

Aquaculture in the European Union: present and future

2002/2058(INI) - 16/01/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on its own-initiative report drafted by Hugues MARTIN (EPP-ED, France) on aquaculture in the EU. (Please refer to the document dated 10/12/02.) The resolution was adopted by 421 votes for, 7 against and 42 abstentions. Parliament also pointed out that tests for detecting toxins are not sufficiently accurate and methods of measuring toxicity have not been standardised at European level, resulting - because excessive precautions are sometimes taken - in longer harvesting and marketing bans. This can threaten the most vulnerable farms and significantly restrict the development of production activities, especially as regards farming of marine bivalve molluscs. The positive trend in recent years towards reduced use of pharmaceuticals, chemicals and other artificial substances in aquaculture should be promoted and resources invested in the further prevention of diseases. Parliament asked the Commission to encourage research into the problems of escaped fish, transgenic fish, and alien species, and to put forward proposals concerning the introduction of the latter into the environment. It expressed concern that salmon from fish farms can affect natural fish populations, primarily genetically but noted that work is being done to minimise the risk. The Commission was also asked to introduce a code of conduct that clearly defines best practice in the production of smoked fish, in particular, avoiding the use of colouring agents and smoke essences combined with ultra-short smoking times. Finally, Parliament suggested that the Commission, the Member States, professional and inter-professional organisations should together draw up a concerted communications programme to improve the image of the aquaculture sector, and to inform the public about the advantages and potential offered by the sector. Specific legislation must be incorporated in Regulation 1263/1999/EC promoting the quality of aquaculture products by means of designations of origin. Communication operations should present aquaculture products as non-genetically modified products.