EU/Mauritius Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2017/0167(NLE) - 02/10/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report by Emilian PAVEL (S&D, RO) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Mauritius on the short-stay visa waiver.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament **give its consent** to the conclusion of the agreement.

The Agreement amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Mauritius on the short-stay visa waiver agreement ensures legal coherence and harmonisation between Member States, in accordance with the **new definition of short-term stay** provided by the Schengen Borders Code amendment, which clarifies the meaning of this term (a stay of up to 90 days in any 180-day period).

Mauritius is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, African Union, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Indian Ocean Rim Association, Non-Aligned Movement, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Southern African Development Community, United Nations and World Trade Organization. Mauritius hosts the headquarters of the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

The explanatory statement accompanying the recommendation notes the following points:

- **economically**, Mauritius has a very good record of growth. Despite the country's isolation from major world markets, it is among the most successful of small developing countries in diversifying its economy out of dependence on one agricultural commodity (sugar) into manufacturing, tourism, horticulture and, latterly, financial services and ICT;
- **politically speaking**, in Mauritius the independence constitution established a multiparty democracy, and the country became a republic in 1992. The presidency is non-executive; political power lies with the Prime Minister and the cabinet;
- **the EU's political dialogue** with the various ACP countries and Mauritius in particular is gradually increasing.

The amended visa waiver agreement will enable citizens not only to derive full benefit from the ACP-EU partnership but continuing also to participate in it by travelling at a reduced, economical and practical cost under a clearer and more coherent legal framework. It significantly deepens relations between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius, which is politically highly significant in the context of the Cotonou Agreement.