EU and Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement

Published by AGRINFO on 19 Jul 2024; Revised 27 May 2025

EU and Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement – new Protocol now applies

Council Decision (EU) 2025/961 of 12 May 2025 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

Council Regulation (EU) 2024/2591 of 10 September 2024 on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

Update

The European Commission has approved the 2024–2029 Implementing Protocol to the EU's Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) with Guinea-Bissau. The previous Protocol expired on 14 June 2024.

Impacted products

Cephalopods, crustaceans, demersal (bottom-dwelling) fish, small pelagic (open-sea) fish, tuna

What is changing?

The Commission has approved the Implementing Protocol to the FPA between the EU and Guinea-Bissau. The Protocol provides fishing opportunities for EU fleets from France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. These include shrimp freezer trawlers, fin-fish and cephalopod freezer trawlers, tuna freezer seiners and long liners, and pole-and-line tuna vessels.

The Protocol allows the following fishing opportunities:

- fin-fish and cephalopod freezer trawlers: 3,500 tonnes per year
- shrimp freezer trawlers: 3,700 tonnes per year

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- small-pelagic trawlers: 0 tonnes per year
- tuna freezer seiners and longliners: 28
- pole-and-line tuna vessels: 13.

The agreed Protocol:

- supports the national administration of Guinea-Bissau in its transition to a management system based on catch limits
- supports Guinea-Bissau's compliance with its reporting obligations to the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations of which it is a member, in particular the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
- strengthens the ability of the national administration to implement controls linked to the export of fishery products to the EU.

Why?

The continuation of sectoral support is important because Guinea-Bissau is preparing a reform of its management system, and is creating an export chain for fishery products to the EU.

The total allowable catch (TAC) for small pelagic species has been set at 0 tonnes due to concerns about the state of the stocks, and because fishing opportunities by EU trawlers targeting small pelagic species were underutilised in the previous Protocol.

Timeline

The current Protocol applies since **18 September 2024**.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

Under the Protocol, export certification to the EU and support towards the construction of the industrial fishing port aim to create a favourable environment for private investment and economic activities to encourage economic cooperation between the EU and Guinea-Bissau, and to meet the need for integration of the fisheries sector into the overall economy, which is a national priority for Guinea-Bissau.

Civil society actors in Guinea-Bissau regret that the previous Protocol (2019–2024) had limited impact on economic integration between operators in the national fishing sector, and that the positive impacts of the Protocol in Guinea-Bissau have been mostly invisible or misunderstood (Evaluation to the Protocol).

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Sectoral support under the current Protocol will assist the Guinea-Bissau fisheries administration with monitoring, control, and surveillance of fishing activities because there is no other external funding available to support the governance of the sector (Evaluation to the Protocol).

Background

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) ensure consistency between the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and other European policies; better governance of fisheries; combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; integration of partner countries into the global economy; and sustainable use of partner country resources.

The current Agreement between the EU and Guinea-Bissau entered into force in June 2007. It is part of the network of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements available to EU operators in the Atlantic Ocean. Guinea-Bissau's fishing area offers an estimated 360,000 tonnes of fisheries resources, including high-value commercial species such as cephalopods, crustaceans, demersal fish, and small pelagics. Access agreements with foreign fleets enable Guinea-Bissau to exploit this potential. The country has no fishing fleet capable of exploiting these resources on its own.

The Agreement has impacted employment in Guinea-Bissau and supply to local markets, but catches made by EU trawlers are not landed, processed, or marketed in Guinea-Bissau because its industrial fishing port infrastructure is inadequate. EU operators suggest that the business environment in the country does not yet encourage investment. The Agreement has therefore contributed mainly to economic development opportunities in foreign ports (Abidjan, Dakar) and EU ports (Las Palmas) (Evaluation to the Protocol).

In the previous Implementing Protocol, EU fishing opportunities represented 27% of the total allowable potential for industrial fishing in Guinea-Bissau. About 90% of catches, mainly cephalopods and shrimp, supply the EU market (Evaluation to the Protocol). The EU's financial contribution helped support and implement Guinea-Bissau's sectoral fisheries policy, establishing fish storage warehouses and studies for a new industrial fishing port.

The financial contribution under the new Protocol is set at €17,000,000 per year (€12,500,000 for access to fishery resources plus €4,500,000 in support of Guinea Bissau's sectoral policy) (Evaluation to the Protocol).

Resources

Caillart, B., Guérin, B., Guélé, M.-É. (2023) Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du Protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche entre l'Union européenne et la Guinée-Bissau. European Commission.

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Council Decision (EU) 2024/2588 of 10 September 2024 on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2019–2024)

Evaluation to the Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Guinea-Bissau, Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2024) 5 final

Regulation 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy

2007/854/EC: Council Decision concerning the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on the provisional application of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the period 16 June 2007 to 15 June 2011

Sources

Council Regulation (EU) 2024/2591 on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

Council Decision (EU) 2024/2588 on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2024–2029)

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