EC/Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement. Implementing Protocol (2024-2029)

2024/0159M(NLE) - 02/04/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 605 votes to 68, with 10 abstentions, a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Implementing Protocol (2024–2029) to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

In parallel, Parliament adopted a legislative resolution on the conclusion of the protocol.

Support to the local fisheries sectors

Parliament called on the Commission to take every step required to make the new protocol on implementing the agreement **more ambitious** than its predecessors so as to ensure that this SFPA satisfactorily supports the development of the local fisheries sector in overall terms and increases the added value for coastal communities, which will contribute to food security and sovereignty.

The resolution encouraged the Commission to develop a **more ambitious partnership agreement** facilitating the export of fishery products that are sustainably processed on the African continent, provided it does not undermine the food security of the local population. It supported awareness-raising and the inclusion of all possible actors in Guinea-Bissau's fisheries sector throughout the process leading to an agreement.

Development of infrastructures

Members advocated for infrastructure to be developed and fishery products to be exploited so as to ensure tangible results for local and artisanal fisheries, prioritising their needs and supporting infrastructure development and market access.

The main problem facing the small-scale fisheries sector is the lack of infrastructure for landing, preserving and processing fishery products. It stressed that the **long-term food security needs of the local population** should be prioritised and highlighted the importance of maintaining sustainable fish stocks to ensure food security for coastal communities. Members encouraged European vessels, therefore, to land at least 2 % in Guinea-Bissau, for the local population.

The Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Commission are called on to improve the participation of coastal and small-scale fishing communities during the implementation of the new protocol.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Parliament called on the Commission, in order to improve the implementation of the IUU Regulation, to address the lack of transparency in the fishing sector in Guinea-Bissau which results, for example, from flags of convenience, flag hopping, complex corporate structures and a lack of public information on beneficial owners. The fight against IUU fishing is being held back by a lack of transparency regarding the ownership of fishing vessels in countries with a high risk of IUU fishing.

Technical and financial assistance

Parliament considered that the EU-Guinea-Bissau SFPA will not achieve its objectives unless it contributes to establishing a **long-term sustainable management system** for the exploitation of its fisheries resources as well as responsible socio-economic arrangements. It pointed out, in this regard, that the EU should mobilise its technical and financial assistance as follows, and as a matter of priority, in order to:

- strengthen institutional capacities;

- strengthen capacities to monitor and control fishing activities in order to prevent IUU fishing;

- build, linked to the Global Gateway Initiative, key infrastructure tailored to fisheries and related activities, such as ports (both industrial and artisanal), landing sites, fish storage and processing facilities, markets, distribution and marketing structures, and quality analysis laboratories;

- strengthen the capacities of local artisanal operators in the fisheries sector;

- train fishing professionals upstream, including seafarers, and downstream in processing facilities;

- support small-scale fishing as regards access to resources, in line with the FAO's SSF Guidelines, modernising seagoing capacities, on-board equipment and cold chain equipment for preservation of catches on land;

- contribute to the good ecological condition of the marine environment;

- recognise and enhance the role of women and young people in fishing;

- facilitate landings of species consumed locally, in the interests of local communities' food security.

Parliament called for the EU to step up its efforts to support the regional joint management of small pelagics and to end overfishing, including by creating a regional fisheries management organisation dedicated to this shared management. It called on the Commission and the Guinea-Bissau authorities to **enhance their cooperation** in order to establish the conditions for the export of Guinea-Bissau fishery products to the EU. It also supports the need to enhance the contribution of the SFPA to local direct and indirect job creation, both on vessels operating under the SFPA or in fishing-related activities.

Lastly, Members considered that is there is a need to improve the quantity and quality of **data** on all catches (target species and by-catches), on the conservation status of fishery resources in the Guinea-Bissau fishing zone and, in general, on the impact of the SFPA on ecosystems.