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REPORT

For a comprehensive EU fishery strategy in the Pacific Region
(2012/2235(INI))

Committee on Fisheries

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

For a comprehensive EU fishery strategy in the Pacific Region

(2012/2235(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982,
- having regard to the resolutions of the UN General Assembly on fisheries, and in particular to paragraph 157 of Resolution 66/68 regarding the obligations of developed states towards least developed states and small island developing states,
- having regard to the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks,
- having regard to the FAO International Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity, endorsed by the FAO Council in November 2000 (IPOA-Capacity),
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing)¹,
- having regard to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing approved by the FAO Conference at its Thirty-sixth Session on 22 November 2009,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2012 on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy²,
- having regard to the Commission's Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 21 March 2012 entitled 'Towards a renewed EU-Pacific development partnership'³,

¹ OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p.1.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0461,

³ JOIN (2012)0006.

- having regard to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, to which the EU has been a contracting party since 25 January 2005 by virtue of Council Decision 2005/75/EC¹,
- having regard to Council Decision 2006/539/EC of 22 May 2006 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, of the Convention for the Strengthening of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) established by the 1949 Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Costa Rica²,
- having regard to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the South Pacific Ocean³, approved on behalf of the European Union by virtue of Council Decision 2012/130/EU⁴ and creating the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO),
- having regard to Council Decision 2011/144/EU of 15 February 2011 on the conclusion of the Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community, of the one part, and the Pacific States, of the other part⁵,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000⁶ (the Cotonou Agreement),
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 215/2008 of 18 February 2008 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the 10th European Development Fund⁷,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Federated States of Micronesia on fishing in the Federated States of Micronesia⁸,
- having regard to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community, on the one hand, and the Republic of Kiribati, on the other⁹,
- having regard to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Solomon Islands¹⁰,

¹ OJ L 32, 4.2.2005, p. 1.

² OJ L 224, 16.8.2006, p. 22.

³ OJ L 67, 6.3.2012, p. 3.

⁴ OJ L 67, 6.3.2012, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 060, 5.3.2011, p. 2.

⁶ (2000/483/EC) OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3.

⁷ OJ L 78, 19.3.2008, p. 1.

⁸ OJ L 151, 6.6.2006.

⁹ OJ L 205, 7.8.2007, p. 3.

¹⁰ OJ L 190, 22.07.2010, p. 3.

- having regard to the Commission Decision of 15 November 2012 on notifying the third countries that the Commission considers as possible of being identified as non-cooperating third countries pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,¹
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A7-0297/2013),
- A. whereas in order to implement policy coherence for development, EU policies which have an impact on fisheries in Pacific ACP (PACP) countries – i.e. fisheries, trade and development policies – should be implemented in a way that ensures that they contribute to the sustainable fisheries development objectives established by PACP countries; whereas such an approach should be incorporated in the forthcoming renewal of the Cotonou Agreement or the instruments successive to that Agreement;
- B. whereas the EU has to seek policy coherence for development on the basis of Article 208(1) TFEU, according to which 'the Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries';
- C. whereas the EU is the second leading donor in this region after Australia, channelling its assistance through the European Development Fund (EDF), and whereas despite fisheries resources being the main source of wealth of the Pacific ACP countries and the only resource common to them all, and although the countries of the Western and Central Pacific have repeatedly expressed their intention to make tuna fishing the driver for the social and economic development of the region, only 2.3 % of assistance under the 10th EDF is devoted to fisheries-related activities;
- D. whereas bilateral and multilateral trade agreements negotiated by the EU should be preceded by impact assessments, in particular with respect to the conservation of marine living resources and the consequences of the agreements for the local populations; whereas such bilateral and multilateral agreements should be guided by the conclusions of such impact assessments;
- E. whereas, in the current negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and the ACP countries aimed at adapting the generalised system of preferences arising from the Cotonou Agreement to WTO rules, fisheries products have a crucial role as regards access both to European markets and to resources and good fisheries governance with the aim of achieving sustainable development;

¹ OJ C 354, 17.11.2012, p. 1.

