EC/Gabon fisheries agreement: conclusion of a first fisheries agreement (protocol and technical annex)

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OBJECTIVE: to conclude a fisheries agreement between the European Community and Gabon. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Regulation (EC) no. 2469/98 on the conclusion of the agreement between the European Community and the Gabonese Republic on fishing off the coast of Gabon. CONTENTS: the initial period of validity of the agreement is 5 years from its entry into force, after which it may be tacitly extended for two years at a time. This first fisheries agreement with Gabon lays down the conditions for fishing by Community vessels in Gabonese waters (requirement to obtain a licence, payment of a fee, notification of catch data, taking on board of Gabonese seamen, allowing technical inspections, fishing zones). In return for the fishing activities, the Community is to pay financial compensation as set forth in the protocol annexed to the agreement. It is valid for 3 years from the date of entry into force of the agreement. The compensation is set at EUR 270 000 per annum and covers a tuna catch of 9000 tons per annum. Over and above this volume, Community fishermen will be required to pay EUR 50 per additional ton. The fishing possibilities defined in the protocol are to be divided as follows: - 42 freezer tuna seiners, - 33 surface long liners. In addition to the above financial compensation, the Community will help to finance scientific and technical programmes in the field of fisheries and various other measures to protect fisheries and provide training (study grants and practical training courses for Gabonese fishermen). The total amount of this aid is EUR 1 215 000 over the 3 years covered by the protocol. The fishing opportunities provided for by the agreement are allocated to the main beneficiaries as follows: 50 vessels for Spain, 20 vessels for France and 5 for Portugal. If licence applications from these Member States do not exhaust the fishing opportunities, the Commission may consider applications from any other Member State. The agreement sets up a joint committee to oversee its implementation. Provisions are also included to conserve Gabon's fish stocks. ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Regulation will enter into force on 18 November 1998 and the fisheries agreement and protocol will enter into force once all the necessary procedures have been completed.