

EC/Pacific States Interim Partnership Agreement: accession of Samoa

2018/0291(NLE) - 02/10/2018 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to approve, on behalf of the European Union, Samoa's accession to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: on 12 June 2002, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

The Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, which establishes a framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement, was signed in London on 30 July 2009. The Interim Partnership Agreement has been provisionally applied by Papua New Guinea and by Fiji since 20 December 2009 and 28 July 2014, respectively.

Article 80 of the Interim Partnership Agreement lays down the provisions regarding the accession of the other Pacific Island States. On 5 February 2018, Samoa submitted an accession request together with a market access offer to the Council.

The Commission assessed Samoa's offer and found it acceptable. Accordingly, it concluded negotiations with Samoa on 23 April 2018.

CONTENT: the draft Council Decision includes provisions for the approval, on behalf of the Union, of **Samoa's accession to the Interim Partnership Agreement** subject to Samoa's deposit of the Act of Accession pursuant to Article 80 of the Agreement, as well as the notification required to express the Union's consent to apply the Agreement on a provisional basis in accordance with Article 76(3) thereof. It also provides that the approval of the accession of Samoa to the Interim Partnership Agreement shall not be construed as conferring rights or imposing obligations which can directly be invoked before Union or Member State courts or tribunals.

The EPA also contains provisions on **sustainable development** whereby the Parties reaffirm that the objective of sustainable development must form an integral part of the provisions of the Agreement, in accordance with the fundamental objectives and principles set out in the Cotonou Agreement and, in particular, their general commitment to poverty reduction and eventual eradication in line with the objectives of sustainable development.

The EPA is a **development-oriented trade agreement** that provides Samoa with asymmetric market access and allows it to protect sensitive sectors from liberalisation, while offering numerous safeguards and a clause to protect infant industries. It also contains provisions on **rules of origin** that facilitate Samoa's exports to the EU.