Fisheries management approaches for safeguarding sensitive species, tackling invasive species and benefiting local economies

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The European Parliament adopted by 528 votes to 21, with 62 abstentions, a resolution on fisheries management approaches for safeguarding sensitive species, tackling invasive species and benefiting local economies.

Sensitive species: ocean resilience indicators

Parliament emphasised the unique role played by sensitive species in marine ecosystems and the environmental, economic and social benefits stemming from their management, conservation and protection.

The Commission and the Member States are invited to:

- implement an **ecosystem-based approach** to fisheries management alongside approaches that focus on the conservation of sensitive species, while supporting the economic and social prosperity of fishers, as well as ensuring the delivery of the EU’s goals and international commitments on MPAs and areas of high biodiversity importance;

- ensure that shifts in ecosystems caused by **climate change** are consistently reflected in environmental assessments and fisheries management;

- **reduce, and where possible eliminate**, incidental catches of sensitive marine species, ensuring that such catches do not represent a threat to the conservation status of these species;

- **make full use of common fisheries policy (CFP) tools**, in particular technical measures to address fisheries interactions and enhance the protection of sensitive species, while ensuring fair and effective compensation for fishers affected by the loss of access to traditional fishing grounds;

- provide more support for **scientific programmes** on sensitive species and management strategies.

Parliament insisted that the EU's fisheries management strategies be aligned with the CFP, the EU's 2030 biodiversity strategy and the EU’s international commitments, such as the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework.

Invasive species: threats to our oceans and our economy

Parliament noted that in the EU, 88 invasive alien species are strictly regulated, including 47 animal species and 41 plant species of Union concern. It regretted that the **current list of species of Union** concern does not fully acknowledge the threat of invasive alien species to EU fisheries, aquaculture and the marine environment, since currently only two marine species (Plotosus lineatus and Rugulopteryx okamurae) are included on the list. It called for the list to be improved based on up-to-date scientific advice and risk assessments.

Members stressed the need for appropriate **species management** and noted with concern the increased presence of species in certain areas, such as the Pacific oyster, the black-mouthed goby, the blue crab, the lionfish, the zebra mussel and the catfish.

The Commission and Member States are called upon to establish species-specific **regional monitoring systems**, including coordinated early warning and response strategies for invasive species impacting economically relevant habitats.

Members also called for improved **monitoring methods** and harmonised indicators across the EU, as well as increased technical and financial support, particularly in the outermost regions. Member States are advised to **strengthen communication, coordination, and cooperation**, especially in transboundary areas, while optimising biosecurity.

Parliament asked the Commission to make **available specific funding**, within the framework of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and other budgetary programmes, to support research on invasive species as well as their prevention and eradication.

Opportunities and challenges for coastal communities

Members believe it is essential to consider the broader **social, economic and cultural consequences** of invasive alien species, beyond biodiversity loss and effects on ecosystems, in order to effectively prevent new invasions and implement successful mitigation measures.

The Commission is invited to develop a **dedicated indicator** for sensitive and invasive species in EU seas, taking into consideration lists such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

The resolution underlined the importance of supporting the fisheries and aquaculture operators that are affected, through **compensation schemes and adaptation funds**, in line with existing financial provisions, especially in areas facing direct economic loss owing to invasive species. Member States and the Commission are invited to develop **awareness-raising campaigns** to inform and engage fishers and other stakeholders in the fisheries sector regarding the introduction, detection, and impacts of invasive alien species.

Parliament recommended, where possible, that **programmes** targeting invasive species be put in place to enhance population control and provide compensation opportunities for fishers.