Parliament amends the Act on Visa in line with the Schengen cooperation agreement

The amended Act on Visa establishes a legal framework for the issuance, administration and control of Schengen short-stay visas in Iceland. Its primary objective is to ensure efficient and harmonised visa processing, in line with Iceland's obligations under the Schengen cooperation agreement, while strengthening border management and security at the external borders.

The amended act defines visa requirements, validity conditions (up to 90 days within a 180-day period), territorial scope, exemptions from visa obligations (including EEA/EFTA nationals and certain family members), and procedural safeguards for issuance, refusal, annulment and revocation. It introduces a structured risk-based assessment model for visa applications, incorporating factors such as risk for overstay, security considerations and exchange of data from/between the EU Schengen and international information systems. The act also regulates the use of biometric data, cross-border cooperation, outsourcing of visa processing to external service providers, and the obligation of operation of the national visa information system to be interoperable with the Schengen Information Systems.

The amended act further establishes detailed governance and institutional arrangements, including ministerial oversight, inter-agency cooperation, and the creation of a visa coordination steering group. It introduces a dedicated Visa Appeals Committee with exclusive competence to review administrative decisions on visa refusals, cancellations, and withdrawals, subject to procedural timelines and formal requirements.

The amended legislation provides for the implementation of EU Schengen visa and VIS regulations, ensuring extensive data-sharing between national and international authorities for migration management and security purposes, while aligns visa issuance rules with EU-wide standards.

Specific provisions under the Foreign Nationals Act also amended, introducing a new short-term residence permit category, while includes specific references to grounds for expulsion pursuant to to Articles 98-99 and Article 106 of the Act on Foreigners (with regards to refusal on applications for renewal on residence permits and deportation upon arrival in Iceland).

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