

EN
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Answer given by Mr Avramopoulos
on behalf of the Commission
(15.2.2016)

The Commission is aware of the problems linked to the use of a system for booking appointments in Polish consulates in Belarus and has been in contact with both Polish and Belarusian authorities in order to remedy this situation. The problems are related to unauthorised use of specialised scripts for automated registration of applications right after a new batch of dates is made available to the public on the website of the consulates. This can lead applicants to believe that they are forced to purchase appointment slots offered by unauthorised intermediaries. In order to remedy the situation, Polish authorities are introducing technical adaptations to the system, including the detection of automated activity and gradually releasing appointment dates for a given month to the public.

Exchanges have taken place in the framework of the Local Schengen Cooperation in Minsk on this issue. Visa applicants have been advised to reject services offered by intermediaries and information explaining how to book an appointment without recourse to those intermediaries is posted outside the consulates of the Member States in Belarus.

On the basis of the available information, the Commission's services have concluded that Polish consulates in Belarus issue visas in compliance with the procedures set out by the Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas¹.

The Commission will continue to monitor this matter.

¹ OJ No. L 243 of 15.09.2009., pp. 1-58