



LONG DISTANCE FLEET REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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OPINION OF THE LONG DISTANCE FLEET REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (LDRAC) REGARDING THE CONCESSION MADE TO PACIFIC ACP COUNTRIES.

On July 13, the Council adopted a decision regarding the signing and temporary implementation of the Interim Partnership Agreement between the EU and Pacific countries, in accordance with the provisions of Community Regulation 1528/07.

This agreement will be applicable to Papua New Guinea, which is, to date, the only signatory country.

The main effect of the coming into force of this agreement is the repeal of the rules of origin for tuna, a measure that not only has a drastic impact on the European tuna sector but may have also on ACP and GSP+ countries.

Moreover, it is reported that several countries in Southeast Asia promise to make important on shore investments in Papua in exchange for fishing licenses for their fleets.

These countries are the main competitors of the Community and ACP y GSP+s fleets and, thanks to this measure; they are increasing their access to the community market.

It is logical to assume that if these fleets introduce more tuna in the EU, the level of catches will increase. A clear example is the development of the Chinese fleet, which has grown from 5 tuna freezer seiners in 2008 to 15 in 2009 and expects to raise this number to 30 in the next two years. Meanwhile, the EU fleet has to comply with a unilateral restriction of 4 since 2000.

Furthermore, this measure is currently causing a "call effect" for IUU vessels from Southeast Asia (the region in the world with the highest concentration of IUU vessels). On September 4, two Taiwanese vessels were caught by Greenpeace while they were illegally transshipping tuna at sea, and this is only the beginning. It is to be hoped that this "call effect" will be controlled by the application of the IUU Regulation.

Based on all of the above, the LDRAC formally requests an assessment of the impact that this measure will have for the tuna sector of Papua New Guinea and the EU, as well as on the tuna sectors of those countries that have signed preferential agreements with the EU.

The LDRAC also requests the EC to explore the possibilities of collaboration with Papua New Guinea, in order to determine not only the conditions of Community vessels access to this country resources, but also EU investments conditions in PNG and in the Pacific region, so to ensure they contribute to the promotion of sustainable fisheries.