

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001472/24
to the Commission
Łukasz Kohut (PPE)
(2 August 2024)**

Subject: Easing of visa requirements for Russians and Belarusians by the Hungarian Government

In July 2024, the Hungarian Government adopted new rules aimed at easing visa restrictions for eight nationalities, including Russian and Belarusian citizens. These individuals are now eligible for a newly adopted fast-track visa system, granting them free access to the Schengen area. This decision could potentially lead to an increase in Russian espionage activities in Europe.

There is no doubt that the Hungarian Government poses a persistent threat to not only their own security, but also to that of all other EU countries, particularly Poland, Czechia and the Baltic states, which strongly support Ukraine.

1. What actions is the Commission planning to take to prevent the implementation of the ‘national card’?
2. Will the Commission take measures to exclude Hungary from the Schengen area if the Hungarian Government does not retract the regulation?

Submitted: 2.8.2024

**Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission
(7 October 2024)**

As explained in the Commission’s answer to the Written Question E-0001438/2024 on the same issue, on 1 August 2024, a letter has been sent to the Hungarian Minister of the Interior in which the Commission’s concerns about the extension of the ‘National Card’ scheme to citizens of Russia and Belarus were expressed.

Hungary was reminded of the importance of upholding enhanced standards of scrutiny and vigilance with regards to the entry of Russian nationals into the Schengen area.

The dialogue with the Hungarian authorities is ongoing to assess the implications of the ‘National Card’ extension for the security of the Schengen area.

Hungary remains bound by the obligation to thoroughly check whether all entry conditions of Article 6 of the Schengen Borders Code ⁽¹⁾ (SBC) applicable to third-country nationals have been met.

This includes, amongst others, the absence of alerts issued in the Schengen Information System or other indications that an individual poses a threat to public policy, internal security, public health or the international relations of any of the Member States. A third-country national who does not fulfil the entry conditions must be refused entry (Article 14 SBC).

On 30 September 2022, the Commission issued updated guidelines on controls of Russian citizens at the external borders in the context of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine ⁽²⁾.

According to these guidelines, border guards should exercise intensive individual scrutiny in assessing the potential heightened security risk posed by Russian nationals.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), OJ L 77, 23.3.2016.

⁽²⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-09/Communication%20from%20the%20Commission%20on%20updating%20guidelines%20on%20general%20visa%20issuance%20in%20relation%20to%20Russian%20applicants%20and%20on%20providing%20guidelines%20on%20controls%20of%20Russian%20citizens%20at%20the%20external%20borders_en.pdf