EC/Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution from 24 November 2014 to 23 November 2017. Protocol

2012/0134(NLE) - 05/10/2015 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Protocol agreed between the European Union and Guinea-Bissau setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the two parties currently in force.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2015/1987 on the conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

BACKGROUND: the Union and Guinea-Bissau have negotiated a new Protocol granting Union vessels fishing opportunities in waters in which Guinea-Bissau exercises sovereignty or jurisdiction with regard to fishing.

The Protocol was signed on 24 November 2014 and has been applied provisionally from the date of its signature.

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

CONTENT: under this Decision, the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau is hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

The main aims of the Protocol to the Agreement are to:

- provide fishing opportunities for the vessels of the European Union in the waters of Guinea-Bissau within the limits of the available surplus;
- enhance the cooperation between the EU-Guinea-Bissau, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the Guinea-Bissau fishing zone, in the interests of both Parties.

The Protocol lays down, in particular, the duration of the application, the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided by the Agreement.

The main provisions of the Agreement can be summarised as follows:

Financial contribution: the overall financial contribution of the Protocol of EUR 9.2 million over the whole period is based on:

- a maximum of 40 authorisations for tuna vessels and of 7 200 GRT for trawlers, for a financial contribution of EUR 6.2 million;
- support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau amounting to EUR 3 million. This support meets the objectives of the national fisheries policy.

Fishing opportunities: for a period of three years, the fishing opportunities shall be as follows:

- freezer shrimp trawlers: 3 700 GRT per year;
- freezer, fin-fish and cephalopod trawlers: 3 500 GRT per year;
- freezer tuna seiners and longliners: 28 vessels;
- pole-and-line tuna vessels: 12 vessels.

Suspension of the implementation of the Protocol: the implementation of this Protocol may be suspended at the initiative of one of the two Parties after consultation within the Joint Committee under unusual circumstances, other than natural phenomena (notably following significant changes in the policy objectives which led to the conclusion of this Protocol, such as serious violation of human rights).

Duration: the Protocol and the Annex hereto shall apply for a period of three years from the provisional application.

Joint committee: the Agreement set up a Joint Committee which is responsible for monitoring the application 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**.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: this Decision shall enter into force on 5.10.2015. 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.