Changes in Visa Policies

of the EU Member States

STEFAN **BATORY**
FOUNDATION

N E W   M O N I T O R I N G   R E P O R T

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New Monitoring Report

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Executive Summary

- Our second study of EU Member States' consular policies vis-à-vis Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine[1] reveals that since our last survey in 2005, applying for visas has probably become less time-consuming and less complicated. The margin of that improvement is relatively small, because as old Member States have reduced procedural complexity and time-investment requirements of visa applicants, new Member States' performance has worsened in the aftermath of their entry to Schengen zone in December of 2007.
- The adoption of the Schengen visa regime by new EU Member States resulted, at least in the case of some countries, in a very dramatic decrease in the number of visas issued to their nationals. The volume of visas issued to Belarusian nationals decreased the most in the case of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia (by 73%, 52% and 34% respectively, as compared to 2007). A noticeable decrease (by nearly 60%) can also be observed to have occurred in the number of visas issued by Polish representations to Ukrainian nationals.
- Since 2005 France has made the greatest progress in terms of improving the performance of its consular services.

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[1] 1062 randomly selected visa applicants were interviewed in October and November of 2008 at consular sites located in four Eastern European capital cities: Minsk, Chisinau, Kyiv and Moscow. Visa regimes studied included these of the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the UK. See Appendix I for methodological details.

- Since 2005 consular officers' respectful and professional approach to applicants have both gained in importance to our respondents; the length of the visa procedure remained the only tangible inconvenience that these applicants cite as comparably important from their view point.
- Visa facilitation increases frequency of visa fee waivers while reducing the procedure's length. It does not seem to reduce paper work requirements.
- Only about a 15% average of all multiple entry visas issued in Ukraine are valid for a period over 6 months. Certainly such a limited term of validity of multiple entry visas significantly lowers their practical value.
- Streamlining the documentation intake stage of the visa application process, particularly eliminating preparatory steps (initial phone calls, stubs) and limiting verbal probing of applicants while they are at consulates, would significantly reduce the time it takes to get a visa.

Introduction

This Report presents an analysis of the changes that have occurred during the last few years in the visa procedures followed by a selected group of surveyed EU Member State consulates. The analysis reflects the situation as seen by those applying for a visa in person and their experiences of the process. We are interested, *inter alia*, in the interval between the submission of an application for, and the issuance of, the visa concerned, the time spent queuing in a line by an applicant, the number of documents required, the attitude of consular officers towards an applicant, and the opinion of the applicant on how arduous the entire process is. The report and the analysis of changes in the visa procedures followed are based on the results of two surveys. The first was carried out in 2005[1], and the second, during the second half of 2008. In both cases the methodology used was the same. They were carried out at consulates of certain EU Member States in Kyiv, Chisinau, Minsk, and Moscow. The visa regimes examined included those of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and United Kingdom as well as of Latvia and Italy (the second survey). The first survey involved interviewing 961 applicants, and the second, 1062[2].

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[1] See: *Visa Policies of the European Union Member States – Monitoring Report*, the Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw, June 2006.

[2] The analysis in Chapter 3.2 is based on the findings from the separate in-depth survey carried out in Ukraine only. The methodology involved is presented in detail in the footnote on p. 49.

It must be stressed here that the results do not reflect the experiences of those that apply for a visa via a specialised company or a travel agency, but only of those that do so personally.

The changes that can be observed in the last few years in the visa procedures followed may be attributed to a number of factors. First, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine have concluded with the EU a Visa Facilitation Agreement. Secondly, new Member States have joined the Schengen Area. These exacerbated the situation of those applying at consulates of the CEEC Member States surveyed: the number of visas issued has dropped significantly in 2008, as compared to 2007, for example, by 60% and 73% in the case of Polish consulates in Ukraine and Belarus, respectively. On the other hand, the situation at older Member State consulates seems to have improved little relative to 2005.

The EU is perceived by citizens of Eastern European countries in the light of its visa policy towards them. For most of the applicants, a meeting with a consular officer constitutes their first ever opportunity to come into direct contact with those representing the EU. For many, a visa policy is also a sort of a "litmus test" of the real goals and objectives the EU is pursuing vis-à-vis its partners from the East. Contrary to its friendly declarations, the real development of EU Eastern policy can not be truly envisaged without the facilitation of people-to-people contacts between EU Member States and their neighbouring countries. Though the EU Member States have jointly decided that in the long-term they will liberalise visas for citizens of Eastern Partnership countries (i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine), as well as of Russia[3], it remains to be seen whether this decision will find its expression in concrete measures. In the short-term, the Union ought to lift all the visa fees for citizens of the neighbouring

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[3] First announced at the EU–Russia Summit in St Petersburg in 2003: "St. Petersburg Joint Statement".

countries and ensure the better operation of the existing visa facilitation agreements.

This Report has been drawn up within the framework of the Friendly EU Border Project, carried out by the Stefan Batory Foundation since 2002. The necessary surveys were conducted in cooperation with four NGOs from Eastern Europe: the Institute for Public Policy (Moldova), the Carnegie Moscow Center (Russia), the Centre for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, and the Centre for Social Innovations from Belarus.

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Level of Difficulty
of Visa Application Process

Main Findings:

- Excluding Finaland from our consideration, it seams that hardship associated with the visa application process in the new Member States' consulates has generally increased, except for Poland, while old Member States, particulary France and UK have improved their performance considerably,
- Except for Lithuania, all regimes took longer to process application in 2008 than in 2005. The Czech Republic and Poland have lengthened their procedures dramatically.
- The key criterion which Eastern Europeans use to evaluate the process of applying for an EU Member State visa is via a regime's ability to demonstrate its capacity to respect applicants' rights and protect their dignity. Time-investment, cost and procedural complexity matter to these applicants far less than humane treatment. We obtained similar results in our 2005 survey.

Our main objective this time was to discover the key correlates of the level of difficulty encountered under the current EU visa regime. This we defined as a combination of procedural complexity and time and money investment required of those applying for a visa. Since we performed nearly an identical survey in 2005, we can compare the 2008 level of difficulty of the visa application process with that which existed three years ago (Chart 1).

Chart 1. How difficult is it to apply for EU Visas? (2005–2008 Change)
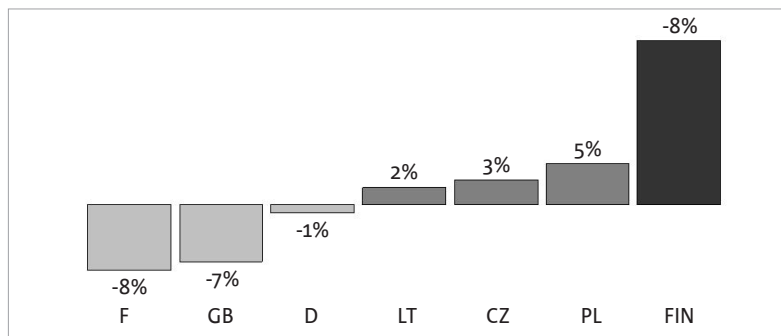
Results for the Finnish regime, which we studied at fewer sites than for other visa regimes, are volatile and have to be taken with caution.

Table 1 shows how visa regimes' rankings have changed between 2005 and 2008. France has made the greatest progress since our last study, improving its score by 8%. Belgium was not included in our 2008 study; Italy and Latvia were not included in 2005.

**Table 1. 2005–2008 change in regimes' ranking by difficulty of visa application process**

2008		2005	
Visa regime	Difficulty level (1=most user-unfriendly; 5=most user-friendly)	Visa regime	Difficulty level (1=most user-unfriendly; 5=most user-friendly)
UK	4.64	Finland	4.60
Poland	4.28	Poland	4.50
Germany	4.27	UK	4.33
Italy	4.27	Czech R.	4.22
France	4.15	Germany	4.22
Latvia	4.14	Belgium	4.20
Czech R.	4.09	Lithuania	3.97
Lithuania	3.89	France	3.85
Finland	3.70		

Adjusted means; evaluated with the following covariates in the model: Did you get a visa? College Degree, Unemployed, Age, Gender. These rankings are independent of regimes' visa rejection rates or applicants education and other demographic characteristics.

The most dramatic change has occurred in the case of Finland whose visa regime was in 2005 perceived as the most user-friendly and in 2008 has moved to the very end of the list. We studied only two Finnish consular sites: in Moscow and Kyiv and it is the former which has generated most of the negative reviews.

Excluding Finland from our considerations, it seems that hardship associated with the visa application process in the new Member States' consulates has generally increased, except for Poland, while old Member States, particularly France and the UK have improved their performance considerably (Chart 2).

Chart 2. Visa process difficult/very difficult (change 2005–2008)
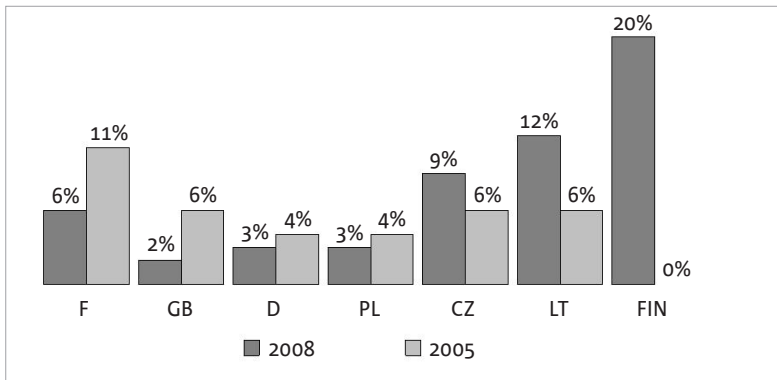
In 2008 the Czech Republic and Lithuania had difficulty maintaining their previous standards of service.

Treatment

Changes in the visa regimes' difficulty level for older Member States are largely due to their better treatment of applicants (Charts 3 and 4). Finland is again an exception. The picture is mixed regarding new Member States: Poland and Lithuania have lowered their standards, while in 2008 the Czech Republic did a better job than in 2005.

Chart 3. Very good treatment while getting an application form

	GB	CZ	D	F	LT	FIN	PL
2008	74%	53%	56%	43%	32%	49%	52%
2005	57%	47%	53%	45%	45%	70%	76%

■ 2008 ■ 2005
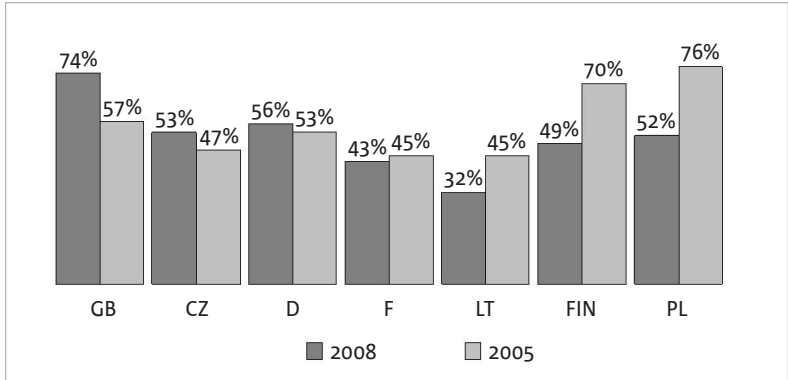
Chart 4. Very good treatment while obtaining a stub

	D	GB	F	CZ	LT	PL	FIN
2008	60%	65%	41%	38%	26%	51%	44%
2005	28%	53%	31%	30%	32%	72%	75%

■ 2008 ■ 2005
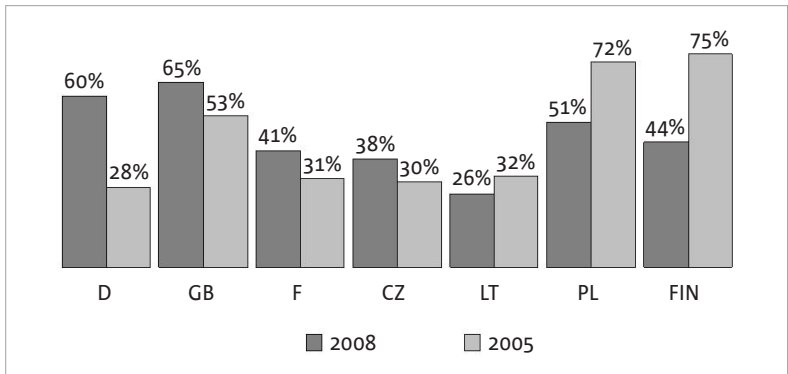
It appears that nearly a year after December 2007, of the three new Member States included in both the 2005 and 2008 studies still learning to cope with the Schengen procedures, Poland appears to have had the hardest time adjusting (Chart 5).

Chart 5. Very good staff skills (professional attitude)
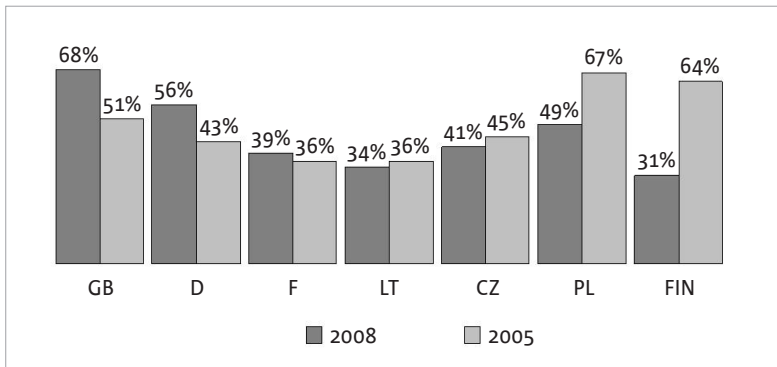
Procedure's length

Except for Lithuania, all regimes took longer to process applications in 2008 than in 2005. The Czech Republic and Poland have lengthened their procedures dramatically. Even if most of these increases can be explained by the Schengen information exchange requirements, Czech consulates take an extraordinary amount of time to process applications. This in turn explains the relatively low ranking of that country's visa regime, despite its accomplishments with regard to applicants' treatment (Chart 6).

Chart 6. Length of procedure (days since first visit)
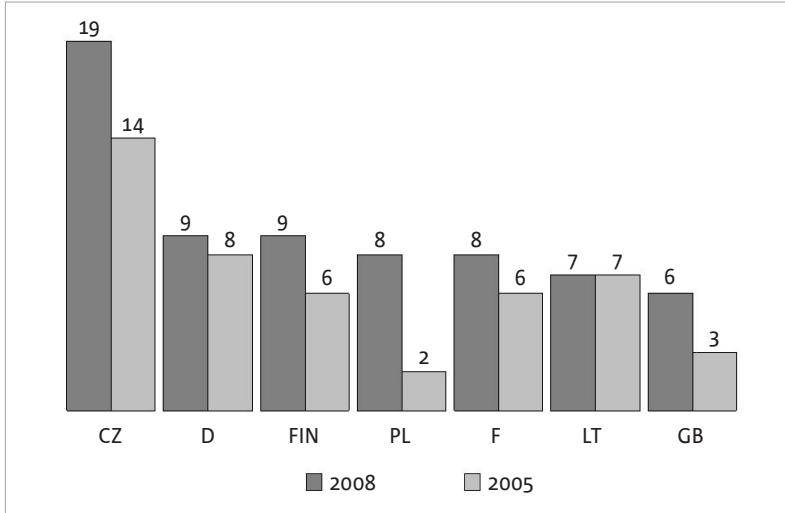
We will now discuss the key determinants of our respondents' perceptions of the complexity and hardship involved in applying for a visa in 2008.

Chart 7 shows predictors of hardship experienced by those who had just gone through the visa application process and agreed to be interviewed. Over two thirds (or about 67%)[1] of differences in our respondents' perceptions of hardship during the process can be explained in terms of humane and respectful treatment by consular officers. Further, one quarter (about 22%) can be attributed to consular officers skills, which we defined as their command of the applicant's preferred language, their ability and willingness to inform and their professional attitudes. The total visa procedure's

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[1] Standardised regression coefficients of statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable add up to about 1, so they can be expressed in percentage terms. "Procedure's length" is border-line insignificant (p=0.056). See Statistical Appendix for model specifications.

Chart 7. What makes the application process easier?

Treatment
0.668

Procedure's Lenght
0.130

Staff Skills
0.224

Standardised Regression Coefficients
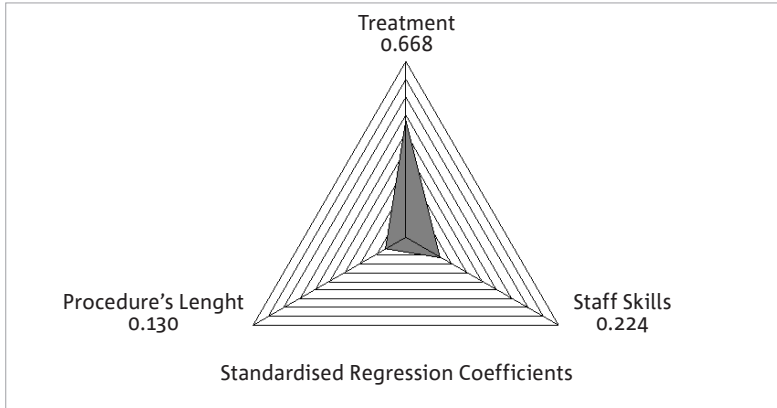
length accounts for a further one tenth (13%) of variations in how these respondents perceive the entire visa process.

