



Fraktion der Europäischen Volkspartei (Christdemokraten) im Europäischen Parlament
Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) in the European Parliament
Groupe du Parti Populaire Européen (Démocrates-Chrétiens) au Parlement européen

Parliamentary Works - Parlamentarische Arbeiten - Travaux Parlementaires

Brussels, 13th November 2011
MB/mis

Minutes of the visit of the Fisheries Committee delegation to Seychelles 1st - 5th November 2011

MEP participating:

Mrs Carmen FRAGA ESTÉVEZ (EPP), Head of the delegation - Chair of Committee,
Mr Gabriel MATO (EPP), **Mrs Ulrike RODUST (S&D)**, **Mrs Josefa ANDRES BAREA (S&D)**, **Mr Pat the Cope GALLAGHER (ALDE)**.

The Members of the EP Fisheries committee Delegation:

- ✓ Met the members of the government of the Seychelles directly involved in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the EU: Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Fisheries, Natural Resources and Industry, Minister of Home Affairs.
- ✓ Met the President of the Republic of Seychelles, the Vice-President of the Republic of Seychelles and the Speaker of the National Assembly.
- ✓ Met the representatives of the local fisheries sector, notably the Civil Society, the Indian Ocean Tuna, Ltd.
- ✓ met the main institutional bodies of the fisheries sector in Seychelles: the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)
- ✓ Met the Ambassador of France in Seychelles and the British High Commissioner to Seychelles.
- ✓ Visit of the Fishing Port's Industrial infrastructures, followed by a visit of EU Fishing vessels.
- ✓ Visit of the Seychelles Coast Guards Headquarter.

Fisheries sector in Seychelles

Geographical Situation: The Republic of Seychelles is a group of around 115 islands situated in the Indian Ocean approximately 1 500 kilometres to the north-east of Madagascar and 1 600 kilometres to the east of Kenya. It is relatively close to other island nations such as Zanzibar to the west, Mauritius and Reunion (France) to the south, and the Comoros and Mayotte (France) to the south-west. In total, the islands of the Seychelles have a surface area of 455 km² and the coastline extends between 500 and 600 kilometres depending on the source.

The territorial waters extend for 12 nautical miles, with a contiguous zone of 24 nautical miles. The limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is set at 200 nautical miles or, where

applicable, at the line equidistant with the EEZs of neighbouring countries.

The huge extent of the Seychelles EEZ and its central position in the western Indian Ocean allow access to abundant resources of highly migratory species. This also means that the ports of the Seychelles are in a favourable position to process or trade in the tunas caught in the region.

Fisheries resources and their exploitation: Commercial fishing in the Indian Ocean is focused on a small number of highly migratory species, mainly tunas.

In Seychelles waters there are Asian vessels (from Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and China), vessels that are foreign owned but Seychelles-registered, vessels from the EU, and vessels that fly flags of convenience. In general they use loglines and purse seines.

The fisheries sector in Seychelles waters consists of the following: the small-scale fleet, which uses small motorised vessels that fish for demersal and semi-pelagic species in the local area; the semi-industrial fleet, which uses long liners that are between 14 and 22 metres in length and that catch large pelagic species (mainly tuna and swordfish); and the industrial fleet, which uses large purse seiners and long liners that are generally foreign owned and concentrate on fishing for tunas (skipjack tuna, yellow fin tuna and big eye tuna).

Currently, 69% of the catch is taken using purse seines, 17% with long lines and 11% using pole-lines.

As highly migratory species, the movements of the tunas tend to vary considerably.

As a result, their catch in a given area is always subject to large variations. In addition,

Somali pirate attacks have led to a reduction in fishing effort, particularly since 2008.

The IOTC (Indian Ocean Tuna Commission) only authorises fishing by Contracting Party vessels that have been declared and registered in a public list. It has also decided to freeze the fishing effort at 2003 levels. In addition, during 2011 and 2012 there is a moratorium off the Somali coast from 1 February to 1 March for long liners and from 1 November to 1 December for purse seiners.

