

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

2015/0229(NLE) - 25/04/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Gabriel MATO (EPP, ES) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for a period of four years.

The committee called on the European Parliament to **give its consent** to the conclusion of the Protocol.

In a short justification accompanying the report, Members stated that the new agreement has remedied some of the shortcomings that undermined the usefulness of the previous protocol. The new protocol also makes improvements for the fleet targeting highly migratory species.

According to the short justification, the new protocol represents a major step forward by comparison with the previous one, and the new commitments given by Mauritania in relation to transparency and priority access for the European fleet are welcome, particularly bearing in mind the bitter experience of previous years.

A further highly positive element is the greater degree of balance that has been achieved between financial contribution and fishing opportunities. This, along with the changes made to the technical measures, has substantially improved the cost/benefit ratio of the agreement with Mauritania.

Despite efforts made by the negotiators on improving fishing opportunities, Members regretted that Mauritania remained opposed to certain landings which will have a significant adverse effect on employment at EU level.

The Commission is urged to raise this issue at the meetings of the Joint Committee, with the aim of finding a solution that will allow landings to be made at ports in Gran Canaria, which offer better conditions for controlling catches, until such time as Mauritanian ports have more highly developed infrastructure.

The Joint Committee should also seriously consider any realistic possibility of increasing the quotas allocated to the European fleet, taking account of stock developments, and including the cephalopod category if at all feasible, even if fishing for these species is initially on an experimental basis only.