

# EC/Pacific States Interim Partnership Agreement: accession of Vanuatu

2025/0055(NLE) - 15/05/2025 - Legislative proposal

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

**PROPOSED ACT:** Decision of the Council.

**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 the conclusion of Economic Partnership Agreements with the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States.

The Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, was signed on 30 July 2009 and has been applied provisionally since 20 December 2009. The Agreement has been applied provisionally by Papua New Guinea since 20 December 2009 and by the Republic of the Fiji Islands since 28 July 2014. Samoa and the Solomon Islands acceded to the Interim Partnership Agreement and have been applying it provisionally since 31 December 2018 and 17 May 2020 respectively.

On 10 July 2024, Vanuatu submitted an application for membership and a market access offer to the Union. The Commission examined Vanuatu's offer and found it acceptable. Accordingly, it concluded the negotiations with Vanuatu on 7 August 2024.

**CONTENT:** the draft Council decision aims to approve, on behalf of the European Union (EU), **the accession of Vanuatu** to the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part, and for the provisional application of that Agreement.

The interim EPA is a development-oriented trade agreement that provides asymmetrical access to Vanuatu's market and allows the country to protect sensitive sectors from liberalisation, while also providing for a number of safeguards and an infant industry protection clause. It also contains rules of origin provisions that facilitate Vanuatu's exports to the EU.

The Union and Vanuatu shall provisionally apply the Interim Partnership Agreement ten days after they have notified each other in writing of the completion of the procedures necessary for this purpose.