


Procedure file

Basic information		
NLE - Non-legislative enactments	2015/0054(NLE)	Procedure completed
EU/Trinidad and Tobago Agreement: short-stay visa waiver		
Subject 6.40.10 Relations with Latin America, Central America, Caribbean islands 7.10.04 External borders crossing and controls, visas		
Geographical area Trinidad and Tobago		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs		13/04/2015
		PPE GABRIEL Mariya	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		S&D GUILLAUME Sylvie	
		ECR STEVENS Helga	
		ALDE MICHEL Louis	
		GUE/NGL VERGIAT Marie-Christine	
		Verts/ALE VALERO Bodil	
	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	Meeting	Date
	Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	3445	12/02/2016
	Foreign Affairs	3384	07/05/2015
European Commission	Commission DG Migration and Home Affairs	Commissioner AVRAMOPOULOS Dimitris	

Key events			
05/03/2015	Preparatory document	COM(2015)0106	Summary
28/04/2015	Legislative proposal published	07196/2015	Summary
11/06/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		
10/11/2015	Vote in committee, 1st reading/single reading		
16/11/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A8-0323/2015	Summary
15/12/2015	Results of vote in Parliament		
15/12/2015	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T8-0427/2015	Summary

12/02/2016	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
12/02/2016	End of procedure in Parliament		
27/02/2016	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2015/0054(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consent by Parliament
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 077-p2; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 218-p6a
Modified legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/8/02993

Documentation gateway

Document attached to the procedure	COM(2015)0105	05/03/2015	EC	
Preparatory document	COM(2015)0106	05/03/2015	EC	Summary
Legislative proposal	07196/2015	28/04/2015	CSL	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	07129/2015	28/04/2015	CSL	
Committee draft report	PE560.853	28/08/2015	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A8-0323/2015	16/11/2015	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading	T8-0427/2015	15/12/2015	EP	Summary

Final act

[Decision 2016/275](#)
[OJ L 052 27.02.2016, p. 0017](#) Summary

2015/0054(NLE) - 05/03/2015 Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and Trinidad and Tobago 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 visas when crossing the external borders of the Member States and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement.

The Regulation was adopted on 20 May 2014 and entered into force on 9 June 2014.

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: Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, the United Arab Emirates and Vanuatu. On 9 October 2014, the Council addressed negotiating directives to the Commission.

The negotiations on the visa waiver agreement with Trinidad and Tobago and the four other Caribbean countries were opened on 12 November 2014 in Brussels. The agreement was initialled by the chief negotiators on 15 December 2014. 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 proposes that the Council approve the Agreement between the European Union and Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

The 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 Trinidad and Tobago when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period. 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 Trinidad and Tobago to stay for 90 days in any 180-day on the territory of each of those Member States (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 Trinidad and Tobago 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 this latter category, each Member State and also Trinidad and Tobago remain free to impose the visa requirement on the citizens of the other Party in accordance with the applicable Union or national law.

The Member States and Trinidad and Tobago reserve the right to refuse entry into and short stay in their territories if one or more of these conditions are not met.

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

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

The Agreement establishes a Joint Committee for the management of the Agreement, which shall adopt its rules of procedure.

2015/0054(NLE) - 28/04/2015 Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago 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 European Union an agreement with the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

In accordance with a Council Decision, the Agreement has been signed and is applied on a provisional basis.

It is now necessary to approve the Agreement on behalf of the EU.

CONTENT: the Council is invited to approve the Agreement between the European Union and Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

For further details of the Agreement, please refer to the summary of the initial legislative proposal dated 5.3.2015.

Territorial provisions: the provisions of the future Agreement shall not apply to the United Kingdom and 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.

2015/0054(NLE) - 16/11/2015 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 Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

The committee recommended the European Parliament to give its consent to the conclusion of the Agreement.

To recall, the Agreement signed on 28 May 2015 provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago 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 report is accompanied by a short justification stating that this agreement on the waiver of short-stay visas simultaneously represents a culmination of the deepening of relations between the European Union and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago 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.

- In the economic sphere, the EU is ranked second among the trading partners of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago has one of the most dynamic and prosperous economies in CARICOM, because of the oil and gas resources, the high levels of direct investment and growing tourism. It seeking to promote a diversified and competitive economy based on technology, innovation and growth. The visa waiver will simplify conditions for travel by businesspeople and will facilitate investment.
- As regards the political and institutional situation, civil and political rights are guaranteed by the Constitution and respected in the

country. Trinidad and Tobago is a stable, democratic country, which, like the European Union, defends the values and principles of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights and the rule of law. This agreement will make it possible to cooperate in such fundamental fields as human rights and to pursue a balanced, regular, in-depth political dialogue on more specific issues such as abolition of the death penalty or promoting the rights of women and children. These two issues remain the Unions priorities.

- As regards mobility, the visa refusal rate in 2014 being around 0.3%. Trinidad and Tobago is therefore a country which does not present the slightest risk of clandestine immigration into the EU or irregular migration or any threat to security and public policy.

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

- called on the Commission to observe any developments in relation to the criteria regarding clandestine immigration, public policy and security, including, considerations relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- urged the Commission and the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago 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 to enable the European Parliament to be involved in the work of these committees.

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 which is liable to reduce Parliaments room for manoeuvre.

2015/0054(NLE) - 15/12/2015 Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 560 votes to 65 with 24 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 Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

Following the recommendation of its 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 Trinidad and Tobago 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.

2015/0054(NLE) - 12/02/2016 Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2016/275 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver.

CONTENT: under this Decision, the Agreement between the European Union and Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver is approved on behalf of the Union.

To recall, the Commission negotiated on behalf of the European Union an agreement with Trinidad and Tobago on the short-stay visa waiver. The Agreement has been signed and is applied on a provisional basis as from 28 May 2015.

The Agreement provides for visa-free travel for the citizens of the European Union and for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago when travelling to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of 90 days in any 180-day period. A joint statement on the interpretation of this duration of 90 days is annexed to the Agreement.

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 this latter category, each Member State and also Trinidad and Tobago remain free to impose the visa requirement on the citizens of the other Party in accordance with the applicable Union or national law.

The Member States and Trinidad and Tobago reserve the right to refuse entry into and short stay in their territories if one or more of these conditions are not met.

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.

This Decision constitutes a development of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in which Ireland and the United Kingdom do not take part. Therefore, these two countries are not bound by it or subject to its application.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 12.2.2016.