EC/Senegal fisheries agreement: protocol for the period from 1st July 2002 to 30 June 2006

2002/0238(CNS) - 02/10/2002 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : on the conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the Agreement between the EC and the Government of the Republic of Senegal on fishing off the coast of Senegal for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2006. CONTENT : the latest protocol annexed to the fisheries agreement between the EC and Senegal expired on 31.12.2001. The latest round of negotiations to renew the protocol, which took place in Dakar on 24 to 25 June 2002, resulted in the initialling of a new protocol. The new protocol, which covers the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2006, will be the 17th since the entry into force of this fisheries agreement. It grants fishing opportunities for 78 tuna vessels and 8000 GRT for trawlers and longliners. Compared to the previous Protocol there has been a considerable reduction of the fishing possibilities on the socially, politically and economically sensitive segments: the coastal demersal segment has been reduced by 30% and the pelagic segment has been excluded from the new Protocol. The overall financial contribution to be paid to Senegal has been increased from EUR 12 million per year to EUR 16 million per year. Out of this amount, the Protocol foresees EUR 3 million/year for the development of a partnership aiming at, inter alia, stock evaluations, control and the surveillance of the fishing activities, the improvement of the safety of the small-scale fishing vessels and institutional support for the introduction of sustainable and responsible fishing. This partnership constitutes an innovative element which did not exist in the previous protocol and which shows the desire of the two parties to contribute to the development of sustainable and responsible fisheries. Moreover, this partnership envisages a programming and follow-up mechanism, which is in line with the other fishing agreements concluded by the Community with third countries. In this respect, it should also be stressed that, within the framework of the partnership, the Senegalese authorities committed themselves to undertake, for each year of application of the protocol, an evaluation and an audit of all the partnership actions. The protocol includes several more positive elements, for example: - for the first time, the new protocol EC/Senegal envisages a continuous monitoring of the development of the state of stocks. To this end, Article 3 of the protocol foresees an annual scientific meeting. On the basis of the conclusions of the scientific meeting, the Joint Committee can adopt appropriate measures of the durable management of resources, including -if necessary -a reduction in the fishing opportunities. - the new way of calculating the fishing possibilities for trawlers and longliners ("per month, averaged over the year") will show the actual fishing effort deployed and will involve a larger flexibility for the EC fishery. It will also most likely bring about a larger rate of utilisation of the fishing possibilities (cost/benefit). - the advances paid by ship-owners have been increased. - the technical conditions have been strengthened (introduction of yearly obligatory biological resting periods, reduced fishing zones, reduced allowed by-catches, larger mesh sizes andincreased obligatory landings). - the number of Senegalese observers and seamen on board Community vessels has been increased. In view of the above, the new Protocol is considered to be good value for money and will encourage the responsible and sustainable exploitation of the resources to the mutual benefit of the Community and Senegal. As regards the licence applications, the proposal states that if licence applications from the following Member States (Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and France) do not cover all the fishing opportunities fixed by the Protocol, the Commission may take into consideration licence applications from any other Member State. The obligation of direct landing by freezer tuna seiners set out in the Annex to the Protocol shall be met by Community shipowners on the basis of the following breakdown (Vessels flying the French flag: 44%; Vessels flying the Spanish flag: 56%).