



Home Office

# Impact of visa liberalisation on countries of destination

## National contribution from the United Kingdom

Home Office Analysis and Insight

March 2019

Disclaimer: The following responses have been provided primarily for the purpose of completing a Synthesis Report for the above-titled European Migration Network (EMN) Focused Study. The contributing EMN National Contact Points have provided information that is, to the best of their knowledge, up-to-date, objective and reliable within the context and confines of this study. The information may thus not provide a complete description and may not represent the entirety of the official policy of an EMN National Contact Point's Member State.



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# Executive summary

This national report is based on a European Migration Network (EMN) study, *Impact of visa liberalisation on countries of destination*. It considers the policies and practices of European Union (EU) Member States and Norway, regarding those Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries that have successfully reached visa liberalisation agreements with the EU.

The scope of the study is the period 2007 to 2017, to include the immediate years before and after the respective visa agreements entered into force. It considers changes in migration flows raised by visa exemptions in these third countries and identifies the positive impacts on Member States since the introduction of EU visa liberalisation policy.

Although a member of the EU the UK is not, and has never been, a part of the Schengen Area.<sup>1</sup> The UK continues to operate border controls with other EU Member States and maintains national control of visa requirements regarding non-EU/European Economic Area (EEA) countries.

In the context of this particular EMN study, UK visa policy requires that nationals of the five Western Balkan<sup>2</sup> countries (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) and three Eastern Partnership countries (Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine) who wish to enter the UK, must apply for a visa.

Therefore, visa liberalisation does not apply in regard to these countries. It is thus not responsible for any changes in UK asylum, immigration and migratory management between 2007 and 2017.

This UK contribution explores key visitor entry and asylum trends over the period where statistics are available. It gives an understanding of the scale of subject countries' diasporas in the UK, illustrating their presence with examples of networks and community initiatives established in UK society. Trade and investment links are also highlighted.

## The UK national situation

As the UK maintains control of its own visa requirements, its visa regulations and requirements are different to those of the Schengen Area. It is therefore difficult to make comparisons. In terms of short-stay visas, a Standard Visitor visa usually permits people to stay in the UK for up to 6 months, rather than for 90 days over a 180-day period (as per

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<sup>1</sup> For further information about the Schengen Area see: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/schengen\\_brochure/schengen\\_brochure\\_dr3111126\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/schengen_brochure/schengen_brochure_dr3111126_en.pdf) [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>2</sup> Kosovo, also in the Western Balkan region, is not included in this study.

the EU visa waiver agreements). This caveat should be heeded when interpreting the following findings.

### Visitor visas granted<sup>3</sup>

For short-stay visa applications, the following data is based on UK visitor visas granted.

- The number of UK visitor visa grants to visitors from the Western Balkans increased from 12,934 (2007) to 23,878 (2017) over the decade – an increase of 85%.
- For the Eastern Partnership, the number of visitor visa grants increased from 30,945 (2007) to 37,782 (2017) over the decade – an increase of 22%.

Whilst there have been overall regional increases (between 2007 and 2016), individual country trends have not been uniform.

### Leave to enter the UK

For external border crossings by nationals of visa-free countries, the following data<sup>4</sup> is based on passengers given leave to enter<sup>5</sup> the UK.

- Passengers given leave to enter from the Western Balkans have increased year-on-year for most of the decade. In 2007, 37,215 Western Balkan nationals were given leave to enter the UK. In 2016 this had risen to 83,390 – an increase of 124%.
- Passengers given leave to enter from the Eastern Partnership have also increased from 82,010 (2007), to 121,000 in 2016. This represents an increase of 48%.

Again, at country level, the trends have not been uniform.

### Diaspora in the UK

People whose country of birth or nationality originates from countries in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership have established communities in the UK.

- In 2017 there were 55,000 people estimated to be residing in the UK whose country of birth was in the Western Balkans, with the majority (36,000, equivalent to 65%) of Albanian origin. Nationals from the Western Balkans represent 0.084% of the UK population.
- 51,000 people, whose country of birth was in the Eastern Partnership region, were estimated to be residing in the UK in 2017. Ukrainians made up the majority (31,000,

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<sup>3</sup> Based on Table 1.2.3, section 1.2.

<sup>4</sup> Based on Table 1.2.1, section 1.2.

<sup>5</sup> Leave to enter also includes those granted leave to enter the UK for work, family or study reasons. See Table ad\_03 in Immigration Statistics, 3. Admissions:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables>  
[accessed 11/02/19]

equivalent to 61%). Nationals of the Eastern Partnership represent 0.078% of the UK population.

## UK trade with the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership regions

The UK has a trade surplus of just over £1 billion with the 8 countries representing the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership. And this has grown in the period 2007 to 2016:

- in 2007 UK exports were worth £1.2 billion and imports were almost £700 million;
- in 2016 UK exports increased to £2.5 billion and imports were almost £1.5 billion.

## UK visa liberalisation policy

The UK does operate an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) system for citizens of Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait. It allows passport holders from these designated countries to visit the UK (for tourism, business or study purposes) for up to six months without a visa. The EVW was launched for Oman, Qatar and UAE in January 2014. In February 2016 it was extended to Kuwait. Travellers can apply online for an EVW without having to provide biometric information or attend a visa application centre. Since its establishment the EVW has undergone changes to make it quicker, more convenient and easier to use, with the most recent development announced in June 2018. Now EVW holders can present their documentation in digital format rather than relying on paper copies.

# Part 1: The National Framework

## 1.1: Description of the national situation

**Q1.1 Please provide an analysis of the short-term (within two years) and long-term (beyond two years) trends that appeared in your Member State after the commencement of visa-free regimes, disaggregated by region and third countries of interest.**

Although a member of the European Union (EU), the UK is not, and has never been, a part of the Schengen Area. The UK continues to operate border controls with other EU Member States and maintains national control of visa requirements regarding non-EU/European Economic Area (EEA) countries. The UK requires that nationals of the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, who wish to enter the UK, must apply for a visa.<sup>6</sup>

Before providing analysis of the immigration and asylum trends regarding these countries, an overview of UK visa requirements is outlined to give contextual background.

### UK visa requirements

Travellers who live outside of the EU, EEA and Switzerland require a valid passport to enter the UK.<sup>7</sup> Travellers will also need to check if they require a visa for entry.<sup>8</sup> Under UK immigration rules, nationals of the five Western Balkan countries and three Eastern Partnership countries need a visa to enter the UK whether they wish to visit, study or work.

Focusing on visitor routes, there are four types:

- visit (standard);
- marriage/civil partnership visit;
- permitted paid engagements visit; and
- transit visit visa.

People can apply for a Standard Visitor visa if they want to visit the UK for leisure, business-related activities, events or another reason (such as private medical treatment).

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<sup>6</sup> See 'Appendix 2: Visa National List' in *Immigration Rules Appendix V: visitor rules* for a list of the nationals or citizens of countries required to apply for a visa in advance of travel to the UK as a visitor or for any other purpose for less than six months: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>7</sup> The visitor's passport must be valid for the duration of the stay in the UK. See: <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control/before-you-leave-for-the-uk> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>8</sup> Members of the public can check if they require a visa via an online tool. See: <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa> [Accessed 11/02/19]

The Standard Visitor visa usually permits people to stay in the UK for up to 6 months although some categories of people may apply to stay for longer (e.g. those receiving private medical treatment up to 11 months and academics on sabbatical up to 12 months). Unless endorsed as a single or dual entry visa, a Standard Visitor visa allows multiple entries within the period for which the visa is valid.<sup>9</sup> A Standard Visitor visa costs from £93.<sup>10</sup>

To apply for a visa from outside the UK applicants are required to fill out an online form and book an appointment at a visa application centre.<sup>11</sup> Here, biometric information will be taken (i.e. photograph and fingerprints).<sup>12</sup> Applicants are required to satisfy the decision maker that:

- they will leave the UK at the end of their visit;
- they can support themselves and any dependents throughout the duration of their stay;
- they are able to pay for their return or onward journey and any other costs relating to their visit; and
- they must have proof of business or other activities, which they want to carry out in the UK as allowed by the visitor rules.<sup>13</sup>

### **Western Balkans – former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina**

#### **Description of the national situation in regard to the Western Balkan region**

The following analysis explores trends (short-term and long-term) within the period 2007 to 2017, in respect to the Western Balkan region, and its individual countries including:

- external border crossings (leave to enter the UK);
- short-stay visa applications (visitor visa grants to the UK);
- asylum applications;
- positive decisions on asylum applications; and
- negative decisions on asylum applications.

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<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>10</sup> See here for costs and terms and conditions: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>11</sup> For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/apply> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>12</sup> To apply for a visa see: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/apply> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>13</sup> Further information on eligibility criteria is listed here: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/eligibility> [Accessed 11/02/19]

As the UK does not operate visa waiver agreements with the five Western Balkan countries, this analysis does not explore causality in any changes in trends, regarding the commencement of EU visa-free regimes. References to visa liberalisation refer to third-country visa waiver agreements with the EU Schengen Area, not the UK. The start of visa-free regimes for each Western Balkan country were:

- 19 December 2009 – FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia; and
- 15 December 2010 – Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **Total number of external border crossings (persons) by nationals of the Western Balkan countries (based on Table 1.2.1, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on non-EEA passengers given leave to enter the UK, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2016).<sup>14</sup>

Leave to enter the UK, given to nationals of the Western Balkans, has been increasing year-on-year for most of the decade. In 2007, 37,215 Western Balkan nationals were given leave to enter the UK. In 2016 this rose to a period high of 83,390 – an increase of 124%. Volumes grew from just over 60,000 in 2010 and 2011 respectively, to over 70,000 every year between 2012 and 2015, rising to over 80,000 in 2016.

Leave to enter the UK has increased markedly regarding Serbian nationals. In 2007 this stood at 8,210 nationals given leave to enter. By 2009, the year its visa waiver agreement was established with the EU, 18,000 Serbians were given leave to enter the UK – an increase of 119%. And comparing 2009 with 2011, leave to enter for Serbians increased to 31,600 – up 76%. Overall, an upward trend is apparent but this preceded the start of visa liberalisation. By 2016 Serbians accounted for 45% of all Western Balkan nationals given leave to enter the UK, compared with 22% in 2007.

Leave to enter the UK has also increased for nationals from Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM and (to a lesser extent) Montenegro in the period immediately after the establishment of their EU visa waiver agreements.<sup>15</sup> In the years prior to their agreements, leave to enter the UK volumes were fairly consistent for these countries except for Montenegro. The numbers of Montenegrins given leave to enter jumped from 325 in 2007, to 1,870 in the year of its visa waiver agreement (2009) – an increase of 475%.<sup>16</sup>

In Albania, visa liberalisation was established in 2010. In contrast to elsewhere in the Western Balkans, the numbers given leave to enter the UK immediately decreased following the introduction of its visa waiver agreement. In 2007 Albanian nationals represented 46% of all leave to enter decisions given to nationals from the Western

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<sup>14</sup> The most recently available data relates to 2016. Data for 2017 is not available.

<sup>15</sup> Visa waiver agreements started in 2009 for FYROM and Montenegro. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, its visa waiver started in 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Montenegro's visa waiver agreement commenced in late December 2009.



Balkans. However, by 2016 this had dropped to a quarter (26%). Nonetheless, 2016 saw the highest number (22,000) of leave to enter decisions recorded for Albanian nationals throughout the entire 9-year period.

### **Total number of visitor visa grants, by third country (based on Table 1.2.3, section 1.2)**

The following analysis is based on visitor visa grants to the UK, not short-stay visa applications, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

The number of visitor visas granted to persons from the Western Balkans rose from 12,934 (2007) to 23,878 (2017) over the decade – an increase of 85%. Growth over the decade has been variable, with noticeable jumps recorded between 2008 and 2009 and then 2009 and 2010.

Countries of the Western Balkans had EU visa liberalisation established in either 2009 or 2010. For those countries where visa waiver agreements were established in 2009,<sup>17</sup> there has been an overall trend towards increasing numbers of UK visitor visa grants. Visas for Macedonian and Montenegrin visitors have grown over the eight years to 2017, but volumes have been relatively low, in the hundreds respectively.<sup>18</sup> Volumes of visitor visas for Serbian visitors to the UK were the highest of all the Western Balkan nations. In 2009 the figure stood at 7,532, rising to a high of 12,647 in 2011 – an increase of 62% – and in 2017 it stood at a similar level of 12,224. Overall, of the 228,705 visitor visas granted to Western Balkan nationals between 2007 and 2017, Serbians accounted for almost half of these (104,150).

For Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which both had visa waiver agreements with the EU established in 2010, the former also saw relatively modest increases in visitor visa grants. In 2010 this stood at 4,641, increasing to 5,251 in 2017 – up 13%. In contrast, Bosnia and Herzegovina was the only Western Balkan nation to see a decrease in the number of nationals granted visitor visas. In 2010 visitor visas granted stood at 3,208. By 2017 this had declined by 26% to 2,368.

### **Total number of asylum applications received from the Western Balkan countries (based on Table 1.2.5, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

Asylum applications to the UK from nationals of the Western Balkan region increased substantially between 2007 (222) and 2017 (1,421) – an increase of 540%. Asylum

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<sup>17</sup> FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia had visa waiver agreements established in 2009.

<sup>18</sup> For example, 2,693 visas were granted to Macedonian visitors in 2009. By 2017 this had reached 3,007 – an increase of 12%. For Montenegro, 797 entry clearance visas were granted for citizens visiting the UK in 2009. By 2017 this had increased to 1,028 – up 29%. The immediate years after visa liberalisation (2010 to 2014) saw UK entry clearance visas for Montenegrin visitors rising sharply, peaking at 1,792 in 2013.

applications from Albanian nationals have been the main driver for this rise, as described below.

Asylum applications from nationals from FYROM, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina were recorded in low volumes between 2007 and 2017. Each country recorded no more than 50 applications over the entire period. When asylum applications are viewed from the point at which each country's visa waiver agreements came into force, applications have been relatively static. And for Montenegro, only one asylum application to the UK was recorded between 2007 and 2017.

Asylum applications from Albanian nationals indicate a different trend. Albania's EU visa waiver agreement was introduced in 2010. Asylum applications to the UK began to rise sharply from that year (174), peaking at 1,576 in 2014. They dropped slightly to 1,417 by 2017. Across the decade, asylum applications from Albanian nationals have increased by 749%.

### **Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants from the Western Balkan countries (based on Table 1.2.6, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

Over the decade there has been considerable fluctuation regarding positive decisions on asylum applications from Western Balkan nationals. There were 47 positive decisions in 2007, rising to a peak of 347 in 2015 – an increase of 638%. By 2017 this had dropped to 74. Between 2007 and 2017 positive decisions on asylum applications concerning nationals from the Western Balkan region totalled 1,527.<sup>19</sup> The vast majority related to Albanian nationals.

Apart from Albania, and reflecting the low number of asylum applications, only a very small number of positive decisions were awarded to nationals from other countries in the Western Balkans over the ten-year period.<sup>20</sup>

As well as accounting for 98% of all asylum applications from the Western Balkan region, Albanian nationals accounted for 98% of all positive decisions made by the UK, in the 10-year period. Between 2007 and 2010 the numbers of positive decisions awarded to Albanian nationals was broadly consistent year-on-year. However, following its visa waiver agreement with the EU in 2010, there was a year-on-year increase in the number of

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<sup>19</sup> In comparison, the country associated with the most positive decisions across this period, inclusive of all nationalities, was Eritrea (11,950). See 'Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants, not limited to visa-free countries' in Table 1.2.8.

<sup>20</sup> Low volumes were recorded on positive asylum decisions regarding FYROM (6), Serbia (11) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (14). The one asylum application from Montenegro, recorded in 2010, was neither granted nor refused. See Tables 1.2.6 and 1.2.7.

successful asylum applications up until 2015 when the number of positive decisions peaked at 347. Yet by 2017 the number had declined to 73 – a 79% drop.<sup>21</sup>

### **Total number of negative decisions on asylum applicants from the Western Balkan countries (based on Table 1.2.7, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).<sup>22</sup>

Negative decisions on asylum applications from Western Balkan nationals were recorded at 152 in 2007 and 551 in 2017 – an increase of 263%. Following EU visa liberalisation, negative decisions began to increase and reached a high of 1,074 in 2015. This was almost entirely due to negative decisions against Albanian nationals, who accounted for 1,069 of the 1,074 in that year – 99.5%. This peak preceded a marked decrease in refusals in 2016 (601 – down 44%) and 2017 (551 – down 8%) for the region.<sup>23</sup>

The numbers of Albanian cases refused were still notably higher than those relating to nationals from either the Western Balkan or Eastern Partnership countries. Over the decade, decisions regarding Albanians accounted for 98% of all negative decisions made regarding asylum applicants from the Western Balkan region. In contrast, the number of negative asylum decisions for nationals of the other Western Balkan countries were very small. And there were none recorded for nationals from Montenegro.<sup>24</sup>

### **Eastern Partnership – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine**

#### **Description of the national situation in regard to the Eastern Partnership region**

The following analysis explores trends (short-term and long-term) within the period 2007 to 2017, in respect to the Eastern Partnership region, and its individual countries including:

- external border crossings (leave to enter the UK);
- short-stay visa applications (visitor visa grants to the UK);
- asylum applications;

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<sup>21</sup> Regarding Albanian asylum applications in the same period (2015 to 2017) there was a 7% reduction, from 1,519 to 1,417.

<sup>22</sup> Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and exclude the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions. Therefore it is not possible to compare the rates of asylum applications and positive or negative decisions. Applications may change in status (e.g. be withdrawn) and decisions may not be necessarily made in the same calendar year.

<sup>23</sup> There was also a drop in asylum applications in these years from Albanian nationals. In 2016 they dropped 2% (from 1,519 to 1,493) and in 2017 applications were down 5% on the previous year (1,417). See Table 1.2.5.

<sup>24</sup> As per Table 1.2.5, Montenegro recorded one asylum application between 2007 and 2017 (in 2010). The application is not recorded as a positive (Table 1.2.6) or negative (Table 1.2.7) decision. This could be for a variety of reasons, including the withdrawal of the asylum application.

- positive decisions on asylum applications; and
- negative decisions on asylum applications.

As the UK does not operate visa waiver agreements with the three Eastern Partnership countries, this analysis does not explore causality in any changes in trends regarding the commencement of EU visa-free regimes. References to visa liberalisation refer to third-country visa waiver agreements with the EU Schengen Area, not the UK. The start of visa-free regimes for each Eastern Partnership country were:

- 28 April 2014 – Moldova;
- 28 March 2017 – Georgia; and
- 11 June 2017 – Ukraine.

### **Total number of external border crossings (persons) by nationals of Eastern Partnership countries (based on Table 1.2.1, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on non-EEA passengers given leave to enter the UK, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2016).<sup>25</sup> The numbers of nationals from Eastern Partnership countries given leave to enter the UK has grown from 82,010 in 2007, to 121,000 in 2016. This represents an increase of 48%. Looking closer, overall regional growth has fluctuated with year-on-year increases recorded between 2009 and 2013 only. In this period no Eastern Partnership country had a visa waiver agreement with the EU. And for two countries, Georgia and Ukraine, visa liberalisation in EU Schengen Area did not start until 2017, i.e. after the period this analysis is based on.

Moldova was the first of the Eastern Partnership countries to benefit from EU visa liberalisation policy, starting from April 2014 when its visa waiver agreement was established. In 2014, 2,850 Moldovans were given leave to enter the UK, compared with 4,730 in 2007 – a 40% decrease. The latest available data for 2017 records 3,100 – up 9% on 2014.

As mentioned, in Georgia and Ukraine EU visa waiver agreements were not established until 2017. Between 2007 and 2016 the number of Georgians given leave to enter the UK was relatively consistent.<sup>26</sup> Regarding Ukraine, the volumes of those given leave to enter the UK were far higher than from any other country, in either the Eastern Partnership or the Western Balkans, in every year between 2007 and 2016. And greater fluctuation was evident in relation to leave to enter the UK given to nationals from Ukraine. Between 2008 and 2013 there was a year-on-year increase in Ukrainian nationals given leave to enter.<sup>27</sup> But this was followed by a decline in numbers between 2014 and 2015. In 2016 the

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<sup>25</sup> The most recently available data relates to 2016; 2017 data is not available.

<sup>26</sup> There were 7,780 recorded admissions at the UK border regarding Georgian nationals, in 2007, and 8,900 in 2017 – an increase of 14%.

<sup>27</sup> Between these six years (2008 to 2013) a total of 497,000 Ukrainian nationals were given leave to enter; 68,500 admissions were made in 2008, rising every year to 103,000 in 2013 – an increase of 50%.

number of Ukrainian nationals given leave to enter the UK peaked at 109,000, representing a 57% increase since 2007.

### **Total number of visitor visa grants, by third country (based on Table 1.2.3, section 1.2)**

The following analysis is based on visitor visa grants to the UK, not short-stay visa applications, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

The number of visitor visas granted to persons from the three Eastern Partnership countries rose from 30,945 (2007) to 37,782 (2017) over the decade – an increase of 22%. In 2013 this reached a high of 43,764 when Eastern Partnership countries had yet been granted visa waiver agreements to the EU Schengen Area. This would commence in 2014, with Moldova being the first Eastern Partnership country to benefit.

The number of UK visitor visas granted to Moldovan nationals has remained steady at around the thousand mark.<sup>28</sup> Georgia, which had its visa waiver agreement established in 2017, had slightly more fluctuation in the numbers of visitors visas granted, but not by much.<sup>29</sup>

Ukraine, the other nation that had a visa waiver agreement established in 2017, had the highest volumes out of any country in either the Eastern Partnership or the Western Balkans. In 2007, 26,229 visitor visas to the UK were granted, peaking at 38,439 in 2013 – an increase of 47%. In 2017 this stood at 32,828. Overall, from 2007 to 2017, the number of visitor visas issued to Ukrainians rose by 25%. Over this period, UK visitor visas granted to Ukrainian nationals accounted for 86% of all UK visitor visa granted to the Eastern Partnership region.

### **Total number of asylum applications received from Eastern Partnership countries (based on Table 1.2.5, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

Asylum applications from nationals of the Eastern Partnership countries have been low compared with numbers from the Western Balkans. In 2007 there were 113 recorded applications; by 2017 this had risen by 55% to 175. Applications were at their highest in 2014 (240), although this was prior to visa liberalisation for Georgia and Ukraine.

Turning to Moldova, asylum applications have declined considerably over the decade, albeit with very low volumes to start with. The highest number of asylum applications from Moldovan nationals was 28 in 2007. This progressively declined every year, with only one application per year recorded from 2014 onwards.

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<sup>28</sup> In 2007 this amounted to 1,354. By the year of visa liberalisation, in 2014, it dropped to 1,022. In 2017 it stood at 1,010. Comparing 2007 with 2017 this represents a decrease of 25%.

<sup>29</sup> In 2007 this was 3,362. It rose to reach a high of 4,184 in 2014. By 2017 it stood at 3,944. Over the decade, 2007 to 2017, this was an increase of 17% of visitors receiving entry clearance visas.

As mentioned, both Georgia's and Ukraine's visa waiver agreements came into force in 2017. Again, asylum applications have been low in volume. In 2007 there were 45 applications from Georgian nationals; in 2017 there were 51. For Ukraine these volumes were higher. There were 40 applications in 2007 and this had increased to 123 by 2017 – up 207%.

### **Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants from Eastern Partnership countries (based on Table 1.2.6, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).<sup>30</sup>

Positive asylum decisions on Eastern Partnership asylum applicants, overall, have been recorded in very low volumes, with only 70 over the decade.<sup>31</sup> This reflects the relatively low volume of asylum applications from this region.<sup>32</sup>

Looking at individual countries, very small numbers of asylum applicants from Moldova, Georgia and the Ukraine (i.e. no more than six per country in any year) were granted positive decisions.

Moldova accounted for 18 (26%) of all 70 positive decisions granted to Eastern Partnership nationals in the decade from 2007. And from the year of its EU visa waiver agreement (2014) to the latest year for which data is available (2017), two positive decisions were recorded. Both Georgia's and Ukraine's EU visa waiver agreements started in 2017. Between 2007 and 2017, 18 Georgian nationals were granted positive asylum decisions (26% of all positive decisions for the region). Finally, Ukrainian nationals recorded 34 (48% of all positive decisions for the region).

### **Total number of negative decisions on asylum applicants from Eastern Partnership countries (based on Table 1.2.7, section 1.2)**

This analysis is based on asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).<sup>33</sup>

From 2007 to 2017, 1,038 Eastern Partnership nationals were refused asylum.<sup>34</sup> In 2007 there were 111 refusals compared with 98 in 2017 – a drop of 12%.

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<sup>30</sup> Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and exclude the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

<sup>31</sup> In contrast, between 2007 to 2017 nationals from Eritrea recorded the most positive asylum application decisions of any country, with a total of 11,950. The next top four were: Iran (10,484), Syria (7,283), Sudan (7,011) and Zimbabwe (4,003). See Table 1.2.8.

<sup>32</sup> Between 2007 and 2017, 14% (1,470) of asylum applications were from the Eastern Partnership compared with 86% (9,394) from the Western Balkans. See Table 1.2.5.

<sup>33</sup> Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and exclude the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

<sup>34</sup> This compares with 4,484 asylum refusals in respect to Western Balkan nationals. Ergo, 81% of all negative asylum decisions recorded (5,523) were for Western Balkan nationals. In comparison, the highest

Between 2007 and 2013 negative asylum decisions regarding Ukraine nationals were relatively low in volume (i.e. the highest recorded number was 37 in 2007), amounting to a total of 172 for that period.<sup>35</sup> In 2014 and 2015 refusal rates increased to 120 and 166 respectively. By 2017, the year in which Ukraine's EU visa waiver agreement came into force, this figure had declined considerably, to 66. From 2015 (166) to 2017 (66) negative decisions had declined by 60%. Nonetheless, 57% of negative asylum decisions, in the Eastern Partnership region, related to Ukrainians in this decade.

Between 2007 and 2013 negative decisions on asylum applicants from Moldova totalled 61 (the most in 1 year was 28, in 2007). Following visa liberalisation in 2014, this declined to only one refusal every year between 2015 and 2017. In all, only 70 cases were recorded for Moldova between 2007 and 2017.<sup>36</sup> Moldovan nationals accounted for 7% of refusals in the Eastern Partnership. Georgia also recorded low volumes, with the most refusals recorded in 2009 (61). By 2017, the year of its visa waiver agreement, the number of negative decisions stood at 31. In all, Georgian nationals accounted for 36% of negative asylum decisions.

