Multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks

2014/0285(COD) - 23/06/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 480 votes to 38 with 39 abstentions a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2187/2005 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007.

The matter had been sent back to the competent committee for re-examination at the sitting of 28.4.2015.

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

Scope: the Regulation establishes a multiannual plan for stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Union waters of the Baltic Sea and for the fisheries exploiting the stocks concerned.

The Regulation also applies to **by-catches** of plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*), flounder (*Platichthys flesus*), turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) and brill (*Scophthalmus rhombus*) caught when fishing for the stocks concerned.

Objectives: the plan shall:

- contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the common fisheries policy (CFP), in particular by applying the **precautionary approach** to fisheries management;
- aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce **maximum sustainable yield** (MSY);
- contribute to the **elimination of discards** by avoiding and reducing, as far as possible, unwanted catches, and to the **implementation of the landing obligation** for the species which are subject to catch limits and to which the Regulation applies.

Furthermore, the plan shall implement the **ecosystem-based approach** to fisheries management in order to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised. It shall be coherent with Union **environmental legislation**, in particular with the objective of achieving good environmental status by 2020 as set out in Directive 2008/56/EC.

Target fishing mortality: Parliament stressed the need to establish the target fishing mortality (F) that corresponds to the objective of reaching and maintaining MSY as **ranges of values** which are consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (F MSY). Those ranges, based on **scientific advice**, are necessary in order to provide flexibility to take account of developments in the scientific advice, to contribute to the implementation of the landing obligation and to take into account the characteristics of mixed fisheries.

Accordingly, the text stipulates that the target fishing mortality shall be achieved as soon as possible and, on a progressive, incremental basis, by 2020 for the stocks concerned, and it shall be **maintained thereafter within the ranges set out in Annex I of the Regulation.**

Where, on the basis of scientific advice, the Commission considers that the fishing mortality ranges set out in Annex I no longer correctly express the objectives of the plan, the Commission may as a matter of urgency submit a proposal for revision of those ranges.

Fishing opportunities shall in any event be fixed in such a way as to ensure that there is **less than** a **5 % probability of the spawning stock biomass falling below the limit** spawning stock biomass reference point.

Safeguards: appropriate safeguard measures should be envisaged in case the stock size falls below such critical spawning stock biomass levels. When scientific advice indicates that the spawning stock biomass of any of the stocks concerned is below the minimum spawning stock biomass reference point as set out in Annex II to the Regulation, all appropriate remedial measures shall be adopted to ensure rapid return of the stock concerned to levels above the level capable of producing MSY.

Remedial measures may include suspending the targeted fishery for the stock concerned and the adequate reduction of fishing opportunities.

Where, on the basis of scientific advice, the Commission considers that the conservation reference points no longer correctly express the objectives of the plan, the Commission may, as a matter of urgency, submit a proposal for the revision of those conservation reference points.

Measures for plaice, flounder, turbot and brill caught as a by-catch: when scientific advice indicates that remedial measures are needed to ensure that the Baltic stocks of plaice, flounder, turbot or brill, caught as by-catch when fishing for the stocks concerned, are managed in accordance with the objectives of the Regulation, the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts regarding:

- characteristics of fishing gear, in particular mesh size, hook size, construction of the gear, twine thickness, size of the gear or **use of selectivity devices**, to ensure or improve selectivity ;
- prohibition or limitation on fishing in specific areas, to **protect spawning and juvenile fish** or fish below the minimum conservation reference size or non-target fish species.

Provisions linked to the landing obligation: the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts regarding exemptions from the application of the landing obligation for species for which scientific evidence demonstrates high survival rates, taking into account the characteristics of the gear, of the fishing practices and of the ecosystem, to facilitate the implementation of the landing obligation.

Technical measures: the plan should also provide for certain accompanying technical measures to be adopted, by means of delegated acts, in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the plan, in particular as regards the **protection of spawning and juvenile fish or to improve selectivity.**

Regional cooperation: Parliament considered that the rules should take better account of the regionalization principle set out in Article 18 of the CFP Regulation

Member States concerned may submit joint recommendations for the first time not later than 12 months after the date of entry into force of this Regulation and thereafter 12 months after each submission of the evaluation of the plan. They may also submit such recommendations when deemed necessary, in particular in the event of an abrupt change in the situation for any of the stocks to which the Regulation applies.

Logbooks: masters of Union fishing vessels of an **overall length of eight metres or more engaged in targeted fishing for cod** shall keep a fishing logbook of their operations. Furthermore, for catches that are

landed unsorted the permitted margin of tolerance in estimates recorded in the fishing logbook of the quantities in kilograms of fish retained on board shall be **10 %** of the total quantity retained on board.

Review: three years after the date of entry into force of the Regulation], and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the results and impact of the plan on the stocks to which the Regulation applies and on the fisheries exploiting those stocks.