

Ms Kaja Kallas
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the
European Commission

Mr Magnus Brunner
Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration

2 June 2026

Dear Vice-President, dear Commissioner,

We have now entered the fifth year of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In September 2022, the Commission rightfully suspended the Visa Facilitation Agreement with Russia, followed by the issuance of guidelines on the handling of visa applications submitted by Russian nationals. However, the uneven implementation of these guidelines across Member States leaves much to be desired, as it lacks both solidarity and consistency. It also risks placing Member States in unequal economic positions.

In times of geopolitical confrontation, the strength of the European Union lies in its unity. A coherent and coordinated approach is essential not only for the credibility of our common foreign and security policy, but also for the effectiveness of the restrictive measures we have adopted. Sanctions, as well as visa-related measures must be applied consistently across the Union to have a meaningful impact on the Russian state and society. Fragmentation weakens our leverage, undermines public trust, and risks sending contradictory signals at a moment when clarity and resolve are needed.

With another summer approaching, we, the undersigned ministers, find it urgent to reiterate the need to uphold a restrictive visa policy towards Russian visa applicants. It has been deeply troubling to witness increasing numbers of Russian tourists enjoying leisure travel on European beaches and in European resorts while missiles and drones continue to strike civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. This is even more distressing given that thousands of unlawfully deported and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children cannot return to their families.

Furthermore, a situation in which Member States apply fundamentally different approaches to the issuance of visas for non-essential travel not only leads to visa shopping but also constitutes a security risk for the entire Schengen area. Easy access to the Schengen area increases potential security risks, including those related to the movement of hundreds of thousands of Russian combatants who have participated in the war of aggression against Ukraine.

According to the Schengen Barometer, 477,878 Schengen visas were issued to Russian citizens for tourism purposes in 2025. A significant share of these have been multiple-entry visas. This stands in stark contrast to the Commission's guidelines calling for a strict approach toward Russian applicants travelling for non-essential purposes and represents a major shortcoming in our collective policy towards the aggressor state. We find this extremely concerning.

In light of the above, and also recalling the March 2026 European Council's conclusions, we wish to:

- **Urge the Commission** to continue its work on introducing new restrictive and binding visa measures in the Visa Code, in line with the ideas set out in the new EU Visa Policy Strategy as we must be able to address hostilities by a third country more effectively. Legislative proposals to this end need to be presented as soon as possible.
- **Call on the Commission** to update and monitor the effective implementation of the guidelines on visa issuance to Russian citizens. While welcoming the new restrictive visa cascade, we call for its global application as restrictive issuance of multiple-entry visas should apply to *all* Russian citizens, regardless of where they reside.
- **Encourage the Commission** to continue regularly updating the Council with aggregated statistics on visa issuance to Russian citizens, to facilitate effective monitoring. Given the challenging security and working environment in the Russian Federation for both Member State consular staff and the EU Delegation, we believe the Commission can also play a greater role in supporting the Local Schengen Cooperation in implementing the Visa Policy.
- **Call on the Commission** to, in cooperation with relevant EU agencies, examine and present appropriate measures to respond to the Estonian initiative of 11 March 2026, on identifying former and currently active Russian combatants and hindering them from entering the Schengen area.

We, the undersigned ministers, stand firmly together in advocating for a more uniform and coordinated approach by all Member States. A restrictive visa policy towards Russian citizens is essential to safeguard the security and integrity of the Schengen area. A divided approach risks undermining — and even counteracting — the pressure we seek to uphold against the Russian Federation.

Yours sincerely,

Johan Forssell, Minister of Migration of
the Kingdom of Sweden

Maria Malmer Stenergard, Minister of Foreign
Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden

Lubomír Metnar, Minister of the Interior
of the Czech Republic

Petr Macinka, Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech
Republic

Rasmus Stoklund, acting Danish Minister
for Immigration and Integration

Lars Løkke Rasmussen, acting Danish
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Igor Taro, Minister of the Interior of the
Republic of Estonia

Margus Tsahkna, Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Estonia

Mari Rantanen, Minister of the Interior of Finland

Elina Valtonen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Þorbjörg Sigríður Gunnlaugsdóttir, Minister of Justice of Iceland *

Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland *

Jānis Dombrava, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia

Vladislav Kondratovič, Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

Kęstutis Budrys, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania

Tom Berendsen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Netherlands

Astri Aas-Hansen, Minister of Justice and
Public Security of Norway *

Espen Barth Eide, Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Norway *

Marcin Kierwiński, Minister of the Interior
and Administration of the Republic of
Poland

Radosław Sikorski, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Poland

**This letter is signed without prejudice to Norway's and Iceland's agreements with the European Union*