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DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (2026-2030) (09587/2026 – C10-0195/2026 – 2026/0107(NLE))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: Emma Ytterell

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (2026-2030)
(09587/2026 – C10-0195/2026 – 2026/0107(NLE))**

(Consent)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (09587/2026),
 - having regard to the draft Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (2026-2030) (09272/2026),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 43(2) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a)(v), and Article 218(7), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C10-0195/2026),
 - having regard to the budgetary assessment by the Committee on Budgets,
 - having regard to Rule 107(1) and (4), and Rule 117(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Development,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Fisheries (A10-0000/2026),
1. Gives its consent to the conclusion of the protocol;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Republic of Seychelles.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelagic country consisting of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean. With an area of 455km² and an estimated population of about 120.000, it is the smallest and least populated countries in Africa.

The Seychelles' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extends up to 200 km from the coast. With its many islands scattered over thousands of kilometres, Seychelles has the largest EEZ in the western Indian Ocean, reaching 1 331 964 km². Its location in the path of the annual tuna migration across the western Indian Ocean ensures access to abundant resources of highly migratory species.

Fishing activities in Seychelles mainly include large-scale fisheries (with purse seine and longline segments), smaller longline fisheries and small-scale and artisanal fisheries, along with more traditional and local fisheries.

The purse seine tuna fishery targets mostly surface swimming yellowfin and skipjack tuna. Port Victoria's strategic location in the middle of the tuna fishing grounds makes it the most important tuna transshipment port in the Indian Ocean. Over 90% of catches of purse seiners licensed to fish inside the Seychelles EEZ are transhipped and landed in Port Victoria every year.

The economic sector associated with fishing activities began to develop in the 1980s, with the improvement of facilities at the port of Victoria, due to the fisheries agreements concluded with the EU and Japan. In addition, fish processing developed in the 1990s, which led to increased landings. The development of the fisheries sector had a significant multiplier effect, as it supported employment throughout the processing and marketing chain and in other ancillary activities associated with fishing.

Seychelles hosts one of the world's largest tuna canneries, which provides a significant share of national employment, with the resulting products exported to major global markets, including the EU. Seychelles also hosts the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

The 2026-2030 Protocol

The Republic of the Seychelles and the European Union have been strategic partners in the area of fisheries for more than 40 years. The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA), first concluded in 1984, plays a key role in EU fishing activities in the Western Indian Ocean, which is the most important tuna fishing ground for the EU fleet. EU vessels dominate the purse seiner segment in the region.

The SFPA has been implemented by successive protocols, defining the EU fishing opportunities and its financial contribution, with the 2020-2026 protocol expiring on 23 February 2026. Negotiations on a new protocol on the implementation had not yet been successful, leading for the first time to an interruption of the SFPA implementation and

affecting operators, vessels and crews.

Just before its expiry, a delegation of the European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries visited Seychelles from 16 to 20 February 2026, composed of Emma Ytterell (Wiesner) (Renew), Francisco Millán Mon (EPP), Paulo Do Nascimento Cabral (EPP), Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D), Guiseppe Milazzo (ECR) and Siegbert Frank Droese (ESN).

Members held meetings with the Seychelles Government, the Speaker as well as Members of the National Assembly of Seychelles, the Seychelles Fisheries Authority, IOTC officials and EU operators on the ground. They also visited fishing vessels, processing facilities and projects supported by the SFPA.

During the meetings, Members noted the importance of the SFPA, both for the EU and the Seychelles, its benefits for the fishing sector and the institutions and projects it supports, and underlined that the EU offered an increase in funding despite important cuts to fisheries in the new EU budget proposal. The mutual importance of close cooperation to secure sustainable management of resources as well as joint efforts in international fora such as IOTC was also highlighted.

Negotiations on a new protocol were finally successfully concluded with the signature of the 2026-2030 Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles on 27 July 2026. The new Protocol covers a period of four years from this date.

The new protocol will have a duration of 4 years with a mid-term review with the possibility for the two parties to assess the functioning and the effectiveness of the protocol. New elements have also been introduced to enhance transparency on beneficial owners, better operability with UN/FLUX in relation to among others VMS, improved conditions for fishers as well as a trainee initiative together with the Seychelles Maritime Academy. Sectorial support has also evolved and will for the new period focus more on socio-economic considerations in the Seychelles.

Fishing opportunities

The new Protocol grants EU vessels access to Seychelles' waters for a period of four years to catch 55,000 tonnes of tuna and other migratory species annually. It provides fishing opportunities for up to 30 tuna purse seiners (17 from Spain, 12 from France and 1 from Italy) and 8 surface longliners (4 from France, 2 from Spain and 2 from Portugal).

Tuna-like species in the region are managed by the IOTC, where both the EU and Seychelles are active members, working together to balance environmental sustainability and economic viability. Close cooperation in IOTC between the EU and the Seychelles is of mutual benefit and important for the sustainable management of the stocks.

Financial contribution

The EU's annual financial contribution amounts to € 5,750,000, which includes €2,750,000 for access to fisheries resources (corresponding to a reference tonnage of 55,000 tonnes per year for tuna and highly migratory species) and €3,000,000 dedicated to sectorial support

including supporting the sustainable development of Seychelles' fisheries policy. Additionally, operators pay an annual financial amount for their vessels to access the Seychelles fishing zone, comprising advance payments, additional fees per tonne of fish caught, as well as a specific fee dedicated to environmental management and observation of marine ecosystems in Seychelles waters.

Rapporteur's conclusions

The objective of the Protocol is to enable EU vessels to fish in the Seychelles EEZ and to enable the Union and Seychelles to work more closely together to develop a sustainable fisheries policy, to promote the responsible exploitation of fisheries resources in the Seychelles EEZ as well as in the Indian Ocean, and to contribute to the creation of decent working conditions in the fishing industry.

It enhances the long-standing fisheries partnership between the EU and the Republic of Seychelles, with economic benefits for both sides, while further promoting capacity building and scientific cooperation. It also formalises fora for closer cooperation and coordination in relation to issues extending beyond the strict scope of the SFP, such as closer cooperation in IOTC and discussions under other international agreements and arrangements. For the EU, the protocol also reinforces the commitment of working together and in a geopolitically sensitive time reinforces our ties with democratic partners.

The protocol secures for the EU continued access to key fishing areas and significant fishing opportunities for the EU fleet. Concretely it allows for Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian fishing vessels to supply part of the tuna demand in the EU, contributing to its food security.

The protocol also aims to contribute to growth and employment in fish production and processing in the partner country. The sectoral support available will especially continue to assist the partner country in further development of its fisheries sector and governance. This includes the support of small-scale fisheries and aquaculture; the enhancement of socio-economic aspects of fishing; sanitary and quality management and support for domestic and export capacities and fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance. It will also benefit both parties in relation to the promotion of scientific cooperation in the field of fisheries as well as the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Considering that the duration of the new protocol will end around the same time as the mandate for the current Seychelle government it is important that the Commission is proactive in initiating negotiations for new protocol in order to avoid a gap as was the case this time.

ANNEX: DECLARATION OF INPUT

The rapporteur declares under her exclusive responsibility that she did not include in her report input from interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register¹, or from representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies, to be listed in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.

¹ Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinst/2021/611/oj).