EU/Antigua and Barbuda Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

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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 Antigua and Barbuda amending the Agreement between the European Community and Antigua and Barbuda 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 Antigua and Barbuda 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).

Antigua and Barbuda is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, Association of Caribbean States, Caribbean Community, Non-Aligned Movement, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, Organization of American States, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

As indicated in the explanatory statement accompanying the recommendation, Antigua and Barbuda is a constitutional monarchy. Government is by parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislature. There is a directly elected lower House of Representatives and an upper Senate. The constitution guarantees individual rights and freedoms. The EU’s political dialogue with the various Pacific ACP countries and Antigua and Barbuda 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 Antigua and Barbuda, which is of great political importance in the context of the Cotonou Agreement.