EU/Gambia Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and Implementation Protocol

2019/0076(NLE) - 12/03/2019 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE: signature, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia and its Implementation Protocol.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: the Commission negotiated on behalf of the European Union a new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia as well as a new Implementation Protocol to the Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement and the Protocol were initialled at the end of those negotiations on 19 October 2018.

The Partnership Agreement repeals the previous Agreement that was concluded between the Government of the Republic of The Gambia and the European Economic Community on fishing off the coast of The Gambia and that entered into force on 2 June 1987.

The objective of the Protocol is to enable the European Union and the Republic of The Gambia to work more closely together to promote a sustainable fisheries policy and a responsible exploitation of fisheries resources in Gambian waters.

In order to ensure an expeditious start of fishing activities by Union vessels, the Partnership Agreement and the Implementation Protocol should be applied provisionally upon their signature.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the European Union, the signing of the Partnership Agreement on Sustainable Fisheries between the European Union and the Republic of Gambia and its Protocol of Implementation, subject to the conclusion of these two acts.

The main aim of the new Agreement 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 The Gambia in the field of fisheries.

The aim of the Protocol is to grant fishing opportunities to European Union vessels in Gambian waters taking into account available scientific assessments.

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).

The annual financial contribution is EUR 550 000, based on:

- an annual amount for access to the fisheries resources in the Gambian fishing zone of EUR 275 000 equivalent to a reference tonnage, for highly migratory species, of 3 300 tonnes per year;

- support for development of the sectoral fisheries policy of The Gambia, amounting to EUR 275 000 a year. This support meets the objectives of The Gambia's national policy on the sustainable management of continental and maritime fishery resources.

The negotiation of a new Fisheries Partnership Agreement with The Gambia forms part of the Union's external action in relation to ACP countries and takes into account, in particular, Union objectives on respecting democratic principles and human rights.

The new Agreement and the new Protocol covers a period of six years from the date of provisional application.