Common fisheries policy: fisheries control situation

1998/2043(COS) - 18/09/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr James L.C. PROVAN (PPE, UK) on monitoring under the Common Fisheries Policy, the European Parliament welcomed the fact that the Commission had responded to its call for action by publishing the present communication. However, it regretted that the Commission?s communication did not take any account of wider international experience of the successful control of fisheries policies other than that of NAFO. It underlined the fact that the scientific data on which TACs are based has to have the full confidence of the fishing industry and should therefore be better integrated into the control process. It insisted on several priorities in order to improve the fisheries policy and win the confidence of fishermen: - more positive involvement of fishermen?s organisations in improving compliance with control measures; - greater cooperation between the Commission and the Member States in monitoring and control activities, with the Commission taking the lead in this area; - strengthening the Community fisheries inspectorate so that it can improve and extend its control work in EU waters (Parliament considered, in particular, that it should have responsibility for the inspection of landings made by Community vessels into ports outside their flag state); - standardisation of the definition of control and monitoring terms (in particular common definitions of tonnage, engine power and inspections in port and at sea) in order to ensure that controls are even-handed, irrespective of the Member State carrying out the control or the flag of the vessel being controlled; - correction of the imbalance between controls carried out in Community waters and in international waters: controls on third country vessels operating in Community waters need to be reinforced and measures adopted to allow access on board these vessels for the purpose of inspection and monitoring. Parliament insisted that controls should not end at port but were essential throughout the supply chain through to the end consumer and efficient control of the markets was therefore needed in order to combat fraudulent imports. Increased cooperation was needed between Member States and the Commission in order to monitor properly the market channels for fisheries products under the supervision of the Community inspectorate. Parliament requested the Commission to bring forward proposals to ensure that in all Member States it becomes a punishable offence to trade in illegally caught or landed fish. It also stressed the need for urgent supervisory action in the knowledge that some Member States are not adequately carrying out control activities and are only partially honouring their legal obligations in the field of data transfer. The Commission must have on-line access to Member States? data bases covering the fisheries sector and use all available instruments, including legal action and financial penalties, to ensure that Member States abide by regulations. Parliament urged the Commission to consider how a decentralised control system for coastal regions which would directly involve fish producers in decisions concerning their sector could be implemented in the post year 2000 period. Finally, it called on the Commission to consider how the NAFO control model could be adapted and extended to Community waters.