Currently, 15 African countries have concluded bilateral agreements called " Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements " (SFPA) with the EU allowing fishing in their respective waters. However, 4 of such agreements (with Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar and Mozambique) are "dormant" as there is no implementing protocol in force setting out the criteria for fishing in their respective waters, including the modalities for issuing the relevant fishing authorisations. The consequence of this "dormant" status of the above agreements is that that EU vessels are not allowed to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of such countries.

An EEZ, according to art. 56 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is an area of the sea in which a sovereign state has special rights regarding the exploration and exploitation, conservation and management of natural resources, whether living or non-living (e.g., fish, offshore oil, and gas), of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, including energy production from water and wind.

The EEZ differs from territorial waters in two respects. First, in the EEZ the jurisdiction of the coastal state is limited to the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, while the territorial sea is considered as an extension of the territory of the coastal state (or of the insular state) where the country has full jurisdiction. Second, while the maximum lenght of the territorial sea is 12 nautical miles from baselines, the maximum width of the EEZ is 200 nautical miles (370 km or 230 English miles).

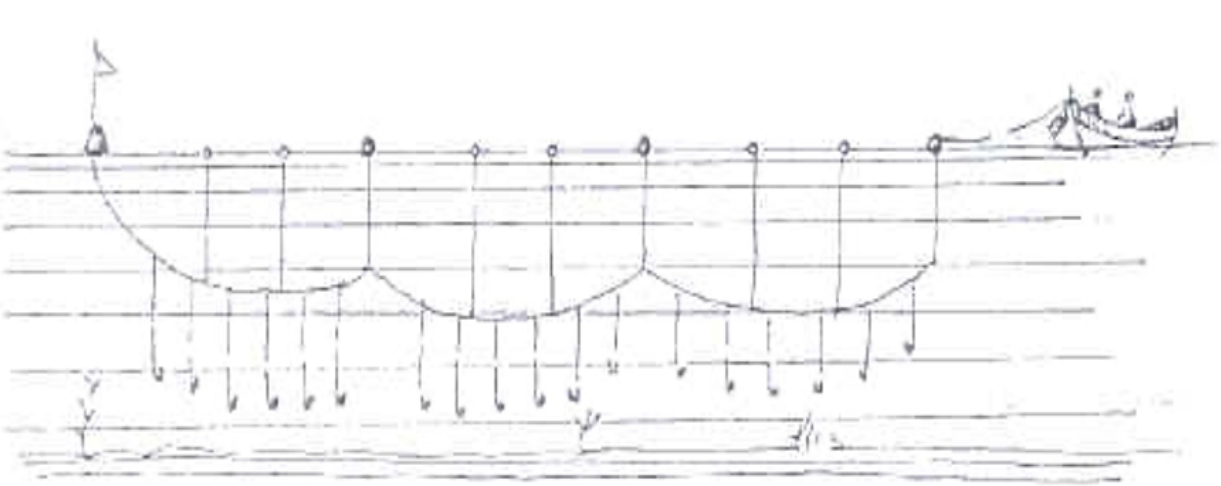
SFPAs are of two types: 1) **Tuna Agreements** and 2) **Mixed Agreements**. While Tuna Agreements allow EU vessels to pursue migrating tuna and tuna-like species stocks as they move along the shores of Africa and through the Indian Ocean, Mixed Agreements provide access of EU vessels to a wide range of species of fish stocks in the partner country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The EU has Mixed Agreements in place only with 3 African countries: Morocco, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau, all the others are Tuna Agreements. In case of Senegal and Gambia, the relevant Agreements cover, in addition to tuna and tuna-like species, also the capture of hake.

An example of African countries that has a Tuna Agreement with the EU is Seychelles. According to the Council Regulation (EU) 2020/271 of 20 February 2020 on the allocation of the fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles (2020-2026), currently 40 vessels and 8 surface longliners are allowed to fish in the Seychelles

EEZ, allocated among EU member States as follows:

a) **Tuna purse seine vessels**: Spain (22 vessels); France (16 vessels) and Italy (2 vessels);
b) **Surface longliners** (boats less than 24 Metres in length that use long main linewith bated hooks attached at intervals via short branch lines called snoods or gangions as shown in the picture below): Spain (2 vessels), France (4 vessels), Portugal (2 vessels).

Figure 1: Surface longliner



Vessels and surface longliners need to obtain a Certificate of Authorisation (COA) for fishing in Seychelles waters (defined by the Fishery Act N. 20 of 2014 as the exclusive economic zone, the territorial sea, archipelagic waters, internal waters and all other waters subject to the fisheries jurisdiction of Seychelles), or to engage in fishing-related activities for the purpose of scientific research. The COA, to be issued by the Seychelles Fishing Authority , is valid for a period not exceeding five years and it is required also to fish outside Seychelles waters. It is issued against the payment of a shipowner fee to be calculated according to the criteria set forth in the Implementing Protocol of the EU-Seychelles SFPA.

On the other hand, Seychelles vessels also need a fishing authorisation to operate in EU waters. The updated list of fishing authorisations issued by the EU is available here .