

Recommendation n° 22:

**Difficulties of the fishermen from La Palma Island (Spain) due to the volcano activity**

Considering the natural disaster that is occurring on the island of La Palma (Canary Islands - Spain), the Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) has identified the difficulties, below mentioned:

- Environmental: The lava from the volcano has destroyed and forbidden fishing in one of the most productive areas for a key species – the parrotfish (*Sparisoma cretense*) - and the capture of small pelagics - essential for bait.

- Social: Some fishermen saw their houses and properties - built during their lifetime - destroyed in a matter of days, leaving them unable to work, without money to pay the rent for a new house, food, fuel for their boats, salaries for their fishermen, etc. In other words, their life felt apart in a short period of time. More, due to the safety perimeter that must be maintained due to the lava flows, fishing has been forbidden in this area. Hence, even the fishermen who were not affected directly by the lava "on land", also lost access to the fishing-grounds at sea.

- Economic: The lava flows blocked the direct access of the fishing community of *Tazacorte* to many areas of the island, that are now isolated, losing access to the most part of their customers, namely restaurants and hotels, who used to buy their fish, causing a great loss of their incomes;

- Health: We cannot forget to mention that this catastrophe occurred in the middle of the Covid19 pandemic, and precisely when the fishermen were beginning to regain their activity and sales, due to the opening of the local, national, and international market, i.e., hotels, restaurants and similar companies.

In Tazacorte, and in all the island (La Palma), we felt their apprehension and sadness. Apprehension, because no one knows the duration and dimension of this tragedy. Sadness, because directly or indirectly all the inhabitants of the island have been affected.

When listening stories from different people, we could feel their pain. With the redness of the lava reflected in the clouds and the immense ashes in the air, it is impossible to forget the huge uncertainty of the future of this community.

We therefore request that **all damages suffered by the fishing community of La Palma should be quickly and rigorously evaluated and that a recovery plan should be drawn up for these Europeans, who face this harsh reality, not only from an economic point of view, but also from a structural one.**

The president of the Executive Committee of the CC RUP,

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(David Pavón González)

Praia da Vitória, 29<sup>th</sup> of December of 2021