Governance within the CFP: the European Parliament, the Regional Advisory Councils and other actors

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted an own-initiative report drawn up by Elspeth ATTWOLL (ALDE, UK) on governance within the CFP: the European Parliament, the Regional Advisory Councils and other actors.

The report calls for members of its Fisheries Committee to be given **observer status** at meetings of the Council of Fisheries Ministers.

The Council, the Commission and Parliament are called upon to:

- complete the work required to reach a genuine agreement laying down standard forms of participation for members of Parliament's Committee on Fisheries in regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and other international bodies whose meetings are given over to discussion of subjects affecting the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP);
- allow members of Parliament’s Committee on Fisheries to serve on the joint committees set up under Fisheries Partnership Agreements, to enable them to bring the necessary scrutiny to bear on those agreements.

The Commission is called upon to:

- notify the Parliament of all consultations that are taking place in relation to the CFP and maritime policy;
- engage in an evaluation of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF);
- take a number of actions in respect of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs): (i) increase their visibility and encourage participation by a wider range of stakeholders; (ii) improve their access to scientific evidence and data and liaison with STECF; (iii) involve them as early as possible in the consultation process;
- fully accept and respect the advisory role of the RACs and to propose, in view of the CFP reform, their increasing involvement in management responsibilities.

MEPs believe that RACS are currently under-financed for the level of work that they are undertaking. While noting that the Commission has issued guidelines concerning financial management, MEPs believe that further dialogue is necessary in this regard and that alternatives to the current system should be explored.

MEPs believe that wider participation in RACs requires a review of their composition but that the current balance between the fishing industry and other organisations should not be disturbed. They call for:

- closer links between the RACs and Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee;
- technical and political decisions to be separated: political decisions should be subject to a regional approach and technical decisions to a scientific approach;

- any future legislation on RACs to afford members of the European Parliament formal status as active observers at their meetings.