



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 6 March 2023
(OR. en)

7107/23

LIMITE

PECHE 69
MAMA 39

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB: FUTURE OF THE EU-MOROCCO SFPa PROTOCOL <i>Information from the Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish delegations</i>

Delegations will find attached a note on the above-mentioned subject, as received from the Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish delegations.

AGRIFISH Council 20th March 2023

AOB: FUTURE OF THE EU-MOROCCO SFPA PROTOCOL
information from the Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish delegations

Latvia, Lithuania and Poland acknowledge and appreciate the European Commission efforts to ensure access for EU fishing vessels beyond EU waters under Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPA's) with non-EU countries. These bilateral agreements provide the basis for the economic viability of significant part of Member States' long-distance fisheries sector, while strengthening EU bilateral co-operation with third countries and promoting good fisheries governance.

Concluded in 2019, the current SFPA between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco (hereinafter – EU-Morocco SFPA) is one of the most important fisheries agreements between the EU and a third country, both in terms of the fishing opportunities and the EU financial contribution. It provides substantial possibilities for EU vessels to carry out economically sustainable fishing for human consumption, thereby contributing to food security.

In addition, the SFPA contributes to the implementation of a sustainable fisheries policy and ocean governance the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the sustainable development of our partners' fisheries sector. Moreover, there is an interdependence and synergy between the fishing grounds in the Moroccan (under the EU-Morocco SFPA) and Mauritanian (under the EU-Mauritania SFPA) waters, which allows for more sustainable fishing and better economic performance of the EU vessels. Fishing possibilities in both Morocco and Mauritania complement each other and help to overcome difficulties specific to each of those SFPAs.

Therefore, the continuation of the EU-Morocco SFPA protocol is of great interest to the Member States involved in fishing activities in Moroccan waters, in the view of the pending final judgment by the Court of Justice of the EU in Joined Cases T-344/19 and T-356/19 (Front Polisario v Council).

Given the increasing presence of Chinese and Russian fishing fleets in the waters covered by SFPAs, and its implications both for the fish stocks and the international ocean governance¹, it is in the essential EU's interest to ensure the continuation of the SFPAs.

In view of the above considerations, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish delegations call on the European Commission to take all timely legal steps to extend the Implementing Protocol under the EU-Morocco SFPAs before its expiration on 17th July 2023, so that the Protocol remains in force until the final judgment by the Court of Justice on the appeal by the EU Council and the European Commission. We also invite the European Commission to coordinate and discuss with Member States on further actions to maintain and develop fishing possibilities for the EU's long-distance fisheries sector.

1

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/733101/IPOL_STU\(2022\)733101_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/733101/IPOL_STU(2022)733101_EN.pdf)