EC/Kiribati Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2007/0062(CNS) - 23/07/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EC and Kiribati..

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Regulation (EC) No 893/2007 on the conclusion of a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community, on the one hand, and the Republic of Kiribati, on the other.

CONTENT: in July 2006 a Fisheries Partnership Agreement was negotiated between the Community and the Republic of Kiribati. The Agreement is accompanied by a Protocol and an Annex and has been signed for a period of six years from its entry into force. Upon its entry into force the proposed Agreement repeals and replaces the Agreement between the Community on fishing off the coast of Kiribati, which entered into force in September 2003.

The main objective of the this Partnership Agreement is to strengthen co-operation between the European Community and the Republic of Kiribati, thereby creating a framework of partnership in which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and responsible exploitation of fisheries resources in the Kiribati fishing zone.

The main provisions of the Agreement and attached Protocol are as follows:

Scope: the Agreement sets out :

- the principles, rules and procedures that govern economic, financial, technical and scientific co-operation;
- conditions governing access by Community vessels to Kiribati waters;
- arrangement for policing fisheries in Kirbati waters with a view to ensuring that conservation measures are complies with and in order to prevent illegal and unregulated fishing;
- measures to set up company partnerships.

Principles: both parties agree to promote responsible fishing; to implement a sectoral fisheries policy and to carry out regular evaluation; to implementing the Agreement according to good economic practice and social governance; and they agree that seamen from the Kiribati and/or APC seamen on board Community vessels, will be regulated according to standards set by the ILO.

Scientific co-operation: both the Community and the Republic of Kiribati agree to monitor the evolution of resources in the fishing zone off Kiribati through joint scientific meetings that will be held annually.

Community access: Community vessels will be given access to the fishing zones off the Republic of Kiribati. Community fishing activities will be subject to the laws and regulations in force in the Kiribati.

Licences: Community vessels will only be allowed to fish in the waters off Kiribati if they are in possession of a fishing licence issued under this Agreement.

Financial Contribution: The financial contribution is fixed at EUR 478 400 per year. Of this financial contribution, 30% shall be allocated the first year to the support and implementation of initiatives taken in the context of the sectoral fisheries policy drawn up by the Government of Kiribati. This percentage is fixed at 40% the second year and at 60% the year thereafter.

The Protocol also establishes that the allocation of fishing possibilities by Kiribati for EC vessels must be compatible with the management decisions to be taken, on a regional basis, by the Central West Pacific nations in the context of the Palau Arrangement for the Management of the Western Pacific Purse Seine Fishery. It is established that the EC fishing effort in Kiribati EEZ will have to be in line with appropriate tuna stock assessments based on scientific criteria, including the scientific overviews conducted yearly by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

Fishing opportunities: The following will apply for a period of six years starting on 16 September 2006 to the 15 September 2012 :

- purse seine vessels: 4 vessels;
- long liners: 12 vessels.

The opportunities are allocated as follows: tuna seiners: France: 27%, Spain: 73% ; surface longliners: Spain: 6, Portugal: 6.

If licence applications from these Member States do not cover all the fishing opportunities fixed by the Protocol, the Commission may consider licence applications from any other Member State.

At the request of the Community and depending on the management decision of the Parties to the Palua Agreement, the number of fishing licences for purse seine vessels may be increased. The Protocol fixes a reference tonnage of 6400 tonnes of tuna per year. If the overall quantity of catches by Community vessels in Kiribati waters exceeds 6.400 tonnes per year, the amount of the financial contribution shall be increased by EUR 65 for each additional tonne caught. However, the total annual amount paid by the Community shall not be more EUR 956 800.

The Protocol also establishes that the Community fishing effort in Kiribati will have to be in line with appropriate tuna stock assessments based on scientific criteria – including the scientific overviews conducted yearly by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 14/08/2007.