EC/Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2007/0209(CNS) - 09/10/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

BACKGROUND: in May 2007, the EC and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau negotiated a Fisheries Partnership Agreement, which provides Community fishermen with fishing opportunities in the Guinea Bissau fishing zone. The Partnership Agreement, which is accompanies by a Protocol and Annexes, was signed for a period of four years and is renewable CONTENT: the purpose of this proposal, therefore, is to conclude the renewed Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. The main objective of the new Partnership Agreement is to strengthen cooperation between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau in order to create a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and the sound exploitation of fisheries resources in the Guinea-Bissau fishing zone.

In summary, the main provisions of the proposed Agreement and attached Protocol are as follows:

Scope: the Agreement sets out the principles, rules and procedures that govern economic, financial and technical issues as well as matters of scientific interest to both parties. It also covers: conditions governing access by Community vessels to Guinea-Bissau fishing zones; arrangements for policing fisheries in Guinea-Bissau waters (with a view to ensuring that conservation measures are complied with); the prevention of illegal and unregulated fishing; and lastly the setting up of fishing operator partnerships.

Principles: both parties agree to promote responsible fishing; to implement a sectoral fisheries policy; to carry out regular evaluation reports; to implement the Agreement according to good economic practice and social governance; and to agree that seamen from Guinea-Bissau 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 Guinea-Bissau agree to monitor the evolution of resources in the fishing zone off Guinea-Bissau 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 Guinea-Bissau. Community fishing activities will be subject to the laws and regulations in force in Guinea-Bissau.

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

Financial Contribution: the Community agrees to pay a single financial contribution, which is set out in the Protocol attached to this Agreement. The single contribution is composed of two related elements. Firstly, access by Community vessels to the fishing off Guinea Bissau and secondly, to support responsible and sustainable fishing.

The financial contribution will amount to EUR 7 million per year. 35% of this (equivalent to EUR 2.450 million) will be allocated each year to support initiatives taken in the context of the sectoral fisheries policy to be drawn up by the Government of Guinea-Bissau. An additional specific contribution of EUR 500 000 per year will also be targeted to improve the health and hygiene conditions of fishery products. However, this contribution could also be used to support control and surveillance measures. The Protocol will contain a financial mechanism, with a maximum allocation of EUR 1 million per year, aiming to improve the use of fishing opportunities by ship-owners, and support for setting up joint ventures.

Fishing opportunities: The fishing opportunities set out in the Protocol to the Agreement will be allocated among the Member States as follows:

- **shrimp fishing**: Spain 1 421 GRT; Italy 1 776 GRT; Greece 137 GRT; Portugal 1 066 GRT.
- **fin-fish/cephalopods**: Spain 3 143 GRT; Italy 786 GRT; Greece 471 GRT;
- **tuna seiners and surface longliners**: Spain 10 vessels; France 9 vessels; Portugal 4 vessels.
- **pole-and-line vessels**: Spain 10 vessels; France 4 vessels.

If license applications from the Member States referred to above do not cover all the fishing opportunities fixed by the Protocol, the Commission may take into consideration license applications from any other Member State.