

[Press release – EU’s farthest-flung fisheries need funding, say MEPs](#)

Young fishermen and fish farmers in the EU’s outermost regions (ORs) need financial help and incentives, including money for new boats, said Parliament on Thursday.

The non-legislative resolution was passed by 428 votes to 64, with 118 abstentions. An amendment to allow EU and national funding to renew the OR fleet was passed by 358 votes to 240, with 16 abstentions.

Commenting on the resolution and the amendment, rapporteur Ulrike Rodust (S&D, DE) said “I have tried to work out the best proposals for a possible solution. And I deplore the fact that the amendment has raised hopes which in my opinion cannot be fulfilled. This result does not correspond to the coherence of the Common Fisheries Policy and the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, respectively, and I doubt that it will pass legal scrutiny. Emphasis should be put on the aim of the Common Fisheries Policy to reach sustainable stocks and fisheries”.

EU and national funding to renew fleet

The renewal funding amendment calls on the Commission to “allow the funding (at EU or national level) of the ORs’ artisanal and traditional fishing vessels which land all their catches in ports in the ORs and contribute to local sustainable development, so as to increase human safety, comply with European hygiene standards, fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and achieve greater environmental efficiency”.

MEPs nonetheless stipulated that “this fishing fleet renewal must remain within the limits of authorised capacity ceilings, must be restricted to the replacement of an old vessel by a new one, and must allow sustainable fishing and reaching the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) objective”.

New financial instrument for OR fisheries

MEPs ask the EU Commission “to look into the possibility of establishing, as soon as possible, an instrument specifically dedicated to supporting fisheries in the outermost regions, along the lines of the POSEI scheme for agriculture”.

Programmes of Options Specifically Relating to Remoteness and Insularity (POSEI), governed by [POSEI Regulation No 228/2013](#), include specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions, such as production and import subsidies.

Aquaculture and young fishermen

MEPs stress that the potential of aquaculture should be better exploited in the ORs, as it might result in new production possibilities and high-quality products, with strong support from the EU. They call on the Commission to encourage and support aquaculture development projects.

Better incentives should be created under a future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to encourage young people to work in the maritime economy, particularly by means of vocational training and promoting measures which improve the incomes and job security, and improve overall sustainable organisation of the maritime economy in the ORs, says the text.

Background

The EU's nine "outermost regions" include parts of France (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin), Portugal (Madeira and Azores) and Spain (Canary Islands). [Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) sets out their defining features, which include remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, and economic dependence on a few products.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

[Press release – Court of Auditors: Parliament endorses Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz as member for Hungary](#)

The appointment of European Parliament Vice-President Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz as a member of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) was endorsed in plenary on Thursday by 326 votes to 126, with 193 abstentions.

As a candidate ECA member, Ms [Gáll-Pelcz](#) (EPP, HU) was given a hearing in the Budgetary Control Committee on 12 April. Her appointment still needs to be confirmed by the Council of the EU.

Ms Gáll-Pelcz, who has university degrees in economics and engineering, was a Member of the Hungarian National Assembly from 2006-10. From 2009 she also served as its Deputy Speaker. She became an MEP in June 2010 and was elected Vice-President of the European Parliament in July 2014 and again in January 2017.

Ms Gáll-Pelcz will take up her new duties in the Luxembourg-based court once

her appointment is approved by the Council.

Background

The Court of Auditors has 28 members, one from each member state. They are appointed for a renewable term of six years. The Council, after consulting the European Parliament, decides on the candidate presented by each country.

To prepare for a hearing in Parliament, a candidate is asked to answer a questionnaire prepared by the Budgetary Control Committee. At the hearing, candidates may make a five-minute opening statement, followed by a question and answer session with committee members. The committee votes on the candidate in a secret ballot. If approved in committee, the nomination is then put to a vote by Parliament as a whole.

Procedure: 2017/0802(NLE)

Déclaration conjointe de la Haute- Représentante/Vice-Présidente Federica Mogherini et du Commissaire pour la Politique

Nous tenons à féliciter chaleureusement le Premier ministre du Royaume du Maroc M. Saad Eddine El Othmani suite à la formation du nouveau gouvernement qui a obtenu la confiance de la Chambre des Représentants en faveur de son programme.

Le Maroc constitue depuis longtemps un partenaire stratégique dans notre voisinage, avec lequel nous avons développé une relation de confiance de longue date.

