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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

Accompanying the document

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the conclusion of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement and a protocol with the Republic of Seychelles

{COM(2019) 281 final} - {SWD(2019) 210 final}

The Council Conclusions on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy adopted on 19 March 2012, calls for an ex-post and ex-ante evaluation to be carried out by the Commission before negotiating a new protocol to the SFPA¹ This stems from Article 31(10) of the Basic CFP Regulation. Ex-ante and ex-post valuation studies aim to inform decision makers, before the negotiation directives by the Council are adopted. The fishing opportunities negotiated under the SFPAs are in line with the best available scientific advice and fleet activities are not in competition with the local artisanal fishermen.

The first fisheries agreement between the EU and Seychelles dates back from 1987. The current Agreement was concluded in 2006² and is tacitly renewed every six years from its entry into force. Under the current Protocol of six years (18 January 2014 till 17 January 2020), the EU fleet is allowed to fish tuna in Seychelles' waters with a reference tonnage of 50 000 tonnes per year. Access is given to 40 tune purse seiners and 6 surface longliners. In addition to the fees paid by the European fleet, the EU pays a financial contribution of 5 000 000 EUR per year for this partnership, out of which 2 500 000 EUR are earmarked for supporting the local fishing sector in Seychelles and improving fisheries governance³.

In accordance with the Better Regulation guidelines, the Staff Working Document (SWD) and its executive summary present the results of a retrospective (ex-post- evaluation carried out by an independent contractor and a forward-looking (ex-ante) evaluation in view of a possible renewal of the Protocol and of a new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement.

The contractor has fully addressed the evaluation questions and provided the Commission with concrete, reliable and credible results. Based on these observations, the contractor has drawn conclusions based on objective analysis and made specific and relevant recommendations for future negotiations on future agreement and protocol between the EU and Seychelles.

Therefore, from all options considered the renewal of the Protocol at the end of its implementation period (17 January 2020) clearly appears as the preferred option. The evaluation also concludes that it could be in the mutual interest of both parties to consider updating the framework for their cooperation by the adoption of a new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement. Any other option would not bring the same benefits, including the option of not renewing the Protocol.

The current Protocol positively addresses the identified needs of the different stakeholders. Therefore, the evaluation recommends retaining a similar technical and financial approach in a future Protocol, with however some adaptations aimed in particular at improving the implementing technical conditions of its access component as well as the management of the sectoral support.

To sum up, the Commission generally supports the conclusions of the assessment made by the contractor.

1 Doc. 7086/12 PECHE 66.

2 OJ L290 of 20.10.2006, p.2

3 For the last 4 years of the Protocol. For the first 2 years, it was 5 350 000