

4 May 2016

Turkey Visa Liberalisation

Scorecard May 2016

Turkey's progress on the visa liberalisation roadmap

On 16 December 2013, the EU and Turkey launched a visa liberalisation process. The European Commission presented a [roadmap](#) listing 72 requirements that it expected Turkey to meet in order to qualify for visa-free travel with Schengen countries.

On 20 October 2014, the European Commission published its [first report](#) assessing whether Turkey complies with these requirements.

On 4 March 2016 a second report was issued (in two parts, with a [main report](#) and a more detailed [background report](#)).

On 4 May 2016, the Commission issued a third report ([main report](#), detailed [background report](#)). Here the Commission recommended visa-free travel on condition that Turkey meets seven open benchmarks. The European Parliament and the Council are due to vote on the Commission's proposal in June, as envisaged under the [EU-Turkey deal of 18 March 2016](#).

In the third report, the language used by the Commission is “fulfilled/almost fulfilled” (66 benchmarks); “partially fulfilled” (3 benchmarks) and “not fulfilled” (3 benchmarks).¹ ESI's scorecard again uses a traffic lights system with green (fulfilled/almost fulfilled), yellow (partially fulfilled) and red (not fulfilled).

¹ In the previous two reports, the Commission used 5 grades but very similar language, from 1 for “fulfilled” to 5 for “not fulfilled” – see full explanation on page 6.

PROGRESS SINCE 2014

Since October 2014 and particularly since November 2015, when the EU and Turkey decided to accelerate the visa liberalisation process, Turkey has made very good progress, meeting almost all benchmarks:

	October 2014	March 2016	May 2016
Fulfilled/almost fulfilled	22	37	66
Partially fulfilled	23	23	3
Not fulfilled	27	12	3

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

There are now 7 benchmarks that Turkey should focus on to qualify for visa-free travel in June when the European Parliament and the Council will vote on the Commission's proposal:

42. Continue implementing the National Strategy and the Action Plan on the Fight against Corruption and the recommendations of GRECO (I., II. and III. Evaluation Rounds)	Not fulfilled
54. Conclude and implement an Operational Cooperation Agreement with EUROPOL	Not fulfilled
65. Revise - in line with the ECHR and with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law, the EU acquis and EU Member States practices - the legal framework as regards organised crime and terrorism, as well as its interpretation by the courts and by the security forces and the law enforcement agencies, so as to ensure the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial and freedom of expression, of assembly and association in practice	Not fulfilled
47. Provide effective judicial cooperation in criminal matters, incl. in extradition matters, to all EU MS	Partially fulfilled
56. Adopt and implement legislation on the protection of personal data in line with the EU standards	Partially fulfilled
68. Implement the EU-Turkey readmission agreement in all its provisions (solid track record)	Partially fulfilled
1. Continue issuing machine-readable biometric travel documents in compliance with ICAO and EU standards, introduce passports with biometric data in line with EU standards	Almost fulfilled

THE SCORECARD IN FULL

Block 1: Document security	Oct. 2014	March 2016	May 2016
1. Continue issuing machine-readable biometric travel documents in compliance with ICAO and EU standards, introduce passports with biometric data in line with EU standards	3	3	Almost fulfilled
6. Exchange passport specimens, visa forms and information on false documents, cooperate on document security with the EU	4	4	Fulfilled
5. Ensure a high level of security of breeder documents and ID cards, define strict procedures for application and issuance	2	2	Fulfilled
2. Ensure the integrity and security of the personalisation, distribution and validation process for passports and breeder documents	2	1	Fulfilled
3. Establish anti-corruption training programmes & ethical codes for officials dealing with visas, breeder documents and passports	1	1	Fulfilled
4. Report to Interpol/LASP data base on lost and stolen passports	1	1	Fulfilled
7. Adopt and implement measures ensuring the integrity and security of the civil status and civil registration process	1	1	Fulfilled
Block 2: Migration management			
22. Allow visa-free access to Turkish territory for the citizens of all EU MS	5	5	Fulfilled
9. Adopt & implement legislation on the movement of persons at the external borders and the organisation of the border authorities in line with Turkey's 2006 IBM strategy and principles of the Schengen Border Code and Schengen Catalogue	5	3	Fulfilled
15. Ensure cooperation with neighbouring EU MS, in particular on border management	4	3	Fulfilled
21. Pursue the alignment of Turkish visa policy towards the EU <i>acquis</i> vis-à-vis the main countries representing important sources of illegal migration for the EU	4	3	Fulfilled
29. Set up & apply a mechanism to monitor migration flows (regular and illegal), develop situational picture on illegal migration flows and the different countries of origin	4	3	Fulfilled
31. Seek to conclude and implement readmission agreements with countries that represent sources of important illegal migration directed towards Turkey or EU MS	4	3	Fulfilled
8. Carry out border checks and border surveillance along all the borders of the country, particularly those with EU MS, reducing the number of illegal border crossings	3	3	Fulfilled
10. Take the necessary budgetary and other measures to ensure the deployment of sufficient numbers of well-trained border guards as well as infrastructure, equipment & IT technology at BCPs and along all the borders, particularly those with EU MS	3	3	Fulfilled
12. Establish anti-corruption training programmes and ethical codes for border guards, customs and other officials involved in border management	3	3	Fulfilled
20. Make access to Turkey more difficult for citizens of countries representing important sources of illegal migration for the EU	3	3	Fulfilled
24. Adopt & implement legislation in line with the EU <i>acquis</i> and the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol without a geographical limitation, to ensure respect for non-refoulement, the ECHR and the possibility to claim asylum and obtain protection, allow UNHCR to fulfil its mandate on Turkish territory unrestricted	3	3	Fulfilled
26. Provide adequate infrastructure and sufficient resources ensuring decent reception and protection of asylum seekers and refugees	3	3	Fulfilled
34. Allow expelled third-country nationals to return voluntarily	3	3	Fulfilled
35. Provide adequate infrastructure (incl. detention centres) and strengthen responsible bodies to ensure the expulsion of illegally	3	3	Fulfilled

