

Press release

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European pelagic freezer trawler owners unanimously condemn EU-Mauritania deal:

“Worthless deal, with African consumers and EU taxpayers as biggest losers”

Reacting to the agreement between the European Commission and the Mauritanian government concluded on a new Fisheries Protocol in Nouakchott on 26 July, all EU pelagic freezer trawler owners strongly condemn the value and rationale of the agreement.

“The deal the Commission has just signed does not make any sense. There will be no winners, only losers. The EU pelagic fleet does not get any commercially viable fishing opportunities and fisheries in the region will not become any more sustainable. As a consequence, African consumers will have less access to affordable fish as valuable protein, African and European seamen will lose their jobs and EU taxpayers will not get any value for nearly 70 million euros a year. On top of that, pelagic fleet owners are being asked to pay a further 37 million euro”, said Gerard van Balsafoort on behalf of all pelagic freezer trawler owners.

“The new protocol is imposing unrealistic conditions for pelagic fisheries, making the agreement worthless. It will lead to zero use of the pelagic part of the agreement. In essence, the Commission intends to pay Mauritania millions for an empty shell,” he continued.

“This agreement creates a lose-lose situation for all, except for non transparent fisheries in West Africa. Driving regulated, transparent and responsible EU vessels out of Mauritanian waters is not the answer to the environmental and social sustainability challenge we all agree to tackle. This deal does not promote, but hinder food security, employment and environmental sustainability in the region. As a fishing deal this agreement does not wash. If it is however an aid package for Mauritania then the EU needs to stand up and state this clearly, rather than masquerading it as a fishing deal,” van Balsafoort concluded.

Key facts about the pelagic freezer trawler fleet:

- Close to 100% of our fish caught in Africa goes to African consumers. Nigeria and the Ivory Coast are among our largest markets.
- Our global fish catch contributes millions of meals per day to African consumers year round.
- The former EU-Mauritanian Fisheries Partnership Agreement sets out clear rules to ensure sustainable fisheries, with which we fully comply.
- Apart from hundreds of EU seamen, we employ around 400 Mauritians on board and provide training to locals.
- We have contributed to scientific fisheries research since 1996.
- We have always supported the sound management of pelagic species in the region.

For more information, please contact

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