



## SHAME ON THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: THE COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADOPTS A REPORT TAINTED BY A BLATANT CONFLICT OF INTEREST

[STRASBOURG, 10 DECEMBER 2018] –Today, in Strasbourg, the INTA committee of the European Parliament, responsible for international trade, has adopted the report presented by Mrs Lalonde for the extension of the agricultural agreement concluded between the European Union and Morocco to the Territory of Western Sahara.

Commenting on the vote, Mohamed Sidati, the EU Representative of Frente POLISARIO, stated "In a shameful decision the European Parliament adopted a report whose author was forced to resign before its adoption due to blatant compromise and conflict of interest"

"The Frente POLISARIO deplors this vote which marks a step further in the will of European leaders to override the clear and precise terms of court decisions. While on all sides' European leaders recall that Europe is based on the law and that respect for the law is the basis of democracy, it is still striking for the Frente POLISARIO, who has seized the European justice, to see these same politicians joining forces to circumvent the EU court decision.

"It is worth noting that the INTA decision was marred by controversy and did not enjoy a consensus amongst European parliamentarians as one entire parliamentary group decided to boycott the session convinced that the report was biased and contains serious defects, which compromises its authority.

"The agreement is clearly illegal. The European Parliament's own legal services previously concluded that it was 'unclear' if the Saharawi people had consented to the amendment - a key condition of the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) ruling on the matter in December 2016. Indeed only, the Frente POLISARIO, the UN recognized representative of the people of Western Sahara could give its consent, which was not the case. Furthermore, the irrelevant claim that the agreement could benefit to the people of Western Sahara is an insult to our people who are living as refugees or in the liberated areas or under Moroccan occupation.

"The ECJ has ruled that Western Sahara remains 'a separate and distinct status from Morocco by virtue of the principle of self-determination'. No EU agreement with Morocco can include the territory, adjacent waters and air space of Western Sahara.

"Sadly, we are left with no option but to refer the issue back to the ECJ, whose past rulings clearly demonstrate that international law is on our side. The consequences of today's vote extend far beyond trade matters. This decision pre-empts and undermines the outcome of negotiations led by UN Envoy Horst Koehler. We urge our European partners to revisit their current policy and to refocus their efforts on the positive steps the EU can take to support Koehler's efforts and incentivize progress in the talks, where trade can be a true dividend for peace."