These findings track our 2005 results. However, the significance of tangible inconveniences that applying for a visa typically entails, namely, having to wait in line, having to visit the consulate multiple times and paying consular fees, has eroded further since then.

What explains this growing disregard for these inconveniences? One could argue that the tangibles have improved and therefore they have become less important. However, as we will demonstrate later in this chapter, intangibles have improved as well, yet they have gained in importance. Another explanation is that the findings shown in Chart 7 reflect Eastern European's impatience with the very existence of visa regimes, not with their particular attributes. Another, perhaps complementary, not alternative explanation is that consular services are unique and therefore treatment and staff skills are a consulates' core organisational resources, not peripheral attributes whose neglect will not impact on the consulates' efficiency. This latter hypothesis is borne out by the data; in the next chapter of this report

we demonstrate that both treatment and staff attitudes correlate with the length of the visa application process.

The statistical insignificance of intangibles notwithstanding, we do not wish to imply that our respondents do not mind spending time in lines, visiting a consulate multiple times or, particularly, being denied a visa. However, the core message of this study remains that from the view point of visa applicants, the most important resources and competencies of EU consular services are scarcely related to physical infrastructure and convenience and instead consist in consular officers' ability to respect and understand their applicants. Let us briefly review each of the factors shown in Chart 7.

Difficulty Level

We measured complexity and time investment required of visa applicants – the "dependent" or predicted variable in the model shown in Chart 7 – at each, distinct stage of the visa application process: (1) obtaining application form; (2) securing a stub; (3) completing paperwork; (4) paying at the cash register; (5) interview and, finally, (6) reporting to the Consulate to pick up a passport with a visa decision.

Generally speaking, these respondents did not consider the application process as particularly difficult. Overall, less than 10% of these respondents describe their experiences at consulates as difficult or very difficult. However, considerable differences exist between visa regimes and between stages of the application process.

Picking up a visa, waiting for the Consulate's decision and filing documents are most frequently perceived as difficult or very difficult. Chart 8 focuses on these three stages only.

Chart 8. Difficult/very difficult stages
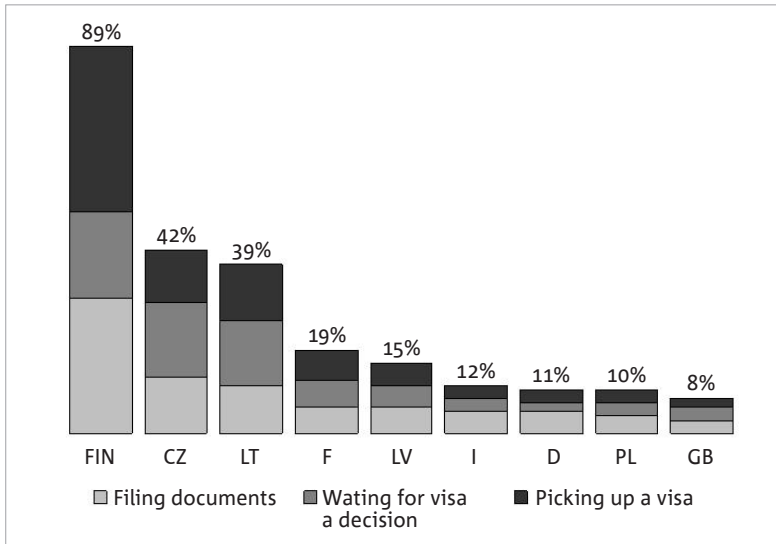
British, Polish, German and Italian regimes are less complex and less time-consuming, while the Finnish regime is clearly the most difficult to deal with. The bar representing the Finnish regime shows that 38% of our respondents reported picking up their visa at a Finnish Consulate as difficult or very difficult, a further 31% experienced dealing with the paper work as difficult or very difficult and lastly, 20% believed waiting for a visa decision was burdensome. These percentages add up to 89. Again, the Finnish data have to be taken with a pinch of salt.

Czech and Lithuanian regimes stand out as complex and burdensome, while the UK, Poland, Germany and Italy have achieved a far greater level of simplicity.

Treatment

Respectful treatment explains most of these differences between Member States. While good and very good treatment prevails at most consulates

(Chart 9), a clear split between old and new Schengen states exists. Baltic states included in our study perform particularly poorly. France ranks worst among western European regimes under consideration. The non-Schengen UK by far outperforms both old and new Schengen states.

Chart 9. Good/very good treatment
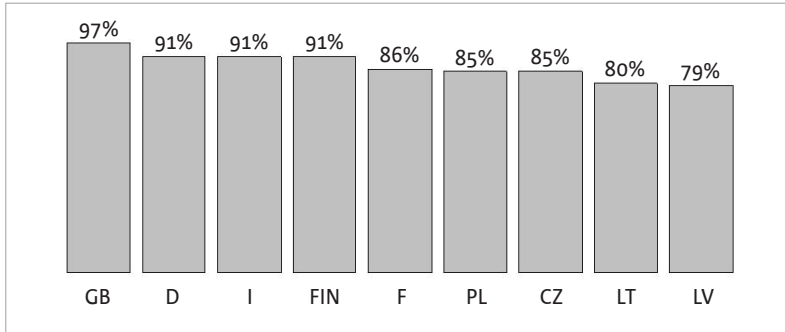
Perceptions of mistreatment most frequently arise at the two most difficult stages of the visa application process: while reporting to a consulate to pick up a passport with a visa decision and while filing documents. Also, they occur relatively frequently in "other situations" (Chart 10). We are not sure what these situations are but, for example, making an enquiry by phone is an activity that we did not consider separately.

Chart 10. Bad/very bad treatment
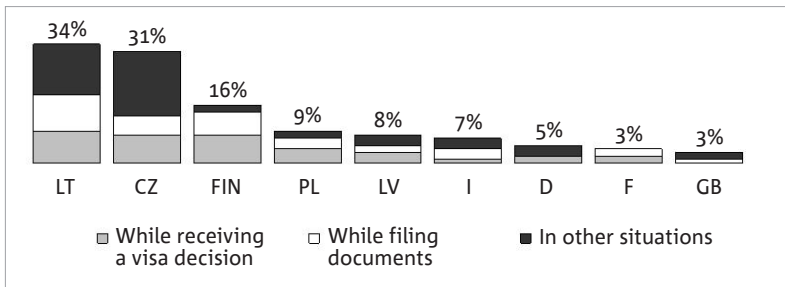
Staff skills

We asked our respondents about four types of consular employees and three types of staff skills. Types of employees include: (1) line fixers (i.e. persons maintaining order in lines, not present at every Consulate); (2) security officers; (3) visa officers and, (4) other staff. Types of skills include: (1) command of the applicants' preferred language; (2) ability and willingness to inform and, (3) professional attitudes.

As shown in Chart 11, poor language skills rarely occur but prevail at new Member States' consular sites. This may well be a matter of cultural and political insensitivity rather than of a genuine shortage of employees capable of speaking the language preferred by applicants. However, our respondents might be somewhat more vigilant when communicating with consular representatives of a country they consider culturally similar. Furthermore, new Member States and Germany frequently earn poor reviews for their inability to inform.

Chart 11. Poor/very poor staff's skills (types of skills)
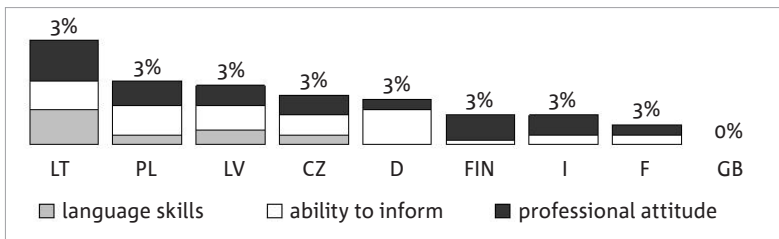
Regarding types of employees (Chart 12), security officers' performance is problematic everywhere except for the UK. New Member States are more likely to have poorly trained visa officers than do older Member States.

Chart 12. Poor/very poor staff skills (types of employees)

21%	
15%	
13%	
10%	9%
9%	
7%	
3%	
1%	
LT	I	LV	CZ	PL	FIN	D	F	GB

☐ Line fixer   ☐ Security officer   ■ Visa officer
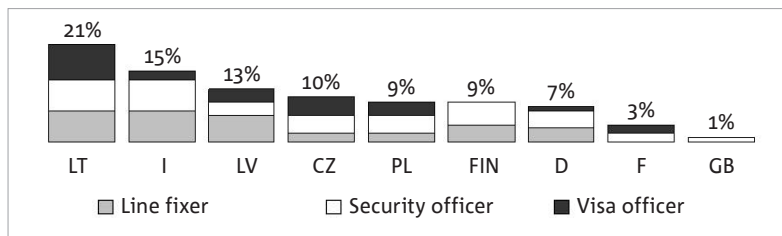
Procedure's Length

The final[2] predictor of how difficult an experience applying for a visa can be is the total length of the application process. We have two measures of the duration of the process: (1) the number of days since the first visit to the Consulate with an intention to start the application process; (2) the number of days since the first call to the Consulate.

Of the two measures, the latter is a better predictor of hardship. Overall, only 25% of respondents report they were required to phone a Consulate to start the procedure. Germany and Italy seem to require a phone call in nearly half of the cases, while Poland and the UK do not seem to require it at all. The few respondents who reported they had to phone these two consulates, had probably mistaken their own diligence for a procedural requirement (Chart 13).

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[2] Procedure's length is in fact border-line significant (p=0.056). In a logistic regression model, with the dependent variable recoded to the binary level, the effect of the procedure's length is no longer statistically significant (See Statistical Appendix for full specifications of both models).

Chart 13. Had to call
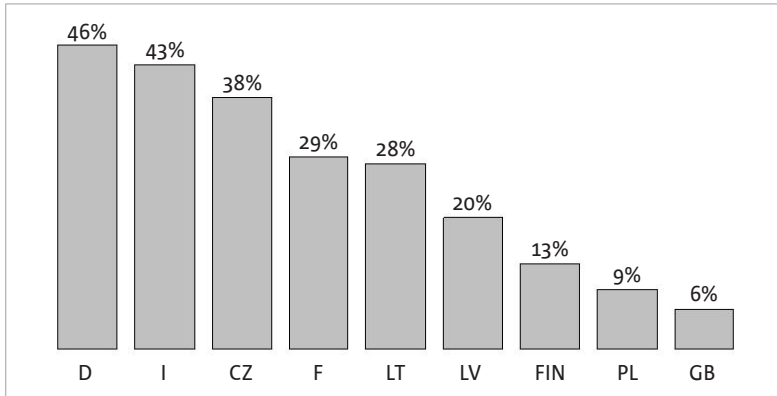
Generally, regimes that require people to call ahead also take longer to process applications (Chart 14), although France defies this rule. In some cases, particularly Lithuania, Germany and the Czech Republic, the procedure's length is two to three times as long as under regimes that do not require a phone call to start the process, i.e. the UK, Finland and Poland.

Chart 14. Length of procedure (days since first call)
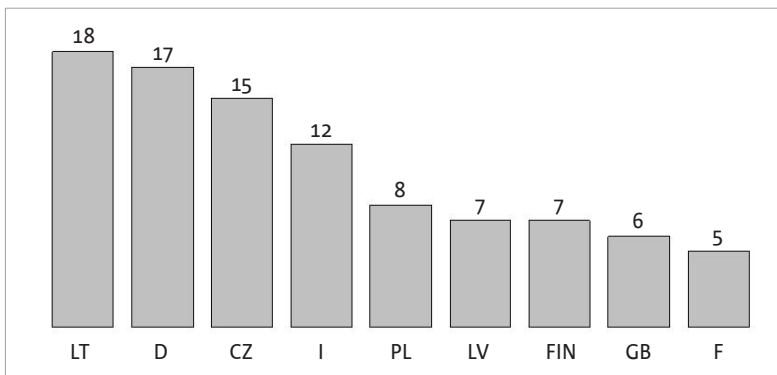
A very small proportion (4.3%) of visa decisions are issued on the same day as when applications are filed. This is a dramatic change compared to 2005. Then, Polish, British, French, and German consular representations were issuing as many as 70%, 61%, 51%, and 19% of their visa decisions so on the same day, respectively. The only Consulate doing so in 2008 in more than 10% of the cases surveyed was the French Consulate (13% of respondents received their visa decision on the same day as when their application was filed).

Common Visa Application Centre versus Application Processing at Consulates

Several EU countries established a Common Visa Application Centre in Chisinau[3]. We included that site in our study in order to compare the quality of service at the Centre with that offered at traditional consular sites.

There are very few significant differences between the quality of service and procedural complexity at the Centre and at other consulates (Table 2). In fact, the number of documents required is actually greater (6.2) at the Centre than at consulates serving single countries (5.3). However, staff language skills are on average better at the Centre than elsewhere. Respectful treatment, the key predictor of hardship, is slightly more frequent at the Centre. However, this effect is border-line significant statistically (See Statistical Appendix).

Table 2. Chisinau Common Visa Centre versus other regimes

	Other regimes	Visa Centre
Number of documents required**	5.3	6.2
Staff language skills*	3.4	3.8

** significant at 0.01 level
* significant at 0.05 level

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[3] The first EU Common Visa Application Centre was opened in Moldova on 25 April 2007. At present, the Centre issues visas for seven EU Member States (i.e. Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia and Sweden) and for Iceland. Negotiations are being carried out with other European countries to join.

Suggestions for Reducing the Procedure's Length

Main Findings:

- Streamlining documentation intake is the key to reducing the time applicants take to go through the application process. Regimes that require an excessive number of documents, force applicants to make multiple visits, and resort to asking additional questions verbally while documentation is filed, tend to be least efficient.
- Preparatory steps, such as asking people to call ahead of their first visit and requiring them to obtain a stub are counterproductive from the viewpoint of reducing the length of the visa application process.
- High quality of information by phone and Internet reduces the length of the visa application process.
- Humane treatment of applicants and the consular staff's professional attitudes are both significant correlates of a shorter visa procedure.

We examined all organisational features of the visa application process from the vantage point of their impact on the length of the visa procedure, the latter being a proximate measure of the consulates' organisational efficiency. Thus we analysed how the quality of information, the availability of application forms on the Internet, staff skills, including language abilities and the ability and willingness to inform, and all other potentially relevant factors correlate with the length of the visa procedure, measured as the number of days from

the first visit. Chart 1 show statistically significant correlates with the number of days it takes to complete the visa application process (see also Table 1).

Table 1. Factors affecting procedure's length

What extends procedure's length?	Correlation coefficient[1]
Time spend in lines to file documents	0.5**
Total time in line	0.3**
Number of separate visits necessary to complete process	0.2**
Additional questions asked verbally	0.1*
Had to call to start procedure	0.1*
Time spend in line to obtain a stub	0.1*
Number of documents required	0.1*
What reduces procedure length?	
Quality of information available by email/Internet	-0.2**
Line-fixer skills	-0.1*
Treatment	-0.1*
Staff's professional attitudes	-0.1*
Quality of information over the phone	-0.1*

[1] Partial correlations with number of days since first visit to Consulate, controlling for age, gender, college degree; **p<0.01; *p<0.05

Chart 1. What affects the length of procedure?

Longer procedure ←——————————→ Shorter procedure
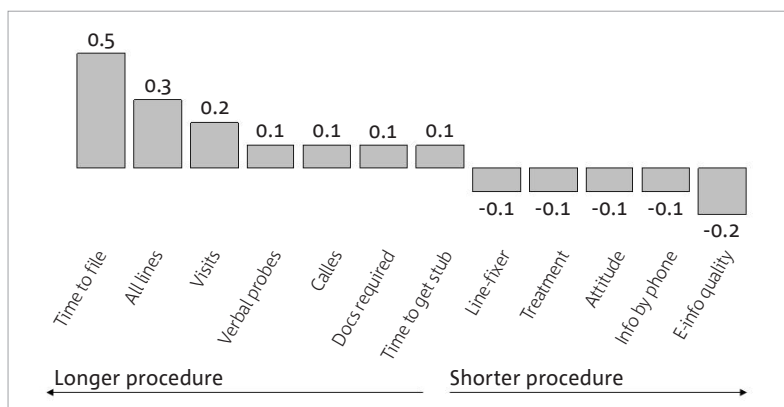
Before we turn to a discussion of each of the correlates, let us briefly ana-lyse the differences among regimes regarding the time they take to process an application. Chart 2 shows the adjusted average numbers of days since the paper work was filed to the day a visa decision was issued. We show adjusted rather than straight means to control the impact of differences in the demographic make up of each Consulate's clientele.

