DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and its Implementing Protocol (2020-2026) between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (COM(2020)0002 – C9-0000/2020 – 2020/0002(NLE))

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PA_Leg_Consent
The Fisheries Partnership Agreement and its Implementing Report between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles is a tuna agreement, which was initialled by the negotiators on 22 October 2019. The new Agreement repeals and replaces the existing Agreement, which entered into application on 18 January 2014 and expired on 17 January 2020. It covers a period of six years from the date of its provisional application, i.e. the date on which it is signed by the parties.

It will allow the EU fleet (40 tuna purse-seiners and 8 long-liners) to continue fishing in Seychelles waters for a duration of 6 years while continuing to support the sustainable development of the fisheries sector in the Seychelles.

Like its previous incarnation, the new Protocol for 2020-2026 must comply with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Regulation, which places emphasis on sustainable fisheries and good governance in particular, while recognising the importance of policy consistency between the CFP and the EU’s development cooperation objectives.

For the whole duration of the Protocol, the total estimated value of the Protocol amounts to EUR 58 200 000, equivalent to EUR 9 700 000 per year. The total annual financial contribution paid by the European Union comprises an annual amount for access to Seychelles fishing zone of EUR 2 500 000, equivalent to a reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes per year, and a specific amount of EUR 2 800 000 per year is earmarked to promote the sustainable management of fisheries in Seychelles, as well as to support the development of small-scale fisheries.

The rapporteur believes that the new Protocol has the potential to promote the responsible and sustainable exploitation of fish stocks, and that it is in line with the objectives of agreements on sustainable fisheries and development cooperation.

The rapporteur emphasises the importance of promoting ecosystem protection and maintaining fish stocks above the levels required to obtain the maximum sustainable yield, as more abundant fish stocks are essential for the development of coastal fishing communities, in line with the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.

The rapporteur also takes the view that more emphasis should be placed on stepping up the control and surveillance of fishing activities in order for illegal fishing to be tackled more effectively.

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The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to recommend approval of the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and its Implementing Protocol (2020-2026) between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles.