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SWD(2021) 222 final

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 an Implementing Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius

{COM(2021) 456 final} - {SWD(2021) 221 final}

The 19 March 2012 Council conclusions on the external dimension of the CFP call on the Commission to carry out *ex post* and *ex ante* evaluations before negotiating a new protocol to an SFPA¹. This requirement is based on Article 31(10) of the CFP Regulation. The aim of such evaluations is to inform decision-makers in advance of the Council's adoption of negotiation directives. The fishing opportunities negotiated under SFPAs are in line with the best available scientific advice and the EU fleet is not in competition with local artisanal fishers.

The first fisheries agreement between the EU and Mauritius dates back to 1989. The current Agreement², valid for 6 years and renewable for additional periods of 3 years, entered into force on 28 January 2014. Under the current 4-year Protocol (8 December 2017 to 7 December 2021), EU vessels are allowed to fish tuna in Mauritian waters, with an annual reference tonnage of 4 000 tonnes. Access is given to 40 purse seiners and 45 surface longliners. In addition to the fees paid by the EU fleet, the EU pays a financial contribution of EUR 220 000 per year for access, plus specific annual amounts of EUR 220 000 for the support and implementation of Mauritius' sectoral fisheries policy and EUR 135 000 to support the deployment of maritime policy and ocean economy.

In accordance with the 'better regulation' guidelines, the staff working document 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 the possible renewal of the Implementing Protocol to the FPA with Mauritius.

The contractor has fully addressed the evaluation questions and provided the Commission with concrete, reliable and credible results. It has drawn conclusions based on objective analysis and made specific and relevant recommendations for future negotiations.

Of all the options considered, the renewal of the Protocol at the end of its implementation period (7 December 2021) emerges clearly as the preferred option. The current Protocol addresses effectively the identified needs of the various stakeholders. Therefore, the evaluation recommends retaining a similar technical and financial approach in a future protocol, with some adaptations aimed in particular at improving the technical implementing conditions of its access component and the management of sectoral support. It recommends reviewing the EU's financial contribution for sectoral support, in line with the absorption and execution capacity of the Mauritian ministry in question.

In summary, the Commission generally supports the conclusions of the contractor's assessment.

¹ Doc. 7086/12 PECHE 66.

² OJ L 79, 18.3.2014, p. 3.