### **Q1.2 What are the main links between the countries of origin and your Member State or the applicable 'pull factors', disaggregated by region and third countries of interest?**

#### **Western Balkans – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

##### **Western Balkan diaspora in the UK**

As of 2017 nationals from the Western Balkans represented just 0.084% of the total UK population.<sup>37</sup> Table A below provides a breakdown of the Western Balkan population in the UK, by individual country. Population statistics are estimates, categorised by country of birth and nationality.<sup>38</sup>

#### **Table A: Western Balkans – 2007 and 2017 UK population estimates, by country of birth**

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number of negative asylum decisions recorded over the decade were against Pakistani nationals, with 16,673 refusals made between 2007 and 2017. Of the top five nationalities for negative asylum decisions (not limited to visa-free nationals from the Western Balkan or Eastern Partnership regions) none were from the European continent. See Table 1.2.8.

<sup>35</sup> Out of the 484 for the whole Eastern Partnership this equates to 35%.

<sup>36</sup> Asylum applications for Moldova were also very low. Between 2015 and 2017 one application per year was recorded. See Table 1.2.5.

<sup>37</sup> Based on a total UK population of 65,176,000 in 2017.

<sup>38</sup> 'Country of birth' refers to a person's place of birth. 'Nationality' refers to that stated by the respondent at time of interview. Whilst nationality may change during a person's lifetime, country of birth will not. Therefore, country of birth will give a more robust estimate over time. The difference in the estimated statistics in Tables A and B, between country of birth and nationality, may be indicative of changes of individuals' nationality status, i.e. nationals taking British citizenship.

	UK population Jan–Dec 2007		UK population Jan–Dec 2017	
	Country of birth	Nationality	Country of birth	Nationality
FYROM	3,000	2,000	2,000	1,000
Montenegro	n/a	n/a	1,000	c
Serbia	3,000	1,000	12,000	7,000
Albania	12,000	11,000	36,000	26,000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9,000	4,000	4,000	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,000</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>35,000</b>

Notes:

c – not available due to disclosure control.

n/a – not available.

Source: ONS Statistics, Population by country of birth and nationality underlying datasets: January – December 2007 and January – December 2017, see:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationalityunderlyingdatasheets> [accessed 11/02/19]

### **Albania**

As outlined in Table A, of the 55,000 nationals estimated to reside in the UK in 2017, whose country of birth was in the Western Balkan region, the majority (36,000, equivalent to 65%) were Albanian.<sup>39</sup> Most – 35,000 (97%) – lived in England. And of that 35,000, 57% lived in London, with most residing in outer London (13,000, equating to 65% of the Western Balkan London population). Out of all the Western Balkans, Albanians continue to be the largest national group residing in the UK.

Albanians living in the UK have access to a range of networks and community initiatives designed to offer support to the community, as shown by the following two examples.

- The Nene Tereza charity operating in North London has nearly 2,000 members and works with schools, academies and via a network of mentors to improve the lives of Albanian children and their families in North London. See: <http://www.nenetereza.co.uk/aboutus.php?i=1> [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>39</sup> In 2007 Albanians accounted for 44% of the Western Balkan population residing in the UK.



- The Albanian Community Organisation, based in central London, offers employment advice, support with accessing health services, housing, legal and advocacy work as well as interpretation and translation to Albanian refugees. See: [https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/services/3263\\_albanian\\_community\\_organisation](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/services/3263_albanian_community_organisation) [accessed 11/02/19]

The UK has played a leading role in support of Albania's membership of the EU.<sup>40</sup> It works closely with the Albanian authorities to reduce the effect on the UK from organised crime and illegal migration, which has received coverage by the UK media. Albania receives support and funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which provides expert assistance to the Albanian criminal justice system, including its Supreme Court and prison service. The UK also works to improve bilateral defence links through activities such as joint annual training. In addition, the UK supports Albania's economic development and capacity to attract direct foreign investment through reforms to the business environment and deploying measures against corruption.<sup>41</sup>

### **Serbia**

As outlined in Table A, an estimated 12,000 people born in Serbia were residing in the UK in 2017 (although 7,000 identified as Serbian). This represents over a fifth (22%) of all Western Balkan nationals within the population. The Serbian population has increased by one quarter since 2007 (3,000).

Almost all Serbian nationals are estimated to reside in England, mainly in London (7,000 or 58%). Of these, the majority are based in inner London (5,000). Outside of London the most sizeable Serbian communities are in the South East and the East of England, specifically in Norwich. Each has communities of circa 2,000 people. A smaller sized community can also be found in the West Midlands (1,000).

Networks and community support available to Serbians in the UK includes the following.

- The Serbian Council of Great Britain is an independent, non-profit, and non-political organisation established to promote the interests of the Serbian community in Great Britain. See: <http://www.serbiancouncil.org.uk/> [accessed 11/02/19]
- The Serbian City Club is a not-for-profit apolitical organisation established to promote the interests of Serbian professionals in the UK and in Serbia. It was established in the late 1990s and most of its members are London based. See: <http://www.serbiancityclub.org/about-us/> [accessed 11/02/19]
- The Serbian Society was established in 1995 and is dedicated to supporting the needs of Serbians in London. According to its website, the aims of the Society included

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<sup>40</sup> Source: 'UK supports Albania in EU, but the reforms should be irreversible', UK government online, 6 October 2015. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-supports-albania-in-eu-but-the-reforms-should-be-irreversible> [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>41</sup> 'Albania and the UK' – 'Our Mission'. See: <https://www.gov.uk/world/albania/news> [accessed 11/02/19].

working toward the advancement in education of Serbian history, culture and heritage as well as offering relief of poverty. See: <http://eng.serbiansociety.org.uk/home> [accessed 11/02/19]

### **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)**

Macedonian nationals represent the second smallest group within the Western Balkan diaspora in the UK, amounting to just 4%, and this estimated population has decreased by 1,000 since 2007. In 2017 there were 2,000 people estimated to be residing in the UK, whose country of birth was FYROM (see Table A). London is the only recorded location of their residence in the UK.

There have been concerted efforts to increase business and trade between the UK and FYROM. Initiatives driven by the UK Government and UK business include the following.

- The British Business Group in FYROM<sup>42</sup> was established in 2007 and works with the Council of British Chambers of Commerce in Europe (COBCOE) to facilitate trade links between the UK and FYROM.<sup>43</sup> It also serves as a localised platform for networking and lobbying.<sup>44</sup>
- In 2014 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office published guidance on how the UK should seek to increase business with FYROM.<sup>45</sup> Since 2005 the British Embassy in Skopje has run a range of programmes to support Macedonian society in four key areas: good governance, the rule of law, diversity and social cohesion, and security.<sup>46</sup>

Although the population of Macedonians within the UK is small, there are a number of resources available to nationals that have a socio-cultural focus.

- The 'Macedonians in the UK' website aims to promote traditional Macedonian culture and acts as information hub signposting users to relevant sources of information and support. See: <http://macedonians.co.uk/> [accessed 11/02/19]
- The Macedonian Society of Great Britain was founded in 1989 and is a registered charity. It is dedicated to communicating the Hellenic roots of FYROM. See: <http://www.macedonia.org.uk/> [accessed 11/02/19]

### **Montenegro**

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<sup>42</sup> See: <http://www.bbgm.co.uk/index.php/mission-goals/> [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>43</sup> See: <http://www.cobcoe.eu/> [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>44</sup> See *Doing business with Macedonia*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-and-security-export-market-briefing-macedonia> [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>45</sup> See *Increasing business with Macedonia*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-and-security-export-market-briefing-macedonia/increasing-business-with-macedonia> [accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>46</sup> Details of the programmes can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-embassy-skopje-programme-assistance> [accessed 11/02/19]

The number of nationals from Montenegro estimated to be residing in the UK was 1,000 in 2017 (see Table A). Montenegrins represent the smallest proportion of Western Balkan-born UK residents, at just 2%.

The first Montenegro–UK Chevening Business Forum was held in 2016.<sup>47</sup> The event hosted discussions about the business environment in Montenegro and how the country could be made more attractive for British and other foreign investment. A second forum was held in 2017.<sup>48</sup>

Efforts are also being made to establish connections between UK higher education institutions and Montenegro.

- The UK Alumni Association of Montenegro (MAUK) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation comprising people from Montenegro with university degrees from British universities. It primarily supports educational opportunities for Montenegrin students in the UK. See:  
[http://www.mauk.me.uk/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=53&Itemid=106](http://www.mauk.me.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=53&Itemid=106) [Accessed 11/02/19]

### ***Bosnia and Herzegovina***

Since 2007 there has been a decline, by over half (56%), in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian population within the UK. In Table A, figures from 2007 indicate that an estimated 9,000 nationals from Bosnia and Herzegovina were then residing in the UK, compared with 4,000 in 2017. All are based in London.

Various networks and support mechanisms are available to the Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora within the UK.

- The Bosnian Institute is a UK registered charity that specialises in providing education and information on the history and culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina. See:  
<http://www.bosnia.org.uk/about/default.cfm> [Accessed 11/02/19]
- The BH UK Network, established in Birmingham in 1996, was set up to provide practical and psychological support to Bosnian and other ethnic minority communities. The organisation specialises in offering support to overcome language barriers. See:  
<http://www.bhuknetwork.org/> [Accessed 11/02/19]
- Supplementary schools have been established in cities such as Birmingham, Coventry, London and Derby, to follow the national curriculum for Bosnian supplementary schools abroad. The schools educate children in the social and cultural

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<sup>47</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/montenegro-uk-chevening-business-forum-2016> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>48</sup> See: [http://www.mauk.me.uk/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=56:montenegro-uk-chevening-business-forum-2017&Itemid=108](http://www.mauk.me.uk/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=56:montenegro-uk-chevening-business-forum-2017&Itemid=108) [Accessed 11/02/19]

history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. See: <http://bhcuuk.com/london-school.html>  
[Accessed 11/02/19]

## Eastern Partnership – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine

### Eastern Partnership diaspora in the UK

As of 2017 nationals from Moldova, Georgia and the Ukraine collectively represented less than 0.078% of the total UK population, according to Table B below. Population statistics are estimates, categorised by country of birth and nationality.<sup>49</sup>

**Table B: Eastern Partnership – 2007 and 2017 UK population estimates, by country of birth and nationality**

	UK population Jan–Dec 2007		UK population Jan–Dec 2017	
	Country of birth	Nationality	Country of birth	Nationality
Moldova	2,000	2,000	19,000	9,000
Georgia	1,000	1,000	1,000	c
Ukraine	22,000	17,000	31,000	16,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>51,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>

Note:

c – not available due to disclosure control.

Source: ONS Statistics, Population by country of birth and nationality underlying datasets: January – December 2007 and January – December 2017. See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/datasets/populationoftheunitedkingdombycountryofbirthandnationalityunderlyingdatasheets> [Accessed 11/02/19]

### Ukraine

Since 2007 the number of persons residing in the UK, who were born in Ukraine, has increased notably by 41%, from an estimated 22,000 to 31,000 (see Table B). However, the estimated number of people self-identifying as Ukrainian has decreased, from 17,000 to 16,000 – a drop of 6%.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> ‘Country of birth’ refers to a person’s place of birth. ‘Nationality’ refers to that stated by the respondent at the time of interview. Whilst nationality may change during a person’s lifetime, country of birth will not. Therefore, country of birth will give a more robust estimate over time.

<sup>50</sup> Unofficial estimates have the Ukrainian population in the UK at much higher volumes. One source, *Ukrainians in the United Kingdom*, indicates there could have been as many as 100,000 Ukrainians (those with citizenship or those who considered themselves Ukrainian) resident in the UK in the mid-2000s. Source:

Ukrainian-born persons have been present in the UK at least since the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>51</sup> Immigration increased significantly following the second world war, enabling the foundations of a Ukrainian community to be established. It was at this point that immigrants “*created the core of the Ukrainian community in the UK (with its institutions as we know it today)*”.<sup>52</sup> Following the second world war, between 1946 and 1951 Ukrainians were awarded European Voluntary Worker status, which allowed them to come to work in Britain with the aim of contributing to the post-war rebuild. Following this initial influx there was a hiatus in migration up until the early 1990s due to the political situation in the Ukrainian Socialist Republic. However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and after gaining independence from the USSR in 1991, there was a renewal of Ukrainian immigration to the UK.<sup>53</sup>

ONS data for 2017 estimates that almost all Ukrainian nationals live in England (14,000) although there is also a population of circa 1,000 residing in Northern Ireland. Within England Ukrainians are predominantly based in London (10,000). The majority reside in outer London (8,000), notably in Hounslow (2,000), Barking and Dagenham (1,000), Bexley (1,000) and Sutton (1,000). Approximately 2,000 reside in inner London. There is also a population of circa 1,000 in Salford, in the North West of England, and 1,000 in the South East of England. According to the Ukrainian embassy to the UK, well-established communities are also based in Bradford and Nottingham.<sup>54</sup>

There is a plethora of support services available to Ukrainians living within the UK including the following.

