EU/Cook Islands Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement: implementation of the Agreement 2021-2024. Protocol

2021/0312(NLE) - 21/12/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the European Union, the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands.

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 Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands was concluded by Council Decision (EU) 2017/418.

The Protocol implementing the Partnership Agreement has been signed, subject to its conclusion at a later date. The protocol should now be approved.

CONTENT: the draft Council decision concerns the **approval, on behalf of the Union, of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Cook Islands**.

The Protocol aims to enable the Union and the Government of the Cook Islands to continue working together to promote a sustainable fisheries policy and the sound exploitation of fisheries resources in the Cook Islands' fishery waters, in line with the objective of conservation of marine biological resources recognised in Union law, and to allow Union vessels to fish in those waters.

The Agreement sets up a **Joint Committee** responsible for the monitoring of the application of the Agreement and its Implementing Protocol. The Joint Committee may approve certain amendments to the Protocol. In order to facilitate the approval of such amendments, the Commission may, subject to specific substantive and procedural provisions and conditions, approve these amendments on behalf of the Union under a simplified procedure.

The Council should determine the Union's position on the proposed amendments to the Protocol. The proposed amendments should be approved unless a blocking minority of Member States objects to the amendments.

In view of the economic importance of the Union's fishing activities in the Cook Islands fishing areas and in view of the need to avoid interrupting those activities upon the expiration of the current Protocol on 13 November 2021, it is important that the Protocol enters into force as soon as possible.