Question for written answer E-009962/2012
to the Commission
Rule 117
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)

Subject: Fishing activities in the Mauritanian zone

The Protocol between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the two Parties currently in force and covering a period of two years was initialled on 26 July 2012. It should be noted that the negotiations on the Agreement were very strenuous and required no fewer than six rounds, with the Agreement signed only during the seventh round. The Agreement extends the prohibited fishing zone from 12 to 20 nautical miles and establishes an obligation of returning 2% of the catch to Mauritania free of charge. In addition, 60% of Mauritanian seamen must be signed on by EU vessels.

1. How will the terms of the Agreement affect fishing activities in the Mauritanian zone? Will they not restrict fishing opportunities for EU vessels in the zone? Will fishing not become non-cost-effective, since many fishing fleets of Member States will have to discontinue their fishing activities due to the terms of the Agreement, which are very disadvantageous and difficult to implement? Why is there no possibility of purchasing commercial licences when the rules governing fishing are so strict?

2. It worth noting that many vessels – not only from Lithuania but also from other Member States – have had to withdraw from the Mauritanian zone to the Spanish port of Las Palmas. They are not engaged in fishing activities and are currently idle and incurring huge losses. What action is planned in order to change this situation and remove the obstacles to fishing activities?

3. Does this Agreement not impinge on the interests of EU fishing fleets engaged in fishing activities in the Mauritanian zone and the interests of businesses, and does it not limit the possibilities for competition? Will ocean fishing not collapse in countries such as Lithuania?