

Fisheries agreement EEC/Sao Tome and Príncipe: period from 1st June 2005 to 31st May 2006

2005/0249(CNS) - 07/12/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to extend by one year (until 31 May 2006) the Protocol annexed to the Fisheries Agreement between the EEC and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe.

PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation

CONTENT : the Protocol annexed to the Fisheries Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe expired on 31 May 2005.

The two parties agreed at the beginning of 2005 to extend the Protocol, in particular in order to work out certain difficulties relating to the implementation of the 2002-05 Protocol and to give the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe more time to prepare as well as possible for negotiations on a future partnership agreement, and to implement the action programme to support the necessary development of the fisheries sector.

The new government, which took office in March 2004, waited until the last minute to analyse the option of extending the protocol, despite numerous reminders in March, April and May 2005. The parties have finally decided to extend the Protocol for a period of one year, from 1 June 2005 to 31 May 2006. The extension, in the form of an exchange of letters, was initialed by the two parties on 3 June 2005, and sets out the technical and financial conditions governing the fishing activities of EC vessels in the waters of São Tomé and Príncipe for the period from 1 June 2005 to 31 May 2006.

The Commission proposes, on this basis, that the Council adopt the Regulation on the conclusion of an Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters extending the Protocol. A proposal for a Council Decision on provisional application of the Agreement (pending its actual entry into force) is the subject of a separate procedure.

The main features of the extended Protocol are unchanged.

The fishing opportunities set out in the Protocol are allocated to Member States as follows:

- tuna seiners: France:18 ; Spain: 18
- pole-and-line tuna vessels: Portugal: 2
- surface longliners: Spain: 20 ; Portugal: 5

If licence applications from these Member States do not cover all the fishing opportunities set out in the Protocol, the Commission may take into consideration licence applications from any other Member State.

The Member States whose vessels fish under the Agreement must notify the Commission of the quantities of each stock caught within the fishing zone of São Tomé and Príncipe in accordance with Commission Regulation 500/2001/EC.

For further information concerning the financial implications of this measure, please refer to the financial statement.