EC/Cape Verde Fisheries Partnership Agreement: implementation of the Agreement 2019-2024. Protocol

2019/0078M(NLE) - 17/06/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 587 votes to 50, with 51 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 Community and the Republic of Cape Verde (2019-2024). It also adopted a legislative resolution approving the conclusion of the protocol.

Objectives of the Agreement and the Protocol

Members stressed that the new sustainable fisheries partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cape Verde (the 'EU-Cape Verde SFPA') shall pursue two objectives, namely:

(1) to provide fishing opportunities for EU vessels in the Cape Verde EEZ, on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and advice and without interfering with conservation and management measures by the regional organisations to which Cape Verde belongs – notably the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) – or overrunning the available surplus;

(2) to promote further economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation between the EU and Cape Verde in the field of sustainable fisheries and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the Cape Verde EEZ, while at the same time not undermining Cape Verde's sovereign options and strategies relating to its own development.

In the light of the high value of marine biology in Cape Verdean waters, the Agreement shall guarantee the adoption of measures to mitigate accidental fishing by EU vessels in the Cape Verde EEZ.

The EU's commitments under international agreements shall also be supported under the SFPA, namely the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14.

Further support for the development of the Cape Verdean fisheries sector

Stressing the need to make significant progress in the development of the Cape Verdean fisheries sector, including the fishing industry and related activities, Parliament called on the Commission to take all necessary measures, including a possible revision and the bolstering of the sectoral support component of the agreement.

The EU-Cape Verde FPA and its Protocol shall be aligned with the national development plans and the Blue Growth Action Plan for the development, within the ecological limits of the Cape Verdean fisheries sector by pursuing the following objectives:

- strengthening institutional capacity and improving governance;

- strengthening surveillance, control and monitoring of the Cape Verdean EEZ;

- strengthen measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities, particularly in inland waters;

- strengthen partnerships with other countries interested in fishing activities in the Cape Verde EEZ;

- support the improvement of a data collection programme that enables the Cape Verdean authorities to assess available resources and to support the scientific evaluation of resources;

- enable the construction and/or renovation of key infrastructure for fisheries and related activities, such as ports, landing sites, storage facilities and processing plants, needs to be built or renovated;

- improve the working conditions of all workers, strengthen organisations representing women and men active in the fisheries sector, establish basic and vocational training centres for fishermen and strengthen measures to encourage young people to engage in the fishing;

- limit by-catches of sensitive species, such as marine turtles;

- enhance scientific research capabilities and the ability to monitor fishery resources and the marine environment.

Improving the quality and reliability of catch data

Parliament called for an in-depth assessment of the benefits of the implementation of the Protocol for local economies and suggested improving the quantity and reliability of data on overall catches, the state of conservation of fisheries resources and the impact of fishing activity on the marine environment.

It called on the Commission and the Cape Verdean authorities to improve data collection and monitoring of stocks in the context of overfishing, paying particular attention to sharks, whose catch rate could prove to be well above 20%.

The Commission is invited to:

- facilitate, through the European Development Fund and other relevant instruments, the necessary steps for the provision of infrastructure which, by reason of its scale and cost, cannot be built solely by means of sectoral support within

the framework of the SFPA, for example fishing ports (both industrial and artisanal);

- ask Cape Verde to use the financial contribution provided for in the Protocol to strengthen its fisheries sector in the long term with a view to creating jobs at local level and making fisheries-related activities more attractive to the younger generation;

- keep Parliament immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedures relating to the Protocol and, where appropriate, its renewal.