NEWS FROM UKRAINE

Rada to adopt EU-recommended bills on data protection, combating discrimination, says speaker

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine will approve the draft laws on amendments to the laws on personal data protection and countering discrimination that was recommended by the European Union, Verkhovna Rada Chairman Volodymyr Rybak has said.

"There are several key issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible. In particular, these are the legal regulation of the fight against corruption, and the introduction of the EU-recommended amendments to Ukraine's laws in the field of personal data protection and combating discrimination," Mr. Rybak stated at a meeting of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Seimas of Lithuania, the Sejm and Senate of Poland in Warsaw on 26 March.

Mr. Rybak said the Verkhovna Rada has already adopted most of the laws that are needed to implement the first stage of the action plan on the liberalization of the EU visa regime with Ukraine. In particular, the Parliament passed the laws dealing with the issues related to migration, a resolution to introduce biometric travel documents. Besides, a system of personal data protection was created in Ukraine.

According to the Ukrainian Parliament's Chair, Ukraine plans to submit to the European side soon its third report on the implementation of the first stage of the visa liberalization action plan, which would give the EU grounds to switch to the second stage.

Read more: Interfax Ukraine, 26 March 2013
http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/146376.html#.UVGP7DesZVQ

Ukrainian Parliament ratifies visa facilitation agreement with EU

Some 275 of the 350 MPs registered in the parliamentary sitting hall supported the Law "On the Ratification of the Amended Visa Facilitation Agreement between Ukraine and the EU".

According to the document, the visa issuing procedure can be facilitated for drivers engaged in international cargo and passenger transportation, journalists and technical staff accompanying them, participants of official exchange programmes organized by the local authorities, close relatives, spouses, children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren that are visiting Ukrainian citizens living in the EU member states, or EU citizens, as well as citizens that travel to the EU for medical treatment.

Visa facilitation is also introduced for members of public organizations participating in seminars and conferences, participants of international exhibitions, conference, and symposiums, members of religious communities, and participants of official EU programs for cross-border cooperation.

Read more: Interfax Ukraine, 22 March 2013
http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/145918.html#.UVGRmTesZVQ

European Parliament to consider amended Ukraine-EU visa facilitation agreement in April

On 17 April, the European Parliament will be voting on Amendment to the EU-Ukraine Agreement on the facilitation of the issuance of visas, the Ukrainian News Agency has learned from the European Parliament's press service.

Read more: The Ukrainian News Agency, 25 March 2013
http://un.ua/eng/article/441327.html

EU and IOM help Ukraine to implement visa liberalization action plan

The EU and International Organization for Migration (IOM) will enhance migration management in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. With a EUR 2.4 million total budget, the MIGRECO project (Strengthening Migration Management and Cooperation on Readmission in Eastern Europe) supports Ukraine to carry out the visa liberalization action plan with the EU in the next two years.

"IOM continues assisting the Ukrainian Government to develop a comprehensive migration management system in line with EU best practices, which will support Ukraine's efforts in progressing in the visa-free dialogue with the EU," states IOM Ukraine's Chief of Mission Manfred Profazi.

Key project partners in Ukraine are the State Migration Service, the State Border Guard Service, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ombudsman's Office.

Read more: The International Organization for Migration, Mission in Ukraine, 21 March 2013
http://iom.org.ua/en/home-page/news/eu-and-iom-help-ukraine-to-implement-visa-liberalization-action-plan.html

Foreign Ministry: quantity of Schengen visas issued to Ukrainians increased

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine takes note that the quantity of Schengen visas issued by the European Union countries to Ukrainians in 2012 increased, acting director of the Foreign Ministry's Communications Policy Department Mr. Yevhen Perebyinis, has stated at a news briefing.

Overall number of the issued Schengen visas rose 173,000 over 2011 to 1.28 million.

Moreover, Mr. Perebyinis says the amount of visa denials fell from 3.3% in 2011 to 2.03% in 2012.

In particular, he says the number of visa denials by separate EU member-states decreased substantially last year, namely by Italy from 8.49% to 4.94%, by Belgium from 7.17% to 4.38% and by Spain from 5.05% to 0.29%.

According to the earlier reports, the quantity of Schengen visas issued to Ukrainians in 2011 rose 200,000 against 2010, and the overall number of denials reduced from 4% in 2010 to 3.3% in 2011.

Read more: The Ukrainian News Agency, 20 March 2013
http://un.ua/eng/article/440579.html

Visa centre of Italy opens in Lviv

The visa centre of the Italian Republic was opened in Lviv on 11 March 2013.

"Lviv is well known for its grand history and traditionally close tights with Italy. From this standpoint Lviv seems to be the most successful and prestigious city for the beginning of the activity, directed on approaching the interested audience and move forward the Ukrainian citizens' needs," said Director General of Visa Management Service Ukraine Ltd Mr. Gennaro Bertolli.

Read more: Europe without Barriers, 12 March 2013
http://novisa.com.ua/en/news/?news_id=306

UNHCR asks Ukraine to free detained Tajik ex-premier

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is deeply concerned about the detention of the former prime minister of Tajikistan Abdumalik Abdullajanov.

A statement posted on the UNHCR website reads that the former Tajik prime minister has been recognized as a refugee by the United States and had travelled to Ukraine on a valid U.S.-issued travel document with a Ukrainian visa. "UNHCR reiterates the importance of the principle of non-refoulement, under which no refugee can be forcibly returned to their country of origin, including by way of extradition," reads the document. UNHCR urges the Ukrainian authorities to act in accordance with international law by respecting Mr. Abdullajanov's refugee status and releasing him from detention.

As reported earlier, Mr. Abdullajanov had been detained at Kyiv's Boryspil International Airport on the request of the Tajik authorities upon arriving to Kyiv from Los Angeles on 5 February. The Ukrainian State Migration Service said Mr. Abdullajanov had not applied for refugee status.

Read more: The National Radio Company of Ukraine, 21 March 2013
http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/en/148/526842/