Basic information

2016/0096(NLE) NLE - Non-legislative enactments	Procedure completed
EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver **Subject** 6.40.09 Relations with Oceanian countries 7.10.04 External borders crossing and controls, visas **Geographical area** Solomon Islands	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	GABRIEL Mariya (PPE)	23/05/2016
	Shadow rapporteur DALLI Miriam (S&D) STEVENS Helga (ECR) HYUSMENOVA Filiz (ALDE) VERGIAT Marie-Christine (GUE/NGL) VALERO Bodil (Verts/ALE) VON STORCH Beatrix (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	3478	2016-06-24
General Affairs	3517	2017-02-07

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Migration and Home Affairs	AVRAMOPOULOS Dimitris

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
08/04/2016	Preparatory document	COM(2016)0189	Summary
20/06/2016	Legislative proposal published	09785/2016	Summary
24/10/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
08/11/2016	Vote in committee		
15/11/2016	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A8-0336/2016	Summary
01/12/2016	Decision by Parliament	T8-0460/2016	Summary
01/12/2016	Results of vote in Parliament		
07/02/2017	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
07/02/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		
11/02/2017	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2016/0096(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consent by Parliament
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 077-p2 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 218-p6a
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/8/06216

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE583.927	28/09/2016	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A8-0336/2016	15/11/2016	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T8-0460/2016	01/12/2016	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	09783/2016	20/06/2016	

Legislative proposal	09785/2016	20/06/2016	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2016)0187	08/04/2016	
Preparatory document	COM(2016)0189	08/04/2016	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Decision 2017/0235
OJ L 036 11.02.2017, p. 0007 Summary

EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2016/0096(NLE) - 07/02/2017 - Final act

PURPOSE: to approve the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

NON LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2017/235 on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

CONTENT : the Council approved **the Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver**, on behalf of the Union.

To recall, the Commission negotiated on behalf of the Union an agreement with Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver. This Agreement was signed and was provisionally applied from 8 October 2016.

The Agreement provides for **visa-free travel** for the citizens of the Union and for the citizens of Solomon Islands when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for **a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period**. The visa waiver covers all categories of persons (ordinary, diplomatic, service/official and special passport holders) travelling for all kinds of purposes, **except for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity**.

For those travelling to carry out a paid activity, each Member State and also Solomon Islands remain free to impose the visa requirement on the citizens of the other Party in accordance with the applicable Union or national law. Member States and Solomon Islands have reserved the right to prevent a person entering their respective territories or making a short stay there, if one or several conditions relating to short stay or entry are not fulfilled.

The Agreement sets up a **Joint Committee of experts** for the management of the Agreement. The Union is to be represented within that Joint Committee by the Commission, which will be assisted by the representatives of the Member States.

The Decision constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen *acquis* in which the United Kingdom and Ireland do not take part. The latter two Member States are therefore not taking part in the adoption of the Decision and are not bound by it or subject to its application.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 7.2.2017.

EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2016/0096(NLE) - 15/11/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted the report by Mariya GABRIEL (EPP, BG) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

The committee recommended that Parliament **give its consent to conclusion of the agreement**.

To recall, the agreement provides for **visa-free travel** for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of the Solomon Islands when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for **a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period**. The visa waiver covers all categories of persons (ordinary, diplomatic, service/official and special passport holders) travelling for all kinds of purposes, except for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity.

The agreement was signed on 7 October 2016 in Brussels. Since that date, the agreement has been applied provisionally.

The report is accompanied by a short justification stating that the agreement represents a culmination of the deepening of relations between the European Union and the Solomon Islands - which is politically highly significant in the context of the Cotonou Agreement – and is an additional way of stepping up economic and cultural relations and intensifying political dialogue on various issues, including human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As regards the economy, the visa waiver agreement could have positive effects by simplifying travel for businesspeople, facilitating investment and boosting tourism. Solomon Islands' economy is based essentially on agriculture, accounting for 50 % of its GDP, and services, representing almost 40 % of its GDP. While European Union trade relations with Solomon Islands are very limited, they have potential for development. The European Union is currently negotiating a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with fourteen Pacific countries, including Solomon Islands.

Politically, Solomon Islands is a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth since 1978. The European Union's political dialogue with the Solomon Islands focuses on protecting its vulnerable environment, especially in relation to climate change on the one hand and on defending human rights and gender issues on the other. The visa waiver agreement represents a significant step towards more regular and enhanced political dialogues.

As regards mobility, the information available indicates that confidence in visa applicants is high and the rate of refusal of visas is low. In 2014 and 2015, no nationals of the Solomon Islands were arrested for being illegally present in the European Union and no refusal of entry at the European Union external border or return decisions were taken concerning Solomon Islands nationals. Furthermore, no asylum applications have been submitted by nationals of Solomon Islands. In this context, the country does not represent any threat in terms of either irregular migration or of security and public order.

