

**COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 539/2001****of 15 March 2001****listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 62, point (2)(b)(i) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission ⁽¹⁾,Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament ⁽²⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Under Article 62, point (2)(b) of the Treaty, the Council is to adopt rules relating to visas for intended stays of no more than three months, and in that context it is required to determine the list of those third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement. Article 61 cites those lists among the flanking measures which are directly linked to the free movement of persons in an area of freedom, security and justice.
- (2) This Regulation follows on from the Schengen acquis in accordance with the Protocol integrating it into the framework of the European Union, hereinafter referred to as the 'Schengen Protocol'. It does not affect Member States' obligations deriving from the acquis as defined in Annex A to Decision 1999/435/EC of 20 May 1999 concerning the definition of the Schengen acquis for the purpose of determining, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Treaty establishing the European Community and the Treaty on European Union, the legal basis for each of the provisions or decisions which constitute the acquis ⁽³⁾.
- (3) This Regulation constitutes the further development of those provisions in respect of which closer cooperation has been authorised under the Schengen Protocol and falls within the area referred to in Article 1, point B, of 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 ⁽⁴⁾.
- (4) Pursuant to Article 1 of the Protocol on the position of the United Kingdom and Ireland annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty establishing the European Community, Ireland and the United Kingdom are not participating in the adoption of this Regulation. Consequently and without prejudice to Article 4 of the aforementioned Protocol, the provisions of this Regulation apply neither to Ireland nor to the United Kingdom.
- (5) The determination of those third countries whose nationals are subject to the visa requirement, and those exempt from it, is

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 177 E, 27.6.2000, p. 66.

⁽²⁾ Opinion of 5 July 2000 (not yet published in the Official Journal).

⁽³⁾ OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 176, 10.7.1999, p. 31.

▼B

governed by a considered, case-by-case assessment of a variety of criteria relating *inter alia* to illegal immigration, public policy and security, and to the European Union's external relations with third countries, consideration also being given to the implications of regional coherence and reciprocity. Provision should be made for a Community mechanism enabling this principle of reciprocity to be implemented if one of the third countries included in Annex II to this Regulation decides to make the nationals of one or more Member States subject to the visa obligation.

- (6) As the Agreement on the European Economic Area exempts nationals of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway from the visa requirement, these countries are not included in the list in Annex II hereto.
- (7) As regards stateless persons and recognised refugees, without prejudice to obligations under international agreements signed by the Member States and in particular the European Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Refugees, signed at Strasbourg on 20 April 1959, the decision as to the visa requirement or exemption should be based on the third country in which these persons reside and which issued their travel documents. However, given the differences in the national legislation applicable to stateless persons and to recognised refugees, Member States may decide whether these categories of persons shall be subject to the visa requirement, where the third country in which these persons reside and which issued their travel documents is a third country whose nationals are exempt from the visa requirement.
- (8) In specific cases where special visa rules are warranted, Member States may exempt certain categories of persons from the visa requirement or impose it on them in accordance with public international law or custom.
- (9) With a view to ensuring that the system is administered openly and that the persons concerned are informed, Member States should communicate to the other Member States and to the Commission the measures which they take pursuant to this Regulation. For the same reasons, that information should also be published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.
- (10) The conditions governing entry into the territory of the Member States or the issue of visas do not affect the rules currently governing recognition of the validity of travel documents.
- (11) In accordance with the principle of proportionality stated in Article 5 of the Treaty, enacting a Regulation listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders, and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement, is both a necessary and an appropriate means of ensuring that the common visa rules operate efficiently.

▼M1

- (12) This Regulation provides for full harmonisation as regards the third countries whose nationals are subject to the visa requirement for the crossing of Member States' external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement,

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HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

1. Nationals of third countries on the list in Annex I shall be required to be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States.

▼M5**▼CI**

Without prejudice to the requirements stemming from the European Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Refugees signed at Strasbourg on 20 April 1959, recognised refugees and stateless persons shall be required to be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States if the third country in which they are resident and which has issued them with their travel document is a third country listed in Annex I to this Regulation.

