

Explanation of vote: Riquet report on the EU-Morocco Aviation Agreement (24 October 2017)

Keith Taylor, on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Regrettably, the Greens/EFA group had to vote against the Riquet report on the EU-Morocco Aviation Agreement on 24 October 2017, due to the unsatisfactory statement of the Commission in plenary prior to the vote.

The Commission confirmed that this Agreement applies to the territory of Western Sahara and that its wording and geographic scope mirrors that of the EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement in its territorial application.

The arguments put forward by the Commission are unconvincing since the Aviation Agreement applies to the territory of and the airspace above Western Sahara, and not to the maritime waters of the latter. Dakhla and Laayoune airports are located on this territory.

The Aviation Agreement fails to comply with the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) of 21 December 2016 POLISARIO vs Council, which required the EU to consider Western Sahara and Morocco as two distinct and separate territories. Moreover, the Commission did not demonstrate that it had secured the consent of the people of Western Sahara to this Agreement, as also required by the CJEU.

We call on the Council to take urgent corrective action to conform with European law and to respect the territorial integrity of Western Sahara.