- F. mindful of the danger posed by the derogation on rules of origin provided for in Article 6(6) of Protocol II on rules of origin annexed to the interim partnership agreement between the European Community and the Pacific States and the resulting risks of unfair competition in the European market for fishery products;
- G. whereas it is in the EU's interest to develop relations with the Pacific region and to cooperate in order to achieve the goal of development, taking as a basis the conservation of fishery resources, the promotion of sustainable fisheries development and the fostering of transparent fisheries management;
- H. whereas around half the tuna caught in the world are taken in the waters of the Western and Central Pacific, of which 80 % are in the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of island states and only 20 % in international waters;
- I. whereas the most recent stock assessments conducted by the WCPFC Scientific Committee in 2012 indicate no overfishing of either skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) or yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) in its regulatory area, but indicate overfishing of big-eye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*); whereas mortality among juvenile big-eye tuna in purse seine fisheries, particularly where related to fish aggregating devices, is of great concern;
- J. whereas despite slightly improved fisheries supervision, vigilance and monitoring in the Pacific, the sustainability of the region's resources is being threatened by a major rise in the number of purse-seiners (mainly from Asia and the island states), the increase in the fishing effort, and illegal fishing;
- K. whereas the EU's approach in the field of fisheries in the Pacific should be to actively support the current regional efforts to address overcapacity and improve fisheries management;
- L. whereas the Pacific has a tradition of regional agencies and structures for the management of tuna fisheries, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the subregional body Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA);
- M. whereas the vessel day scheme (VDS) was introduced by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement in 2008 in an attempt to manage access to PNA waters, limit fishing effort in those waters and maximise the benefits derived from the fishery by Pacific small island developing states;
- N. whereas the excessive effort of the parties is a reality, and discussions are taking place within the WCPFC on a new Conservation and Management Measure for the following years, where the limits on effort are being addressed;
- O. whereas the United States signed a multilateral agreement with the Pacific States in 1988, and that agreement, which is currently being renegotiated, guarantees access to around 20 % of the fishing days in the region;

- P. whereas the vessel day scheme (VDS) needs to be fully transparent and its provisions need to be improved and implemented by all its members, to enable it to fulfil its objectives and ensure full compatibility of measures taken both in the EEZs and on the high seas;
- Q. whereas the access costs for long-distance fleets are expected to continue to increase significantly in coming years, given that they are an important source of income for countries in the area; whereas the cost of a fishing day as decided at the annual meeting of the PNA was set at a minimum of USD 6 000 for 2014;
- R. whereas the fisheries partnership agreements signed by the EU, including those with the countries of the Pacific Region, have traditionally been based on a limitation of vessel numbers with an indicative reference tonnage, and this has led to disparities owing to the introduction of the VDS by the PNA and their desire to apply the VDS to partnership agreements with the EU;
- S. whereas a well-designed and properly enforced vessel day scheme has the potential to provide the means to prevent further increases in effort in the region;
- T. whereas, in its relations with third countries, the EU has established cooperation and compliance in the field of IUU fishing as a prerequisite for the conclusion of fisheries partnership agreements; whereas Article 38(9) of Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 on the combating of IUU fishing states that the Commission shall not enter into negotiations to conclude such partnership agreements with countries that do not cooperate in this respect;
- U. whereas EPAs should include a specific reference to the implementation of the IUU regulation, rather than simply general wording on the need to combat IUU fishing, and should not be concluded with third countries identified as ‘non-cooperating’;
- V. whereas the Commission, in its decision of 15 November 2012, named Fiji and Vanuatu, among others, as possibly being non-cooperating countries in terms of the IUU Regulation, owing to their lack of deterrent measures and penalties against IUU vessels flagged in those countries and to their not having implemented the recommendations of the regional fisheries organisations;
- W. whereas historically, the fishing operations of Europe’s purse-seiner fleet have mainly been conducted in the Central Pacific, both in international waters and in the EEZ of Kiribati, as well as those of Tuvalu, Tokelau and Nauru, on the basis of private-sector agreements;
- X. whereas, however, besides the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Kiribati, the EU has also negotiated such agreements with certain countries of the Western Pacific, but these have not entered into effect, as the Agreement with the Federated States of Micronesia was not ratified by that country’s parliament and the negotiations to renew the Agreement

with the Solomon Islands have been at a standstill since 2012;

- Y. whereas the Commission has completed prior assessments with the Cook Islands and Tuvalu with a view to launching negotiations on fisheries agreements with those countries, and whereas the corresponding memoranda of understanding have been signed as a prerequisite for requesting negotiating mandates from the Council;
- Z. whereas the European External Action Service has to date lacked fisheries staff in its delegation in Fiji;

OVERALL STRATEGY

- 1.
1. Urges the Commission to ensure coherence among all the Community policies affecting the Pacific region, as required by Article 208 TFEU, and specifically those on fisheries, trade and development, and to enhance potential synergies with a view to achieving a multiplier effect that maximises the benefits both for the states of the Pacific region and for the EU Member States, while also promoting the international dimension, boosting the EU's strategic presence, raising the profile of the EU in the Western and Central Pacific, and contributing to the sustainable exploitation of Pacific resources;
2. Believes that within the framework of future, post-Cotonou relations with the Pacific ACP countries, the fisheries strategy should have a regional focus that bolsters the position and role of the EU in the Western and Central Pacific region;
3. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the 11th EDF takes this strategy into account and also reflects the possibility of increasing the percentage of sector-specific assistance for addressing fishing communities' needs (including enhancing their contribution to local food security) and developing fishery infrastructure for landing and processing catches locally, since fishing is one of the region's main economic resources;
4. Welcomes the recent addition to the EU Delegation in Fiji of staff specifically responsible for fisheries matters, and hopes that this will help establish a permanent specialist link in the field of fisheries with the countries of the region;
5. Calls, also, for greater coordination and complementarity with other actors in the region in relation to development assistance, in keeping with the Cairns Compact of August 2009; welcomes the holding on 12 June 2012 of the second EU-PIF ministerial meeting, which has strengthened the EU-Pacific political dialogue, in particular in the fields of fisheries and development, thereby ensuring that actions taken in these areas by the EU and countries in the region will be more effective;
6. Stresses the need for distant water fleets to contribute, in cooperation with Pacific countries, to reducing fishing pressure on tropical tuna stocks, including by substantially reducing mortality levels for juvenile big-eye tuna, a stock of great economic importance to the region and one which is currently overfished;

FISHERIES STRATEGY

A. Short term:

7. Highlights the importance of establishing a fisheries strategy for the Western and Central Pacific, given the relevance of this region from a fisheries standpoint and its value to the Union's fleet and the EU market and fish processing industry, as well as of providing legal certainty for the vessels operating there;
8. Notes that the EU's strategy for accessing resources in the EEZs of the countries in the region by way of fisheries cooperation agreements has not worked properly except in the case of Kiribati, and considers that a new framework for close and advantageous relations between the various parties involved is needed in order to revitalise and consolidate those agreements;
9. Considers that part of the problem is that the EU has held unsuccessful negotiations on agreements with the countries of the Western Pacific, which is where the EEZs of the Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia are located, rather than directing its efforts towards the Central Pacific, where the Community's purse-seiner fleet has traditionally centred its operations;
10. Welcomes warmly the fact that the Commission has completed prior assessments with the Cook Islands and Tuvalu with a view to launching negotiations on fisheries partnership agreements, and that the corresponding memoranda of understanding have been signed as a prerequisite for requesting negotiating mandates from the Council;
11. Considers this new negotiating approach to be more in line with the regional focus repeatedly called for by Parliament, especially with reference to fisheries of highly migratory species; calls on the Commission to ensure compliance with the WCPFC provisions in the case of negotiations with parties to the PNA and other Pacific ACP countries;
12. Notes that the EU's approach to the Pacific should assist developing states, and small island developing states in particular, in their efforts to secure a greater share of the benefits from the sustainable exploitation of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks and should also help strengthen regional efforts to sustainably conserve and manage fisheries for such stocks, as called for by the UNFSA Review Conference;
13. Expresses its concern at the existence of IUU fishing in the area, and, while acknowledging that there have been some improvements in fisheries governance, considers that insufficient progress has been made, especially as regards the introduction of basic tools to combat IUU fishing;
14. Calls on the Commission to include an explicit reference to the IUU Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 in the provisions of the EPA negotiated with the Pacific countries;