Thus the UK is able to process an application in just six days, while the Czech Republic needs 23 days on average. Among old Member States, Finland and Germany are least efficient and require nine days to process an applica-tion. Let us discuss briefly each of the factors affecting procedure length.

Chart 2. Length of procedure (days since first visit)
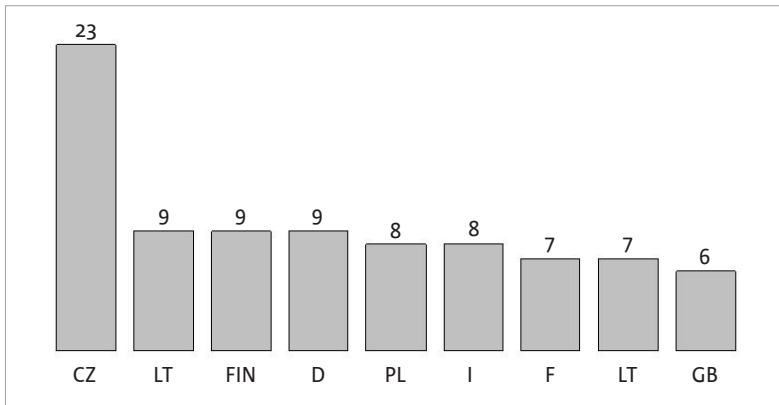
Lines

Like the number of visits, the presence of waiting lines is an obvious and perhaps tautological indicator of the visa regime's inefficiency. Nearly all (85%) of those in our sample that were applying for a Finnish visa and 72% of applicants planning a trip to the Czech Republic had queued up at some point during the application process. Only those travelling to the UK and France had a greater than 50% chance of getting through the process without having to wait in any line (Chart 3).

Chart 3. Had to wait in line?

FIN	85%
CZ	72%
I	62%
LT	60%
PL	58%
D	52%
LV	51%
F	44%
GB	30%
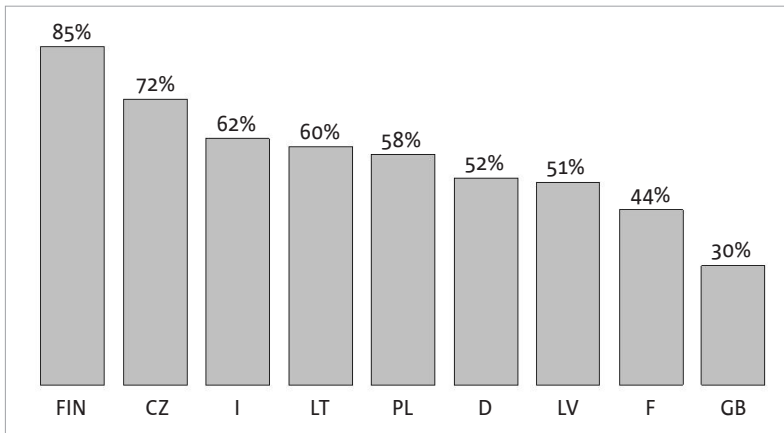
The total time these respondents spent waiting in lines varied from only six minutes when getting a British visa to over four and a half hours while going through the application process at a Finnish Consulate. This, however, applies principally to the situation at the Finnish Consulate in Moscow where the total time an applicant stood in a line exceeded seven hours (449 minutes); in Kyiv fifty five minutes of standing in a line was required. Apart from Finland, the situation at new Member States' consular sites was worse than at those representing old Member States (Chart 4).

Chart 4. Average total time spent in lines (minutes)

	FIN	CZ	LT	LV	PL	F	D	I	GB
Other	39	19							
To pick up a visa	124	21	19	19	13	14	13	12	
To file documents	113	84	40	25	29	23	19	14	

☐ To file documents   ◼ To pick up a visa   ■ Other
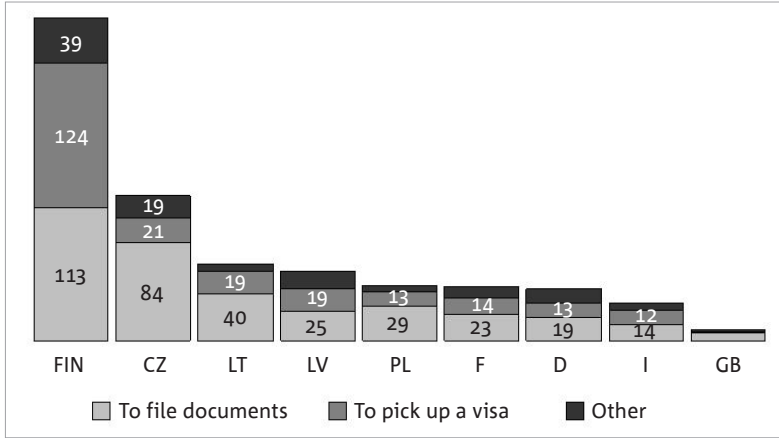
On average, 50% of the total time spent waiting in a line by these re-spondents was devoted to filing paper work; another 33% was spent picking up a visa (Chart 5). As usual, Finland deviates from this pattern as picking up a visa at a Finnish facility took longer than filing documents. Lining up to obtain a stub constituted only 7% of total time in lines. However, the presence of these types of line indicates less efficient consulates.

Chart 5. Proportion of time spent in lines at subsequent stages
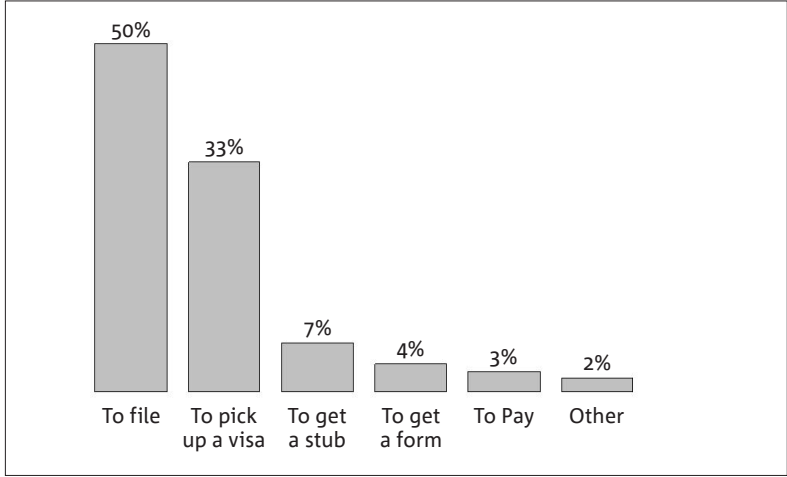
Number of Visits

The necessity to make more than one visit to a Consulate predictably coincides with a longer visa procedure. While this is admittedly a trivial observation, it is still puzzling that some regimes, particularly the Lithuanian and French ones, perform poorly in terms of the number of visits they require of their applicants, while at the same time being able to process visa applications in a relatively short period of time. i.e. within one week. We shall demonstrate that this is probably a consequence of excessive documentation requirements combined with poor quality of information by phone and via electronic means.

Chart 6. More than two visits
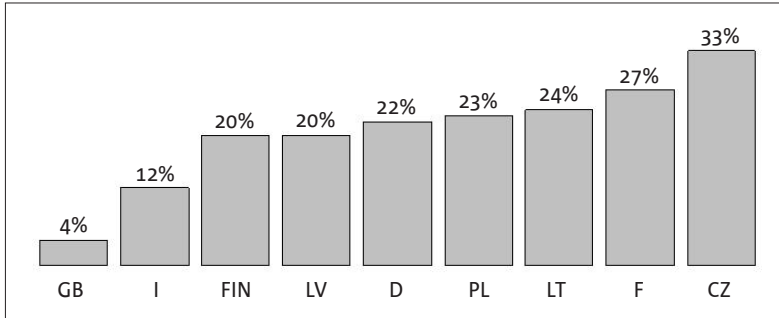
Additional Questions

As shown in Table 1, the necessity to queue up to file documents is the strongest correlate of a Consulate's inefficiency. It is thus particularly interesting to examine what separates the UK and Italian regimes, on the one hand, from Finnish and Czech, on the other.

Asking people additional questions during the documentation intake stage of the process, as opposed to screening applicants on the basis of their documentation does, of course, complicate paper work intake and lengthens the visa procedure.

Old Member States, particularly Germany and France are most inquisitive (80% and 67% respectively). Of new Member States the Czech Republic and Lithuania were more likely (55% and 52%, respectively) to verbally probe visa applicants. The Italian regime stands out as a remarkably non-inquisitive one (Chart 7).

Chart 7. Additional questions asked verbally (Member States concerned)
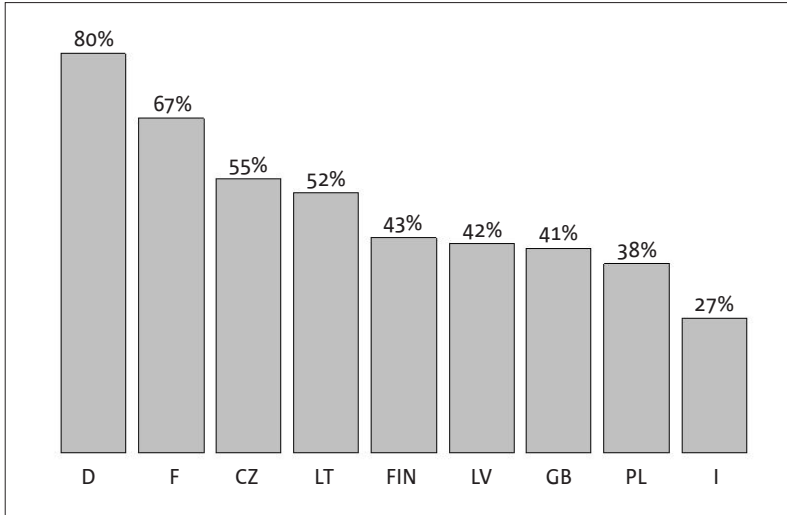
Looking at this from the perspective of the applicants' country of origin, most of these additional enquiries occurred in Moldova where a staggering 79% of visa applicants were asked these questions, versus only 37% in Russia (Chart 8). It appears that the incidence of verbal screening is not simply a function of the applicant's individual circumstance. It is thus unlikely that the incidence of verbal probing is arbitrary and thus, that it can be easily eliminated.

Chart 8. Additional questions asked verbally (country of origin)
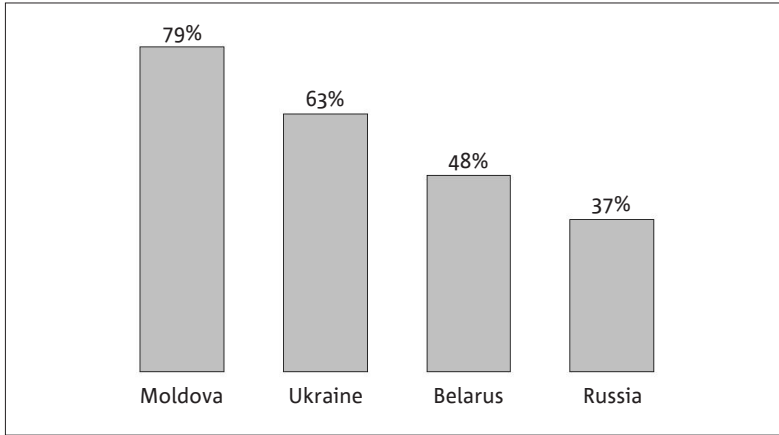
Verbal probing does not mean, of course, a separate interview with a visa officer. Only a small minority (3.5% or 37 persons) of all our respondents experienced an additional, separate interview. A small cell count does not allow us to conduct any meaningful analysis of the likely causes of being selected for an interview. The largest proportion of those who were invited for an interview were those applying in Russia (38% or 14 cases), while Ukrainian and Belarus applicants participated in interviews far less frequently (19% and 16% respectively of all individual interviews). Interviews with the Moldavans made up the remaining 27% of those thirty seven cases.

From the destination country perspective, Poland was most likely to interview applicants (32% or 12 of all interviews occurred at Polish consulates). The Czech Republic was the second most frequent interviewer of visa applicants (24% or nine interviews). Lithuania conducted no extra interviews. Neither did the UK. However, due to a small volume of traffic, we did not include the UK's Consulate in Chisinau in our study.

While Consulate inquisitiveness extends the number of days it takes to complete the visa application process, it does not necessarily violate applicants' sensitivities regarding privacy. Only 9% of all the respondents found these verbal probes inappropriate or very inappropriate. Nevertheless it is clear that new Member States, with the commendable exception of Poland, were far more likely to pose questions deemed as inappropriate than were the old Member States: 18% of applicants experienced inappropriate questions at Latvian, 15% at Lithuanian, and 14% at Czech consulates. Polish visa officers asked questions deemed inappropriate to only 6% of its clientele. France led the way among the old Member States (Chart 9).

Chart 9. Inappropriate/very inappropirate questions (Member States concearnd)
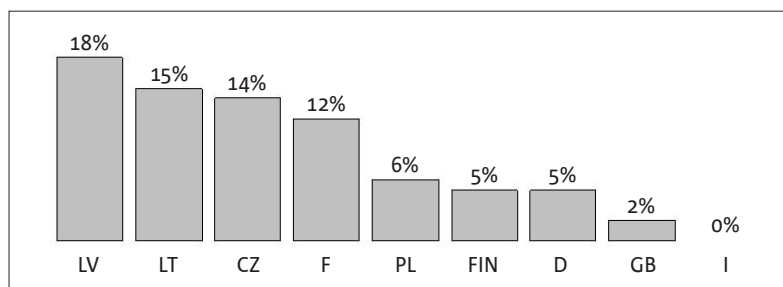
Oddly, Russian nationals, who faced additional questions least frequently were by a wide margin most protective of their right to privacy – 19% of applicants from that country revealed they experienced verbal probes as inappropriate. Only 5% of Moldavans, 6% of Ukrainians and 7% of Belarus nationals reported they encountered questions they did not think were justified (Chart 10).

Chart 10. Inappropriate/very inappropirate questions (country of origin)
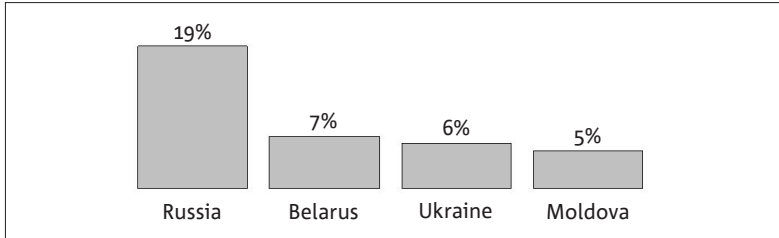
Inquisitiveness, incidence of inappropriate questions, and separate interviews appear to be a matter of a Consulate's organisational ineptitude, rather than an outcome of due diligence on the part of consular officers. We cannot prove it directly but there is a strong relationship between excessive inquisitiveness and the lack of procedural transparency. Chart 11 demonstrates that inquisitive countries are also more likely not to reveal reasons why visas were refused. The small cell count (only those who are refused a visa can know reasons for refusal) does not allow us to estimate the strength of that relationship.

Chart 11. Knows reasons for refusal
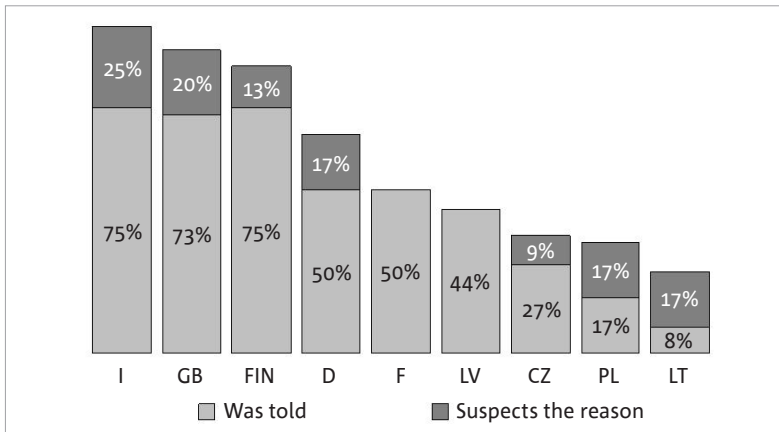
When compared to our analysis in 2005 we can see that the French regime, then refusing to give reasons for visa refusal to 79% (of those concerned), now notifies the reason to 50% of its applicants. Also German consulates perform better in this respect, as compared to 2005 when 75% of its applicants being refused a visa were also denied a reason for refusal.

Quality of Information

The traditional notice board outside the Consulate is no longer the key source of knowledge that respondents depend on for efficient completion of the application process. Online sources of information have become most important, followed by information by phone. Old Member States generally provide the best quality of information online and by phone. (Charts 12 and 13).

