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Green Party  
*for the South East of England*

Kim Howells MP  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

May 19<sup>th</sup> 2006

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your response to my correspondence about the EU/Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement. As you will be aware, I have concerns that it will allow fishing by EU-flagged vessels in the waters of the Western Sahara.

This week, the European Parliament adopted its report on the agreement, by Daniel Varela Suanzes-Carpegna. The report includes a number of amendments that concern the Western Sahara and I would like to bring them to your attention.

An amendment proposed initially by the Development Committee states that:

***The Community financial contribution should also be used for the development of coastal populations living on fisheries in Morocco and Western Sahara and the creation of small and medium-sized local firms in the fisheries sector.***

Three others refer to the much-disputed legality of the inclusion of the Western Sahara, and would require the Commission to take steps to suspend the agreement if it is not implemented in accordance with international law:

***The Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Morocco is hereby approved on behalf of the Community, **subject to its implementation in accordance with international law.*****

***On the basis of those notifications and of information supplied by the Joint Committee established under Article 10 of the Agreement, the Commission shall report annually to the European Parliament and to the Council on its implementation.***

***In the event of evidence that the use to which the Agreement is being put is in contravention of international obligations, the Commission shall take immediate steps to suspend the Agreement as provided for in Article 15 of the Agreement.***

All of these amendments were adopted with overwhelming majorities, signalling the very strong unease in the Parliament about this agreement and its inclusion of the Western Sahara.

My group, the Greens/EFA, tabled amendments that would specifically exclude the Western Sahara from the agreement:

***Fishing activities authorized under this Agreement shall be restricted to the waters north of 27° 40' N.***

While this amendment was not adopted, it nonetheless received one third of the votes cast, which demonstrates a very significant commitment in the European Parliament to defending the rights of the Saharawi people.

A certain number of Member States are soliciting support for a declaration to attach to the agreement, stating that the agreement does not pre-judge any future political decision relating to the Western Sahara issue. Given the very strong support for the rights of the Western Sahara demonstrated in Parliament today, I would urge you to add the United Kingdom to the list of countries that sign the declaration.

I would also like to take this opportunity to query one of the points you made in your letter of May 17<sup>th</sup>. You write that Morocco is bound by international law to ensure that economic activities under its administration do not adversely affect the interests of the Saharawi people. In fact the agreement is that Morocco should not act in any way that is contrary to both the interests *and the wishes* of the people of the territory. Given that the Polisario Front are opposed to the EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement, I would argue that international law is being breached already and would request information about what the UK is doing to raise this with Morocco.

I am also interested in learning who is going to be awarded the UK's fishing rights in the waters of Western Sahara? I understand from a response to a question put to the Scottish Parliament that it will not be Scotland, as had previously been stated.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.