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

2013/0375(NLE) - 13/05/2014 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude a new Protocol on fishing between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles.

NON LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2014/306/EU on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles.

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

In accordance with Council Decision 2014/5/EU, the new Protocol has been signed and is applied on a provisional basis as from 18 January 2014.

The new Protocol should be approved in the name of the European Union.

CONTENT: with this Decision, the Council, with the approval of the European Parliament, approves in the name of the European Union, the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Seychelles.

Main objectives of the Protocol: the Protocol is in line with the Fisheries Partnership Agreement which aims to strengthen the cooperation between the European Union and the Seychelles and to promote a partnership framework promoting responsible fishing and sustainable fisheries in the Seychelles' fishing sector, in the interests of both parties.

In addition, the parties agreed to cooperate to implement the sectoral policy of Seychelles' fisheries and to pursue the policy dialogue to this end.

Financial contribution: the Protocol provides a financial contribution of **EUR 30.7 millions** over the whole period.

This amount is made up of:

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

Fishing opportunities: the fishing opportunities offered to the European fleet would be **40 tuna purse seine vessels and 6 surface longliners**.

However, the Joint Committee may reassess the fishing opportunities foreseen so as to ensure the sustainable management of tuna fisheries. In this case the financial contribution shall be adjusted proportionately and *pro rata temporis*. 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.

The Protocol shall apply provisionally from 18 January 2014.

Finally, specific clauses are included for its suspension or termination.

Simplified procedure to define the position of the EU in the EU-Seychelles Joint Committee: the Agreement set up a Joint Committee which is 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, it is appropriate to empower the Commission, subject to specific conditions, to approve them under a **simplified procedure**.

Annex: the 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, modifications in respect of

- review of fishing opportunities;
- modalities of the fisheries sectoral support;
- review of the technical rules on the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in accordance with the Protocol as well as other similar technical provisions.

In the Joint Committee, the Union shall act in accordance with the objectives it pursues within the framework of the Common Fisheries Policy as well as relevant rules adopted by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. Moreover, the Joint Committee should base its decisions on the latest statistical, biological and other relevant information.

Technical provisions are also laid down as regards the framework and practical aspects of the approval of amendments to the Protocol.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 30.05.2014. The date of entry into force of the Protocol will be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* by the General Secretariat of the Council.