Chart 12. Good/very good quality of E-information
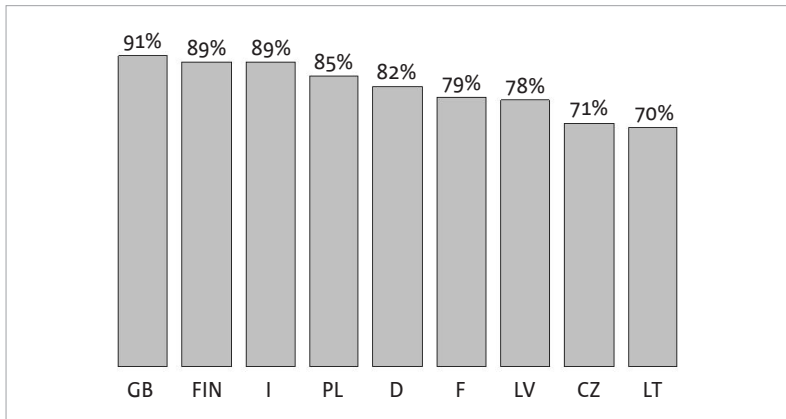
Chart 13. Good/very good quality of information over the phone
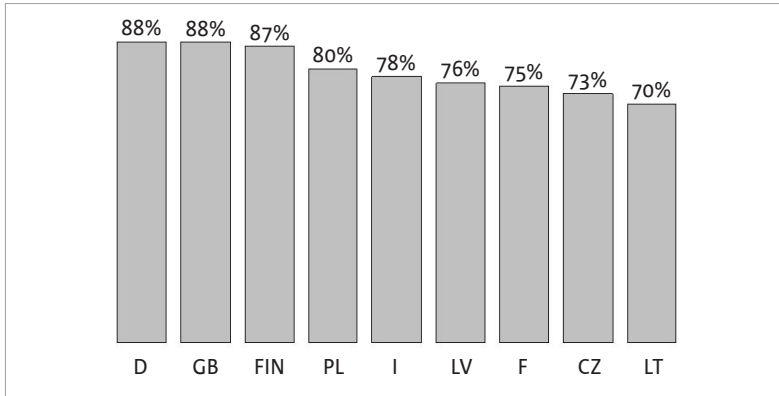
    In our previous study, online sources of information played a limited role. In 2008, however, the proportion of those who went online to obtain their application form was nearly the same (42%) as the proportion of those who decided to pick the form up at a Consulate (46%) (Chart 14).

Chart 14. Source of application form
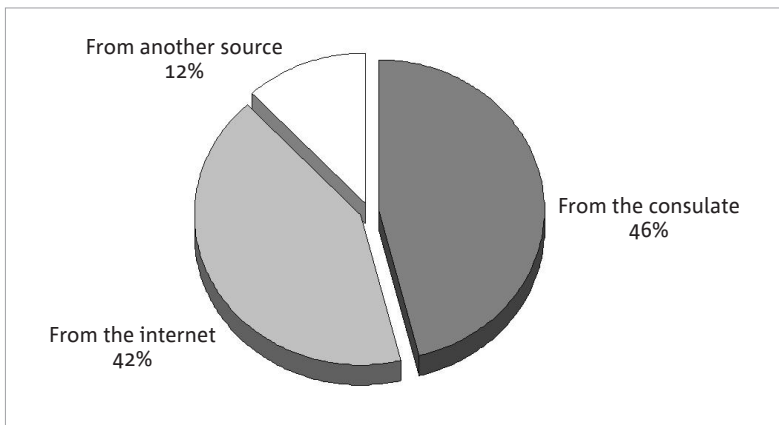
At least one third of applicants in each country and as many as 54% of Russian nationals have gone online to obtain an application form. From the destination country's perspective, new Member States appear less likely to offer forms online (Chart 15). These differences remain even if respondents' education and age are taken into account (see Statistical Appendix).

Chart 15. Application from the Internet
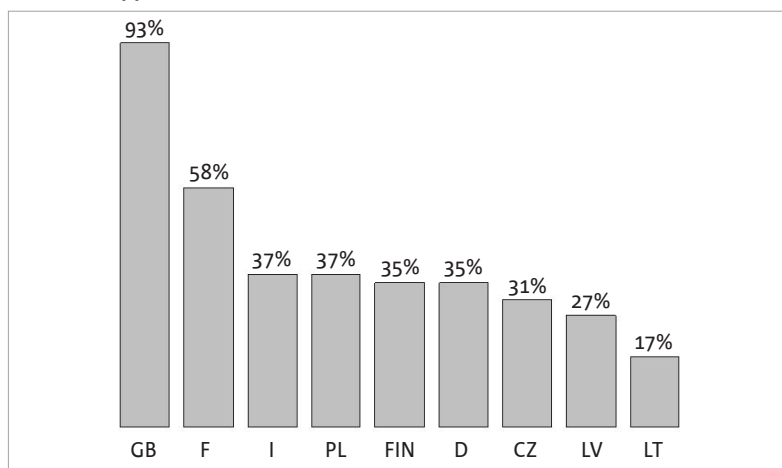
Number of Documents

Consulates typically require four or five documents. Contrary to our expectations, "other" documents, such as a birth or marriage certificate, ticket, bank statement, etc. are not requested very frequently and differences among visa regimes are, in this regard, not very pronounced. Apart from standard documents such as a visa application form, photo, travel document, letter of invitation and health insurance, consulates most frequently require a few more documents such as: proof of means, proof of residence[1]

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[1] Visa applicants are asked for a proofs of residence such as for example: registration at the city of origin, proof of real estate ownership and others.

and others. The table below shows the frequencies with which consulates required this extra documentation.

Documents required

	Proof of means	Proof of residence	Other documents
UK	56%	18%	31%
IT	42%	6%	16%
POL	34%	9%	22%
FRA	34%	20%	27%
LITH	39%	3%	24%
GER	24%	18%	26%
CZR	42%	27%	29%
LAT	23%	8%	22%
FIN	23%	29%	14%

Treatment and Professional Attitudes

Both of these determinants of the procedure's length have been discussed in Chapter I. It should be noted here though that consular services are likely to be unique and that the requirement to treat applicants humanely and professionally is not merely a matter of professional courtesy but is a measure of the consulates' core competencies and their organisational aptitude.

2005–2008 Change

In our 2005 study we did not analyse predictors of the procedure's length. We can, however compare incidence of lines in 2005 and 2008.

The prevalence of lines has dropped somewhat for all regimes except Finland and Poland. The average decrease is only 3% but the UK reduced incidence of lines by 20%, Germany by 15% and France by 13% (Chart 16).

Chart 16. Had to wait in line?
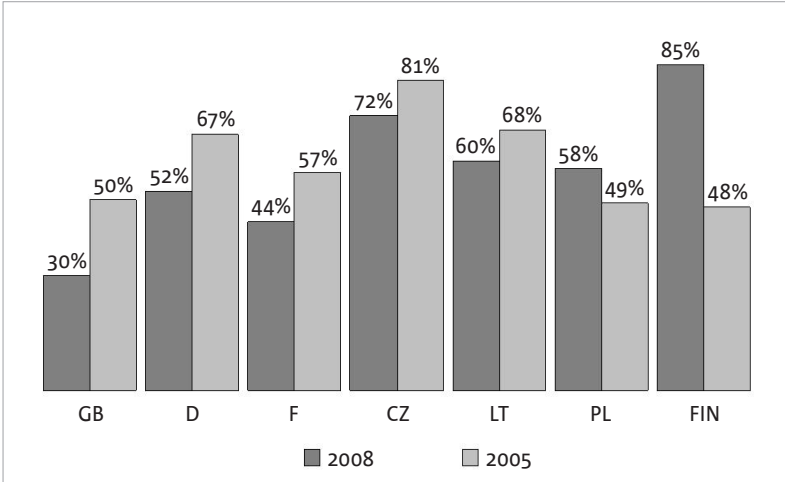
Effects of Visa Facilitation Agreements

Main Findings:

- Visa facilitation simplifies the application procedure and lowers the visa fee. On the other hand, it has no discernible impact on the length of the visa procedure.
- The issuing of longer-term, multiple-entry visas is independent of facilitation.
- About one third of applicants are aware of a Visa Facilitation Agreement between their country and the EU; about one fifth of those aware of the facilitation report having cited it while dealing with consulates.

The EU's visa facilitation agreements originally served as an incentive for enacting readmission agreements. The standard Visa Facilitation Agreement (VFA) benefits bona fide travellers in certain demographic categories (e.g. the young and the elderly), applicants falling under certain categories of travel purpose (e.g. training, visiting close relatives, family emergency, medical treatment or accompanying persons in need of such treatment), and, most frequently, members of certain professions (truck drivers, academics and researchers, businesspersons, etc.). Expected benefits include waived consular fee, the simplification of paper work requirements and the possibility of receiving a long-term multiple entry visa. The VFA with Russia

benefits fewer demographic and travel-purpose categories than do those with Moldova and Ukraine[1]; Belarus did not have a VFA at the time when our survey was conducted; therefore it can serve as our "control group", i.e. a subset of respondents not subjected to a factor whose strength we want to assess.

Visa Facilitation Awareness

Awareness of visa facilitation is particularly high in Ukraine where two thirds of our respondents (65%) report having heard of their country's enactment of a VFA with the European Union. However, awareness is considerably lower in Russia (38%) and Moldova (33%). Even there, though, it is twice as high as among members of the "control group", i.e. applicants in Belarus (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Aware of visa facilitation

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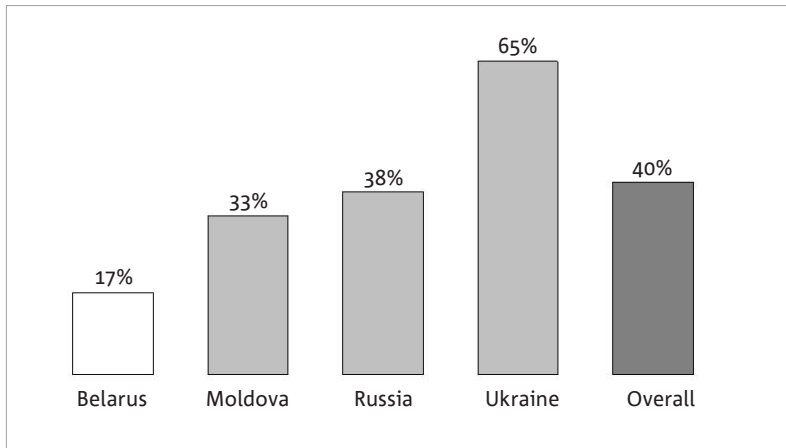
[1] See Trauner and Kruse 2009: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1337604.

One in five (22%) of these respondents brought up visa facilitation while dealing with consulates. Again, the proportion of those who did so was particularly high in Kyiv, where one third (33%) mentioned facilitation. One in four of Moldavan applicants (24%) and only 10% of Russian ones mentioned facilitation. Among our Belarusian "control group", 3% of respondents claim they had brought up facilitation while talking to consular officers.

Chart 2. Mentioned visa facilitation while applying (country of origin)
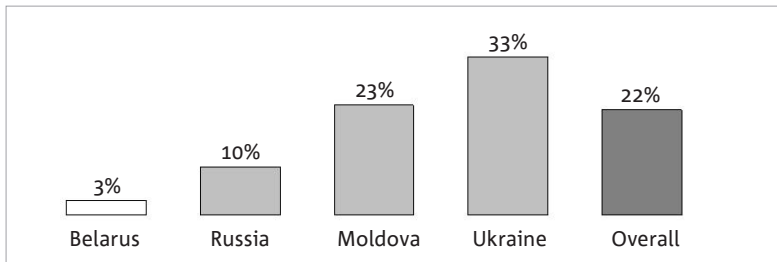
Facilitation was brought up particularly frequently at Finnish and Czech consulates (Chart 3).

Chart 3. Mentioned visa facilitation while applying (Member States concerned)
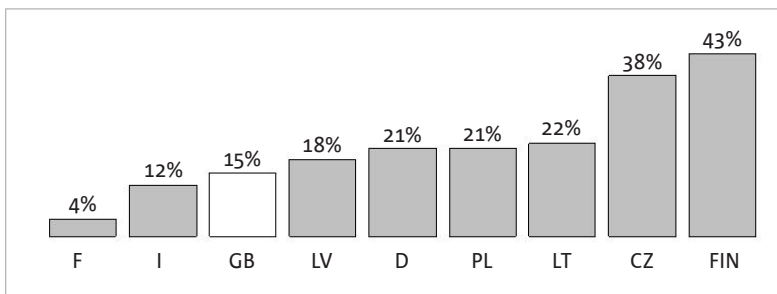
Visa facilitation is most often cited when the time required to get a visa is longer than these respondents expected. On average, those who referred to facilitation had waited for their visa thirteen days since their first phone call, nearly twice as long as those who did not invoke facilitation.

Impacts of Facilitation

To test the impact of facilitation, we compared applicants from Belarus with the rest of our respondents, using key measures of visa process outcomes as the comparison's criteria.

Generally, the effect of facilitation is rather positive. For example, due to facilitation, applicants incur lower total costs (€62 versus €50). However, taking into account that for the nationals of countries with a VFA the fee for a Schengen visa has been lowered from €60 to €35, and for some social groups, has been entirely waived, the effect of facilitation seems to be quite insignificant in this respect.

Amongst the positive effects one must include the shortening of the time one has to wait for a decision as applicants covered by a VFA save three days of waiting time for their visa. They also receive visas with a longer term of validity than do those applying in Minsk (92 versus 58 days). The latter effect is particularly strong in the case of Ukraine.

The other differences between Belarus and VFA countries are somewhat paradoxical. Belarus nationals are more likely to receive multiple entry visas. The VFA has also very little effect on the documents required during the visa application process.

Table 1. Impacts of facilitation – Belarus versus VFA countries (excl. the UK)

	Belarus	Moldova	Russia	Ukraine	VFA countries' average
Multiple entry visas (%)	46%	13%	31%	47%	34%**
Average total cost of a visa	€62	€40	€52	€50	€49**
Procedure's length (days)	11.7	9.8	6.9	9.4	8.6*
Visa duration (days)	58	90	74	112	92*
Visa fee waived	14.8%	32.1%	10.7%	31%	23%*
Average number of documents required	4.6	5.3	4.3	5.3	4.9

** significant at 0.01 level
(VFA countries versus Belarus, excluding applicants to the UK)

Tables 2 and 3 show the same comparisons for old and new Member States separately. As there are now fewer cases in each group, some of the effects shown earlier lose their significance, while other, e.g. visa fee waivers remain highly significant only for old Members States.

The most interesting difference between those two groups of countries is the reluctance with which the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland issue multiple entry visas. This difference is particularly striking with regard to those applying in Kyiv – old Member States' consulates in Kyiv are three times more likely to allow Ukrainian nationals multiple entries than are new Member States' ones.

Table 2. Impacts of facilitation – Belarus versus VFA countries (new Member States)

	Belarus	Moldova	Russia	Ukraine	VFA countries' average
Multiple entry visas (%)	29%	16%	9%	22%	16%**
Average total cost of a visa	€59	€40	€59	€44	€50
Visa fee waived	17.3%	25.5%	8.7%	35.9%	22.3%
Procedure's length (days)	13.2	11	7.1	10.2	9.5

Visa duration (days)	**44**	101	32	78	**68**
Average number of documents required	**4.6**	5.4	4.3	5.1	**4.9**

** significant at 0.01 level
(VFA countries versus Belarus, excluding applicants to the UK)

Table 3. Impacts of facilitation: Belarus versus VFA countries (old Member States)

	Belarus	Moldova	Russia	Ukraine	**VF countries' average**
Multiple entry visas (%)	**61%**	1%	45%	62%	**48%****
Average total cost of visa	**€82**	€41	€63	€75	**€66***
Visa fee waived	**8.6%**	43.6%	10.2%	21.6%	**19.3%****
Procedure's length (days)	**7.1**	7.8	7.3	8	**7.7**
Visa duration (days)	**126**	74	125	173	**139**
Average number of documents required	**4.6**	5.0	4.3	5.3	**4.8**

** significant at 0.01 level
(VFA countries versus Belarus, excluding applicants to the UK)

Multiple-entry Visas
# and their Term of Validity

The Visa Facilitation Agreement was to ensure, *inter alia*, the increase in the granting of multiple-entry visas with a term of validity of up to five years. This would decidedly facilitate arrangements for those needing to travel to the EU frequently, and at the same time, would relieve congestion at consular representations involved. Therefore we have decided to include in our survey also this issue. The analysis presented below is based exclusively on the findings from the survey carried out at consular representations of EU Member States in Ukraine[2].

