

EC/Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution. Extension of the Protocol

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CONTENT: to conclude the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on an extension to 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, expiring on 15 November 2019.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

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

BACKGROUND: on 8 July 2019, the Council adopted a mandate¹ authorising the European Commission to open negotiations to renew the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Protocol implementing that Agreement which sets out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution and which will expire on 15 November 2019.

The mandate lays down that in the event of the negotiations for a new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) and Protocol between the European Union and Islamic Republic of Mauritania taking longer than expected and to avoid fishing activity being interrupted for a long period of time, the Commission should be able to agree on an extension to the current Protocol with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for a maximum period of one year, while continuing to try to reach an agreement for a new SFPA and Protocol in line with the objectives set out in the mandate.

Due to the complex nature of the negotiations, both parties agreed to extend the current Protocol for a maximum period of one year, in line with the mandate from the Council. The extension was established by way of an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters which was initialled on 4 September 2019 in Brussels.

The extension of the existing Protocol to the FPA avoids the interruption of fishing activities by European vessels when the Protocol expires on 15 November 2019. It will be effective for a maximum period of one year, pending the finalisation of negotiations for the renewal of the JPA.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on the extension 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, expiring on 15 November 2019.

Objective

The aim of the Exchange of Letters is to enable the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to continue working together to promote a sustainable fisheries policy, the sound exploitation of fisheries resources in Mauritanian waters and to allow EU vessels to fish in those waters.

The Protocol enables the establishment of a strategic fisheries partnership between the European Union and Mauritania. The Protocol will also contribute to better management and conservation of fishery resources, through financial support (sectoral support) for the implementation of programmes adopted at national level by the partner country, in particular as regards monitoring and combating illegal fishing, and support for the small-scale fisheries sector.

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;
- Black hake (non-freezer) trawlers and bottom longliners: 6 000 tonnes and 6 vessels;
- Black hake (freezer) trawlers: (black hake: 3 500 tonnes, squid: 1 450 tonnes, cuttlefish: 600 tonnes);
- Vessels fishing for demersal species other than black hake with gear other than trawls: 3 000 tonnes and 6 vessels;
- Tuna seiners: 12 500 tonnes (reference tonnage) and 25 vessels;
- Pole-and-line tuna vessels and longliners: 7 500 tonnes (reference tonnage) and 15 vessels;
- Pelagic freezer trawlers: 225 000 tonnes (may be exceeded by a maximum of 10%) and 19 vessels;
- Non-freezer pelagic vessels: 15 000 tonnes (deducted from volume under category 6 if used) and 2 vessels.

Financial contribution

The annual financial contribution has been set at EUR 61 625 000 for a maximum period of one year for the purposes of the extension, on the basis of:

(a) an annual amount for access to fisheries resources, for the categories provided for in the Protocol, fixed at EUR 57 500 000 for the duration of the extension of the Protocol.

(b) support for the development of Mauritania's sectoral fisheries policy for an annual amount of EUR 4 125 000 for the duration of the extension of the Protocol. This support meets the objectives of the national policy for the sustainable management of continental and marine fisheries resources for the duration of the Protocol.

The annual amount for commitment and payment appropriations shall be established during the annual budgetary procedure.

The Exchange of Letters relating to the extension also lays down a pro-rata reduction clause in the event that the negotiations to renew the Partnership Agreement and its Protocol result in these being signed and subsequently entering into force prior to the expiry of the annual extension to which the Exchange of Letters applies.