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) - 09/09/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 500 votes to 78, with 96 abstentions, 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, Parliament considered that the results achieved to date in the field of sectoral cooperation have been unsatisfactory. It 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.

Parliament 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: Parliament 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. It 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: Parliament noted that Guinea Bissau has made public the fisheries agreements it has concluded with third countries and that they may be consulted. It called on the Commission to follow closely developments in these agreements and in fishing activities in Guinean waters.

Members also 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.

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

Lastly, 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.