

Mozambique fish deal under attack

BRUSSELS/ The EC-Mozambican fisheries agreement ratified during the March session of the European Parliament has come under severe criticism by several Socialist MEPs.

The sharpest attacks came from the British Labour MEP David Morris, who said that the new protocol which is valid until the end of September, was "to the disadvantage of Mozambique and its people".

Stressing that the country is just emerging from war, Morris said: "Instead of seeking to help with stock recovery, which is in our interest as well as theirs, what we have done in fact is to cut back on the kind of aid that we could give them. We have cut back by

86%, for example, in terms of the financial compensations for catches (from Ecu2.15m to Ecu300,000).

"We have cut back by 81% in terms of research (from Ecu1.95m to Ecu360,000). We have cut to zero the money which was given them for reconnaissance, that is for monitoring their own waters.

"In other words, we have created a situation where it is now possible for a free-for-all, where piracy can go unchecked."

Other MEPs called for another kind of agreement in the future which would take into account the need for development of the ACP countries and the EC sector as well.