Biological impact of fisheries

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The Committee unanimously adopted the report by Mrs Brigitte LANGENHAGEN (EPP, GER) on the Biological Impact of Fisheries, following a Commission discussion document on the subject. The Commission communication was the result of a meeting of a working group set up, at the request of the Council, to consider the effects on the ecosystem of fisheries and the problems which were perceived to exist. The group found that:- in many areas the current state of knowledge is inadequate; - to answer all probable questions would require a huge budget. The Commission concluded that the best approach would be to prioritise research resources in those areas which it considered to be of most concern to the public. Mrs LANGENHAGEN'S report agreed with the Commission that prioritisation was essential, but stressed the need for the widest possible consultation and coordination at all levels within the fisheries sector in order to restore the confidence of fishermen in the work of the scientific community. The Committee is now calling on the Commission to carry its initiative forward, by establishing a working party of scientists to formulate a research plan with an adequate budget, so that priorities may be established in cooperation with the industry. It further calls for the active participation of the Committee in this process and for the Commission to then submit proposals which would command broad support within the industry to Parliament and Council.