

EC/Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement

2005/0280(CNS) - 23/12/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to conclude a Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Morocco.

PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation.

CONTENT : on 28 July 2005, the Community and the Kingdom of Morocco negotiated a Fisheries Partnership Agreement in order to provide EU fishermen with fishing opportunities in Moroccan fishing zones. At the same time a Protocol was agreed, which set out the technical and financial conditions governing the fishing activities of Community vessels. The Protocol is set to last for four years following its entry into force.

The main purpose of the new Partnership Agreement is to strengthen EU-Moroccan cooperation in order to provide for a sustainable fisheries policy and a reasonable exploitation of fishing activities in Moroccan fishing zones, to the mutual benefit of both sides. In addition, the Agreement sets out Morocco's fishing priorities for the coming years. The priorities listed include a modernisation programme, to abolish driftnets, to secure funding for scientific research, to restructure small scale fishing, to update marketing efforts, to improve the mechanisms used for landing and handling fish and lastly to seek support for professional organisations involved in the Moroccan fisheries sector. A further feature of the Agreement is an in built mechanism designed to enhance economic co-operation between Community fishing operators and their Moroccan counter-parts.

In terms of the proposed financial contribution, it has been fixed for a four year period and totals 36 100 000 per year, or EUR 144 400 000 over the four year period. Of this, EUR 13 500 000 per year will be put towards defining and implementing a Moroccan sectoral fisheries policy specifically designed to support and uphold a sustainable Moroccan fisheries policy.

The proposed fishing opportunities are as follows:

- For small scale fishing: Twenty seiners for fishing pelagic species in the north, twenty vessels for small-scale fishing in the south, thirty bottom long liners for small-scale fishing in the north and twenty-seven pole and line vessels.
- Twenty-two trawlers and bottom long liners for demersal fishing.
- An annual quota of 60 000 tonnes for industrial pelagic fishing.

Ship owners fees have been fixed for each category and could contribute an additional annual income of around EUR 3 million for Morocco. Based on the above, the Commission proposes that the Council adopt the Conclusion of the new Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Communities and Morocco in the form of a Regulation.

For further information concerning the financial implications of this measure, please refer to the financial statement.