

Fishery resources: recovery of cod stocks, long-term plan

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted a report drafted by Niels **BUSK** (ALDE, DK) and amended the proposal on the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 423/2004 as regards the recovery of cod stocks and amending Regulation (EEC) No 2847/93.

The main amendments – made in the framework of the consultation procedure – are as follows:

RACs: effective fisheries management mechanisms should be developed in co-operation with the fishing industry. To this end, evaluation and decision-making should involve the relevant Regional Advisory Councils and Member States. The Commission must seek the views of the relevant Regional Advisory Councils and Member States as to the effective management of cod stocks.

Cod avoidance programmes: any cod-avoidance programmes are more likely to succeed if they are developed in co-operation with the fishing industry; accordingly, cod-avoidance programmes developed within Member States should be considered an effective means of promoting sustainability, and the development of such programmes should be encouraged alongside the operation of the relevant Community legislation.

A new clause states that when cod stocks have substantially improved, the Commission should review the system of regulating the fishing effort.

TAC calculation: factors in TAC calculation should include scientific analysis evaluating the amount of cod being killed by seals, together with an assessment of the impact of climate change on cod recovery.

The Chapter on fishing effort limitation is amended to **fishing effort determination**.

Reference years: to ensure that the data used are of high quality and reliability, 2004-2006 should be used as the reference years (rather than 2005-2007.)

KW days-scheme: Member States must have the flexibility themselves to define which criteria to use to distribute the number of kW-days allocated to vessels.

2007 fleet restructuring: the committee deleted the provision stating that for each effort group, the total capacity expressed both in GT and kW of the vessels having special fishing permits shall not be greater than the capacity of the vessels that have been active in 2007 using the gear and fishing in the geographical area concerned. It felt that the provision impedes restructuring of the fleet in relation to 2007. For example, it would not be possible to replace beam trawl vessels with gill net vessels, which consume less fuel compared with the fleet structure in 2007.

With regard to the exchange of **maximum allowable fishing effort across effort groups**, Members stated that where a transfer is from one donor gear grouping to another donor gear grouping with a higher catch per unit effort (cpue), the effort transferred shall be subject to a reduction in the form of a more specifically defined correction factor. They noted that it is essential to have sufficient flexibility to be able to respond to external circumstances. For example, rising fuel prices may encourage fishermen to switch to less fuel-consuming gill net fishing but if such gill net fisheries have a higher cpue than beam trawl fisheries, for example, there can be no transfer of fishing effort under the Commission's text.

Decision-making procedure: the committee deleted the Article stating that where this Regulation provides for decisions to be taken by the Council, the Council shall act by qualified majority on the basis of a proposal from the Commission. It noted that no special decision-making procedure should be introduced which excludes Parliament from the decision-making process, unless there is an entirely exceptional justification for it.