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2 The full analysis: ***The Public Monitoring of Visa Issuance by the EU Consular Establishments in Ukraine*** (Iryna Sushko, Oleksandr Sushko, Nataliya Parkhomenko, and Oleksiy Vradiy) is based on the findings from the monitoring survey carried out in Ukraine in 2008. Its aim was to assess the quality of the implementation of the Visa Facilitation Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, its impact on visa policy and practice of EU Member States, and the impact of Schengen zone expansion on human contacts between Ukraine and the new Schengen States. The survey was carried out by a consortium of independent think-tanks/NGOs from Kyiv and the six regional centers of Ukraine, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The project was coordinated by the Center for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, Kyiv. It was carried out by the following regional partners: the Kharkiv Public Foundation for Local Democracy, the National Institute for Strategic Studies from Uzhgorod, the Institute for Social Studies and Policy Analysis from Donetsk, the "Global" Research Centre from Odessa, the Association for Youth Rights Protection from Lutsk, and the Lviv Legal Society. The survey was carried out by means of a questionnaire handed out to visa applicants at exit points from consular representations of the Schengen States involved. 840 respondents were polled, covering applicants at representations of 11 Schengen States in Kyiv (ten representations) and other regions of Ukraine (11 representations) – i.e. 40 applicants at each representation. The only applicants queried were those who were themselves directly involved in the entire visa application process: from submitting an applica-

The increase in the share of multiple-entry visas in the number of Schengen visas granted is undeniable. Yet it is also true that visas with a short term of validity (of up to one to three months) prevail. Our survey shows that of all the multiple-entry visas granted by consular representations of the "new" and "old" Schengen" states, some 40% and 50%, respectively, are those valid for up to one month only.

As for the multiple-entry visas with a relatively longer term of validity, granted by consular representations of the "old" Schengen states, roughly 10% are those valid for up to three to six months, and roughly 13%, for more than six months. At the same time, roughly 50% of the multiple-entry visas granted by them are valid for up to one month (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Breakdown of multiple-entry visas applied for, to, or granted by, consular representations of "old" Schengen states, according to their term of validity in days
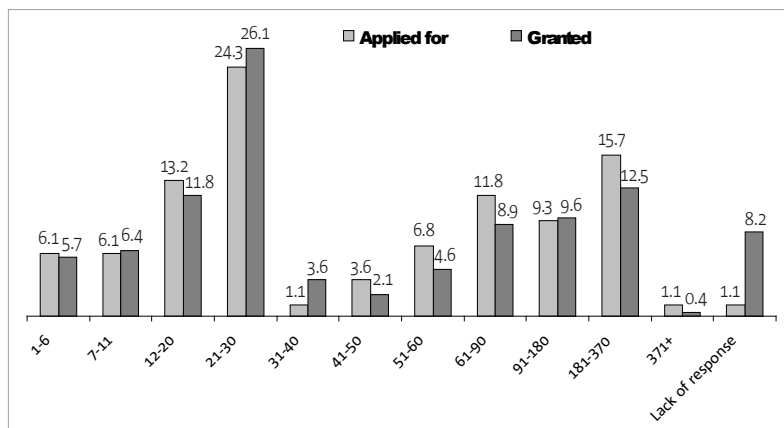
tion to picking up a visa decision. The survey did not cover those who have received a visa via an intermediary. The states surveyed included: Germany (1), France (1), Italy (1), Spain (1), Belgium (1), and Greece (2) – the "old" Schengen states, as well as Poland (5), Hungary (3), the Czech Republic (3), Slovakia (2), and Lithuania (1) – the "new" Schengen states. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of consular representations involved.

As for the multiple-entry visas granted by consular representations of "new" Schengen states, only 17% are valid for three to six months, and roughly 18%, for more than six months. At the same time roughly 40% of them are valid for up to one month only (see Chart 2).

Chart 2. Breakdown of multiple-entry visas applied for, to, or granted by, consular representations of "new" Schengen states, according to their term of validity in days
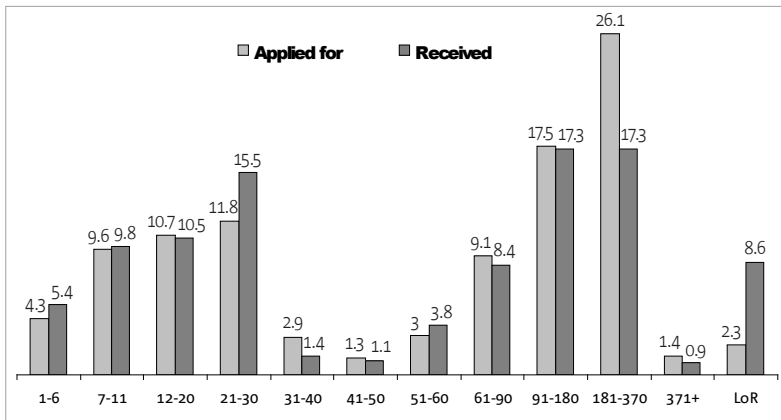
Conclusion

Most of the multiple-entry visas granted are those with a term of validity of up to one to three months. Only roughly 15% of them are those with a term of validity of more than six months. Certainly such a short term of validity – of multiple-entry visas granted – significantly reduces their practical value.

Changes in the Visa Policies as a Result of the Schengen Membership

The accession of new EU Member States to the Schengen area (in December 2007) prompted many to assert the need for measures to prevent the rise of a new "Iron Curtain" on the eastern Schengen borders.

The analysis of officially released data on the number of visas issued to Belarusian, Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian nationals between 2005 and 2008 shows that in practice the new Schengen states did not succeed in this regard.

This text presents the officially released data and findings from the survey carried out in these four East European countries with a view to assessing the situation.

1. Data Officially Released

The analysis presented below is based on data concerning the 22 states party to the Schengen Agreement since 21 December 2007, with particular attention being paid to four "new" Schengen states: the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

During the reporting period (2005 to 2008), all these EU Member States had their consular representations[1] in Russia, and nearly all (except

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[1] This applies only to visa-issuing representations.

Luxembourg), in Ukraine too. As for Belarus, only ten of them[2] did so. Only four of them (France, Germany, Hungary, and Poland) had representations in Moldova in 2005 to be joined in 2008 by representations of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania, and further, by the Common Visa Application Centre representing jointly seven EU Member States (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia, and Sweden) and Iceland.

Chart 1. Volume of visas issued by Schengen state and new EU Member State representations between 2005 and 2007 (A, B, and C types combined)

Arrows indicate the direction of changes between 2007 and 2005

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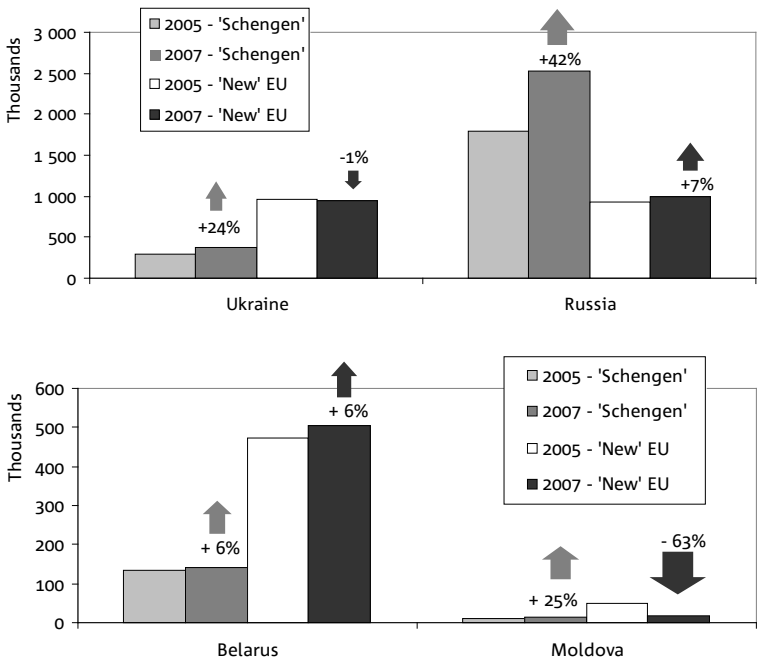
[2] i.e. Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia.

Chart 1 shows a noticeable increase in the number of visas issued by the Schengen states to Russian nationals (by as much as 42%), Moldovan (25%), and Ukrainian (24%). A slight increase (6%) can also be seen to have occurred in the number of visas issued to Belarusian nationals.

As for the new EU Member States that acceded to the Schengen area in December 2007, the differences between 2005 and 2007 in the volume of visas issued are very small indeed (a slight decrease in the number of visas issued to Ukrainian nationals; an increase in respect to Belarus and Russia). The only exception here is Moldova where the number of visas issued by the new EU Member States during the reporting period shows a noticeable decrease (by 63%).

Changes in the visa policies in the new Schengen states

The adoption of the Schengen visa regime by some new EU Member States resulted, at least in the case of some countries, in a very dramatic decrease in the number of visas issued to their nationals. We will demonstrate this based on the data gathered at the Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish representations in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.

The adoption of the new regime has hit Belarusian and Ukrainian nationals the hardest. This can be attributed mainly to the dramatic decrease in the number of visas issued in these countries by the consulates of Lithuania and Poland (their immediate neighbours). Of particular significance here is Poland which in 2005 and 2007 was the major issuer of visas to nationals of these countries but following a drop in 2008, the volume of visas issued by Poland fell to a level similar to that for Czech representations.

Chart 2. Volume of visas issued by the Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish representations in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine in 2005, 2007, and 2008 (A, B, and C types combined)
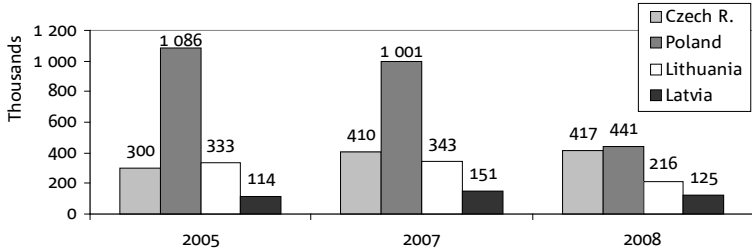
Sources: Ministries of Foreign Affairs:
of the Republic of Poland, The Czech Republic, Latvia and Lithaunia

As for 2005, the dominant position was occupied by visas issued to Ukrainian nationals, but Russian nationals received almost as many. The changes that occurred in 2008 are not only numerical but structural in nature too. Chart 3 clearly shows this. The number of visas issued to Russian nationals increased while in the case of Belarus and Ukraine, decreased. As for Belarusian nationals the drop is very significant indeed.

Chart 3. Breakdown of visas issued between 2005 and 2008 by the Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish representations in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine
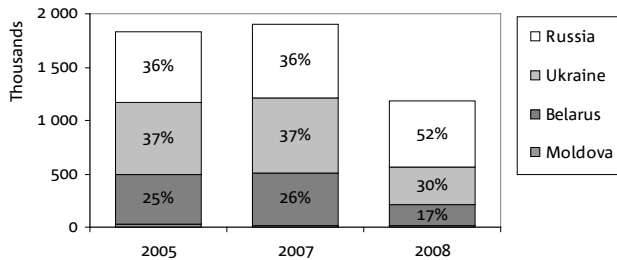
Sources: Ministries of Foreign Affairs:
of the Republic of Poland, The Czech Republic, Latvia and Lithaunia

It is interesting to note the percentage change in the number of visas issued by representations of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland following their accession to the Schengen area. It appears that the change in the visa regime adopted by them affected most of their immediate neighbours. The volume of visas issued to Belarusian nationals decreased the most in the case of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia (by 73%, 52% and 34% respectively, as compared to 2007). A noticeable decrease (by nearly 60%) can also be observed to have occurred in the number of visas issued by Polish representations to Ukrainian nationals. The change in the visa regime adopted was relatively less acutely felt by Moldovan and Russian nationals.

Chart 4. Changes in the volume of visas issued by the Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish representations in 2008, as compared to 2007
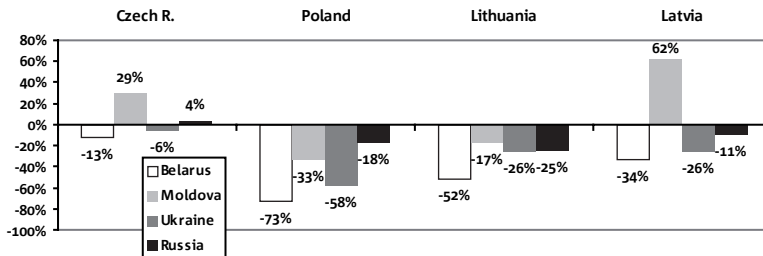
Changes in the number of visas issued following the last enlargement of the Schengen area is least noticeable in the case of Czech representations. This new Schengen state has no immediate border with any of the East European countries concerned. Nor does the Czech Republic follow any visa policy towards these countries that could be considered especially liberal.

The biggest decrease (in both the share and the number of visas issued) concerns Poland which between 2005 and 2007 tried to follow a liberal visa policy, especially towards Belarusian and Ukrainian nationals.

The increase in workload arising from the restrictiveness of the Schengen regime adopted, coupled with the poor organisational culture in consular representations, resulted in a 250% decrease in the number of visas issued by Poland to Belarusian, Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian nationals. As for Moldovan nationals, the biggest drop in the number of visas issued between 2005 and 2007 concerns Polish representations. The subsequent decrease is not as significant. The Czech Republic, Latvia, and Lithuania set up their representations in Chisinau only in 2007 and therefore comparisons between the Schengen states and countries concerned for the period from 2005 to 2007 are not possible to make.

The chart below shows in detail the changes in the number of visas issued by four new Schengen states to Belarusian, Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian nationals between 2005 and 2008.

Chart 5. Volume of visas issued by Czech, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish representations in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and the Ukraine between 2005 and 2008 (A, B, and C types combined)

Volume of visas issued in Belarus
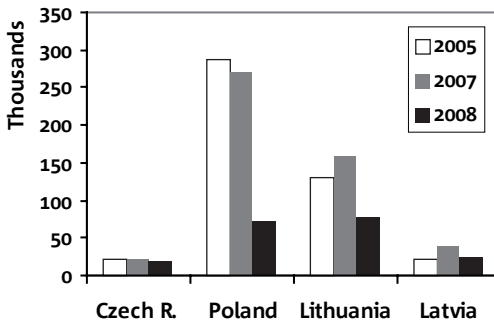
Number of visas issued in Moldova
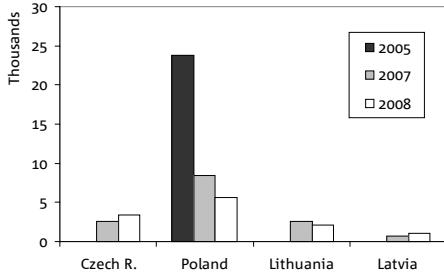
Please note that the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Lithuania did not have their own visa issuing representations in Moldova in 2005

Number of visas issued in Ukraine
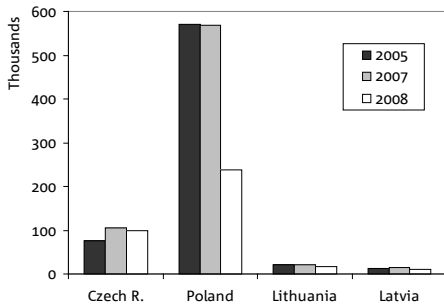
Number of visas issued in Russia
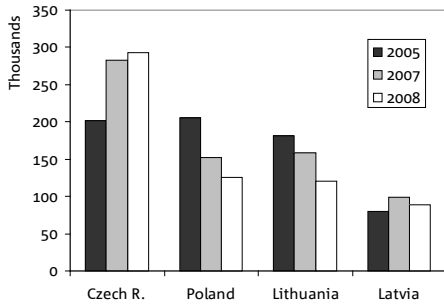
Sources: Ministries of Foreign Affairs: of the Republic of Poland, The Czech Republic, Latvia and Lithaunia

The drop in the number of visas issued between 2007 and 2008 is not attributable to the drastic rise in the number of visa applications rejected. The rejection percentages are similar in the case of all the countries concerned. The most noticeable changes can be observed in respect of visas that were issued in relatively small numbers, namely those issued by Polish and Czech representations to Moldovan nationals, and by Latvian representations to Belarusian nationals and Ukraine. There was also an increase in the percentage of visa applications being rejected by Polish representations in Belarus but in spite of this it still reached only 2.56% in 2008.

Thus, the drop in the number of visas issued relates mainly to the drop in the number of applications received. This can be attributed to many factors which we can only guess at, such as, for example:

(1) Application requirements: the need to submit a letter of invitation, proof of hotel reservation, etc. that would require knowing someone in the country of destination (someone who would send the letter of invitation spending, first, a lot of time to register it with the competent authority), or would involve an outlay of substantial sums before departure; or

(2) Organisational factors: the introduction of a lengthier and more complex visa procedure has resulted in longer lines and disorder outside the representations surveyed, which in turn, could discourage from applying for a visa those who do not need to visit the EU on business or some other pressing need, and therefore need not subject themselves to these inconveniences.

Some of these hypotheses were confirmed by findings from the surveys carried out at Schengen state consular representations in Belarus, Russia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Findings from the Surveys Carried out Outside Consular Representations

The surveys were carried out at consular representations of the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. This analysis will concern itself though with only three "new" Schengen states: the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Poland. Latvia could not be included because, first of all, the most important issue at hand is the change that has occurred following the accession of some new EU Members States to the Schengen area, and secondly, Latvia was not included in our 2005 Survey and thus we have no data to compare the results with.

