

Conservation of fishery resources: cod, stock recovery

2003/0090(CNS) - 06/05/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish measures for the recovery of cod stocks. **CONTENT** : this Commission initiative follows on from previously made proposals regarding the conservation of cod and hake set out by the Commission in December 2001 and 2002. It also follows on from a Council request for a more definitive recovery plan to replace interim measures applied by a 2002 quota system. The overall objective of the proposal is to ensure the safe recovery of cod to scientifically assessed stock sizes based on the precautionary principle. The aim being to see sustainable stock sizes reached within a time frame of 5 to 10 years. In order to achieve these objectives the proposed Regulation is organised into four Chapters. Chapter I sets out which cod stocks are covered by this proposal and, for each, what their lowest stock size should be in line with the precautionary principle. Cod in the Irish Sea and Eastern Channel will be included in this recovery plan. The Commission remains firmly of the view that the level of cod stock remains serious and thus in need of stringent measures. Chapter II sets out the absolute minimum stock sizes below which scientists indicate that the stocks are in significant danger of total collapse. Guidelines set the level of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) based on estimations of actual stock sizes. Data for the guidelines is based on scientific advice. Chapter III contains provisions restricting the time that the fishing vessels concerned may spend fishing - to correspond with the TAC's. These proposals are a more simplified version of previous proposals. Essentially the provisions of Chapter III aim to offer greater flexibility to both Member States and fishermen in the management and allocation of the fishing regime. Chapter IV provides for measures in relation to improved monitoring, inspection and control for the vessels covered under the management system. This Chapter remains largely unchanged from previous proposals although the rules concerning the use of VMS have been removed, as they will be addressed in a new Regulation. Lastly it should be noted that the TAC for other species and stock associated with cod may be effected by the provisions of this Regulation. This proposal replaces the provisions set out in the modified proposal for a Council Regulation establishing measures for the recovery of cod and hake stocks. A proposal for the recovery of hake stock will be made separately.