



Plenary sitting

A9-0235/2021

15.7.2021

REPORT

containing a motion for a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union on the one hand, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, on the other hand and the Implementation Protocol thereto (06566/2021 – C9-0154/2021 – 2021/0037M(NLE))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: Pierre Karleskind

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT NON-LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union on the one hand, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, on the other hand and the Implementation Protocol thereto (06566/2021 – C9-0154/2021 – 2021/0037M(NLE))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (06566/2021),
- having regard to the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) between the European Union on the one hand, and the Government of Greenland and the Government of Denmark, on the other hand and the Implementation Protocol thereto (06380/2021),
- having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 43(2) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a)(v), and (7), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C9-0073/2020),
- having regard to Title II of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common fisheries policy (CFP)¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/2403 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets²,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of ...³ on the draft decision,
- having regard to Article 62 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,
- having regard to the Convention of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC),
- having regard to the Convention of the North-West Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO),
- having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR),
- having regard to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean,

¹ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.

² OJ L 347, 28.12.2017, p. 81.

³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(0000)0000.

- having regard to the Protocol (No 34) on special arrangements for Greenland,
 - having regard to the Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council,
 - having regard to its position of 31 January 2019 on the proposal for a Council decision on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union, including relations between the European Union, on the one hand, and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark, on the other (‘Overseas Association Decision’)⁴,
 - having regard to the report of 9 August 2019 entitled ‘Ex ante and ex post evaluation study of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Greenland’,
 - having regard to Rule 105(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Fisheries (A9-0235/2021),
- A. whereas the EU has set sustainability objectives as part of the European Green Deal and its Biodiversity 2030 and Farm to Fork strategies and given international commitments, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 on conserving resources and the marine environment;
 - B. whereas climate change is altering marine ecosystems and resources;
 - C. whereas Article 62 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea provides that a coastal state should, through agreements or other arrangements, give other states access to the surplus of an allowable catch;
 - D. whereas the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean has imposed a 16-year ban on commercial fishing in that area;
 - E. whereas the EU and Greenland, via Denmark, are members of the regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) NEAFC and NAFO;
 - F. whereas the EU maintains a close relationship with Greenland; whereas Greenland is one of the overseas countries and territories associated with the EU and whereas the EU and Greenland have had a fisheries partnership since 1984;
 - G. whereas Protocol (No 34) on special arrangements for Greenland links preferential tariffs on the European market for fisheries products from Greenland to European vessels’ access to Greenland’s fishing areas;
 - H. whereas the special nature of this Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) means that fishing opportunities are negotiated annually and that it allows for quota transfers with Norway and the Faroe Islands;
 - I. whereas the *ex post* evaluation of the previous protocol and the *ex ante* evaluation led to the negotiation of a new agreement and a new protocol that are more in line with fishing opportunities and scientific advice, provide greater flexibility over catches and have a

⁴ OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 698.

lower by-catch quota, and to the negotiation of a six-year validity period for the protocol;

- J. whereas an SFPA with Greenland is important for the EU vessels that fish in Greenland's waters and for the Member State fleets that benefit directly or indirectly from the agreement and the quota transfers it provides for;
- K. whereas the new agreement and protocol enable 12 EU vessels to make use of fishing opportunities in Greenland's waters for eight species (cod, pelagic redfish, demersal redfish, Greenland halibut, northern prawn, grenadier, capelin and Atlantic mackerel) for a period of four years, renewable for two years, in return for annual financial compensation from the EU of EUR 16 521 754, of which EUR 2 931 000 has been earmarked for support for and the development of Greenland's fisheries sector;

Previous agreement and protocol

- 1. Notes that both parties' fisheries sectors benefited from the previous agreement from a socio-economic point of view, in terms of both direct and indirect employment and the gross value added generated by the EU fleet fishing in Greenland's waters;
- 2. Is concerned that the total allowable catches that Greenland set for a number of stocks under the previous protocol exceeded scientifically advised levels; stresses that the EU's share of these fishing opportunities is relatively small;
- 3. Welcomes the fact that the financial contribution paid to Greenland's fisheries sector is used by the country's authorities for the purposes of administration, oversight and scientific research;
- 4. Is concerned, however, at the lack of scientific data needed to draw up accurate estimates of stock levels;

New agreement and protocol

- 5. Takes note of the complexity of the negotiations and of the circumstances in which they took place, as negotiations were being held in parallel on the agreement with the United Kingdom, creating uncertainty, and Greenland was facing some internal political challenges; recalls that Greenland's starting position in these negotiations was to slash quotas for EU vessels by 30 %; notes that this proposal for a reduction in fishing opportunities was motivated by Greenland's desire to further develop its fisheries sector;
- 6. Notes that quotas have been cut by an average of 5 % over the previous protocol;
- 7. Deplores the fact that EU operators were unable to fish in Greenland's waters for almost four months until the provisional application of the agreement, which remained unsigned until 22 April 2021 because Greenland had been holding elections and a government needed to be formed;
- 8. Notes that fishing opportunities for Atlantic mackerel are dependent upon the participation of coastal states as signatories to the coastal states agreement on the

management of Atlantic mackerel and that fishing opportunities for redfish must be in line with the management agreement and with the decisions taken at NEAFC level;

