

EC/São Tomé and Príncipe Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2007/0034(CNS) - 07/03/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the EC.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

BACKGROUND: the Community and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe initialled, on 25 June 2006, a Fisheries Partnership Agreement which replaces the Agreement between the EEC and the Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe on fishing off the coast of São Tomé and Príncipe which entered into force in 1984 (refer to [CNS/2005/0249](#) for details of the last protocol).

The main objective of the new Partnership Agreement is to strengthen cooperation between the EC

and São Tomé and Príncipe. This will create a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fisheries resources in São Tomé and Príncipe's fishing zone, in the interests of both Parties. The Commission's negotiating position was based in part on the results of an ex-post and ex-ante evaluation carried out by independent experts.

This Agreement establishes the principles, rules and procedures governing:

- economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to promoting responsible fishing in São Tomé and Príncipe's fishing zones to guarantee the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and develop São Tomé and Príncipe's fisheries sector;
- the conditions governing access by Community fishing vessels to São Tomé and Príncipe's fishing zones;
- cooperation on the arrangements for policing fisheries in São Tomé and Príncipe's fishing zones with a view to ensuring that the above rules and conditions are complied with, that the measures for the conservation and management of fish stocks are effective and that illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing is prevented;
- partnerships between companies aimed at developing economic activities in the fisheries sector and related activities, in the common interest.

The Protocol and the Annex setting out the technical and financial conditions governing the fishing activities of EC vessels were signed for a period of four years from 1 June 2006. Pending the entry into force of the new Agreement, this Protocol and the Annex will enter into force on the date on which the Parties notify each other of the completion of the procedures necessary for that purpose. They will apply with effect from 1 June 2006.

The financial contribution is fixed at **EUR 663 000 per year** during the period of application of this Protocol. If the overall quantity of catches by Community vessels in São Toméan waters exceeds 8 500 tonnes per year, the amount of the financial contribution shall be increased by EUR 65 for each additional tonne caught. However, the total annual amount paid by the Community shall not be more than twice the

amount equivalent to the reference tonnage (i.e. EUR 1 105 000). Where the quantities caught by Community vessels exceed the quantities corresponding to twice the total annual amount (17 000 tonnes), the amount due for the quantity exceeding that limit shall be paid the following year.

The main elements of the agreement are:

Fishing opportunities: 25 freezer tuna seiners (a reduction of 30.6% against the previous Protocol) and 18 surface longliners (a reduction of 28% against the previous Protocol) allocated as follows (based on applications by the Member States and the historical rates of utilisation by Member State and by category), i.e.:

- tuna seiners: France: 12, Spain: 13;

- surface longliners: Spain: 13, Portugal: 5.

Annual reference tonnage: 8 500 tonnes of tuna and related species

Annual financial contribution: EUR 663 000.

Advances and fees payable by vessel-owners: EUR 35 (compared with EUR 25 previously) per tonne of tuna and related species caught in São Tomé and Príncipe's fishing zone. The advances are fixed at EUR 5 250 per year per tuna seiner and EUR 1 925 per year per surface longliner (+40% against the previous Protocol).

The Partnership Agreement also provides for encouraging economic, scientific and technical cooperation in the fisheries sector and related sectors.

The financial contribution is fixed at EUR 663 000 per year. Of this financial contribution, 50% will provide annual financial support for defining and implementing a sectoral fisheries policy in São Tomé and Príncipe, with a view to introducing responsible and sustainable fishing. This financial support will be based on annual and multiannual programming.

Shipowners' fees have been fixed for each category and, overall, could create an additional annual income of around EUR 165 900 for São Tomé and Príncipe.

For a more detailed assessment of the budgetary implications of this proposal, please refer to the financial statement.