

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1490/09
by Rosa Miguélez Ramos (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Derogation from the rules of origin for tuna products

The Commission is considering a series of requests for the 2009 marketing year for exceptions to the rules of origin for tuna products. Specifically, these requests have been submitted by Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Kenya, countries which already enjoy an automatic derogation for certain quantities of canned tuna and tuna loins under the Origin Protocol attached to the ESA-EU Interim Partnership Agreement.

In contrast to the situation in 2007, which justified the exceptions granted in 2008, none of these countries currently appears to be facing any difficulties as regards supplies of raw material. In the case of Madagascar and Seychelles, the European fleet fishing in the Indian Ocean makes virtually all landings and transshipments in their ports, and a sizeable portion of European catches also reaches Mauritius and Kenya.

Given that there are no supply problems, does the Commission not believe that granting fresh exceptional measures for 2009 would amount to giving permanent status to measures whose justification rests precisely on the fact that they are exceptional?

Has the Commission assessed the risk that, in the case of some of these countries, this exception might allow the use of raw material from fleets that are closely associated with IUU fishing, which could lead to the EU becoming the final destination for fish products with dubious origins?