

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-003158/25
to the Commission
Karin Karlsbro (Renew)
(31 July 2025)**

Subject: EU action on security risks and visa policy in the light of increasing Russian tourism

Recent data shows a sharp increase in the number of Schengen visas issued to Russian nationals in 2024, including 152 254 by Italy, 123 890 by France and 111 537 by Spain. Given this data, serious concerns have been raised about the security implications of this trend, especially considering Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and mounting hybrid threats from Russia against EU Member States.

While several Member States targeted by Russia, such as the Baltic countries, Finland and Czechia, have significantly curtailed visa issuance, other Member States continue to welcome affluent Russian tourists. These contrasting approaches risk undermining EU solidarity and coherence in security measures.

1. What steps is the Commission taking to address the uneven implementation of Russian visa restrictions across the Member States, particularly in the light of the increased volume of tourism-related visas?
2. Is the Commission considering legally binding measures or revised guidelines in order to enhance the security screening of Russian nationals applying for Schengen visas, including more robust checks for hybrid threat potential?
3. What is the Commission's assessment of the risk posed by Russian tourism in terms of EU internal security, and how is it working to ensure a unified approach across the Schengen zone?

Submitted: 31.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(9 September 2025)**

Following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, on 9 September 2022, the Council adopted a decision on the suspension in whole of the application of the Agreement between the European Community and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of the EU and the Russian Federation ⁽¹⁾.

On 30 September 2022, the Commission presented the updated guidelines to Member States on visa procedures as well as on border controls for Russian citizens at the EU's external borders ⁽²⁾.

These guidelines already call for reinforced and robust security scrutiny when issuing visas to Russian citizens as well as particularly thorough checks at the EU external borders.

The guidelines also recommend a more restrictive approach to visa for non-essential purposes, such as tourism.

Figures would indicate that the Member States are following the guidelines in general: overall number of visas issued to Russian applicants has decreased from more than 4 million visas issued in 2019 to around 0.5 million in 2024. The visa refusal rate has evolved from 1.5% in 2019 to 7.5% in 2024.

The Commission will continue to monitor and discuss the implementation of these guidelines with Member States as appropriate. If necessary, the Commission might adapt them in accordance with the evolving reality on the ground.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision (EU) 2022/1500 of 9 September 2022 on the suspension in whole of the application of the Agreement between the European Community and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of the European Union and the Russian Federation, OJ L 234I, 09/09/2022, p. 1-3.

⁽²⁾ C(2022) 7111.