referred to in Article 7e of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, and only to:

- (a) verify the data uploaded by the applicant;
- (b) upload biometric identifiers;
- (c) upload copies of the supporting documents;
- (d) use the appointment tool to indicate available slots.”;

(c) paragraph 6 is amended as follows:

(1) point (c) is replaced by the following:

“(c) collecting data and, if applicable, applications (including collection of biometric identifiers and, in the exceptional cases referred to in Article 10(1a), supporting documents and documents needed for identity checks), transmitting them to the consulate or the central authorities where applicable, and uploading them to the EU application platform;”;

(2) the following point (ca) is inserted:

“(ca) verifying the travel document against the copy uploaded by the applicant;

(caa) verifying that the holder of the travel document corresponds to the person for whom a visa application is processed, in cases where Article 12, paragraph 2 applies;”;

(29) ~~in~~ Article 44 is amended as follows:-

(a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

“1. In the case of cooperation among Member States and cooperation with an external service provider, the Member State(s) concerned shall ensure that data are fully encrypted, whether transferred electronically or physically on an electronic storage medium.”;

(b) the following paragraph 4a is inserted :

“1a. Paragraph 1 shall not apply to the access that external service providers may have to the EU application platform via the external service provider gateway referred to in Article 7e of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.”;

(30) ~~in Article 47 is amended as follows:-~~

(a) point (e) of paragraph 1 is deleted;

(b) the following paragraph 3 is added:

“3. The EU application platform shall provide the general public with all relevant information in relation to the application for a visa via the EU application platform, in particular the information referred to in Article 7a of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.”;

~~(31) in Article 51a(2), (3) and (6) the reference to “Article 16(9)” is replaced by reference to “Article 11(1), Article 16(9) and Article 32(2)”;~~

~~(32) in Article 53(1), point (f) is replaced by the following:-~~

~~“(f) for Member States which do not issue visas in digital format, the additional national entries in the ‘comments’ section of the visa sticker, as referred to in Article 27(2);”;~~

(33) Annex III is deleted.;

~~(34) Annex V is amended as follows:~~

~~1...~~

Article 2 *Amendments to Regulation (EC) No 767/2008*

Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 is amended as follows:

(1) Article 2a is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 1 is amended as follows:

(1) the following point is inserted:

“(fa) EU application platform;”;

(2) the following subparagraph is added:

“The EU application platform shall share and re-use as much as technically possible the hardware and software components of the EES web service and the ETIAS website and the app for mobile devices.”;

(b) the following paragraph 6 is added:

“6. The EU application platform shall consist of the following components:

- (a) a public website and an app for mobile devices;
- (b) temporary storage capacity;
- (c) a secure account service;
- (d) a verification tool for applicants;
- (e) web-service for visa holders
- (f) an email service;
- (g) a payment tool;
- (h) an appointment tool;
- (i) an external service provider gateway;
- (j) a configuration module that shall cater for eu-LISA, central authorities and consulates;
- (k) a software to ~~generate and~~ read encrypted 2D barcode;
- (l) a secure web service enabling the components of the EU application platform to communicate;
- (m) a helpdesk function to be managed by eu-LISA;
- (n) read-only copy of VIS database~~;~~;
- ~~(o) a printing function;~~
- (p) a visa chatbot.”;**

(2) ~~in~~ Article 4 **is amended as follows:**

(a) point 2 is replaced by the following:

“2. ‘digital visa’ means the visa in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009;

2a. ‘visa sticker’ means the uniform format for visas as defined by Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 for Member States not issuing visas in digital format.”;

(b) point 15 is added:

“15. ‘read-only copy of VIS database’ means a subset of data from the VIS relevant for the purpose of this Regulation with exception of biometric data.”;

(3) the following Chapter Ia is inserted:

“CHAPTER Ia EU ONLINE VISA APPLICATION PLATFORM

Article 7a

General public information on the EU-application platform

1. The EU Online Visa Application Platform (‘EU Application Platform’) shall provide general information to the public as referred to in Article 47 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009.

The Commission and the Member States shall be responsible for providing the information, in accordance with their respective responsibilities set out in paragraphs 2 to 4 of this Article.

