Common fisheries policy: monitoring of fisheries, action plan

1998/2127(COS) - 15/01/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The resolution drafted by Honorio Novo (EUL/NGL, P) which welcomes the Commission working document on an action plan for improving the implementation of the common fisheries policy was approved by the European Parliament. The report expresses the Parliament's concern that control measures should not be pursued as a priority in isolation, to the detriment of other policies which are equally crucial to the proper application of the common fisheries policy. In monitoring and control activities, the Parliament considers it essential that the Commission should take the initiative to achieve closer and more effective cooperation between itself and Member States, among the Member States and with fishermen and producers' and vessel owners' organisations. It believes that any new system of controls must be based on reliable data enabling information to be processed correctly and contributing to greater transparency within the system. For this reason and in order to promote stability in the industry, it believes that it is essential to maintain the existing legislation on access to resources and to follow up its resolutions on international fisheries agreements and the common fisheries policy after 2002. The Parliament is concerned that fishing effort should be matched with resources, not only restricted to funding fleet reduction. It feels that any measures should be accompanied by suitable financial compensation to vessel owners, fishermen and, where justifiable, processors as well as flexible training and retraining programmes (funded by increased ESF allocations) and aid for social integration. The report stresses the need for harmonised criteria to compare the characteristics, size, capacity and productivity of the different Community fleets, evaluate their fishing efforts, examine the impact of modernisation and intensified, high-technology resource exploitation and take the necessary measures of adaptation. The Parliament also requests: - full cofinancing of expenditure on improvement of controls (in particular the generalisation of satellite control systems); - a plan for scientific research on the state and evolution of resources and their impact on fishing and pollution. - equitable and uniform application of both land and sea control measures irrespective of the flag flown by the vessel under inspection; - closer cooperation to exercise the necessary controls over the marketing channels for fisheries products and greater recourse to certification and standardisation of fisheries products landed and marketed in the EU; The report urges the Commission to rectify the existing imbalances between controls in Community waters and those in international waters and to submit proposals for stepping up post-landing controls on both EU and third-country fisheries products. The Parliament urges all Member States to fully undertake all control activities and abide by their legal obligations as regards the provision of information and advocates some form of penalisation if information is repeatedly withheld. It also advocates greater use of new technologies to reduce the inefficiencies of the current paper-based system. The Parliament considers it a matter ofurgency that a uniform system of penalties be drawn up for fishermen across the E.U and also urges the Commission to give priority to financing Community inspections and establishing a code of conduct for inspection procedures.