EC/Seychelles Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution. EU/Seychelles Protocol

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PURPOSE: to conclude a new Fishing Protocol between the EU and the Seychelles.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: on the basis of relevant Council mandate, the Commission on behalf of the European Union negotiated with the Seychelles in view of renewing the Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Seychelles.

Following these negotiations, a new Protocol was initialled on the 10th of May 2013. It is now necessary to conclude the Protocol on behalf of the EU.

CONTENT: this proposal calls on the Council to conclude the new Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Seychelles.

Towards sustainable fishing: the new Protocol is in line with the objectives of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement aiming at strengthening the cooperation between the European Union and the Seychelles and promoting a partnership framework in which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and responsible exploitation of fishery resources in the Seychelles' fishing zone in the interests of both Parties.

The two Parties agreed to cooperate with a view to implementing Seychelles' sectoral fisheries policy and to that end shall continue the policy dialogue on the relevant programming.

Financial contribution: the new Protocol provides for a total financial contribution of **EUR 30 700 000** for the whole period.

This amount corresponds to:

- **EUR 2 750 000** for the first two years of the application of the Protocol, and **EUR 2 500 000** for the remaining years of the Protocol, equivalent to an annual reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes,
- **EUR 2 600 000** for the first two years of the Protocol, and **EUR 2 500 000** for the remaining years, corresponding to the additional envelope paid by the EU to support Seychelles' fisheries and maritime policy.

Fishing possibilities: the fishing opportunities granted under the Fisheries Partnership Agreement shall be as follows: **40 tuna purse seine vessels, and 6 surface longliners**.

The Joint Committee may reassess the fishing opportunities and these may be adjusted by mutual agreement in the Joint Committee insofar as the recommendations and resolutions of IOTC support that such an adjustment will secure the sustainable management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. In this case the financial contribution shall be adjusted proportionately and *pro rata temporis*.

However, the total annual amount paid by the European Union shall not be more than twice the figure set out in the Agreement.

Provisions are made to allow EU vessels to be granted with new fishing opportunities, such as deep-water experimental fishing.

In the event that the Parties consider that experimental campaigns have given positive results, the Government of Seychelles may allocate fishing possibilities of the new species to the European Union fleet until the expiration of this Protocol. The financial compensation shall consequently be increased.

Duration of the Agreement: the new Protocol covers a period of six years starting from the adoption of the Council decision on the Protocol's signing and provisional application and after expiry of the current Protocol, on 17 January 2014. In addition, the Protocol contains specific clauses for its suspension or termination.

This Protocol shall be applied provisionally from 18 January 2014.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the total financial envelope allocated to this Protocol would be **EUR 31.336 million** from 2014 to 2019, including administrative costs for the management of the Protocol and human resources expenditure.