The problem of discarded catches

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The committee adopted by 13 votes to 4, with 1 abstention, the motion for a resolution on the problem of discarded catches. The report points out that there is no easy solution to the problem of overexploitation of fish stocks, as this has been going on for over 30 years. The rapporteur, Ms HARDSTAFF (PES, UK), therefore stresses the need to take a range of measures for certain species of fish and certain fishing grounds in order to cut the size of catches. The resolution also emphasises the need to replace bans on discarding fish, which are genuinely difficult to observe, with effective measures to ensure that the requirement to keep on board, and to land, all the fish caught, including fish which are too small or too young, is not employed as a pretext for using these fish for commercial purposes. The rapporteur calls for fishermen, fish-sellers and processors to be educated not to demand smaller fish or fishing-nets. Measures are also needed to pay for the social costs of this strategy to fishing communities. The report therefore calls as a matter of urgency for more effective support measures to be introduced through the Structural Funds and special subsidies.