



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels
MARE.B.3/AD

Dear Mr. Rogríguez,

Thank you for your email from 17 November in which you share the LDAC Advice on Working with Morocco to improve fisheries governance and promote resilient fishing communities.

I would also like to thank you for the LDAC and its members' contribution to the ex-post ex-ante evaluation conducted in 2023 by external contractor. I am pleased to inform you that this evaluation has been recently published ⁽¹⁾. The results of this evaluation, together with your advice, will feed our reflexion on how to improve our partnership in fisheries with Morocco.

Previous protocols included provisions to encourage stakeholders' cooperation in view of forging lasting business ties. It was the case, for example, during the Seafood event in Barcelona in 2022 where meetings were organised by stakeholders to discuss scientific research and innovation to enhance the value of seafood products. We fully supported such gatherings.

While waiting for the Court of Justice decision, the Commission and Morocco still hold technical and scientific discussions under the framework of the agreement. Considering our close and important relationship in fisheries matters, we believe that it is of great importance to continue this dialogue and cooperation. We also intend to have a meeting at technical level with Moroccan authorities to discuss the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation. The recommendations presented in your letter could also be discussed during that meeting.

We will keep the LDAC informed of these meetings.

However, I should recall that these discussions cannot prejudice any possible future negotiations on a fisheries agreement or implementing protocol with Morocco.

We have taken good note of your recommendations in relation to the fight against IUU fishing. Indeed, DG MARE has an informal cooperation on IUU fishing with the authorities of Morocco, especially in the framework of the SFPA. We will continue

(¹) <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/785958>

Alexandre Rodríguez
Executive Secretary
EU LONG DISTANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

working closely with the authorities on this subject as well as with the Member States to ensure that the fisheries products coming from Morocco comply with the applicable rules.

As part of the e-FishMed project, Morocco has been able to participate to several activities led by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) such as recently, the “train the trainers” session held in Malta in September or a training session in Rabat on risk management methodology in December 2023.

On the social side, in 2021, in response to calls from both European and international partners, the Commission began a fundamental review aimed in particular at strengthening the chapter in the protocols implementing the SFPAs dealing with the employment of non-EU fishermen by EU shipowners. The employment of nationals from partner third countries onboard EU vessels was also reviewed in the evaluation of the SFPAs finalised in 2021⁽²⁾.

As part of its action on international ocean governance and its Common Fisheries Policy, the EU promotes decent work in the fisheries sector, in line with the objectives of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The EU promotes the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Convention C188 on work in fishing, as well as other relevant international standards, in particular the IMO Convention on Standards of Training for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F). As part of the sectoral support offered by the SFPAs, we support the training of non-European fishermen, as has been the case in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, for example. We encourage our partner countries to consider this funding opportunity. For eligible partner countries, we also encourage closer links with the secretariats of the IMO and the ILO to benefit from the subsidies and aid made available.

I take this opportunity to wish you a happy and fruitful year.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours faithfully,

Charlina VITCHEVA

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⁽²⁾ Paragraph 3.5.3 - European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Caillart, B., Cappell, R., Defaux, V. et al., *Evaluation and analysis of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) between the EU and third countries including an in-depth analysis of the sectoral support component of the SFPAs – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/52188>