

Fishing in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Agreement area: technical measures

2014/0213(COD) - 14/10/2015 - Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the recommendation for second reading contained in the report by Gabriel MATO (EPP, ES) on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1343/2011 on certain provisions for fishing in the GFCM (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean) Agreement area.

The committee recommended the European Parliament to **approve the Council position at first reading**.

The European Parliament and the Council agreed on the transposition into the Union Law of several Recommendations made by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (the GFCM Agreement) which provides an appropriate framework for multilateral cooperation to promote the development, conservation, rational management and best utilisation of living marine resources in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea at levels which are considered sustainable and at low risk of collapse.

The main problem encountered by the co-legislators was the choice of legal mechanisms to be used in requests to Member States to grant derogations, in particular concerning the use of trawl nets and gill-nets fisheries in the Black Sea and the minimum basal diameter of colonies, gear and devices and the harvesting of red coral.

Derogations to ban coastal trawling in the Black Sea: Parliament accepted that these should be managed at Member States' level with the Commission scrutiny right. It is question of authorising a limited number of vessels to exceptionally use trawl nets within the Black Sea coastal zone. Also, Member States concerned are not obliged to introduce management plans but only a monitoring system as a condition for granting derogations.

However, Parliament made a **declaration** – annexed to the draft legislative resolution - pointing out that it accepts the arrangement authorising the Member States concerned to grant the derogations at stake but stresses that this **arrangement is not to be taken or used as a precedent** in any future legal act.

Derogations on the harvesting and the minimum basal diameter of colonies of red coral: the Parliament succeeded in proposing a compromise that was accepted by all Institutions: Member States will submit, within a period of 3 years, joint recommendations on the basis of the Article 18 of the CFP basic Regulation (regionalisation), accompanied by detailed information on the national management framework.

In the meantime, Member States that have already national frameworks in place can maintain them and those who wish to set up national frameworks they can do it provisionally, provided that an appropriate national management framework is in place. Where the Commission considers, on the basis of the notifications provided by the Member States, that a national management framework does not comply with the conditions set out in the present Regulation, it may, subject to providing relevant reasons and after consultation with the Members States concerned, request it to amend the framework.

The gear and devices to be used for the harvesting of the red coral: the colegislators agreed that the use of the ROVs (Remotely Operated under-water Vehicles) for the purpose of observation and prospection of the red coral shall continue to be permitted in zones under the jurisdiction of the Members State provided that the ROV is not equipped with manipulator arms or any other allowing the cutting and harvesting of red coral.

Such authorisations shall expire or be withdrawn no later than 31 December 2015, unless the Member State concerned has obtained scientific results showing that the use of the ROVs beyond 31 December 2015 would have no negative impact on the sustainable exploitation of red coral.