



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 18 February 2011**

**6354/11**

**VISA 27  
COEST 52**

**"I/A" ITEM NOTE**

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from : General Secretariat of the Council

to : Coreper/Council

No. Cion prop. : 16330/10 VISA 276 COEST 349 (RESTREINT UE) (SEC(2010) 1400 final)

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Subject : Adoption of a Council Decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement between the European Union and Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas

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1. The Commission submitted on 12 November 2010 a Recommendation to the Council in order to authorise the Commission to open negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement between the European Union and Belarus on the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas, set out in 16330/10 VISA 276 COEST 349 (RESTREINT UE).
2. Following examination of the Recommendation by the Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia on 17 January and by the Visa Working Party on 19 January 2011, it was concluded that there was a basic consensus on the draft mandate, subject to the deletion of point 2.4 of the draft negotiating directives (see 5679/11 VISA 8 COEST 25 (RESTREINT)), but that future action should await and take account of the outcome of the Council (Foreign Affairs).

3. The Council (Foreign Affairs) adopted at its meeting on 31 January 2011 the conclusions on Belarus set out in doc. 5956/11 COEST 37 PESC 137 RELEX 100, where the Council, while recalling the importance it attaches to facilitating people-to-people contacts with Belarus to the benefit of the Belarusian population at large, looked forward to the start of negotiations for visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Belarus, once the negotiating directives have been adopted.
4. Consequently, the Presidency suggested in a written procedure certain further amendments to the negotiating directives. No delegation has objected to the suggested amendments.
5. The draft Council Decision set out in 6355/11 VISA 28 COEST 53 (RESTREINT EU) has been prepared on that basis.
6. The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to ask the Council to adopt the draft Council Decision as set out in 6355/11 VISA 28 COEST 53 (RESTREINT EU) as an A point.

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