

OPEN LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
CONCERNING YOUR VOTE ON THE EU-MOROCCO FISHERIES AGREEMENT

6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

FROM: **The undersigned Saharawi civil society NGOs**

Dear MEP,

On behalf of Saharawi civil society and the undersigned civil society organizations from the occupied territories of Western Sahara, the liberated territories, the refugee camps in Tindouf and the Saharawi diaspora, we wish to share our opinion and position on the proposed EU-Morocco sustainable fisheries partnership agreement and the inclusion of Western Sahara in its territorial scope.

The EU's Court of Justice (CJEU) has twice (on [21 December 2016](#) and [27 February 2018](#)) ruled that Western Sahara is separate and distinct from Morocco, that Morocco has no sovereignty over the territory of Western Sahara and that the EU-Morocco agreements are not applicable to Western Sahara. The Court has also stipulated the *consent* of the people of Western Sahara as the principle pre-condition for the application of such agreements in Western Sahara as a non-self-governing territory.

There have been no efforts from the EU Commission to obtain the consent of the people of Western Sahara nor have we seen responsible engagement from the EU in negotiating with the POLISARIO Front. Quite the contrary, we have witnessed the attempt by the Commission to mislead and divide the people of Western Sahara in the course of fake consultations, which failed to meet the requirement by the Court of ensuring the consent as the main condition for the legality of any economic activity in the occupied Western Sahara. Moreover, our people remains largely excluded from the fisheries sector which is overwhelmingly run and staffed by Moroccan settlers and therefore, the fisheries agreement will only reinforce our exclusion, while expanding the external, illegal control over the exploitation of our fisheries resources.

We are disappointed by the Council's approval of an agreement that aims to illegally plunder the natural resources of our occupied homeland - Western Sahara – and contributes directly to the prolongation of the occupation, the suffering of the people of Western Sahara and strengthens the illegal, military presence of Morocco in our territory. Instead, the EU should support the UN peace process and UN Special Envoy Mr. Köhler's efforts to resume negotiations between the POLISARIO Front and the Kingdom of Morocco and contribute constructively to formally decolonize Western Sahara.

This deal has nothing to do with a "sustainable fisheries partnership agreement". It is not sustainable: to this date, the Commission still does not have any independent data concerning the fisheries reserves in our waters and has relied exclusively on information provided by the Moroccan authorities or the pro-Moroccan industry. There is no partnership: the Commission did not carry out any genuine consultation of our people and it has negotiated with Morocco an agreement, which ignores our interests and wishes. Finally, it is not about fisheries but only about geopolitics: pleasing an illegal occupying force in exchange of its support for the EU agenda on migration or other interests.

We urge you, Honorable Members of the European Parliament to vote AGAINST the proposed EU-Morocco fisheries agreement to save the EU's image as an international institution that has been always

presented as a “global leader” in defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We call upon you all to take your constitutional responsibilities and act as legislative power, stand up to defend your own court and not to be seduced by propaganda and baseless claims of « benefits » by the EU Commission.

The Saharawi civil society trusts that the Parliamentarians will understand for themselves the reality of dispossession, repression and demographic engineering that is occurring in occupied Western Sahara and that the proposed agreement will only prolong. Therefore, a referral to the CJEU can be an alternative option for those who still have doubts about the clarity of the CJEU rulings related to the same agreements.

We will be following your vote next week and we wish to see the majority of the members of this house defending the legality and our people’s right not to lose faith in the European Parliament and the entire EU politics.

Yours faithfully,

The undersigned

Signed by the Saharawi civil society NGOs:

Occupied territory of Western Sahara:

1. The collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA)
2. Association for Monitoring of Resources and for Protection of the Environment in Western Sahara (AMRPENWS)
3. Saharawi Committee for the Defense of the Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara (CODAPSO)
4. The Saharawi Association for Victims of Grave Violations Committed by the Moroccan State (ASVDH)
5. The Saharawi Association for the Protection and Dissemination of the Saharawi Culture and Heritage
6. Saharawi Media Team
7. National Television Team
8. Media team Maizirat
9. The Saharawi Center for Media and Communication
10. The Association for the Protection of Saharawi Prisoners in Moroccan Prisons
11. Western Sahara Times
12. Committee for Support the Peace Plan and Protection of Natural Resources in Western Sahara
13. Committee of the Mothers of the 15 Abductees
14. Association for Justice and Human Rights
15. The Saharawi Center for Save Memory
16. The Saharawi Observatory for the Child and Women
17. Forum for the Future of Women
18. Renunciation Moroccan Nationality Group

