EU/Liberia Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and Implementation Protocol from 9 December 2015 to 8 December 2020

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PURPOSE: to conclude a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Liberia and the Implementation Protocol thereto.

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: on the basis of the relevant negotiating directives, the Commission conducted negotiations with the Government of Liberia with a view to concluding a new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and an Implementation Protocol thereto between the European Union and Liberia. Following these negotiations, a new Agreement and Protocol were initialled on 5 June 2015.

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

CONTENT: the draft decision calls on the Council to approve, on behalf of the European Union, the new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia and the Implementation Protocol.

Objectives: the new Agreement will provide for a framework taking into account the priorities of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy and its external dimension, with a view to establishing a strategic partnership between the European Union and Liberia.

The main objective of the new Protocol is to provide fishing opportunities to Union vessels in the Liberian fishing zone, on the basis of the best available scientific advice and respecting the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), where applicable within the limits of the available surplus.

The aim is also to enhance cooperation between the European Union and Liberia to promote a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fisheries resources in Liberia’s fishing zone, in the interests of both parties.

Financial contribution: the annual financial contribution has been set at:

- EUR 715 000 for the first year,
- EUR 650 000 for the second, third and fourth years, and
- EUR 585 000 for the fifth year, on the basis of:

(a) a reference tonnage of 6 500 tonnes, for which an amount linked to access has been set at EUR 357 500 for the first year, EUR 325 000 for the second, third and fourth years, and EUR 292 500 for the fifth year; and

(b) support for development of the sectoral fisheries policy of the Republic of Liberia, amounting to EUR 357 500 for the first year, EUR 325 000 for the second, third and fourth years, and EUR 292 500 for the fifth year. This support meets the objectives of the national fisheries policy and in particular the Republic of Liberia's needs in relation to scientific research, artisanal fisheries as well as fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance and the fight against illegal fishing.

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

- 28 tuna seiners;
- 6 surface long-liners.

The allocation of fishing opportunities will be set out between the EU Member States.

Duration of the agreement: the Protocol covers a period of five years from the date of provisional application– i.e. from the date of its signature.