

Maria Damanaki

European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

European Parliament plenary debate

- **Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EC and Comoros**
- **Community financial measures for the implementation of the common fisheries policy**
- **Transitional technical measures from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011**
- **Imports of fishery products from Greenland**

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

European Parliament plenary session

Strasbourg, 5 April 2011

Mr President, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Commission urges the European Parliament to give its consent for **the conclusion of the new Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Union of Comoros.**

Firstly, I would like to thank Mr. Capoulas Santos for his work as a rapporteur. I am pleased to see the very strong support of the Fisheries Committee on the substance of this proposal.

As you are aware, the EU's commitment is to continue promoting responsible and sustainable fisheries in the waters of its partners, including the Indian Ocean region. It is important to maintain bilateral relationships with this region's countries, Comoros in this case, in connection with the participation of the EU in regional fisheries organisations such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.

At present, the EU has four active fisheries partnership agreements in the Indian Ocean, namely with Seychelles, Madagascar, Mozambique and this one with the Union of Comoros (renegotiated in June 2010).

It was important to reach an agreement with Comoros as the agreement plays an important role in terms of the presence of our fleet in the region. It was also necessary to reinforce the dialogue on the sectoral policy in order to encourage the implementation of a responsible fisheries policy.

Mr President, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me come now to the requests made by the rapporteur to the Commission in the conclusions of his report.

I would like to repeat that the Commission is committed to keeping the European Parliament fully informed at all stages of the negotiation and conclusion of international agreements. We want to make available all relevant information, but in line with the commitments made in the Framework Agreement.

In practice, Commission services have been honouring this commitment for more than one year. The Commission is sending the European Parliament the same information as to the Council and at the same time.

In particular, I am committed to making available ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of our Agreements as soon as possible. To give you one example: in view of the upcoming vote on the resolution on the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Mauritania, Commission services have made arrangements that the evaluation report of this Agreement be available ahead of the foreseen schedule.

As regards participation of MEPs as observers in international meetings, I must emphasize that the Commission's commitment made under the Framework Agreement applies to multilateral international conferences and meetings of bodies set up by multilateral international agreements. At the same time, we intend to continue established successful practices of participation in bilateral negotiations. Nevertheless, any decision to include MEPs as observers in EU delegations is taken by the College of Commissioners on a case-by-case basis following the evaluation of the legal, diplomatic and technical possibilities pursuant to the Framework Agreement.

Mr President, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning to the second report on **Community financial measures for the implementation of the common fisheries policy**, I would like to thank the Fisheries committee and the Rapporteur, Mr Ferreira for their work on this proposal. Thanks to their efforts we have a text before us which is acceptable to the Council. I am happy to say that the text is also acceptable to the Commission. There has been excellent cooperation between the three institutions on this file. This has led to a successful informal trilogue held on 2 March when a consensus was achieved on the outstanding points. The Commission therefore hopes that a first reading agreement can be achieved on this proposal.

I would like to recall that this proposal rationalizes the Regulation on the so-called 2nd financial instrument. This regulation covers spending in international relations, governance, data collection and scientific advice and control and enforcement. The revision intends to ensure coherence between the Regulation and other elements of the legislative framework. It makes limited adaptations and clarifications of the provisions.

I therefore urge the European Parliament to approve the proposal.

I will turn now to the third report on **transitional technical measures**, for which I warmly thank the rapporteur, Ms Grelier.

The purpose of this proposal is to extend existing transitional technical measures until 31 December 2012. This is based on the assumption that the reformed CFP will enter into force on 1 January 2013.

My intention in proposing this extension is to avoid opening complex discussions on technical measures in the wake of the CFP reform.

The Commission supports the amendment agreed by the Fisheries Committee on a mesh size range for boarfish, as it is based on scientific advice.

I note the concerns of some of the Honourable Members and also by certain Member States, who have sought additional amendments. We could not accept these as these had not yet been tested by scientists or because scientists have actually not received the full information from Member States in order to make an assessment.

Finally, I would like to say a few words on the report concerning the **imports of fishery products from Greenland**. First, I would like to thank Mrs Fraga for the good work on the report.

The measure proposed by the Commission addresses a long standing request from Greenland.

It seeks to simplify the relevant sanitary measures and certification procedures, and make Greenland part of the Single Market for fishery products and derived products.

This is entirely in line with our commitment in the Agreement of 2006 "to contribute to the development of Greenland and to co-operate in the area of food safety".

The Commission is very pleased to note that all parties concerned – the Member States in Council (with unanimity), Greenland, the European Parliament and also the National Parliaments of the Member States – are prepared to deliver on this commitment and support the proposal.

For the Commission, the relationship with Greenland is of extreme importance. This is a political priority.

I therefore hope that the discussions on the legal basis of this proposal will not risk putting in place these important measures.

The Commission will not stand in the way of finding a pragmatic solution. Although we remain convinced that the legal basis of our proposal is correct, we would accept if the Council adopted the position of the Parliament,

It is now up to the Council to consider the options and move the case forward in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.

I hope we can resolve this issue very soon, in order to avoid an impact on our relations with Greenland.

Mr President, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, I would once again like to thank all Rapporteurs and the Fisheries Committee for their reports and work on these relevant issues.

Thank you.