2. eu-LISA shall be responsible for publishing and updating the following general public information on the EU-application platform, upon receiving the following information from the Commission or the Member States:
 - (a) the visa requirements, including visa lists, visa waiver agreements; including for diplomatic and service passports, and including cases of possible suspension of visa-free travel, under Articles 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 and Annexes I and the II thereto, as well as information pursuant to Directive 2004/38/EC and EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement;
 - (b) the amount of the visa fees referred to in Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009; reduced or higher fees in case of visa facilitation agreement, or a readmission-related measure stemming from Article 25a of that Regulation, as well as Directive 2004/38/EC and the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement;
 - (c) where applicable, harmonised lists of supporting documents, established in accordance with Article 14(5a) of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009;
 - (d) where applicable, travel medical insurance requirements, in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009.

In case a Member State provides the information, eu-LISA shall configure the EU application platform upon confirmation of this information from the Commission.

3. The central visa authorities shall be responsible for inputting the following elements:
- (a) locations of consulates and their territorial competence referred to in Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009;
 - (b) representation agreements or arrangements referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009;
 - (c) use of external service providers and their locations referred to in Article 43 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009;
 - (d) supporting documents referred to in Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, as well as those applicable pursuant to Directive 2004/38/EC and the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement;
 - (e) optional visa waivers referred to in Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806;
 - (f) optional visa fee waivers referred to in Article 16(5) Regulation (EC) No 810/2009.
4. The consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State shall be responsible for inputting the following elements:
- (a) contact details and access rights of external service providers including for the appointment tool;
 - (b) appointment tool, including available slots;
 - (c) ~~number of applications accepted per week/month.~~

5. The EU application platform shall include a visa chatbot. The chatbot will provide answers to applicants on the application procedure.

The Commission shall, by means of an implementing act, define the requirements concerning the chatbot included in the platform.

Article 7b
~~Online a~~*Application form*

1. ~~Without prejudice to Article 9(1b) of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 the Visa code,~~ Each applicant shall submit an ~~completed online application referred to in Article 11 of that Regulation (EC) No 810/2009,~~ using the EU application platform.
2. Without prejudice to Article 7ba, the applicant shall provide the ~~following personal~~ data in the application form ~~as set out in Annex I of Regulation (EC) 810/2009.~~
- (1) ~~surname(s) (family name);~~
 - (2) ~~surname at birth (former family name(s));~~

- ~~(3) — first name(s) (given name(s));~~
- ~~(4) — date of birth (day-month-year);~~
- ~~(5) — place of birth;~~
- ~~(6) — country of birth;~~
- ~~(7) — current nationality; nationalities at birth, if different; other nationalities;~~
- ~~(8) — sex;~~
- ~~(9) — civil status;~~
- ~~(10) — parental authority (in case of minors) /legal guardian (surname, first name, address, if different from the applicant's, telephone number, e-mail address, and nationality);~~
- ~~(11) — national identity number, where applicable;~~
- ~~(12) — type of travel document;~~
- ~~(13) — number of the travel document;~~
- ~~(14) — date of issue;~~
- ~~(15) — valid until;~~
- ~~(16) — issued by (country);~~
- ~~(17) — personal data of the family member who is a mobile EU, EEA or CH citizen or who is a UK national beneficiary of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made, if applicable: surname (family name), first name(s) (given name(s)), date of birth, nationality, number of travel document or ID-card;~~
- ~~(18) — Family relationship with a mobile EU, EEA or CH citizen or with a UK national who is a beneficiary of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made, if applicable~~
- ~~(19) — Applicant's home address and email address, telephone number;~~
- ~~(20) — residence in a country other than the country of current nationality;~~
- ~~(21) — current occupation;~~
- ~~(22) — employer and employer's address and telephone number: for students name and address of educational establishment;~~
- ~~(23) — purpose(s) of the journey;~~

- ~~(24) additional information on purpose of stay;~~
- ~~(25) Member State of main destination (and other Member States of destination, if applicable);~~
- ~~(26) Member State of first entry;~~
- ~~(27) number of entries requested; intended date of arrival of the first intended stay in the Schengen area; Intended date of departure from the Schengen area after the first intended stay;~~
- ~~(28) fingerprints collected previously for the purpose of applying for a Schengen visa; date (if known); visa number, if known;~~
- ~~(29) entry permit for the final country of destination, where applicable;~~
- ~~(30) surname and first name of the inviting person(s) in the Member State(s). If not applicable, name of hotel(s) or temporary accommodation(s) in the Member State(s);~~
- ~~(31) name and address of inviting company/organisation~~
- ~~(32) how the cost of travelling and living during the applicant's stay is covered;~~

~~The applicant shall also provide an email address.~~

All such data shall be recorded and stored temporary storage capacity in line with the data retention periods defined in Article 7c.

