Fisheries: integrated framework for partnership agreements with third countries

2003/2034(INI) - 09/10/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Arlindo CUNHA (EPP-ED, Portugal) on the Commission's communication. (Please see the summary of 09/09/03.) Parliament welcomed the Commission proposal and insisted that agreements, although of a commercial nature, must respect sustainable development of the fishing industry of the developing country concerned. The Commission was urged to make negotiations on the renewal of fisheries partnership agreements dependent upon the presentation of satisfactory evidence that monies paid under the previous agreement for targeted measures have been spent as intended. Development cooperation policy in this field entails promoting developing countries' capacity to exploit their fishery resources, enhance local added value and obtain a fair price for access rights for EU fleets to their EEZs, while accepting the need to protect the interests of the EU's fisheries. Parliament felt that these agreements should contain measures to protect small-scale indigenous fisheries, to promote the landing of fish locally and require access to be dependent on the use of selective fishing methods. The Commission must ask that the third countries involved apply to all other nations' distant water fleets operating in their waters the same set of rules which it applies to the Community fleet, respecting the obligations committed to in multilateral agreements, in particular the fight against illegal fishing. Parliament went on to ask the Commission to inform Parliament on the negotiating mandate which the Council grants the Commission. Parliament should be supplied with annual reports on the degree of implementation of the agreements, the use of funds for targeted measures and standardised evaluation reports that should meet the requirements as laid down by the Fisheries Council of October 1997 so as to respect the Commission's accountability to Parliament. Finally the Commission is asked for aid for implementation by third countries of the FAO's international action plan for combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing one of the main priorities when concluding future agreements with third countries.