

Applied research relating to the common fisheries policy

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The European Parliament adopted by 616 votes to 18, with 24 abstentions, a resolution on applied research relating to the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

MEPs are convinced that it is necessary, in the policies pursued with regard to research, to pay greater attention to the specific problems of fisheries and aquaculture in view of this sector's economic, social and political importance in the EU.

Review the 7th Framework Programme: the resolution deplores that the 7th Framework Programme does not consider either fisheries or aquaculture as specific strands and calls on the Commission to review the 7th Framework Programme when the mid-term evaluation is carried out, scheduled for 2010, paying greater attention to the specific problems of fisheries and aquaculture. MEPs stress that, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the CFP, specific programmes need to be put in place in the field of applied research, and their funding needs to be ensured through an adequate budget allocation.

New priorities: the Parliament also recommends that, in the field of scientific marine research, priority be given not only to research to gain knowledge of the state of fish stocks but also to the ecosystemic, commercial, economic and social aspects that determine fisheries management, since all these aspects are of crucial importance.

Dialogue between fishermen and scientists: the resolution notes a clear conflict of interest between fishermen and scientists in the short term (whereas their long-term objectives appear to be more compatible), and calls on the Commission to promote closer collaboration between scientists and fishermen and to gather specific information on the way in which the dialogue between scientists and fishermen currently operates in the various Member States and to list best practices.

Moreover, the Commission and the Member States are called upon to demonstrate and better convey to fishermen that it is in their interests to take into account the economic benefit that they can expect in the medium or long term in the assessment of their presumed short-term economic loss.

Attracting young scientists: MEPs stress the worrying problem of the deficit of young scientists in applied research in the fisheries sector, because careers are not very attractive compared to basic research and other scientific disciplines. They stress the need to re-establish interesting and status-enhancing university degree courses leading on to remunerative careers for this scientific path.

Information exchange: lastly, the Parliament urges the Commission to promote the creation of a stable European network, based on the existing physical infrastructure in the Member States and geared to the observation of and collection of data on the marine environment, that would facilitate the exchange of information between operators in the sector and European research bodies, and would maintain the EU in a position of excellence.