



**2021/0300M(NLE)**

20.4.2022

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on a motion for a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and of the Implementing Protocol thereto  
(2021/0300M(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Rosa Estaràs Ferragut

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas the EU is a major market for fishmeal and fish oil produced in Mauritania;
  - B. whereas in 2017, Mauritania committed to reduce and gradually phase out fishmeal and fish oil production by 2020; whereas since 2010, production of those products has tripled;
  - C. whereas robust scientific data, efficient monitoring and control systems and transparency regarding catches and fishing licences are necessary to enable coastal states to determine the available surplus of shared stocks of small pelagic fish, which are currently being harvested in numbers exceeding the limits set by scientists;
  - D. whereas the Commission's assessment of the previous protocol called for the establishment of a regional management framework for the exploitation of shared stocks of small pelagic fish and shared stocks of black hake as required under Article 63 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;
  - E. whereas shared stocks of small pelagic fish – on which artisanal fishers rely for their livelihoods and food security – are overexploited; whereas demand for those fish is growing with the expansion of foreign-owned fishmeal factories in Mauritania and neighbouring countries, which are putting food security at risk and raising concerns about environmental pollution at the local level, for example from untreated waste;
1. Welcomes the new direction taken in the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) and their implementing protocols, which duly reflect EU priorities and external policy lines; recalls the EU's commitment to the principle of policy coherence for development and the need for the SFPAs and their implementing protocols to be in line with this principle, best scientific advice and the data available, the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the objectives of the common fisheries policy;
  2. Recognises the role that SFPAs can play in fisheries management, scientific research, data collection and transparency on fishing activities by putting in place a long-term sustainable management system for the exploitation of fishing resources and enhancing sustainability and good governance in the EU's partner countries and globally; recalls, in this regard, that SFPAs must rely on active participation from the EU and partner countries and must contribute to the sustainable development of the small-scale fisheries sector in non-EU countries and to local food security; insists that this protocol should be adapted to Mauritania's specific needs and priorities;
  3. Stresses that fishing, including small-scale fisheries, is an important sector for Mauritania's economy and is essential to the country's economic development, employment opportunities, in particular for women and young people, food security and nutrition, and for ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic development for all; therefore supports measures to significantly increase the resilience of local actors, including small family-owned businesses and coastal communities, to the consequences

of climate change and coastal erosion; insists that investments in fisheries must be clearly aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and not jeopardise the needs of coastal communities; insists that the financial contribution provided for under the SFPAs with Mauritania should be distributed in a way that takes account of the fundamental role of coastal communities;

4. Welcomes the fact that the aim of the new protocol is to contribute to responsible fishing and the sustainable management of fisheries resources under better technical and operational conditions and with full transparency, in order to minimise the impact of fishing on marine ecosystems and respect the activities of Mauritanian coastal and artisanal fleets;
5. Underlines that the partnership must offer guarantees and protect Mauritanian small-scale fishers from unfair competition, including from EU fishers, and must not undermine local communities;
6. Welcomes the fact that in the new protocol, the reference tonnage for octopus was maintained at zero in order to reserve octopus for national artisanal fishers, which is key for their local development; is worried, however, that upcoming scientific programmes and/or assessments could open up the possibility to revise catch limits for cephalopods; underlines that cephalopod fisheries should be reserved for artisanal fishers considering their high added value for the artisanal fisheries sector;
7. Stresses that access for all vessels operating in Mauritania's waters should be limited to the level of surplus fish stocks and encourages every effort to collect reliable scientific data to accurately determine fish stocks; highlights the need for increased transparency and better data collection in this regard; encourages Mauritania to strengthen the IMROP (Institut Mauritanien de Recherches Océanographiques et des Pêches – Mauritanian Institute for Oceanographic and Fishing Research) so that it can play an active role in the monitoring of landings to ensure that the reference quotas are not exceeded;
8. Recalls that the EU can contribute to ending overfishing of small pelagic fish and to ending the situation caused by the negative impacts of the fishmeal and fish oil industry in Mauritania, on which the EU aquaculture and agriculture industries rely;
9. Welcomes the requirement in the new protocol for Mauritania to publish a plan for the sustainable management of small pelagic fish that will apply to all vessels fishing in Mauritanian waters; urges Mauritania, when drafting this plan, to adopt ambitious measures in line with scientific advice in order to protect fisheries resources on which local communities rely;
10. Calls on the EU to step up its efforts in this regard by supporting the implementation of a regional management framework for the exploitation of shared stocks of small pelagic fish and the setting up of a regional fisheries management organisation for those stocks and by initiating an international dialogue with the countries concerned;
11. Welcomes the requirements on transparency in the new protocol regarding the publication by Mauritania of all public and private agreements with foreign vessels in its fishing zone and agreements regarding fishing activities in Mauritania; calls on

Mauritania to make this information publicly available and to publish the most recent data as soon as possible in line with its obligations under the Fisheries Transparency Initiative; expresses concerns that some fisheries agreements concluded with foreign countries have so far not been published by Mauritania;

12. Welcomes the sectoral support component dedicated to improving the sustainability of fisheries in Mauritania in the new protocol; considers that the amount could have been further increased and encourages Mauritania to use it to improve research and analysis, including on the impacts of global warming on species and their migration due to climate change, which requires specific monitoring, as well as surveillance and control of fishing activities, support for coastal communities and the sustainable development of Mauritania's small-scale fisheries sector; calls for more onshore investment and for sectoral support, coupled with other actions, to serve as a catalyst for land-based investments aimed at improving the use of catches for human consumption, which is essential to avoid the mass processing of fish into meal and oil; believes that sectoral support should be used to improve scientific data on fish stocks, especially on shared stocks of small pelagic fish such as sardinella species and horse mackerel, which is key to calculating the surplus; underlines the need to ensure that the identification of sectoral support spending priorities is a transparent and participatory process involving the scientific and local communities, including women fish processors; calls on the Joint Committee to promote infrastructure projects that will lead to increased local consumption of fish products and to finance projects directly benefiting the whole value chain in Mauritanian small-scale fisheries; in addition, calls on the Commission and Mauritania to proactively publish annual reports on how sectoral support is utilised;
13. Calls for the fostering of local and regional economic development and the strengthening of coastal communities that are dependent on marine resources and therefore must be fully involved in the management of marine and coastal areas; recalls that the restoration of marine and coastal biodiversity sustains coastal communities and contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation; underlines the need for regular consultation with coastal communities throughout the implementation process;
14. Welcomes the fact that EU shipowners of pelagic freezer trawlers and shrimp vessels fishing under the protocol, as a fee in kind, will contribute to the policy of distributing fish to people in need by reserving 2 % of their pelagic catches transhipped or landed at the end of a trip for the National Fish Distribution Company (SNDP); notes that local fish consumption is increasing in Mauritania; stresses that these activities benefit the local labour market and coastal communities;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to ensure that small-scale artisanal fishers and small-scale processors of fish are able to make a living by promoting a sustainable local blue economy, acknowledging and strengthening the position of women and young people, who play a crucial role in the selling and processing of fish, by supporting them through projects funded by sectoral support, limiting vessels in the fishery resources they can catch and protecting fishing areas on which small-scale fishers depend for their livelihoods;
16. Welcomes the employment of qualified Mauritanian seafarers on EU vessels on contracts that comply with International Labour Organization standards and include

social cover; welcomes projects funded by EU development aid in Mauritania such as Promopeche, which is aimed at creating jobs and training young people in the field of artisanal fishing;

17. Highlights the need to work to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing to ensure that fish stocks are maintained at sustainable levels and calls for the EU to ensure that the transparency clause includes fishery resources caught by foreign fleets through local fishers and to trigger infringement procedures against Member States that fail to ensure the compliance of their external fleets; stresses the need to limit the use of flags of convenience and reflagging and to address trans-shipment at sea, in Mauritanian waters in particular and in the region in general, as these are important tools for closing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing loopholes;
18. Expresses concerns about reported human rights abuses such as human trafficking and forced labour on fishing vessels conducting illegal fishing activities in West Africa;
19. Calls on the Commission, with regard to Article 21 of the SFPA with Mauritania and Article 14 of the new Implementing Protocol, to pay specific attention to human rights in Mauritania, including in the fisheries sector; warns that, while being officially illegal in Mauritania, the practice of slavery persists in the country and has been condemned on several occasions in previous years by Parliament.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	20.4.2022
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 16 -: 0 0: 9
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Eric Andrieu, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Hildegard Bentele, Dominique Bilde, Udo Bullmann, Catherine Chabaud, Antoni Comín i Oliveres, Ryszard Czarnecki, Gianna Gancia, Charles Goerens, Mónica Silvana González, Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Beata Kempa, Karsten Lucke, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Erik Marquardt, Janina Ochojska, Michèle Rivasi, Christian Sagartz, Tomas Tobé, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

16	+
ECR	Ryszard Czarnecki, Beata Kempa
ID	Gianna Gancia
NI	Antoni Comín i Oliveres
Renew	Barry Andrews, Catherine Chabaud, Charles Goerens, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou
S&D	Eric Andrieu, Udo Bullman, Mónica Silvana González, Karsten Lucke, Pierfrancesco Majorino
Verts/ALE	Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, Eric Marquardt, Michèle Rivasi

0	-

9	0
ID	Dominique Bilde
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Hildegard Bentele, György Hölvényi, Rasa Junevičienė, Janina Ochojska, Christian Sagartz, Tomas Tobé
The Left	Miguel Urbán Crespo

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention