

EU-Morocco agreement first fishing permit granted

The head of the General Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environmental (MAGRAMA), Andres Hermida, granted 28 licenses for vessels based in Algeciras port, Barbate and Conil, under the fisheries agreement signed between the Union European (EU) and Morocco.

After three years' absence, the Spanish ships are returning to Moroccan waters.

In Algeciras, Hermida granted 15 licenses for category 2 for north bottom artisanal longline fisheries; in Barbate, five permits were granted, three of them of category 2 and 2 of category 1 of north artisanal purse seine fishing of pelagic fish; and in Conil eight permits of Category 2.

In total, 52 permits will be granted for the boats from Spain to resume fishing in waters of Morocco: 28 belong to ships based at Andalusian ports, 16 in Canarias, 6 in Galicia and 2 in Basque Country.

The return to the African fishery was managed after intense negotiations led by MAGRAMA authorities with the EU Commissioner of Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, and the Moroccan government.

In December 2011, the then Minister of Agriculture -- Miguel Arias Cañete -- established the renewal of this strategic agreement for the country as a priority.

And on 5 September, the current minister -- Isabel García Tejerina -- managed to settle the recent agreements in Rabat for the Spanish fleet to return to fishing grounds in Morocco.

Hermida stressed that the government worked "hard" for the Spanish vessels to return to these waters "as quickly as possible."

For her part, the president of the autonomous government of Andalucía, Susana Diaz, expressed her satisfaction from Rabat that the Andalusian fishermen can immediately resume fishing in Moroccan waters.

After a meeting with the Moroccan Prime Minister, Abdelilah Benkirane Diaz highlighted that fishermen from Asilah were conveyed their joy at an agreement that will make it possible to create **jobs** in Andalusia and in the African country, the agency *Europa Press* reported.

The bilateral agreement will last four years and provides 126 licenses for European ships, of which 98 correspond to Spain.

Source : <http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=71334> (15/09/2014)