

Common fisheries policy CFP: restructuring, action programme

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Giovanni FAVA (PES, I) on the Commission's proposed Action Plan. It called on the Commission to update the Plan to counter the socio-economic consequences of the ongoing reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The committee said that the Commission's figures regarding job losses over the 2003-2006 period were inaccurate because, while the net result of the Council's decisions in December 2002 would be to alleviate job losses, the unexpected severity of the "cod crisis" in the North Sea could lead to the loss of up to 40 000 jobs, mainly in Scotland. The report also pointed out that none of the Commission's recovery plans for endangered stocks - whose socio-economic consequences are expected to be severe - had yet been adopted by the Council. MEPs therefore underlined the need to include "additional special financing" for social measures in a revised plan - including EUR 150 million for areas affected by the cod crisis. This reflected the view that the funding of these measures should not depend on the re-programming of existing funds, which is up to the Member States, who are sometimes reluctant to alter spending priorities given that such measures require matching funds from national budgets. The report therefore asked the Commission "to guarantee economic and social cohesion in areas dependent on fisheries", particularly for small-scale fisheries and in the outermost regions.