

Community action in relation to whaling

2008/2101(INI) - 21/01/2009

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the own-initiative report by Elspeth **ATTWOOLL** (ADLE, UK) welcoming the Commission Communication on Community action in relation to whaling and the decision on whaling, which was adopted by qualified majority at the Council. It supports the maintenance of the global moratorium on commercial whaling and a ban on international commercial trade in whale products.

MEPs seek to end "scientific whaling" and supports the designation of substantial regions of ocean and seas as sanctuaries in which all whaling is indefinitely prohibited. The Council is called upon to adopt a new common position under Article 37 as well as Article 175 of the EC Treaty.

The report calls for any such hunting to take place only with clear quotas based on the advice of the IWC Scientific Committee and regulated under strict controls incorporating full recording and reporting to the IWC. It also calls for the establishment, in suitable locations around the world, of more Marine Protected Areas in which whales would receive special protection. In this context, the report draws attention to the need to use more selective fishing gear to avoid by-catches of other species, particularly cetaceans.

The committee calls for threats to the cetacean population arising from climate change, pollution, ship strikes, fishing gear, anthropogenic ocean noise (including sonar, seismic surveys and vessel noise) and other hazards to be tackled outside such protected areas.

MEPs consider that the Commission should, in advance of global action, bring forward further proposals to counter such threats in respect of Community waters and Community vessels.

Lastly, the report dictates that the EU must promote, in key international fora, in a coordinated and coherent way, the highest level of protection for whales at a global level.