EC/Solomon Islands Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2005/0168(CNS) - 13/03/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE: the conclusion of a fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Solomon Islands

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Regulation 563/2006/EC concerning the conclusion of a Partnership Agreement between the European Community and Solomon Islands on fishing off Solomon Islands.

CONTENT: this Council Regulation confirms the Agreement between the European Communities and the Solomon Islands on fishing opportunities in the waters off the Islands. The fishing opportunities set out in the Protocol (attached to the Regulation) are as follows:

- Freezer tuna seiners: Spain: 75% of fishing possibilities available. France: 25% of fishing possibilities available;

- Surface long liners: Spain: six vessels. France: four vessels.

In cases where the licence applications from these Member States do not cover all the fishing opportunities fixed by the Protocol, the Commission may take into consideration licence applications from any other Member State.

In addition, this Agreement established the principles rules and procedures governing the economic, financial, technical and scientific co-operation in the fisheries sector. It seeks to enhance responsible fishing in the fishing zone off the Solomon Islands and to guarantee conservation as well as the sustainable exploitation of fishers in the area. The Agreement sets out the conditions governing access to the fishing zone by Community vessels; sets out the arrangements for policing fisheries in the Solomon Islands as well as for the effective conservation and management of fish stock, the prevention of illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing and the setting up of a partnership between companies seeking to develop economic activities in the fisheries sector. In other provision, the Agreement and accompanying Protocol stipulate that:

- Community vessels operating in the waters off the Solomon Islands must employ at least one seaman from the Solomon Islands and that working conditions on board musts be in accordance with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

- The state of resources will be monitored by a Scientific Committee set up by both parties.

- The Solomon Islands authorise Community vessels to engage in fishing activities in its fishing zone. Any such fishing activity will be subject to the laws and Regulations of the Solomon Islands.

- The conditions for obtaining a Licence are specified in the accompanying Protocol.

- The Community will grant the Solomon Islands a single financial contribution which will be calculated according to access by Community vessels to the fishing zone and the Community's financial support for enhancing sustainable fishing. The single financial contribution will be EUR

400 000 per year. A share of 30% of the contribution will be put towards the definition and implementation of a sectoral fisheries policy in the Solomon Islands with a view to enhancing responsible fishing.

- Both Parties will encourage economic, commercial, scientific and technical co-operation in the fisheries sector

- A Joint Committee will be set up to monitor the implementation of this Agreement

- The Agreement applies to the territories of the EU, as defined in the EU Treaty establishing the European Community on the one hand, and the territory of the Solomon Islands on the other hand.

- The Agreement will apply for three years from the date of its entry into force. It will be automatically renewed for an additional three years, unless notice of termination is given.

- The Agreement may be terminated by either Party in the event of serious circumstances (such as the degradation of stocks). In which case either Party must give written notification six months before the Agreement is to be terminated.

- The European Community may suspend payment of the financial contribution on the grounds of *force majeure* – in other words under circumstances (other than natural phenomena) which prevent fishing activities off the Solomon Islands.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 20 April 2006. The Protocol, with its Annexes, enters into force on the date on which the Parties notify each other of the completion of the procedure necessary for that purpose. It shall apply with effect not before 1 January 2005.