Conservation of fishery resources: western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel and the fisheries exploiting that stock. Multi-annual plan

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report drafted by Pat the Cope GALLAGHER (ADLE, IE) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multi-annual plan for the western stock of Atlantic horse mackerel and the fisheries exploiting that stock.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as the codecision procedure) should be to amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Scope: the new management plan needs to take proper account of the activities of the small-scale fleets which have traditionally specialised in this fishery for the purposes of consumption of fresh fish. It is therefore important not to establish zones too far out to sea.

In order to achieve the objective laid down in Article 4, each year the Council, acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 43(3) TFEU and after consultation of the STECF, shall decide on the TAC for western horse mackerel for the following year.

Procedure for setting the TAC: several amendments have been introduced in order to adapt the proposal to the new legal basis laid down in the TFEU and to the ordinary legislative procedure (Article 43(2) TFEU), as this proposal was submitted by the Commission before the entry into force of the TFEU and under the consultation procedure.

An amendment stipulates that each year the Council, acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 43(3) TFEU and after consultation of the STECF, shall decide on the TAC for western horse mackerel for the following year. It also stated that the TAC area for western horse mackerel defined in this regulation shall cover the entire geographical area identified by STECF as forming part of that area.

Calculation of the TAC: where the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) is not able to estimate the level of discards including slipped fish (fish released in the water without being taken on board the vessel), the report suggests a fairer methodology than that proposed by the Commission. This would involve taking historic data on discards from the last 15 years into account.

Calculation of the total removal for a year following an egg survey: Members want to introduce some flexibility in the mode of calculation of the total removal, by setting lower (70 000 tonnes) and upper limits (80 000 tonnes) for the minimal total removal amount.

Article 290 of the TFEU (Delegated Acts): Members propose to delegate to the Commission, under Article 290 TFEU, the power to adapt one of the components of the formula laid down in Article 7, paragraph 1 (c) and in the Annex - the weighting factor or the slope reflecting egg abundance, in order to adapt that parameter to new scientific advice.

Fishing authorisation: several technical amendments have been proposed which aim to clarify the wording and make reference to Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy (the new Control Regulation).

The master of a fishing vessel not holding a fishing authorisation may retain on board horse mackerel and enter the area referred to in Article 11, paragraph 2, provided that the gear is lashed and stowed in accordance with the requirements laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009.

In addition to the requirements laid down in Regulation (EC) 1224/2009, prior to entering the area, the master of the vessel shall make an entry in his logbook, indicating the date and time that the last fishing operation ended and specifying the intended port of landing. Quantities of horse mackerel on board the vessel and not recorded in the logbook shall be deemed to have been taken within the area.