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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

to authorise the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the renewal of the protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Guinea Bissau

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A. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The European Union and the Republic of Guinea Bissau have concluded a protocol to the fisheries agreement¹ which was initialled by the two parties on 23 May 2007 and entered into force on 18 March 2008. The protocol, which grants fishing opportunities for the EU vessels and fixes the financial counterpart, will expire on 15 June 2011.

The Commission proposes to negotiate a new protocol that meets the actual possibilities and needs of the Member States fleet and is in line with the July 2004 Council guidelines on fisheries partnership agreements.

The Council is asked to adopt the negotiation guidelines attached to this recommendation.

B. RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the above, the Commission recommends that:

- The Council authorises the Commission to open and conduct negotiations for the renewal of the protocol in the framework of the fisheries partnership agreement with the Republic of Guinea Bissau;
- The Commission is nominated as the Union negotiator for this subject;
- The Commission shall conduct such negotiations in consultation with the special committee pursuant to the provisions laid down in the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union;
- The Council approves the negotiation guidelines attached to this recommendation.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) n°241/2008 of 17 March 2008 – OJ L 75 of 18 March 2008

ANNEX

Negotiation guidelines

- The objective of the negotiations is the renewal of the protocol in the framework of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Guinea Bissau, in line with the 15 July 2004 Council conclusions on fisheries partnership agreements based on the Commission's communication of 23 December 2002, and giving consideration to the human rights situation in the country.
- This protocol shall include a clause about consequences in cases of violation of human rights and democratic principles.
- With a view to ensuring through this new protocol, the promotion of sustainable and responsible fisheries, the Commission's negotiation objectives will be based on the following:
 - Ensuring access to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the necessary authorisations for the vessels of the European fleet to carry out fishing activities in the aforesaid EEZ;
 - Duly taking into account the best available scientific advice;
 - Ensuring that access to fisheries resources is based on the same criteria that apply to the current protocol and on the evolutions observed during the past few years;
 - Strengthening dialogue on sector policy with a view to encouraging the implementation of a responsible fisheries policy, consistent with the development objectives of the country, in particular with regard to monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities, fisheries resource management, and improved hygiene standards of fisheries products.