

Press release
10/01/2018

The European Parliament Intergroup for Western Sahara welcomes the opinion of the ECJ Advocate General concluding that the EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement is invalid due to its application to Western Sahara

We undersigned members of the European Parliament Intergroup for Western Sahara welcome the opinion of the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) on the 10th of January 2018, which concludes that the Fisheries Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco is invalid due to its application to the separate territory and waters of Western Sahara. In his opinion, the Advocate General refers to Morocco as the occupying power and states that the notion often claimed by the European Commission of Morocco as a "de facto administrative power" does not exist in international law and "must be rejected". Thus, the EU is, once again, found at odds with international law by failing to respect the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and by breaching the obligation not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the illegal situation in that territory.

We undersigned members of the Western Sahara Intergroup urge the European Commission and the Member States to immediately suspend the ongoing EU negotiations with Morocco on fisheries and on agriculture, in order to take all necessary measures to put itself strictly in accordance with international and European law in relation to Western Sahara. This also entails engaging with the only recognised representative of the people of Western Sahara, the Front POLISARIO.

Moreover, we call for a comprehensive audit of EU-Morocco relations, which takes into account the legal and political consequences of the illegal occupation of Western Sahara.

Lastly, we urge all European companies to immediately cease their activities in the occupied territories and to measure the legal consequences of profiteering from an illegal situation.

We look forward to the ruling of the Court and are hopeful that it will follow the conclusions of the Advocate General of the ECJ.

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