

EU/São Tomé and Príncipe Fisheries Partnership Agreement 2019-2024. Protocol

2019/0173(NLE) - 30/08/2019 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the European Union, the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and the European Community.

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 Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community entered into force on 29 August 2012 and has since been renewed automatically. The previous Protocol to the Agreement, which entered into force on 23 May 2014, expired on 22 May 2018.

The evaluation report concluded that the Union's tuna fishing sector has a strong interest in fishing in São Tomé and Príncipe and that a renewal of the Protocol would help strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance and contribute to improved governance of the fisheries in the region.

The Commission conducted negotiations with the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe with a view to concluding a new Protocol to the Agreement. Following these negotiations, a new Protocol was initialled on 17 April 2019. The Protocol covers a period of five years from the date of its provisional application, i.e. from the date on which it is signed.

The negotiation of a new protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with São Tomé and Príncipe forms part of the Union's external action in relation to countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and takes into account, in particular, Union objectives on respecting democratic principles and human rights.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and the European Community.

Objectives of the proposal

The objective of the Protocol is to enable the Union and São Tomé and Príncipe to work more closely on promoting a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fisheries resources in São Tomé and Príncipe waters and to support efforts by São Tomé and Príncipe to develop its fisheries sector.

Fishing opportunities

In accordance with the priorities of the Fisheries Policy reform, the new Protocol provides fishing opportunities for Union vessels in São Tomé and Príncipe waters, on the basis of the best available scientific advice and following the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

The Protocol provides for fishing opportunities in the following categories: (a) 28 freezer tuna seiners; (b) 6 surface longliners.

The annual financial contribution from the European Union is EUR 840 000, based on:

- a reference tonnage of 8 000 tonnes per year, for which an amount linked to access has been set at EUR 400 000 per year for the entire duration of the Protocol;

- support for the development of São Tomé and Príncipe's sectoral fisheries policy amounting to EUR 440 000 per year for the entire duration of the Protocol. This support meets the objectives of São Tomé and Príncipe's national policy on the sustainable management of its continental and maritime fishery resources for the entire duration of the Protocol. The annual amount for commitment and payment appropriations is established during the annual budgetary procedure.

The Commission is authorised to approve, on behalf of the Union, amendments to the Protocol to be adopted by the Joint Committee established under the Fisheries Partnership Agreement.