Seychelles fisheries sector: Fishing-related activities form a **pillar** of the **Seychelles economy**. Their contribution to GDP and foreign exchange exceed that of tourism. Exports of fishery products account for over 90% of all exports.

The Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone is at the **centre** of the south-west Indian Ocean **tuna fishing area**.

Victoria is the closest point to 90% of the region's tuna fishing areas, it is less than two days' sailing from the region's fishing grounds, and it is outside the area affected by cyclones.

Around 80% of the tuna catch in the south-west Indian Ocean is landed or transhipped in the **port of Victoria**.

The fisheries sector in the Seychelles requires significant investment and has high operating costs in relation to its limited productivity. It is also facing a shortage of workers with adequate professional training and shortcomings in its infrastructure.

There is a large tuna cannery (operated by **Indian Ocean Tuna**), which is one of the largest canneries in the world and the main employer in the Seychelles. The Seychelles economy is heavily dependent on IOT's operations, which are in turn highly dependent on the European Union market. Given its relatively high cost, any erosion of the preference for importing Seychelles tuna into the EU could have wideranging economic repercussions. This could happen as a result of the tariff concessions granted to certain countries, such as the derogation from rules of origin applicable to Papua New Guinea.

There are only two **aquaculture** production facilities, one producing black-lip oysters (*Pinctada margaritifera*) and the other producing maxima clams (*Tridacna maxima*), both of which are located on Praslin. A shrimp production facility closed in 2008.

Seychelles Fisheries Agreements: The Seychelles have concluded agreements with the European Union, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. All these agreements focus on catches of highly migratory species (tunas, swordfish or sailfish) in the open sea.

The agreement concluded with the EU is one of a series of tuna agreements in the Indian Ocean, and has developed from the 1984 Fisheries Agreement to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement signed in 2005.

This agreement allows Community vessels – both purse seiners and, to a much lesser extent, long liners – to fish for tuna in Seychelles waters.

Long liners are currently making very little use of their fishing opportunities. As for purse seiners, although their fishing opportunities were well used until 2007, this has declined considerably and now the main beneficiaries of the agreement are Spanish and French vessels.

In exchange for access to these waters, the EU pays a contribution, over half of which must be used to develop a fisheries policy in the Seychelles.

The Seychelles fisheries sector is heavily dependent on the EU agreement. However, the Seychelles are not taking full advantage of all the agreement's options, particularly in terms of boarding local crews or observers.

The EU contribution varies and is based on reference catches valued at a flat rate per tonne. If the EU vessel catches exceed the reference tonnage, the EU contribution increases proportionally. However, if the Community vessels land less than the reference catches, the basic contribution is not reduced.

The current protocol grants fishing opportunities for 48 purse seiners and 12 surface long liners.

Piracy in the Indian Ocean: Piracy off the coast of Somalia has posed a threat to maritime activities since the start of the civil war at the beginning of the 1990s.

The Somali pirates have extended their area of operations, moving ever further away from the Somali coastline by using mother ships. Their weapons, equipment and methods, economic intelligence resources and bargaining processes are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

This Somali-based piracy is significantly affecting **fishing activities** in the Indian Ocean, including the Seychelles EEZ. In fact, use of the **fisheries agreement** with the Seychelles by Community purse seiners has declined considerably since 2009. This piracy has not only led to a reduction in the number of vessels, but has also restricted their activities and pushed the fishing areas further east. However, the pirates have likewise extended their area of operations.

Since August 2009, French purse seiners have carried military personnel for their protection, and since November 2009 it has been permitted to have private armed teams on board.

These pirate attacks are also hindering the proper development of **scientific observation programmes** and are making it difficult to **monitor fishing activities**, as the coastguards are having to focus their attention on the pirates.

This piracy has also had negative effects on activities in the **port of Victoria**. The number of vessels handled, volume of fish trans-shipped, catches destined for the IOT cannery and services provided to vessels have all declined. This situation has led to some trans-shipments being moved to Port Louis in Mauritius. Although activities at the port of Victoria have been negatively affected by the piracy, it is also true that this has taken competing ports out of circulation, by, for example, limiting processing activity at the port of Mombasa in Kenya.

