

Cancellation of visa regime for countries of the Western Balkans

The Commissioner Oli Rehn during the round table in the Brussels organized due to accession of Croatia to EU stated that EU commission wants to continue in this process, which will mean at the end the cancellation of visa regime for countries of the Western Balkans.

Rehn stressed that all Balkan countries will get in EU according to their achievements, however before the gates of the EU will open, EU will very carefully investigate the cross-border and other problems.

To countries of the Western Balkans, which were advanced in the process of the EU accession, the visa regulation will be cancelled till the end of the year, most probably.

According to Rehn the EU and the Western Balkans have same security, economic and energetic interests. On other hand, he warns about the policy of EU enlargement with actual global crises and on rocky road with the acceptance of Lisbon treaty.

EU devoted 200 billions of Euros for assistance to the old and the new member countries, which had problems due to the global crisis, which, according to Rehn, represents the proof of EU membership values and mutual solidarity. "This should be the positive impulse for countries, which are preparing for the EU membership," Rehn said.

European Commissioner also warns that Brussels has concerns from deficient cooperation of Croatia with International Court of Justice. Cooperation with this court is the condition for the membership of Croatia in the EU. He stressed that Zagreb has to do a lot of reforms in the fields of jurisdiction, fight against corruption, organized crime and to restructure the shipping sector.

Sources: B92, Danas

Serbian government recalled the draft of antidiscrimination law

Serbian Government recalled the draft of law against discrimination, which had already been sent to Serbian National Parliament. The government decided for this step after the request of the Orthodox Church.

The Serbian Orthodox Church is requesting the change in the Article 18 of drafted law, which is about religious beliefs and Article 21, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The adoption of this antidiscrimination law is the condition for the accession of Serbia to EU and also the condition for putting Serbia on the White Schengen List – the list of countries, for which the visa regime to the Schengen Area was cancelled.

The drafted law should be the systematic, should prevent the discrimination in various fields and ease the process of claiming rights to the citizens.

The recall of the draft law was criticised by the Coalition Against Discrimination (The Center for Advanced Legal Studies, Helsinki Committee for Human rights, Gay-straight Alliance, Initiative of Youth for Human Rights, Anti- Trafficking Center and Network of Committees for Human Rights).

The Coalition against Discrimination requests from government to put the draft law back to the Parliament for its approval in unaffected version. Very critical position to this situation among others expressed the Serbian Liberal Democratic Party as well as some NGOs - Women in Black, Center for Development of Civil Society and Coalition for Secular State.

Source: B92