

## VISA LIBERALIZATION FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS: KOSOVO CASE – ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

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### ABSTRACT

In the last months of 2014, and the first months of 2015, Kosovo faced with a very concerning phenomenon, the mass fleeing of Kosovo citizens towards EU countries. Illegal migration of many Kosovo citizens, according to economic scholars, was mainly motivated by social conditions. Nevertheless, this study is not aimed at addressing the causes of illegal migration, but only the influence of the phenomenon in the process of visa liberalization for the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo. Kosovo in fact is the only state in the Western Balkans not included in the visa-free regime for the Schengen zone. The fulfilment of technical criteria by the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo is nearing conclusion, and the expectations were for Kosovo to benefit from the regime already this year. This study shall address also the additional criteria set forth to Kosovo for the process, thereby providing a comparison with other regional countries already enjoying visa-free movement throughout the Schengen zone.

**Keywords:** Visa liberalization, illegal migration, fulfilment of criteria.