EU/Mauritius Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution 2017-2021. Extension of the Protocol

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PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the European Union, the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius on an extension of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius.

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: on 28 September 2021, the Council adopted a decision authorising the European Commission to open negotiations for a new protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and, if necessary, in order to avoid interruption of fishing activities, for a limited extension of the current 2017-2021 protocol to the Agreement, which expired on 7 December 2021.

The 2017-2021 Protocol allowed the EU fleet to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in Mauritian waters, up to an indicative level of annual fishing possibilities set at 4000 tonnes.

The two parties have agreed on an extension of the 2017-2021 Protocol for a maximum period of six months. This extension was established by an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters, initialled on 6 December 2021.

CONTENT: the purpose of the proposal for a decision is to authorise the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters **extending for a maximum period of six months the 2017-2021 Protocol** setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius.

Objectives

The aim of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters is to:

- continue granting fishing opportunities to European Union vessels in Mauritius waters in accordance with scientific advice and the recommendations of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), within the limits of the available surplus;

- continue strengthening cooperation between the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the fishing zone of the Republic of Mauritius, in the interests of both parties.

The Agreement forms part of the EU’s external action in relation to ACP countries and takes into account, in particular, EU objectives on respecting democratic principles and human rights.

Fishing opportunities and financial contribution

The Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters provides for indicative fishing opportunities of **2 000 tonnes** and a corresponding adjustment of the EU financial contribution for access.

The EU's financial contribution for six months is **EUR 287 500**, based on:

(a) an amount for access to fishery resources for the categories provided for in the Protocol, set at EUR 110 000 for the duration of the extension of the Protocol;

(b) support for the development of the Republic of Mauritius's sectoral fisheries policy amounting to EUR 110 000 for the duration of the extension of the Protocol. This support meets the objectives of the Republic of Mauritius's national policy on the sustainable management of their maritime fishery resources for the entire duration of the extension of the Protocol;

(c) support for the development of maritime policy and ocean economy amounting to EUR 67 500.