La coopération entre le Maroc et l'UE est solide et touche de nombreux domaines stratégiques, ce qui rend notre relation mutuellement bénéfique.

L'Union européenne réitère son soutien pour la poursuite et l'approfondissement du mouvement de réforme dans lequel le Maroc s'est engagé, dans le sillage des réformes constitutionnelles de 2011 entreprises sous l'autorité du roi Mohammed VI.

La formation du gouvernement a lieu à un moment clé de notre relation, et nous saisissons cette occasion pour confirmer la détermination de l'Union européenne à travailler de concert avec le nouveau gouvernement marocain sur

le renforcement de l'excellent partenariat entre l'Union européenne et le Maroc afin de faire face aux défis communs.

Remarks by Federica Mogherini upon arrival at the informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Defence

Check against delivery!

Good morning, today we will have a quite intense meeting with the Defence Ministers also welcoming the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation] Secretary General [Jens Stoltenberg] and the Head of the UN [United Nations] Peacekeeping Operations [Jean-Pierre Lacroix] – strong partners with whom we work very intensively.

We will have a session on Libya and our work in and around Libya at sea. Yesterday, we were visiting the flagship of Operation Sophia to fight the smugglers' networks but also to train the Libyan coastguards. Inside Libya, we have work ongoing to strengthen the capacity of the authorities of Libya, especially on the control of the territory and the reforms they have to make. Also the work we are doing south of Libya with our partners in the Sahel because we know very well that be it on migration, be it on security, counterterrorism or the smuggling of arms, there is work to be done at the southern border with the desert. And this is the work we are doing especially with Niger, with Chad, with Mali.

So, we will discuss with the Ministers this approach in different manners and then we will move to another very important point which is the continuation of the work we are doing to strengthen European defence and security. As you know, this is a work we have launched last year already with the Global Strategy [the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy] and then, in the last eight, nine months, we have moved quite fast and quite far on strengthening the European defence.

Today we will discuss with Ministers in an informal manner, so do not expect decisions to be taken, it is not the setting for that, but we will discuss how to move forward on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), on the use of Battlegroups, on the fund that the [European] Commission is preparing to support the European defence, both on capabilities and on research and industry. So it will be, I believe, not only stocktaking but also a strong push to develop this European defence chapter about cooperation and integration that was indicated also in Rome when we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Treaties as one of the main fields where the European

Union will move on in the next years.

Q. You said yesterday that the EU was ready to provide ships to the Libyan coastguards. When could this start and what form could it take? Which countries will contribute?

Too early to say that. We are assessing the needs. We have for the moment, as I said yesterday, trained around 100 Libyan coast guards and navy. We are now assessing together with the Libyan authorities the needs and this is a process that will take place in the next months. And I know that some countries bilaterally – for example Italy – are just now starting to provide or considering to provide some vessels for patrolling the Libyan territorial waters. But this will be a European common effort.

Q. How much progress can you make on EU defence when France is still choosing a President?

Well, that is a process that will be concluded in a couple of weeks from now. So I do not see any problem with the political calendar on that. We have moved very consistently and very fast and united on this file. I would just mention the fact that in March we took important decisions on military capabilities to be together conducted and run in Brussels – and people were sceptical about the possibility of us moving still at 28, and still we have done it.

So, I am very confident that the chapter of the European defence will continue to move forward, in a very concrete, constructive and united manner – no matter about the political calendar that obviously is important in France as in all other EU Member States. I see this as a clear priority for all. And by the way, if you ask not only the governments but if you ask the European citizens, the European citizens clearly indicate the field of foreign policy, security and defence as the field where the European Union added value is absolutely not in discussion. They want to see more European Union in the field of foreign policy, security and defence – and this is what we are doing.

Q. Is it possible to equip the Libyan coast guards with weapons?

We are talking about non-military equipment.

Q. Is there still a possibility that Operation Sophia goes into the territorial waters of Libya?

This would require an invitation from the Libyan authorities and a UN Security Council resolution. What we have achieved in international waters would now be useful to achieve in Libyan territorial waters, both in terms of dismantling the traffickers' network but also in terms of saving lives. You know that most of the tragedies now take place close to the Libyan coast. What we are currently doing is trying to empower the Libyans to do this work in Libyan territorial waters. This would allow us to solve the problem of smugglers and save lives without necessarily entering ourselves in the Libyan waters. Our objective is not in itself being in the territorial

waters of Libya, our objective is that in the territorial waters of Libya the work is done. If it is done by the Libyans, it is even better.

