EU–São Tomé and Príncipe Fisheries Partnership Agreement

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EU–São Tomé and Príncipe Fisheries Agreement: Allocation of fishing opportunities

Council Regulation (EU) 2025/2257 of 29 September 2025 on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community (2025–2029)

Council Decision (EU) 2025/2139 of 30 September 2025 on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application of the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community (2025–2029)

Update

The European Commission and São Tomé and Príncipe have agreed a new Implementing Protocol (2025–2029) to the current Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the European Union (EU) and São Tomé and Príncipe, with fishing opportunities for highly migratory species (including tuna, swordfish, and oceanic whitetip shark) in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters for 35 EU vessels.

Impacted products

Highly migratory species including tuna, swordfish, and oceanic whitetip shark

What is changing?

The European Commission and São Tomé and Príncipe have agreed a new Implementing Protocol (2025–2029) to the FPA between the EU and São Tomé and Príncipe. The new Protocol will provide fishing opportunities for EU fleets, and the EU will provide São Tomé and Príncipe a yearly financial contribution of €825,000. This consists of annual fishing access to São Tomé and Príncipe's waters at €325,000 (based on an estimated catch of 6,500 tonnes), plus support for development of São Tomé and Príncipe's sectoral fisheries policy at €500,000 per year (see Protocol for details).

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The new Protocol will allow fishing opportunities for:

- 26 tuna seiners
- 9 surface longliners

Why?

The EU fleet cannot fish in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters if there is no Protocol in place that implements the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) between the two parties. The previous Protocol expired on 18 December 2024.

Timeline

The Regulation applies from **6 October 2025**.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The new Protocol provides economic revenue and employment opportunities to São Tomé and Príncipe's population through improving the options for landing catches of the EU fleet in ports in São Tomé and Príncipe. It foresees the setting up of businesses, vocational training, and programmes aimed at developing and modernising the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in a sustainable way.

Background

The FPA between the EU and São Tomé and Príncipe, in effect since July 2007, is part of the tuna network fisheries agreements in West Africa. The previous Protocol allowed for a maximum of 34 vessels, flying the flags of France, Portugal, and Spain, to operate year-round in São Tomé and Príncipe's waters. Over the course of the Protocol, the EU has made an estimated total financial contribution of €4.2 million.

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

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Resources

Defaux V, Caillart B (2024) Évaluation rétrospective du Protocole de mise en œuvre de l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche entre l'Union européenne et la République de Sao Tomé-et-Principe et prospective d'un éventuel futur Protocole. Rapport final. Publications Office of the European Union.

Commission Staff Working Document: Evaluation Accompanying the document Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union on a new implementing protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on behalf of the European Union on a new implementing protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

Regulation 894/2007 on the conclusion of a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community

Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community (2025-2029)

Regulation 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy

Sources

Council Regulation (EU) 2025/2257 on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community (2025–2029)

Council Decision (EU) 2025/2139 on the signing, on behalf of the Union, and provisional application of the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe and the European Community (2025–2029)

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