# EC/Comoros Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution. Protocol

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PURPOSE: to conclude a new Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Union of the Comoros.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: based on a mandate from the Council, the European Commission negotiated with the Union of the Comoros to renew the Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Union of the Comoros, dated 6 October 2006. On conclusion of these negotiations, a new Protocol was initialled on 21 May 2010 and amended by an exchange of letters on 16 September 2010.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

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

CONTENT: the objective of the proposed Decision is to define the fishing opportunities offered to vessels of the European Union based on the surplus available as well as the financial contribution due, separately, for access rights and for sectoral support.

**Sustainable fishing**: the main objective is to continue the cooperation between the European Union and the Union of the Comoros, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fisheries resources in the Comorian fishing zone, in the interests of both Parties.

The new Protocol is in keeping with the two Parties' concern to strengthen partnership and cooperation in the fisheries sector using all the financial instruments available. To this end, it is recalled that there is a need to create a framework which is favourable to the development of investment in this sector and optimising the production of small-scale fisheries.

**Financial contribution**: the overall annual contribution of the Protocol of **EUR 1 845 750** over the whole period (3 years) is based on:

- an annual reference tonnage fixed at 4 850 tonnes for 70 vessels corresponding to EUR 315 250 per year, and
- support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of the Union of the Comoros amounting to EUR 300 000 per year. This support meets the objectives of the national fisheries policy.

**Fishing opportunities**: **45 tuna seiners and 25 surface longliners** will be authorised to fish. Nevertheless, with regard to the annual assessments of the state of stocks, these fishing opportunities could be revised up or down which would lead to a corresponding review of the financial contribution. If the overall quantity of catches by European Union vessels in Comorian waters exceeds 4 850 tonnes per

year, the total amount of the annual financial contribution shall be increased by EUR 65 for each additional tonne caught. However, the total annual amount paid by the European Union shall not be more than twice the amount (EUR 630 500).

**Duration of the Agreement**: the Protocol to the Fisheries Agreement between the European Community and the Union of the Comoros expires on 31 December 2010. The new Protocol is concluded for a duration of three years from the entry into force of the Council decision on the provisional application of the said Protocol and after expiry of the current Protocol on 31 December 2010.

This procedure is initiated in parallel with the procedures relating to the Council Decision on the signing on behalf of the Union and on the provisional application of the Protocol itself, as well as to the Council Regulation concerning the allocation of fishing opportunities between the Member States of the EU.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION: the total financial envelope for this Protocol shall be **EUR 2.219 65 million** from 2011 to 2013, including the administrative and management costs related to the Protocol and the costs of human resources. Advances and fees payable by shipowners: EUR 35 per tonne of tuna caught in the Comorian fishing zone. The annual advances are fixed at EUR 3 700 per tuna seiner and EUR 2 200 per longliner. These advances and fees have no impact on the EU budget.