

EC/Pacific States Interim Partnership Agreement: accession of Tonga

2024/0048(NLE) - 18/12/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 545 votes to 41, with 26 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the accession of the Kingdom of Tonga to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part.

Parliament **gave its consent** to the accession of Tonga to the Agreement.

Given that Tonga classifies as an upper middle-income country and no longer benefits from the Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences, the accession of Tonga to the interim Economic Partnership Agreement will facilitate its economic growth path by integrating it further to regional and global trade.

The interim EPA is a development-oriented trade agreement, which offers asymmetric market access to Tonga and allows it to shield sensitive sectors from liberalisation, while providing a large number of safeguards and a clause for infant industry protection.

In particular, the interim EPA:

- contains the rules of origin that facilitate Tonga's exports into the EU;
- establishes the conditions for EU economic operators to take full advantage of the opportunities between the respective economies;
- establishes a set of disciplines in the areas of sustainable development; Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT); and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary measures (SPS), among others.