

EU–São Tomé and Príncipe fisheries agreement

EU fishing vessels have long been active in the waters of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, in the framework of a bilateral EU fisheries agreement. The conclusion of a new protocol implementing this agreement is expected to be the subject of a consent vote in Parliament during the June plenary part-session. The protocol provides access rights for the EU fleet to fish for tunas in São Tomean waters. In addition, it aims to promote sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in the region and to support the development of the local fisheries sector.

Background

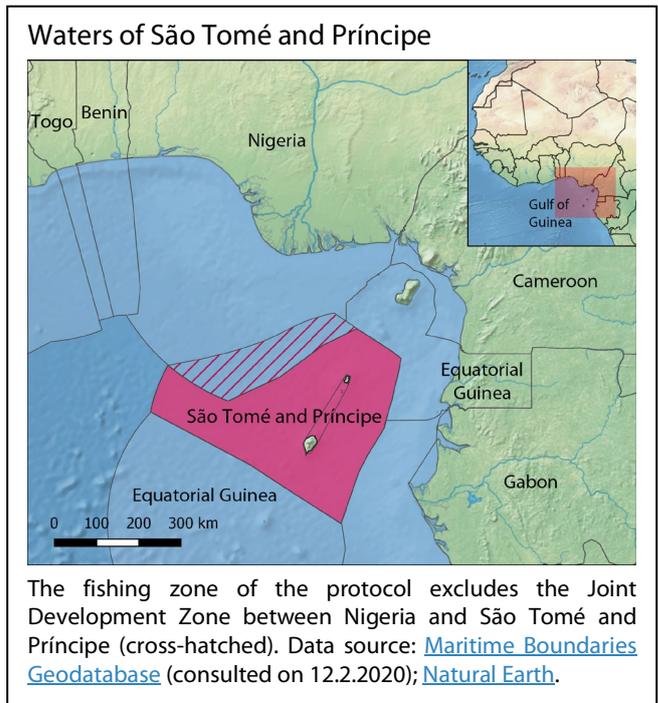
The agreement with São Tomé and Príncipe is part of the network of [tuna fisheries agreements](#) along the western coast of Africa, and provides the legal framework for EU access to highly migratory species in São Tomean waters. First concluded in [1984](#), it was replaced by the current [fisheries partnership agreement](#) in July 2007, then tacitly renewed every four years. Successive implementing protocols have ensured fishing opportunities for EU vessels, in exchange for a financial contribution. The previous protocol, covering the 2014-2018 period, expired on 22 May 2018. An [evaluation study](#) recommended its renewal.

European Commission proposal

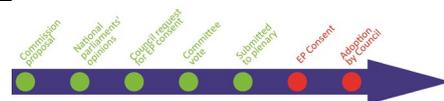
A new five-year [protocol](#) was initialled on 17 April 2019, and has applied provisionally since its signature on 19 December 2019. The protocol is particularly important for EU fishing activities in the southern part of the Gulf of Guinea, as the agreements with neighbouring Gabon and Equatorial Guinea are dormant (i.e. they have no protocol in place). The new protocol provides [fishing opportunities](#) for up to 28 purse seiners (16 from Spain and 12 from France) and 6 surface longliners (5 from Spain and one from Portugal), fishing tuna and tuna-like species equivalent to a reference tonnage of 8 000 tonnes per year. The protocol defines an annual EU contribution of €840 000, of which €400 000 represents access rights to São Tomean waters. The remaining €440 000 is dedicated to supporting sustainable management of resources and the development of local fisheries, in particular by improving the monitoring and control of fishing activities, fisheries research and the quality of fisheries products, supporting small-scale fishing and aquaculture, and strengthening international cooperation.

European Parliament position

On 21 January 2020, the Committee on Fisheries (PECH) recommended that Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of the protocol. The Committees on Development (DEVE) and Budgets (BUDG) have also provided favourable opinions. This [recommendation](#) will be considered in plenary in June.



Consent: [2019/0173\(NLE\)](#); Committee responsible: PECH;
Rapporteur: Nuno Melo (EPP, Portugal).



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Author: Irina Popescu with Clara Antonia Kloecker, Members' Research Service
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ep@ep.europa.eu (contact) <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) <http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)

