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B7-0193/2011

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B7-0018/2011

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the Renewal of the Protocol of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement
between the EC and Mauritania

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on the Renewal of the Protocol of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EC and Mauritania

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to Annex II of the Framework Agreement between the European Parliament and the Commission of 20 February 2010,
 - having regard to the Recommendation from the Commission to the Council to authorise the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the European Union for the renewal of the protocol of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Mauritania (SEC(2011)137 final),
 - having regard to the oral question to the Commission on the Renewal of the Protocol of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (B7 0015/2011),
 - having regard to the current protocol, which expires on 31st December 2012,
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the current protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania expires on 31 July 2012 and the European Commission intention to launch negotiations for its renewal, for which it has requested the prescriptive mandate from the Council,
- B. whereas Article 218 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union provides for clear conditions under which the European Parliament should be associated to decisions made on fisheries agreements, which legitimate the European Parliament wish to collaborate in the process expressing its priorities for the new Protocols to be renegotiated,
- C. whereas fishing sector represents an important pillar in the Mauritanian economy. It accounts for 10% of GDP and between 35% and 50% of Mauritanian exports. It also provides 29% of the income for the national budget and generates 45 000 direct and indirect jobs,
- D. whereas the Agreement with Mauritania is one of the four remaining mixed agreements with third countries and in this regard is essential for the EU fleets, and is of utmost importance to supply the European Union market in a wide range of fisheries products, of which it is highly deficient,
- E. whereas, under the successive agreements, fishing opportunities have been reduced, but the financial contributions and fees to be paid by shipowners have increased. In some fishing categories, the opportunities are not being fully used due to problems in terms of

technical measures, high fees and boarding,

- F. whereas the successive Protocols signed with Mauritania have allowed substantial progress in supporting the development of the Mauritanian fisheries sector, conservation of the fishing stock and improvement in the control, although there are aspects that still need to be strengthened and clarified, including the operation of the control by VMS, sharing of information regarding boarding, and the promotion of certain infrastructure to encourage greater community investment in Mauritania,
 - G. whereas it is necessary, when negotiating fishing opportunities of the new protocol to take into account the relations of Mauritanian fisheries sector with third countries which also exploit the EEZ fishing opportunities through bilateral or private agreements,
 - H. whereas the main objectives of the New Protocol, as expressed in the Draft Mandate are strengthening dialogue on sectoral policy with a view to encourage the implementation of a responsible fisheries policy, developing the fisheries industry in Mauritania, and contributing to the economic and social development, in line with the development objectives of the country,
 - I. whereas the Annex II of the Framework Agreement shall govern the forwarding to Parliament and the handling of confidential information, as defined in point 1.2, from the Commission in connection with the exercise of Parliament's prerogatives and competences. The two Institutions shall act in accordance with their mutual duties of sincere cooperation, in a spirit of complete mutual trust and in the strictest conformity with the relevant Treaty provisions,
- 1. Shares the point of view expressed by the Commission on previous fisheries agreements that the duration of the Protocol should be as wide as possible to allow better planning of business activities and to ensure greater continuity and community investment projects, to provide a stable framework and continuous measures to support the industry and sectoral fisheries policy in Mauritania and to pursue scientific research on the status of the resources;
 - 2. Calls for the fishing opportunities to meet the real needs of the fleets and stresses in this regard its concern about the so called "paper fish" trend which has lead to an abuse of the financial compensation. This would allow to avoid under uses that may jeopardize the continuity of certain categories of fisheries, a better follow-up of catch data and status of resources, and to fully respect the budgetary discipline;
 - 3. Insists on getting reliable information and figures on the fishing opportunity of third countries in the waters of Mauritania as a key element to take into account during the negotiations in order to identify the surplus resources that can be made available to the EU;
 - 4. Considers that the Joint Scientific Committee, which is responsible for assessing the state of resources and provides for recommendations accordingly, should have the human and material resources needed to perform adequately their jobs and asks the Commission to watch over the proper exercise of this function;

5. Asks the Commission to negotiate simultaneously the fishing opportunities for different categories of vessel and the technical measures to be applied in each case, in order to avoid under uses and situations where fishing turns to be impossible due to technical reasons, which lead to substantial income losses;
6. In the same way biological recovery periods described in the new protocol should be based on scientific criteria only, with no discriminatory elements and having as sole purpose and objective the sustainability of the resources;
7. Considers that the financial compensation to support the sectoral fisheries policy is highly needed given the important investments to be made by both the industry and the Mauritanian authorities to ensure the proper development of the sector, and calls on the Commission to ensure that this contribution is effective and properly invested,
8. Highlights the need for improvement of fisheries infrastructure for the Mauritanian fishery sector (ports, warehouses, refrigerators, etc) as for example the cleaning of wrecks and the expansion of the very important port of Nouadibou; considers that these improvements would also be necessary for the better functioning of the EU fleet activity and would facilitate the investment flows;
9. Must recognize, however, the important investments that both the EU and certain Member States have made and pursued in Mauritania, but calls for greater efforts from both the Commission and the Member States to achieve a greater coordination of the financial contribution, in order to reach a real cooperation in the development and to avoid an uncoordinated duplication;
10. Urges the Commission to calls on the Mauritanian authorities to give guarantees regarding its interpretation of the control measures, the latest being the worst aspect of the current protocol despite the efforts of the EU. In particular, reiterates that community vessels are equipped with VMS and that this must be the instrument to determine its position, and that alternative systems, such as an approximate visual estimation of the distance to the coast, should be banished as it was proven to be unreliable and legally uncertain for the fleet;
11. Shows its concern about illegal boarding of community vessels by the Mauritanian authorities, which is a recurrent problem linked, notably, to the facts reported in the previous paragraph; underlines the non compliance of the Mauritanian authorities with the Chapter VI of Annex II of the protocol, in particular its paragraph 3 on the procedures in case boarding of vessels;
12. Underlines the need for the EP to be entirely involved in both the negotiating process and the long term monitoring of the functioning of the new Protocol to comply with its TFUE obligations regarding the fully and promptly information of Parliament; Recalls its conviction that the European Parliament should be represented at the Joint Committees meetings foreseen by the fisheries agreements, and insists on the benefits that all parties could take from the participation of the concerned sector to the Joint Committees meetings, given its expertise;
13. Asks the Commission to inform the European Parliament, in due time, on the ex-post evaluation of the current Protocol, in order to have sufficient elements to asses the

Protocol and to identify persistent problems;

14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Mauritanian Government.