

EC/Côte d'Ivoire Fisheries Partnership Agreement: implementation of the Agreement 2018-2024

2018/0267M(NLE) - 12/02/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 535 votes to 35, with 28 abstentions, a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Members took the view that the EU-Côte-d'Ivoire SFPA should pursue two equally important goals:

(1) providing fishing opportunities for EU vessels in the Côte d'Ivoire EEZ, on the basis of the best available scientific advice and without interfering with conservation and management measures by the regional organisations to which Côte d'Ivoire belongs – primarily the ICCAT – or overrunning the available surplus;

(2) promoting cooperation between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire with a view to a sustainable fisheries policy and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the Côte d'Ivoire fishing zone, and contributing to sustainable development of the Ivorian fisheries sector through economic, financial, technical, and scientific cooperation, without undermining Côte d'Ivoire's sovereign options and strategies regarding that development.

The conclusion of successive agreements between the Union and Côte d'Ivoire in the sustainable fisheries sector has contributed to Côte d'Ivoire's economy through the employment of local seamen, the use of the Abidjan port and canning facilities, the by-catches of EU tuna seiners have been turned to account, and local monitoring capacities have been strengthened.

Findings showed that the Protocol to the 2013-2018 SFPA had on the whole proved to be effective, efficient, appropriate to the interests involved, and consistent with the Ivorian sectoral policy and a high degree of acceptability to stakeholders, and which recommended the option of concluding a new protocol.

This new protocol should, *inter alia*:

- improve governance: drafting and validating legislation and building on management plans;
- tighten up control and surveillance in the Côte d'Ivoire EEZ;
- strengthen measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including in inland waters;
- enable landing quays and ports to be constructed and/or renovated, including at – but not limited to – the Port of Abidjan;
- establish marine protected areas and improve the sustainability of marine resources overall.
- enable the reinforcement of organisations representing men and women in the fishing industry, especially those involved in artisanal fishing.

Parliament considered that rules regarding the hiring of ACP seamen for EU fishing vessels, amounting to 20 % of the crew, could be more ambitious and called for ILO principles to be abided by.

It also stressed that the quantity and accuracy of data on all catches (target species and by-catches) and on the conservation status of fishery resources should be improved.

On a financial note, the Commission urged the Côte d'Ivoire to use the financial contribution provided by the protocol to sustainably strengthen its national fisheries industry, encouraging demand for local investment and industrial projects, and creating local jobs.

Parliament should be kept immediately and fully informed at every stage of the procedures relating to the Protocol and, if applicable, its renewal.