

Reporting obligations under Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the CFP

2011/2291(INI) - 12/09/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 377 to 241 votes, with 33 abstentions, a resolution on reporting obligations under Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy.

Members note that the Commission has now fulfilled its commitments under Council Regulation No 2371/2002, which obliges it to report on i) the operation of the CFP with respect to Chapters II (Conservation and Sustainability) and III (Adjustment of Fishing Capacity) of that regulation; and ii) on the arrangement on fishing restrictions in the 12 nautical mile zone.

Conservation and sustainability (Chapter II): the resolution stresses the **need for a balance between the ecological and the economic and social situation in each fishery** while acknowledging that without plentiful fish stocks there will be no profitable fishing industry.

Parliament believes that, as part of the objective of guaranteeing sustainability, the policies considered should focus on the future of the fishing sector and, consequently, on facilitating the entry of new generations of fishermen. It calls on the Commission, the Member States and the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), in the future, to use the ecosystem approach as a basis for all long-term management plans (LTMPs) which should be the basis of the future CFP.

Parliament highlights the **need to develop an effective no-discards policy** at EU level whereby the Community Fisheries Control Agency (CFCA) has greater powers to ensure a fair system of rules and sanctions.

It argues that a discard ban should be implemented **gradually** on a fishery-by-fishery basis, form part of the different management plans and not relate to different fish stocks. It stresses that **selective fishing gear** and other devices which reduce or eliminate by-catches of non-targeted species, or of juveniles of targeted species, should be promoted, along with other sustainable fishing methods

The Commission is invited to:

- provide for the establishment of long-term management plans for all commercial EU fisheries within a highly decentralised management regime which fully involves all relevant stakeholders;
- assess the possibility of establishing a network of closed areas in which all fishing activities are prohibited for a certain period of time in order to increase fish productivity and conserve living aquatic resources and the marine ecosystem;
- address immediately the lack of sufficient reliable data necessary for sound scientific advice by establishing a system whereby Member States which do not fulfil their respective obligations regarding data collection and transmission under the European fisheries data programme are sanctioned;
- take measures to reduce the **negative effects of seals and certain seabirds** on fish stocks, particularly where these are invasive species in a particular region.

The resolution emphasises that **scientific fisheries research** is an essential tool for identifying factors that influence the development of fishery resources, with a view to carrying out a quantitative assessment but also for improving fishing gear. In this context, it stresses the need to invest in the training of human resources, to provide adequate financial resources and to promote cooperation between various public bodies in the Member States.

Adjustment of fishing capacity (Chapter III): Parliament calls on the Commission to:

- establish a **definition of overcapacity** at EU level, accommodating regional definitions and taking into account local specificities;
- redefine **fishing capacity** in such a way that both the vessel's fishing capacity and its actual fishing effort are taken as a basis;
- measure, before the end of 2013, the **capacity of European fleets** in order to establish where there is overcapacity in relation to the resources available and what reductions/conversions are required;
- **monitor and adjust fleet capacity ceilings** for Member States so that they are in line with reliable data and technical advances are taken into account.

Members emphasise that the future [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#) (EMFF) must provide for adequate financial assistance to mitigate any **socio-economic impact of measures** aimed at reducing overcapacity, and to adjust the size and effort of fishing fleets in line with fishing opportunities and long-term sustainability.

The resolution stresses the need to set clear deadlines and make progress as soon as possible towards fleet adjustments where necessary. It urges the Commission **to provide for a scheme of measures to sanction Member States which do not fulfil their respective obligations** within the set timelines, while also providing adequate funding for this process, and to **develop further the concept of ecological and social conditionality** in the context of access to fishing resources and remuneration which rewards sustainable fishing.

The Commission is called upon **to establish a system of result-based management for awarding access rights** whereby the burden of proof of sustainable fishing is upon the industry.

Lastly, Parliament believes that, for the present, **the special access regime for small-scale fisheries in the 12 nautical mile zone should be retained**, as should specific restrictions for vessels registered in the ports of the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands in respect of the waters around these archipelagos, particularly the bio-geographically sensitive areas currently covered by Council Regulation (EC) No 1954/2003.