Integration of fisheries and environmental issues, ministerial meeting, March 1997, Bergen

1998/2117(COS) - 10/03/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Parliament adopted its resolution on fisheries and the environment which was drafted by Ms; Veronic HARDSTAFF (PES, UK). It acknowledges the comprehensive and integrated approach reflected in the guiding principles and management objectives contained in the statement of conclusions of the Inter-Ministerial Meeting (IMM). It insists that the Council adopt the necessary measures to reduce the current fishing effort in the area and progressively reduce the present TACs which, although based on scientific criteria, remain for certain species at levels near or less than the biologically accepted minimum and which could, in the event of some unforeseen negative consequences provoke the collapse of the stock, especially with regard to mackerel, plaice, haddock, saithe and cod. It, therefore, urges the Council to apply the precautionary principle in determining the TACs, and calls on the Commission to expedite its efforts to develop a quality label for sustainable fish. It demands that the Council and the Commission adopt the necessary measures to reinforce the control of fisheries in order to avoid the current numerous illegal catches, the disregard of legal minimum sizes and the over-exploitation caused by unchecked landings. It insists that the Commission presents proposals and the Council takes decisions in ord to achieve the following objectives : - transparency, reliability and speed in the transmission of data by means of compatible systems which ensure the proper intercommunication between all the administrations between all the administrations of the Member States and the Community institutions; - adoption of a comparable system of sanctions whereby similar penalties are imposed for similar infringements regardless of where they take place; - reinforcement of the human and economic means of controlling fishing activities both at a Community and national level, which at present are manifestly insufficient to achieve the objectives which they pursue. It calls on the Council to adopt the necessary measures for achieving the objectives laid down in the Multi-annual Guidance Programmes (MAGP) with regard to each segment of the fleet in the Member States and establish, at the same time, effective sanctions for those states which systematically fail to implement their required objectives. It advocates, as a matter of principle, the setting of objectives, the improvement of fishery practice, recovery plans and special projects, such as the establishment of no-fishing zones or periods. It notes that the follow-up to the IMM by ad hoc measures to deal with urgent problems could be of great importance, for example: - further action to promote the recovery of cod stocks by reducing by-catches of undersized fish by encouraging the development of fishing gear which reduces the risk of unwanted by-catches. - technical measures to protect sizeable recruitments of North Sea cod or of other heavily fished species from the negative impact of mixed fisheries. - the provisional closure of areas in which high densities of juvenile cod and therefore high by-catch rates are to beexpected, combined with a temporary reduction in the capacity of the fleets concerned. - immediate reduction of by-catches of small cetaceans, as laid down in the ASCOBANS Resolution. - the setting-up of a cetacean protection area around the island of Sylt, as this is a particularly important breeding ground, in conjunction with a ban on fishing methods representing a hazard to cetaceans and their young. - drastic restrictions on the destructive technique of beam trawling (for bootm fishing) in the North Sea, where it is causing great damage, linked to a reduction in the reduction in the capacity of these fleets or at least a freeze on trawler numbers.