

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000041/26
to the Commission
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(8 January 2026)**

Subject: European Union financial contributions arising from fisheries agreements with third countries

A scientific study recently published in the journal *Nature* indicates that Morocco and Mauritania have received around 75% of the EU's financial contributions relating to fishing agreements since 1979 — a total amount estimated to be EUR 3.5 billion. Such contributions, channelled through Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements, are said to have aided the growth of non-EU fleets that are in direct competition with the fleets of Member States such as Spain and Portugal.

In accordance with the agreements signed with Mauritania ⁽¹⁾ and Morocco ⁽²⁾, the financial contributions have been paid to the fisheries ministries of the respective countries, which are the bodies responsible for their management and implementation.

In view of the above:

1. What monitoring, oversight and checking arrangements has the Commission implemented to ensure contributions have been used for their intended purposes, in particular as regards sustainability of resources and development of the local fisheries sectors?
2. Does the Commission have information on the final recipients of said aid?
3. Has the Commission assessed the impact of those financial contributions on the competitiveness and viability of fishing fleets in Member States such as Spain and Portugal? What main conclusions has it come to?

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**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(11 March 2026)**

Pursuant to Article 32(1)(a) of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation (CFP ⁽¹⁾), a part of the Union's financial contribution under Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) is intended to support the cost of access to fisheries resources in third-country waters.

This part of the contribution is not earmarked for specific policy objectives and its use falls under the sovereign discretion of the partner country.

In addition, as per Article 32(1)(b) of the CFP Regulation, financial assistance is provided to partner countries aiming at the development of a sustainable fisheries policy driven by the third country (the so-called 'sectoral support').

As such financial assistance is conditional upon the achievement of specific results, programming and implementation of activities funded by sectoral support are subject to strict monitoring by the Joint Committee of SFPAs, through the regular monitoring by the Commission both in headquarters and in EU delegations.

Furthermore, SFPAs define requirements for the administrations of partner countries to ensure transparency, accountability and control of these funds, including a mandatory annual report.

Further details and examples can be found in the evaluation and analysis of the SFPAs between the EU and third countries published in 2023 ⁽²⁾ which includes an in-depth analysis of the sectoral support component of the SFPAs, including beneficiaries, as well as in the evaluations conducted before the expiry of each protocol ⁽³⁾.

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2021.439.01.0003.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2021%3A439%3.ENG

² https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2019.077.01.0008.01.ENG

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC, OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, pp. 22.

⁽²⁾ Commission: Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Fisheries Maritime Affairs F&S, Megapesca Lda and Poseidon, Evaluation and analysis of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) between the EU and third countries including an in-depth analysis of the sectoral support component of the SFPAs — Final report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/52188>.

⁽³⁾ For Morocco: Commission: Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, F&S and Poseidon, Évaluation rétrospective et prospective du Protocole à l'accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche durable entre l'Union européenne et le Royaume du Maroc — Rapport final, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/785958>.

For Mauritania: European Commission: Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Poseidon, Fisheries Maritime Affairs, Caillart, B., Guerin, B. et al., 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, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2771/6618550>.

These evaluations also show that active SFPAs provide access to important fishing zones for the EU fleet, as part of a network of SFPAs concluded by the EU, enabling the vessels concerned to maintain their activities throughout the year.
