



Madrid, October 2016

Subject: Transparency and accountability of the SFPAs sectoral support

Dear Mr. Aguiar Machado,

Through the latest protocols of European Union's Fisheries Partnership Agreements with developing countries, around 28 million euros are spent on supporting coastal states policies to manage their fisheries and promote sustainable fisheries development. In October 2015, the European Court of Auditor's report "*Are the Fisheries Partnership Agreements well managed by the Commission?*"¹ confirmed the need to improve the transparency and accountability of these funds.

In February 2016², the report of a parliamentary visit from the fisheries committee to Guinea Bissau highlighted that the implementation of the new (SFPA) protocol 'must deliver sustainable development for local fisheries, with support to value adding infrastructures, creating jobs and better living conditions for coastal communities... To reach this objective, sectoral support has to be better coordinated with other types of support, and stakeholders have to be included, in a transparent way, in the process'.

We recognize that there have been improvements in transparency and accountability in some cases. The management of sectoral funds in Morocco has probably achieved the highest levels of accountability to date. In the case of the fisheries agreement with Mauritania, a fact sheet was published on the sectoral support of the 2008-2012 agreement, which was a useful effort to raise public awareness. Minutes of the meetings of the joint committee that provides oversight of the use of sectoral funds have also been published.

However, this does not happen as standard in all countries. There is little public information on how these payments have been used and whether their impact has been positive or not. Addressing this situation should be done in a way to provide better information to the EU taxpayer about the efficient use of public money to support sustainable fisheries through SFPAs, but detailed information about the use of sectoral support in each country would also increase the acceptability of SFPAs in partners countries, by showing how, and how much, sectoral support contributes to local fisheries development.

¹ Special Report No 11/2015: Are the Fisheries Partnership Agreements well managed by the Commission?
<http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=33233>

² European Parliament Committee on Fisheries meeting 18 February 2016
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PECH-OJ-20160217-1+02+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>



In view of the above, the LDAC would have the following three recommendations:

1. The European Commission should publish an infographic (similar to those already published on DG MARE website for fisheries agreements) about the use of the sectoral support in SFPAs.
2. Detailed information should be published for each SFPA about how the sectoral support is being used. This could be done through the systematic publication of the minutes of the Joint Committee meetings, where this topic is discussed.
3. Up to now, the external ex ante ex post evaluations of SFPAs are inconsistent in terms of how they report on the use of sectoral support funds. We suggest the EC, together with the LDAC, to reflect on how the use of sectoral support should be treated in the future evaluations, looking at its efficiency, the local sector and stakeholder consultation processes and the coordination between the sectoral support and other forms of EU aid to fisheries.

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