15. Calls on the ACP states to continue to play an active part within the RFMOs, and to keep their civil societies and socio-professional organisations regularly informed about decisions concerning fisheries;

B. Medium to long term

12.

16. Calls on the Commission to provide for the establishing of a longer-term strategy for access for the EU fleet to the EEZs of the countries of the region, based on a regional framework agreement between the EU and the countries of the Western and Central Pacific, negotiated with the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and centring on the following aspects:

- a) the agreement should outline the arrangements for access for the EU fleet, which would then be given concrete form in bilateral fisheries cooperation agreements with the countries concerned;
- b) the agreement should establish a system of transparent governance which would in particular ensure the combating of IUU fishing and specify the tools that should be used, including the Port State Measures Agreement;
- c) the agreement should be based on the VDS, provided that measures are adopted to ensure its transparency, improve its effectiveness and its implementation by all relevant parties, and ensure its compliance with the best available scientific advice;
- d) the negotiation of the agreement should explore ways of channelling EDF development assistance for the region through the FFA, since the Pacific ACP countries do not have the human and technical resources to adequately utilise that funding;

17. Stresses that the final stage in this process should be exclusively regional in its focus, i.e. it should take the form of a multilateral fisheries cooperation agreement with the EPA signatory countries that grants the Community fleet access to the EEZs of those countries;

18. Recommends that the Commission bear in mind this fisheries strategy for the Pacific region and the specific characteristics of the island states when it comes to the revision of the Cotonou Agreement;

19. Underlines the need for Parliament to be adequately involved in the preparation and negotiating process and the long-term monitoring and assessment of the functioning of bilateral agreements according to the provisions of the TFEU; insists that Parliament be immediately and fully informed, on an equal footing with the Council, at all stages of the procedure related to FPAs, pursuant to Articles 13(2) and 218(10) TFEU; recalls its conviction that Parliament should be represented by observers at the Joint Committee meetings envisaged in the fisheries agreements; insists that civil society observers, including both EU and third-country fisheries representatives, should also attend those meetings;

20. Instructs its President to forward this report to the Council, the Commission and the

European External Action Service.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This report recommends that a long term-fisheries strategy be established for the Western and Central Pacific area which takes into account the need for EU policies to be coordinated in order to enhance potential synergies, achieve a multiplier effect that maximises the benefits both for the Pacific states and for the EU countries, and raise the EU's profile in that region.

The Pacific is extremely rich in fish, and is the largest fishing ground for highly migratory species, and in particular tuna, with 80% of the world's catch. This is especially the case for the Western and Central Pacific, where 49% of such fish were taken in 2010 and 52% in 2011.

There are seven regional groups of ACP countries, five of which are in Africa, one in the Caribbean and the other in the Pacific. The Pacific region consists of 15 island states: the Cook Islands, East Timor, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

This report concentrates on the Western and Central Pacific since it is not only very rich in fisheries resources but is also a hub of IUU fishing, consists of island states most of which are ACP countries, forms part of the EU's new trade strategy based on EPAs and receives a significant share of the region's development funding through the EDF.

A future fisheries strategy should also be tied in with the future of the Cotonou Agreement. Most of the countries of the Western and Central Pacific are island states belonging to the ACP group of countries. Given the inevitable potential changes to that Agreement, this fisheries strategy should form an integral part of the EU's new approach to relations with those countries. The majority of possible models for those relations currently under discussion are regional in their focus. The EU's main objectives are to promote the social and economic development of the region via adaptation to climate change and external trade and, in turn, to promote sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources by means of transparent fisheries management.

