Conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea Bissau

2015/2119(INI) - 20/07/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted a report by João FERREIRA (GUE/NGL, PT) containing a motion for a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea Bissau.

Recalling that the Agreement is a matter of great importance both for Guinea-Bissau and for the EU fleets operating in Guinea-Bissau's waters, Members considered that the results achieved to date in the field of sectoral cooperation have been unsatisfactory. They called on the Commission to take every step required – by installing mechanisms for increased transparency, accountability and participation of beneficiaries in particular **small-scale artisanal fishing communities** and, if need be by revising and increasing the sectoral support component of the Agreement.

Members believed that the areas to support, not least with technical assistance, could include:

- increased support for institutional capacity building;
- training of fishing professionals;
- partnerships with artisanal small-scale fisheries;
- stronger emphasis on gender policies so as to confer recognition on, and take advantage of, the role of women (distribution and marketing of fish, storage, first-stage processing, etc.);
- employment possibilities for local seamen on board EU vessels should be fully exploited.

Prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing: Members considered that measures to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in the exclusive economic zone of Guinea Bissau should be reinforced, including by means of improved monitoring, control and surveillance through the extensive use of the satellite-based vessel monitoring system.

They called on the Commission to continue to help the Guinea-Bissau authorities improve the fisheries surveillance and control system in Guinea-Bissau waters with a view to intensifying measures to combat IUU fishing.

Data on the implementation of the Agreement: Members considered it desirable to improve the quantity and accuracy of data on all catches (targeted and bycatch) and, more generally, the **conservation status of fishery resources** so that the impact of the Agreement on the marine ecosystem and on fishing communities can be gauged more accurately. They also believed that Guinea-Bissau should be helped to develop its own means of obtaining such data.

Transparency measures on the implementation of the Agreement and the Protocol: Members called on the Commission to send Parliament the minutes and conclusions of meetings of the Joint Committee provided for in the Agreement, the multi-annual sectoral programme referred to in the new Protocol and

the findings of the related annual assessments, as well as the minutes and conclusions of the meetings provided for in the new Protocol.

The Commission is also called upon to enable representatives of Parliament to attend Joint Committee meetings as observers and to promote the participation of Guinea Bissau fishing communities.

Lastly, Members requested that, during the final year of application of the Protocol and before negotiations are opened for its renewal, a full report on its implementation should be submitted to the European Parliament.