EC/Kiribati fisheries agreement: Western Pacific tuna fishing

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PURPOSE : to conclude an agreement between the EC and the Republic of Kiribati on fishing within the Kiribati fishing zone. CONTENT : Kiribati controls waters with excellent tuna resources. The text of this new bilateral tuna Agreement was initialled on 6 July 2002. The Protocol to the Agreement has been concluded for an initial period of three years. It establishes the following: - the concession of fishing possibilities by Kiribati for EC vessels must be compatible with the management decisions to be taken, on a regional basis, by the Central West Pacific nations in the context of the Palau Arrangement for the Management of the Western Pacific Purse Seine fishery. The EC fishing effort in Kiribati will have to be in line with appropriate tuna stock assessments based on scientific criteria, including the scientific overviews conducted yearly by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community; - as regards fishing possibilities, or the first year of application of the Agreement, 6 purse seine vessels and 12 surface long-liners will be allowed to fish. Starting from the second year, there will be a minimum of 4 purse seine vessels and 12 surface long-liners. Depending on the management decisions taken pursuant to the Palau Arrangement, the number of fishing licences for purse seine vessels may be increased upto 11 vessels, on a yearly basis; - the global financial contribution was fixed at EUR 546 000 for the first year and to a minimum of 416 000 for the second and third year for the application of the Protocol. Starting from the second year, the financial contribution may be increased by EUR 65 000/year for each additional purse seine vessel licence obtained according to the possibilities offered by Kiribati in line with the Palau Arrangement constraints. In the hypothesis of the acquisition of all additional purse seine licences, the total EC financial contribution could reach EUR 871 000. The Annex to the Agreement establishes monitoring and control of fishing activities. EC ship-owners must pay fishing fees of EUR 21 000 per purse seine vessel and EUR 4200 for each small long-liner vessel. Furthermore, EC ship-owners will be required to embark 2 Kiribati seamen per vessel and tranship at least 3 times per year in a Kiribati port. The draft Council Regulation sets out the method for allocating fishing opportunities among the Member States: i)purse seine vessels - France: 30% of available licences. Spain: 70% of available licences. ii)long-liners - Spain: 6 vessels. Portugal: 6 vessels.