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Turkey

Towards visa liberalization between Turkey and the EU

The European Commission and Turkish government today signed agreements on readmission of migrants and the opening of negotiations on visa liberalization. These agreements will lead to a relaxation of EU visa rules for Turkish citizens in return for Turkey readmitting illegal migrants who enter the EU via Turkey.

Commenting on the agreement, Greens/EFA MEP **Hélène Flautre**, Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, said:

“Within the next three and a half years at the latest, new rules will come into force allowing Turkish citizens to travel to the EU without having to go through an often long and humiliating visa procedure! Visa procedures for Turkish citizens will therefore soon be aligned with those of citizens of other accession candidate countries. This was a longstanding demand of all our partners in Turkey and is good news for relations between Europe and Turkey.

“However, the readmission agreement is a high price to pay for this visa liberalization: the rapprochement between Turkey and the EU seems to come at the expense of third country nationals, migrants or refugees, who too often risk their lives on their way to Europe. This is already the case for refugees from Syria, in particular on the Turkish-Bulgarian border or in the Aegean Sea.

“The implementation of this agreement should therefore be placed under full democratic oversight to ensure that migrants’ fundamental rights are fully respected.”

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