EU/Bahamas Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2017/0169(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 Commonwealth of the Bahamas amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas 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 Commonwealth of the Bahamas 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).

The Bahamas is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, Association of Caribbean States, Caribbean Community (though not the CARICOM Single Market and Economy), Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of American States and United Nations.

The explanatory statement accompanying the recommendation notes the following points:

- **economically**, the Bahamas is among the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean region; it is now a significant financial centre and ship registry, among the largest in the world in terms of gross tonnage registered;
- **politically speaking**, the Bahamas is a constitutional monarchy. The country is a parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislature;
- **the EU's political dialogue** with the various ACP countries and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas in particular is gradually increasing.

The new visa waiver agreement will enable citizens not only to derive full benefit from the ACP-EU partnership but continuing 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 Bahamas, which is of great political importance in the context of the Cotonou Agreement.