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

2013/0375(NLE) - 09/12/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude a Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Seychelles

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: the Union has negotiated with the Seychelles a new Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Agreement.

In accordance with a Council Decision, the new Protocol has been signed and is applied on a provisional basis as from 18 January 2014.

Given that it is in the interest of the Union to implement the Agreement by means of this Protocol, it is proposed to approve this new Protocol on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: this proposal aims to call on the Council to conclude the Protocol to the Fisheries Agreement with the Seychelles, on behalf of the EU.

The draft Protocol aims to strengthen the cooperation between the European Union and the Seychelles and promote 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.

For further details of the fishing opportunities and the financial implications of the draft Protocol on the EU budget, *please refer to the summary of the initial legislative proposal dated 06/11/2013*.

Simplified procedure: this Agreement sets up a Joint Committee which is responsible for monitoring the implementation 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.

Annex: the draft Decision outlines the scope of the empowerment and procedure for the establishment of the Union position in the Joint Committee. The Commission shall be authorised to negotiate with the Seychelles and, where appropriate, agree on modifications to the Protocol in respect of the following issues:

- review of fishing opportunities in accordance with Article 5(1) of the Protocol;
- modalities of the sectoral support in accordance with Article 3 of the Protocol;
- review of the technical rules on the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in accordance with the Protocol and similar technical provisions of the Protocol.

Technical provisions are also laid down as regards the approval of the Union’s position concerning the amendments to the Protocol.