

EC/Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement: fishing opportunities and financial contribution. EU/Morocco Protocol

2013/0315(NLE) - 16/12/2013 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Protocol between the European Union and Morocco setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement in force between the two Parties.

NON-LEGSLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2013/785/EU on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco setting out the fishing opportunities and financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco.

BACKGROUND: on 22 May 2006 the Council approved the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EC and Morocco by adopting Regulation (EC) No 764/2006.

The Union has negotiated with Morocco a new Protocol granting vessels of the Union fishing opportunities in the waters falling within the sovereignty or jurisdiction of Morocco as regards fishing.

By Decision 2013/720/EU, the Council authorised the signature of the Protocol, subject to its conclusion. It is now necessary to conclude the Protocol.

CONTENT : with this Decision, the Council concludes, with Parliament's approval, a Protocol to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA).

The Protocol aims to set out the conditions under which EU flag States might fish in Moroccan waters in the framework of a sustainable fisheries policy.

Purpose: the main aim of the Protocol to the Agreement is to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and Morocco, thereby creating a partnership framework within which to develop a policy of sustainable fisheries and sound exploitation of fishery resources in the Moroccan fishing zone, in the interests of both parties.

Fishing Protocol: the Fishing Protocol and its Annex provides for fishing opportunities and the financial contribution set out in the Agreement. The Protocol sets out fishing opportunities in the following categories:

- small-scale pelagic fishing in the north: 20 seiners,
- small-scale fishing in the north: 35 bottom longliners,
- small-scale fishing in the south: 10 vessels (rods and lines),
- demersal fishing: 16 vessels (bottom longliners and bottom trawlers),
- tuna fishing: 27 vessels (pole-and-line),

- industrial pelagic fishing: 80 000 tonnes of catches, 18 vessels.

Financial contribution: an annual financial contribution of **EUR 30 million** is provided in exchange for fishing opportunities. This contribution is based on:

- an amount of EUR 16 000 000 linked to access and
- support for the development of the sectoral fisheries policy of Morocco amounting to EUR 14 000 000.

There will also be an amount of **EUR 10 million** corresponding to the estimated amount of fees owed by ship owners under the fishing licences granted under the Fisheries Agreement.

The fishing opportunities may be reviewed by the **Joint Committee by mutual agreement**, provided that this review is designed to ensure the durability of Moroccan fisheries resources.

In the event of an increase, the financial contribution will be increased proportionally to the fishing opportunities and *pro rata temporis*. The total amount of the financial contribution made by the EU may not, however, exceed twice the EUR 16 million indicated in the Protocol for access to fishing zones.

Economic integration of EU operators in the Moroccan fisheries sector: the Protocol provides for specific cooperation between economic operators in the following areas:

- development of subsidiary industry related to fisheries, particularly naval construction and repair and the manufacturing of fishing gear and materials;
- promoting exchange of professional expertise and training of managers for the maritime fishing sector;
- sale of fishery products;
- marketing;
- aquaculture.

Joint Committee: the Partnership Agreement set up a Joint Committee which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. Furthermore, in accordance with the Protocol, the Joint Committee may approve certain modifications to the Protocol. In order to facilitate the approval of such modifications, the Commission is empowered to approve them under a **simplified procedure**, subject to specific conditions, which are set out in the Annex.

The modifications relate, in particular, to:

- the revision of fishing possibilities;
- the modalities of the sectoral support in accordance with the Protocol.

Duration of the Protocol: the Protocol will apply for a period of **4 years** from the date of its entry into force.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision will enter into force on 16.12.2013. The Protocol will enter into force when all the necessary procedures to this end have been completed.