Relevance of Various Factors to the Assessment of the Difficulties Involved in Obtaining a Visa

Most of the respondents considered the visa application process as "easy" or "very easy". Such perceptions have varied though depending on the visa regime applied to by the Schengen state concerned. The chart below shows the average level of difficulty involved in obtaining a visa at a consular representation of the Czech Republic, Lithuania, or Poland (2005 versus 2008).

Chart 6. The average level of difficulty involved in obtaining a visa
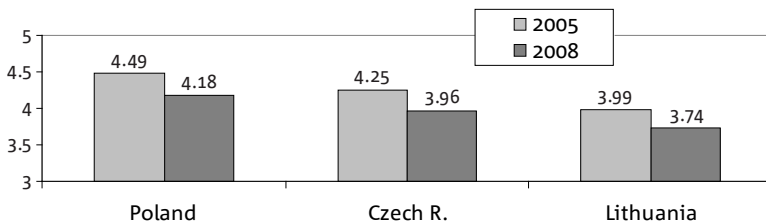
Please note that the visa application procedures were rated from 1 = "very difficult" to 5 = "very easy".

Source: 2005 and 2008 surveys

It is appropriate to note that the average level of difficulty has dropped in the case of all three countries concerned. This means that the procedures applied by them in 2008 were considered to be more difficult than those from three years earlier. Therefore it seems justified to propose that the rise in the level of difficulty involved in obtaining a visa is related to some degree to the accession of the state concerned to the Schengen area.

The level of difficulty involved in obtaining a visa at a consular representation of the Czech Republic, Lithuania, or Poland in 2008 was rated by respondents in the light of various aspects the most important of which seemed to have been: the attitude of the consular officer receiving documents, the number of visits required at the representation concerned, the treatment afforded to the applicant by the consular officers involved, and finally, the very fact of obtaining a visa. These same elements constituted the basis of our assessment in 2005.

Now, we will analyse the changes that have occurred in this respect at consular representations of the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Poland sine 2005.

Treatment Afforded to Applicants
Compared to our previous survey (2005), the respondents rated higher the various aspects of the services rendered them by representations of Germany, and in respect of some aspects, also of the Czech Republic and France. On the other hand, the representations of Lithuania and Poland are seen to have worsened. As for Poland, the difference is dramatic. This is shown in the chart below.

Chart 7. "Very good treatment" at some stages in the visa application procedure

Picking up a visa application — Obtaining a stub with a number
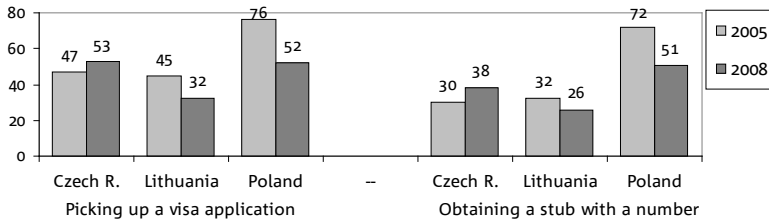
Source: 2005 and 2008 surveys

The results of the 2008 survey show that compared to 2005 the number of those who felt that the treatment they were afforded while obtaining a visa-application form was "very good" increased only in the case of Czech representations. The representations of the other two states were rated lower than in 2005 in this respect. The biggest drop in the number of satisfied applicants was observed at Polish representations, by as much as 24%, and 21%, as concerns the treatment afforded at the form-, and stub-obtainment stage, respectively.

The proper treatment of visa applicants involves also the transparency of visa procedures, assured, *inter alia*, by providing applicants with the necessary information in a competent and efficient manner about the documents required and on the entire visa procedure process. The chart below presents a comparison between the Czech, Lithuanian, and Polish representations, as concerns the percentages of consular officers' willing-ness to inform as "very good".

Applicants at Czech representations more often than in 2005 perceived the willingness to inform as "very good", but Lithuanian and Polish repre-sentations were rated that high noticeably less often in 2008 than three years earlier. Again, the most noticeable deterioration has been endured

by representations of Poland where the percentage of respondents rating them as "very good" in this respect decreased over this three year period by 21%.

Chart 8. Percentage of respondents rating consular officers' willingness to inform as "very good"
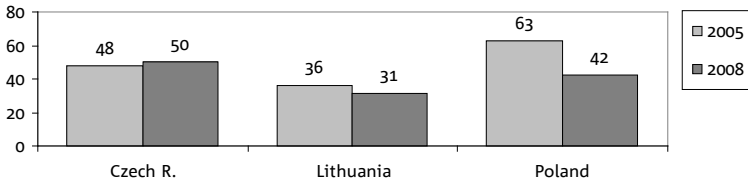
Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys

Attitude Displayed by Consular Officers

We have also included in our survey another factor reflected in the perceptions towards visa application procedure, namely the attitude adopted by consular officers towards applicants. The respondents were asked to rate this according to the various types of consular officer (officers issuing stubs, security officers, officers receiving documents, and others). Of particular significance here is the role played by officers receiving documents as it is their attitude towards applicants that creates the image of the visa regime of the country concerned as friendly or unfriendly.

The perceptions towards officers receiving documents have changed since our previous survey retaining though the same pattern throughout as that relating to the treatment afforded to applicants during the initial stages of the visa application procedure, described above. This is shown in Chart 9. It appears that the percentage of respondents who consider the attitude displayed by officers receiving documents as "very good" has increased in the case of Czech representations (by 4%) but decreased in the case of Polish (by 18%) and Lithuanian (by 4%) representations.

Chart 9. Percentage of respondents considering the attitude displayed by officers receiving documents as "very good"
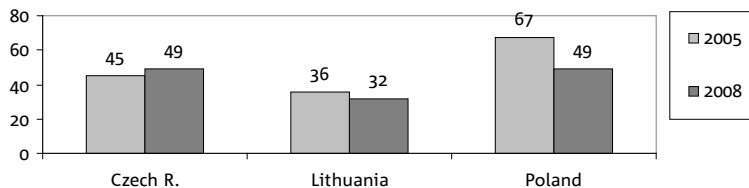
Source: 2005 and 2008 surveys

Length and burdensomeness of visa procedures

Many nationals from East European countries feel that applying for a visa to an EU Member State is time consuming. The time they have to wait for the final visa decision seems to them to be relatively insignificant compared to the other problems they have to encounter as they are not involved in this process themselves, and therefore can spend this time, for example, at work. However they are unhappy about the necessary effort they must make to initiate the visa application process, namely the various tasks that they need to perform before they can submit the required documents.

Amongst the most burdensome is the need to deal with lines outside the representation concerned. We found that between 2005 and 2008 (2005 and 2008 surveys) the incidence and length of lines outside Czech and Lithuanian representations has decreased. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents complaining in 2008 about the lines outside the Polish ones increased, as compared to 2005. However, even with this increase, the percentage of respondents complaining about the lines outside Polish representations in 2008 is still the smallest amongst these three new Schengen states.

Chart 10. Percentage of respondents complaining about the lines outside consular representations
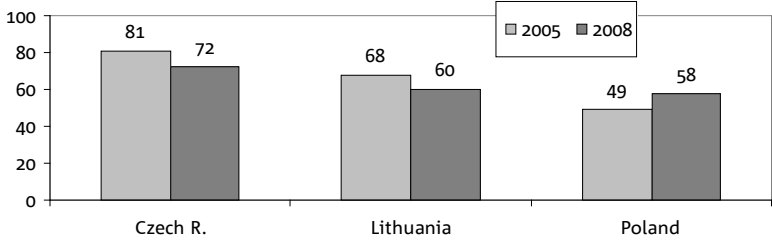
Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys

Chart 11. Maximum number of visits required to complete the visa application process
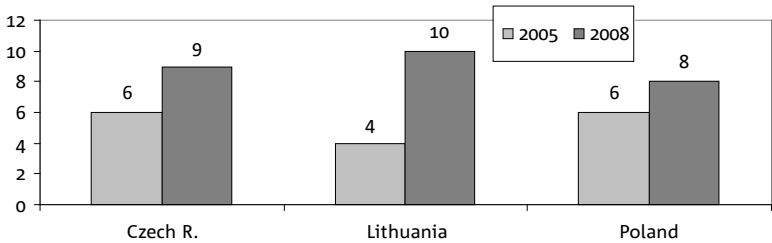
Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys

The number of visits required was greater in those representations where there were lines outside. This is in part because the respondents were also asked to include in their responses visits involved in checking their place on a list of those waiting outside (usually applicants would organise themselves by drawing up their list and entering the representation concerned in the order agreed and monitored between themselves accordingly; thus they would not need to stand in a line all the time but instead would have to check from time to time, the progress of the line). The analysis of the correlation between the number of visit required and the varied factors

involved showed that the need for more multiple visits is related directly to the lack of the necessary information – probably the applicant concerned (our respondent) had to visit the representation again to submit documents that were initially missing[3].

The perceptions towards difficulties involved in applying for a visa are also shaped by the length of the procedure involved, namely the time between the submission of the application and the obtainment of the visa. We found that in the case of all the Schengen states surveyed this has lengthened as compared to 2005. Similarly to our previous analyses, the most noticeable deterioration concerns Polish representations. However, in this case, apart from factors that are purely organisational in nature, there are also systemic ones.

The issue of a Schengen visa requires more complex verification procedures which therefore cannot be completed within one day. This is one of the reasons why in 2008 there were no EU Member States that in reality would issue a visa within the very same day in which the application was received. In 2005 Polish representations were issuing as many as 70% of their visa decisions within the same day in which the relevant application was received. Consular representations of other EU Member States were following such speedy procedures in individual cases only. Therefore, in their case, the change in the aftermath of their having adopted the Schengen regime was not as dramatic.

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[3] For all the Schengen states surveyed, the relevant correlation coefficients between the number of visits required and the willingness of consular officers to inform (rated from 1 = "very bad" to 5 = "very good") are -0.15 for officers issuing stubs, -0.12 for security officers, -0.16 for officers receiving applications, and -0.21 for others. The negative value indicates that the lower the mark assigned, the higher the number of visits required.

Chart 12. Length of visa procedure (in days, on average)
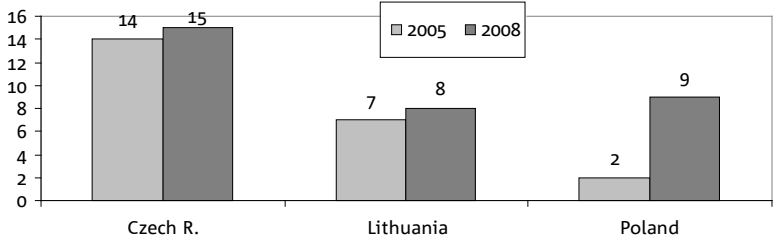
<div align="right">Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys</div>

Comparison of Changes between "Old" and "New" Schengen States

The analysis presented here will be concluded with the comparison of changes in the perceptions towards visa procedures followed by the "old" and "new" Schengen states. Due to the need to include only such data from our two surveys (2005 and 2008) that can be compared, the "old" Schengen states are represented by three states (Finland, France, and Germany), and the new ones also by only three states (the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Poland).

Chart 13. Level of difficulty involved in applying for a visa (average)
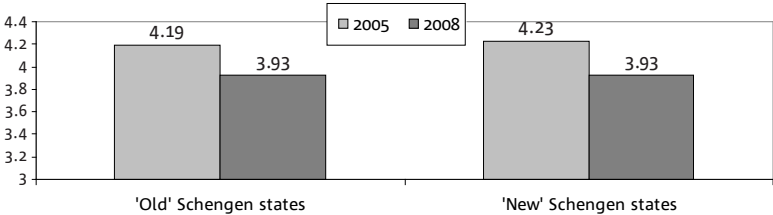
Please note that the scale applied extends from 1 = "very difficult" to 5 = "very easy"

<div align="right">Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys</div>

As can be seen from Chart 13, the perceptions towards difficulties involved in the entire visa application process have worsened on average during the three years concerned in the case of both groups of states.

However, the new Schengen states have endured a more noticeable drop in this respect. In 2005 the procedures followed by those states that are now the new Schengen states were perceived as easier than those of the then Schengen states (now old Schengen states). After these three years (and following the accession of the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Poland to the Schengen area) the average rates have evened out to some degree between the two groups.

As for technical elements of the visa application process, such as picking up a visa application form or obtaining a stub necessary for submitting documents, it appears that the direction of changes that have occurred between 2005 and 2008 was different in the case of new and old Schengen states.

As for obtaining a visa application form, the deterioration (decrease in the percentage of respondents rating treatment afforded to them as "very good") can be observed in the case of both the old and new Schengen states. However, the former have suffered a drop in "very good" rates of 7% and the latter, by as much as 11%.

As for obtaining a stub, the old Schengen states improved their standing in this respect (by 5%) but the new ones have dropped (by 7%).

Chart 14. "Very good" treatment at the two stages in the visa application procedure
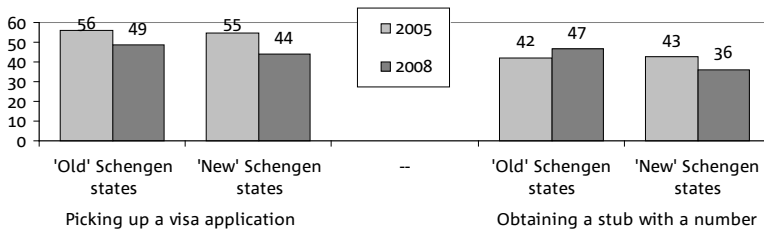
Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys

The willingness of consular officers to provide information has in the eyes of our respondents decreased at consular representations of both the old and new Schengen states but in the case of the latter the change is most noticeable (a decrease of 8%).

Chart 15. Percentage of respondents considering consular officers' willingness to inform as "very good"
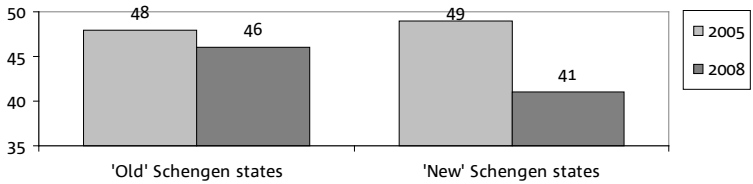
Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys

Perceptions towards officers receiving documents have worsened in the case of new Schengen states (by 7%) and in the case of old ones have slightly improved (by 1%).

Chart 16. Percentage of respondents considering attitude of officers receiving applications as "very good"
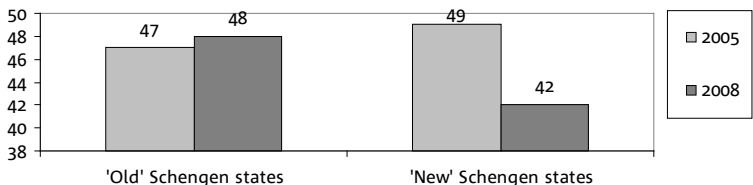
Sources: 2005 and 2008 surveys

Conclusions

The analysis presented above shows that the adoption by Lithuania and Poland of the Schengen regime resulted in the worsening of perceptions towards nearly all aspects of the functioning of their consular services. On the other hand, the perceptions towards the Czech consular services were similar to those reported three years ago (in 2005).

This is partly due to the fact that having a direct border with Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine (in the latter case, Poland only), until their accession to the Schengen area, Lithuania and Poland followed an exceptionally liberal visa policy towards these countries. The introduction of the Schengen regime forced these EU Member States to adjust their visa granting criteria and procedures accordingly.

However, the accession to the Schengen area explains this deterioration only in respect of some aspects such as, for example, the impossibility of obtaining a visa on the very same day in which the application was submitted, or in general, the length of the visa application procedure.

Other aspects analysed here (treatment afforded to applicants, willingness to inform, incidence and length of lines) are purely organisational in nature and the adoption of the Schengen regime cannot justify the poor organisation of work.

Lines outside consular representations would be shorter if each and every applicant would have to visit the representation concerned only twice: first, to submit his or her documents, and second, to pick up his or her visa. The need for multiple visits is to a large extent an outcome of the lack of sufficient information on the part of applicants. Unfortunately applicants are only partly to blame for this.

Site Visits at the EU Member States Consulates

In Kyiv site visits were carried out at the Czech, French, German, Finnish, and Polish consulates, as well as at the British, Italian, and Spanish visa centres; all of these took place in September and October of 2008.

1. Consulate Site

In general, a visa applicant has to wait outside the Consulate. At any one time, the greatest number of applicants can be seen at the German and Polish consulates (20 to 25 and 30 to 35 applicants, respectively). As compared to the previous survey of 2005, there is no substantial change with regard to the consular infrastructure. At all the consulates surveyed there is no shelter outside against the sun or rain, nor a place to sit down. There is only a shelter within the courtyard of the German Consulate, where an applicant must stand in one of the lines, according to the desk assigned. This shelter can accommodate between 40 to 50 applicants at a time. However, usually it is filled to capacity; therefore some applicants have to wait outside, where there is no shelter whatsoever.

