Fishing in the North-East Atlantic: specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks, provisions for fishing in international waters

2012/0179(COD) - 06/12/2016 - Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the recommendation for second reading contained in the report by Isabelle THOMAS (S&D, FR) on the Council position at first reading in view of the adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks in the North-East Atlantic and provisions for fishing in international waters of the North-East Atlantic and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002.

The committee recommended the European Parliament to **approve the Council position at first reading without amendment**.

Following the adoption of Parliament's first-reading position in plenary on 10 December 2013, the Council considered the proposal in detail between January 2014 and November 2015, which was when negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement at second reading started with the Luxembourg Presidency.

The Council's first-reading position is consistent with the agreement reached in the trilogues. The explanatory statement highlighted the following elements of the Agreement as reached on the proposal on 30 June 2016:

- the European Union is going to freeze its fishing footprint by specifying the area in which deep-sea fishing will be allowed. That area includes the area in which targeted fishing took place between 2009 and 2011 in EU waters in the North-East Atlantic. This geographical boundary will apply to vessels targeting deep-sea species, i.e. those whose deep-sea species catch makes up more than 8% of the total on at least one fishing trip during the year;

- Parliament has secured specific penalties for vessels breaching the regulation on deep-sea fishing and a stipulation that no exemptions will be granted to certain rules;

- Parliament and Council negotiators have agreed: (i) on a depth limit of 800 metres; (ii) that vessels found to be fishing in vulnerable marine ecosystems at a depth in excess of 400 metres will have to stop their operations and move at least five nautical miles away from the fishing area in question;

- Parliament has introduced new, stricter transparency rules by including obligations to make information available to the public on European vessels targeting deep-sea species and to report all catches (fish and vulnerable ecosystems). Member States will also be required to provide information on the location of vulnerable ecosystems (impact assessments) and the Commission will assess this data annually and adapt the allowed fishing area accordingly (by means of implementing acts).