As regards the implementation and monitoring of the agreement, the rapporteur:

- called on the Commission to observe any developments in relation to issues of clandestine immigration, public policy and security, but also the Union's external relations with the third countries concerned, including, in particular, considerations relating to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- called on the Commission and the authorities of Tuvalu to ensure full reciprocity of the visa waiver, which should permit equal treatment of all citizens, particularly all citizens of the Union;
- encouraged the Commission to review the composition of the joint management committees for future agreements so that Parliament might be involved in the work of the Joint Committee.

Lastly, the rapporteur also queried the practice of signing visa waiver agreements and **applying them provisionally before the European Parliament has approved them**, a practice that is liable to reduce Parliament's room for manoeuvre.

EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2016/0096(NLE) - 01/12/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 562 votes to 53, with 27 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

In line with the recommendation made by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Parliament **gave its consent** to the conclusion of the agreement.

The Agreement provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of the Solomon Islands when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period. The visa waiver covers all categories of persons (ordinary, diplomatic, service/official and special passport holders) travelling for all kinds of purposes, except for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity.

The provisions of the Agreement shall not apply to the United Kingdom or Ireland.

EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2016/0096(NLE) - 08/04/2016 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

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:

Regulation (EU) No 509/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council amended Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement.

Regulation (EU) No 509/2014 was adopted on 20 May 2014 and entered into force on 9 June 2014. It is applied by all Member States with the exception of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

In July 2014, the Commission presented a Recommendation to the Council to authorise it to start negotiations on **visa waiver agreements with each of the following 17 countries**.

The first series of visa waiver agreements were signed on 6 May 2015 (United Arab Emirates), 26 May 2015 (Timor-Leste) and 28 May 2015 (Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu) and provisionally apply from the date of signature pending their entry into force. The Council has authorised the signature of a **second series** of visa waiver agreements with Tonga (signed on 20 November 2015), Colombia (signed on 2 December 2015), Kiribati (date of signature to be determined) and Palau (signed on 7 December 2015). These four agreements provisionally apply from the day following the date of signature pending their entry into force.

The negotiations with Solomon Islands were opened on 19 November 2014. **The agreement was initialled by the chief negotiators in Brussels on 13 November 2015**.

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 Union.

CONTENT: the Commission calls on the Council to adopt a decision aiming to approve the **Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver**.

The final content of the agreement may be summarised as follows:

Purpose and duration of stay: the agreement provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of Solomon Islands when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period. A joint declaration on the interpretation of this period of 90 days in any 180-day period is attached to the agreement.

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 Solomon Islands to stay for 90 days in any 180-day on the territory of each of those Member States (currently Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania), independently of the period calculated for the whole Schengen area.

A provision has been included in the agreement stating that Solomon Islands may **suspend or terminate the agreement** only in respect of all the Member States of the European Union and that the Union may also only suspend or terminate the agreement in respect of all of its Member States.

Scope: the visa waiver covers **all categories of persons** (ordinary, diplomatic, service/official and special passport holders) travelling for all kinds of purposes, **except for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity**. For those travelling to carry out a paid activity, each Member State and also Solomon Islands remain free to impose the visa requirement on the citizens of the other Party in accordance with the applicable Union or national law. 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.

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

The provisions of the Agreement do not apply to the United Kingdom or to Ireland.

A joint declaration on the association of Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the implementation, application and development of the Schengen acquis is annexed to the agreement.

Lastly, the Agreement sets up a **Joint Committee of experts** for the management of the Agreement.

EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2016/0096(NLE) - 20/06/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the European Union, the Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

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 Commission negotiated, on behalf of the Union, an agreement with Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

In accordance with a Council Decision, the Agreement has been signed and is applied on a provisional basis. The Agreement should now be approved on behalf of the EU.

CONTENT: the draft Council Decision seeks the approval of the **Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver is hereby approved on behalf of the Union**.

The agreement provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of Solomon Islands when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for **a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period**. The visa waiver covers all categories of persons (holders of ordinary, diplomatic, service/official and special passports) travelling for all kinds of purposes, except for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity.

The future provisions of the Agreement shall not apply to the United Kingdom or Ireland.

The Agreement sets up a Joint Committee of experts for the management of the Agreement. The Union is to be represented within that Joint Committee by the Commission, which should be assisted by the representatives of the Member States.

EU/Solomon Islands Agreement: short-stay visa waiver

2016/0096(NLE) - 08/04/2016

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands on the short-stay visa waiver.

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:

Regulation (EU) No 509/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council amended Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of the Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement.

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