EC/Mauritania fisheries agreement: protocol for the period from 1st August 2001 to 31st July 2006

2005/0229(CNS) - 23/11/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to conclude an Agreement making amendments to the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Agreement on cooperation in the sea fisheries sector between the EC and Mauritania for the period 1 August 2001 to 31 July 2006

PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation

CONTENT : The purpose of this proposal is to amend the existing Protocol to the Agreement on cooperation in the sea fisheries sector between the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

On the basis of the conclusions of the technical working group comprising representatives of the Mauritanian administration and the European Commission, and in the light of the scientific opinions available, the two parties reached the conclusion at the Joint Committee meeting held on 10 September 2004 in Brussels that a number of measures should be taken concerning the management of the fishing effort in Mauritania's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

The Agreement on the amendments to the existing Protocol has been formalised by an Exchange of Letters.

The measures in question are aimed, on the one hand, at reducing the catch rate for cephalopods by decreasing the fishing effort and, on the other, by increasing the number of licences in the pelagic and tuna categories. In order to help integrate fleets flying the flags of the new Member States and guarantee continued access for Community fishing vessels traditionally operating under the above-mentioned Agreement, licences for the pelagic category will be awarded on the basis of the licence applications received from all Member States, taking into account the fishing activities traditionally carried on under this Agreement. If need be, the Commission will make a proposal on the allocation of licences for the pelagic category among the Member States.

The suspension of five cephalopod licences, which was the subject of a consultation with the Member States as far back as March 2004, has now been compensated for under this reorganisation through the issue of these new pelagic licences, thus guaranteeing sound and healthy financial management by allowing fishing opportunities to be adjusted in accordance with resources and sectoral demands. The new balance achieved through this reorganisation was established on the basis of the results of the 2001 negotiations on the existing Protocol and constitutes a very satisfactory outcome for the EC in cost-benefit terms.

The Commission proposes, on this basis, that the Council adopt this Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on the amendments to the Protocol.

A proposal for a Council Decision on the provisional application of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on the amendments to the Protocol is the subject of a separate procedure.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS :

Budget line: 110301 : International agreements concerning fisheries

Total resources allocated: EUR 86.000.000 for the EC/Mauritania Agreement currently in force. This amendment to the Protocol does not have any budgetary implications.

Period of application: 1 August 2001 to 31 July 2006

Total estimate of expenditure over five years: EUR 430 million