Operation Atalanta is a military operation undertaken by the European Union. It involves 23 EU Member States and another four countries and its aim is to combat piracy in the Horn of Africa. It commenced operations on 8 December 2008 and these are scheduled to continue until December 2012.

Visits and Meetings

Meeting and with Mr. Alejandro Anganuzzi, Executive Secretary, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), Headquarter of the IOTC, Le Chantier Complex, Victoria, Mahé

The **Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)** plays a central role in managing the most economically important species in Seychelles waters. The IOTC has been operating since 1997 and is based in Mahé. It is an intergovernmental organisation with the power to administer stocks of 16 species of tuna and other highly migratory species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent areas. Its aims are to promote cooperation between its members in order to ensure, through appropriate management, the optimum conservation and use of resources, and the sustainable development of their exploitation.

Fraga, Head of Delegation raises the question of the effectiveness of the control regulation. It still remains the great problem of the data collection. MEPs, asked what are the sanctions for illegal fishing, what kind of controls are carried out. The effectiveness of control also depends on the type of boats; with regard to small-scale fisheries this type of activity is difficult. MEPs asked what authority shall decide and to issue the number of fishing licenses. Another subject treated was the state of the shark catches and if it is practiced the finning. Local authorities have confirmed that they practice the finning, but that carcasses are not discarded. Finally, MEPs asked if it is to be applied the satellite system VMS. The system concerned to fishing in the Indian Ocean, have not fully applied. The problem of piracy was also raised.

Meeting with Hon. Dr. Patrick Herminie, Speaker of the National Assembly; île du port, Mahé

Mr Herminie gave an overview of the activities of the **National Assembly**.

The National Assembly is composed of 31 Members, of which 25 are directly elected, and 6 are proportionately elected. General elections are held every five years. It is a unicameral system. Last election took place recently on 29 September-1 October 2011.

The 2011 legislative election was boycotted by the main opposition party, the Seychelles National Party (SNP).

The speaker of the National Assembly is **Hon. Dr. Patrick Hermine**. The Speaker is the head of the legislative branch of the government and is the principal presiding officer of the National Assembly. The Speaker manages over the affairs of the Assembly and presides over the sessions of the National Assembly. He/she is elected by the Members of the National Assembly, from amongst the Members.

Ms Fraga explains the reasons for the visit: EU and Seychelles are renewing the protocol to the tuna agreement, the most important for the community fleet. Fraga recalls the new powers of the Parliament, in the field of fisheries, after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. For the future, the Parliament will try to work more closely of the sector, for the decision-making process of the Agreement. Other issues raised: The future development of small-scale fisheries; application of the rules concerning the control for the management of resources; the problem of the piracy.

Visit of the SFA/EU financed projects, in the presence of Amb. Vivianne Fock Tave, Amb. of the Seychelles in Belgium, Mr. Michel Nalletamby, Principal Secretary for Investment and Natural Resources, Mr. Finley Racombo, Ag. CEO of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) and Mr. Philippe Michaud, Technical Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The project in question is related to the activities of the research in the field of Standardization, Certification, Metrology, Testing and Fish Inspection & Quality Control. The Fish Inspection and Quality Control Unit (FIQCU) also the Competent Authority is officially authorized to certify the export of fish and fishery products from Seychelles. It also undertakes factory audits and spot check inspections of all approved establishments and all fishing vessels supplying products for EU.

This ensures compliance to the exports destined to the EU market with the Export and Fishery Product Act and other EU relevant regulations.

Ms Fraga asks how they are adjusting the problem of the presence of heavy metals in fish and asked if the case of the presence of cadmium has been resolved. The local legislation in the field of fisheries provides the traceability of the product.

Meeting with the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) represented by Mr. Finley Racombo, Ag. CEO of SFA, and in the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Investment, Natural Resources and Industry and the University of Seychelles.

