



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Development

2013/0102(NLE)

17.9.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (2013-2018) (08701/2013 – C7-0216/2013 – 2013/0102(NLE))

Rapporteur: Maurice Ponga

PA_Leg_Consent

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Côte d'Ivoire is a developing country which ranks very low on the Human Development Index, lying in 168th position out of a total of 186 countries in 2013.

The country has just come out of a major political crisis which lasted for more than 10 years. It is now in the throes of reconstruction, but efforts to re-establish the rule of law across the length and breadth of the country have run into a number of problems, as the national reconciliation process is proving rather complicated.

The EU is assisting Côte d'Ivoire in this process through a wide range of humanitarian aid measures being implemented as part of the Partnership for Transition and under EU development programmes (EDF, DCI, IfS, EIDHR, MDG Initiative). The 10th EDF (2008-2013) for Côte d'Ivoire covers funding of more than EUR 600 million for use in consolidating peace and good governance, promoting social cohesion and rehabilitating social and economic infrastructure. Most international cooperation schemes are up and running again, which means that implementation of the national development plan, which began in March 2012, can be stepped up.

Although the situation in the country is difficult, with per capita GDP standing at EUR 1 300 in 2011 and some 50% of the population living below the poverty line, Côte d'Ivoire's economy is growing. In 2012, GDP grew by an estimated 8.6%. Implementation of the national development plan (2012-2015) should place the country back on a sustainable growth path in the medium term, with a growth rate of between 8.9% and 9.8% in 2013 and 2014.

Farming is the cornerstone of the country's economy, accounting for more than one-quarter of GDP. It provides jobs for some 4 million people (two-thirds of the working population). Côte d'Ivoire is one of the world's leading exporters of cocoa, coffee, cashew nuts and palm oil. It also produces oil and gas. Fishing generates approximately 1% of GDP and the port of Abidjan is West Africa's largest port.

The fisheries partnership between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire which was initialled in April 2007 replaced the original agreement concluded in 1990. Fishing opportunities and the financial contribution are set in protocols to the agreement.

This new protocol covers a five-year period (1 July 2013 to 30 June 2018) and covers fishing opportunities for 28 freezer tuna seiners and 10 surface longliners. The Union will pay an annual financial contribution of EUR 680 000, comprising:

- EUR 422 500 for access by Union vessels to Côte d'Ivoire's EEZ (reference tonnage of 6 500 tonnes);
- EUR 257 500 per year in support of the development of the country's sectoral fisheries policy (84% higher than the figure laid down in the previous protocol).

Over and above this financial contribution, vessel owners are also required to pay flat-rate fees.

The ex post evaluation of implementation of the previous protocol found it to be broadly satisfactory with respect to:

- the consistency of the agreement as a whole with the relevant rules and policies, both on the EU side and on the Ivorian side;
- compliance with good-governance requirements;
- job creation. Twenty thousand people work in or around the fishing industry (including in ports and the fish processing sector). Furthermore, workers in the processing plants have decent wages, sickness and pension cover, access to training and education, etc;
- a return of some 170% on each euro invested.

Although some of the clauses in the protocol, such as those covering the monitoring, control and surveillance system and the taking of observers on board, were not complied with owing to the lack of a legal framework, of serviceable equipment and of manpower, overall, the protocol may be said to have been effective.

The rapporteur notes the conclusions reached in the ex post evaluation to the effect that, if the aid is to be effective, it is important to ensure that action funded from the financial contribution does not seek to do too many things, and that major investment is required in the port of Abidjan in order to make it more technically and financially attractive to users. The funding provided under the protocol accordingly needs to be properly coordinated with that available under the 11th EDF and other assistance programmes,

Despite the fact that it was implemented at a time of political difficulties, the fisheries partnership agreement has had a satisfactory outcome and made a key contribution to the sustainable development of Côte d'Ivoire. Given that Côte d'Ivoire is currently engaged in a reconstruction process, it is important for the EU to be on hand to provide any necessary support, and this new protocol should help to further this process in the fisheries sector. Care nonetheless needs to be taken to make sure that the protocol is properly applied, and there must be no hesitation in applying Article 8 (suspension of the protocol) should one of the essential and fundamental elements of human rights and democratic principles be breached.

On the above basis, the rapporteur considers that Parliament should consent to the ratification of the new protocol.

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

The Committee on Development considers that the Commission should duly take the following into account during the implementation of the protocol:

- (a) Calls for the multiannual sectoral programme to focus on only a limited number of objectives, in order to make the sectoral aid more effective;
- (b) Stresses that the action taken needs to be consistent and coordinated with action funded under other EU development programmes, including the 11th EDF and the ACP Fish II programme, as well as Ivorian regional and national programmes; calls for such coordinated action to include measures to help upgrade the infrastructure at the port of Abidjan;
- (c) Calls on the Commission, as part of its work within the Joint Committee provided for in Article 9 of the agreement and over and above the objectives referred to in Article 3(1)(b) of the new protocol, to consider adopting measures to bolster the legal framework and financial, technical and human resources for monitoring, control and surveillance activities, with a view to discouraging IUU fishing; calls on the Commission also to support Côte d'Ivoire in its efforts to promote regional cooperation instruments covering inspections at sea, in particular action within the FCWC including the introduction of a regional observer programme tuna fishing and the setting up of a regional fisheries surveillance centre;
- (d) calls for annual reports on use of the sectoral budget to be sent to Parliament and the Council in order to promote transparency and make sure that this additional budget intended to be used in support of the sectoral fisheries policy is indeed used for that purpose.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	17.9.2013
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Michael Cashman, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Corina Crețu, Véronique De Keyser, Leonidas Donskis, Mikael Gustafsson, Filip Kaczmarek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Maurice Ponga, Jean Roatta, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Keith Taylor, Patrice Tirolien, Ivo Vajgl
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Philippe Boulland, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Edvard Kožušník, Krzysztof Lisek, Isabella Lövin, Judith Sargentini
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Emma McClarkin, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska