

EC–São Tomé and Príncipe Fisheries Partnership Agreement (2025–2029): Implementing Protocol

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PURPOSE: to conclude the protocol on the implementation (2025-2029) of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and the European Community.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the Council.

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 Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and the European Community was signed on 30 October 2007 and entered into force on 29 August 2011 for a period of four years. The agreement is tacitly renewable for periods of four years, so it is still in force. A previous five-year FPA implementation protocol entered into force on 19 December 2019 and expired on 18 December 2024.

The Commission negotiated a new protocol with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. Following the negotiations, a protocol was initialled on 9 April 2025. The new protocol covers a period of four years from the date of provisional application, i.e., the date of its signature by the Parties.

The negotiation of a new protocol for the implementation of the fisheries partnership agreement with Sao Tome and Principe is part of the Union's external action towards the countries of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council should 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 (2025-2029).

The objective of the Protocol is to allow Union vessels to conduct fishing activities in the fishing zone of Sao Tome and Principe, as well as to enable the Union and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe to work more closely together to develop a sustainable fisheries policy, to promote the responsible exploitation of fisheries resources in the fishing zone of Sao Tome and Principe and in the Atlantic Ocean, and to contribute to establishing decent working conditions in the fisheries sector.

Fishing opportunities

The protocol grants fishing opportunities to European Union vessels in the fishing zone of Sao Tome and Principe, in accordance with the best available scientific advice and the resolutions and recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), within the limits of the available surplus.

The new protocol provides for fishing opportunities in the following categories:

- 26 tuna purse seiners;

- 9 surface longliners;

- support vessels in accordance with the relevant ICCAT resolutions and the limits set by Sao Tome and Principe legislation.

Financial counterpart

The annual financial contribution amounts to **EUR 825 000**, based on:

(a) an annual amount of EUR 325 000, for access to fishery resources in the fishing zone of Sao Tome and Principe, equivalent to a reference tonnage, for highly migratory species, of 6 500 tonnes per year;

(b) support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of Sao Tome and Principe amounting to EUR 500,000 per year. This support meets the objectives of the strategic plan for fisheries of Sao Tome and Principe.

The **sectoral support programme** defined within the framework of this protocol includes in particular actions for:

- support for monitoring, control and surveillance capacities of fishing activities, measures to deter and sanction infringements related to IUU fishing;

- the scientific assessment of the fishery resources of Sao Tome and Principe and management measures based on scientific advice,

- support for improving value chains for fishery products, including support for fishing communities, particularly through employment assistance and vocational training, with particular attention to women and young people.

The Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and the European Community establishes a Joint Committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement and its implementing protocol. In addition, the Joint Committee may approve certain amendments to the protocol.