

EU fisheries agreement with the Cook Islands

The EU fisheries agreement with the Cook Islands and its implementation protocol, signed in October 2016, allow EU vessels to fish in this country's waters for the first time. Parliament's consent, requested for their conclusion, will be subject to a plenary vote planned for the February II session.

Background

To date, the EU has concluded tuna fisheries agreements with three countries in the western-central Pacific: Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Micronesia (see map). However, none of these agreements currently have a protocol in force, and thus the EU fishing fleet cannot operate in these countries' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ; for an overview of EU fishing activities in the western-central Pacific, see July 2016 EPRS [briefing](#) 'Expanding the network of EU tuna agreements').

EU sustainable fisheries partnership agreement with the Cook Islands

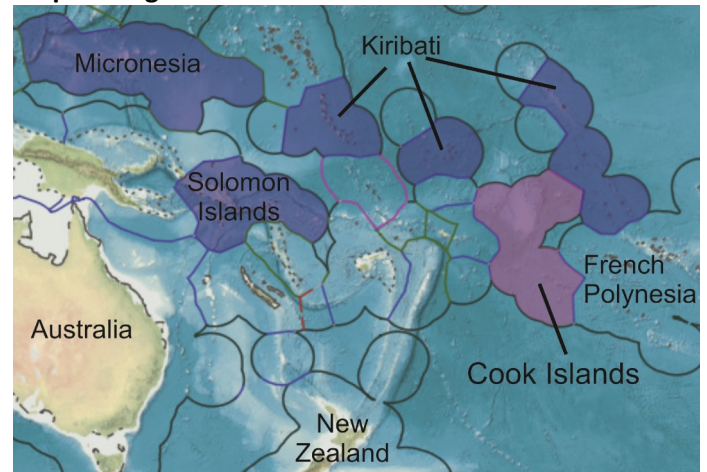
Over the past few years, the Commission has negotiated the first EU fisheries agreement with the Cook Islands, together with a protocol defining its implementation details. Following a lengthy [debate](#) in the Cook Islands on allowing [purse-seining](#) by foreign fleets in their waters, the agreement and its protocol were signed on 14 October 2016 and are now applied provisionally. The main objective is to ensure continued activity of the EU fleet in an important tuna fishing region, notably after the end of the Kiribati protocol in September 2015. The [agreement](#) is set to last eight years and is tacitly renewable. The associated four-year protocol will allow four EU purse seiners to fish a reference tonnage of 7 000 tonnes per year. In return, the EU will pay an annual contribution of €735 000 for the first two years, and €700 000 for the remaining two years. Of this amount, €350 000 per year represents sectoral support for the Cook Islands' fisheries policy, which targets several precise aspects: increasing monitoring, control and surveillance capabilities in the large Cook Islands' EEZ and measures to combat illegal fishing, improving scientific knowledge of fish stocks and marine ecosystems in this area, and supporting small-scale fisheries. The remainder represents access rights for EU vessels.

European Parliament position

Following the favourable opinions from the Committees on Budgets and Development, on 26 January 2017 the Committee on Fisheries (PECH) [recommended](#) that Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of the agreement and protocol. The Committee also adopted an accompanying motion for a [non-legislative resolution](#) setting out recommendations which the Commission is expected to take into account. It underlines the significant amount provided by the agreement for supporting sectoral development, and the Cook Islands' clear strategy for using it. It requests that an annual report on the outcomes of the sectoral support is submitted to the Parliament, and that Parliament is fully informed about procedures related to the protocol.

Recommendation on consent: [2016/0077\(NLE\)](#);
Committee responsible: PECH; Rapporteur: João Ferreira (GUE/NGL, Portugal).

Map - EU agreements in the western-central Pacific



Data source: [MarineRegions.org](#), accessed on 27.1.2017. Different types of boundaries are indicated for the coastal states' EEZ, e.g. 200 nm lines (in black), median lines (in green), treaties (in blue).

