

Peru Fulfills Criteria for Visa-Free Access to Europe's Schengen Area



Lima, October 30 (RHC-Andina) -- The European Commission has adopted two reports concluding that Colombia and Peru fulfill the relevant criteria for the negotiation of visa waiver agreements between each of these countries and the EU.

According to a press release on the European Union's official website, the significant improvements accomplished by Colombia and Peru in many areas in recent years mean that it is no longer justified to maintain a visa obligation on citizens of these countries visiting the Schengen area for short stays.

Once the reports have been discussed in the appropriate committees and groups of the European Parliament and the Council, the Commission will seek authorisation from the Council to negotiate short-stay visa waiver agreements with each of the two countries.

It should be noted an additional step is required before opening negotiations on bilateral visa waiver agreements. In this sense, the Commission will assess the two countries with regard to the criteria set out in Article 1(1) of Regulation 509/2014.

Among the factors to take into consideration when making the assessment are illegal immigration, public policy and security, economic benefit, in particular in terms of tourism and foreign trade, and the Union's external relations with the relevant third countries.

In view of the preparation of the evaluation, the Commission requested and received contributions from three EU agencies: the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the European Police Office (Europol) and the European Agency for the Management of External Borders (Frontex).

Furthermore, additional information was obtained from the EU Delegations in Bogotá and Lima, as well as from the Colombian and Peruvian authorities. If the Council grants such an authorisation, negotiations could start in the first trimester of 2015.

The Schengen area is made up of Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Monaco, Germany, Greece and Hungary.

Likewise, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland are part of this bloc.

In August 2013, the Spanish government announced it would formally request fellow countries in the passport-free Schengen zone to lift short-stay visa requirements for Peru and Colombia.

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