

Brussels, 19 April 2012

Statement of the V4 countries – the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia on the decision of the Swiss Government to re-establish quantitative limitations for certain categories of residence permits as regards EU citizens who are nationals of eight of the EU Member States

We express our deep regret at the Swiss government's decision. It undermines Switzerland's traditional stance as an open and friendly country.

We deplore this measure firstly because the Swiss authorities differentiate among EU Member States by singling out selected countries – even though some of our states did not fulfil migrant worker quotas – and, secondly, because we see this as a purely political decision, with our countries representing only 10% of the EU migrant workers in Switzerland.

Thirdly, we are convinced that at a time of crisis, we must strengthen – and not weaken – European economic freedoms. Indeed, many Swiss companies profit from the common market and are active in our respective countries with their 65 million consumers.

Moreover, we note the firm position of High Representative Cathy Ashton as reflected in her statement that this measure is in breach of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons as amended by the Protocol of 2004.

We trust that in the light of these arguments the Swiss government will reconsider its decision soon.