



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Development

2010/0287(NLE)

4.3.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Union of the Comoros
(COM(2010)0565 – C7 – 0020/2011 2010/0287(NLE))

Rapporteur for the opinion: Eva Joly

PA_Legapp

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Fisheries Agreement between the European Community and the Comoros expired in December 2010. The new Protocol is valid from 2011 to 2013 and should be provisionally applied pending the European Parliament's consent procedure.

According to Article 43(2) and Article 218(6)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Parliament can either consent or decline to consent.

Under the draft agreement the Parties undertake to promote responsible fishing in the Comoros fishing zone based on the principle of non-discrimination between the different fleets fishing in the Comoros fishing zone, while at the same time promoting a policy dialogue on the necessary reforms.

However the agreement does not limit the quantity of tuna catches. The financial contribution referred to in the agreement consists of an annual amount of EUR 1 845 750, equivalent to an annual reference tonnage of 4 850 tonnes for 70 vessels.

If the overall quantity of catches by European Union vessels in Comorian waters exceeds 4 850 tonnes per year, the total amount of the annual financial contribution will be increased by **EUR 65** per tonne: this is a derisory figure.

Furthermore, the European Union will pay a specific amount of EUR 300 000 to support the development of the sectoral fisheries policy in the Union of the Comoros.

Where the quantities caught by Community vessels come to more than double the total annual amount, the amount due for the quantity exceeding that limit is to be paid the following year. For developing countries, this might be problematic for various reasons.

Another problematic issue is the allocation of these funds as they are paid to the Comoros authorities, and they have full discretion regarding the use to which they are put. Who are then the real beneficiaries of these funds?

In conclusion, your rapporteur is of the opinion that fisheries partnership agreements should not simply be a legal way of allowing European vessels to have access to fish stocks in third countries. They should also be a tool to promote sustainable exploitation of maritime resources. The financial contribution paid by EU taxpayers must be ring-fenced and earmarked for development goals, i.e. spent in ways that benefit the fishing communities, in order to improve their living conditions, provide training programmes, ensure safety at sea and create new local jobs.

The DEVE Committee therefore believes the following issues should be taken into account during implementation of the agreement:

1. The transparency of the procedures to identify the total catches should be improved;
2. The probity of all the mechanisms vis-à-vis the corruption problem should be beyond all

doubt;

3. The accountability of the local government, which should guarantee an improvement in living conditions for local fishermen, should be reinforced;
4. Minimum standards and conditions agreed at regional level must be respected;
5. The European Union should receive regular reports on the implementation of the agreement.

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of the agreement.

The Committee on Development asks that the following points be duly taken into account by the European Commission and by the Union of the Comoros during implementation of the agreement:

- a) The transparency of the procedures to identify the total catches as well as the measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing should be improved with a view to developing responsible and sustainable fishing;
- b) The probity of all the mechanisms vis-à-vis the corruption problem should be beyond all doubt;
- c) The accountability of the local government, which should guarantee an improvement in living conditions for local fishermen by promoting, among other things, the establishment of small local fish freezing and processing industries, should be reinforced;
- d) Minimum standards and conditions agreed at regional level, in particular under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), should be respected;
- e) The European Union should receive regular reports on the implementation of the agreement.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	3.3.2011
Result of final vote	+: 19 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Nirj Deva, Leonidas Donskis, Charles Goerens, András Gyürk, Eva Joly, Franziska Keller, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Michèle Striffler, Alf Svensson, Eleni Theocharous, Iva Zanicchi, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Fiona Hall, Cristian Dan Preda
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Jolanta Emilia Hibner