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2. ►**M1** Nationals of third countries on the list in Annex II shall be exempt from the requirement set out in paragraph 1 for stays of no more than three months in all. ◀

▼M5**▼CI**

The following shall also be exempt from the visa requirement:

- the nationals of third countries listed in Annex I to this Regulation who are holders of a local border traffic card issued by the Member States pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders of the Member States and amending the provisions of the Schengen Convention ⁽¹⁾ when these holders exercise their right within the context of the Local Border Traffic regime;
- school pupils who are nationals of a third country listed in Annex I and who reside in a Member State applying Council Decision 94/795/JHA of 30 November 1994 on a joint action adopted by the Council on the basis of Article K.3.2.b of the Treaty on European Union concerning travel facilities for school pupils from third countries resident in a Member State ⁽²⁾ and are travelling in the context of a school excursion as members of a group of school pupils accompanied by a teacher from the school in question;
- recognised refugees and stateless persons and other persons who do not hold the nationality of any country who reside in a Member State and are holders of a travel document issued by that Member State.

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3. Nationals of new third countries formerly part of countries on the lists in Annexes I and II shall be subject respectively to the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 unless and until the Council decides otherwise under the procedure laid down in the relevant provision of the Treaty.

▼M3

4. Where a third country listed in Annex II introduces a visa requirement for nationals of a Member State, the following provisions shall apply:

- (a) within 90 days of such introduction, or its announcement, the Member State concerned shall notify the Council and the Commission in writing; the notification shall be published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Union*. The notification shall specify the date of implementation of the measure and the type of travel documents and visas concerned.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 405, 20.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 327, 19.12.1994, p. 1.

▼M3

If the third country decides to lift the visa obligation before the expiry of this deadline, the notification becomes superfluous;

- (b) the Commission shall immediately after publication of that notification and in consultation with the Member State concerned, take steps with the authorities of the third country in order to restore visa-free travel;
- (c) within 90 days after publication of that notification, the Commission, in consultation with the Member State concerned, shall report to the Council. The report may be accompanied by a proposal providing for the temporary restoration of the visa requirement for nationals of the third country in question. The Commission may also present this proposal after deliberations in Council on its report. The Council shall act on such proposal by a qualified majority within three months;
- (d) if it considers it necessary, the Commission may present a proposal for the temporary restoration of the visa requirement for nationals of the third country referred to in subparagraph (c) without a prior report. The procedure provided for in subparagraph (c) shall apply to that proposal. The Member State concerned may state whether it wishes the Commission to refrain from the temporary restoration of such visa requirement without a prior report;
- (e) the procedure referred to in subparagraphs (c) and (d) does not affect the Commission's right to present a proposal amending this Regulation in order to transfer the third country concerned to Annex I. Where a temporary measure as referred to in subparagraphs (c) and (d) has been decided, the proposal amending this Regulation shall be presented by the Commission at the latest nine months after the entry into force of the temporary measure. Such a proposal shall also include provisions for lifting of temporary measures, which may have been introduced pursuant to the procedures referred to in subparagraphs (c) and (d). In the meantime the Commission will continue its efforts in order to induce the authorities of the third country in question to reinstall visa-free travel for the nationals of the Member State concerned;
- (f) where the third country in question abolishes the visa requirement, the Member State shall immediately notify the Council and the Commission to that effect. The notification shall be published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Union*. Any temporary measure decided upon under subparagraph (d) shall terminate seven days after the publication in the Official Journal. In case the third country in question has introduced a visa requirement for nationals of two or more Member States the termination of the temporary measure will only terminate after the last publication.

5. As long as visa exemption reciprocity continues not to exist with any third country listed in Annex II in relation to any of the Member States, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and the Council before the 1 July of every even-numbered year on the situation of non-reciprocity and shall, if necessary, submit appropriate proposals.

▼B*Article 2*

For the purposes of this Regulation, 'visa' shall mean an authorisation issued by a Member State or a decision taken by such State which is required with a view to:

- entry for an intended stay in that Member State or in several Member States of no more than three months in total,

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— entry for transit through the territory of that Member State or several Member States, except for transit at an airport.

▼M5**▼CI****▼B***Article 4*

1. A Member State may provide for exceptions from the visa requirement provided for by Article 1(1) or from the exemption from the visa requirement provided for by Article 1(2) as regards:

▼M5**▼CI**

(a) holders of diplomatic passports, service/official passports or special passports in accordance with one of the procedures laid down in Articles 1(1) and 2(1) of Regulation (EC) No 789/2001 of 24 April 2001 reserving to the Council implementing powers with regard to certain detailed provisions and practical procedures for examining visa applications ⁽¹⁾.

