EC/Guinea-Bissau fisheries agreement: protocol for the period from 16th June 2001 to 15th June 2006

2003/0227(CNS) - 10/10/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal on the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters concerning the provisional application of amendments to the Protocol establishing the fishing opportunities and the compensation provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau on fishing off the coast of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2001 to 15 June 2006, and Council Decision of 26 February 2001 setting the terms for financial support to Guinea-Bissau in the fisheries sector PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation. CONTENT : the Protocol attached to the Fisheries Agreement between the European Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau covers the period from 16 June 2001 to 15 June 2006. The two Parties met in Bissau on 19 and 20 May 2003, within the Joint Committee provided for in Article 11 of the Agreement between Guinea-Bissau and the European Community, to analyse all aspects of the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on fisheries and the ad hoc Council Decision of 26 February 2001. They noted the difficulties encountered with the utilisation of fishing rights, in particular the low utilisation of licences in the shrimp trawler segment. The two Parties agreed to amend some of the technical characteristics of the Protocol and, with the priority on the protection and good management of Guinea-Bissau's fisheries resources, agreed that they should, by way of precaution, reduce fishing effort in certain fisheries in the final two years covered by the Protocol (16 June 2004 - 15 June 2006) in accordance with the guidelines set out in the interim reports following scientific monitoring campaigns. The two delegations also agreed on the principle of reprogramming specific support measures for the fisheries sector and of devising a programming method and allocating financial resources to this end (financing a scientific programme to improve information on fisheries resources and monitoring of the evolution of resources; support for improved health and hygiene conditions in the fisheries sector; institutional support for the Ministry of Fisheries; support for investments in the small-scale fishing sector; fisheries monitoring and control). In addition, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau also agreed to review all agreements (bilateral and/or private agreements) currently in force with a view to reducing fishing effort in segments which are over-exploited, guaranteeing compliance with commitments to promote responsible fishing, reviewing fisheries agreements, putting a freeze on new bilateral and private agreements, and strengthening fisheries monitoring policy so as to ensure the rational management of fisheries resources. The Commission proposes, on this basis, that the Council adopt by Regulation the exchange of letters with the amendments to the Protocol and to the Council Decision of 26 February 2001. The Commission provides specifically for: - from 16 June 2004, until the expiry of the Protocol, the fishing opportunities granted pursuant to the Agreement shall be as follows: a) freezer shrimp trawlers: 4 400 gross registered tonnes (GRT); b) freezer fin-fish and cephalopod trawlers: 4 400 grossregistered tonnes (GRT); c) freezer tuna seiners: 40 vessels; d) pole-and-line tuna vessels and surface longliners: 30 vessels. - the two Parties have agreed to allow exchanges of fishing rights between the first two categories (freezer shrimp trawlers and freezer fin-fish and cephalopod trawlers) in the period 16 June 2003 to 15 June 2004, this flexibility being needed to ensure that the Protocol on fisheries is more efficiently used; - from 16 June 2004, the compensation provided for in the Agreement shall be EUR 7 260 000 per year; - the support measures in the fisheries sector shall be financed from financial resources available under the Council Decision of 26 February 2001 (EUR 3 250 000); - reducing fishing effort in segments which are over-exploited, particularly shrimp fishing. The fishing opportunities provided for in the Agreement shall be allocated among the Member States as follows: a) shrimp: Italy 1 776 GRT; Spain 1421 GRT; Portugal 1 066 GRT; Greece 137 GRT. b) fin-fish /cephalopods: Spain 3 143 GRT; Italy 786 GRT; Greece 471 GRT. c) tuna seiners: Spain 20 vessels; France 19 vessels; Italy 1 vessel. If the licence applications from the Member States do not cover all the

fishing opportunities fixed by the Protocol, the Commission may consider licence applications from any other Member State. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS : - Budget line concerned : B78000 + B7800A: "International Fisheries Agreements"; - Overall multiannual estimate of expenditure: EUR 19.95 million; - Period of application: 2004 - 2006; - Impact on staff and administrative expenditure : 9 permanent and 2 temporary amounts to an expense of EUR 1 070 372 per year and EUR 19 480 per year for the other administrative expenditure deriving from the action (mission, meetings, etc).