



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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PECHE 337

NOTE

from: Spanish delegation
to: Council

Subject: Fisheries Protocol EU/Mauritania
Outcome of 7th round of negotiations EU/Mauritania - State of play
- Information from the Spanish delegation

Delegations will find attached a note submitted by the Spanish delegation as a background document to the agenda point on "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 24-25 September 2012.

Fisheries Protocol EU/Mauritania
Outcome of 7th Round of negotiations EU/Mauritania - State of Play
Information from the Spanish delegation

Spain underlines the importance of the Fisheries Partnership Agreements and the need to defend a sustainable and competitive EU fisheries industry.

After seven rounds of negotiations, the Commission reached a draft agreement with Mauritania on the Fisheries Protocol. The financial compensation is potentially higher than the previous one while the fishing possibilities do not increase proportionally. On the contrary, new limits and conditions may seriously hinder European fishing activities in Mauritanian waters.

Very few ship-owners have requested the renewal of fisheries licenses during the interim period. This is proof of the poor profitability prospects not only for the Spanish fleet, but also for the rest of the EU operators, who had to take a most difficult decision, in view of the absence of alternative fishing grounds.

Most of the Member States and practically the whole fisheries sector concerned have expressed serious doubts with respect to the initial agreement reached by the Commission. Spain is extremely concerned as it considers the conditions imposed in the agreement will hinder the minimum profitability to make the agreement attractive to the European fishermen. Likewise, some of the new provisions will be very difficult to implement and will most probably give rise to conflicts with the Mauritians authorities based on differences in their interpretation.

Spain is of the opinion that the agreement can still be improved so as to render it viable while still ensuring its sustainability. For instance, the latest scientific opinion available justifies the possibility of exploitation of a cephalopods quota and should be taken into account.

As a conclusion, Spain believes that it is time to pause and take stock of the situation, reflect on the consequences for all of the concerned parties and consider the line of action to be taken.