19. The field coordination of the unemployed Saharawi graduates
20. Bentili Media Center
21. Gdim Izic Coordinating for Peaceful Movement
22. Committee of Victims of the Agdaz and Magouna
23. Independent Media Commission
24. The Saharawi Association for Persons with Disabilities in Western Sahara
25. Committee of the Families of the Saharawiss Missing
26. The Saharawis Association for the Defense of Human Rights and the Protection of Resources in Bujdour
27. Freedom Sun Organization in Smara
28. Saharawis Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Samara
29. Organization Against Torture in Dakhla, western Sahara
30. The Saharawi committee for the defence of human rights in Zag
31. The Saharawi committee for human rights monitoring in Assa
32. The Saharawi committee for the defence of human rights in Glaimim
33. The Saharawi organization for the defence of freedoms and dignity
34. El Ghad for human rights

Saharawi refugee camps:

35. Comisión Nacional Saharaui de Derechos Humanos (CONASADH)
36. Unión Nacional de Mujeres Saharaui (UNMS)
37. Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UGTSARIO)
38. Unión Nacional de la Juventud de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UJSARIO)
39. Unión Nacional de Estudiantes de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UESARIO)
40. Unión de Juristas Saharaui (UJS)
41. Unión de Periodistas y Escritores Saharaui (UPES)
42. Observatorio Saharaui de Recursos Naturales
43. Asociación de Familiares de Presos y Desaparecidos Saharaui (AFAPREDESA)
44. Grupo Non-Violence Active (NOVA SAHARA OCCIDENTAL)
45. Asociación de Víctimas de Minas (ASAVIM)
46. Asociación de Abogados Saharaui (UAS)
47. Campaña Saharaui para la sensibilización sobre el peligro de Minas (SCBL)
48. The Saharawi campaign against the plunder SCAP
49. The Union of Saharawi farmers
50. L'union des ingénieurs Sahraoui
51. L'union des artisans Sahraouis

Saharawi Diaspora :

52. Saharawi association in the USA (SAUSA)
53. VZW de vereniging van de Saharawi gemeenschap in Belgie – Belgium
54. Association culture Sahara – centre de France
55. Association des femmes Saharawi en France

56. La league des jeunes et des etudiants Saharawi en France
57. Association de la communauté Saharaoui en France
58. Association culturelle franco-Saharaouie
59. Association des Sahraouis en France
60. Association des Sahraouis de Bordeaux
61. Asociación de abogados saharauis en España
62. Asociación de médicos saharauis en España
63. La liga de deportistas saharauis en España
64. La liga de periodistas saharauis en España
65. Comunidad Saharai en las palmas
66. Asociación de saharauis en Tenerife
67. Asociación de saharauis en Fuerteventura
68. Colectivo saharai en Lanzarote
69. Asociación de saharauis en bal
70. Asociación ARDI HURRA en Sevilla
71. Asociación de saharauis en lebrija
72. Colectivo de saharauis en Jaén
73. Asociación de saharauis en jerez de la frontera
74. Colectivo sah en estepona
75. Comunidad Saharai en Granada
76. Asociación amal centro Andalucía
77. Comunidad Saharai en Murcia
78. Asociación de saharauis en alicante
79. Asociación de zamur Valencia
80. Comunidad Saharai en Catalunya
81. Comunidad Saharai en Aragón
82. Asociación de saharauis en valdepeñas
83. Comunidad Saharai en Castilla la Mancha
84. Asociación de saharauis en Ávila
85. Comunidad Saharai en Castilla y León
86. Asociación de saharauis en Navarra
87. DISABI Bizkaia
88. Sahara Euskadi Vitoria
89. Sahara Gasteiz Vitoria
90. Amal nanclares
91. Tawasol Iludio
92. Tayuch Amurio
93. Colectivo saharai en GIPUZKOA
94. La liga de estudiantes en España
95. Green Western Sahara Association
96. Sahara not for Sale – Saharawi Association in Brussels
97. Association des Saharawi de Toulouse

98. Association des Saharawi de Périgueux