The SFA was created in August 1984 to develop the fishing industry to its fullest potential and to safeguard the resource base for sustainable development. Its objectives are: **to promote, organise and develop** fishing industries and fishing resources; **to assist in the formulation of the national policy** with respect to fishing; fishing industries, fishing resources and in the implementation of that policy; **to conduct negotiations**, or engage in meetings, seminars or discussions, with regard to fishing or fisheries or the establishment or operation of fishing industries, whether at a national or international level, on behalf of the Republic or otherwise;

To identify the manpower training requirements of Seychelles with regard to fishing and fishing industries

MEPs raised the following issues: about the sectoral support (71% of the EU's contribution), there are problems to spend the whole amount; it asked if there are professional courses for the crews; the private sector is getting facilities for port construction; the inclusion of young people in the fisheries sector, there are incentives.

Ms Fraga asked what are the reasons that have led to a 30% reduction in fishing activities from 2006, which causes, the Piracy only? The Piracy, according the local authorities, was not the only reason for the reduction of fishing activities; another factor is the migration of many pelagic species. With regard to the piracy, now with security staff on board, the situation has stabilised. MEPs asked about the exception to the rule of origin of the product applied for Papua New Guinea, if there were trade impact to the Seychelles; the competition of Mauritius regarding the production of canned fish, there is a problem of costs in respect of the landings. The local authorities said that the exception to the rule of origin of the product for Papua New Guinea has had an impact on trade in fish of the Seychelles.

Meeting with **Mr. James A. Michel**, President of the Republic of Seychelles, in the presence of **Mr. Peter Sinon**, Minister for Investment, Natural Resources and Industry, **Ambassador Vivianne Fock Tave**, Amb. of the Seychelles in Belgium and **Mr. Finley Racombo**, Ag. CEO of SFA; at State House, Victoria and Meeting **Mr. Danny Faure**, Vice-

President of the Republic of the Seychelles, in the presence of **Mr. Peter Sinon**, Minister for Investment, Natural Resources and Industry, **Amb. Vivianne Fock Tave**, Amb. of the Seychelles in Belgium, **Mr. Michel Nalletamby**, Principal Secretary for Investment and Natural Resources, **Mr. Finley Racombo**, Ag. CEO of SFA and **Mr. Philippe Michaud**, Technical Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; at State House, Victoria

The meetings were at closed door

Meeting with Mr. Peter Sinon, Minister for Investment, Natural Resources and Industry, in charge for Fisheries; at the Seychelles Fishing Authority's Training Room, Victoria

Minister refers to the EU/ Seychelles Partnership Fisheries Agreement and the need to create port infrastructure suitable for large vessels (since Victory, the single most important African port). Another theme raised was the derogation from the origin of the product granted in Papua. Ms Fraga recalls that do not yet exist in the region the perception of the importance of sustainability. Another theme treated how to combat piracy. Still, and asked if there are observers on board in the Seychelles and the level of employment in the sector. Which species have reached the level of MSY. Minister: some species such as yellow fin tuna has reached an acceptable MSY. With regard to the agreements of the Seychelles with other countries, the approach of the Seychelles is similar to that adopted by the EU. The minister recalled that in fishing in the Indian Ocean there is no by-catch, because the fish not used for human consumption is used for the production of fish meal. It's necessary to create a regionalization in Africa on the basis of concrete initiatives to be taken in the fisheries sector. The position of the Seychelles on the rule of origin of the product is clear: we must know where the product comes from. The minister stressed the not deferrable of creating a sustainable industry without compromises to "fall". As piracy, many fishermen are waiting for concrete action is taken. We need to improve the monitoring activity against pirates and apply on board the satellite system VMS. Finally, with regard to the observers on board and with regard to the theme of the low wages, the minister stressed that, actually, there is a lack of staff because the incomes are not attractive. About the observers, there is the problem of their readiness to embark.

