Fishery resources: management and conservation of the marine environment

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The European Parliament adopted its resolution drafted by Mr. Giorgios KATIFORIS (PES, Gr) on the European Commission's communication on fisheries management and nature conservation in the marine environment. Parliament welcomes the intention of the Commission to improve the integration of environmental protection into the common fisheries policy and hopes that the Council is able to find the political will to adopt the Commission's proposals. It calls on the Commission to: - always take into account, when drawing up any measure linked to the environment, that a wide range of (interlinked) factors are involved in causing deterioration in marine species, including pollution, climate changes, industrial activity, the pressure exerted by human activity on coastal areas, maritime transport and uncontrolled fishing; - continue to use the appropriate legal means within its powers whenever it detects a breach of the obligations of the Member States or third countries in the fisheries sector and to advocate in every international body that sanctions be imposed on any states not complying with its statutory principles; - continue to use appropriate legal and technical measures, where necessary, to restrict the capacity of the Community fleet and to take an international initiative to persuade the other major fishing powers in the world to follow suit; - ensure that current Community measures to reduce the intensity of fishing continue to include, as a matter of absolute necessity, the establishment of appropriate ceilings on fishing for the species listed in the scientific reports, in line with the conditions set out in those reports, and stringent checks on those ceilings at the various stages of the process; - urge the Member States to take more responsibility for the monitoring and control of compliance with environmental legislation affecting the management of fishery resources; - propose a definitive ban on the use and sale of fishing gear which alters the nature of the seabed, destroys fish spawn and does not select the target species to the full extent that is possible; - assess the operation of the current satellite fishing vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and, in the light of the results, to look into the possibility of extending them to a larger number of vessels; - take account of factors other than the length, tonnage and engine-power of vessels in measuring their fishing capacity; - speed up and strengthen the establishment of the Natura 2000 network of habitats of Community interest by involving the NGOs specialising in the protection of the environment and natural resources; - disseminate information about the proliferation in the Mediterranean Sea of the algae caulerpa taxifolia and, in particular, the impact thereof on inshore fishing and marine flora and fauna. The Parliament also calls for the drawing up of a Community policy for the management and protection not only of fishery resources but also of nature in the marine environment so as to safeguard both fish stocks and the marine environmentitself. It takes the view that pollution of the marine environment and its consequent destruction are frequently due to land-based sources of pollution and discharges of waste of all kinds. For this reason, it calls for the commitments given by the EU in the OSPAR, Baltic Sea and Mediterranean international conventions, as well as Community legislation, to be applied effectively and for their implementation to be strictly monitored by the competent authorities. Likewise, with respect to the dumping of oil and other harmful substances from ships, it calls for the effective implementation of international agreements and penal sanctions to be applied. The EP urges that, if the Global Assessment of the Fifth Action Programme recommends a successor, the topic of fisheries be added as a sector for integration. The Council is called upon to confer on Community inspectors increased powers and responsibilities in line with the Commission proposals. The Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up the adoption of measures to combat the possible negative effects of aquaculture on the marine environment, including: - the mandatory possession of prior environmental impact assessments before the establishment of enterprises engaged in aquaculture, particularly in the case of establishments in enclosed sea areas in which the waters renew slowly, and in estuaries, more rigorous scientific monitoring of aquaculture as regards the possible effects on the local marine ecosystem of setting up an enterprise, the possibility of transmitting disease and the quality of the feed, - an obligation on entrepreneurs, where feasible, to clean the seabed in the area covered by their operations or any other

type of pollution caused by those operations. Lastly, it calls on the Commission and Member States to launch an information campaign for fisherment and consumers to make them aware of the risks involved in the unthinking exploitation of fishery resources for the survival of fishing as an occupation for future generations, and to train them in sustainable development methods.