Basic information

2009/0020(CNS) CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	Procedure completed
EC/Bahamas agreement: short-stay visa waiver See also 2017/0169(NLE) **Subject** 6.40.06 Relations with ACP countries, conventions and generalities 7.10.04 External borders crossing and controls, visas **Geographical area** Bahamas	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development		

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	2936	2009-04-06
Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)	2979	2009-11-30

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Justice and Consumers	BARROT Jacques

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/02/2009	Legislative proposal published	COM(2009)0055	Summary
14/07/2009	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
30/09/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
02/10/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A7-0016/2009	
19/10/2009	Debate in Parliament		
20/10/2009	Decision by Parliament	T7-0047/2009	Summary
20/10/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
30/11/2009	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
30/11/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/12/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2009/0020(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	International agreement
Legislative instrument	Decision
Amendments and repeals	See also 2017/0169(NLE)
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 218-p6a Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 077-p2
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/7/00248

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE428.191	15/09/2009	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A7-0016/2009	02/10/2009	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T7-0047/2009	20/10/2009	Summary

European Commission			
Document type	**Reference**	**Date**	**Summary**
Legislative proposal	COM(2009)0055	12/02/2009	Summary

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
National parliaments	IPEX	
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Decision 2009/0897 OJ L 321 08.12.2009, p. 0039	Summary

EC/Bahamas agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2009/0020(CNS) - 20/10/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 608 votes to 31, with 33 abstentions, a legislative resolution approving unamended, under the consultation procedure, the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Community and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver.

EC/Bahamas agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2009/0020(CNS) - 12/02/2009 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to sign, provisionally apply and conclude the Agreement between the European Community and the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: Council Regulation (EC) No 1932/2006 amended Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders of the European Union (negative list), and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (positive list) by - inter alia - transferring six third countries from the negative to the positive list. These are **Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Mauritius, Saint Kitts and Nevis and the Seychelles**. The Regulation also points out that the exemptions from the visa requirement for nationals of these countries should not come into force before a bilateral visa waiver agreement between the European Community and the countries in question has been concluded and entered into force. This Regulation was adopted on 21 December 2006 and entered into force in January 2007.

In the meantime, as from 15 January 2007, the CARICOM countries introduced a special visa regime for the nationals of several EU Member States (EU nationals were treated unequally as the citizens of the other Member States remained exempted from the visa obligation) due to the Cricket World Cup 2007 taking place in the Caribbean Community. The introduction of this visa requirement despite the favourable provisions of the new Community Regulation led to the postponement of the preparation of the draft mandates for negotiations with these third countries on the visa waiver.

Having regard to the expiry of the temporary visa regime on 15 May 2007, the Council authorised the Commission, on 5 June 2008, to negotiate an agreement between the European Community and the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver. Negotiations on the agreement were opened on 4 July 2008 and concluded on 16 October 2008. Subject to its possible conclusion at a later date, the Agreement initialled in Brussels on 19 November 2008, should be signed.

CONTENT: the Commission considers that the objectives set by the Council in its negotiating directives were attained and that the draft visa waiver agreement is acceptable to the Community. It therefore proposes that the Council:

- decide that the Agreement be signed on behalf of the Community and authorise the President of the Council to appoint the person(s) duly empowered to sign on behalf of the Community;
- approve the provisional application of the Agreement pending its entry into force;
- approve the Agreement between the European Community and the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver.

The final content of this agreement can be summarised as follows:

Purpose: this agreement provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of the Bahamas when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of three months during a six months period.

The citizens of several Member States are already exempted from the visa obligation by the Bahamas. A provision has been included in the Agreement stating that the Bahamas may suspend or terminate the Agreement only in respect of all the Member States of the European Community and, reciprocally, the Community may also suspend or terminate the Agreement only in respect of all of its Member States. The specific situation of the United Kingdom and Ireland is reflected in the preamble.

Scope: the visa waiver covers all categories of persons (ordinary, diplomatic or service/official passport holders) travelling for all kinds of purposes, except for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity. For this latter category, each Member State and also the Bahamas remains free to impose the visa requirement on the citizens of the other Party in accordance with the applicable Community or national law. In order to ensure harmonised implementation, a joint declaration is attached to the Agreement on the interpretation of the category of persons travelling for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity.

Duration of stay: the agreement takes into account the situation of the Member States that do not yet apply the Schengen acquis in full. As long as they are not part of the Schengen area without internal borders, the visa waiver confers a right for the nationals of the Bahamas to stay for three months on the territory of each of those Member States (Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania), independently of the period calculated for the whole Schengen area.

Territorial application: in the case of France and the Netherlands, the visa waiver would entitle nationals of the six countries to stay only in those Member States' European territories.

EC/Bahamas agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2009/0020(CNS) - 30/11/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Community and the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2009/897/EC on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Community and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver.

CONTENT: by this Decision, the Council approves the Agreement between the European Community and the Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver on behalf of the Community.

The content of this agreement can be summarised as follows:

Purpose: this agreement provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of the Bahamas when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of three months during a six months period.

The citizens of several Member States are already exempted from the visa obligation by the Bahamas. A provision has been included in the Agreement stating that the Bahamas may suspend or terminate the Agreement only in respect of all the Member States of the European Community and, reciprocally, the Community may also suspend or terminate the Agreement only in respect of all of its Member States. The specific situation of the United Kingdom and Ireland is reflected in the preamble.

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Territorial application: in the case of France and t he Netherlands, the visa waiver would entitle nationals of the six countries to stay only in those Member States' European territories. The UK and Ireland are not taking part in the adoption of this Decision and are not bound by it or subject to its application.

It should be noted that this Agreement, signed on behalf of the Community on 28 May 2009, has been **provisionally applied** since that date subject to its conclusion at a later date, in accordance with Council Decision 2009/481/EC.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Agreement enters into force when all the necessary formalities have been completed.