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- (b) civilian air and sea crew;
- (c) the flight crew and attendants on emergency or rescue flights and other helpers in the event of disaster or accident;
- (d) the civilian crew of ships navigating in international waters;
- (e) the holders of laissez-passer issued by some intergovernmental international organisations to their officials.

▼M5**▼CI**

2. A Member State may exempt from the visa requirement:
- (a) a school pupil having the nationality of a third country listed in Annex I who resides in a third country listed in Annex II or in Switzerland and Liechtenstein and is travelling in the context of a school excursion as a member of a group of school pupils accompanied by a teacher from the school in question;
 - (b) recognised refugees and stateless persons if the third country where they reside and which issued their travel document is one of the third countries listed in Annex II;
 - (c) members of the armed forces travelling on NATO or Partnership for Peace business and holders of identification and movement orders provided for by the Agreement of 19 June 1951 between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation regarding the status of their forces.

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3. A Member State may provide for exceptions from the exemption from the visa requirement provided for in Article 1(2) as regards persons carrying out a paid activity during their stay.

Article 5

1. Within 10 working days of the entry into force of this Regulation, Member States shall communicate to the other Member States and the Commission the measures they have taken pursuant to Article 3, second indent and Article 4. Any further changes to those measures shall be similarly communicated within five working days.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 116, 26.4.2001, p. 2. Regulation as amended by Decision 2004/927/EC (OJ L 396, 31.12.2004, p. 45).

▼B

2. The Commission shall publish the measures communicated pursuant to paragraph 1 in the *Official Journal of the European Communities* for information.

Article 6

This Regulation shall not affect the competence of Member States with regard to the recognition of States and territorial units and passports, travel and identity documents issued by their authorities.

Article 7

1. Council Regulation (EC) No 574/1999 ⁽¹⁾ shall be replaced by this Regulation.

2. The final versions of the Common Consular Instruction (CCI) and of the Common Manual (CM), as they result from the Decision of the Schengen Executive Committee of 28 April 1999 (SCH/Com-ex(99) 13) shall be amended as follows:

1. the heading of Annex 1, part I of the CCI and of Annex 5, part I of the CM, shall be replaced by the following:

‘Common list of third countries the nationals of which are subject to the visa requirement imposed by Regulation (EC) No 539/2001’;

2. the list in Annex 1, part I of the CCI and in Annex 5, part I of the CM shall be replaced by the list in Annex I to this Regulation;

3. the heading of Annex 1, part II of the CCI and of Annex 5, part II of the CM shall be replaced by the following:

‘Common list of third countries the nationals of which are exempted from the visa requirement by Regulation (EC) No 539/2001’;

4. the list in Annex 1, part II of the CCI and in Annex 5, part II of the CM shall be replaced by the list in Annex II to this Regulation;

5. part III of Annex 1 to the CCI and part III of Annex 5 of the CM shall be deleted.

3. The decisions of the Schengen Executive Committee of 15 December 1997 (SCH/Com-ex(97)32) and of 16 December 1998 (SCH/Com-ex(98)53, rev.2) shall be repealed.

▼M1*Article 8*

This Regulation shall enter into force on the 20th day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

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This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in the Member States in accordance with the Treaty establishing the European Community.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 72, 18.3.1999, p. 2.

▼B*ANNEX I***Common list referred to in Article 1(1)**

1. STATES

Afghanistan

Albania

Algeria

Angola

▼M5**▼C1**

▼B

Armenia

Azerbaijan

▼M5**▼C1**

▼B

Bahrain

Bangladesh

▼M5**▼C1**

▼B

Belarus

Belize

Benin

Bhutan

▼M5**▼C1**

Bolivia

▼B

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Botswana

Burkina Faso

Burma/Myanmar

Burundi

Cambodia

Cameroon

Cape Verde

Central African Republic

Chad

China

Colombia

Congo

Côte d'Ivoire

Cuba

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Djibouti

▼ B

Dominica
Dominican Republic

▼ M5**▼ C1**

▼ M2

Ecuador

▼ B

Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Fiji

▼ M6

▼ B

Gabon
Gambia
Georgia
Ghana
Grenada
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Guyana
Haiti
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Jamaica
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kiribati
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Laos
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Maldives
Mali

