

Morocco seeks new fisheries 'partnership' with EU

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Morocco wants a new fisheries 'partnership' to allow EU vessels to operate in waters it controls, Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita said on Wednesday, 12 July.



Source: www.pixabay.com

Morocco is reviewing its current fisheries partnership with the EU in a way that takes into account its own fishing strategy and biological factors, Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita said on Wednesday.

The General Court of the European Union in 2021 annulled EU-Morocco trade deals covering farm products and fish because they were agreed to without the consent of the people of Western Sahara.

Morocco regards Western Sahara as its own, while Algeria-backed Polisario rebels have sought to establish an independent state there.

The European Commission appealed the ruling after it issued a joint statement with Morocco saying they would act to

ensure continuity of bilateral trade.

A final verdict has not yet been made and the fisheries deal expires on Monday.

A Moroccan-EU joint fisheries committee will meet this week in Brussels to assess the four-year deal, Bourita told reporters in Rabat, without referring to the ongoing EU judicial process.



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Seeking advanced partnerships

Morocco is not into a partnership consisting in "resources in return for financial aid," he said. Rabat wants "more advanced partnerships ... with a stronger Moroccan added value," he said.

The Moroccan government assessment will take into account the country's fisheries strategy and the biological factors, he said.

Morocco would interact with the EU on the basis of this ongoing assessment, he said.

Most of the 128 fishing vessels operating in Morocco-controlled waters under the deal are from Spain.

Under this deal the EU contributes €208m over four years.

Morocco's fisheries exports rose 13% to \$2.8bn in 2022, according to official data.

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