

Long-term plan for cod stocks and the fisheries exploiting those stocks: management

2012/0236(COD) - 26/04/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Diane DODDS (NI, UK) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1342/2008 of 18 December 2008 establishing a long-term plan for cod stocks and the fisheries exploiting those stocks.

The parliamentary committee recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading according to the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Incentive measures: Members consider that other measures than automatic reduction of TAC and fishing effort are useful in order to obtain the targets set in this plan. Thus, Member States should give priority to the development and promotion of measures and incentives that aim to avoid unwanted catches. Financial support should be provided for the use of selective gear measures.

Time at sea: an amendment seeks to allow the development of alternative methods of accounting for time at sea (i.e. soak time for gill netters, etc.) that may better incentivise cod avoidance behaviour. Member States should calculate days present within an area in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community fisheries control system.

Procedure for setting TACs: Members want to enable the Council to set a different TAC in instances where the stringent following of the Management Plan would move recovery away from the objectives of the plan.

Another proposed change should help to **avoid automatic reductions in the absence of reliable scientific information**.

In order to obtain sustainable fishing mortality rates, based on scientific advice, **a gradual elimination of discards should be implemented**. Selective gears and other measures for this purpose should be introduced by Member States with financial support from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Member States should consult the relevant Regional Advisory Council as well as ICES and/or STEFC and relevant stakeholders on the measures to be adopted.

Exclusion from the fishing effort regime in certain areas, certain depths or using certain gear: Members consider partial exemption from effort would be appropriate in a mixed fisheries context where vessels often have quota to catch cod.

Furthermore, **once STEFC approve a gear or area**, submitted by a Member State, it should become available for use by all Member States.

Adjustment of the baseline used to calculate the maximum allowable fishing effort: in order to ensure the continued innovation of gear selectivity the baseline should be altered annually.

Exclusion of vessels participating in trials: the Commission proposal stipulates that the transfers of quotas of cod to vessels outside the fishing effort management system or from these vessels are forbidden. According to the report, the risk related to discarding of cod by vessels not participating in trials of fully

documented fisheries is only a theoretical one. There is no evidence that discards by the non-FDF fleet have increased. As a result, members consider that it is not appropriate to present proposal in the absence of scientific data.