- The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB) claims to be the “*largest representative body for Ukrainians and those of Ukrainian descent in the UK*”. The AUGB has a presence in 25 locations across the UK and aims to “*develop, promote and support the interests of the Ukrainian community in the UK*”. See: <https://www.augb.co.uk/> [Accessed 11/02/19]
- The British Ukrainian Society (BUS) is a non-profit body seeking to strengthen ties between Ukraine and the UK and promotes understanding and awareness of Ukraine internationally. Established in 2007, it provides a platform for cultural exchange and business cooperation. See: <http://www.britishukrainiansociety.org/about-us> [Accessed 11/02/19]

## **Moldova**

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*Ukrainians in the United Kingdom*. See: <http://www.ukrainiansintheuk.info/eng/01/ukrinuk-e.htm> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>51</sup> Source: *The Evolution of Ukrainian Migration to the UK: Scoping Study Report*. University of Oxford: International Migration Institute, January 2011. See: <https://www.imi-n.org/publications/the-evolution-of-ukrainian-migration-to-the-uk-a-themis-scoping-study> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p 8.

<sup>54</sup> Source: *Ukrainians in Great Britain*, Embassy of Ukraine to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. See: <https://uk.mfa.gov.ua/en/ukraine-uk/ukrainians-in-uk> [Accessed 11/02/19]

As Table B shows, the Moldovan population estimated to be residing in the UK has increased notably since 2007. As of 2017, 19,000 people living in the UK were born in Moldova (up from 2,000 in 2007) and 9,000 identified as a Moldovan national (2,000 in 2007). Of the 9,000 identifying as Moldovan nationals, the majority live in England (8,000), mostly in outer London (5,000), and notably in the London Borough of Redbridge (3,000).

Two-thirds of Moldovans are of Romanian descent. The languages are virtually identical and the two countries share a common cultural heritage.<sup>55, 56</sup>

## Georgia

As illustrated in Table B, Georgians represent the smallest proportion of the Eastern Partnership residing in the UK, amounting to just 2% from the region. Only 1,000 people, born in Georgia were estimated to be resident in the UK in 2017. This population has remained stable since 2007, except there has been a decline in those who self-identify themselves as Georgian. One possibility is that they could have changed their nationality from Georgian to British. According to ONS estimates, the Georgian community is almost exclusively based within England.

In terms of support for the Georgian community in the UK, the following organisations are key.

- The British Georgian Society (BGS) is a recognised charity launched in 2004. The BGS focuses on “*promoting Georgian culture, business development, diplomatic links, architectural heritage, humanitarian aid and human rights*”. See: <http://www.britishgeorgiansociety.org/about-bgs> [Accessed 11/02/19]
- The British Georgian Chamber of Commerce is a non-political trade body “*to facilitate business growth and contacts at all levels between UK and Georgia*”. See: <http://bgcc.org.uk/about-us/information-about-bgcc/> [Accessed 11/02/19]

### Q1.3 Which national institutions and/or authorities are involved in implementing the visa liberalisation process and what is their respective role in this process?<sup>57</sup>

As the UK is not part of the Schengen Area, and does not have visa waiver agreements with the Western Balkan or Eastern Partnership countries, the following provides an overview of the UK government department and units involved in developing and managing visa policy, including its enforcement.

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<sup>55</sup> Source: ‘Moldova country profile’, BBC News online, 2 January 2018. See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17601580> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>56</sup> Figures for 2017 indicate that Romanians represent the second most common non-British nationality within the UK, representing a 25% increase in numbers since 2016. Source: ‘Romanian is second most common non-British nationality in UK’, *The Guardian*, 24 May 2018. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/24/romanian-second-most-common-non-british-nationality-uk> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>57</sup> For example, changes in instructions for border patrol agents and in equipment.

In the UK the **Home Office** is the lead government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, fire, counter-terrorism and police. With reference to immigration the Home Office is responsible for considering applications to enter and stay in the UK, issuing passports and visas, securing the UK border and controlling immigration.

**UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)**, the **Border Force** and **Immigration Enforcement** are divisions of the Home Office.

- **UKVI** is responsible for running the UK's visa service. It considers applications to visit or settle permanently in the UK and manages appeals from unsuccessful applicants. In addition, UKVI decides applications from employers and educational establishments who want to join the register of sponsors. It also runs the UK's asylum service.<sup>58</sup>
- The **Border Force** is the law enforcement command within the Home Office. It is responsible for securing the UK border by carrying out immigration and customs controls for people and goods entering the UK. It checks the immigration status of people arriving and departing the UK, carries out searches for illicit goods or illegal immigrants, patrols the coastline and gathers intelligence.<sup>59</sup>
- **Immigration Enforcement** is responsible for preventing abuse, tracking immigration offenders and increasing compliance with immigration law. It works across government and with employers in different sectors to maximise compliance with immigration rules.<sup>60</sup>

**Q1.4 Were there changes in your national legislation in connection with the introduction of the visa-free regimes? If yes, please explain their scope and impact on nationals coming from the third countries analysed in this study?**

N/A

**Q1.5 Were there any public/policy debates related to the visa liberalisation process in your (Member) State? If yes, what were the main issues discussed and how did this impact national policy?**

### Overview

The UK is not part of the Schengen Area and is, therefore, not directly affected by the visa liberalisation agreements established between the EU and the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries. As a result, the design or implementation of visa liberalisation did not initiate much public/policy debate. Nonetheless, some coverage on the impact of visa liberalisation has arisen from increases in illegal immigration, particularly from Albania.

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<sup>58</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration/about> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>59</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/border-force/about> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>60</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/immigration-enforcement/about> [Accessed 11/02/19]

The UK media reported on the number of illegal immigrants arriving in the UK in the wake of the visa liberalisation agreements with the Western Balkans. Most of this focused on the increased number of illegal immigrants from Albania entering the UK. Some reports also made links to an increase in crime.

- A 2012 article, published in *The Daily Express*, reported that there had been an 800% increase in the number of illegal Albanian migrants picked up by British immigration officers in the 3 months between July and September 2011. The report made an explicit link between the increase in illegal immigrants and the establishment of the Albanian visa waiver agreement in December 2010. This, it claimed, was “*proof that even though Britain is not part of the EU’s borderless Schengen Area, lax controls still affect the UK.*” The article did not quote a source but cited that “*Albanian gangsters are said to control more than 75% of UK brothels and turn over £15 million a year in London’s West End alone.*”<sup>61</sup>
- In 2016 *The Observer* reported that the “*apparent increase*” in the number of Albanians entering the UK could “*be traced back to December 2010, when the EU relaxed laws allowing them to travel throughout the Schengen Area without a visa*”. The increase in Albanian illegal migration to the UK was “*heavily promoted by pro-Brexit politicians and newspapers*” to attempt sway those undecided how to vote in the (then) upcoming referendum on UK membership of the EU.<sup>62</sup>
- In 2017 *The Guardian* published a report titled “*Albanians caught entering UK illegally more than any other nationality*”, although it did not make any link to the visa liberalisation policy.<sup>63</sup>

**Q1.6 Do you have any other remarks relevant to this section that were not covered above? If yes, please highlight them below.**

Whilst the UK does not operate visa waiver agreements with the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, which are the subject of this study, it does have an Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) system in place with four Gulf states. An overview is provided below.

**Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) system for citizens of Oman, Qatar, UAE and Kuwait**

An EVW system allows passport holders from designated countries to visit the UK (for tourism, business or study purposes) for up to six months without a visa.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Source: ‘EU’s open borders let gangsters into UK’, *The Daily Express*, 30 January 2012, see: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/298852/EU-s-open-borders-let-gangsters-into-UK> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>62</sup> Source: ‘The fear and feuds driving Albanians to the Kent coast’, *The Observer*, 4 June 2016, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/04/fear-feuds-albanians-kent-coast-dinghies> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>63</sup> Source: ‘Albanians caught entering UK illegally more than any other nationality’, *The Guardian*, 8 February 2017, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/08/albanians-caught-entering-uk-illegally-more-than-any-other-nationality> [Accessed 11/02/19]



In January 2014 an EVW system was launched for citizens from Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).<sup>65</sup> And in February 2016 it was extended to citizens from Kuwait.<sup>66</sup>

The EVW system has been designed to mitigate the cost and time for applying for a traditional UK visa. It does not require an applicant to attend a visa application centre or hand in their passports in advance of travel. Furthermore, an EVW does not require biometric information (photo and fingerprints).<sup>67</sup>

At the point of its introduction applying for an EVW was free of charge. However, following a change to the application process in 2016, the UK Government introduced a £15 fee to cover the additional costs associated with the new system.

Travellers submit their details online, anywhere, making it quicker than a visa application.<sup>68</sup> It can be completed up to 3 months before the travel date but not less than 48 hours before departure to the UK. If an individual's travel plans change, a new EVW form must be completed. As well as their passports, travellers must present a copy of their EVW at the departure port (air, sea or train) and again on arrival in the UK. Each EVW document is only valid for a single entry to the UK.<sup>69</sup>

In 2016 an additional requirement was introduced to the application process.<sup>70</sup> As part of the online application, travellers were required to submit a copy of the biographic page of their passport. This was to enable checks to be undertaken in advance of travel to ensure that a traveller's passport details matched the information submitted on their application form.<sup>71</sup> Previously the EVW process had relied on passengers entering their personal information. A simple set of questions, in both English and Arabic, was also introduced to make it easier for users to understand the process.

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<sup>64</sup> An EVW is not valid if an applicant seeks to travel to the UK to: study or stay in the UK for more than six months, work, get married or register a civil partnership in the UK.

<sup>65</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-electronic-visa-waiver-introduced-for-oman-qatar-and-uae> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>66</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-visa-system-announced-for-kuwaiti-visitors-to-uk> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>67</sup> To apply an applicant needs their current passport, to provide the address of where they will stay in the UK and details of their journey (departure and arrival dates/times). See: <https://www.gov.uk/get-electronic-visa-waiver> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>68</sup> An EVW application is made via the UK Visas and Immigration online portal, Visa4UK. See: <https://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/home/welcome> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>69</sup> Each visitor must have an EVW, including children. See: <https://www.gov.uk/get-electronic-visa-waiver> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>70</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/oman-qatar-and-the-united-arab-emirates-benefit-from-new-electronic-visa-waiver-eww> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>71</sup> A fee of £15 was introduced to cover the costs of processing the new passport copy requirement. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-launches-new-visa-waiver-system-in-kuwait> [Accessed 11/02/19]

A further development to the EVW system was announced in June 2018 to streamline and simplify the process.<sup>72</sup> From July 2018 EVW holders can present their EVW in a digital format rather than relying solely on paper copies. In practice, this means that passengers will be permitted to present their EVW in an electronic or printed format to carriers upon departure and to a UK Border Force officer upon arrival.

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<sup>72</sup> See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-the-immigration-rules--2> [Accessed 11/02/19]

## 1.2: Statistical information

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them, in particular when the statistics provided: are partial; had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differ from below, or of first-hand research); or when they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy). If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude and why they are not available. When available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2008 and 2017 inclusive. For year 2007, national data should be provided, if available.

At a minimum please provide data two years before and after the waiver agreement date for each third country (as highlighted in green in each table). Ideally, the study aims to present data for the whole period if available (e.g. from Eurostat).

**When filling in the tables please do not leave blank cells and follow these conventions:**

N/A – not applicable, in cases where the question is not applicable to your (Member) State please insert N/A in relevant cells.

NI – no information, in cases where there is no data available please insert NI in relevant cells.

0 – insert 0 whenever you have collected data and the result was 0.

Table 1.2.1: Total number of external border crossings (persons) by nationals from the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) (insert all available data or <u>at least</u> 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
<b>Total number of external border crossings (persons) by nationals of WB and EP countries</b>													NI
<b>FYROM</b>	5,740	6,090	6,390	6,850	9,410	9,170	10,200	9,870	10,300	10,900		NI	Data source: Total in Table ad_03: non-EEA passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom by purpose of journey, by main category and country of nationality.  See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Asylum, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables#admissions">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables#admissions</a>
<b>Montenegro</b>	325	1,300	1,870	2,620	2,500	2,750	3,660	2,870	3,170	3,370		NI	
<b>Serbia</b>	8,210	10,600	18,000	26,800	31,600	32,400	33,100	33,100	32,300	37,200		NI	
<b>Albania</b>	17,000	18,700	20,600	19,100	16,200	14,500	14,400	14,600	17,100	22,000		NI	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	5,940	7,040	6,290	6,770	11,300	11,600	11,500	10,800	9,990	9,920		NI	
<b>Moldova</b>	4,730	4,070	3,810	3,760	3,890	3,370	3,170	2,850	3,050	3,100		NI	
<b>Georgia</b>	7,780	8,760	9,100	9,190	9,040	9,420	9,550	9,410	8,420	8,900		NI	
<b>Ukraine</b>	69,500	68,500	72,400	75,500	87,600	90,000	103,000	92,200	87,700	109,000		NI	
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,225</b>	<b>125,060</b>	<b>138,460</b>	<b>150,590</b>	<b>171,540</b>	<b>171,540</b>	<b>188,580</b>	<b>175,700</b>	<b>172,030</b>	<b>204,390</b>		NI	
<b>Total number of external border crossings (persons)**</b>	12,800,000	12,400,000	12,300,000	12,500,000	13,300,000	12,900,000	14,000,000	14,600,000	15,300,000	16,300,000		NI	

Note:

\*Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of border crossings (persons).

