

Fisheries resources: conservation and sustainable development in Mediterranean Sea, action plan

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Giorgio LISI (EPP-ED, I) on the Community Action Plan. It acknowledged the need to overhaul the system of derogations which, it said, was proving "counterproductive" and also welcomed the decentralised approach promoted in the action plan. However, it was opposed to the proposal to extend the TAC system and stressed the need for a flexible approach to achieving the objectives of fisheries reform. The Commission was urged to make a more detailed assessment of the impact of the CFP reform on the Action Plan for the Mediterranean with particular reference to the socio-economic repercussions on the areas concerned, and to make provision for innovative support measures. MEPs also pointed out that the small-scale fisheries sector was responsible for creating the most employment in fisheries and should therefore be given preferential treatment in the implementation of the FIGG. The report stressed the need for non-EU Mediterranean countries to be involved as part of a multilateral approach to the management of Mediterranean fishery resources. This approach should also take account of the structural and organisational shortcomings of the fisheries sector in non-EU Mediterranean countries, by means of partnership projects and exchanges of good practice. Among its other recommendations, the committee called on the Member States to step up checks and introduce much harsher penalties with genuine deterrent effect in order to combat illegal fishing. The Commission was also urged to liaise more closely with non-Mediterranean flag states whose vessels fish in the Mediterranean. Lastly, the report regretted that due consideration was not being given, at Community level, to an integrated approach to the management of coastal areas. It pointed out that "fishermen are generally more sinned against than sinning" when it comes to damage to the environment in some areas of the Mediterranean, which is often due to urban and industrial pollution. The committee therefore called for studies to be carried out into the impact on biodiversity and habitats of intense fishing activity in populated coastal areas with a view to apportioning responsibility and launching integrated management plans for coastal areas.