



**2023/0117(NLE)**

20.9.2023

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Madagascar and the Implementing Protocol thereto (2023-2027)  
(09525/2023 – C9-0223/2023 – 2023/0117(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Caroline Roose

PA\_Leg\_Consent

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The European Commission carried out negotiations with Madagascar authorities on concluding a new Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA), including a new Implementing Protocol, which was signed on 28 October 2022. The new SFPA repeals and replaces the 2007 agreement and covers a period of four years from the date of provisional application.

The new SFPA and its Implementing Protocol establish an updated framework allowing 65 Union vessels to access Madagascar's waters and to fish for tuna and associated species.

In exchange for fishing rights, the EU provides a financial contribution to Madagascar which represents EUR 1 800 000 per year, broken down into an annual amount of EUR 700 000 for access to Madagascar's fishing zone and an amount of EUR 1 100 000 for sectoral support aiming at supporting Madagascar's fisheries policy. The EU and Madagascar have also agreed on a set of rules to promote sustainable fishing, including by improving fisheries control, scientific cooperation or fighting against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Protocol is innovative for introducing a specific contribution for environmental management and ecosystem protection to be paid by Union vessels owners.

Madagascar waters are rich in fish species, yet they are prey to intense and overexploiting fishing practices by foreign industrial vessels, notably foreign-owned trawlers targeting shrimps. Climate change and overfishing degrade marine ecosystems, dramatically reducing local consumption due to the immediate price increase. These factors make fish unaffordable to coastal communities and force people to venture offshore to fish, in turn affecting their livelihoods and food security. Compared to other African fish economies, fish consumption in Madagascar is low (as of 2019, 4.26Kg yearly per person compared to 16kg in the Seychelles and 20Kg in Mauritius). Meanwhile, 33% of the population is undernourished with some regions facing hunger.

Some tropical tuna species are subject to overfishing in the Indian Ocean, notably yellowfin tuna. In 2022, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) Scientific Committee recommended a reduction of at least 30% in catches to allow yellowfin tuna populations to recover. This situation is due to the overcapacity in industrial tuna fisheries in the region, quotas set to unsustainable levels but also to the use of a large number of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), that are detrimental for ecosystems. In 2023, the IOTC adopted several measures to reduce the use of FADs but the EU and some other contracting parties objected, thus making them ineffective.

In 2018, fishing in Madagascar accounted for almost 7% of national gross domestic product. In 2022, it is estimated that almost 2.5 million livelihoods depend on fisheries. Most of the fishing activities are conducted by small-scale fisheries in the coastal areas. Women play a key role, especially in subsistence fishing and across the value chain. Still, they receive unequal pay and bear the burden of overfishing.

The sectoral support aims at helping Madagascar to develop its national fisheries strategy, notably by financing monitoring, control and surveillance, while supporting small-scale fishers and trainings. There is no specific objective concerning food security.

Your rapporteur takes the view that the Protocol has the potential to improve the situation in Madagascar when it comes to fisheries management, transparency and IUU fishing.

The financial contribution was increased compared to the previous agreement, following Madagascar's demands. Yet, it could be higher and fairer, especially when it comes to fees paid by EU operators, considering the market value of tuna species. The Protocol also contains requirements for the employment of seafarers who are nationals of Madagascar and a reinforced social clause. There are some economic interactions between EU fleets and the local processing sector, notably for the supply of the Antsiranana cannery factory.

A major improvement is that some civil society organisations were allowed to attend the negotiations of SFPA. Such good practices should continue, when implementing the agreement (e.g. by consulting coastal communities and publishing comprehensive lists of projects financed with sectoral support).

It is also necessary that the SFPA directly benefit the Madagascar small-scale fishing sector. There is no direct competition between small-scale fishers and EU tuna vessels as they do not operate in the same area and the latter are not allowed to fish in the coastal areas. However, the overexploitation of tuna species does have serious impacts on marine ecosystems and communities that rely on them. It must be tackled by both Parties.

Finally, your rapporteur stresses the need for more synergies between EU development aid and the SFPA, in order to tackle food insecurity.

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The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to recommend approval of the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, and provisional application of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Madagascar and the Implementing Protocol thereto (2023-2027).

## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Title</b>	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Madagascar and the Implementing Protocol thereto (2023-2027)
<b>References</b>	09525/2023 – C9-0223/2023 – 2023/0117(NLE)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	PECH
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	DEVE 10.7.2023
<b>Rapporteur for the opinion</b> Date appointed	Caroline Roose 30.8.2023
<b>Date adopted</b>	20.9.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 17 –: 0 0: 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Hildegard Bentele, Stéphane Bijoux, Dominique Bilde, Christophe Clergeau, Ryszard Czarnecki, Mónica Silvana González, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Karsten Lucke, Erik Marquardt, Janina Ochojska, Michèle Rivasi, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Bernhard Zimniok
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Frances Fitzgerald, Marlene Mortler, Patrizia Toia, Carlos Zorrinho
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Róza Thun und Hohenstein

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

17	+
ECR	Ryszard Czarnecki
ID	Bernhard Zimniok
PPE	Hildegard Bentele, Frances Fitzgerald, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Marlene Mortler, Janina Ochojska
Renew	Stéphane Bijoux, Róza Thun und Hohenstein
S&D	Christophe Clergeau, Mónica Silvana González, Karsten Lucke, Patrizia Toia, Carlos Zorrinho
Verts/ALE	Erik Marquardt, Michèle Rivasi
0	-
2	0
ID	Dominique Bilde
The Left	Miguel Urbán Crespo

Key:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstentions