



**SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**STATEMENT
ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A VISA-FREE REGIME FOR GEORGIAN CITIZENS
TRAVELLING TO THE SCHENGEN AREA**

28 September 2016
Vilnius

The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,

taking into consideration that, according to the European Commission's assessment, Georgia has successfully fulfilled the requirements under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and thus the European Commission tabled a legislative proposal of 9 March 2016 (amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement) transferring Georgia to the list of countries whose citizens do not need a visa to travel to the Schengen area;

taking into consideration that on 5 September 2016, the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) voted in favour of the introduction of the visa-free regime for Georgian citizens to travel to the Schengen area,

noting that the debate on the issue is still ongoing in the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament and that there is a delay in the adoption of the final decision;

calls upon the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to adopt as soon as possible the necessary decisions on the introduction of a visa-free regime for Georgian citizens travelling to the Schengen area;

notes that such actions would clearly illustrate that the 'more for more' principle of the European Neighbourhood Policy works in practice as well as enhance confidence of Georgian society in the European Union and its institutions; contribute towards further strengthening of relations between the European Union and Georgia; meet the European aspirations of the

Georgian people and constitute an important incentive for Georgia to advance with its reforms in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms.

Benediktas Juodka

Chair of the Committee