Common fisheries policy : improving scientific and technical advice for its management

2003/2099(INI) - 10/02/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Carlos LAGE (PES, Portugal) on scientific advice for fisheries. (Please see the document dated 20/01/04.) Parliament felt that where there are contradictions between different scientific reports, these should be put to a higher scientific body to resolve the contradictions. Parliament went on to state that the impact of fishing upon non-commercial species of all kinds (fish, sharks, turtles, birds, marine mammals) must be investigated as a priority, in conjunction with research into alterations to fishing gears and practices to decrease such catches. EU measures based on scientific advice can have severe socio-economic impacts on fishing communities. It is therefore vital to improve the quality both of scientific advice and of socio-economic impact assessments. In particular recovery plans should be subjected to a thorough scientific assessment as quickly as possible, with special attention being paid to their effectiveness. Scientific advice on aquaculture needs to be improved and systematized. Parliament suggested an advisory committee with specific responsibility for aquaculture. Greater resources should be devoted to researching aquaculture, including the generation of production and economic data and environmental impact data. Parliament stated that the need for improved scientific advice on fisheries could be met by a combination of actions, including the strengthening of ICES, with new scientists directly employed to meet EU needs, as well as by the recruitment of further staff in the Commission on a permanent official basis and also by increased use of temporary experts. Scientists should also travel on fishing vessels so as to conduct research at the locations where fishing is carried on. New fisheries, either for previously unexploited species or in new areas, must be the subject of more thorough studies to improve fisheries management by monitoring catches and establishing an appropriate fishing effort.