Meeting with H.E. Mr. Mathew Forbes, British High Commissioner to Seychelles and H.E. Mr. Philippe Delacroix, French Ambassador; at the British High Commission, Oliajee Trade Centre, Victoria, Mahé

Themes treated: situation of piracy. The activities of pirates from three years to today have enough intensified. The Seychelles are suffering from this phenomenon especially in the tourism sector (first contributor to the country's GDP). In the past two years, there have been more than 80 sentences of pirates against about 500 seized. Most of the pirates are being tried in the Seychelles. There is cooperation on this matter with Mauritius. The authorities of the Seychelles have initiated a dialog with the Political Movement for the Somali transition in Mogadishu. In recent months is working to develop a code of defence. Not all the boats in the port of Victoria are protected. It remains the problem specific to relapse of the phenomenon piracy on tourism. The Seychelles authorities are collaborating with the international authorities. It is now in the process of checking the possibility of extending it to more State the anti-piracy activities. Ms Fraga insists on the possibility of being able to curb the phenomenon, for example, tracking down the origin of the money that the pirates deposited in banks in Mogadishu. The detentions of pirates represent 2% of the total.

Meeting with the Civil Society/Private Sector, in the presence of Mr. Albert Napier, Fisherman Association, Mr. Bernard Elizabeth, LUNGO NGO, Mr. Beatty Hoarreau, Boat Owner Association, CEFRAD, Other relevant organisation, Hunt Deltel&Aquarius Shipping as Shipping agents, Oceana Fisheries and Sea Harvest as Fish Processor; SFA's Training Room, Victoria, Mahé

LUNGOS NGO's Association: "Citizens are fully engaged in the development of Seychelles." LUNGOS delivers a collaborative platform for Civil Society in Seychelles. It was created out of a need for a coordinating service for the Third Sector. Its mission is "To support the growth and development of Civil Society in Seychelles leading to organisations which are dynamic, organised, effective, resourceful and operating at high standards of excellence, thus achieving sought after sustainable and unifying results for individuals, communities and the nation." Currently, over 60 of the active Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Seychelles are affiliated to LUNGOS. They are clustered into eight different Thematic Commissions according to areas of intervention and focus.

The State recognised and confirmed the vital role of civil society organisations (CSOs) through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with LUNGOS in June 2008.

The crucial issues of the Protocol were discussed between the government and the sector/ With regard to civil society, the Seychelles authorities have organised meetings with the sector, which have been very useful. The partnership agreement will serve to the authorities of the Seychelles to revise the strategy in the fisheries sector and to reorganise the sector. Other topics: **Piracy:** the phenomenon is affecting the organization of industry that must bear significant additional costs for armed units on board/ **Traceability:** the Seychelles have adopted a modern system for the certification of fish per species. It remains the problem of the different interpretations by the Member on the criteria to be applied for the certification. **By-catch:** there are no peaches ancillary, all fish is inserted in the chain of production for human consumption. Ms Fraga recalls that as indicated within ICCAT has been accepted the 15% as physiological, by all the States members of this organization. Port infrastructure: the port of Victory is deemed insufficient, in general, for the activities of the fisheries sector. The method of transport of fish from the Seychelles is changed, today takes place via container. **Staff Training:** it is necessary to provide for the training of the crew on board, in the new Protocol. **Wages:** it is necessary to review the level of salaries for employees in the field of small-scale coastal fishing. **Processing:** it should be solved the problem of the processing of tuna, which is happening today in Mauritius. In the new program for fisheries, the private sector will promote the activity of processing. It is, finally, made reference to chapter IV of the new Protocol which should indicate who the competent authority responsible for the Agreement is.

Visit of the Indian Ocean Tuna Ltd. (previously named "*Conserverie de l'Océan Indien*"), accompanied with Mr. Peter Sinon, Minister for Investment, Natural Resources and Industry, Amb. Vivianne Fock Tave, Amb. of the Seychelles in Belgium, Mr. Michel Nalletamby, Principal Secretary for Investment and Natural Resources, Mr. Finley Racombo, Ag. CEO of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) and Mr. Philippe Michaud, Technical Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; at Fishing Port, Victoria, Mahé

Company is the sole and important company engaged in tuna canning in Seychelles and was formed in 1987. Previously named *Conserverie de L'Océan Indien*, the American food giant H J Heinz acquired 60% of the shares in the company and changed its name in 1995. IOT's operations have a regulating effect on the market, as they absorb part of those

catches landed, particularly skipjack tuna, which are less in demand for direct consumption or for the production of high added value products by European industry. However, it is not perceived as an important market outlet, either for Seychelles vessels or for foreign fleets, whether European or Asian. IOT has the only frozen product storage facilities in the Seychelles, the capacity of which allows for 25 days of production. IOT also has a fishmeal production factory, which uses the cannery's by-products and certain by-catches of the fleet. There is also a company called Ocean Products Seychelles, which is owned by IOT and which extracts oil from the tuna heads.

