

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF VISA LIBERALISATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES ON EU MEMBER STATES AND NORWAY?

EMN FLASH #5 - 2019

Introduction to the EMN Study on the Impact of Visa Liberalisation on Countries of Destination

Visa liberalisation is one of the EU's most powerful tools in facilitating people-to-people contacts and strengthening ties between the nationals of third countries and the EU. It fosters mobility, improves regional cooperation between individual countries and creates more open societies.

But what has been the impact of visa liberalisation on EU Member States and Norway, as countries of destination? Are there specific benefits for the countries of destination?

What are the main challenges?

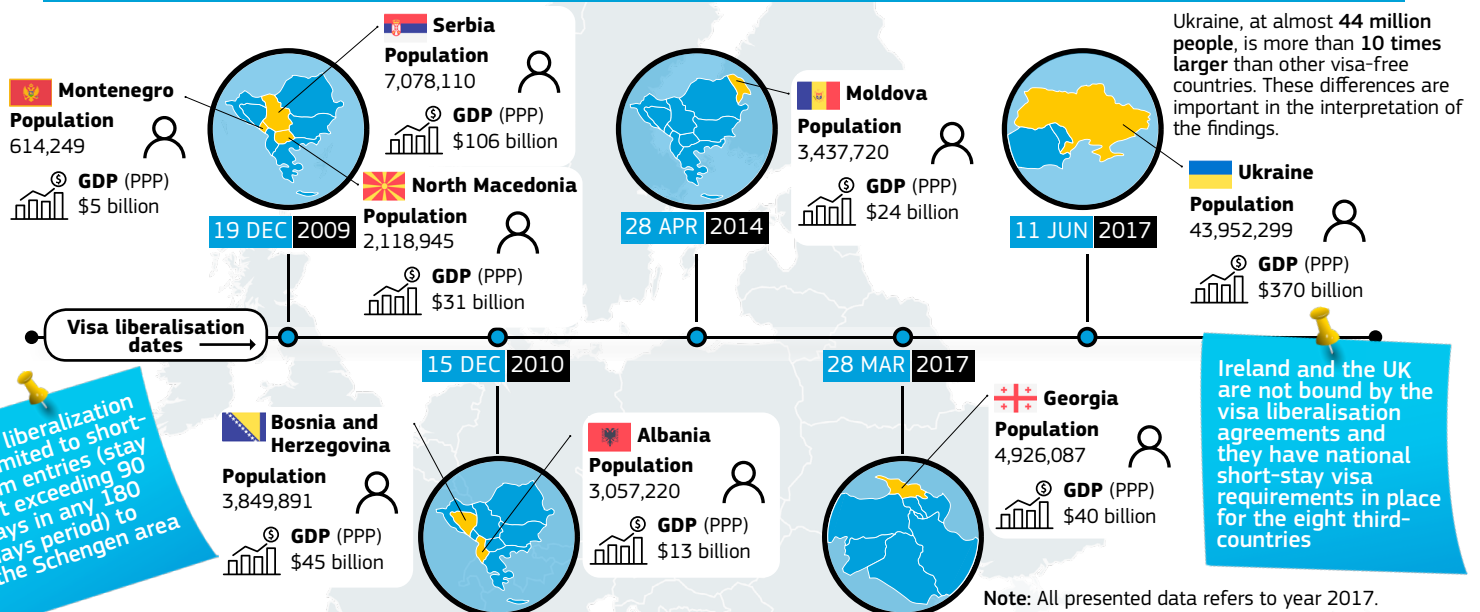
What measures have EU Member States and Norway set up to counter the potential for the misuse of visa liberalisation?

By exploring migration trends and other issues with the visa-free countries in the period 2007 – 2017 this EMN Study provides a new perspective based on information collected from 25 Member States and Norway. At a glance, the main research findings are introduced below.

Key findings

- Visa liberalisation led to an immediate increase in short-term travel to the EU Member States and Norway** from visa-free countries, an increase in control activities to avoid the misuse of visa liberalisation and an immediate reduction in the workload of consulate staff.
- Following visa liberalisation, there has been an increase in the number of resident permits issued to nationals of the eight visa-free countries**, mostly for remunerated activities. Some Member States also reported higher levels of cooperation during return and readmission procedures.
- Several Member States registered an increase in criminal activities after visa liberalisation was introduced.** The fight against organised crime groups is considered a priority and visa-free countries were asked to reinforce their efforts.
- Several Member States reported an overall increase in the number of asylum applications** from visa-free countries following visa liberalisation. Most of these applications received a negative decision. Measures to cope with this increase included designation of visa-free countries as safe countries of origin, information campaigns in visa-free countries and closer cooperation with their national authorities.
- The number of visa-free nationals overstaying their maximum period allowed increased** after visa liberalisation in Member States. Available data was limited to establish a clear link between visa liberalisation and the facilitation of irregular migration.
- Most Member States did not report specific challenges related to illegal employment** after visa liberalisation was introduced.

Visa liberalisation timeline and countries of origin comparison



FIND OUT MORE

- About the study:** https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/emn-study-impact-visa-liberalisation-countries-destination_en
- About the EMN:** <http://www.ec.europa.eu/emn>