Fisheries:

The purse-seiner fleet in the Western and Central Pacific has seen a marked increase, from 191 vessels in 2003 to 268 and 280 in 2010 and 2012 respectively, bringing with it an increase in fishing effort and in catches. These vessels are mainly from Asia and the island states. Since 1999, the EU's purse-seiner fleet in the region has only numbered four vessels, which represents around 2% of the total purse-seiner fleet operating in these waters, with their catch accounting for 7% of the total purse-seiner catch in the area.

It is important to note that there are three regional fisheries management organisations for the Pacific area:

- a) The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), which covers the Eastern Pacific from the USA to Chile. This organisation is responsible for the conservation and

management of tuna fisheries, and also has responsibilities in respect of implementing the International Dolphin Conservation Programme (IDCP). The EU has been a full member since 7 June 2006. There are 30 Community vessels operating in IATTC waters (5 purse-seiners and 25 long-liners).

- b) The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) , whose work also concerns the conservation and management of tuna and other highly migratory species. The respective convention entered into force in 2004. The Community fleet operating under this convention consists of four purse-seiners and 14 longliners.
- c) The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), which manages pelagic species, and primarily horse mackerel and squid, as well as certain demersal species such as black swordfish, southern hake, black butterfly and boarfish. This is the newest of the organisations, since the respective convention entered into force on 24 August 2012, with the EU being a founder member. There are eight pelagic trawlers operating in this area from the Netherlands, Germany and Lithuania, fishing for horse mackerel.

As regards the fisheries partnership agreements, the EU has signed agreements with Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. The latter has never been implemented, despite the EU having already paid the first instalment of financial compensation and the ship owners their licensing fees. The negotiations with the Solomon Islands are at a standstill, which means that the only partnership agreement in force is the one with Kiribati, and this is currently being renegotiated. As for the outlook for new agreements, DG MARE signed a memorandum of understanding with the Cook Islands in May 2012 and another with Tuvalu in June 2012. Ex-ante assessment reports have recently been published for both countries, which means that the Commission is in a position to request a mandate from the Council to negotiate future partnership agreements.

Only 20% of the waters covered by the WCPFC are international waters, making access for the Community fleet to EEZs very important. As regards catch volumes, only 5% of all catches are taken in international waters, since the majority of these have been closed to fishery.

Besides the agreement signed with Kiribati, the EU fleet has expressed its interest in concluding agreements with Tokelau, Nauru, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands, since their EEZs are adjacent to the international waters in which it fishes and these islands are closer to the processing factories in South America.

