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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 123 of the Rules of Procedure

on the restoration of reciprocity in the visa regime – solidarity with the unequal status of Czech citizens following the unilateral introduction of visas by Canada

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Written declaration on the restoration of reciprocity in the visa regime – solidarity with the unequal status of Czech citizens following the unilateral introduction of visas by Canada

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in July 2009 Canada unilaterally imposed a visa requirement for citizens of the Czech Republic, whose status is now therefore unequal to that of other citizens in the EU, and Canada, despite repeated calls to do so, has not given a date on which it will abolish this visa requirement,
- B. whereas further delay in the termination of the unequal status of Czech citizens could threaten the future ratification of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada,
- C. whereas the Czech Republic cannot autonomously introduce a visa requirement for Canadian citizens,
- D. whereas the Commission and Council are not acting with sufficient forcibility in this matter,
 1. Calls on the Commission and Council to increase political pressure on Canada in order to set the earliest possible date for abolishing the visa regime for Czech citizens as well as ending other breaches of visa reciprocity towards citizens of Bulgaria and Romania;
 2. Emphasises that unless this breach of reciprocity is resolved soon, equivalent retaliatory measures by the EU are likely to follow;
 3. Calls on the Commission to establish, rather than bilateral arrangements, a new mechanism that guarantees full visa reciprocity for all Member States while ensuring that if a non-EU country breaches that visa reciprocity, all Member States will immediately restore the visa requirement for nationals of that country;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Commission, the Council and the parliaments of the Member States.