Q. But is this partner reliable enough?

It is the partner with whom we are working. It is the Government of National Accord that is internationally recognised and we are trying to do all we can to strengthen their capacity. We are also working with municipalities and with others in the country. For us what is important is this: that there is the legitimacy from the international perspective and, on the other side, that there is the political work in Libya. This is maybe less for the Defence Ministers to discuss but it is very much for us to do. I will debrief the Ministers also of the fact that we are intensifying our work, especially with the Arab League and the African Union and the UN to push for a political inclusive process in Libya that allows, that would allow the east and the west and the south to come together and Libyans themselves to find a way to avoid fighting each other and uniting together to fight terrorism. This is the effort that on the political side we are committed to do and we will continue to discuss this.

Fight against terrorism financing requires wider measures

EESC supports Commission's cash control plans but points to the obstacles to their implementation

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) backs the European Commission's new proposal on expanding cash controls at the EU borders and giving the authorities more power to conduct checks and confiscate goods in the event of suspected illicit activities, in order to gather more information and discover more cases of terrorist financing.

But the EESC has again called upon the Commission to publish a new list of tax havens responsible for the majority of illicit money flows, seeing it as a huge obstacle to the effective application of the proposal.

"Cash consignments continue to be the main channel through which money launderers and other financial criminals operate," stated **Javier Doz Orrit**, rapporteur on the opinion [Terrorism Financing – Controls of Cash Movements](#), adopted at the EESC plenary session on April 27.

Estimates put money 'laundered' for terrorism purposes at between hundreds of billions and a trillion US dollars per year, according to a report by the intergovernmental body Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The obligation requiring all travellers entering or leaving the EU with EUR

10,000 or more to declare the amount at the border was introduced by the first Cash Control Regulation (CCN) in 2005. The new proposal extends the obligation to declare to all cash sent by post, courier or freight transport.

It also empowers the competent authorities to temporarily detain amounts below that threshold if an illegal activity is suspected. The number of cash consignments entering and leaving the EU remains high, but cash controls are still limited, amounting to some 100,000 per year in all the Member States put together, an analysis has shown. Furthermore, the controls and the number of suspicious cases investigated vary from country to country.

The EESC recommends that, following extensive consultations and a comprehensive study, the Commission should put together a plan for reducing the use of cash in the EU.

“As part of this study, the question of whether the compulsory declarations threshold of EUR 10,000 is appropriate should be considered”, co-rapporteur **Mr Mihai Ivaşcu** said. Starting from 2018, EUR 500 banknotes will be removed from circulation as it is widely documented that they are used to make cash payments in illicit trafficking. The Committee welcomes this development and its beneficial implication for fighting against terrorism financing.

Furthermore, the new regulation promotes the introduction of penalties in all the Member States for failing to comply with the obligation to declare. The EESC believes those penalties should be harmonised and a common communication procedure should be set up for all Member States.

The Committee underlines the importance of improving the exchange of information and coordination between the authorities of the Member States and with the third countries, to achieve the maximum effect in applying the new regulation. In this sense, the EESC urges all Member States to make their anti-terrorist databases available to Europol.

The new proposal also broadens the definition of cash to include prepaid cards and highly liquid commodities like gold. Although the EESC acknowledges the social value of prepaid cards, which allow people of different social status to make payments online and offline, it points to the threat of their use by criminals or terrorists, as was the case in the November 2015 attacks in Paris.

The Committee also recommends that in addition to gold, other commodities of high value should be listed as cash, such as precious metals and gemstones.

However, the EESC points out that the successful implementation of any legislation against money laundering and terrorist financing is seriously hampered by the fact that the tax havens do not appear on the list of “high-risk third countries with strategic deficiencies”, published by the Commission in the Annex to its Regulation (EU) 2016/1675.

“The lack of any real political will to eradicate tax havens is a serious obstacle to the effective application of the regulation,” Mr Doz Orrit stated.

He said the EESC felt obliged to reiterate the call made in one of its previous opinions: "The Commission should propose a new list of tax havens, merging it into a single list of third countries and territories not cooperating in the prosecution of financial crimes and terrorist financing".