3. The EU application platform shall also contain a secure account service. The secure account service shall have the possibility for the applicant to keep the data provided for subsequent applications, but only if the applicant freely and explicitly consents to such storage.

The secure account service shall contain the possibility for the applicant to submit application in several steps. The Commission shall adopt ~~delegated~~ implementing acts in accordance with Article 48a in order to define the requirements of the secure account service, including **the modalities of access and authentication**, the retention period for data stored therein and for uncompleted applications or applications which do not pass the competence and admissibility check.

4. The data referred to in paragraph 2 shall be introduced by the applicant in Latin alphabet characters.
5. On submission of the ~~online~~ application form, the EU application platform shall collect the IP address from which the application form was submitted and add it as part of data of the application.

6. The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, define the content of a simplified application forms for confirmation of valid visas in a new travel document, as referred to in Article 32a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, and for extension of visas, as referred to in Article 33 of that Regulation, using the EU application platform. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).
7. The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, define the requirements concerning the format of the personal data referred to in paragraphs 2 and 5 of this Article to be inserted in the application form as well as parameters and verifications to be implemented for ensuring the completeness of the application and the coherence of those data. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).

Article 7ba

Specific provisions on the use of the EU application platform by family members of Union citizens or of other third-country nationals enjoying the right of free movement under Union law or of UK nationals who are beneficiaries of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement

1. A third-country national who is a family member of a Union citizen to whom Directive 2004/38/EC applies or of a third-country national enjoying the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country, on the other, may lodge an application for a visa, without using the EU application platform and be entitled to lodge the application in person at the consulate or at the external service providers premises, at their choice.
2. Where a third-country national who is a family member of a Union citizen to whom Directive 2004/38/EC applies or of a third-country national enjoying the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country, on the other, applies for a visa using the EU application platform, the application process shall be carried out in accordance with Directive 2004/38/EC.
3. In particular, the EU application platform shall be designed so as to ensure that the following specific rules shall apply:
 - (a) the visa fee shall be waived;
 - (b) in the visa application form, the applicant shall not provide the following personal data:
 - (a) Current occupation
 - (b) Employer and employer's address and telephone number: for students name and address of educational establishment

- (c) Surname and first name of the inviting person(s) in the Member State(s). If not applicable, name of hotel(s) or temporary accommodation(s) in the Member State(s)
 - (d) Name and address of inviting company/organisation
 - (e) Means of how the cost of travelling and living during the applicant's stay is covered.
- (c) the applicant should be able to submit documents establishing that he/she is a member of the family of a Union citizen to whom Directive 2004/38/EC applies or of a third-country national enjoying the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country, on the other. The applicant should not be requested to submit supporting documents referred to under Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 nor proof of possession of adequate and valid travel medical insurance in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 should not be requested.
- (d) by way of derogation from Article 7c(8), the automated admissibility pre-check shall only verify whether:
- (a) all the required fields of the application form are filled in;
 - (b) proof of holding a valid passport in accordance with Directive 2004/38/EC is provided;
 - (c) the biometric data of the applicant have been collected, if applicable.
- (e) where a visa is issued, in the notification laid down in Article 7f, the applicant shall receive a reminder that the family member of a citizen exercising the right of free movement who is in possession of a visa only has a right to enter if that family member is accompanied by or joining the Union citizen or other third-country national exercising his or her right of free movement.
4. Paragraphs 1 and 2 also apply where a third-country national who is a family member of a Union citizen to whom Directive 2004/38/EC applies or of a third-country national enjoying the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country, on the other, requires a visa extension or a confirmation of the visa in a new travel document. The visa extension fee and the visa confirmation fee shall be waived.
5. Paragraphs 1 to 4 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to family members of UK nationals who themselves are beneficiaries of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made.

Article 7c
Application process using the EU application platform

1. Upon submission of the application form pursuant to Article 7b, the EU application platform shall determine the type of visa applied for, and conduct an automated competence pre-check to automatically pre-determine the competent Member State on the basis of the data provided by the applicant. This shall not preclude the manual verification of the competence by the Member States in accordance with Article 18(3) of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009.

The EU application platform shall be designed in such a way to allow applicants to indicate whether they are legally present, but not residing in a jurisdiction, as referred to in Article 6 (2) of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009

2. Applicants shall be able to use the EU application platform to submit a ~~scanned~~ electronic copy of the travel document in electronic format, as well as supporting documents and proof of travel medical insurance in digital format, as applicable, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 or Directive 2004/38/EC.
3. The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, define the technical requirements concerning the format of supporting documents, travel medical insurance and copy of travel document in electronic format. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).
4. If ~~necessary~~ applicable, the applicant shall be able to use the EU application platform to pay the visa fee using the payment tool referred to in Article 7d.
5. The EU application platform shall be able to check in the read-only copy of VIS whether the applicant's biometrics were taken in the last 59 months and whether the applicant has already applied with the same travel document:

Where this is the case, the EU application platform shall notify the applicant that no visit to consulate or external service provider is required to lodge the application;

Where this is not the case, the EU application platform shall notify the applicant to arrange a visit to consulate or external service provider, as required, to lodge the application.

6. If a visit to consulate or external service provider is necessary in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, a Member State may decide to use the appointment tool referred to in Article 7d for this purpose.
7. The applicant shall submit the application, including declaration of the authenticity, completeness, correctness and reliability of data.

8. After the applicant submits the application via the EU application platform, the EU application platform shall perform an automated admissibility pre-check.

The automated admissibility pre-check shall ~~automatically~~ verify whether:

- (a) the application has been lodged within the period referred to in Article 9(1), if applicable;
 - (b) all the required fields of the application form are filled in;
 - (c) proof of holding a travel document in accordance with Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 is provided;
 - (d) the biometric data of the applicant have been collected, if applicable;
 - (e) the visa fee has been collected, if applicable;
9. If according to the automated admissibility pre-check the application is admissible, the EU application platform shall send a notification to the consulate or the central authorities of the Member State with the combined result of the automated competence and admissibility pre-check.

If according to the automated admissibility pre-check the application is not admissible, the EU application platform shall send a notification to the applicant and notify which part of the application file is missing.

The application platform shall be designed so as to ensure that Article 19 paragraphs (4) and (4a) of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 can apply, in order to allow applications to be considered admissible.

10. Following the notification referred to in paragraph 9, the consulate or the central authorities of the Member State shall perform a manual verification of the competence, in accordance with Article 18(3) of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009, and subsequently if needed, a manual verification of admissibility in accordance with Article 19. of that Regulation.
11. If the competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State accept the application submitted via the EU application platform the data shall be transferred to the national system from temporary storage. The data shall be immediately deleted from temporary storage, with the exception of contact data linked to the secure account service.
12. If, after the verification, the notified consulate or central authorities of the Member State find that they are not competent and the applicant withdraws the application the application is not re-submitted to the competent consulate or central authorities following the automated competence and admissibility pre-check, Article 18(4) of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 will apply ~~the data shall be immediately deleted from temporary storage, with the exception of contact data linked to the secure account service.~~
13. The competent consulate or the central authorities of the competent Member State may use the secure account service to communicate with the applicants.

Article 7d
Payment tool and appointment tool

1. A payment tool shall be used to pay the visa fee using the EU application platform. ~~The payment tool shall be managed by third-party provider.~~
2. The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, define the requirements concerning the payment tool referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, including the reimbursement modalities for applicants. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).
3. A tool for managing appointments may be used by Member States or external service providers.

When this tool is used, the Member State shall be responsible for setting the available slots.

4. The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, define the requirements concerning the appointment tool referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article, including the modalities for confirmation of appointments, the link to existing appointment tools or information on walk-in appointments to be configured by the consulates or external service providers and the technical modalities to ensure that any family member of a Union citizen to whom Directive 2004/38/EC applies or of a third-country national enjoying the right of free movement equivalent to that of Union citizens under an agreement between the Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and a third country, on the other, or of UK nationals who themselves are beneficiaries of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made can benefit from an accelerated procedure. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).

Article 7e
External service provider gateway

1. External service providers shall have access to the EU application platform using the external service gateway only to:
 - (a) verify and perform quality checks on the data uploaded in the temporary storage capacity, notably the ~~scanned~~ electronic copy of the travel document;
 - (b) upload the biometric identifiers and check whether biometric identifiers are already available;
 - (c) upload the supporting documents, if needed;
 - (d) use the appointment tool to indicate available slots, if applicable;
 - (e) ~~make-forward the application available~~ to the consulate for further processing.

2. An authentication scheme, reserved exclusively for external service providers, shall be set up by Member States in order to allow access to the gateway for the purposes of this Article to the duly authorised staff members. When setting up the authentication scheme, information security risk management and the principles of data protection by design and by default shall be taken into account.
3. The Commission shall adopt implementing acts to lay down the authentication scheme for external service provider staff members. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).

Article 7f
Notification of decisions

1. Applicants and visa holders shall be notified of the decisions according to paragraph 2, lett. a) to e) taken by Member States on their applications or issued visas by ~~secure~~ electronic means.
2. The ~~notifications~~ information on decision shall be made available to applicants or visa holders in the secure account., ~~as~~ applicable, it shall contain the following data:
 - (a) for visa issued: data listed in Articles 24, 25 or 26 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and Article 10 of this Regulation;
 - (b) for visa refused: data listed in Article 32 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and Article 12 of this Regulation;
 - (c) for visa confirmed : data listed in Article 32a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and Article 12a of this Regulation;
 - (d) for visa extended : data listed in Article 33 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and Article 14 of this Regulation;
 - (e) for visa annulled or revoked: data listed in Article 33 of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and Article 13 of this Regulation.
3. The ~~notification-digital visa~~ referred to in paragraph 2(a) shall contain a 2D barcode digitally signed by the issuing authority, and the facial image of the holder. Member States may add national entries in a specific 'comments' section. The 2D barcode shall contain the information referred to in paragraph 2.

The ~~notification-digital visa~~ shall be in printable format.

4. The Commission shall adopt implementing acts to lay down technical specifications of the digital visas and the notification referred to in paragraph 1, including details on the format of the ~~notification-digital visa~~, such as 2D barcode, possible additional national comments entries, and printable format. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).

Article 7g
Verification tool

1. The verification tool shall allow applicants and visa holders to check:
 - (a) status of their application;
 - (b) status and validity of their visa.
 2. The verification tool shall be based on the secure account service referred to in Article 7b(3).
 3. The EU application platform shall offer a web-service functionality for applicants to verify the digital visa without the secure account service.
 4. The Commission shall adopt implementing acts concerning the detailed rules on the conditions for the operation of the web service and the data protection and security rules applicable to the web service, including unique identifier for the applicant. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2).-”;
- (4) in Article 9(4), the following points are added:
- “(na) if applicable, the fact that the applicant applies as a family member of UK nationals who is a beneficiary of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made;
- (o) email address;
- (p) IP address from which the application form was submitted;
- ~~(q) in the case of applications filled in by a duly authorised person other than the applicant, via the EU application platform: the surname, first name(s), name of firm, organisation if applicable, email address, mailing address and phone number if available of that person; relationship to the applicant.~~**”;
- (5) In Article 9b the following paragraph is added:
- “5. Paragraphs 1 to 4 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to family members of UK nationals who themselves are beneficiaries of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made.”;
- (6) Article 10 is amended as follows:
- (a) in paragraph 1, point (e) is replaced by the following:
- “(e) visa number;”;
- (b) in paragraph 1, point (k) is deleted.

(c) in paragraph 1, points (m) **and (o)** is added

“(m) if applicable, the status of the person indicating that the third-country national is a member of the family of UK national who is a beneficiary of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in the host State for which the visa application is made.”;

“(o) national remarks.”;

(7) the following Article 12a is inserted:

*“Article 12a
Data to be added for a visa confirmed*

1. Where a decision has been taken to confirm a visa, the visa authority that has taken the decision shall add the following data to the application file:
 - (a) status information;
 - (b) authority that confirmed the visa;
 - (c) place and date of the decision;
 - (d) new travel document data, including number, issuing country and authority, issuing date, expiry date.
2. Where a decision has been taken to confirm a visa, the system shall immediately retrieve and export from the VIS into the EES the data listed in Article 19(1) of Regulation (EU) (EU) 2017/2226.”;

(8) in Article 14(1), point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) visa number of the extended visa;”;

(9) in Article 15(2), point (f) is replaced by the following:

“(f) the visa number, long-stay visa or residence permit number and the date of issue of any previous visa, long-stay visa or residence permit;”

(10) **in Article 18, is amended as follows:**

(a) in paragraph 1, point (b) is deleted;

~~(b)~~—paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

- “3. By way of derogation from paragraph 2 of this Article, where a search is launched in the EES pursuant to Article 23(2) or (4) of Regulation (EU) 2017/2226, the competent border authority may search the VIS without making use of the interoperability with the EES, where specific circumstances so require, in particular, where it is technically impossible, on a temporary basis, to consult the EES data or in the event of a failure of the EES.”;

(11) the following Article 18e is inserted:

“Article 18e

Fall-back procedures in the case of a technical impossibility to access data at the external borders

1. Where it is technically impossible to proceed with the consultation referred to in Article 18 because of a failure of any part of VIS, eu-LISA shall notify the border authorities of the Member States.
2. Where it is technically impossible to perform the search referred to in Article 18 because of a failure of the national border infrastructure in a Member State, the border authorities shall notify the eu-LISA. eu-LISA shall then inform the Commission.
3. In cases referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, the border authorities shall follow their national contingency plans. The national contingency plan may authorise the border authorities to derogate temporarily from the obligation to consult VIS referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2016/399.
4. The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, adopt model contingency plans for the cases referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, including the procedures to be followed by border authorities. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 49(2). Member States shall adopt their national contingency plans using the model contingency plans as a basis, to be adapted as necessary at the national level.”;

(12) in Article 19, paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

- “1. For the sole purpose of verifying the identity of the visa holder and/or the authenticity of the visa and/or whether the conditions for entry to, stay or residence on the territory of the Member States are fulfilled, the authorities competent for carrying out checks within the territory of the Member States as to whether the conditions for entry to, stay or residence on the territory of the Member States are fulfilled, shall have access to search with the number of the visa in combination with verification of fingerprints of the visa holder.

Where the identity of the visa holder cannot be verified with fingerprints the competent authorities may also carry out the verification with the facial image.”;

(13) in Article 20(2), point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) the data entered in respect of any visa issued, refused, confirmed, annulled, revoked or extended referred to in Articles 10 to 14.”;

(14) in Article 21(2), point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) the data entered in respect of any visa issued, confirmed, annulled, revoked or extended referred to in Articles 10, 12a, 13 and 14.”;

(15) in Article 22(2), point (e) is replaced by the following:

“(e) the data entered in respect of any visa issued, confirmed, annulled, revoked or extended referred to in Articles 10, 12a, 13 and 14.”;

(15a) in Article 22c, point (h) is added:

“(h) national remarks;”;

(16) in Article 22f(1), point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) the visa number;”;

(17) in Article 22o, paragraph 3 is amended as follows:

(a) point (c) is replaced by the following:

“(c) visa number or number of the long-stay visa or residence permit and the date of expiry of the validity of the visa, long-stay visa or residence permit, as applicable;”;

(b) the following points (f) and (g) are added:

“(f) IP address **from which the application was submitted**;

(g) email address.”;

(18) in Article 22r, paragraph 3 is amended as follows:

(a) point (c) is replaced by the following:

“(c) visa number or number of the long-stay visa or residence permit and the date of expiry of the validity of the visa, long-stay visa or residence permit, as applicable;”;

(b) the following points (f) and (g) are added:

“(f) IP address **from which the application was submitted**;

(g) email address **used for the application**”;

(19) in Article 45(2), the following points (g) to (o) are added:

- “(g) for defining the content of a simplified application forms for confirmation of valid visas in a new travel document and for extension of visas, in accordance with Article 7b;
- (h) for defining requirements concerning the format of the personal data in the online application form, in accordance with Article 7b;
- (i) for defining the technical requirements concerning the format of supporting documents, travel medical insurance and copy of travel document in electronic format to be provided via the EU application platform, in accordance with Articles 7c and 7ba;
- (ia) for defining the requirements of the secure account service, including the modalities of access and authentication, the retention period for data stored therein and for uncompleted applications or applications which do not pass the competence and admissibility check, in accordance with Article 7b;**
- (j) for defining the requirements concerning the payment tool, including the reimbursement modalities for applicants, in accordance with Article 7d;
- (k) for defining the requirements concerning the appointment tool referred, including the modalities for confirmation of appointments, and the link to existing appointment tools or information on walk-in appointments to be configured by the consulates or external service providers, in accordance with Article 7d;
- (l) for laying down the authentication scheme for external service provider staff members using the External service provider gateway, in accordance with Article 7e;
- (m) for laying down technical specifications of the visas in digital format, and the visa notification, including details on the format of the notification, such as 2D barcode, printable format, in accordance with Article 7f;
- (n) for laying down detailed rules on the conditions for the operation of the web service and the data protection and security rules applicable to the web service, in accordance with Article 7g;
- (o) for defining model contingency plans regarding fall-back procedures in the case of a technical impossibility to access data at the external borders, including the procedures to be followed by border authorities , in accordance with Article 18e-;
- (p) to lay down the functionalities of the visa chatbot hosted by the EU application platform in accordance with Article 7a(5).”;**

