

Fish stock conservation: multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean

2011/0144(COD) - 23/05/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted 635 votes to 16 with 11 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 302/2009 concerning a multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Parliament adopted its position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council. They amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Spawning grounds: a recital recalls that in order to rebuild the stock, Recommendation 10-04 provides for a further reduction of the total allowable catch, for the strengthening of measures to reduce the fishing capacity and for the reinforcement of the control measures, in particular concerning the transfer and the caging operations, and provides additional advice by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) in 2012 on the **identification of spawning grounds** and on the creation of sanctuaries.

Objective of the plan: the amended text states that the objective of the recovery plan that is in force from 2007 to the end of 2022 shall be to achieve a biomass corresponding to the maximum sustainable yield with at least 60 % probability.

Transmission of provisional annual fishing plan: no later than 30 September each year, Member States shall transmit to the Commission the provisional annual fishing plan relating to the following year. The Commission shall compile the provisional annual national fishing plans and integrate them into the Union fishing plan that is to be transmitted to the ICCAT Secretariat for endorsement by ICCAT. No later than 31 January each year, Member States shall transmit the final annual fishing plan to the Commission. The Commission shall compile the **final annual national fishing plans** and integrate them into the Union fishing plan that is to be transmitted to the ICCAT Secretariat by 1 March of each year.

It will also compile the **national inspection plans** and integrate them into the Union inspection plan that is to be transmitted to the ICCAT Secretariat for endorsement by ICCAT.

Calculation of the fishing capacity reduction: this shall be based on the catch rates for categories of vessels in accordance with the methodology approved at the 2009 ICCAT annual meeting.

Retroactive submissions: no retroactive submissions shall be accepted. Subsequent changes to the lists referred to in the text during a calendar year shall only be accepted if the notified fishing vessel is prevented from participating due to legitimate operational reasons or force majeure.

Transfer operations: the amended text states that the transfer shall be authorised or not authorised by the Member State responsible for the catching vessel, towing vessel, farm or tuna trap, as appropriate, within 48 hours following the submission of the prior notification of transfer.

Caging operations: where the estimation of catch by the regional observer is at least 10 % higher by number and/or average weight than declared by the master of the catching vessel, the Member State responsible for the catching vessel shall initiate an investigation which shall be concluded prior to the time of caging at the farm.

The amended text states that if the investigation is not concluded within 10 working days or if the outcome of the investigation indicates that the number or the average weight of bluefin tuna is more than 10 % higher than that declared by the farm operator, the flag CPC or Member State responsible for the catching vessel shall issue a release order in respect of the number or weight in excess.

Inspection: if, at any time, more than 15 fishing vessels of a Member State are engaged in bluefin tuna fishing activities in the Convention area, that Member State shall **deploy an inspection vessel for the purposes of inspection and control** at sea in the Convention area throughout the period that those vessels are there. This obligation shall be deemed to have been complied with where Member States cooperate to deploy an inspection vessel or where an EU inspection vessel is deployed in the Convention area.

Implementing powers: in order to provide for uniform conditions pertaining to transfer operations, caging operations and recording and reporting of tuna trap activities, implementing powers are conferred on the Commission. Those powers must be exercised in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers.