

Reform of the common fisheries policy - overarching communication

2011/2290(INI) - 24/07/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the own-initiative report by Nikolaos SALAVRAKOS (EFD, EL) on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in response to the Commission Communication on the subject.

The main recommendations in the report are as follows:

Environmental sustainability: Members consider that the prime objective of any fisheries policy to be to ensure the supply of fish to the public and the development of coastal communities, promoting employment and better working conditions for fishing professionals while seeking to establish resources on a sustainable footing which makes for proper conservation. The committee:

- maintains that the reformed policy must be **coordinated more closely with other EU policies** such as cohesion policy, environmental policy, agricultural policy and external policy;
- stresses that any and every fisheries policy should take account of a multitude of dimensions – **social, environmental and economic**;
- stresses that the CFP must apply **the precautionary approach** to fisheries management and ensure that the sustainable exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of all stocks of harvested species above levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield (MSY);
- believes that the **objective of achieving MSY** based on fishing mortality (FMSY) should be implemented immediately, as this will contribute significantly to putting the sustainability of stocks on the right track;
- calls on the Commission to provide for the **establishment of long-term management plans (LTMPs)** for all EU fisheries and for the use of the ecosystem approach as a basis for all such plans, with clearly defined objectives and harvest control rules playing a pivotal role in each plan,
- believes that the **gradual elimination of discards** should be fishery-based and depend on the characteristics and realities of the different modalities and fisheries;
- believes that the **reliability and availability of scientific data** and socio-economic impact assessments relating to different stocks, and their respective ecosystems, must be one of the highest priorities of the reform.

Socio-economic sustainability: Members consider that living marine resources to be a **common public asset**, which cannot be privatised. They reject the creation of private property rights for access to exploit this public asset.

The report:

- states that ‘**transferable fishing concessions**’ (TFCs) proposed by the Commission should be voluntary in nature and subject to Member States’ discretion;
- believes that priority access to fishing grounds should be offered to those who fish in a **socially and environmentally responsible** way;
- calls on the Commission to come up with suitable measures to improve **fuel efficiency** in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and an action plan for coastal regions and islands, in particular the outermost regions;
- reaffirms the need for strict **monitoring and certification of fisheries products** entering the Union market, in order to ensure that they meet the same requirements with which Union producers have to comply – for example with regard to labelling, traceability, phytosanitary regulations and minimum size;
- considers that the fisheries and extensive aquaculture sectors must be seen as important **direct and indirect sources of job creation** that vitalise the economy in maritime regions while also contributing to food security in the EU;
- stresses the need to make **careers in fishing attractive** and to make standards of qualification and training meet international and European requirements.

Regionalisation: Members share the view expressed in the Commission proposal regarding the need for adaptation and specific measures based on the disparate realities of the European fishing and aquaculture industry, especially in the case of the **Union’s coastal areas and outermost regions**. They support the idea of establishing regionalisation as one of the main instruments of this new form of governance. The report:

- believes that the reform should be an opportunity for a significant move towards a new form of **cooperation between the scientific community, industry and the social partners**, in order to implement the process of regionalisation;
- believes that, as far as regionalisation is concerned, **clear and simple rules** must be established at the appropriate level, thus increasing compliance;
- feels that the **role of the Regional Advisory Councils should be strengthened** in terms of representativeness and power. The Commission is asked to table a new proposal aimed at strengthening the participation of stakeholders and artisanal and small-scale fisheries, thus leading to genuine regionalisation under the CFP;
- is convinced that a **more holistic and integrated view of the marine environment** is needed, and that marine spatial planning at the local and regional level, involving all stakeholders, is a necessary tool in order to implement a genuine ecosystem approach to management;
- stresses, lastly, that an ambitious and real reform of the CFP can be facilitated if **sufficient financial resources** are made available for the next 10 years.