

EC/Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution for the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2012. Protocol

2008/0093(CNS) - 13/05/2008 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: conclude a protocol to the European Community/Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement for the period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2012, with a view to setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution under the Agreement.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

BACKGROUND: the Community and Mauritania concluded a Fisheries Partnership Agreement in 2006. This Agreement included a Fisheries Protocol, applicable until 31 July 2008 (see [CNS/2006/0168](#)), which now needs to be renewed.

As a result, on 13 March 2008, the Commission negotiated and initialled a new Fisheries Protocol setting out new fishing opportunities and a new financial contribution, which shall be valid until 2012. This new Protocol has been concluded for a period of four years and will enter into force on the date on which the Parties notify each other that they have completed the necessary procedures to that end. It will apply with effect from 1 August 2008 and will replace the previous Protocol (in force from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2008 and tacitly renewable until 31 July 2012).

The Commission's negotiating position for this new Protocol was based on the latest state of fisheries resources in Mauritania, on the basis of scientific advice.

CONTENT: based on the negotiations led by the Commission in the light of the latest state of fisheries resources in Mauritania, it has been proposed to conclude a new Fisheries Protocol between the European Community and this country.

This new Protocol provides for a reduction in fishing opportunities compared with the Protocol in force from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2008, thus reflecting the reduced requirements of the European fleet and recent scientific advice. Fishing opportunities have been decreased by 25% for the cephalopods category, by 10-50% for the demersal categories and by 43% for the small pelagics category, thus reducing the overall tonnage from 440 000 tonnes per year at present to 250 000 tonnes per year.

This Protocol is aimed at reinforcing economic integration in the fisheries sector through stronger sectoral support, particularly by promoting investment, including by European firms, in the Mauritanian fisheries sector.

On the basis of the sectoral fisheries strategy adopted by the new Mauritanian Government formed following the democratic elections held in March 2007, the current priorities as regards fisheries policy in Mauritania, the objectives to be met, and the annual and multiannual programming to attain them will be identified by mutual agreement with a view to ensuring sustainable and responsible management of the sector.

The financial contribution under the Protocol is set at **EUR 86 million**, EUR 76 million, EUR 73 million and EUR 70 million for the first, second, third and fourth years respectively. Of this financial contribution, an amount of EUR 11 million, EUR 16 million, EUR 18 million and EUR 20 million for the first, second, third and fourth years respectively will be allocated to financial support for the implementation of the national fisheries policy and will include EUR 1 million per year for support for the Banc d'Arguin National Park (PNBA).

The fishing opportunities provided for in the Agreement have been laid down for eleven categories. The conditions for each licence period are as follows:

- **crustaceans** (excluding spiny lobster): maximum authorised capacity 9 570 GT (gross tonnage);
- **black hake trawlers and longliners**: maximum authorised capacity 3 240 GT;
- **demersal fisheries** – other than trawlers and targeting species other than black hake: maximum authorised capacity 1 162 GT;
- **demersal trawlers** – targeting demersal species other than black hake, cephalopods and crustaceans: maximum authorised capacity 375 GT;
- **cephalopods**: maximum authorised capacity 13 950 GT for 32 licences;
- **spiny lobsters and crabs**: maximum authorised capacity 300 GT for each category;
- **tuna fisheries**: maximum of 22 licences for seiners and 22 licences for pole-and-line vessels and longliners;
- **small pelagics** (pelagic freezer trawlers): 17 licences;
- **small pelagics** (non-freezer vessels): maximum authorised capacity 15 000 GT.

Shipowners' fees have been fixed for each category. It is estimated that shipowners will pay total contributions of around EUR 15 000 000 per year to Mauritania direct.

A proposal for a Council Decision on the provisional application of the new Protocol is the subject of a separate procedure.