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

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The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Ruža TOMAŠI (ECR, HR) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows.

Objective of the plan: the objective of the multiannual plan should be to contribute to achieving the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and especially restoring and maintaining fish stocks above biomass levels capable of producing the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), implementing the landing obligation, achieving a sustainable fisheries sector and providing an effective management framework.

The plan should provide for additional management measures, in particular measures to gradually eliminate discards, to count fish below the minimum conservation reference size and to minimise, and where possible eliminate, the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine environment.

Scope: the provisions of the multi-annual plan should apply only to stocks of **sardine and anchovy**. While the European Commission is proposing to separate the management of sardine and anchovy, Members are in favour of subjecting these two species to **joint management** since they are caught together. Measures under the plan would be taken on the basis of the best **available scientific advice**.

Reference levels of the plan: one of the main provisions of the proposal is based on biological reference points. In the Commission's proposal, these reference points are based on the fishing mortality value (F), which corresponds to exploitation of resources at maximum sustainable yield (FMSY). Members proposed that the reference point to be used in the multiannual plan for the Adriatic Sea should be **stock biomass and not fishing mortality**. They believe that using only biomass is more appropriate and a more certain value for managing small pelagic species which are more dependent on environmental conditions than exploitation, at least until improvement of scientific assessment.

Management measures: while the Commission proposes to regulate fishing by laying down total catch volumes and establishing a quota system, Members proposed to replace, the ‘fishing opportunities’ (referring to the TAC system) by ‘management measures’, a concept better suited to the effort based management system.

When scientific advice indicates that **recreational fisheries** have a significant impact on the fishing mortality of a particular stock, the Council shall take them into account and may limit recreational fisheries when setting fishing opportunities in order to avoid exceeding the total target of fishing mortality.

Three years after the implementation of the management measures, a scientific study should be carried out to verify the effectiveness of the measures taken.

Socio-economic objectives: the amended text emphasises that the Adriatic Sea small pelagic fishery has a very important socio-economic impact for the Member States' coastal community's livelihood and future of coastal communities in Member States. Regionalisation should be used to adopt measures that take into account the specificities of **each fishing area** and preserve its environmental conditions.

Artisanal fishing gear traditionally used in fishing communities should be safeguarded when defining the technical measures resulting from the multiannual plan. In order to enable the industry to cope with the fishing effort reduction measures and the consequent reduction in income for businesses and for seafarers, there should be arrangements for priority access to appropriate support from the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** (EMFF).

The plan should also provide for certain accompanying technical, as well as **temporal and spatial measures** to be adopted, by means of delegated acts, and taking into account the best available scientific advice. Moreover, Member States should provide incentives to fishing vessels deploying selective fishing gear or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact. A multiannual plan should always find a balance between the achievable result, taking into consideration the timeframe, and the socio-economic impact.