

EU/São Tomé and Príncipe Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution from 23 May 2014 to 22 May 2018.

Protocol

2014/0115(NLE) - 13/05/2014 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and São Tomé and Príncipe.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

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

BACKGROUND: the Union has negotiated with São Tomé and Príncipe a new Protocol, for a period of four years, granting Union vessels fishing opportunities in the waters over which São Tomé and Príncipe has sovereignty or jurisdiction in respect of fisheries.

That new Protocol was signed in accordance with a Council Decision and will apply on a provisional basis from the date of its signature.

It is in the interest of the EU to implement the Partnership Agreement through the application of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Partnership Agreement. It is now appropriate to conclude the Protocol on behalf of the EU.

CONTENT: the proposal calls on the Council to conclude the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with São Tomé and Príncipe, on behalf of the EU.

The Protocol sets out the conditions under which ships flying an EU flag may fish in the waters of São Tomé and Príncipe.

For details of the fishing opportunities and financial implications of the Agreement on the EU budget, please refer to the *Commission's initial legislative proposal dated 01/04/2014*.

Simplified procedure setting the EU's position in the Joint Committee: the Partnership Agreement establishes a Joint Committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. In accordance with the Protocol, the Joint Committee may approve certain modifications to the Protocol. In order to facilitate the approval of such modifications, the draft decision empowers the Commission, subject to specific conditions, to approve them under a simplified procedure.

Annex: the draft decision sets out the extent of the powers conferred on the Commission as well as the procedure for establishing the EU's position in the Joint committee.

Accordingly, the Commission shall be authorised to negotiate with São Tomé and Príncipe and agree on modifications to the Protocol in respect of the following issues:

- decision on the modalities of the sectoral support;
- adaptation of the provisions on the pursuit of fishing activities and the rules for implementing the Protocol and its annexes.

In the Joint Committee set up under the Fisheries Partnership Agreement, the Union shall act in accordance with the objectives pursued within the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy, as well as promote positions that are consistent with the relevant rules adopted by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. The Joint Committee should also take account of the latest statistical, biological and other relevant information transmitted to the Commission.

Technical provisions set out the modalities and framework for approval of modifications to the Protocol.