9. Notes that the protocol provides for 600 tonnes of by-catch, a major reduction in comparison with the previous protocol; highlights that all catches, including by-catches and discards, must be recorded and reported by species in accordance with the applicable Greenlandic legislation;
10. Applauds the agreement's sustainability objectives and the parties' cooperation in efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
11. Is concerned about the '4+2 years' arrangement regarding the duration of the agreement and about the uncertainty concerning the protocol's renewal after the first four years, which may provide less clarity for EU vessels;
12. Notes that the EU's financial compensation is higher than under the previous protocol, while the contribution to sectoral support remains the same and the reference prices for shipowners' fishing authorisations have risen;

Greenland as a strategic player in the North Atlantic and Arctic

13. Notes that Brexit has destabilised relations among North Atlantic countries;
14. States that the UK's exit from the EU and the resulting consequences for fisheries in the North Sea and the North-East Atlantic should not be misused to manipulate the distribution of quotas in the Northern Agreements, but instead should respect the historically evolved distribution of fishing opportunities that has evolved historically, always based on the best available scientific data and advice;
15. Recalls Greenland's geostrategic position in the Arctic region; stresses the importance of relations with Greenland as part of an EU strategy on the Arctic and with a view to preventing unregulated high seas fishing in the Central Arctic;

Recommendations for and requests to the Commission

16. Makes the following recommendations and requests to the Commission:
 - (a) to keep Parliament informed about the implementation of the agreement and the protocol;
 - (b) to ensure that the implementation of the agreement and the protocol thereto help to mitigate global warming and to permit adaptation to its growing effects, to preserve and restore biodiversity and to achieve the sustainability goals set in the European Green Deal, and is aligned with the objectives of the CFP;
 - (c) to ensure the application of the precautionary approach to the currently exploited and targeted stocks such as cod, redfish and Greenland halibut;
 - (d) to improve arrangements for data collection and analysis and for updating oversight of use of the EU's financial contribution to sectoral support, with a view to ensuring that stocks fished by the EU are managed sustainably and that the

quotas allocated to EU vessels are in fact for surplus stocks;

- (e) to ensure improvements in the available data on the fleet size and fishing effort of Greenland's subsistence and small-scale fishing fleets;
- (f) to ensure that the protocol is renewed for a further two years in four years' time and endeavour to ensure that European vessels can continue to operate in Greenland's waters permanently;
- (g) to do all in its power to prevent cuts to the fishing opportunities provided under the protocol each year, unless scientific advice dictates their necessity;
- (h) to carry over to the allocation for 2022 all or part of the quotas left unused owing to the delay in the provisional application of the agreement, in line with the best scientific advice;
- (i) to encourage Greenland to sign the coastal states agreement on the management of Atlantic mackerel;
- (j) to ensure that special attention is paid to lost fishing nets, to the collection marine litter, to marine ecosystems and vulnerable species, to the identification of habitats and to bird by-catches, particularly in the context of support for the sector;
- (k) to improve the connection between the EU-Greenland SFPA and the Overseas Association Decision;
- (l) to improve clarity and transparency as regards the international instruments for managing fish stocks in the region, such as RFMOs and coastal state agreements for the management of certain stocks; highlights in this context the importance of following scientific recommendations, including the effects of climate change, as well as of improving decision-making processes in RFMOs, including harvest control rules;
- (m) to engage in a long-term process of reflection on how to formalise relations with our partners in the region and to reduce the instability created by the UK's departure from the EU, particularly in the fisheries sector;
- (n) to establish a long-term discussion on the connection between the SFPA with Greenland and fisheries agreements with Norway, including their interdependence;
- (o) to take full account of the SFPA when the EU establishes its geostrategic position on the Arctic Ocean;

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17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of Greenland and Denmark.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	12.7.2021
Result of final vote	+: 24 -: 0 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, François-Xavier Bellamy, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Isabel Carvalhais, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Rosanna Conte, Rosa D'Amato, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Søren Gade, Francisco Guerreiro, Anja Hazekamp, Niclas Herbst, Ladislav Ilčić, France Jamet, Pierre Karleskind, Predrag Fred Matić, Francisco José Millán Mon, Grace O'Sullivan, João Pimenta Lopes, Manuel Pizarro, Caroline Roose, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Peter van Dalen, Emma Wiesner, Theodoros Zagorakis
Substitutes present for the final vote	Valentino Grant, Ska Keller, Gabriel Mato, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Elżbieta Rafalska

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

24	+
ECR	Ladislav Ilčić, Bert-Jan Ruissen
ID	France Jamet
PPE	François-Xavier Bellamy, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Peter van Dalen, Niclas Herbst, Francisco José Millán Mon, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Theodoros Zagorakis
Renew	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Søren Gade, Pierre Karleskind, Emma Wiesner
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Pietro Bartolo, Isabel Carvalhais, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Predrag Fred Matić, Manuel Pizarro
The Left	João Pimenta Lopes
Verts/ALE	Rosa D'Amato, Grace O'Sullivan, Caroline Roose

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4	0
ID	Rosanna Conte, Valentino Grant
The Left	Anja Hazekamp
Verts/ALE	Francisco Guerreiro

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention