

Technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources

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The adopted by 15 votes to 1 the draft legislative resolution embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the conservation of fishery resources. The committee agreed with its rapporteur, Mrs Izquierdo Rojo (PSE, E), that the Commission's proposal should be rejected. As far as the technical measures were concerned, the rapporteur stressed that they were rarely completely satisfactory and that a wider, more ambitious approach should therefore be taken. In addition, generalized harmonization could be ill-advised unless account was taken of the biological conditions of the different fisheries and the real profile of fishing activities, which was why a balance needed to be found between the trend towards homogenization and diversity. The rapporteur also raised the question of: inadequate consultation of the sectors in question, which needed to be improved before the regulation was presented in order to give the viewpoints of the parties concerned a better hearing and convince them, while at the same time guaranteeing a training and information programme; the Commission's lack of trust, resulting in its opting for a system of inspections as if it needed to legislate against supposed offenders; the failure to take account of the negative economic and social impact of new technical measures, which needed to be tackled by drawing up a plan and by financial support instruments such as a "conservation dividend" to compensate fishermen for their voluntary application of certain measures. The report adopted urged that restricted fishing in certain areas and during certain periods be fixed on the basis of scientific criteria and suggested that an "ad hoc" high level panel be convened to revise fishery strategies and to ensure that proposed standards were fair and coherent (taking account, for example, of the fact that fisheries in the Gulf of Cadiz are different from Atlantic fisheries). Finally, it called for a reasonable transitional period of at least two years.