

EU and Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement

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EU and Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement – opening of negotiations

Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on a new implementing protocol to the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Update

The European Commission proposes to negotiate a new implementing protocol to the EU's Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) with Mauritania. The current protocol will expire in November 2026.

Impacted products

Shrimp, demersal fish, small pelagic fish, tuna

What is changing?

The European Commission has evaluated the current protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) between the European Union (EU) and Mauritania, which expires in November 2026.

The evaluation assessed the EU fleet's fishing activities and the impact of its landings on fish processing and trade in Mauritania, along with the performance of the EU's support for the local fishery sector. The evaluation recommends the negotiation of a new implementing protocol with certain improvements:

- fishing opportunities that better reflect their probable use by EU vessels, based on the EU fleet's current and past catches
- automatically adjust the financial contribution to be paid for the EU's access to Mauritania's fishery resources in case the negotiated fishing opportunities are underused
- alignment of the protocol with identified preservation and management measures for target species, including a management plan for small pelagic species and recommended ecosystem approach

- financing of a programme of on-board scientific observations, with results-based payments to observers in terms of the achieved statistical coverage of the fishing trips
- support of the fishing sector better aligned with Mauritania's national fisheries policy, improved planning and faster paced implementation of EU support to the local fishery sector.

Why?

Although deemed broadly consistent with aims of both EU and Mauritania fisheries policies, the European Commission's evaluation of the current protocol concluded the following.

- The negotiated fishing opportunities exceeded the actual needs of the EU's long-distance fleet, which led to a low uptake (on average only 55%) of these opportunities (Caillart et al. 2025). Low uptake subsequently led to a financial imbalance, borne by the EU.
- Delays in the disbursement of funds for sectoral support have limited the protocol's impact. There were also some concerns about Mauritania's past use of funds (related to expenditure discrepancies and missing supporting documents).
- The protocol has shown only moderate effectiveness in terms of sustainability, with some fish stocks being overexploited.
- The scientific observation programme on board was not implemented, affecting the quality of management data (Caillart et al. 2025).
- Some 450 jobs have been created for Mauritanian seafarers employed on board vessels, but an appropriate mechanism to protect their rights is needed. EU vessels interact little with local industries, despite their landing obligations (Caillart et al. 2025).

Overall, the implementation of sectoral support lacks transparency, and the approach to improve infrastructure and scientific monitoring needs to be more inclusive.

Timeline

The current protocol will expire in November 2026. If adopted by the Council of the EU, this Decision provides the basis for negotiations in 2026.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The EU–Mauritania SFPAs aim to promote good governance and support the local fishing sector. The continuation of the agreement under a new protocol will continue to provide economic revenue to Mauritania and employment opportunities through the continued presence and landings of the EU fleet.

Background

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) ensure consistency between the EU's Common Fisheries Policy and other European policies, including sustainable use of partner country resources; combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; integration of partner countries into the global economy; and better political and financial governance of fisheries.

The current SFPA between the EU and Mauritania was signed and started on 15 November 2021. It repealed the previous Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the two parties which entered into force on 8 August 2008. Under the Protocol, the EU fleet is allowed to fish in Mauritanian waters for shrimp, demersal fish, tuna, and small pelagic fish, up to a total of 287,050 tonnes per year ([European Commission 2021](#)). The allocation of these fishing opportunities is specified in Regulation [2021/2061](#). Under the [Implementing Protocol](#) (Annex I, Chapter V), the EU fleet is obliged to land or trans-ship these catches in Mauritanian ports.

Resources

Caillart, B., Guerin, B. & Defaux, V. 2025. [Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du Protocole 2021-2026 à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche durable entre l'Union européenne et la République Islamique de Mauritanie : Rapport final](#) (10 October). Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Fisheries Maritime Affairs, Poseidon.

Council Decision (EU) [2022/1448](#) on the conclusion of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Council Regulation (EU) [2021/2061](#) on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the Protocol on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2021–2026)

European Commission (2021) [Sustainable fisheries partnership agreement with Mauritania](#)

European Commission (2025) [Executive summary of the Evaluation of the protocol to the partnership agreement in the field of sustainable fisheries between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania](#). Commission Staff Working Document SWD/2025/387 final.

European Union (2021) [Partnership Agreement on sustainable fisheries between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania](#)

Sources

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