Table 1.2.2: Total number of detections of irregular border crossings from nationals of visa-free countries\*, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of detections of irregular border crossings from nationals of visa-free countries	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of detections of irregular border crossings***</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Frontex: Number of detections of illegal border crossings by sea and land, see: <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/>

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of irregular border crossings.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below. No information.

Table 1.2.3: Total number of visitor visa grants,\* by third country, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017		
<b>Total number of short-stay visa applications, by third country</b>													
<b>FYROM</b>	2,743	2,778	2,693	2,783	2,396	2,832	3,127	2,740	2,739	2864	3,007	<p>Note: Data based on number of visitor visa grants by third country, <u>not</u> short-stay visa applications, which is not applicable to the UK. See visitors (Total) in table.</p> <p>Data source: visitors (Total) in table vi_06_q_o: Entry clearance visas granted by category and country of nationality: Other (2007–2017)</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Visas, Volume 2: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>	
<b>Montenegro</b>	5	365	797	1,672	1,581	1,471	1,792	1,220	944	975	1,028		
<b>Serbia</b>	290	843	7,532	11,685	12,647	12,592	12,486	11,654	10,857	11,340	12,224		
<b>Albania</b>	6,522	4,864	4,482	4,641	3,622	4,040	3,641	3,772	4,679	4,706	5,251		
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	3,374	3,654	3,174	3,208	3,117	2,948	2,997	2,559	2,156	2,228	2,368		
<b>Moldova</b>	1,354	1,119	1,132	1,197	1,358	1,196	1,210	1,022	920	900	1,010		
<b>Georgia</b>	3,362	3,564	3,513	3,504	3,868	4,113	4,115	4,184	4,168	3,579	3,944		
<b>Ukraine</b>	26,229	26,486	25,287	27,632	33,903	33,729	38,439	30,741	27,667	29,070	32,828		
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,879</b>	<b>43,673</b>	<b>48,610</b>	<b>56,322</b>	<b>62,492</b>	<b>62,921</b>	<b>67,807</b>	<b>57,892</b>	<b>54,130</b>	<b>55,662</b>	<b>61,660</b>		
<b>Total number of short-stay visa applications – all third countries***</b>	<b>1,428,617</b>	<b>1,337,912</b>	<b>1,365,601</b>	<b>1,518,700</b>	<b>1,683,646</b>	<b>1,696,068</b>	<b>1,941,024</b>	<b>1,878,826</b>	<b>1,913,818</b>	<b>1,902,768</b>	<b>2,096,377</b>		

Note:

\* Please see note in table. Table 1.2.3 does not present data on short-stay visa applications but visitor visa grants.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of short-stay visa applications.

Table 1.2.4: Total number of short-stay visa application refusals, by third country, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
Total number of short-stay visa application <u>refusals</u> , by third country													
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Total number of short-stay visa application <u>refusals</u> – all third countries**	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of short-stay visa application refusals.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below:

No information.



Table 1.2.5: Total number of asylum applications received from the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of asylum applications received from WB and EP countries	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
FYROM	26	2	4	4	1	3	0	3	1	2	2	<p>Data source: Total Applications in Table as_01: Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, by country of nationality (2007–2017).</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Asylum, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>
Montenegro	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Serbia	15	5	1	3	5	1	3	0	4	4	1	
Albania	167	159	209	174	395	819	1,325	1,576	1,519	1,493	1,417	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	14	7	7	4	6	2	4	2	2	1	1	
Moldova	28	22	16	7	7	6	3	1	1	1	1	
Georgia	45	66	75	57	23	22	33	31	34	42	51	
Ukraine	40	29	50	46	34	35	46	208	183	104	123	
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>1,744</b>	<b>1,647</b>	<b>1,596</b>	
<b>Total number of asylum applications – all third countries**</b>	23,431	25,932	24,487	17,916	19,865	21,843	23,584	25,033	32,733	30,747	26,350	

Note:

\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of asylum applications.

Table 1.2.6: Total number of positive decisions on asylum applicants from the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of <b>positive</b> decisions on asylum applicants from WB and EP countries	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
FYROM	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	<p>Note: Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and exclude the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.</p> <p>Data source: Total Grants in Table as_01: Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, by country of nationality (2007–2017).</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Asylum, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>
Montenegro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Serbia	6	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Albania	39	38	46	38	66	161	225	241	347	222	73	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	3	3	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Moldova	3	2	4	3	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	
Georgia	1	3	4	2	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	
Ukraine	2	3	1	4	1	6	3	6	3	0	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>79</b>	

Note:

\*Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

Table 1.2.7: Total number of negative decisions on asylum applicants from the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of <u>negative</u> decisions on asylum applicants from WB and EP countries	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017	
FYROM	11	8	3	3	3	1	0	2	1	1	1	<p>Note: Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and exclude the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.</p> <p>Data source: Total Refusals in Table as_01: Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, by country of nationality (2007–2017).</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Asylum, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>
Montenegro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Serbia	19	2	1	1	3	2	2	3	1	2	0	
Albania	115	81	104	145	147	282	503	787	1,069	597	549	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7	2	3	7	2	3	0	6	3	1	1	
Moldova	28	12	7	6	4	3	1	6	1	1	1	
Georgia	46	42	61	49	23	17	13	21	42	27	31	
Ukraine	37	18	25	33	22	20	17	120	166	72	66	
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>649</b>	

Note:

\*Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

**Table 1.2.8: Total number of positive and negative decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries)\*, 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) (insert all available data)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017		
<b>Total number of <u>positive</u> decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to WB and EP countries)</b>													
<b>Nationality 1 – Eritrea</b>	1,172	1,231	898	558	647	589	787	2,155	1,531	1,237	1,145	Data source: Total Grants in Table as_01: Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, by country of nationality (2007–2017).  See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Asylum, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/s/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/s/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a>	
<b>Nationality 2 – Iran</b>	424	449	398	706	1,011	1,193	1,063	993	1,532	1,456	1,259		
<b>Nationality 3 – Syria</b>	39	28	38	34	99	661	1,116	1,195	1,796	1,590	687		
<b>Nationality 4 – Sudan</b>	83	53	91	377	484	429	432	776	2,296	1,173	817		
<b>Nationality 5 – Afghanistan</b>	885	988	1,381	762	388	288	308	328	512	603	524		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,603</b>	<b>2,749</b>	<b>2806</b>	<b>2437</b>	<b>2,629</b>	<b>3,160</b>	<b>3,706</b>	<b>5,447</b>	<b>7,667</b>	<b>6,059</b>	<b>4,432</b>		
<b>Total number of <u>negative</u> decisions on asylum applicants (top five nationalities, not limited to WB and EP countries)</b>													
<b>Nationality 1 – Pakistan</b>	773	728	1,009	1,254	1,636	2,075	2,035	1,810	1,869	1,731	1,753	Data source: Total Refusals in Table as_01: Asylum applications and initial decisions for main applicants, by country of nationality (2007–2017).  See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Asylum, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/s/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/s/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a>	
<b>Nationality 2 – Iran</b>	1,666	1,353	1,700	1,587	1,212	1,069	856	808	1,258	2,446	1,431		
<b>Nationality 3 – Afghanistan</b>	1,492	1,354	1,854	1,382	976	584	587	615	917	1,109	795		
<b>Nationality 4 – Sri Lanka</b>	812	668	1,061	1,384	1,281	1,051	1,025	1,060	1,358	687	600		
<b>Nationality 5 – Zimbabwe</b>	1,154	2,015	4,111	1,297	427	203	188	166	354	191	207		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,897</b>	<b>6,118</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>6,904</b>	<b>5,532</b>	<b>4,982</b>	<b>4,691</b>	<b>4,459</b>	<b>5,756</b>	<b>6,164</b>	<b>4,786</b>		

Note:

\* This is to provide a broader context; any nationality may be included in the top five.

Table 1.2.9: Total number of residence permit applications (all residence permits), by visa-free country\*, 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>												
Total number of residence permit applications (all residence permits), by visa-free country	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017		
FYROM	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Montenegro	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Serbia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Albania	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Moldova	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Georgia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Ukraine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total number of residence permit applications (all residence permits)***	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat – Number of first residence permits issued, by reason, EU-28, 2008–2016 [migr\_resfirst].

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of residence permit applications.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

Not applicable.

Table 1.2.10: Total number of identity document fraud instances, by visa-free country,\* 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of identity document fraud instances, by visa-free country	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of identity document fraud instances***</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of identity document fraud instances.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

# Part 2: Positive impact of visa liberalisation on (Member) States

## 2.1: Description of the national situation

**Q2.1 What impact did the visa liberalisation have on your (Member) State? Please provide a short description of your national situation.**

The UK is not part of the Schengen Area and does not operate visa waiver agreements with the Western Balkan or Eastern Partnership countries. Therefore, direct impact on the UK has been limited.

### Illegal immigration

In 2016 Frontex documented the increased presence of Albanian migrants across the EU and linked it explicitly to the 2011 visa liberalisation agreement.<sup>73</sup> Their *Risk Analysis for 2016* publication also reported that:

*“The number of persons aiming to get to the UK with fraudulent documents significantly increased (+70%) compared with 2014. This trend is mostly attributable to the increasing number of Albanian nationals misusing Italian and Greek ID cards.”<sup>74</sup>*

**Q2.1.1 If applicable please categorise your answer to Q2.1, by third country:**

**Western Balkans – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

N/A

**Eastern Partnership – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine**

N/A

**Q2.2 Did your (Member) State assess the impact of visa liberalisation as positive? If yes, please explain the reasons for your positive assessment and how this was reached (i.e. who was involved in the assessment and how they reached this conclusion). If no, explain why this is the case.**

NI

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<sup>73</sup> Source: Frontex (March 2016) *Risk Analysis for 2016*, p 23, see: [https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annula\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2016.pdf](https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annula_Risk_Analysis_2016.pdf) [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>74</sup> Source: *Ibid.*, p 25.

**Q2.2.1 Did your collaboration with relevant third countries improve within the field of migration since the introduction of visa liberalisation?<sup>75</sup> If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

N/A

**Q2.2.2 Did your (Member) State identify specific economic benefits? If yes, please list them and provide a short description for each.**

NI

**Q2.2.3 Did your (Member) State experience a growth in tourism<sup>76</sup> from third-country nationals under the visa liberalisation regime? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.1, section 2.2.**

NI

**Q2.2.4 Did your (Member) State experience an impact on its labour market since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples, including background information on the link between visa-free travel and access to the labour market in the national context.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.3, section 2.2.**

NI

**Q2.2.5 Did your (Member) State experience a growth in the number of students arriving from third countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.4, section 2.2.**

N/A

**Q2.2.6 Did your (Member) State experience a growth of entrepreneurship, including of self-employed persons from third countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples, including background information on the access to self-employment from visa-free regimes in the national context.**

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<sup>75</sup> For example, in cases of return and readmission.

<sup>76</sup> For example, third-country national visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments increased.



Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 2.2.5, section 2.2.

NI

**Q2.2.7 Did your (Member) State experience a growth in trade with third countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples (i.e. in which sectors / what type of goods or services).**

### **UK trade with the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership regions**

This analysis is based on measuring UK trade (imports and exports) between 2007 and 2016.<sup>77</sup> An important caveat, in the context of this study, is that it does not explore causality regarding changes in trade growth between 2007 and 2016. Therefore, any changes in the growth in trade identified cannot be attributed to visa liberalisation.

The analysis indicates that overall UK trade with the eight countries representing the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership blocs has grown between 2007 and 2016.<sup>78</sup> In 2007 UK exports were worth £1.2 billion and imports were almost £700 million. In 2016 UK exports increased to £2.5 billion and imports were almost £1.5 billion, providing the UK with a trade surplus of just over £1 billion.

Focusing on country blocs, whilst UK exports to the Western Balkans have substantially increased over this period (by 422%), exports to the Eastern Partnership have decreased (by 11%), see Table C. UK imports have increased from both the Western Balkans (by 196%) and the Eastern Partnership (by 71%), see Table D. But at an individual country level within these blocs, growth has been variable regarding exports and imports. This is illustrated in the following analysis, which looks at UK exports, then UK imports.

### **UK exports**

Overall exports from the UK to the eight countries in this study, representing the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership, have increased by 107% between the period 2007 to 2016. These amounted to just under £2.5 billion worth of exports in 2016. See Table C.

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<sup>77</sup> Trade is measured by UK exports and imports, inclusive of goods (general merchandise, goods for processing, repairs on goods, goods procured in port and non-monetary gold) and services (transport, travel, telecommunication/computer/information, construction, insurance, financial, intellectual property, other business, personal/cultural/recreational, government, manufacturing and maintenance and repair services). See: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-information/economy/summary-quality-report-for-uk-trade.pdf> [Accessed 11/02/19]

<sup>78</sup> Data not available for 2017.

**Table C: UK exports to the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries, 2007 and 2016**

Country	UK total exports (2007)	UK total exports (2016)	Change in total exports (2007–2016)
Albania	£27m	£34m	26%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	£31m	£169m	445%
FYROM*	£68m	£1,296m	1,806%
Montenegro	£35m	£16m	-54%
Serbia	£163m	£177m	9%
<b>Western Balkans total</b>	<b>£324m</b>	<b>£1,692m</b>	<b>422%</b>
Moldova	£25m	£72m	188%
Ukraine	£788m	£561m	-29%
Georgia	£52m	£136m	162%
<b>Eastern Partnership total</b>	<b>£865m</b>	<b>£769m</b>	<b>-11%</b>

Note:

\* The huge increase in exports to FYROM is largely attributable to a considerable increase in exports of HS 7110 (Platinum, including palladium, rhodium, iridium, osmium and ruthenium, unwrought or in semi-manufactured forms, or in powder form), comprising 92% of goods exports in 2016. It is not possible to assess the breakdown for services trade as this data is not available.

Source: ONS, 'Individual country data (goods) on a monthly basis, from January 1998 to April 2018'. See:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/adhocs/008596individualcountrydatagoodsonamonthlybasisfromjanuary1998toapril2018> [Accessed 11/02/19]

and ONS, 'Additional country data for trade in goods and services between 1999 and 2016'. See:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/adhocs/007716additionalcountrydatafortradeingoodsandservicesbetween1999and2016> [Accessed 11/02/19]

Regarding trade with the **Western Balkan countries**, UK exports have increased substantially (up 422%) between 2007 and 2016. In 2016 this amounted to just under £1.7 billion. There were more goods exports (£890 million) than services (£802 million).

Looking at UK exports to the individual **Western Balkan countries** between 2007 and 2016 there are some marked differences in growth.

- Exports to FYROM experienced the greatest increase of any country in this study, from £68 million in 2007 to £1,296 million in 2016 – an increase of 1,806%. Here, goods (£698 million) made up more than services exports (£598 million).
- Exports to Montenegro declined from £35 million in 2007 to £16 million in 2016 – a decrease of 54%. By 2016 UK exports were almost entirely goods related.

In contrast, UK exports declined by 11% to the three **Eastern Partnership** countries over the same period, with exports worth £769 million in 2016. Exports were mainly goods related (£539 million) rather than services (£230 million).

Looking at UK exports to the individual **Eastern Partnership** countries between 2007 and 2016 there are, again, some striking differences in volumes and growth.

- Exports grew the most to Moldova, from £25 million to £72 million – an increase of 188%. Most of the exports, in 2016, were goods (£40 million) rather than services (£32 million).
- Exports to Ukraine stood at £788 million in 2007 but dropped to £561 million in 2016 – a decrease of 29%. Exports mostly consisted of goods (£393 million) rather than services (£168 million) in 2016.

### UK imports

Mirroring UK exports, overall UK imports from the eight Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries increased by 106% between the period 2007 to 2016. The value of imports to the UK in 2016 was nearly £1.5 billion (see Table D).

**Table D: UK imports from the Western Balkan and the Eastern Partnership countries, 2007 and 2016**

Country	UK total imports (2007)	UK total imports (2016)	Change in total imports (2007–2016)
Albania	£15m	£5m	-67%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	£26m	£193m	642%
FYROM	£38m	£127m	234%
Montenegro	£4m	-	Trade was nil or less than £1m in one or both years
Serbia	£111m	£249m	124%
<b>Western Balkans total</b>	<b>£194m</b>	<b>£574m</b>	<b>196%</b>
Moldova	£23m	£372m	1,517%
Ukraine	£323m	£448m	39%
Georgia	£150m	£27m	-82%
<b>Eastern Partnership total</b>	<b>£496m</b>	<b>£847m</b>	<b>71%</b>

Note:

Source: ONS, 'Individual country data (goods) on a monthly basis, from January 1998 to April 2018'. See:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/adhocs/008596individualcountrydatagoodsonamonthlybasisfromjanuary1998toapril2018> [Accessed 11/02/19]

and ONS, 'Additional country data for trade in goods and services between 1999 and 2016'. See:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/adhocs/007716additionalcountrydatafortradeingoodsandservicesbetween1999and2016> [Accessed 11/02/19]

The value of imports from the five **Western Balkan states** almost tripled between 2007 (£194 million) and 2016 (£574 million). This is an increase of 196%. Imports were evenly split between goods (£282 million) and services (£292 million).

Looking at imports from individual countries between 2007 and 2016 shows the following.

- Imports from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UK increased more than sevenfold, jumping from £26 million to £193 million – an increase of 642%. In 2016 these were heavily focused on services (£174 million) compared to goods (£19 million).

Imports from the three **Eastern Partnership** countries increased by 71% between 2007 (£496 million) and 2016 (£847 million). Most imports concerned services (£484 million) rather than goods (£363 million).

Imports from individual countries between 2007 and 2016 showed the following.

- Imports from Moldova increased from £23 million to £372 million – an increase of 1,517%. In 2016 UK imports were more focused around services (£326 million) than goods (£46 million) from Moldova.
- Imports from Georgia dropped heavily from £150 million to £27 million – a decrease of 82%. Of the £150 million exports in 2007, £146 million were concerned with goods. These decreased by 92% over the period. In 2016 imports were evenly distributed between services (£15 million) and goods (£12 million).

**Q2.2.8 What other benefit (or positive impact) was identified by your (Member) State in relation to visa liberalisation that was not already captured in the previous questions, if applicable?<sup>79</sup>**

N/A

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<sup>79</sup> For example, agreements with third countries for exchange of students, scholars; social benefits (social assistance, social trust and cooperation).

## 2.2: Statistical information

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them, in particular when the statistics provided: are partial; had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differ from the below, or of first-hand research); or when they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy). If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude and why they are not available. When available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2008 and 2017 inclusive. For year 2007, national data should be provided, if available.

At a minimum please provide data two years before and after the waiver agreement date for each third country (as highlighted in green in each table). Ideally, the study aims to present data for the whole period if available (e.g. from Eurostat).

**When filling in the tables please do not leave blank cells and follow these conventions:**

N/A – not applicable, in cases where the question is not applicable to your (Member) State please insert N/A in relevant cells.

NI – no information, in cases where there is no data available please insert NI in relevant cells.

0 – insert 0 whenever you have collected data and the result was 0.

**Table 2.2.1: Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments from the visa-free countries,\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments from the visa-free countries	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Total number of visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments***	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of tourism visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the box below.

No information.

**Table 2.2.2: Total number of first-time residence permit applications received from visa-free country nationals,\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017		
<b>FYROM</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Montenegro</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Serbia</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Albania</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Moldova</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Georgia</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Ukraine</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of first-time residence applications***</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of first-time temporary residence applications.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below. No information.



**Table 2.2.3: Total number of first residence permits issued for remunerated activities reasons to visa-free country nationals, 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
<b>Total number of permits issued for remunerated activities reasons to visa-free country nationals</b>													
<b>FYROM</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Montenegro</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Serbia</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Albania</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Moldova</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Georgia</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Ukraine</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total number of permits issued for remunerated activities reasons**</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Note:

\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of permits issued for remunerated activities reasons.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below. Not applicable.

**Table 2.2.4: Total number of first residence permits issued for education reasons to visa-free country nationals, 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional Information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
<b>Total number of permits issued for education reasons to visa-free country nationals</b>													
<b>FYROM</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Montenegro</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Serbia</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Albania</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Moldova</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Georgia</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Ukraine</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total number of permits issued for education reasons**</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Note:

\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of permits issued for education reasons.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below. Not applicable.

**Table 2.2.5: Total number of first residence permits issued to entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons) from visa-free countries,\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007-2017)											Additional Information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of first residence permits issued for entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons) from visa-free countries	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of first residence permits issued for entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons)**</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of first residence permits issued for entrepreneurs (including self-employed persons).

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

## Part 3: Challenges of visa liberalisation on (Member) States

### 3.1: Description of the national situation

**Q3.1 Did your (Member) State face certain challenges (if any) since the introduction of visa liberalisation? Please provide a short description of your national situation.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Section 3.2, while specific challenges can be detailed in sub-questions Q3.1.2 to Q3.1.7.**

N/A

**Q3.1.1 If applicable, please categorise your answer to Q3.1 by third country.**

**Western Balkans – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

As a reminder, references to visa liberalisation refer to third-country visa waiver agreements with the EU Schengen Area, not the UK. The start of visa-free regimes for each country were as follows.

**Western Balkan region:**

- 19 December 2009 – FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia;
- 15 December 2010 – Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Table 3.2.1: Total number of nationals from the Western Balkans refused entry at the external borders (based on Table 3.2.1, section 3.2)**

This analysis is based on total refusals regarding entry clearance visas for visitors, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

There were 8,890 refusals to Western Balkan nationals in the decade commencing 2007. Refusals have increased substantially following the commencement of visa waiver agreements. But this has been mainly due to the increase in refusals regarding Albanian nationals. Over the decade they have accounted for 83% of all refusals relating to Western Balkan nationals. There were 301 refusals of Albanians in 2007; this increased to 1,204 in 2017 – a rise of 300%.

**Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the Western Balkan countries (based on Table 3.2.2, section 3.2)**

This analysis is based on return decisions data provided by the UK to Eurostat (2008–2017).<sup>80</sup>

Between 2008 and 2017 there were 22,690 return decisions issued to nationals of the Western Balkan region.

Return decisions over this period were made to nationals of FYROM (110), Montenegro (25) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (95). Whilst there were 530 recorded return decisions for Serbia, Albania recorded by far the most, with 21,930 return decisions. This represented 97% of all return decisions for the Western Balkan region over this period.

Albania has seen a substantial increase in UK return decisions since its visa waiver agreement started with the EU Schengen Area in 2010. Jumping from 585 in that year, it peaked at 3,820 in 2016 – an increase of 553%. In 2017 it maintained similar levels with 3,760 return decisions made. The other four Western Balkan nations' return decisions remained relatively stable following the commencement of their EU visa waiver agreements, with low volumes of return decisions as mentioned above.

### **Total number of voluntary returns (all types), by nationals of the Western Balkan countries (based on Table 3.2.3, section 3.2)**

This analysis is based on voluntary removal data (2007–2013) and voluntary returns (2014–2017), sourced from UK data.<sup>81</sup>

Between 2007 and 2017 there were 3,530 voluntary removals and returns of Western Balkan nationals. Overall, Montenegro had the least number of voluntary returns (34), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (94), then FYROM (188), and Serbia (336). The largest number of voluntary removals and returns over this period was in respect to Albanian nationals (2,878), who represented 82% of all removals and returns from the Western Balkan region.

### **Total number of forced returns, by Western Balkan country (based on Table 3.2.4, section 3.2)**

This analysis is based on enforced removal data (2007–2013) and enforced returns (2014–2017), sourced from UK data.<sup>82</sup>

Over the period 2007 to 2017 there were 9,093 enforced removals and returns of Western Balkan nationals from the UK. The vast majority of these (8,865, or 97%) regarded enforced removal and return of Albanian nationals.

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<sup>80</sup> Data is not available for 2007.

<sup>81</sup> Data from before 2014 is not directly comparable from 2014 onwards due to a change in the way that returns are classified.

<sup>82</sup> Data from before 2014 is not directly comparable from 2014 onwards due to a change in the way that returns are classified.

## Eastern Partnership – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine

As a reminder, references to visa liberalisation refer to third-country visa waiver agreements with the EU Schengen Area, not the UK. The start of visa-free regimes for each country were as follows.

### Eastern Partnership region:

- 28 April 2014 – Moldova;
- 28 March 2017 – Georgia;
- 11 June 2017 – Ukraine.

### Total number of nationals from Eastern Partnership countries refused entry at the external borders (based on Table 3.2.1, section 3.2)

This analysis is based on total refusals regarding entry clearance visas for visitors, sourced from UK data (2007 to 2017).

In the 10 years from 2007 there were 5,731 refusals of nationals from the Eastern Partnership region. Refusals against Ukrainian persons accounted for 80% of all made regarding nationals from this region attempting to enter the UK over the decade. In 2007 there were 363 refusals of Ukrainian nationals. In 2017, 476 refusals were recorded – an increase of 31%.

### Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from Eastern Partnership countries (based on Table 3.2.2, section 3.2)

This analysis is based on return decisions data (2008–2017) provided by the UK to Eurostat.<sup>83</sup>

Over the period of 2008 to 2017, there were 6,830 return decisions made against nationals from the Eastern Partnership region. Moldova had the fewest (830), then Georgia (1,030), followed by Ukraine (4,970).

EU visa waiver agreements for each country were established relatively late into the period on which this analysis is based. For Moldova, return decisions have mostly declined over the 2008–2017 period. Since 2014, the year of its EU visa waiver agreement, return decisions have increased, albeit marginally (rising from 20 in 2014 to 25 in 2017).

Georgia recorded a reasonably consistent level of return decisions prior to its EU visa waiver agreement beginning in 2017. For Ukraine, which had its visa waiver agreement start in the same year as Georgia's, return decisions increased from 365 (2007) to 555 (2017) – an increase of 52%.

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<sup>83</sup> Data is not available for 2007.

**Total number of voluntary returns (all types), by nationals of Eastern Partnership countries (based on Table 3.2.3, section 3.2)**

This analysis is based on voluntary removal data (2007–2013) and voluntary returns (2014–2017), sourced from UK data.<sup>84</sup>

Between 2007 and 2017 more removals and returns were recorded for Eastern Partnership nationals (4,295) than for those from the Western Balkan region. Georgia recorded the fewest (514), followed by Moldova (703). Ukraine had by far the highest number among the Eastern Partnership countries at 3,078. This represented 72% of all removals and returns from the region.