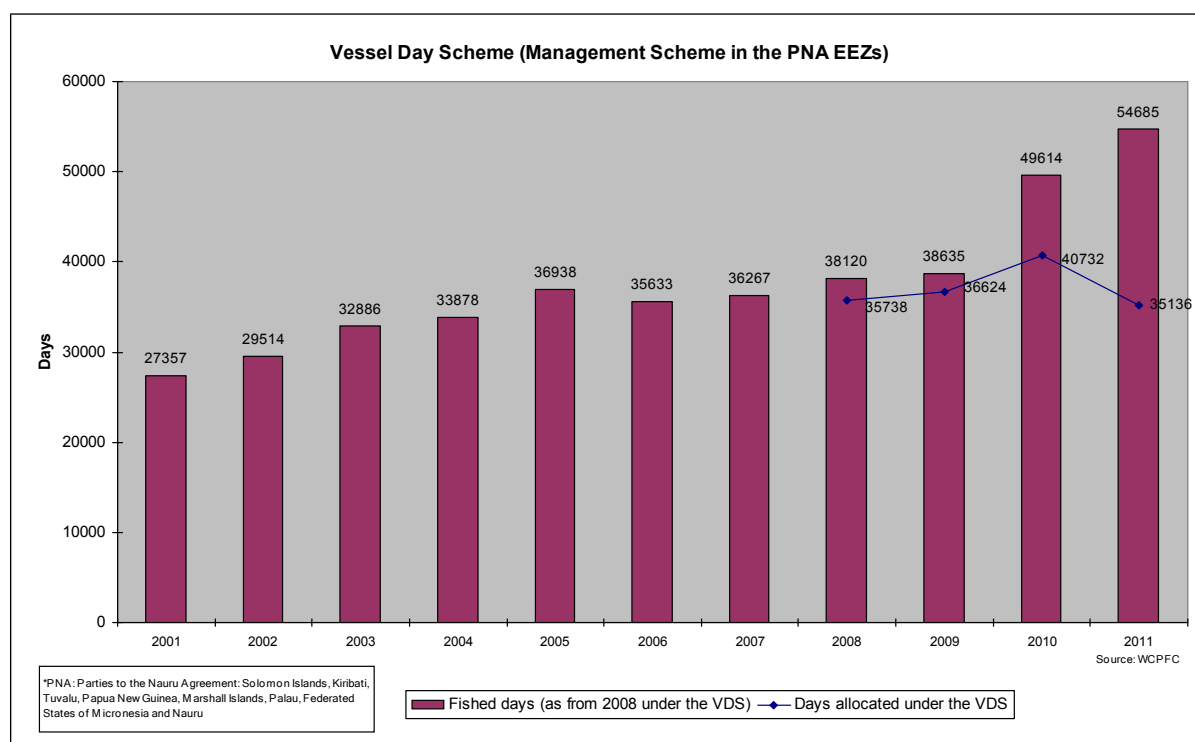
This area has a strong tradition of regional partnerships, including in the fisheries sector. The two main sub-regional organisations are the Pacific Islands Forum, and its dependent body the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA).

The aim of the FFA is to promote sustainable tuna fishing in the Western and Central Pacific. The PNA is a sub-regional agreement between the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. Its main objective is the management of tuna resources in the EEZs of those islands.

A precedent for a regional agreement exists in the form of the multilateral agreement between the countries of the area and the USA, which was been operative since 1988. That agreement was signed with the FFA and renewed in 2003 for the period 2003-2013. It permits 55 purse-seiners to fish in the area for financial compensation of USD 14 million each year, to which one has to add the further 4 million paid by ship owners. The agreement is currently being renegotiated and should allow for 40 to 45 purse-seiners to operate for 8 000 fishing days at a cost of around USD 60 million.

The VDS is the instrument which the PNA countries use to manage the fishing effort. It consists of a system of allocation of fishing days in the EEZs of those countries at a minimum price of USD 6 000 per vessel per fishing day. This system entered into force in December 2007. The aim of the agreement is to maximise the financial return on fisheries for these island states. It is also intended to restrict and reduce tuna catch volumes and ensure compliance with the WCPFC recommendations on reducing the fishing effort for the purse-seiner fleet. Since the scheme's objectives – such as a 30% reduction in the fishing effort – have not been achieved, the WCPFC has had to reformulate its conservation and management measures.

The system suffers from a lack of transparency and poor results in terms of meeting objectives, with reductions always being significantly overshoot. According to WCPFC statistics, in 35 738 fishing days were to have been allocated in 2008, but this became 38 120 days, while in 2010 the target was 40 732 fishing days and 49 614 (22% more) were allocated. For 2011, 54 685 fishing days were allocated rather than the target of 35 136 days, meaning that this target was overshoot by 56 %.



Trade:

World tuna catch volumes are stable at around 4.2 million tonnes, with no significant increase expected in this figure. 80% of all tuna is consumed as tinned tuna. Only 8% of world tinned tuna production takes place in the EU. In other words, 92% of tinned tuna is produced in third countries, most of which are developing countries. Bearing in mind that the market for tuna is highly sensitive to price variations on the World market, any concessions to third countries is liable to have a major impact on other countries which already enjoy tariff concessions.

