Current and future management of Black Sea fisheries

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the current and future management of Black Sea fisheries. It points out that the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) should take into account the specificities and needs of this aquatory, because this will be the first reform of the CFP incorporating the Black Sea. Members note that until today there has been loose, or even non-existent, collaboration, a lack of a harmonised legislative framework and a lack of a common legislative act governing fishing activities between the Black Sea states, owing to the fact that all the waters are under the jurisdiction of different coastal states, as well as to the general lack of adequate, systematic research and scientific information on the Black Sea basin. Management of fisheries in the Black Sea is extremely difficult, because only two out of the six countries bordering the basin are EU Member States and even those two are new Member States which only joined the EU in 2007. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), whose mandate covers the area of the Black Sea, does not as yet meet the needs and expectations of the stakeholders, particularly fishermen, to the extent possible, and should make use of all available tools related to this area.

Parliament states that the **Black Sea needs a special policy to preserve and improve the situation of fisheries resources** and ensure that the fisheries sector is suited to the Black Sea basin, bearing in mind the specificities of the Black Sea region, as well as the fact that the Black Sea fisheries policy should be integral part of the upcoming reform of the CFP. Members underline the need for **more accurate analytical and scientific research** coordinated at a regional, national and European level to preserve and improve fisheries resources and ecosystems in the Black Sea basin. They take the view that the Black Sea should have an appropriate status in Community policies, and to this end appropriate diplomatic and scientific efforts should be undertaken and adequate financial resources made available for sustainable fisheries in the basin. The lack of a common agreement among the six countries bordering the Black Sea could be remedied by a framework agreement negotiated, for instance, on the basis of a communication from the Commission, in which the interests of all parties would be expressed and taken into consideration.

Whilst expressing satisfaction with the Commission’s efforts to establish working groups in the field of fisheries management with Turkey and the Russian Federation, Parliament points out that a large part of the problems of the Black Sea is the result of the **lack of an appropriate institutional structure** that coordinates and carries out the management of Black Sea fisheries at a professional and specialised level. Whilst negotiations have been continuing between the national administrations for the past ten years on the creation of such an institutional structure, these have not yet been successful, and no adequate measures have been taken to control catches and, in particular, cross-border fishing. Accordingly, Members take the view that **a separate regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) for the Black Sea** could in the long term foster and promote communication between scientific institutes and professional organisations of fishermen, producers and processors with a view to settling issues and deepening cooperation in the Black Sea. They encourage the Commission to work with the Black Sea countries at a bilateral level, bearing in mind that many of them are not members of the EU. The RFMO would coordinate scientific research, analyse the situation of fish stocks and carry out special policies regarding observation of endangered species. It could also make suggestions regarding the level of the fisheries multiannual management plans and distribute the quotas for the countries bordering the Black Sea.

Members urge the EU to use its diplomatic resources to convince as many non-EU Black Sea littoral countries as possible of the value of the principles of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, especially with

regard to the **application of the multiannual management plans**. They feel that EU tools should be used in scientific activities as an instrument to foster and facilitate cooperation and joint work between the European scientific teams and their counterparts from the Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Georgia and Turkey. The EU's Common Fisheries Policy should encourage the establishment of professional fishermen's organisations and inter-branch organisations in the fisheries and aquaculture industries in the Black Sea where they are lacking or very underdeveloped. Members believe that the principles of annual TACs and quotas currently applied should not be the only option for the management of Black Sea fisheries. Multiannual management plans should be fostered and could provide for more clarity on the EU' s objectives in the field of fisheries in the Black Sea region and its vision for the future of the basin. Such plans are of very great interest for both the economic situation of the fishing sector and the environmental situation of the Black Sea ecosystems. This approach should be accompanied by effective control of catches.

The resolution goes on to stress the importance of managing fisheries with a view to ensuring that **ecosystems are viable and sustainable**, that fishing is carried out legally and that action is taken against IUU fishing. It calls for the establishment of a European coastguard in order to develop cooperation between Member States in an effective way so as to boost maritime security and combat new threats at sea, in particular in the Black Sea.

Lastly, Members underline the need to encourage **scientific research on Black Sea issues** in order to take account of the economic, social and environmental consequences. They believe it is necessary to conduct detailed, coordinated research in order to give a clear and unequivocal answer to the questions of fisheries management and the possible impact of fishing methods (e.g. trawling on the seabed), since in the absence of studies no serious conclusions can be drawn. Furthermore, research programmes and projects in the field of Black Sea fisheries, such as SESAME, KNOWSEAS, WISER and BlackSeaFish, should be further encouraged.