Fishing opportunities in EU waters of fishing vessels flying the flag of Venezuela in the exclusive economic zone off the coast of French Guiana. Declaration

2015/0001(NLE) - 30/01/2015 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to approve, on behalf of the European Union, the Declaration on the granting of fishing opportunities in EU waters to fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the exclusive economic zone off the coast of French Guiana.

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: subject to their compliance with the applicable legally binding Union acts on the conservation and management of fishery resources, fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have operated in Union waters in the exclusive economic zone off the coast of French Guiana for many decades.

The processing industry based in the French Guiana depends on the landings from those fishing vessels and therefore the continuity of those operations should be ensured.

This Decision should replace Council Decision 2012/19/EU which was annulled by the judgement of the Court of Justice of 26 November 2014 and the effects of which are being maintained until the entry into force of a new decision within a reasonable period of time. As the Declaration has already been notified to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, there is no need for a new notification thereof.

CONTENT: under this proposed Decision, the Council is requested to approve the Declaration addressed to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the granting of fishing opportunities in EU waters to fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the exclusive economic zone off the coast of the French Guiana on behalf of the European Union.

Declaration: in the Declaration addressed to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, it is stipulated that:

- the EU shall issue fishing authorisations to a limited number of fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to fish in the part of the exclusive economic zone off the coast of French Guiana that lies more than 12 nautical miles from the base lines;
- the authorised fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shall comply with the provisions of the European Union common fisheries policy concerning the conservation and control measures and other European Union provisions governing fishing activities in that zone;
- the authorised fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shall comply with any relevant European Union rules or regulations specifying, inter alia, the fish stocks that may be targeted, the maximum number of authorised fishing vessels and the proportion of catches to be landed into ports in French Guiana.

Without prejudice to the withdrawal of authorisations granted to individual fishing vessels flying the flag of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on grounds of their failure to comply with any relevant European Union rules or regulations, the European Union may at any time withdraw, by way of unilateral declaration, the specific undertaking expressed in this Declaration to grant fishing opportunities.

For further details of the proposed Decision, please refer to the summary of the *Commission's initial legislative proposal dated 12/01/2015*.