(20) in Article 48a(2), (3) and (6), the references to “Article 9, Article 9h(2), Article 9j(2) and Article 22b(18)” are replaced by references to “Article 7b, Article 9, Article 9h(2), Article 9j(2) and Article 22b(18)”.

Article 3
Amendments to Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95²⁴

Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 is amended as follows:

- (1) Article 1 is replaced by the following:

“Article 1

Visas issued in conformity with Article 5 of this Regulation by the Member States which do not **apply the Schengen acquis in full** ~~issue visas in digital format~~ referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 shall be produced in the form of a uniform format (sticker). They shall conform to the specifications set out in the Annex.”;

- (2) in Article 7, the following fourth paragraph is added:

“The use **of** the uniform visa format for purposes other than those covered by Article 5 is without prejudice to issuing visas in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009.”.

Article 4
Amendments to Council Regulation (EC) No 333/2002²⁵

In Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 333/2002, paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

- “1. This Regulation shall apply to Member States which do not issue visas in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council*.

For the purposes of this Regulation, "form for affixing a visa" shall mean the document issued by the authorities of a Member State to the holder of a travel document which is not recognised by that Member State, to which its competent authorities affix a visa.”.

* Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243 15.9.2009, p. 1).”.

²⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 of 29 May 1995 laying down a uniform format for visas (OJ L 164, 14.7.1995, p. 1).

²⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 333/2002 of 18 February 2002 on a uniform format for forms for affixing the visa issued by Member States to persons holding travel documents not recognised by the Member State drawing up the form (OJ L 53, 23.2.2002, p. 4).

Article 5
Amendments to Council Regulation (EC) No 694/2003²⁶

Regulation (EC) No 694/2003 is amended as follows:

(1) Article 1 is replaced by the following:

“Article 1

1. Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) issued by the Member States as referred to in Article 2(1) of Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 shall be issued in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council * and shall have the same value as limited territorial validity visas with the purpose of transit. In addition, the digital format shall contain clear indication that the issued document is FTD.
2. Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD) issued by the Member States as referred to in Article 2(2) of Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 shall be issued in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and shall have the same value as limited territorial validity visas with the purpose of transit. In addition, the digital format shall contain clear indication that the issued document is FRTD.”.

* Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243 15.9.2009, p. 1).”.

(2) In Article 2(1), the first subparagraph is replaced by the following:

- “1. Further technical specifications for the digital format for FTD and FRTD, including relating to the following, shall be established in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 4(2): ”;

(3) In Article 6, the first subparagraph is replaced by the following:

- “2. Member States which have decided to do so shall issue the digital format for FTD and FRTD as referred to in Article 1 no later than one year after the adoption of the additional security features and requirements referred to in Article 2.”.

²⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 694/2003 of 14 April 2003 on uniform formats for Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) and Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD) provided for in Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 (OJ L 99, 17.4.2003, p. 15).

Article 6
*Amendment to the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement*²⁷

Article 18 of the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement is amended as follows:

(1) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

- “1. Visas for stays exceeding 90 days (long-stay visas) shall be national visas issued by one of the Member States in accordance with its national law or Union law. Such visas shall be ~~in~~ issued in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009.

By way of exception, Member States which do not issue visas in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 shall issue visas in the uniform format for visas as set out in Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 ^(*) with the heading specifying the type of visa with the letter “D”. They shall be filled out in accordance with the relevant provisions of Annex VII to Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code).”;

(2) the following paragraph 1a is inserted:

- “1a. Long-stay visas issued in digital format shall be notified to applicants by electronic means ~~in accordance with Article 7f of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008~~ by national authorities of the issuing Member State”.

