

Inzko: Visa liberalisation heralds the dawning of a new era for BiH



Visa liberalization heralds the dawning of a new era for Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of its relationship with the European Union, paving the way for its citizens to travel freely to and across much of the continent, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko said today.

“Exactly 21 years ago today, Europe’s artificial divide, the Berlin Wall, came crashing down, opening up hitherto undreamed of opportunities for Europeans to experience freedom and travel throughout their continent,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative said. “How appropriate, therefore, that as the post-Cold War Europe comes of age, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina will also be able to benefit from the continent’s hard-won freedom in the same way as their peers elsewhere.”

Mr Inzko was responding to the European Union’s Justice and Home Affairs Council’s decision today to approve the lifting of the visa requirement for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina traveling to those European countries that form the so-called Schengen Area – 22 EU member states [\[1\]](#) and three non-EU countries. [\[2\]](#)

“The visa requirement has been a heavy burden that has been perceived as Bosnia and Herzegovina’s international isolation,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative said. “Visa liberalization paves the way for the country’s citizens to travel freely across much of the European continent and brings Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens closer to the European homeland to which they belong.”

“The time that Bosnians and Herzegovinians had to stand in line and queue for visas to travel to the European Union will soon thankfully be behind us. In future, the freedom to travel, experience other European cultures and exchange ideas will be enjoyed by all.”

The decision to abolish visas for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina was taken after the country’s authorities committed themselves to and implemented a series of wide-ranging and complex reforms. “The European Union has responded to positive developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina by rewarding the country and its citizens,” Mr Inzko said. “We should now build on this momentum to move Bosnia and Herzegovina decisively towards Europe.”

[\[1\]](#) Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

[\[2\]](#) Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.