

Portugal

Question raised from the Left Bloc Party:

Subject: Ratification of The Cape Town Agreement
Recipient: Minister of the Sea

Honourable President of the Assembly of the Republic,

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing) threatens ecosystems, undermines the management of marine resources, endangers food security of fishing communities, affects the safety of crews and contributes to the violation of fundamental human rights. Human trafficking and forced labour are associated with IUU fishing. The current pandemic situation has worsened the labour conditions of many fishers aboard large vessels. There are situations in which fishers are prevented from abandoning fishing vessels for months on end, and often safety standards on board are non-existent or lack implementation.

In October 2019, during the Ministerial Conference organized by the International Maritime Organization, the Portuguese State subscribed to the Torremolinos Declaration, thus joining other 51 states that compromised themselves to fighting IUU fishing and to ratify the CTA Agreement by October 11th 2022.

The Cape Town Agreement sets out rules to protect the safety of crews and observers and sets standards for vessels of an out-and-out length of 24 meters or more. The Agreement enters into force as soon as at least 22 States, with a total of 3,600 vessels, have ratified it. But, to date, only 14 States, with a total of 1,433 vessels, have ratified the Agreement.

Given the importance of reinforcing the rules and norms that protect fishing professionals and observers on board vessels, it is important to understand why the Portuguese State has not ratified the Cape Town Agreement and know the date on which it intends to do so.

In light of the above, and under the applicable constitutional and regulatory provisions, the Parliamentary Group of the Left Bloc hereby directs the Government, through the Minister of the Sea, to the following questions:

1. Will the Portuguese State ratify the CTA Agreement, fulfilling the commitments made in October 2019 with the subscription of the Torremolinos Declaration during the Ministerial Conference organized by the International Maritime Organization?
 - 1.1 If so, on what date does the government plan to ratify the Agreement?
2. What has prevented the government from proceeding with the ratification of the Cape Town Agreement and from joining other European Union States that have already done so?
3. How will the government overcome the obstacles that prevent ratification of the Cape Town Agreement?

Assembly of the Republic, September 29th 2021

The deputies and the deputy
Ricardo Vicente,
Fabiola Cardoso