Article 7
*Amendment to Council Regulation (EC) No 693/2003*²⁸

Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 2, paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

- “3. The FTD/FRTD shall be issued in digital format referred to in Article 26a of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009*”

* Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code) (OJ L 243 15.9.2009, p. 1).”;

²⁷ Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders (OJ L 239, 22.9.2000, p. 19).

²⁸ Council Regulation (EC) No 693/2003 of 14 April 2003 establishing a specific Facilitated Transit Document (FTD), a Facilitated Rail Transit Document (FRTD) and amending the Common Consular Instructions and the Common Manual (OJ L 99, 17.4.2003, p. 8).

(2) Article 5 is amended as follows:

(a) In paragraph 1, the first sentence is replaced by the following:

“The application for an FTD shall be submitted to the consular authorities of a Member State which has communicated its decision to issue the FTD/FRTD in accordance with Article 12.”;

(b) the following paragraph 5 is inserted:

“5. The application for an FTD and FRTD shall be carried out using an online application tool. The online application tool shall contain data referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Article.”.

(3) in Article 6, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 are replaced by the following:

“2. No FTD/FRTD shall be issued for a travel document that has expired.

3. The period of validity of the travel document for which the FTD/FRTD is issued shall be longer than that of the FTD/FRTD.

4. No FTD/FRTD shall be issued for a travel document if that travel document is not valid for any of the Member States. If a travel document is only valid for one Member State or for a number of Member States, the FTD/FRTD shall be limited to the Member State or Member States in question.”.

Article 8

Amendments to Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council²⁹

Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 is amended as follows:

(1) in Article 16(2), point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) where applicable, the short-stay visa number, including the three letter code of the issuing Member State, the type of short-stay visa, the end date of the maximum duration of the stay as authorised by the short-stay visa, which shall be updated at each entry, and the date of expiry of the validity of the short-stay visa;”

²⁹ Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011 (OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20).

(2) Article 19 is amended as follows:

(a) **the title is replaced by the following:**

“Data to be added where an authorisation for short stay is revoked, annulled or extended and when a valid visa is confirmed in a new travel document”;

(b) in paragraph 1, point (d) is replaced by the following:

“(d) where applicable, the new visa number, including the three letter code of the issuing country;”;

(b) the following paragraph 7 is added:

“7. Where a decision has been taken to confirm a valid visa in a new travel document, the visa authority which has taken the decision shall immediately retrieve the data provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article from the VIS and import them directly into the EES in accordance with Articles 12a of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.”.

(3) in Article 24(2), point (b) is replaced by the following:

“(b) the short-stay visa number, including the three letter code of the issuing Member State referred to in Article 16(2), point (d);”;

(4) in Article 32(5), point (c) is replaced by the following:

“(c) visa number and the date of expiry of the validity of the visa;”.

Article 9

Evaluation of the EU application platform

1. Five years after the date of start of operations according to Article 12 of this Regulation, the Commission shall evaluate the operation of the EU application platform. This evaluation shall include an examination of the results achieved against objectives and of the implementation of the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 and Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, as amended by this Regulation.
2. The Commission shall transmit the evaluation referred to in paragraph 1 to the European Parliament and the Council. On the basis of the evaluation, the Commission shall submit, where necessary, appropriate proposals.

Article 10
Start of operations of the EU application platform

1. The Commission shall determine the date from which operations of the EU application platform start pursuant to this Regulation, once the following conditions have been met:
 - (a) the measures referred to in Article 1, point (31) and Article 2, points (19) and (20) have been adopted;
 - (b) eu-LISA has declared the successful completion of a comprehensive tests;
 - (c) eu-LISA has validated the technical and legal arrangements and notified them to the Commission.
2. The Commission decision referred to in paragraph 1 shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.
3. By way of derogating from paragraph 1, and without prejudice to issuing visas in digital format, a Member State may, for a period of 5 years from the date referred to in paragraph 1, decide not to avail itself of the EU application platform.

In this case, the Member State shall notify the Commission regarding its decision not to avail itself of the EU application platform during the transition period. The Commission shall publish the notification in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

During this transitional period, visa holders shall be able to verify the digital visas using the web-service of the online visa application platform, referred to in Article 7g of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 if the Member State processing their visa application decided not to avail itself of the EU application platform.

4. A Member State may notify the Commission and eu-LISA that it wishes to avail itself of the EU application platform before the end of the transition period referred to in paragraph 3.

The Commission shall determine the date from which this shall be applicable. The Commission decision shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Article 11
Entry into force

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,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President