

GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Office of the Prime Minister

GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA RESPONDS TO EUROPEAN UNION COMMUNICATION ON CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, July 6, 2026..... The Government of Antigua and Barbuda informs the public of a formal communication received from the European Union (EU) regarding the country's Citizenship by Investment (CBI) Programme.

In a letter dated 25 June 2026, signed by Commissioner Magnus Brunner and addressed to Prime Minister the Right Honourable Gaston Browne, the European Commission formally requested that Antigua and Barbuda phase out its CBI Programme by 1 June 2028.

The EU grounded its request in a revised Visa Suspension Mechanism adopted by the Union on 31 December 2025. Under this new framework, the mere *operation* of a CBI programme — regardless of how well it is managed — is now a self-standing ground for suspending visa-free access.

The Commission's letter offers a 24-month transition period and proposes the implementation of specific interim measures. These measures include the full exclusion of individuals subject to EU restrictive measures as well as reinforced vetting procedures for all nationalities, to be in place no later than September 2026.

The EU has also indicated it will reflect Antigua and Barbuda's response in its Visa Suspension Mechanism Report planned for December 2026.

Prime Minister Browne advises the public that this development does not come as a surprise. As he communicated to the nation on Saturday, 20 June 2026, the Government had advance knowledge that such letters were forthcoming and had already begun consultations at the regional level. He further points out that this EU decision is not directed at Antigua and Barbuda alone, but to all OECS member states with active CBI programmes. The other 4 countries, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts-Nevis and St Lucia have received similar correspondence from the European Commission.

The Antigua and Barbuda Government's position is clear: the CBI Programme is a critical pillar of Antigua and Barbuda's non-tax revenue base, and it cannot simply be abandoned without viable, concrete, and credible replacement revenues being made available. Prime Minister Browne has stated unequivocally that the CBI Programme will continue, and the Government will not be pressured into a unilateral phase-out that would cause irreparable harm to the national economy and the welfare of our citizens.

In this connection, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda will continue to engage the European Commission in a principled and constructive dialogue, consistent with the spirit of our longstanding partnership under the Samoa Agreement. We welcome the EU's expressed commitment to supporting Antigua and Barbuda's sustainable development through the Global Gateway Investment Agenda and other mechanisms. However, the Government notes that none of these offers from the EU are quantified, binding, or explicitly framed as *replacement revenues* for the CBI income stream.

Over the years, the CBI Programme has funded hospitals, schools, infrastructure, and disaster recovery efforts. It represents necessary income for a small island developing state with limited fiscal space and acute vulnerability to climate change and external economic shocks.

Consequently, the Government will reiterate to the European Commission that any agreed path forward must include tangible EU assistance in generating equivalent replacement revenues to offset the economic impact of any transition. The government will exercise its sovereign right to pursue economic development strategies that serve the best interests of its people while continuing to give full regard to the security of all other countries. In the latter context, as an act of good faith towards the EU, the Government will continue to exclude from its CBI Programme any individuals subject to EU restrictive measures; reinforce vetting for all other nationalities applying to the programme; and give full attention to any additional safeguards which may be required to satisfy EU security standards.

The public is reassured that the Government is pursuing all available diplomatic avenues — bilaterally and through OECS and other channels — to protect Antigua and Barbuda's national interests.

Further updates will be provided as discussions with the European Commission progress. (Ends)