**Total number of forced returns, by Eastern Partnership country (based on Table 3.2.4, section 3.2)**

This analysis is based on enforced removal data (2007–2013) and enforced returns (2014–2017), sourced from UK data.<sup>85</sup>

There were 2,734 removals and returns of nationals from Eastern Partnership countries between 2007 and 2017. Ukraine accounted for 70%, amounting to 1,919. Combined enforced removals and returns for Georgia and Moldova were at lower levels over this period, at 382 and 433 respectively.

**Q3.1.2 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in illegal employment since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.5.

N/A

**Q3.1.3 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in smuggled and/or trafficked persons from the visa-free countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Tables 3.2.6 and 3.2.7.

N/A

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<sup>84</sup> Data from before 2014 is not directly comparable from 2014 onwards due to a change in the way that returns are classified.

<sup>85</sup> Data from before 2014 is not directly comparable from 2014 onwards due to a change in the way that returns are classified.

**Q3.1.4 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in the number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.8, section 3.2.**

N/A

**Q3.1.5 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in the number of nationals found to be illegally present from the visa-free countries since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.9, section 3.2.**

N/A

**Q3.1.6 Did your (Member) State encounter a rise in the number of overstayers since the introduction of visa liberalisation? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.10, section 3.2.**

N/A

**Q3.1.7 Did your (Member) State encounter any signs of possible misuse of the visa liberalisation?<sup>86</sup> If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

N/A

**Q3.2 Did your (Member) State as a country of destination face any administrative burden<sup>87</sup> since the introduction of the visa-free regime? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

N/A

**Q3.2.1 If applicable, please list the institutions that faced administrative burdens.**

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<sup>86</sup> For example, dealing with cases when persons enter the country legally but later become illegally employed, are staying in the country legally, but are working without a work permit or apply for asylum without reasonable grounds.

<sup>87</sup> For example, a significant increase in residence permit applications, increased demand for work permits, more time-consuming border control procedure due to the lack of visas.



N/A

**Q3.3 Did your (Member) State as a country of destination face any security risks since the introduction of the visa-free regime? If yes, please provide a short description and specific examples.**

N/A

**Q3.3.1 Did the visa liberalisation regime increase the security risks in your (Member) State? If yes, please provide a short description explaining why and provide examples.<sup>88</sup>**

N/A

**Q3.3.2 If applicable, what types of offences<sup>89</sup> were committed by third-country nationals in your (Member) State after the commencement of the visa-free regime?<sup>90</sup> Were there any significant differences compared to the time before the visa-free regime started?**

N/A

**Q3.3.3 If applicable, what was the rate of offences (final court rulings) committed by third-country nationals<sup>91</sup> in your (Member) State after the commencement of the visa-free regime? Were there any significant differences compared to the time before the visa-free regime started?**

N/A

**Q3.4 What is the role and impact of irregular migration facilitators that provide their services to third-country nationals with an entry ban? Please provide a short description with specific examples about your (Member) State situation and make a clear distinction between people who assist migrants and people who are profiting from facilitation.**

**Please answer this question by making a link with the data presented in Table 3.2.6, 3.2.7 and 3.2.8, section 3.2.**

N/A

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<sup>88</sup> For example, did your (Member) State identify any increased terrorism risks arising from the entry or residence of respective third-country nationals?

<sup>89</sup> Please use this pre-defined list of categories: cybercrime; drugs offences; economic and financial offences; illicit immigration; illicit trafficking (not drug related); offences against property; offences against public order and safety; offences against public trust (e.g. fraud, forgery, counterfeiting); offences against the person; sexual exploitation of children (including child pornography); sexual offences against adults; terrorism-related activity; trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants.

<sup>90</sup> This applies to third-country nationals who do not live your country but visited (short stay of up to 90 days).

<sup>91</sup> See above.

**Q3.4.1 How did the activities of irregular migration facilitators impact your (Member) State?<sup>92</sup> Please provide a short description with specific examples about your (Member) State situation.**

N/A

**Q3.4.2 If applicable, please list and explain any challenges and risks identified by your country related to the activities of irregular migration facilitators, while making a clear distinction between people who assist migrants and people who are profiting from facilitation.**

N/A

**Q3.5 What other challenge (or negative impact) was identified by your (Member) State in relation to visa liberalisation that was not already captured in the previous questions, if applicable?**

N/A

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<sup>92</sup> Did their activities lead to increases in irregular border crossings, enhanced border controls or document fraud?

## 3.2: Statistical Information

Please provide, to the extent possible, the following statistics (with their source) along with, if necessary, an explanatory note to interpret them, in particular when the statistics provided: are partial; had to be estimated (e.g. on the basis of available statistics that differs from the below, or of first-hand research); or when they reflect any particular trends (e.g. a change in policy). If statistics are not available, please try to indicate an order of magnitude and why they are not available. When available, statistics from Eurostat should be used and presented annually covering the period between 2008 and 2017 inclusive. For year 2007, national data should be provided, if available.

At a minimum please provide data two years before and after the waiver agreement date for each third country (as highlighted in green in each table). Ideally, the study aims to present data for the whole period if available (e.g. from Eurostat).

**When filling in the tables please do not leave blank cells and follow these conventions:**

N/A – not applicable, in cases where the question is not applicable to your (Member) State please insert N/A in relevant cells.

NI – no information, in cases where there is no data available please insert NI in relevant cells.

0 – insert 0 whenever you have collected data and the result was 0.

**Table 3.2.1: Total number of nationals from the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries refused entry at the external borders, 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	*2009	*2010	2011	2012	2013	*2014	2015	2016	*2017		
<b>Total number of nationals from the WB and EP countries refused entry at the external borders</b>													
<b>FYROM</b>	17	24	16	31	26	25	51	29	30	31	42	<p>Note: Data is based on entry clearance visas for visitors.</p> <p>Data source: Total Refusals in Table ad_04: Passengers initially refused entry, by country of nationality (2007–2017).</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Admissions: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>	
<b>Montenegro</b>	3	2	2	9	6	18	14	21	11	12	13		
<b>Serbia</b>	6	10	30	62	86	68	102	76	78	71	80		
<b>Albania</b>	301	278	260	170	778	698	810	935	977	965	1,204		
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	35	34	45	38	43	35	37	36	38	34	37		
<b>Moldova</b>	126	115	73	45	60	51	47	57	65	86	106		
<b>Georgia</b>	32	36	41	39	21	18	27	19	24	21	40		
<b>Ukraine</b>	363	407	334	388	304	315	315	551	651	478	476		
<b>Total</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>1,324</b>	<b>1,228</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>1,724</b>	<b>1,874</b>	<b>1,698</b>	<b>1,998</b>		
<b>Total number third-country nationals refused entry at the external borders **</b>	<b>28,140</b>	<b>26,589</b>	<b>22,522</b>	<b>18,941</b>	<b>17,173</b>	<b>15,522</b>	<b>16,292</b>	<b>18,038</b>	<b>17,516</b>	<b>17,536</b>	<b>18,674</b>		

Note:

\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number third-country nationals refused entry at the external borders.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

**Table 3.2.2: Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries,\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017		
<b>Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the WB and EP countries</b>													
<b>FYROM</b>	NI	15	15	10	15	5	5	10	5	15	15	<p>Note: Return decisions data is only provided for Eurostat. It is not published directly by the UK, hence no data prior to 2008.</p> <p>Source: Total number of return decisions issued to nationals from the visa-free countries, extracted from third country nationals ordered to leave [migr_eiord], Eurostat (2008–2017).</p> <p>See: Eurostat [migr_eiord]  <a href="http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_eiord&amp;lang=en">http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_eiord&amp;lang=en</a></p>	
<b>Montenegro</b>	NI	0	5	0	5	0	5	5	0	5	0		
<b>Serbia</b>	NI	305	40	30	30	20	25	15	20	20	25		
<b>Albania</b>	NI	725	725	585	1,075	1,680	2,440	3,390	3,730	3,820	3,760		
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	NI	10	15	20	10	5	10	5	5	5	10		
<b>Moldova</b>	NI	120	140	100	180	165	35	20	20	25	25		
<b>Georgia</b>	NI	125	135	105	90	110	80	70	105	115	95		
<b>Ukraine</b>	NI	365	385	510	555	640	490	490	580	400	555		
<b>Total</b>	NI	1,665	1,460	1,360	1,960	2,625	3,090	4,005	4,465	4,405	4,485		
<b>Total number of return decisions issued to third-country nationals****</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI		

Note:

\* See Eurostat: Third-country nationals ordered to leave – annual data (rounded) [migr\_eiord].

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of nationals ordered to leave.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below. No information.

**Table 3.2.3: Total number of voluntary returns (all types), by nationals of the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries,\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of voluntary returns (all types) by nationals of WB and EP countries	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	48	22	9	9	15	10	12	5	13	25	20	<p>Note: Data from before 2014 is not directly comparable to data from 2014 onwards due to a change in the way that returns are classified.</p> <p>Data source: Voluntary Removal in Table rt_02: Returns, by country of nationality and type (2007–2013) and Voluntary returns, Table rt_02: Returns, by country of nationality and type (2014–2017)</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Returns, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>
Montenegro	3	3	2	1	3	0	7	1	3	6	5	
Serbia	71	28	27	18	27	21	23	23	20	46	32	
Albania	424	357	299	170	165	287	385	146	139	258	248	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	13	2	10	10	14	7	4	3	11	10	10	
Moldova	183	34	31	29	155	151	35	14	17	31	23	
Georgia	48	30	60	46	46	64	40	21	40	60	59	
Ukraine	89	106	178	217	371	550	366	206	222	398	375	
<b>Total</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>1090</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>772</b>	
<b>Total number of voluntary returns (all types) – all third-country nationals***</b>	<b>14,452</b>	<b>18,375</b>	<b>22,800</b>	<b>27,114</b>	<b>26,419</b>	<b>29,663</b>	<b>32,178</b>	<b>25,784</b>	<b>28,189</b>	<b>27,157</b>	<b>19,896</b>	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Number of voluntary and forced returns [migr\_eirt\_vol].

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of voluntary returns.

Table 3.2.4: Total number of forced returns, by Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership country,\* 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											
Total number of forced returns, by WB and EP country	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
<b>FYROM</b>	37	11	12	5	3	1	4	4	2	3	5	<p>Note: Data from before 2014 are not directly comparable to data from 2014 onwards due to a change in the way that returns are classified.</p> <p>Data source: Total Enforced Removals in Table rt_02: Returns, by country of nationality and type (2007–2013) and Enforced Returns, Table rt_02: Returns, by country of nationality and type (2014–2017)</p> <p>See: Immigration Statistics, year ending March 2018, Returns, Volume 1: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2018/list-of-tables</a></p>
<b>Montenegro</b>	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	
<b>Serbia</b>	37	15	9	2	3	7	7	6	3	4	8	
<b>Albania</b>	413	339	317	289	467	606	747	1,062	1,421	1,645	1,559	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	2	8	3	4	1	3	3	2	1	3	1	
<b>Moldova</b>	92	76	76	60	51	25	10	7	11	13	12	
<b>Georgia</b>	61	40	50	50	37	32	33	13	17	20	29	
<b>Ukraine</b>	244	175	200	248	193	116	88	141	220	129	165	
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>1,817</b>	<b>1,779</b>	
<b>Total number of forced returns – all third-country nationals***</b>	17,770	17,239	15,252	14,854	15,063	14,647	13,311	14,395	13,690	12,469	12,229	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Number of voluntary and forced returns [migr\_eirt\_vol].

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of forced returns.

**Table 3.2.5: Total number of nationals from the Western Balkan and European partnership countries found in illegal employment,\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017)											Additional information (e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)	
	<i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>												
Total number of nationals from the WB and EP countries found in illegal employment	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017		
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please name the top 5 labour sectors where third-country nationals were illegally employed (see table note list for pre-defined sectors).
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	Please see above.
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Total number third-country nationals found in illegal employment <sup>93</sup>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present – annual data (rounded) [migr\_eipre].

<sup>93</sup> All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number third-country nationals found in illegal employment.



\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining and quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities; Construction; Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; Transportation and storage; Accommodation and food service activities; Information and communication; Financial and insurance activities; Real estate activities; Professional, scientific and technical activities; Administrative and support service activities; Public administration and defence; Compulsory social security; Education; Human health and social work activities; Arts, entertainment and recreation; Other service activities; Activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use; Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies.

\*\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number third-country nationals found in illegal employment.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

Table 3.2.6: Total number of smuggled persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings),\* 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017		
<b>Total number of <u>smuggled</u> persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)</b>													
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of <u>smuggled</u> persons from third countries (final court rulings)***</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of smuggled persons from third countries.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

Table 3.2.7: Total number of trafficked persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings),\* 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
Total number of <u>trafficked</u> persons from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)												
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Total number of <u>trafficked</u> persons from third countries (final court rulings)**	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of trafficked persons from third countries.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

**Table 3.2.8: Total number of identified facilitators\* of unauthorised entry, transit and residence\*\* from the visa-free countries (final court rulings),\*\*\* 2007–2017**

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>	
	2007	2008	**** 2009	**** 2010	2011	2012	2013	**** 2014	2015	2016	**** 2017		
<b>Total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence from the visa-free countries (final court rulings)</b>													
<b>FYROM</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Montenegro</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Serbia</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Albania</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Moldova</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Georgia</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Ukraine</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence (final court rulings)****</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>EU nationality 1</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	<i>Please add the number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence from EU MS (top 5 EU nationalities).</i>
<b>EU nationality 2</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	<i>Please see above.</i>
<b>EU nationality 3</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	<i>Please see above.</i>
<b>EU nationality 4</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	<i>Please see above.</i>
<b>EU nationality 5</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	<i>Please see above.</i>

Note:

\* This refers to the nationality of the facilitators. EU nationalities can be provided in the second part of the table.

