EC/Madagascar Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018. Protocol

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PURPOSE: to conclude the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and Madagascar.

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: on the basis of the powers conferred on it by the Council, the European Commission has conducted negotiations with Madagascar with a view to renewing the Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and this country.

At the end of the negotiations a new draft protocol was initialled by the negotiators on 19 June 2014.

It is now necessary to conclude the Protocol on behalf of the European Union.

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

Objectives: the primary objective of the Protocol to the Agreement is to grant fishing opportunities to EU vessels in the fishing zone of the Republic of Madagascar, in line with the management measures adopted by the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, namely the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and where relevant, in keeping within the limits of the available surplus.

The general objective is to enhance cooperation between the European Union and Madagascar, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the fishing zone of Madagascar, in the interests of both parties.

Financial contribution: the annual financial contribution, which is EUR 1 566 250 for each of the first two years of the Protocol and EUR 1 487 500 for each of the following two years, is based on:

- a reference tonnage of 15 750 tonnes linked to access, for an annual amount of EUR 866 250 for each of the first two years of the Protocol and EUR 787 500 for each of the following two years;
- support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of Madagascar, amounting to EUR 700 000 per year. This support meets the objectives of the national fisheries policy and in particular the needs of the Republic of Madagascar in the fight against illegal fishing.

In the event of the annual amount of catches of the species referred to the Protocol exceeds the reference tonnage of 15 750 tonnes, the amount of the annual financial contribution shall be increased by EUR 55 during the first two years of the Protocol, and EUR 50 during the last two years for each additional tonne caught.

However, the annual amount paid by the European Union in respect of access to Madagascar's fishing zone shall not be more than twice the amount of the tonnage reference for the corresponding year. If the amounts caught by European Union vessels in Madagascar's fishing zone exceed a quantity corresponding to twice that total annual amount, the amount due in respect of the quantity exceeding that limit shall be paid the following year.

Fishing opportunities: the Protocol provides for fishing opportunities in the following categories:

- 40 tuna seiners;
- 32 surface longliners with a tonnage greater than 100 GT;
- 22 surface longliners with a tonnage less than or equal to 100 GT.

New fishing opportunities: the new fishing opportunities and technical measures may be reviewed by mutual agreement within the Joint Committee. They may be adjusted by the Joint Committee insofar as the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the IOTC confirm that such adjustments guarantee the sustainable management of the fish species covered by this Protocol. In this case, the financial contribution shall be adjusted proportionately and pro rata temporis.

Exploratory fishing surveys may be authorised in the Malagasy fishing zone to test the technical feasibility and economic viability of new fisheries.

Duration of the Agreement: the new Protocol covers a period of four years from the date of provisional application – i.e. from the date of its signature and 1 January 2015 at the earliest.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: the total financial envelope allocated to this Protocol amounts to **EUR 6.602 million from 2015 to 2018**, including administrative management costs and human resources.