Strategy for fisheries in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted the own-initiative report by Guido MILANA (S&D, IT) on a fisheries strategy in the Adriatic and Ionian seas.

Members welcome the Commission communication of 3 December 2012 as an important step towards the adoption of a legislative framework that will foster closer cooperation between the countries and regions along the shores of the Adriatic and Ionian seas, with a view to ensuring that fishing is carried out in a responsible manner and is economically viable for coastal communities.

The report notes that **seven countries have an outlet to the Adriatic and Ionian seas**, three of which are Member States (Italy, Greece and Slovenia), one is a future Member State (Croatia), one is a candidate country (Montenegro) and two are potential candidate countries (Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina). **Cross-border cooperation is therefore essential** in order to establish arrangements for the joint management of fishing activities and to make sure that fish stocks are exploited in a sustainable manner.

The committee supports a **strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian seas**, which should make particular reference to the sustainable development and growth of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, including employment, and should strive to ensure the preservation and protection of the environment.

The Commission is urged to adopt, at the earliest opportunity **and by 2013 at the latest**, the action plan for the practical implementation **on a macro-regional basis** of the maritime strategy for the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea, (i) pointing out that the fisheries sector should form one of the priorities of that strategy, (ii) taking account of the specific geo-physical features and (iii) linking this plan of action to regional policy, the Union's integrated maritime policy and the Connecting Europe Facility, so as to maximise its leverage effect.

The Commission is also asked to:

- submit, at the earliest opportunity, **a proposal for a regulation** laying down common technical measures for fishing in the Adriatic-Ionian sea basin and specifying the admissible fishing effort, fishing periods and fishing gears and other relevant management measures;

- establish an **ongoing dialogue with the non-EU countries of the Adriatic-Ionian sea basin**, with a view to concluding bilateral or multilateral agreements with the aim of advancing towards a harmonisation and standardisation of the rules for fisheries management in order to achieve the objectives of the EU Common Fisheries Policy CFP in the Mediterranean;

- consider whether a **specific funding line** for implementation of the measures and objectives laid down for this strategy should be created in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB), drawing on the experience gained with the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP).

Members call on the Commission to **establish a specific Work Plan for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas**, setting out the future objectives in that region as is currently undertaken in the Mediterranean Sea (IMP-MED project). They stress that this Work Plan should be seen as a project eligible for funding under the future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).