Multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks

2017/0043(COD) - 24/02/2017 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the common fisheries policy (CFP) seeks to ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term, to apply the precautionary approach to fisheries management, and to implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

Scientific advice from the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and from the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean's Scientific Advisory Committee (GFCM — SAC) has indicated that the exploitation of anchovy and sardine stocks in the Adriatic Sea **exceeds the levels required to achieve the maximum sustainable yield (MSY)**. The vast majority are being caught by Italy and Croatia, in the northern part of the Adriatic.

Currently, small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea are governed by several legal frameworks, at national, EU and international level. This proposal **addresses the problem of overexploitation** of small pelagic stocks due to an unsustainable fishery and ineffective governance.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the preferred option was the one which called for an EU Regulation to manage small pelagic fisheries. This option should lead to an improved conservation status of anchovy and sardine, which would ultimately result in a healthier and more sustainable fishing sector dependent on this resource, with better salaries for individual fishers and greater profitability overall compared to the status quo.

CONTENT: the proposed plan seeks to **replenish stocks such as sardines, anchovies, mackerel and horse mackerel** and contribute to their sustainable use, as well as to establish a simpler and more comprehensive management framework. The plan should:

- **facilitate the introduction of the landing obligation** by providing a basis for derogations in certain circumscribed situations;
- enable **regionalisation to be used**, whereby Member States around sea basins are involved in the conception and design of management rules for the interested parties.

The multiannual-plan will apply to all EU fishing vessels irrespective of their overall participation in fishing in the Adriatic Sea (in EU and international waters). It shall include:

- **target fishing mortalities** expressed in ranges for each of the stocks, where available, which would be the basis for setting annual catch limits for those stocks;

- **safeguard measures** to give a framework to restore stocks when they fall below safe biological limits;
- **control provisions** are provided on the vessel monitoring system, prior notification, electronic logbooks and designated ports. Regarding electronic logbooks and the vessel monitoring system, the provisions included in Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 are extended to cover all vessels over eight metres in length, to improve control of the fisheries covered by the multiannual plan.

The plan should be evaluated every five years on the basis of scientific advice.