DG TRADE has negotiated an Interim Partnership Agreement (IPA) with Papua New Guinea and Fiji which takes a new approach to trade relations between the ACP countries and the EU, with the aim of adjusting the scheme of tariff preferences under the Cotonou Agreement to WTO guidelines. The IPA came into provisional effect in December 2009. The EP ratified the agreement in January 2011, and the Council in February 2011. The Papua New Guinea Parliament ratified the IPA in May 2011, while Fiji has yet to implement it.

The EU is using tariff preferences as a means of promoting the economic development of third countries. In general, in order to enjoy this type of preferential tariff treatment, the products concerned must originate in the beneficiary country, under the rules of origin.

Article 1 of the IPA sets as its objectives enhanced market access, the promotion of sustainable development and the establishing of a free trade area. Under the Agreement, the EU grants a derogation from the rules of origin for tinned tuna and tuna steaks. That derogation has been granted without taking into account its potential impact not only on the European processing industry but also, more importantly, on that in third countries, including the ACP countries. This has already been emphasised by the Committee on Fisheries in its opinion on the Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the Conclusion of an Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Pacific States¹.

DG TRADE is currently negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement with the Pacific ACP countries that will replace the Interim Agreement. The aim is for the EPA to cover all the ACP countries in the region, and for it also to extend to trade in services. The fisheries chapter has been one of the most hotly-debated chapters. The ACP countries are demanding a derogation from the rules of origin for all fisheries products, including fresh and frozen fish. The EU, for its part, has called for good fisheries governance to be included in the agreement to ensure the sustainable fisheries development and access to resources for the Community fleet.

It seems paradoxical for such disproportionate importance to be awarded to fisheries since, in the short term, only Papua New Guinea could benefit from derogations from the rules of origin on account of the difficulty of exporting to the EU owing to distance, the absence of any economies of scale and high production costs arising, inter alia, from high electricity costs. All this limits its competitiveness in comparison to other major players in the tinned products sector such as Thailand. If the EU were to enter into a free trade agreement with that country that included tinned tuna in a zero-rate tariff scheme, this would put paid to the possibility of any expansion in the tinned products sectors of the Pacific island states.

¹ A7-0365/2010.

One of the possible explanations for this paradoxical interest in including fisheries in the EPA is that this could provide a means of bypassing Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, especially since the Commission has issued notification of certain countries such as Vanuatu and Fiji possibly being identified as non-cooperating countries under that Regulation. This procedure is still in progress. Were these countries indeed to be identified as non-cooperating countries, they would be prohibited from exporting to the EU. Other countries in the area are also under investigation, which gives some idea of the problems created by the lack of transparent and sustainable fisheries management in the region.

In order to avert the risks inherent in the extension of the derogation on rules of origin, guarantees need to be obtained that IUU fisheries products would not be able to benefit from that derogation, that measures to combat IUU fishing would be stepped up and that the VDS arrangements would be improved, so that sustainable fishing took precedence over financial profits. Access to the resources of the EEZs of those countries must also be secured, as a counterparty to the granting of a derogation, as a form of compensating the EU fishing industry.

Development policy

During the period 2006-2011, the EU was the second largest donor of development assistance in the Western and Central Pacific region, behind Australia.

The countries of the Pacific have received approximately EUR 745 million under the 10th EDF (2008-2013), including EUR 74 million for overseas countries and territories. Of that amount, only EUR 17.2 million (a little under 2% of overall funding) was for support for fisheries.

That EUR 17.2 million have been used for regional fisheries projects – EUR 8.2 million for DEVFISH II (Development of sustainable tuna fisheries) and EUR 9 million for SCICOFish, for scientific support for the management of coastal and ocean fisheries.

The percentage of development assistance earmarked for fisheries is very low in comparison to the overall assistance granted to the region. Almost all the assistance is granted regionally and coordinated by the Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), which is the scientific services provider for the WCPFC, and the FFA, and is targeted at the assessment of tuna stocks, the training of observers, and improved fishing vigilance. However, no assistance has been provided nationally or locally for modernising or creating new fishing infrastructure, of which there is a chronic shortage in the area.

