

Specific actions in the common fisheries policy for developing the role of women

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The European Parliament adopted by 468 votes to 40, with 17 abstentions, a resolution on specific actions in the Common Fisheries Policy for developing the role of women.

Parliament noted that more than 100 000 women worked in the fisheries sector in Member States, 4 % of them in the extractive sector and with jobs linked to the activities of fishing boats, as net-makers, port workers or packers, 30 % in aquaculture, chiefly shellfish gathering on foot, and around 60 % in the processing industry. However, the statistics grossly underestimated the reality of female work in some of these sectors, and the widespread economic crisis in some Member States had led to a **growing number of women engaging in activities in the fishing sector**, particularly land-based shellfish gathering, as a means of complementing or even ensuring their family income.

The resolution urged the Commission to **launch a specific statistical programme for regions that depended on fishing**, paying particular attention to artisanal and coastal fishing, traditional fishing methods and specific marketing channels, and to the work and social and labour conditions of women shellfish gatherers, net-makers and artisanal workers, with the aim of assessing the specific needs associated with women's activity and enhancing the social recognition given to these extremely arduous occupations. The **collection of gender-disaggregated data** should also cover the catch sector and new indicators should be introduced, such as age, education and training levels, and activity of spouse or partner.

Parliament called for:

- **legal and social recognition** to the role played by women in the fisheries and aquaculture sector and in the sustainable development of areas that depended on fishing, with the aim of removing all economic, administrative and social barriers that stand in the way of their participation on equal terms;
- regulation and **recognition as occupational diseases** injuries to joints, back injuries and rheumatic diseases caused by the harsh weather conditions in which women shellfish gatherers, net-makers, processing workers, fishers and sellers have to work, as well as injuries caused by lifting excessive weights;
- the creation (under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and/or other instruments) of **specific support mechanisms** that can be activated in emergencies (natural disasters), as well as of **financial compensation mechanisms** to assist fishermen, fisherwomen and their families during temporary fishing bans, especially in areas where fishing is the sole source of earnings;
- **the recognition that the work carried out by women helps to improve the traceability of fishery products** ;
- **financial support for the establishment of women's associations** through national and European women's networks, in order to facilitate the exchange of experience, and communicate women's needs and demands, from local government level up to European bodies;
- **access to funding for women's organisations** in fisheries, aquaculture and related sectors.

The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2013-2020: Parliament noted that only one Member State had made use of the opportunities offered by axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund to finance projects whose beneficiaries were women. It urged Member States to seize the opportunities offered by the EMFF in order to, inter alia:

- apply the principle of equal opportunities to **operational programmes**;
- make the fisheries sector **more women-friendly** by redesigning the sector and providing suitable facilities (such as changing-rooms on vessels and in ports);
- offer women and girls **easier access to training by financing specific training and vocational education** and professional recognition of their activity;
- **promote business initiatives launched by women**, including the economic diversification of certain activities related to the fisheries sector, among them activities such as museology, cultural traditions, crafts, gastronomy and the restaurant industry;
- **facilitate soft loan channels** that will make it possible to avoid the specific difficulties faced by women in relation to financing projects eligible for inclusion in national programmes under the EMFF.

Basic regulation on the common fisheries policy: Member States were urged to:

- ensure compliance with the objectives of the new common fisheries policy in relation to access to fishery resources based on transparent environmental, social and economic criteria, **incorporating the principles of equal treatment** and equal opportunities;
- recognise the **occupational status of women in the event of temporary cessations** of activity, including biological rest periods;
- ensure **compliance with Directive 2010/41/EU**, so that women working full- or part-time in family businesses, as well as women who make their livelihood from such activity without belonging to a family unit, are given legal recognition and social benefits equivalent to those enjoyed by people with self-employed status.