

# **EU/Cabo Verde Agreement: amending EU/Cape Verde Agreement on facilitation of the issue of short-stay visas**

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**PURPOSE:** to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cabo Verde amending the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cape Verde on the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas to the citizens of the Republic of Cape Verde and the European Union.

**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:** the Special Partnership between the EU and Cabo Verde was approved by the Council of the European Union on 19 November 2007. One of its objectives is to increase mobility and people-to-people contacts between citizens of the Union and Cabo Verde, as well as to strengthen cooperation in the fight against illegal immigration.

On 1 December 2014, the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cape Verde on the facilitation of issuance of short-stay visas to citizens of the Republic of Cape Verde and the European Union entered into force.

After almost 5 years of implementation of these Agreements and in light of the supervened changes of both the EU and Cabo Verde's domestic legislation related to visas, namely the revision of the EU's Visa Code 3 and Cabo Verde decision to exempt EU citizens from the visa requirement for stays up to 30 days, the Joint Committee set up by the existing agreement explored the need to amend certain rules thereby established, with a view to adapt it to the changed circumstances.

On that basis, the Commission presented on 13 September 2019, a recommendation to the Council with a view to obtaining directives to negotiate an Agreement amending the existing Visa Facilitation Agreement with the Republic of Cabo Verde.

The Council having given its authorisation, the chief negotiators reached an agreement in principle on the draft text of the agreement, initialled on 24 July 2020 through an exchange of e-mails.

**CONTENT:** the Commission proposes that the Council approve the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cabo Verde amending the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cape Verde on the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas to the citizens of the Republic of Cape Verde and the European Union.

The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate, on the basis of reciprocity, the issuance of visas for an intended stay of no more than 90 days in any 180-day period.

The agreement provides for the following:

- the reduction of the visa fee for processing applications to 75% of the amount to be charged in accordance with the applicable domestic (i.e. EUR 60 for Cabo Verdean citizens); for children of at least

12 years of age (but under 18 years of age), the fee is further reduced by 50% compared to the generally applicable amount (i.e. EUR 30 for Cabo Verdean citizens);

- simplification of the documents required to justify the purpose of the journey for certain categories of applicants, e.g. business people; spouses, children and parents of Union citizens or Cabo Verdean citizens legally residing in the EU; schoolchildren, students; participants in scientific, cultural, sporting or religious events, journalists and persons travelling for medical reasons;

- the modification of the rules on the issuing of multiple-entry visas focusing on the previous lawful use of the visa during a given reference period rather than on the purpose of travel of the applicants;

- the exemption from the visa requirement for short stays for holders of a valid EU laissez-passer;

- the possibility for the parties to suspend the agreement in whole or in part for any reason deemed appropriate;

- the amendment of the general clause of the agreement to ensure that: (i) the facilitation granted to Cabo Verdean citizens would be granted to EU citizens if the visa requirement for stays of up to 30 days re-imposed for their visit to Cabo Verde; (ii) at least the same facilitation are granted to EU citizens applying for a Cabo Verde visa for stays exceeding 30 days but not exceeding 90 days;

- the amendment of the Joint Declaration on cooperation on travel documents to include a reference to Cabo Verde's internal legislation introducing biometric travel documents.