

EU/Gambia Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and Implementation Protocol

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PURPOSE: to approve the conclusion of a sustainable fisheries partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia and of the implementation protocol thereto.

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: the Commission negotiated a new agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia on sustainable fisheries and a protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the corresponding financial contribution. At the end of the negotiations, the partnership agreement and the protocol were initialled on 19 October 2018.

The partnership agreement and the protocol have been provisionally applied from the date of their signature. They should now be approved on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, the sustainable fisheries partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia and its implementation protocol.

Objectives

The new agreement repeals and replaces the existing agreement, which entered into force on 2 June 1987. Its objective is to provide an updated 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 the Republic of Gambia in the fisheries sector.

The aim of the Protocol is to grant fishing opportunities to European Union vessels in Gambian waters taking into account available scientific assessments, in particular those of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), and in accordance with the best available scientific advice and the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), within the limits of the available surplus.

Fishing opportunities

The Protocol provides for fishing opportunities in the following categories:

- 28 tuna seiners;
- 10 pole-and-line vessels;
- 3 trawlers (targeting black hake, a deep-sea demersal species).

Financial consideration

The annual financial contribution amounts to EUR 550 000, based on

- an annual amount of EUR 275 000 for access to the fisheries resources in the Gambian fishing zone, equivalent to a reference tonnage, for highly migratory species, of 3 300 tonnes per year;
- support for the development of Gambia's sectoral fisheries policy amounting to EUR 275 000 per year. This support is in line with the objectives of Gambia's national policy for the sustainable management of continental and marine fisheries resources.

The new agreement covers a period of 6 years from the date of its provisional application, that being the date on which it is signed by the parties and is renewable by tacit agreement.