

Conservation of fish resources: reduction of the quantity of by-catches of cetaceans

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The committee adopted the report by Heinz KINDERMANN (PES, D) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure: - any fish caught in fishing operations conducted for the purpose of scientific investigation may not be traded commercially; - to enable the ban on the use of drift-nets in the Baltic to show its full effect, the ban should be incorporated in the framework of bilateral agreements with Russia as well; - following implementation of the full ban in all EU waters, drift-nets should be destroyed in order to avoid any further use by third country vessels in EU or non-EU waters. The relevant authorities should ensure that fishermen are adequately compensated for the loss of their investments; - in their annual reports, Member States should indicate what measures they have taken to ensure observation of cetacean by-catches on small fisheries vessels, for which observation on board is not feasible for reasons of space or safety (application of Article 4(2)); - provision should be made for the regulation to be reviewed in June 2007 with a view to drawing up a framework regulation with a long-term conservation strategy, including the definition of minimum population sizes for the cetacean species concerned; - in the interests of transparency, the Commission should inform Parliament and Council of any research developments in this field and the action being taken to follow up on such research; - since the acquisition of acoustic deterrents is a considerable financial burden, the fishermen concerned should be assisted from public funds with the investment needed to purchase them. Some of the cost could be supported from FIFG grants for the introduction of more selective fishing methods.