EC/Kiribati Fisheries Partnership Agreement (2023-2028). Implementation Protocol

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PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the Union, the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Republic of Kiribati, of the other part (2023-2028).

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 (FPA) between the European Community, on the one hand, and the Republic of Kiribati, on the other, was signed on 28 April 2008 and entered into force on 30 April 2008 for a period of six years. The first Protocol implementing the FPA expired on 15 September 2012. The second such Protocol expired on 15 September 2015.

On 26 January 2015, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations for a new Protocol to the FPA between the European Union and the Republic of Kiribati. Following these negotiations, the new Protocol was initialled by the negotiators on 18 December 2022. The new protocol covers a period of five years from its date of provisional application, i.e. the date of signature by both parties.

The negotiation of the new Protocol implementing the FPA forms part of the EU's external action towards the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and takes particular account of the EU's objectives regarding respect for democratic principles and human rights.

CONTENT: the purpose of the proposal is to seek the Council's authorisation for the conclusion of the new Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Republic of Kiribati, of the other part (2023-2028).

The objective of the Protocol is to implement the Fisheries Partnership Agreement so as to grant fishing opportunities to Union vessels in the fishing areas within Kiribati waters and to enable the Union and Kiribati to work more closely on promoting cooperation in the field of sustainable development of the oceans, fishery policy, while contributing to decent working conditions in the fisheries sector.

Fishing opportunities

The aim of the new Protocol is to grant fishing opportunities to EU vessels in the Kiribati fishing zones, in accordance with scientific advice and the recommendations of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

The new Protocol allows Union vessels to fish in Kiribati waters for tuna species and provides for the following fishing opportunities:

- 4 tuna purse seine vessels, with an access to Kiribati waters for 160 days per year;

- possible additional days per year can be made available to Union vessels, upon request.

Financial contribution

The annual financial contribution from the Union is EUR 760 000, based on:

- an annual amount for access to fishery resources for the categories provided for in the Protocol, set at EUR 360 000 for the duration of the new Protocol;

- support for the development of Kiribati's sectoral fisheries policy amounting to EUR 400 000 per year, for the duration of the new Protocol.

This support meets the objectives of Kiribati's policy on the sustainable management of their maritime fishery resources for the entire duration of the new Protocol.

The Commission will be empowered to approve, on behalf of the Union, amendments to the Protocol adopted by the Joint Committee set up by the Partnership Agreement.