▼ B

Marshall Islands

Mauritania

▼ M5**▼ CI**

▼ B

Micronesia

Moldova

Mongolia

▼ M6

▼ B

Morocco

Mozambique

Namibia

Nauru

Nepal

Niger

Nigeria

North Korea

Northern Marianas

Oman

Pakistan

Palau

Papua New Guinea

Peru

Philippines

Qatar

Russia

Rwanda

▼ M5**▼ CI**

▼ B

Saint Lucia

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

▼ M5**▼ CI**

Samoa

▼ B

São Tomé and Príncipe

Saudi Arabia

▼ B

Senegal

▼ M6

▼ M5**▼ C1**

▼ B

Sierra Leone

Solomon Islands

Somalia

South Africa

Sri Lanka

Sudan

Surinam

Swaziland

Syria

Tajikistan

Tanzania

Thailand

The Comoros

▼ M5**▼ C1**

Timor-Leste

▼ B

Togo

Tonga

Trinidad and Tobago

Tunisia

Turkey

Turkmenistan

Tuvalu

Uganda

Ukraine

United Arab Emirates

Uzbekistan

Vanuatu

Vietnam

▼ M5**▼ C1**

▼ B

Yemen

Zambia

Zimbabwe

2. ENTITIES AND TERRITORIAL AUTHORITIES THAT ARE NOT
RECOGNISED AS STATES BY AT LEAST ONE MEMBER STATE

▼ M2

▼ B

Palestinian Authority

Taiwan

▼ M6

Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999

▼ M5

▼ C1

3. BRITISH CITIZENS WHO ARE NOT NATIONALS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE PURPOSES OF COMMUNITY LAW:

British overseas territories citizens who do not have the right of abode in the United Kingdom

British overseas citizens

British subjects who do not have the right of abode in the United Kingdom

British protected persons

▼ B*ANNEX II***Common list referred to in Article 1(2)**

1. STATES

Andorra

▼ M5**▼ C1**Antigua and Barbuda ⁽¹⁾**▼ B**

Argentina

Australia

▼ M5**▼ C1**Bahamy ⁽¹⁾Barbados ⁽¹⁾

▼ B

Brazil

▼ M5**▼ C1**

Brunei Darussalam

▼ M4

▼ B

Canada

Chile

Costa Rica

Croatia

▼ A1

▼ M2

▼ A1

▼ M6former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ⁽²⁾**▼ B**

Guatemala

Holy See

Honduras

▼ A1

▼ B

Israel

Japan

▼ A1

▼ B

Malaysia

⁽¹⁾ The exemption from the visa requirement will apply from the date of entry into force of an agreement on visa exemption to be concluded with the European Community.⁽²⁾ The visa requirement exemption applies only to holders of biometric passports.

▼ A1

▼ M5▼ C1Mauritius ⁽¹⁾▼ B

Mexico

Monaco

▼ M6Montenegro ⁽²⁾▼ B

New Zealand

Nicaragua

Panama

Paraguay

▼ A1

▼ M4

▼ B

Salvador

San Marino

▼ M6Serbia (excluding holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (in Serbian: *Koordinaciona uprava*)) ⁽²⁾▼ M5▼ C1Seychelles ⁽¹⁾▼ B

Singapore

▼ A1

▼ B

South Korea

▼ M5▼ C1Saint Kitts and Nevis ⁽¹⁾▼ M2

▼ B

United States of America

Uruguay

Venezuela

2. SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Hong Kong SAR ⁽³⁾Macao SAR ⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ The exemption from the visa requirement will apply from the date of entry into force of an agreement on visa exemption to be concluded with the European Community.

⁽²⁾ The visa requirement exemption applies only to holders of biometric passports.

⁽³⁾ The visa requirement exemption applies only to holders of a 'Hong Kong Special Administrative Region' passport.

⁽⁴⁾ The visa requirement exemption applies only to holders of a 'Região Administrativa Especial de Macau' passport.

▼ M5

▼ C1

3. BRITISH CITIZENS WHO ARE NOT NATIONALS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE PURPOSES OF COMMUNITY LAW:

British nationals (overseas)