



ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
OF FISHING ENTERPRISES IN THE EU

EP(16) 1

Mr. Stefaan Depypere,
European Commission ,
International Affairs and Markets (DG MARE),
Brussels

11th January 2016

Dear Mr Depypere,

We are writing to you to express our support to the Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association who have written to you on 1st January this year. As you are now aware, following the new protocol under the EU-Mauritania Fisheries Partnership Agreement, the European fishing sector started to prepare itself to return to fishing in Mauritanian waters. Many of our own members devised a fish plan for Mauritania for 2016 and started the application procedure to acquire the necessary licenses.

During the lengthy negotiations for this new protocol, the European pelagic industry had consistently expressed its concerns regarding the old protocol, which we believed needed to be improved considerably. One of our main issues was the condition in the old protocol that a minimum of 60% of the total crew on pelagic trawlers (minus 3 officers) be Mauritanian nationals. This condition made the protocol rather unworkable and also worked against safety-on-board and the national legislation of many flag member states.

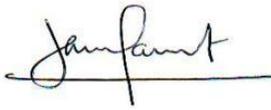
It came as a relief that this point the text of the new protocol had been amended. In the context of this new text in the protocol crew plans for our vessels were devised and licences were applied for. We have reports that for vessels (as mentioned in the original letter), provisions of the protocol signed by the Mauritanian government have been violated.

As you can imagine, our ship-owners are facing a considerably problematic position. To follow the crew numbers as indicated on the license would mean putting at risk a safety-on-board and non-compliance with flag state legislation, as was the previous problem. Non-compliance could also lead to control issues with the Mauritanian authorities including arrests, fines and a loss of time at sea.

We therefore demand that the European Commission as a matter of urgency, offer legal protection for all affected EU ship-owners that the agreed protocol will also be followed by Mauritania and strongly urge the use of whatever means at your disposal to rectify the situation, to bring licences into line with the provision as mutually agreed.

We would be grateful if you could provide us with the action that Commission will take since this is unfortunately not the first time that Mauritania behaves in a way not in line with mutually agreed positions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Javier Garat', written over a horizontal line.

Javier Garat

President of Européche

cc. Roberto Cesari