

Policy coherence for development and the effects of the EU's exploitation of certain biological natural resources on development in West Africa

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The Committee on Development adopted the own-initiative report by Frithjof **SCHMIDT** (Greens/EFA) on policy coherence for development and the effects of the EU's exploitation of certain biological natural resources on development in West Africa. The Committee believes that greater policy coherence for development (PCD) is necessary since this policy is central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

A series of efforts must be made across different sectors of the primary economy to improve the sustainable development of developing countries and to work towards reducing the negative effects of climate change, particularly in the forestry sector in order to develop **sustainable forest management in African countries**.

In terms of strengthening the sustainability of development in West Africa, the main sectors targeted by MEPs are those of timber and fish.

Timber: given that tropical deforestation is one of the key contributors to climate change (responsible for 20%) and to greenhouse gas emissions, MEPs call on the Commission to finance sustainable forest management initiatives within the framework of aid programming and Country Strategy Papers.

They also call on the Commission to:

- present a communication determining the European Union's approach for promoting forest protection and outlining the European Union's commitment to provide funds to finance forest protected areas and to promote economic alternatives to forest destruction;
- speed up the implementation of the EU FLEGT action plan (EU action plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) and the directive aimed at combating illegal logging and related trade and enhancing the consumption of wood products produced in a sustainable way;
- propose a legislative proposal aimed at preventing the placing on the market of timber and timber products derived from illegal sources;
- speed up the adoption and implementation of a green public procurement policy which favours the purchase of **eco-labelled wood products**, especially those certified according to the standard of the Forest Stewardship Council.

Fish: recalling the high level of dependence of countries in West Africa on fisheries (as a source of employment, food security, government revenues and foreign exchange), MEPs call on the Commission to examine the clear link between migration levels of immigrants from West African countries and the decline of fish stocks. They also call on the Commission and the West African countries to **curb illegal fishing**, which largely contributes to the rapid decline of fish stocks. It is also necessary to strengthen coherence between the Community's development policy and its fisheries policy by ensuring better surveillance of the waters off the West African coasts, by supporting scientific research into fish stocks and reinforcing phyto-sanitary standards.

Sustainability of fishing: a series of actions are also planned to ensure the sustainability of the fishing activities in West Africa. Amongst the main actions proposed by MEPs are the following: the assessment

of the abundance of relevant fish stocks in order to identify which fish stocks are the most depleted; the accurate, reliable and timely public reporting on catches and activities of European Union vessels operating in third countries; the strengthening of collaboration with West African partners on the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as working with local communities; the evaluation of local processing industries; and the improvement of the current system of rules of origin.

MEPs recognise that even though the financial contributions under the fisheries agreements have come to represent a substantial share of the total budgets of some third countries, cooperation for sustainable development cannot come from the common fisheries policy alone. Therefore, other Community policies also need to be brought into play, particularly development cooperation policy, in order to bring about political and socio-economic conditions that will enable those countries to redirect administrative and financial efforts so that they can benefit from the potential offered by their natural biological resources in a sustainable manner.

In addition, MEPs call on the Commission to conduct more detailed Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIAs) in West Africa, particularly focusing on development policy in the fish and timber sectors.

To conclude, MEPs believe that the FLEGT process and the reformed Fisheries Partnership Agreements of the new generation represent important starting points for development-friendly policies.