

EC/Pacific States Interim Partnership Agreement: accession of Solomon Islands

2019/0099(NLE) - 20/03/2020 - Final act

PURPOSE: accession of Solomon Islands to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2020/409 on the accession of Solomon Islands to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part.

CONTENT: the Council decided to approve, on behalf of the Union, the accession of Solomon Islands to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, subject to the deposit of the Act of Accession by Solomon Islands in accordance with the Interim Partnership Agreement.

According to Article 76(3) of the Interim Partnership Agreement, the Union and Solomon Islands are to apply the Interim Partnership Agreement on a provisional basis 10 days after they have notified each other in writing that the procedures necessary for that purpose have been completed.

It is recalled that the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, establishing 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, Fiji and Samoa since 20 December 2009, 28 July 2014 and 31 December 2018 respectively.

On 4 June 2018, Solomon Islands submitted to the Council a request for accession and a market access offer. The Commission has assessed Solomon Islands' offer and, after amendments, found it acceptable. Accordingly, the Commission concluded negotiations with Solomon Islands on 23 October 2018.

The EPA is a development-oriented trade agreement, which offers asymmetric market access to Solomon Islands and allows it to shield sensitive sectors from liberalisation, while providing a large number of safeguards and a clause for infant industry protection. It further contains provisions on the rules of origin that facilitate Solomon Islands' exports into the EU and provisions on sustainable development.

Over the course of its implementation, the EPA will largely relieve EU exporters of industrial products to Solomon Islands from paying customs duties. Indeed, the EPA covers 90.3% of the tariff lines or 83% of the volume of EU exports over 15 years. The agreement also contains provisions on sustainable development.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 17.2.2020.