EC/Seychelles Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2006/0029(CNS) - 06/03/2006 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to approve the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EC and the Republic of Seychelles.

PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation.

CONTENT : following the Council Conclusions on the Fisheries Partnership Agreements of July 2004, the Community renegotiates all existing framework agreements to be replaced by this new framework.

The initialing of the new Fisheries Partnership between the Community and the Seychelles took place in March 2005. Both parties have thereby agreed to a new framework agreement and a fisheries protocol (the protocol is to be adopted in a separate procedure).

The new Fisheries Partnership Agreement and the new protocol provides for improved economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to guaranteeing the conservation and sustainable exploitation of resources, as well as partnerships between undertakings aimed at developing the common interest economic activities in the fisheries sector and related activities.

Scope: the Agreement establishes the principles, rules and procedures governing:

- economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to introducing responsible fishing in the waters of Seychelles to guarantee the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources, and developing the Seychelles fisheries sector;

- the conditions governing access by Community fishing vessels to Seychelles' waters;

- the arrangements for policing fisheries in Seychelles waters with a view to ensuring that the above rules and conditions are complied with, the measures for the conservation and management of fish stocks are effective and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is prevented;

- partnerships between companies aimed at developing economic activities in the fisheries sector and related activities, in the common interest.

Principles underlying the implementation of the Agreement: the Parties undertake to promote responsible fishing in the waters of Seychelles based on the principle of non-discrimination, and to cooperate with a view to defining a sectoral fisheries policy in Seychelles' waters. They must also carry out evaluations, both jointly and unilaterally, of measures implemented on the basis of the Agreement. Notably, there is a clause stating that the employment of Seychelles seamen on board of Community vessels will be governed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which shall apply as of right to the corresponding contracts and general terms of employment. This concerns in particular the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Financial contribution: the Community will pay Seychelles a financial contribution in accordance with the terms and conditions laid down in the Protocol and Annexes. This single contribution will be composed of two related elements, namely:

- access by Community vessels to the Seychelles' fisheries, and

- the Community's financial support for introducing responsible fishing and the sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in Seychelles' waters.

Statistical cooperation: during the period covered by the Agreement, the Parties will monitor the evolution of resources in Seychelles' fishing zone, and a joint scientific meeting shall be held annually to that end. Based on the conclusions of the annual scientific meeting and the best available scientific advice, the Parties will take measures to ensure the sustainable management of fisheries resources. The EC and the Seychelles undertake to consult each other, either directly or within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), to ensure the management and conservation of living resources in the Indian Ocean and to cooperate in the relevant scientific research.

Promoting cooperation among economic operators and in civil society: the EC and the Seychelles must encourage commercial and technical cooperation in the fisheries sector and related sectors, as well as encourage exchanges of information on fishing techniques and gear, preservation methods and the industrial processing of fisheries products.

The Commission proposes on this basis that the Council adopt the conclusion of this new Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EC and the Seychelles.