23.1.2013

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Fisheries

For a comprehensive EU fishery strategy in the Pacific region
(2012/2235(INI))

Rapporteur: Maurice Ponga

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out that in the Pacific region, 15 ACP states have special relations with the EU under the Cotonou Agreement, and that, in those countries, the fisheries sector, including inshore and offshore fishing, processing and aquaculture, plays a key role in terms of food security and economic and social development;
2. Points out the need for EU policies to be consistent with development objectives along the lines called for in Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; calls on the Commission to ensure that measures relating to Pacific fisheries are in keeping with an external dimension of the common fisheries policy and with the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative entitled ‘Towards a renewed EU-Pacific development Partnership’¹, and that they guarantee responsible and sustainable exploitation of fishery resources while at the same time contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and responding to environmental challenges in the Pacific region; strongly supports the proposal put forward by the Commission and the High Representative aimed at making the Pacific OCTs catalysts for inclusive and sustainable growth for human development in the region, including in the fisheries sector;
3. Calls on the Commission to promote cooperation at regional and sub-regional level and to ensure that EU fisheries policies are compatible with existing regional Treaties and agreements, including the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and its implementing

¹ JOIN(2012)6 final, 21 March 2012.

protocols;

4. Stresses the need for ‘distant water fleets to contribute, in cooperation with Pacific countries, to reducing fishing pressure on tropical tuna stocks, including by substantially decreasing mortality levels of juvenile big-eye tuna, a stock of great economic importance to the region and one which is currently overfished;
5. Regrets that there is no regional EU fisheries approach for the Pacific, bearing in mind the mobility of fish stocks, even though this has been explicitly requested by many countries in the region; calls on the Commission to work towards a general framework for good fisheries governance at regional level, in particular by strengthening cooperation with Pacific countries bilaterally, regionally and through the appropriate RFMOs;
6. Points to the need to coordinate EU activities in the Pacific region, not least the support for the fisheries sector under the EDF, the DCI, and the Investment Facility for the Pacific, and the funding allocations for sectoral support under the present SFAs;
7. Calls, also, for greater coordination and complementarity with other actors in the region in relation to development assistance, in keeping with the Cairns Compact of August 2009; welcomes the holding on 12 June 2012 of the second EU-PIF ministerial meeting, which has strengthened the EU-Pacific political dialogue, in particular in the fields of fisheries and development, thereby ensuring that actions taken in these areas by the EU and countries in the region will be more effective;
8. Calls on the Commission to use its influence with the RFMOs concerned, in particular the WCPFC and SPRFMO, together with the SPC and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), in order to promote sustainable fisheries by intensifying action to eliminate IUU fishing, and to support the scientific committees with a view to providing them with relevant information about available fish stock levels;
9. Calls on the ACP States to continue to take an active part within the RFMOs and keep their civil societies and socio-professional organisations regularly informed about decisions concerning fisheries.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	22.1.2013
Result of final vote	+: 24 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Michael Cashman, Corina Crețu, Véronique De Keyser, Nirj Deva, Leonidas Donskis, Charles Goerens, Filip Kaczmarek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Bill Newton Dunn, Maurice Ponga, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Michèle Striffler, Alf Svensson, Keith Taylor, Eleni Theoharous, Patrice Tirolien, Anna Záborská, Iva Zanicchi
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Enrique Guerrero Salom, Gesine Meissner, Judith Sargentini

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	18.9.2013
Result of final vote	+ : 21 - : 1 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Kriton Arsenis, Alain Cadec, Carmen Fraga Estévez, Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo, Marek Józef Gróbarczyk, Ian Hudghton, Iliana Malinova Iotova, Werner Kuhn, Isabella Lövin, Gabriel Mato Adrover, Guido Milana, Maria do Céu Patrão Neves, Ulrike Rodust, Struan Stevenson, Isabelle Thomas, Nils Torvalds, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jean-Paul Besset, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Gesine Meissner, Jens Nilsson, Antolín Sánchez Presedo
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Esther Herranz García, Juan Andrés Naranjo Escobar