



Parliamentary questions

7 December 2015


E-015516-15

**Question for written answer
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Tanja Fajon (S&D) , Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D)

► **Subject: Alleged illegal issuing of Schengen visas in Belarus**

 Answer(s)

Information has come to our attention concerning alleged irregularities in the issuing of Schengen visas in Belarus, in particular by Polish consulates.

A report from a Belarusian non-governmental organisation states that Schengen visas were issued at the Polish consulates in Minsk, Brest and Grodno to Belarusian citizens through more than 40 unofficial and illegal 'mediators' and often also to persons who did not fulfil the entry conditions. Allegedly, in 80% of cases an extra fee of up to EUR 500 was demanded, depending on the desired application conditions. Other difficulties reported concerned the launching of an application online and booking an appointment (not possible without a 'mediator'), while in other cases visas were issued without a specific appointment date. Allegedly, an investigation conducted by the Polish Supreme Audit Office issued a negative evaluation of the process of accepting visa applications.

Is the Commission aware of the abovementioned situation and has it been informed of any irregularities as regards the issuing of Schengen visas in Belarus? If so, have any steps been taken in this regard? Have any problems been reported in the local Schengen cooperation format? How does the Commission monitor the issuing of Schengen visas in Belarus?

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