

EU/Gabon Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution from 24 July 2013 to 23 July 2016. Protocol

2013/0216(NLE) - 27/06/2013

PURPOSE: to conclude a Protocol between the European Union and Gabon setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the two Parties currently in force.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: on the basis of the powers conferred on it by the Council, the European Commission has conducted negotiations with Gabon with a view to renewing the Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and this country.

At the end of those negotiations, a new draft Protocol was initialled by the negotiators on 24 April 2013.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the interested parties were consulted during the evaluation of the [Protocol for the period 2005-11](#). Experts from the Member States were also consulted in technical meetings. These consultations concluded that it would be beneficial to maintain a fishing protocol with Gabon.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 43(2) in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) and (7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: this proposal seeks to conclude the Protocol between the EU and Gabon setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Gabonese Republic.

Aim: the main aim of the Protocol to the Agreement is to provide fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Gabonese waters **within the limits of the available surplus, in accordance with the best available scientific advice and recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).**

The general aim is to enhance the cooperation between the European Union and Gabon, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the Gabonese fishing zone, in the interests of both Parties.

Fishing protocol: the Protocol provides for **annual fishing opportunities** in the following categories:

- 27 freezer tuna seiners;
- 8 pole-and-line tuna vessels.

Financial contribution: the **annual financial contribution** of EUR 1 350 000 is based on:

- a reference tonnage of 20 000 tonnes, for an amount of EUR 900 000 linked to access;
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- support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of Gabon amounting to EUR 450 000. This support meets the objectives of the national fisheries policy and in particular the needs of the Gabonese Republic in the fight against illegal fishing and the implementation of the national fisheries strategy.

The Parties may adopt, in the Joint Committee, measures entailing a review of fishing opportunities. In that case, the financial contribution shall be adjusted proportionately and pro rata temporis.

At the request of Gabon, the Gabonese Government may call on the European Union in order to consider the possibility of experimental fishing in order to exploit certain fisheries, under the direct supervision of scientists representing the two Parties and either ICCAT or the relevant regional fisheries organisation. They shall consult each other and determine on a case-by-case basis the relevant species, conditions and other parameters. The authorisations for experimental fishing shall be granted for a maximum of 12 months. In the event that the Parties consider that experimental campaigns have given positive results, the Government may allocate fishing opportunities for new species to the European Union fleet until this Protocol expires. The financial compensation of the current Protocol shall consequently be increased.

Duration of the fishing protocol: this Protocol and the Annexes shall apply for a duration of **three years** from the date of provisional application of the new Protocol.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the total amount of operational commitments for the Protocol is set at **EUR 4.05 million for 2013 to 2015**. Other expenditure such as administrative, management and human resources amount to EUR 318 000.