

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

2013/0216(NLE) - 26/11/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the European Union, the Protocol setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Gabonese Republic.

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: the Union has negotiated a new protocol with the Gabonese Republic granting Union vessels fishing opportunities in waters in which the Gabonese Republic exercises its sovereignty or its jurisdiction as regards fishing.

The New Protocol was signed in accordance with Decision 2013/462/EU, and is applied provisionally as from 24 July 2013.

The New Protocol should therefore be approved.

CONTENT: the proposed Decision seeks to conclude the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities with Gabon on behalf of the Union.

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.

For details of the fishing opportunities and the financial implications of the draft Protocol on the budget of the European Union, *please refer to the summary of the Commission's initial legislative proposal dated 27/06/2013.*

Simplified procedure to define the EU's position within the EU-Gabon joint committee: the Partnership Agreement set up a Joint Committee which is responsible for monitoring the application of the Agreement. Furthermore, in accordance with the Protocol, the Joint Committee may approve certain modifications to the Protocol. In order to facilitate the approval of such modifications, it is appropriate to empower the Commission, subject to specific conditions, to approve them under a **simplified procedure** laid down in the proposed Decision.

Annex: the draft Decision details the extent of the powers conferred on the Commission as well as the procedure to establish a Union position within the joint committee. The Commission should be authorised to negotiate with Gabon, modifications to the Protocol as regards:

- the revision of fishing opportunities;
- the decision on the modalities of the sectoral support of the Protocol;
- technical specifications and modalities falling within the powers of the Joint Committee.

In the Joint Committee, the Union shall act in accordance with the objectives pursued by the Union within the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Technical provisions are provided to establish the framework and the practical conditions of the approval of the modifications to the Protocol.