Conservation and control measures applicable in the Regulatory Area of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO)

2018/0304(COD) - 16/01/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted the report by Ricardo SERRÃO SANTOS (S&D, PT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down conservation and control measures applicable in the Regulatory Area of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 2115/2005 and Council Regulation (EC) No 1386/2007.

On 7 August 2018, the Commission presented a proposal for a regulation seeking to transpose into EU law the conservation and enforcement measures (CEMs) adopted by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), to which the European Union (EU) has been a contracting party since 1979.

The proposal relates to the measures adopted by NAFO since 2008 and to the entry into force on 18 May 2017 of the amended NAFO Convention.

The committee recommended that the position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading in the framework of the ordinary legislative procedure amend the Commission proposal as follows.

Transposition into EU law

Members believed that the transposition into EU law of any future recommendation amending the NAFO CEM should be done according to the ordinary legislative procedure and not through delegated acts as proposed by the Commission.

Research vessels

Members stated that research vessels must include in their research plans all fishing activities to be carried out, including those conducted outside the regulatory area. Research activities other than those included in the research plans must not be permitted.

It is clarified that the maximum amount of Northern prawn that can be caught in Area 3L is that established for the flag Member State of the research vessel.

Shark conservation measures

Research should be undertaken to identify ways to make fishing gear more selective for the protection of sharks and elasmobranch species. Members recalled hat current rules highlight the 'at risk' status of elasmobranch species such as sharks and rays and that, according to the findings of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, shark populations and marine ecosystems, are under severe threat.

Members also specified that:

- there are catch and fishing effort limitations, which are applied to stocks independently of each other;

- the port state control provisions of vessels flying the flag of another contracting party should apply to all fisheries resources and not just to fish.