EC/Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement: implementation of the Agreement 2019-2024. Protocol

2019/0090M(NLE) - 27/01/2020 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by João FERREIRA (GUE/NGL, PT) containing a motion for 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 Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (2019-2024).

Stressing the importance of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) between the European Union and Guinea-Bissau, Members called on the Commission to take all the necessary steps to ensure that the new Protocol to the SFPA is more ambitious than the previous ones, in order to ensure that the SFPA:

- leads to satisfactory levels of development of the local fisheries sector to be achieved, and

- be consistent with the objectives referred to in the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDO) 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Supporting the need to make significant progress in the development of Guinea-Bissau's fisheries sector, including related industries and activities, Members called on the Commission to take all necessary measures, including a possible strengthening of the sectoral support component of the agreement so that it contributes to the full implementation of the national strategy for fisheries and the blue economy by pursuing the following objectives:

- strengthening institutional capacity, including regional and global fisheries governance strategies;

- supporting the strengthening of marine protected areas;

- developing key fisheries infrastructure, such as ports (industrial and artisanal), landing sites, fish storage and processing facilities, markets, distribution and marketing structures, or quality analysis laboratories;

- contribute to the good ecological condition of the marine environment, in particular by supporting the collection of waste and fishing gear by local actors;

- supporting small-scale fisheries, building the capacity of local operators in the fisheries sector by supporting fishermen's organisations, training professionals and enhancing the role of women and young people in fisheries.

Members considered that the European Development Fund (EDF) and the sectoral support provided for in the EU-Guinea-Bissau DPA should complement each other and be fully coordinated. They called on the Commission and the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to strengthen their cooperation in order to establish the conditions for the export of Guinea-Bissau fishery products to the EU, in particular as regards the verification of the required sanitary conditions and certification of the analytical laboratory (CIPA).

The report also stresses the need to improve:

- the contribution of the SFPA to the local creation of direct and indirect jobs;

- the quantity and quality of data on all catches (target and by-catches), the state of conservation of fishery resources in Guinea-Bissau's fishing zone and, in general, the impact of the SFPA on ecosystems;

- the governance, control and surveillance of the Guinea-Bissau fishing zone and to combat IUU fishing, in particular by stepping up vessel monitoring (through the VMS system), with a view to improving the sustainability of fishing activities.

The report called for the inclusion of transparency provisions, including the publication of all agreements concluded with States or private entities granting foreign vessels access to Guinea-Bissau's EEZ. It also recalled that the landings of fish in Guinea Bissau ports contribute to local processing activities and food security, both in terms of species and quality.