

Multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean

2015/0096(COD) - 23/06/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 524 votes to 25 with 37 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a multiannual recovery plan for Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean repealing Regulation (EC) No 302/2009.

The matter had been sent back to the competent committee for re-examination at the sitting of 19.1.2016.

Parliament's position adopted in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Allocation of fishing opportunities: Parliament stipulated that the recovery plan must take into account the specificities of the different types of gear and fishing techniques. When allocating the fishing opportunities available to them, Member States shall use **transparent and objective criteria**, including those of an **environmental, social and economic nature**. They shall also endeavour to:

- distribute national quotas fairly among the various fleet segments giving consideration to traditional and artisanal fisheries, and
- provide incentives to Union fishing vessels deploying **selective fishing gear** or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact.

Conditions associated with management measures: the proposal stated that each Member State shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the fishing effort of its catching vessels and its traps are commensurate with the Bluefin tuna fishing opportunities available to that Member State in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Members stressed that **the carrying -over of any unused quota shall be prohibited**.

Minimum conservation reference size and incidental catches: the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas: (ICCAT) concept of minimum sizes should be transposed into Union law as **minimum conservation reference sizes**. Parliament replaced the concept of minimum sizes of Bluefin tuna by references to minimum conservation reference sizes. To recall, the minimum conservation reference size for Bluefin tuna caught in the eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean is 30 kg or 115 cm fork length.

Incidental catches of a maximum 5 % of Bluefin tuna weighing between 8 and 30 kg or with a fork length between 75 and 115 cm shall be allowed for all catching vessels and traps fishing actively for Bluefin tuna.

By-catch: each Member State shall make provision for by-catch of Bluefin tuna within its quota and shall inform the Commission thereof when transmitting its fishing plan. This provision shall ensure that **all dead fish are deducted from the quota**. Each Member State shall deduct all dead fish within the by-catch from its quota. Members also stated that dead Bluefin tuna shall be landed whole and unprocessed.

Use of aerial means: the use of any aerial means, including aircraft, helicopters or any types of unmanned aerial vehicles for searching for Bluefin tuna shall be prohibited.

Sport and recreational fisheries: the amended text stipulates that any Bluefin tuna landed shall be **whole, gilled and/or gutted**. Each Member State shall take the necessary measures to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, **the release of Bluefin tuna, especially juveniles, caught alive** in the framework of sport and recreational fishing.

Fishing authorisations for vessels: the flag Member State shall withdraw the fishing authorisation for Bluefin tuna and **may require** the vessel to proceed immediately to a port designated by it when the individual quota is deemed to be exhausted.

Landings: where Member States are authorised under applicable Union legislation to apply a shorter notification period than that referred to in the regulation, the estimated quantities of Bluefin tuna retained on board may be notified at the thus applicable time of notification prior to arrival. If the fishing grounds are **less than four hours from the port**, the estimated quantities of Bluefin tuna retained on board may be modified at any time prior to arrival.

Transshipment: transshipment at sea of Bluefin tuna in the Convention area shall be prohibited in all circumstances.

ICCAT regional observer programme: Member States shall ensure that an ICCAT regional observer is present during all transfers from one farm to another. ICCAT regional observers shall also observe that fishing and farming operations are in compliance with the relevant ICCAT conservation and management measures.

Entry into force: the Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.