

EU/Cook Islands Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and implementation Protocol

2016/0077(NLE) - 28/02/2017 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Partnership Agreement in the field of sustainable fisheries between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands and its Protocol of Implementation.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision (EU) 2017/418 on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of the Partnership Agreement in the field of sustainable fisheries between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands Its implementation protocol.

BACKGROUND: The Union and the Government of the Cook Islands have negotiated a partnership agreement in the field of sustainable fisheries for a period of 5 years, renewable by tacit agreement, and a protocol for the implementation of this agreement, Vessels in the waters over which the Cook Islands have sovereign rights or are under its fisheries jurisdiction.

The Agreement and the Protocol have been signed in accordance with Council Decision (EU) 2016/776 and apply provisionally from 14 October 2016.

The Agreement and the Protocol on behalf of the European Union should now be approved.

CONTENT: With this Decision, the Partnership Agreement in the field of sustainable fisheries between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands and its Protocol of Implementation are hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

The agreement provides a framework that takes into account the priorities of the common fisheries policy and its external dimension, with a view to a strategic partnership between the European Union and the Cook Islands. It establishes the principles, rules and procedures governing:

- the conditions under which Union vessels may engage in fishing activities in Cook Islands fishing zones;
- economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector, with a view to establishing responsible fishing in the fisheries waters of the Cook Islands to ensure the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and to develop The Cook Islands fisheries sector;
- cooperation on management, control and surveillance measures to control fishing in Cook Islands waters.

The **main objective** of the new Protocol is to provide **fishing opportunities** for Union vessels in the Cook Islands fishery area on the basis of the best available scientific advice and in compliance with conservation and management measures of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) as appropriate, within the limits of the available surplus.

The objective is also to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and the Cook Islands to **promote sustainable fisheries policy** and the responsible exploitation of fishery resources in the Cook Islands fishing zone in the interests of both Parties.

Fishing opportunities: the Protocol provides for fishing opportunities for **4 tuna seiners** for fishing for the highly migratory species listed in Annex 1 to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Financial compensation: The overall financial contribution offered by the EU to operate in the waters of the Cook Islands was set at **EUR 2 870 000** for the entire duration of the Protocol.

The agreement and its implementing protocol also provide for the possibility of suspending or denouncing their application in case of violation by either party of **respect for human rights**.

Joint Committee: Lastly, the Agreement establishes a Joint Commission to monitor the implementation, interpretation and application of the Agreement. It will also be called upon to approve certain amendments to the Protocol. To this end, the Commission will be empowered to approve these decisions in accordance with a simplified procedure.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision shall enter into force on 28.2.2017. The Agreement and the Protocol shall enter into force when all the procedures necessary for this purpose have been completed.