EC/Solomon Islands Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2010/0094(NLE) - 22/04/2010 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Solomon Islands.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: on the basis of the mandate given to the Commission by the Council, the Community and Solomon Islands have negotiated and initialled, on 26 September 2009, a Fisheries Partnership Agreement which provides EU fishermen with fishing opportunities in Solomon Islands fishing zone. This Partnership Agreement is accompanied by a Protocol and the annexes thereto which, has been signed for a period of three years and is renewable.

On the date of its entry into force, this Agreement repeals and replaces the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and Solomon Islands on fishing off Solomon Islands which entered into force on 9 October 2006 (see CNS/2005/0168).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment has been carried out.

LEGAL BASE: Article 43(2) in conjunction with Article 218 (6)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the proposed Decision aims to conclude the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Solomon Islands. The Agreement and the annexed Protocol provides EU fishermen with fishing opportunities in Solomon Islands fishing zone.

Sustainable fisheries: the aim of the new Partnership Agreement is to strengthen cooperation between the European Community and Solomon Islands and promote a partnership framework in which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and responsible exploitation of fishery resources in Solomon Islands fishing zone in the interests of both Parties.The two Parties have agreed to cooperate with a view to implementing a sectoral fisheries policy adopted by Solomon Islands and to that end shall initiate a **policy dialogue** on the necessary reforms.

The Partnership Agreement also provides for economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to promoting responsible fishing in Solomon Islands fishing zone to guarantee the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fishery resources and developing Solomon Islands fisheries sector.

Fisheries protocol: a protocol is provided which set out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Agreement between the European Community and Solomon Islands for the period 2009- 2012. It’s main measures may be summarised as follows:

- **Financial contribution**: the financial contribution under the Protocol is set at EUR 400 000 per year, corresponding to fishing opportunities in the tuna highly migratory species. 50% of this financial contribution is earmarked for the support and implementation of objectives identified in the context of the sectoral fisheries policy drawn up by the Solomon Islands authorities. EU shipowners shall pay fishing fees of EUR 13.000 per purse seine vessel. Furthermore, EU shipowners shall undertake to employ at least 25% seamen of ACP origin, giving priority to Solomon Islands seamen and to contribute towards the observers programme.

- **Fishing opportunities**: 4 purse seiners will be authorised to fish. No fishing possibilities for longliners have been negotiated. However, the new protocol includes a clause which allows for the possibility to introduce new fishing possibilities, including for longliners, should the need arise.

Duration of the Agreement: this Partnership Agreement, accompanied by a Protocol and the annexes thereto, have been signed for a period of three years and is renewable. The protocol will be valid for the period from 9 October 2009 to 8 October 2012

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: the financial contribution for tuna fishing is EUR 400 000 per year and covers a volume of 4 000 tons of catches. If the volume of annual catches exceeds that quantity, the amount of financial compensation is increased proportionately at the rate of EUR 65/tonne, but it may not exceed EUR 800 000 per year.

According to the Protocol, the fishing opportunities may be increased by mutual agreement provided that the conclusions of the annual meeting of the “Palau Arrangement” members and the annual review of the status of stocks made by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community confirm that such an increase will not endanger the sustainable management of Solomon Islands’ resources The financial contribution may, however, only be increased subject to budgetary possibilities.

A financial envelope of EUR 251 300 for 2010 to 2012 is provided to cover various administrative expenditure.

It should be noted that advances and fees payable by shipowners do not have an impact on the EU budget.