entering/residing third-country nationals, while offering legal aid, assistance & decent and fair detention conditions and removal procedures			
11. Enhance cooperation and information exchange between the staff and bodies in charge of border management, the custom service and other law enforcement agencies	4	2	Fulfilled
16. Enhance training on document security for Turkey's consular and border staff, develop and use the Turkish Visa Information System	3	2	Fulfilled
17. Abolish issuance of visas at the borders as an ordinary procedure for citizens of countries representing a high migratory and security risk to the EU	3	2	Fulfilled
27. Persons granted refugee status should be given the possibility to self-sustain, access public services, enjoy social rights and integrate in Turkey	3	2	Fulfilled
28. Adopt and implement legislation in line with EU and Council of Europe standards on migration management including rules on entry, stay and exit of foreigners and the reception, return and rights of illegally entering/residing foreigners	3	2	Fulfilled
30. Address the pull factors facilitating illegal migration into Turkey, take measures improving the capacity to investigate cases of organised or facilitated illegal migration	3	2	Fulfilled
19. Introduce airport transit visas	2	2	Fulfilled
33. Ensure effective expulsion of illegally residing third-country nationals	2	2	Fulfilled
18. Use the new Turkish visa stickers with higher security features, stop using stamp visas	3	1	Fulfilled
23. Adopt & implement legislation on carriers' responsibility defining sanctions	3	1	Fulfilled
25. Establish a specialised body for refugee status determination, offer the possibility of legal remedy before a court, ensure protection and assistance for asylum seekers and refugees	3	1	Fulfilled
32. Ensure sufficient resources for migration management, incl. training programmes	2	1	Fulfilled
13. Implement the Memorandum of Understanding signed with FRONTEX	1	1	Fulfilled
14. Ensure that border management is carried out in line with international refugee law	1	1	Fulfilled
Block 3: Public order and security			
54. Conclude and implement an Operational Cooperation Agreement with EUROPOL	5	5	Not fulfilled
42. Continue implementing the National Strategy and the Action Plan on the Fight against Corruption and the recommendations of GRECO (I., II. and III. Evaluation Rounds)	4	4	Not fulfilled
56. Adopt and implement legislation on the protection of personal data in line with the EU standards	5	5	Partially fulfilled
47. Provide effective judicial cooperation in criminal matters, incl. in extradition matters, to all EU MS	4	4	Partially fulfilled
36. Continue & complete the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the fight against organised crime, ensuring adequate human and financial resources	4	4	Fulfilled
45. Develop working relations with EUROJUST	4	4	Fulfilled
46. Continue implementing the 1980 Hague Convention on civil aspects of international child abduction, accede to the 1996 and the 2007 Hague Conventions related to parental responsibility and the protection of children, and international recovery of child support	4	4	Fulfilled
55. Sign, ratify and implement relevant international data protection conventions	5	3	Fulfilled
38. Provide adequate infrastructure and resources ensuring decent reception and protection of victims of trafficking and supporting their social and professional reintegration	4	3	Fulfilled
43. Implement & comply with international conventions concerning judicial	3	3	Fulfilled

cooperation in matters			
44. Take measures aimed at improving the efficiency of judicial co-operation in criminal matters, of judges and prosecutors with EU MS and countries in the region	3	3	Fulfilled
37. Sign & ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking, adopt and implement legislation in line with it and with the relevant EU <i>acquis</i> on prevention of THB, the prosecution of traffickers and protection and assistance to their victims	4	2	Fulfilled
39. Ratify the CoE Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism, transpose it into national law, enact legislation implementing the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force	3	2	Fulfilled
40. Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, adopt legislation enacting it	3	2	Fulfilled
41. Continue implementing the National Strategy and the Action Plans against Drugs and Drug Addiction; cooperate with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA);	3	2	Fulfilled
52. Strengthen the capacities of the Turkish Financial Crimes Investigation Board (MASAK) and develop its cooperation with Financial Intelligence Units within EU MS	3	2	Fulfilled
48. Ensure law enforcement co-operation among the relevant national agencies - especially border guards, police, customs officers - as well as with judicial authorities	2	2	Fulfilled
49. Reinforce regional law enforcement services co-operation, implement bilateral and multilateral operational cooperation agreements, share information with EU MS authorities	2	2	Fulfilled
53. Continue implementing the Strategic Agreement with EUROPOL	2	2	Fulfilled
50. Improve the operational and special investigative capacity of law enforcement services to tackle more efficiently serious and cross-border crime incl. ID and travel document fraud	1	1	Fulfilled
51. Cooperate with OLAF and EUROPOL in protecting the Euro against counterfeiting	1	1	Fulfilled
Block 4: Fundamental Rights			
65. Revise - in line with the ECHR and with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law, the EU <i>acquis</i> and EU Member States practices - the legal framework as regards organised crime and terrorism, as well as its interpretation by the courts and by the security forces and the law enforcement agencies, so as to ensure the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial and freedom of expression, of assembly and association in practice	4	4	Not fulfilled
63. Develop and implement policies addressing Roma social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination in access to education, health services, ID cards, housing, employment and participation in public life	4	3	Fulfilled
64. Ratify additional Protocols n. 4 and 7 of the European Convention on Human Rights	4	3	Fulfilled
61. Ensure access to identity documents for refugees & stateless persons residing in Turkey	2	1	Fulfilled
57. Ensure that freedom of movement of citizens of Turkey is not subject to unjustified or discriminatory restrictions, carry out full investigations when needed	1	1	Fulfilled
58. Provide information about the conditions and circumstances for the acquisition of Turkish citizenship	1	1	Fulfilled
59. Provide information about the conditions for changing personal data	1	1	Fulfilled
60. Ensure access to travel and identity documents for all citizens	1	1	Fulfilled
62. Provide information on registration requirements to foreigners wishing to reside in Turkey, ensure equal and transparent implementation of the respective legislation	1	1	Fulfilled
Block 5: Readmission of illegal migrants			

68. Implement the EU-Turkey readmission agreement in all its provisions (solid track record)	5	4	Partially fulfilled
66. Implement readmission obligations existing with Member States	5	4	Fulfilled
70. Strengthen the capacity of the competent authority to process readmission applications	5	3	Fulfilled
71. Process readmission requests in line with domestic and EU data protection requirements	5	3	Fulfilled
72. Compile and share with MS and the European Commission statistics on readmission	5	3	Fulfilled
69. Establish & implement internal procedures to identify and return Turkish citizens, third-country nationals and stateless persons illegally residing in EU MS, facilitate the transit of persons being returned elsewhere	4	2	Fulfilled
67. Ratify the EU-Turkey readmission agreement initialled on 21 June 2012	1	1	Fulfilled

Legend for the third report (May 2016):

“Fulfilled/Almost fulfilled”: **green**

“Partially fulfilled”: **yellow**

“Not fulfilled”: **red**

Scorecard legend for the first two reports (October 2014 and March 2016):

“Requirement fulfilled”: **grade 1 and green**

“Almost fulfilled (i.e. only some limited work still needs to be done to entirely fulfil the requirement)”: **grade 2 and green**

“Fulfilled partially but with good prospects for further progress (i.e. much work still needs to be done, but the results achieved and the work done by the Turkish authorities are substantial, and developments so far are encouraging)” and “Fulfilled only partially but certain progress was observed”: **grade 3 and yellow**

“Only partially fulfilled (i.e. much work still needs to be done to fulfil the requirements of the benchmark, no particular positive developments to address them were observed)”: **grade 4 and red**

“Requirement not fulfilled (i.e. Turkey is far from meeting this benchmark)”: **grade 5 and red**