

Technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources

1996/0160(CNS) - 10/04/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting by 179 votes to 14 with 12 abstentions the report by Mr Gordon ADAM (PSE, UK) concerning the amendments to existing technical measures with a view to reducing the mortality rates of immature fish, Parliament adopted a large number of amendments to the Commission proposals concerning inter alia: - the number of nets, of different mesh sizes allowed onboard a fishing vessel; - improved selectivity by increased mesh sizes, the use of square mesh panels in front of the cod-end, and the use of separator panels; - closed seasons and closed areas; - adjustment of minimum landing sizes to the selectivity of the nets. Parliament called for a reasonable transition period before implementation of the regulation. In particular, Parliament considered that provision should be made for the mandatory use of square-meshed netting, in order to reduce the capture of juveniles. It called for a prohibition to have on board or to use any trawl, Danish seine or similar towed net having more than 100 meshes in the circumference of the cod-end excluding the joining and selvages. An exemption could apply to vessels using a mesh size of less than 80mm permitting the use of cod-ends with a circumference of not more than 120 meshes. To enable fishermen to adjust it proposes a transitional period, which in no case should be longer than five years, during which towed nets whose mesh size falls within the range of 70 to 110 mm would be authorized. Parliament proposed that the square mesh netting should be constructed of knotless or other material with non-slip knots and inserted in such a way that the meshes remain fully open whilst fishing at all times. It also proposed that vessels should carry on board or use towed nets two different mesh sizes. It proposed that from 31 December 1999 it should be prohibited to carry on board or to use any towed nets constructed wholly or in part of netting materials having a twine diameter of more than 8mm. (This provision would not apply to pelagic fishing where authorization had been granted to fish with nets up to 80 millimetres.) A prohibition should also apply to any towed nets constructed wholly or in part of netting materials consisting of multiple twine. It also called for the prohibition of any towed net whose meshes in the cod-end consist of any type of mesh other than square mesh or diamond mesh. Sorting would be carried out immediately after catches had been removed from the nets. Undersized anchovy, sardine, horse mackerel or mackerel caught for use as live bait could be retained on board providing they were retained alive. Finally, Parliament called on the Commission to consider additional measures to protect the hake adult spawning stock off the south and west coasts of Ireland.