However, IOT does not contribute through taxes or social security contributions as it is covered by the free zone arrangements. Despite that, in addition to helping to maintain an industrial fabric, it also generates container traffic, putting the port of Victoria on the map of trade routes. Without this traffic, the costs of the other activities in the Seychelles economy would increase considerably.

Visit of the Fishing Port's industrial infrastructures in the presence of Mr. Peter Sinon, Minister for Investment, Natural Resources and Industry, Amb. Vivianne Fock Tave, Amb. of the Seychelles in Belgium, Mr. Michel Nalletamby, Principal Secretary for Investment and Natural Resources, Mr. Finley Racombo, Ag. CEO of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) and Mr. Philippe Michaud, Technical Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other high government officials; at Fishing Port, Victoria, Mahé

Work on the new fishing port is due to begin immediately and on the ice plant in May. The port will feature an administrative block, a fish-handling shed, storage for gear, an ice plant and mooring buoy, as well as landing, mooring and bunkering quays. The ice plant at Bel Ombre will be one of the most modern to be built here.

It will have the capacity to make six tons of plate ice a day, said to be of better quality than the flake ice being produced at existing plants. It will have storage space for up to a cubic metre.

Technicians from the SFA and the contractor visited the two sites yesterday to discuss last-minute details and adjustments to be made to the plans before work begins.

Speaking during the visit, SFA's Clifford Toussaint said the projects will modernise the fishing sector and bring immense benefit to the fishing communities.

Meeting with Mr. Joel Morgan, Minister for Home Affairs, Environment, Transport and Energy, Chairman of the High Level Committee on Piracy, Independence House, Victoria, Mahé

The MEPs focus their interests in discussing the piracy/The theme of piracy is complicated, because there are supporters of the phenomenon. We are working to create a synergy at world level, in order to combat this phenomenon. The operation Atalanta has given strong support to safety at sea for the vessels are exposed to pirate attack. EU Member states have made a great contribution. It will be presented another project concerning the reform of coast guard with a financing on the part of the United Arab Emirates. – Ms Fraga underlined the excellent work done by the authorities of the Seychelles against piracy.

Visit of the Seychelles Coast Guards Headquarter welcomed by Col. Michael Rosette, Chief Commanding Officer of the Coast Guards, informal discussion with coast guards on Piracy and other relevant topics; Coast Guards HQ, Victoria, Mahé

Creation: December 1992/ It was an amalgamation of ex=Navy & Air force/ Create an organization to be the lead agency in military and non=military maritime affairs in Seychelles/

The creation of a Coast Guard in addition to a Navy would have resulted in duplication of efforts in terms of maintenance of vessels, support facilities as well as recruitment and training.

Roles and responsibilities: defence of the country; enforce national & international maritime laws in maritime zones as applicable; search and rescue; assist government agencies in meeting tasks of National interest, as specified from time to time, including marine pollution control & monitoring; protect offshore assets & resources..

Piracy: since 2008, there has been a constant increase in the level of piracy incidents in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean/ Acts of piracy yield roughly 30 Million USD a year and due to the vast level of profits attacks are assessed to increase in the foreseeable future.

Piracy off the Somali coast has been a threat to international shipping since the beginning of Somalia's civil war in the early 1990s. Since February 2009, it also became a severe threat to our country.

The act of piracy is seriously posing a real threat to our country as it is affecting our fishing and tourism industries.

Fishing - Piracy activities is disrupting our tuna fishing industry resulting in a loss of employment, earnings and shortages of tuna to the canning factory (**tuna importation declined by 30%**).

Tourism - Tourism activities linked to cruise ships and yachts are also seriously perturbed and so have most marine activities.

Mauro Belardinelli
Adviser
