

**Question for written answer E-002669/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Reinhold Lopatka (PPE)

Subject: State of play of the Schengen visa waivers for Gulf Cooperation Council countries

Travellers from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are among the highest spenders on tourism, benefiting EU economies. Visa-free travel for nationals of these countries would also support the EU's commitment to fostering ties with GCC nations in sectors such as energy, security and the promotion of European values.

In April 2022, the Commission proposed visa waivers for Kuwait and Qatar. However, this proposal has been frozen in Parliament since December 2022, with no timeline for adoption.

In October 2024, the joint statement following the EU-GCC summit stated, 'In line with legal requirements in both regions, we reaffirm our commitment to continue efforts to enhance our people-to-people contacts by continuing to work together on practical and constructive steps towards a safe and mutually beneficial visa-free travel arrangement between the EU/Schengen and the GCC countries'.

1. What measures are being undertaken by the Commission to implement what is considered to be a roadmap issued by the EU-GCC summit?
2. With the visa waiver file frozen in Parliament since December 2022, does the Commission envisage the submission of a new proposal? Would such a proposal include all five visa-bound GCC countries?
3. Are there further measures that the Commission intends to implement to facilitate the attainment of visa liberalisation for nationals of GCC countries?

Submitted: 27.11.2024