

Multiannual recovery plan for bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean: fishing seasons

2013/0133(COD) - 02/05/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to amend the provision concerning fishing seasons regarding bluefin tuna in Council Regulation (EC) No 302/2009.

PROPOSED ACT : Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF PARLIAMENT : the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND : the EU is a Party to the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas ("the Convention"), which established the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas ("ICCAT"). At its 16th Special Meeting in 2008, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 08-05 to establish a new recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and in the Mediterranean, and Regulation (EC) No 302/2009 was adopted to implement those international conservation measures at Union level. This was later amended by Regulation (EU) No 500/2012.

At its 18th Special Meeting in 2012, ICCAT adopted Recommendation 12-03, which provides for:

- a modification of the fishing seasons;
- defining fishing seasons as open seasons, as opposed to closed seasons indicated in the previous ICCAT Recommendations;
- a modification of the actual dates when fishing is permitted by purse seiners, bait boats and trolling boats;
- explicitly allowing all other gears the possibility of fishing all year round to avoid any uncertainty for those gears which are not subject to any specific rules on fishing seasons.

Pending the entry into force of ICCAT Recommendation 12-03 and its comprehensive implementation, this proposal aims to modify the provisions on fishing seasons in Regulation (EC) No 302/2009 in order to ensure effective conservation of the bluefin tunastock.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT : no impact assessment was undertaken. Member States concerned by this fishery (Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta and Portugal) were consulted on 11th December 2012 on the need to clarify the dates of the fishing season, and are agreed on the modifications to the dates of the fishing season.

LEGAL BASIS : Article 43 (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

CONTENT : this proposal aims to amend Regulation (EC) No 302/2009 to reflect ICCAT Recommendation 12-03 regarding fishing seasons.

Fishing seasons: bluefin tuna fishing will be permitted **in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean**:

- by large-scale pelagic long line catching vessels over 24 m during the period from 1 January to 31 May with the exception of the area delimited by West of 10W and North of 42N, where such fishing shall be permitted from 1 August to 31 January;
- by purse seine fishing during the period from 26 May to 24 June;
- by bait boats and trolling boats during the period from 1 July to 31 October;
- by pelagic trawlers in the eastern Atlantic during the period from 16 June to 14 October ;
- as recreational and sport fishing from 16 June to 14 October.

Fishing for Bluefin tuna **by other gears** than those mentioned above will be permitted throughout the year.

Date of application: this amendment will apply with retroactive effect **from 1 January 2013**. This will allow Member States properly to define their fishing capacity and inspection plans which are linked to the fishing seasons and ensure legal certainty.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: this proposal has no impact on the EU budget.