\*\* Facilitators of the unauthorised entry, transit and residence – intentionally assisting a person who is not a national of an EU Member State either to enter or transit across the territory of a Member State in breach of laws on the entry or transit of aliens, or, for financial gain, intentionally assisting them to reside within the territory of a Member State in breach of the laws of the State concerned on the residence of aliens (see Article 1(1)(a) and (b) of Council Directive 2002/90/EC).

\*\*\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities.

\*\*\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of identified facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

Table 3.2.9: Total number of nationals found to be illegally present from the visa-free countries,\* 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present***</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present – annual data (rounded) [migr\_eipre].

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of third-country nationals found to be illegally present.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

Table 3.2.10: Total number of overstayers from the visa-free countries,\* 2007–2017

Indicator	Period of interest (2007–2017) <i>(insert all available data or at least 2 years prior and after the visa waiver agreement date)</i>											Additional information <i>(e.g. data source[s], explanation of trends and numbers for this indicator)</i>
	2007	2008	**2009	**2010	2011	2012	2013	**2014	2015	2016	**2017	
FYROM	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Montenegro	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Serbia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Albania	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Moldova	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Georgia	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
Ukraine	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	
<b>Total number of third-country nationals overstayers***</b>	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	

Note:

\* Information to be provided by inserting national data as gathered by competent authorities. Also see Eurostat: Third-country nationals found to be illegally present – annual data (rounded) [migr\_eipre].

\*\* Visa waiver agreement dates: FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia (19/12/2009), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (15/12/2010), Moldova (28/4/2014), Georgia (28/3/2017) and Ukraine (11/6/2017).

\*\*\* All nationalities apply, to calculate the proportion out of the total number of third-country national overstayers.

If you do not have data as requested in the above table (e.g. for year 2007), please explain why this is the case below.

No information.

## Part 4: Measures put in place to deal with possible misuse of visa-free regimes by (Member) States

### 4.1: Description of the national situation

**Q4.1 Did your (Member) State implement certain measures (if any) to deal with the challenges that appeared after the commencement of the visa-free regime? Please provide a short description of your national situation.**

Specific measures can be detailed in sub-questions Q4.1.2 to Q4.1.7.

N/A

**Q4.1.1 If applicable, please categorise your answer to Q4.1 by third country.**

**Western Balkans – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

N/A

**Eastern Partnership – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:**

N/A

**Q4.1.2 If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to increase the efforts to promote voluntary return? If yes, for which nationalities and explain their impact.**

N/A

**Q4.1.3 If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to expand the legal possibilities of stay? If yes, for which nationalities and explain their impact.**

N/A

**Q4.1.4 If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to fight illegal employment? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples.**

N/A

**Q4.1.5 If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to fight the smuggling and/or trafficking of persons from the visa-free countries? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples.**



N/A

**Q4.1.6 If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to fight the activities of facilitators of unauthorised entry, transit and residence? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples.**

N/A

**Q4.1.7 If applicable, did your (Member) State implement measures to reduce the incidence of nationals found to be illegally present in your country? If yes, please explain their impact and add specific examples. Please also see Q4.4 (on overstayers) before answering to avoid overlap.**

N/A

**Q4.1.8 If applicable, what was the effectiveness of the measures listed above and which of them were most successful in reaching their intended goals? Please provide any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.2 Did your (Member) State implement measures to deal with administrative burdens since the introduction of the visa-free regime?<sup>94</sup> If yes, please list and explain these measures, their impact / effectiveness and add any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.3 Did your (Member) State implement measures to deal with the possible misuse of visa liberalisation?<sup>95</sup> If yes, please list and explain these measures, their impact / effectiveness and add any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.4 How did your (Member) State deal with cases when third-country nationals entered the country legally, but did not legalize their stay after 90 days (overstayers)? Please provide a short description of such instances while highlighting any measures implemented by your country to deal with this. If applicable, what was the impact / effectiveness of these measures and are there any good practices / lessons learned you have identified?**

N/A

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<sup>94</sup> For example, significant increase of residence permit applications, increased demand for work permits, more time-consuming border control procedure due to the lack of visas.

<sup>95</sup> For example, dealing with cases when persons enter the country legally but later become illegally employed, are staying in the country legally, but are working without a work permit or apply for asylum without reasonable grounds.

**Q4.4.1 In the case of overstayers from the visa-free countries, does your (Member) State apply a different return procedure compared to the usual procedure? If yes, please provide a short description of such instances while highlighting any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.4.2 Does your (Member) State apply any special procedures in cases where overstayers have lost their identification documents or in instances where there are problems with their identification? If yes, please provide a short description of such instances while highlighting any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.4.3 If applicable, what was the effectiveness of these procedures (see Q4.4.1 and Q4.4.2) and were they successful in reaching their intended goals? Please provide any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.5 How did your cooperation with the visa-free countries evolve over time in terms of assistance and information exchange, before and after the visa-free regime commencement?<sup>96</sup> Please provide a short description and specific examples of your national situation disaggregated by region and third countries of interest.**

**Western Balkans – FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina:**

N/A

**Eastern Partnership – Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine:**

N/A

**Q4.5.1 If applicable, how effective was the cooperation with third countries to reach your desired goals? Where there any particular differences in your interactions with different third countries and did you identify any good practices / lessons learned?**

N/A

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<sup>96</sup> For example, in terms of information campaigns in the third countries working on the elimination of 'push factors' – unemployment, poverty, poor conditions in the national health system, assistance to visa-free countries from Member States and reintegration assistance to returnees.

**Q4.6 If applicable, how did your (Member) State respond to the influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries? Please provide a short description of the measures taken and any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.<sup>97</sup>**

N/A

**Q4.6.1 If applicable, were the measures of your (Member) State effective to manage the influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries? Please provide a short description of your national situation highlighting any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.6.2 If applicable, how did your (Member) State cooperate with other (Member) States found in a similar situation (i.e. influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries)? Please provide a short description of your national situation and any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.6.3 Did you receive assistance from the EU to deal with the influx of asylum seekers from the visa-free countries? If yes, how effective was the assistance in supporting your (Member) State? Please provide a short description of your national situation and any good practices / lessons learned you have identified.**

N/A

**Q4.7 What other measure (or good practice / lesson learned) was adopted by your (Member) State in relation to visa liberalisation that was not already captured in the previous questions, if applicable?**

**At the same time, are there any planned measures that will be adopted in the nearby future?<sup>98</sup>**

N/A

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<sup>97</sup> For example, using the concept of safe country of origin.

<sup>98</sup> For example, in relation to Ukraine or Georgia for which the visa waiver agreement entered into force in 2017.

## Part 5: Conclusions

### Q5.1 With regard to the aims of this study, what conclusions would you draw from the findings reached in elaborating your National Contribution?

Although a member of the EU the UK is not, and has never been, a part of the Schengen Area. It continues to operate border controls with other EU Member States and maintains national control of visa requirements regarding non-EU/European Economic Area (EEA) countries. The UK does not operate visa waiver agreements with the third countries, which are the subject of this study. Nationals of these countries are required to apply for a visa should they wish to enter the UK. Consequently, any changes in asylum, immigration and migratory management, between 2007 and 2017, are not attributable to EU visa liberalisation although they may be indirectly associated with such processes being adopted by Schengen countries. Some of the key changes in trends in UK asylum, immigration and migratory management are below.

#### Leave to enter the UK

- Passengers given leave to enter from the Western Balkans have increased year-on-year for most of the decade. In 2007, 37,215 Western Balkan nationals were given leave to enter the UK. In 2016 this had risen to 83,390 – an increase of 124%. Between 2007 and 2016, Serbians accounted for 41% (263,310) of all Western Balkan nationals (638,015) given leave to enter.
- Passengers given leave to enter from the Eastern Partnership have also increased from 82,010 in 2007 to 121,000 in 2016. This represents an increase of 48%. Over the period 2007 to 2016, a total of 980,770 passengers from the Eastern Partnership were given leave to enter. Nationals from Ukraine accounted for 86% (855,400).

#### Visitor visa grants to the UK

- The number of UK visitor visa grants to visitors from the Western Balkans increased from 12,934 (2007) to 23,878 (2017) over the decade – an increase of 85%. Almost half of all the visitor visas granted during this period were to Serbians (104,150, or 45%).
- For the Eastern Partnership, the number of UK visitor visa grants increased from 30,945 (2007) to 37,782 (2017) over the decade – an increase of 22%. Of the 386,343 visitor visas granted to persons from the Eastern partnership countries over the decade, 86% were to Ukrainian nationals (332,011).

## Asylum applications

- Asylum applications from the Western Balkan region increased substantially between 2007 (222) and 2017 (1,421) – an increase of 540%. Asylum applications from Albanian nationals have been the main driver for this rise.
- Asylum applications from the Eastern Partnership have been in low volumes, compared with the Western Balkans. In 2007 there were 113 recorded applications and, by 2017, this had risen to 175 – an increase of 55%.

## Positive decisions on asylum applications<sup>99</sup>

- Positive asylum decisions on Eastern Partnership asylum applicants overall have been recorded in very low volumes, with only 70 over the decade. For example, in 2007 there were six positive decisions; in 2017 there were five concerning nationals of the region.
- Between 2007 to 2017 positive decisions on asylum applications concerning nationals from the Western Balkan region totalled 1,527. There were 47 positive decisions in 2007, rising to a peak of 347 in 2015 – an increase of 638%. By 2017 this had dropped to 74. The vast majority of positive decisions related to Albanian nationals.

## Negative decisions on asylum applications<sup>100</sup>

- Negative decisions on asylum applications for the Western Balkans were recorded at 152 in 2007 and 551 in 2017 – an increase of 263%. The vast majority of these were in regard to negative decisions on Albanian cases. For example, of the 551 refusals in 2017, 549 concerned Albanian nationals.
- From 2007 to 2017, 1,038 Eastern Partnership nationals were refused asylum. In 2007 there were 111 refusals compared to 98 in 2017 – a drop of 12%.

There are likely to be a range of factors to consider, in regard to changes in trends in UK asylum, immigration and migratory management as illustrated above. For example, there has been a considerable increase in Albanian nationals making asylum applications to the UK since the establishment of its visa waiver agreement with the EU Schengen Area. But asylum applications from the other four Western Balkan countries have been relatively static over the same period.

People whose country of birth or nationality originates from countries in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership have established small communities in the UK according to official estimates.

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<sup>99</sup> Asylum applications and initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and exclude the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions. Therefore it is not possible to compare the rates of asylum applications and positive or negative decisions. Applications may change in status (e.g. be withdrawn) and decisions may not be necessarily made in the same calendar year.

<sup>100</sup> As per footnote above.

- In 2017 there were 55,000 people estimated to be residing in the UK, whose country of birth was in the Western Balkans, with the majority (36,000, equivalent to 65%) being of Albanian origin. Nationals from the Western Balkans represent 0.084% of the UK population.
- 51,000 people, whose country of birth was in the Eastern Partnership region, were estimated to be residing in the UK in 2017. Ukrainians made up the majority of (31,000, equivalent to 61%). Nationals of the Eastern Partnership represent 0.078 of the UK population.

#### **Q5.2 What do you consider to be the relevance of your findings to (national and/or EU level) policymakers?**

As the UK did not introduce visa liberalisation policy for either the Western Balkans or the Eastern Partnership, it stands to be a comparator against those EU Schengen Area Member States that did.

As reported, there were overall increases in UK visitor visa grants to these third-country nationals between 2007 and 2017. For the Western Balkans, an increase of 85% was recorded over that period. For the Eastern Partnership, there was an increase of 22%. A consideration here would be whether such increases were a 'side effect' of visa liberalisation policy on a non-implementing Member State (the UK)?

At the country level, of those increases recorded for the countries of Eastern Partnership nationals, two of the three countries (Georgia and Ukraine) did not have EU visa waiver agreements until 2017. So visa liberalisation is not a direct factor in the increases the UK experienced in visitor visas for these countries. Turning to the Western Balkans there was, however, a substantial increase in Serbian nationals being granted UK visitor visas from the year of its visa waiver agreement in 2009. These examples suggest there are wider factors to be considered in understanding changes in such trends, aside from EU visa liberalisation policy.

#### **Estimating third-country diasporas in the UK**

It has been officially estimated that in 2017 there were 55,000 people residing in the UK whose country of birth was in the Western Balkans region and 51,000 people who were born in an Eastern Partnership country. But estimates of third-country nationals provided from other unofficial sources have varied substantially. This hints at the challenges of population estimation. For example, data on migration can be difficult to obtain, particularly at local level. These challenges are likely to be applicable to most if not all Member States

ISBN: 978-1-78655-778-0



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