

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Committee on Development*

**2005/0280(CNS)**

22.3.2006

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a Council regulation on the conclusion of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Morocco  
(COM(2005)0692 – C6-0040/2006 – 2005/0280(CNS))

Draftsman: Thierry Cornillet

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## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The cooperation agreement with Morocco is the most important such agreement signed between the Community and a third country.

Following the negotiations concluded on 28 July 2005, Parliament is being asked to deliver its opinion on the document. Once adopted by the Council it will cover a period of four years and is renewable.

Even though the question immediately arises as to why a period of six months has elapsed between the Commission's initialling of the agreement and consultation of Parliament, the agreement's importance means that particular attention should be paid to its substance.

The EU has committed itself to ensuring the sustainable character of fisheries worldwide, as defined at the Johannesburg summit, by maintaining or restoring stock levels with a view to the most sustainable exploitation possible.

The EU has signed the FAO 'Code of Conduct for responsible fisheries'.

The EU presence in distant fishing grounds is a legitimate objective and the Union's fisheries interests should be protected, whilst at the same time focusing on the development of the nations with which agreements are signed.

The partnership agreement identifies the current priorities for fisheries policy in Morocco: modernisation and upgrading of the coastal fleet, abolition of driftnets, scientific research, restructuring of small-scale fishing, updating of marketing channels, mechanisation of methods of landing and handling fish, and training and support for professional organisations in the Moroccan fisheries sector.

It can be imagined that some of these priorities may have an impact on the development of coastal populations living on fishing or on marketing fish. However, it would have been preferable to have measures targeted at this objective.

It might be recalled that the Union's development cooperation policy and the common fisheries policy (CFP) must be consistent, complementary and coordinated, contributing together to poverty reduction in the countries concerned and to sustainable development.

The protocol accompanying the agreement lays down the financial contribution, the categories of fishing activities for Community vessels in Moroccan fishing zones and the conditions governing them.

The financial contribution is fixed at EUR 36 100 000 per year. Slightly more than one third of this sum is to be put towards defining and implementing a sectoral fisheries policy in Morocco.

The fishing opportunities provided for in the agreement have been laid down: (1) for the small-scale fishing category: 20 seiners for fishing pelagic species in the north, 20 vessels for small-scale fishing in the south, 30 bottom longliners for small-scale fishing in the north, and

27 pole-and-line vessels; (2) 22 trawlers and bottom longliners for demersal fishing; (3) an annual quota of 60 000 tonnes for industrial pelagic fishing.

Ten European countries are authorised to fish in Moroccan waters, including for the first time vessels from the new Member States.

Shipowners' fees have been fixed for each category, and could contribute an additional annual income of around EUR 3 million for Morocco.

There is however one fundamental question which needs to be considered before the Committee on Development delivers its opinion on the Commission proposal.

Article 2(a) of the text initialled by the Commission reads as follows:

"Moroccan fishing zone" means the waters falling within the sovereignty or jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Morocco'.

The Committee on Development has asked Parliament's Legal Service for its opinion on whether the Community could agree to sign an agreement that authorises European vessels to fish in the waters of the former Spanish Sahara.

The reply from the Legal Service was in the affirmative.

According to the Legal Service, the important thing is that a share of the Community financial contribution should be set aside for the development of local populations in Western Sahara.

The Legal Service suggests that Parliament might receive an assurance from the Commission and Council that they will call on Morocco to provide the necessary guarantees in this regard, and that the Community would envisage suspending the agreement if the populations in Western Sahara do not receive part of the financial contribution.

## AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Text proposed by the Commission<sup>1</sup>

Amendments by Parliament

Amendment 1  
Recital 2 a (new)

***(2a) The Community financial contribution should also be used for the development of***

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<sup>1</sup> Not yet published in OJ.

*coastal populations living on fisheries in Morocco and Western Sahara and the creation of small and medium-sized local firms in the fisheries sector.*

## PROCEDURE

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|---|---|
| <b>Title</b>  | Proposal for a Council regulation on the conclusion of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Morocco  |
| <b>References</b>   | COM(2005)0692 – C6-0040/2006 – 2005/0280(CNS)   |
| <b>Committee responsible</b>                                      | PECH  |
| <b>Opinion by</b><br>Date announced in plenary                    | DEVE<br>14.2.2006   |
| <b>Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary</b>           |   |
| <b>Drafts(wo)man</b><br>Date appointed                            | Thierry Cornillet<br>25.1.2006  |
| <b>Previous drafts(wo)man</b>                                     |   |
| <b>Discussed in committee</b>                                     | 13.3.2006      21.3.2006  |
| <b>Date adopted</b>   | 21.3.2006   |
| <b>Result of final vote</b>                                       | +: 14<br>–: 12<br>0: 0  |
| <b>Members present for the final vote</b>                         | Margrietus van den Berg, Danutė Budreikaitė, Marie-Arlette Carlotti, Thierry Cornillet, Nirj Deva, Fernando Fernández Martín, Michael Gahler, Hélène Goudin, Filip Andrzej Kaczmarek, Glenys Kinnock, Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, Maria Martens, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Luisa Morgantini, José Javier Pomés Ruiz, Horst Posdorf, Toomas Savi, Pierre Schapira, Frithjof Schmidt, Jürgen Schröder, Mauro Zani |
| <b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>                   | Manolis Mavrommatis, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer  |
| <b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b> | Carlos Camero González  |
| <b>Comments (available in one language only)</b>                  |   |