At the Polish Consulate, the times for the submission of documents and for the issuing of visas overlap to some degree. Because of this, two lines are formed outside, at both sides of the entrance, under the direction of the security officers of the Consulate. The line for those wishing to submit

documents numbers usually some 30 to 35 applicants whilst the line for picking up a passport numbers four to five people.

This problem is not observed at the visa centres surveyed as there are almost no lines there, but in practice, applicants have to incur an additional fee.

The decided majority of the consulates surveyed offer applicants only one entry door to and exit from the office (only at the German Consulate there are two separate doors).

In general, the visa facilities surveyed do not provide a place where an applicant can fill out their application in some comfort, nor is any stationery (pens/pencils) made available to them. A positive deviation from this can be found at the French Consulate where there is both a special room and some basic stationery for applicants.

The majority of the consulates surveyed are located in the centre of Kyiv or rather close by. Only the Lithuanian Consulate is relatively far from the centre of town, and further, is not easily accessible by public transport.

2. Information System

Usually, there is a notice board outside that provides information on the applicable visa procedures in Ukrainian, and in the language of the country to be visited, and at some sites, in English and Russian too. The consulates surveyed are not equipped with an information desk, nor do they have a designated information officer to serve potential applicants. In most consulates surveyed no (or only very basic) information is provided on how the applicant might lodge his or her complaint on consular services. The relevant Websites provide accurate information on the opening hours, and further, offer the possibility to download an application form (except for the Czech Republic), but there is no procedure for applying for a visa online. The consulates surveyed do not provide sufficient information about the opportunities afforded by the EU-Ukraine Visa Facilitation Agreement (except for the list of types of travellers that are entitled to a visa free of charge, which is available at some other sites).

3. Visa Application Procedure

The consulates surveyed are open from Monday to Friday, except for the Czech one which does not accept applications on Wednesdays. In general, the times for submitting the documents required and for picking up passports do not overlap at consulates and visa centres surveyed, except at the Polish Consulate, where there is some overlap. The application processing procedure somewhat differs at the French Consulate surveyed, in so far as the decision is usually taken immediately upon the submission. Therefore an applicant leaves the Consulate in approximately 40 to 60 minutes with their visa application accepted or refused.

Recently, application forms have been made uniform between the Member States concerned. However, the Czech Consulate in Kyiv differs in this respect as it still uses an application form which differs from the model provided for by the Common Consular Instructions. This form contains four (instead of two) pages and includes questions that could confuse an applicant. For example, this form requires the patrimonial (middle) name of the applicant and his or her spouse to be given. Yet, it fails to inform the applicant that this requirement applies only where this information is provided in his or her passport. As Ukrainian passports do not do so, most of the applicants make a mistake in this respect, having been misinformed by the Consulate.

4. Role of Travel Agencies and Insurance Companies

At most sites surveyed one can find someone from a travel agency offering fliers assisting in obtaining a visa (i.e. in filling out the form, etc.). Some potential applicants use this informal help while at the site or by visiting the travel agency concerned. Offices of these agencies are situated close by (in the building adjacent or opposite to the Consulate concerned). These serve the consulates of the Czech Republic, France, and Poland. Insurance can usually be obtained from an insurance agent standing outside, some 10 to 30 metres from the entrance to the Consulate concerned. Usually the services of such an agent are cheaper then these offered by insurance

companies directly. All the consulates surveyed monitor the immediate environment in and around their facility, except for those relating to the insurance services referred to above.

Moldova

In Moldova, site visits were conducted at the Czech, French, German, Lithuanian, and Polish consulates, as well as at the EU Common Visa Application Centre[1]. All of the visits took place in November and December of 2008.

1. Consulate Site

Except for the Common Visa Application Centre, where applicants can wait inside, most of the time waiting in line is spent outside. All the consulates surveyed, except the Czech one, have a shelter from the sun and rain, but only the German Consulate has a bench to sit on. At all the other sites surveyed applicants have to stand all the time while waiting.

Some very unusual conditions prevail at the Czech Consulate. The access road to, and the area immediately in front of the Consulate are not paved; when it rains, the ground becomes muddy and thus waiting and walking there becomes particularly difficult. In addition, construction work is being carried out just opposite the entrance to the Consulate, and some visitors feel endangered, as the construction site is not properly secured.

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[1] The first ever EU Common Visa Application Centre is the one opened in Moldova on 25 April 2007. At present, the Centre issues visas for seven EU Member States (i.e. Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia and Sweden) and for Iceland. Negotiations are being carried out with other European countries to join. Of the other five consulates, only the Polish one is not housed in the same building as the Embassy; the others share the same building with the Embassy of their respective country. With the exception of the Polish Consulate which is closed for business on Wednesdays, the consulates and Common Visa Centres surveyed are open for business every week from Monday to Friday. The number of service desks is comparable at all of them (numbering from one to three).

The number of those waiting outside fluctuate, from one to five applicants at the Lithuanian Consulate, to fifteen to twenty five at the French, German, and Polish ones and as many as forty to fifty at the Czech one. At all the sites surveyed applicants arrange between themselves the order in which they are to enter. Only at the Czech, Lithuanian, and Polish consulates, applicants enter whenever the security officer on duty calls them by name.

2. Information System

All the consulates and the Common Visa Application Centre have a notice board outside that provides information in Romanian and Russian, in most cases. Additional information may be obtained also from consular officers on duty, directly or by phone. However, at most of the consulates surveyed this could be done only on particular days and at particular times. Apart from the Lithuanian consulate, all the consulates and the Common Visa Application Centre have a Website that provides a wide range of information, and affords the possibility to download a visa application form. At all of the consulates surveyed, visa application forms were the only material distributed.

3. Visa Application Procedure

The existing visa application procedures vary between the consulates surveyed. To schedule an appointment, applicants must visit the Polish Consulate or the Common Visa Application Centre, but need only call the Czech, German, or Lithuanian ones. On the other hand, the French Consulate can be contacted for an appointment online only. An old woman from a rural community told the interviewer that she had to pay someone to have her appointment arranged because she did not have access to the Internet. At the Lithuanian Consulate an appointment has to be arranged at least one month in advance of the intended travel date.

Although as a rule all the consulates surveyed operate strictly within their opening hours, we observed cases at the Polish one where someone was asked to wait for their visa long after the facility was officially to close for the day.

The visa application process can take from one week to up to three months to be completed, depending on the type of visa requested. Those with a formal letter of invitation from the country to be visited are served much faster than others. Some of those that have applied for a work visa at the Czech or Polish Consulate informed us that they had to wait as long as three months for a decision. One of the excuses given for these delays is that the application process involves police scrutiny of the country of the prospective employer.

Some applicants queried praised the ease with which the application process is carried out at the Common Visa Application Centre.

4. Role of Travel Agencies and Insurance Companies

No one offering to help to shorten the waiting time was observed at the sites surveyed. Furthermore, no material advertising services of a travel agency or an insurance company were seen at, or in the vicinity of the consulates surveyed. However, a few transport company representatives were observed at the Czech and German consulates, distributing business cards and confirming departure dates amongst those that were leaving the facility. At the German Consulate, there are also specific hours to serve tourist groups represented by a travel agent.

Russia

In Moscow, our on-site surveys covered the Czech, German, Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish Consulate, as well as the British, French, and Italian consulates and their Visa Centres. These surveys were carried out in October and at the beginning of November 2008.

1. Consulate Site

In most of the consulates surveyed applicants have to wait outside for some time. As a rule, there is no shelter or place to sit outside except for the Latvian Consulate (a small bench near the entrance) and the Czech

Consulate (a small shelter), nor is there a possibility to fill in an application while waiting in a line. The number of those waiting at any one time varies between the sites surveyed (from a very small number at the French and the British consulates, French, and Italian Visa Centres, through to twenty to forty at the Czech, Finnish, Italian, Lithuanian, and Polish consulates, to more than fifty at the German and Latvian consulates).

It should be noted too that the waiting arrangements vary a lot between consulates surveyed. For example, the German Consulate has a special "fast line" for the submission of the required document without appointment by those who within the last 24 months have already been granted a Schengen visa at least twice. Applicants arrive there as early as 7 a.m. (two hours before the opening). The main desk has several sections, each serving applicants of a specific type.

The Latvian Consulate has one line only. Applicants waiting in the line can be found there throughout the day, during all the opening hours. The wait is about one hour on average. Surprisingly those with a special permit may enter the Consulate without having to wait their turn but we have never witnessed this occurrence. At the Polish and Lithuanian consulates the line moves relatively quickly. The Finnish Consulate receives the applications, and issues visas within the same opening hours making it very inconvenient for those involved. The same regime applies at the Visa Centres surveyed but since in their case lines almost never stretch outside, and one can wait inside in relative comfort, this has not posed any problems.

According to our observations, the most convenient is the British facility. Applicants ought to apply for a UK visa online and while doing so they are assigned a number, date and time for visiting the Centre and showing proof of the necessary documents. Immediately upon arrival the applicant is admitted into an office where he or she receives one more stub with his or her line number.

It is almost impossible to enter a Consulate, but we have managed to enter some of them. The best conditions are at the Visa Centres (British, Italian, and French) as there are many seats, drinking water dispensers, places to fill in an application, etc. In addition the British Visa Centre provides applicants with access to a photocopying machine and a small photo studio, as well as to several computers where one can make changes to one's application. Good conditions can also be found at the Lithuanian Consulate. The waiting room is rather large and there are several places to sit. The German Consulate provides relative comfort (desks for completing one's application, scissors, glue, etc.). In addition, it accommodates the DHL desk where one can arrange for having their passport delivered). The only problem is that each applicant has to wait a long time outside before getting into the office.

2. Information System

Each Consulate tries to provide maximum information through various information structures. Each Consulate has a Website with visa regime information and almost each has a notice board near the entrance to the Consulate. There is also the possibility of contacting consular officers by phone and receiving additional information.

Usually the information on the Websites are in Russian, English, and the language of the country to be visited. Some consulates do not provide an English translation of the information (the Czech, Finnish, French, German, and Latvian ones). The Websites operated by all the consulates, except the Italian one, offer answers to various questions concerning visas (document requirements, eligibility to enter the country concerned without a visa, visa fees and charges, medical insurance requirements, visa application procedure, opening hours, list of official holidays, etc.). The Czech, German, Latvian, and Polish consulates provide the text of the Visa Facilitation Agreement. Each Consulate surveyed offers the possibility of downloading an application. The Lithuanian Website offers the possibility of applying online via its Consular Advance Registration Information System. The online

registration and application is a must in the case of the British Visa Centre. The information provided by the Italian Consulate is less comprehensive though there is a toll-free number where one can obtain more information on visas, and other numbers where the information is provided for a fee. There is also a link to the Website of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that provides useful information on visas but in English and Italian only.

For those with no Internet access, the phone information and the notice board outside the Consulate concerned is the main source of information. Information on these boards is usually in Russian and the language of the country to be visited (only the French Consulate and the British Visa Centre do not have a notice board). Consular officers are usually friendly and provide enough information by phone. However the German and British consulates provide information by phone only via a paid number.

3. Visa Application Procedure

Following the obtainment of all the information required via one of the means available one has to visit the Consulate in person to submit all the documents required. The British Visa Centre though, requires the prior registration and the submission of the application via its Website. This application has to be completed in English and this could cause some problems to those who are not proficient in this language or who cannot easily obtain help in this respect. The application is also not provided in Russian by the French Consulate (only in English and French). The online registration procedure is followed by the British Visa Centre, as well as by the French Consulate and the Visa Centre. The phone registration procedure is used by the German and Czech consulates. In the latter case, this is a must for those applying for a long-term visa. The phone registration procedure is also used by Italian and French consulates and visa centres.

The wait for the issuance of a visa decision is the longest stage in the entire procedure. In some cases it can take up to four months to get a deci-

sion (e.g. a long-term visa for the Czech Republic). As a rule, short-term visas are issued within a week or so from the receipt of the relevant application. Some consulates surveyed work within a predetermined time-frame (e.g. five working days at the Latvian and Lithuanian consulates), while others make their decision within a wide range of time-frames (e.g. the British Visa Centre can even take 28 days and the Polish Consulate up to one month to reach their decision in a particular case).

Though document requirements are nearly the same (e.g. completed application form, passport, photo, letter of invitation or proof of other arrangements, medical insurance, etc. required by the Finnish Consulate), some consulates (e.g. the Polish and German one) require additional documents such as proof of independent financial subsistence, proof of employment, tickets or other proof of independent means of return home.

Some consular services (i.e. the French Consulate and the British Visa Centre) provide applicants with the possibility of tracking the progress of their application online.

4. Role of Travel Agencies and Insurance Companies
Almost each and every Consulate surveyed has one or two travel agents in its vicinity where it is possible to purchase a medical insurance policy, have a passport photo taken, and in some of them, have photocopies made. Near the Lithuanian Consulate there are two Lithuanian travel agencies which arrange hotel or other accommodation in Palanga and Druskeniki. The Finnish Consulate Website provides a list of 86 authorised travel agencies. In the vicinity of the Czech Consulate we were offered by an individual, unofficial assistance from the travel agency.

Belarus

1. Consulate Site

The lines at new EU Member State consulates, as well as at the German and Italian one are usually longer then at the other consulates surveyed (from 10 to 30 applicants at any one time). These happen to be also the most popular destinations for Belarusian citizens. The numbers vary though between the seasons: much longer lines are to be seen in May and November of each year.

At the Czech Consulate, our survey team observed a line practically throughout all the days they were working there. There were days when applicants would join a line as early as in the evening in order to be able to enter the Consulate the very next day. We have also witnessed a case where a family which wanted to visit relatives in Prague spent two days and nights in a line for the Consulate.

Typically, applicants spent most of their waiting time outside the Consulate concerned. Near the Polish Consulate there are three benches one can sit on. The Lithuanian Consulate has a small shelter from the rain. Other consulates have no such facilities, nor places to sit down while waiting in line outside.

2. Information System

All the Consulates surveyed have a notice board outside, near the entrance. The information provided there comprises general visa requirements, samples of application forms to be completed, working hours, etc. In general, the information provided by the consulates surveyed is characterised by the following deficiencies:

(1) The list of documents required is neither clear nor complete (as a rule, at least two to three more documents are always asked of the applicant concerned); thus he or she has to visit the Consulate concerned more than once, waiting in a line each time;

(2) The criteria for a visa to be granted or refused are not clearly defined;

(3) There are no information officers/desks for applicants to obtain a preliminary explanation or information needed by them. This vacuum is beginning to be filled at some sites by volunteers (usually insurance agents);

(4) Visa information channels seem to operate very poorly; for example the relevant phone lines are almost always busy.

For example, anyone wishing to obtain information from a Polish consular officer will find it in practice impossible, due to the long lines. One can access the information needed via the Internet but not everyone is able to do that. Trying to reach the Consulate by phone one can spend three to five hours as the line is almost always busy. The procedures followed at the Lithuanian Consulate are somewhat more applicant-friendly as there is someone whose sole responsibility is to provide applicants with information. Furthermore, this person can be easily accessed from outside: there is a special window accessible from the street. Usually, there are no more then two to three applicants waiting there for information or an explanation.

All the consulates surveyed have their own Website. The information on this Websites is usually in Russian and Belarusian, as well as in the language of the country to be visited. The information provided though is limited to the basics such as the Consulate address, its working hours, additional document requirements etc. Most of these Websites also provide an opportunity to download an application form.

3. Visa Application Procedure

As for the Polish Consulate, applicants complained about cases where:

(1) The very same set of documents would be rejected by one visa officer to be then accepted by another at a different desk;

(2) A letter of invitation would serve as a basis for giving the applicant a visa free-of-charge while others presenting a letter of invitation

of the very same type would be required to pay for their visa; this would happen to students who would submit their application with the supporting documents on different days both of whom possessing the very same educational invitation would be treated differently as far as the visa-issuance-fee or lack of fee would be concerned.

Usually, an individual wishing to obtain a visa has to visit the Consulate concerned three times: first, to pick up an application form; second, to submit his or her application with supporting documents; and finally, to pick up his or her passport with or without a visa. Only at the French Consulate is this process somewhat optimised as anyone wishing to submit their application with the required documents is assigned an appointment, substantiated by a numbered stub.

The most convenient system is provided for under the British visa regime. The potential applicant can register himself or herself via Internet or by phone. An application can also be submitted online. Very often, a visa is granted the very next working day. Compared to 2005, the number of visa refusals has shown a considerable decrease and it is much easer to submit the required documents. Where a visa for the UK is refused, the grounds for the refusal are given in English. The relevant document runs to two pages. This can cause some problems to those who are not proficient in English.

It is very important to note that Polish and Lithuanian consulates in Minsk have to deal with much bigger traffic then those representing other Member States there (in 2007 Polish and Lithuanian consulates issued 444,000 visas in total, as compared to 142,000 issued during the very same year by France, Germany and Italy taken as a whole). Such a workload is reflected in the time it takes to complete the procedure in each case. At the Lithuanian Consulate, for example, the interval between the first visit (to register to submit the documents required) and the actual submission can easily take from one to two weeks. However, this procedure is relaxed whenever the urgency of the particular case demands.

