EC/Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution from 16 November 2015 to 15 November 2019. Protocol

2015/0229(NLE) - 27/10/2015 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude a Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and Mauritania.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: on the basis of an authorisation from Council, the Commission negotiated, on behalf of the EU, the renewal of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and Mauritania. At the end of those negotiations, a new Protocol was initialled on 10 July 2015.

It is now appropriate to conclude that Protocol on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: the draft decision calls on the Council to approve the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and Mauritania for a period of four years on behalf of the Union.

Objectives: the main aim of the Protocol is to grant fishing opportunities to European Union vessels in Mauritanian waters taking into account available scientific assessments, in particular those of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), and in accordance with scientific advice and the recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), **within the limits of the available surplus**.

The objective is to also enhance cooperation between the European Union and Mauritania, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the fishing zone of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, in the interests of both parties.

Fishing opportunities: the Protocol provides for fishing opportunities in the following categories:

- Vessels fishing for crustaceans other than spiny lobster and crab: 5 000 tonnes and 25 vessels (Category 1);
- Black hake (non-freezer) trawlers and bottom longliners: 6 000 tonnes and 6 vessels (Category 2);
- Vessels fishing for demersal species other than black hake with gear other than trawls: 3 000 tonnes and 6 vessels (Category 3);
- Tuna seiners: 12 500 tonnes (reference tonnage) and 25 vessels (Category 4);
- Pole-and-line tuna vessels and longliners: 7 500 tonnes (reference tonnage) and 15 vessels (Category 5);
- Pelagic freezer trawlers: 247 500 and 19 vessels (Category 6);
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- Non-freezer pelagic vessels: 15 000 tonnes (deducted from volume under category 6 if used) and 2 vessels (Category 7).

Financial contribution: the annual financial contribution has been set at **EUR 59 125 000 per year,** on the basis of:

- a total allowable catch of 261 500 tonnes for fishing categories 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 and a reference tonnage of 20 000 tonnes for fishing categories 4 and 5 of the Protocol, corresponding to an amount linked to access to EUR 55 000 000 per year, and
- support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania amounting to EUR 4 125 000 per year. This support meets the aims of national fishing policy and in particular the needs of Mauritania as regards supporting scientific and technical cooperation, training, fisheries monitoring, protecting the environment and development infrastructure.

Duration of the agreement: the Protocol covers a period of four years from the date of provisional application– i.e. from the date of its signature.

Joint Committee: Article 10 of the Partnership Agreement establishes a Joint Committee which is responsible for monitoring the application of the Partnership Agreement and ensuring that it is implemented. The Joint Committee may approve certain amendments to the Protocol.

In order to facilitate the approval of such amendments, the Commission should be empowered, subject to specific conditions, to approve these amendments under a simplified procedure (in particular the review of fishing opportunities, decision on the modalities of the sectoral support in accordance with the Protocol as well as conditions governing fishing activities.