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

2010/0287(NLE) - 13/05/2011 - Final act

PURPOSE: the conclusion of 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.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2011/294/EU on the conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Partnership Agreement in the fisheries sector between the European Community and the Union of the Comoros.

BACKGROUND: the European Union has negotiated with the Comoros a new fishing Protocol providing EU vessels with fishing opportunities in the waters over which the Comoros has sovereignty or jurisdiction in respect of fisheries. Following these negotiations, the new Protocol was initialled on 21 May 2010 and amended by an exchange of letters on 16 September 2010.

In accordance with Council Decision 2010/783/EU, this new Protocol was signed on 31 December 2010 on behalf of the European Union and is being applied provisionally.

The new Protocol should now be concluded in the name of the Union.

CONTENT: with this decision, the 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, is approved on behalf of the European Union.

The new Protocol contains the following provisions:

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.

1. 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.

2. 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 new Protocol applies for a duration of three years from the entry into force of the Council decision on its provisional application.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision enters into force on 21 May 2011. The date the Protocol enters into force shall be published in the European Union's Official Journal.