4. Role of Travel Agencies and Insurance Companies

Travel agents wait in a line dedicated to them and are dealt with by visa officers who follow special procedures. However, travel agencies do not provide their services in this respect to private travellers but only to organised travel groups.

Appendix I
Study Scope and Purpose

The primary objective of this study was to measure the degree of restrictiveness of selected EU Member States' visa *regimes* in force in four Eastern European *host* countries: Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. We covered the EU visa regimes of: the Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the UK. Interviews were conducted only in capital cities, even though most visa regimes are represented at multiple locations in the Eastern European countries under consideration. The interviews were conducted during the months of October and November of 2008, when traffic at most consulates converges with monthly averages for the entire year[1].

In the absence of a sampling frame, points in time were randomly drawn. At specified times, face-to-face interviews, based on a standardised questionnaire were conducted at consular sites' exits, during the time when passports with visas (visa decisions) are returned to applicants.

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[1] This is true for most regime-host combinations. Visa traffic is typically lowest immediately after Christmas holidays and after the summer vacations, i.e. in January–February and in September. Average monthly traffic converges with annual average between March and May and in the period between October and November. The UK provides analysis of monthly traffic fluctuations (http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/2958881/stats2006-07). Data on other European Union visa regimes are available from the Council of European Union's web site (http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=549&lang=EN&mode=g.; search documents by key phrase, for example: exchange of statistical information).

Not all regime-host combinations were covered. The reasons for this were two-fold: (1) some regimes are not represented in all host countries; (2) including some regime-host combinations was not feasible due to a small number of applications at consular sites representing those combinations.

Table 1. Sites included in the study

		REGIME								
		Czech Rep.	Germany	Finland	France	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	UK
HOST	Belarus									
	Moldova									
	Russia									
	Ukraine									

Sampling Design

We defined visa regime restrictiveness – our key variable – as a combination of this visa regime's refusal rates and these regime's procedural complexity. We took visa application refusal rates, which are available from the official sources, as a proxy of the regime's restrictiveness. The sample size was determined separately for each regime (column table 1). In fact, nine separate sub-samples were drawn.

Thus, the main proportion used to calculate the sample size for each regime was that regime's average rejection rate, computed on the basis of data for 2007 (See Chapter II for refusal rates). Budgetary limitations made it necessary to accept a fairly large margin of error of ±5%. Assuming additionally a 95% confidence interval (which translates into a standard score of 1.96), sample size for each host was determined by substituting a regime's average proportion of rejections for *P* to the following equation:

$$5 = 1.96\sqrt{\frac{PQ}{n'}}$$

where P is the proportion of rejections and $Q = (100\text{-}P)$; n' is the initial sample size.

Table 2. Final sample

		REGIME								
		Czech Rep.	Germany	Finland	France	Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	UK
HOST	Belarus	33	35		45	43	34	47	33	47
	Moldova	33	35		45			47	33	
	Russia	33	35	65	45	43	34	47	33	47
	Ukraine	33	35	65	45	43	34	47	33	47

SUM: 1355

Implementation

Each interviewer received a precise break-down of points in time when the interview attempt should have been made. At a designated point in time, the interviewer was supposed to approach the first person that appeared at the consulate's exit.

The point in time schedules were determined as follows:
(1) **Sampling Zone**: the overall number of interview attempts for a specific site, divided by the number of survey days earmarked for an individual consulate;
(2) **Sampling Interval**: the period of time when visas are issued in a specific consulate (usually one to three hours), divided by the daily quota of interview attempts obtained is step one; this yielded the maximum time interval between interview attempts;
(a) The minimum interval was fixed at five minutes to provide the field workers at least five minutes between interview attempts;
(b) The actual time interval was determined by drawing a random number between five and the maximum determined in step two;

(3) **Starting Point:** a random number drawn between one and the actual interval, added to the point in time when visa issuing for a site is scheduled to start;

Each subsequent interview attempt time was calculated by adding the actual interval to the starting point as many times as was necessary to match the daily quota of interview attempts.

Site Reconnaissance

Information on the topography and traffic patterns at individual sites was gathered beforehand, during the visits conducted by our local survey organisations. During these visits, locations of exits, deployment of security officers, number of service desks, traffic intensity during the visa issuing time and other key details of the visa application process were determined.

Interviewer Training; Questionnaire Testing

Two formal training sessions were held: (1) a two-day meeting for coordinators was conducted in Warsaw; (2) one-day in-class training sessions were conducted in each capital city just before the commencement of field work; (3) each interviewer conducted at least two mock interviews in the field.

Response Rate

We made 1306 valid interview attempts, of which 1062 resulted in an interview. Survey response rate was thus 81% (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Survey Response Rate
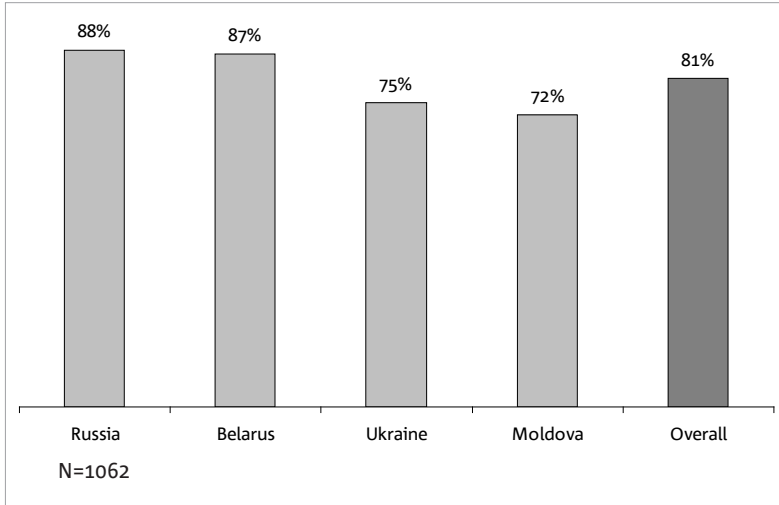
Apendix II
Statistics
Model Specifications

Chapter 1

a. Linear Regression

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.839(a)	0.703	0.661	0.51133

Coefficients(a)

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.041	0.507		-0.080	0.936
Treatment (Average of six measures of how applicants were treated; 5=Very well; 1=Very badly)	0.661	0.095	0.666	6.988	0.000
Staff performance (Average of twelve measures of staff skills; 5=Very good; 1=Very poor)	0.316	0.115	0.243	2.757	0.007
Days passed since the first call	-0.006	0.003	-0.136	-1.937	0.056

Time spend in lines (in hours)	0.056	0.036	0.098	1.556	0.123
Got visa? (1=Yes; 0=No)	-0.232	0.256	-0.068	-0.906	0.367
Paid for visa (1=Yes; 0=No)	-0.079	0.183	-0.028	-0.429	0.669
Number of previous visits at destination country	-0.002	0.021	-0.007	-0.110	0.913
Number of separate visits at Consulate	-0.027	0.049	-0.042	-0.561	0.576
Age	0.003	0.005	0.042	0.678	0.500
Gender (1=Female; 2=Male)	0.247	0.120	0.140	2.062	0.042
College education (1=Yes; 0=No)	-0.057	0.136	-0.027	-0.421	0.675
Unemployed (1=Yes; 0=No)	0.067	0.148	0.030	0.455	0.650

a – Dependent Variable: Difficult (average of measures of the visa application process's difficulty level, at the following stages of the process: obtaining form, obtaining stub, filing documents, being interviewed, waiting for visa decision, picking up visa, all stages of the application process; all measured on a five-point scale: 5=Very easy; 4=Easy; 3=Neither difficult nor easy; 2=Difficult; 1=Very difficult).

b. Logistic Regression

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	64.788(a)	0.452	0.631

a – Estimation terminated at iteration number seven because parameter estimates changed by less than 0.001.

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Treatment (Average of six measures of how applicants were treated; 5=Very well; 1=Very badly)	2.841	0.783	13.168	1	0.000	17.141
Staff performance (Average of twelve measures of staff skills; 5=Very good; 1=Very poor)	1.542	0.773	3.985	1	0.046	4.675
Days passed since the first call	-0.015	0.024	0.400	1	0.527	0.985
Number of separate visits at consulate	-0.453	0.671	0.455	1	0.500	0.636
Number of previous visits at destination country	-0.068	0.158	0.182	1	0.670	0.935
Time spent in lines	0.536	0.268	3.982	1	0.046	1.708
Got visa? (1=Yes; 0=No)	-4.133	2.154	3.681	1	0.055	0.016
Unemployed (1=Yes; 0=No)	0.406	1.001	0.165	1	0.685	1.501
Paid for visa (1=Yes; 0=No)	0.343	1.008	0.116	1	0.734	1.409
Age	0.019	0.037	0.263	1	0.608	1.019
Gender (1=Female; 2=Male)	1.119	0.810	1.908	1	0.167	3.060
College education (1=Yes; 0=No)	0.317	0.875	0.131	1	0.717	1.373
Constant	-17.331	4.615	14.103	1	0.000	0.000

a – Dependent Variable: Difficult (average of measures of the visa application process's difficulty level, at the following stages of the process: obtaining form, obtaining stub, filing documents, being interviewed, waiting for visa decision, picking up visa, all stages of the application process; recoded to a binary variable 1=Easy/Very Easy; 0=Very Difficult/Difficult/Neutral).

Lithuania Consulate versus Visa Center in Chisinau

	Lithuania	Visa Center
Treatment**	3.1	4.5
Staff language skills** (5=very good; 1=very poor)	2.6	3.8
Staff performance** (5=very good; 1=very poor)	3.6	4.6
Staff skills: visa officers** (5=very good; 1=very poor)	2.5	3.5
Staff skills: ability and willingness to inform** (5=very good; 1=very poor)	2.6	3.6
Staff skills: security** (5=very good; 1=very poor)	2.8	3.6
Staff skills: professional attitudes** (5=very good; 1=very poor)	2.6	3.5
How difficult was the process* (5=very easy; 1=very difficult)	3.3	4.1
Time waited since first visit (in days)*	7.0	8.7
Number of documents required*	7.1	6.2
Multiple-entry visa & for 45 days or more*	0.2	0.0
Time passed since call (in days)	22.2	9.0
Got visa?	0.6	0.8
Total fees	31.6	35.0
Duration of visa received (in days)	80.5	48.5
Total time in lines	24.7	20.4

** significant at 0.01 level
* significant at 0.05 level

All Consulates versus Visa Center in Chisinau

	Other systems	Visa Center
Number of documents required**	5.3	6.2
Staff language skills*	3.4	3.8
Treatment	4.1	4.5
Multiple-entry visa for 45 days or more	0.1	0.0
Duration of visa received (in days)	97.9	48.5
Staff performance	4.3	4.6
Skills: ability and willingness to inform	3.3	3.6
Skills: security	3.4	3.6
Time passed since call (in days)	19.3	9.0
Skills: visa officers	3.3	3.5
Skills: visa officers	3.4	3.5
Total fees	46.5	35.0
Time waited since first visit (in days)	10.0	8.7
Skills: line fixer	3.5	3.6
How difficult was the process	4.1	4.1
Got visa?	0.8	0.8
Total time in lines	20.9	20.4

** significant at 0.01 level
* significant at 0.05 level

Chapter 2

Partial correlations

Control Variables: Age, College Degree, Gender		Days since the first visit at consulate
Time in line to file docs	Correlation	0.494
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.000
Total time in lines	Correlation	0.342
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.000
Number of separate visits at consulate	Correlation	0.1845
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.000
Quality of information by e-mail/Internet	Correlation	-0.150
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.002
Line Fixers (all skills)	Correlation	-0.136
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.007
Additional questions asked verbally	Correlation	0.092
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.008
Number of Documents required	Correlation	0.1075
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.001
Quality of information by phone	Correlation	-0.106
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.046
Had to call to start visa procedure	Correlation	0.076
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.029
Treatment	Correlation	-0.082
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.019
Staff skills: professional attitudes	Correlation	-0.078
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.026

Partial correlations (continued)

Control Variables: Age, College Degree, Gender		Days since the first visit at Consulate
Got application form from the Internet	Correlation	-0.066
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.056
Quality of the information brochures	Correlation	-0.054
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.614
Quality of information from employee	Correlation	-0.067
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.207
Number of previous visits to destination country	Correlation	0.024
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.526
Staff performance	Correlation	-0.066
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.059
Language skills (all types of employees)	Correlation	-0.033
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.345
Willingness to inform (all types of employees)	Correlation	-0.064
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.074
Security officers (All skills)	Correlation	-0.070
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.056
Visa officers' skills	Correlation	-0.038
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.274
Time in line to pick up visas	Correlation	0.012
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.726
Time in line to get forms	Correlation	0.030
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.387
Time in line to pay	Correlation	0.015
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.670
Time in line – other	Correlation	0.009
	Significance (2-tailed)	0.807

Documents required

	Pho-tos	Pass-port	Non-passport ID	Invita-tion	Proof of means	Proof of res.	Proof of job at des.	Health insurance	Other docs
UK	95%	59%	2%	69%	56%	18%	3%	24%	31%
IT	89%	65%	5%	71%	42%	6%	15%	63%	16%
POL	87%	58%	12%	54%	34%	9%	4%	74%	22%
FRA	85%	57%	18%	60%	34%	20%	10%	77%	27%
LITH	94%	65%	17%	44%	39%	3%	1%	80%	24%
GER	92%	49%	16%	76%	24%	18%	6%	83%	26%
CZR	95%	43%	20%	54%	42%	27%	10%	83%	29%
LAT	96%	46%	22%	62%	23%	8%	3%	91%	22%
FIN	99%	25%	2%	59%	23%	29%	3%	91%	14%

Application forms from the Internet

	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
EU-system			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Czech Rep.	0.286	0.047	0.194	0.377
Germany	0.346	0.045	0.257	0.434
Finland	0.310	0.045	0.222	0.398
France	0.559	0.040	0.480	0.638
Hungary	0.166	0.162	-0.152	0.484
Italy	0.380	0.044	0.293	0.467
Latvia	0.249	0.047	0.157	0.340
Lithuania	0.184	0.037	0.110	0.257
Poland	0.351	0.044	0.265	0.438
UK	0.927	0.040	0.849	1.005

a Evaluated at covariates appeared in the model: AGE = 36.2145, COLLEGE = 0.6997, UNEM-PLOYED = 0.1067, GENDER = 1.52.

Project Partners

Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw, Poland

The aim of the Stefan Batory Foundation is to support the development of a democratic, open society both in Poland and in other countries of the region. The Foundation's priorities include the reinforcement of the role and a proactive approach to civil society, the propagation of civil liberties and the rule of law as well as the development of international collaboration and solidarity. The Foundation acts as a coordinator of the "Friendly EU Border" project and conducts, as part of the project, monitoring on the visa policies of EU Member States in Eastern Europe.

www.batory.org.pl

Carnegie Moscow Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow, Russia

The Carnegie Moscow Center was established in 1993 as a subdivision of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Washington, D.C.). The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a private, non-profit making organisation dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations. Its role is to provide independent analysis on a wide variety of public and foreign policy issues. Its work is non-partisan and dedicated to achieving practical results. The Endowment's core principles are political independence, timeliness and depth of analysis, and cross-border cooperation among experts.

www.carnegie.ru/en/

Centre for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

The major objective of this organisation is to provide policy analysis and professional expertise on the current problems of security, the political and civil processes in Ukraine and its integration with the European and global community of nations. The research results – specifically concerning foreign and security policy, civil society, migration, conflict prevention and management, civil control over military forces, Ukraine's international role and its integration with European structures – are presented to the Ukrainian authorities and to political leaders in Ukraine and abroad.

www.cpcfpu.org.ua

Centre for Social Innovation, Minsk, Belarus

The main objectives of the Centre, which was founded in 1996, include: support for the establishment of an effective mechanism of social, civil and economic security, creating adequate conditions for the intellectual and creative development of Belarusian nationals as well as an evaluation of the progress of the implementation of international projects in Belarus. The Centre pursues its mission via social and educational programmes as well as through the promotion of the development of non-governmental organisations and international liaisons.

Institute for Public Policy, Chisinau, Moldova

The Institute for Public Policy is an independent non-profit making organisation supporting the development of democratic society, the rule of law and the free-market economy. On account of its research and publications, the Institute provides an in-depth analysis of Moldovan public life to political, business and academic circles as well as to the media. The Institute conducts research on the new EU borders, and – since 2005 – has been collaborating with the Stefan Batory Foundation on the Friendly EU Border Programme.

www.ipp.md

International Renaissance Foundation, Kyiv, Ukraine

The International Renaissance Foundation is an integral part of the International Soros network and the Ukraine's largest charity. The Foundation provides financial and operational assistance to projects and programmes which foster the development of civil society, promote the rule of law and an independent mass media. Funds are also allocated for the diversification of information resources for the third sector, democratisation of education and public health, advancement of social capital and academic publications, as well as ensuring the protection of the rights of national minorities and their integration into Ukrainian society. The Foundation is providing financial support to the Friendly EU Border Programme.

www.irf.kiev.ua