Fisheries: action plan to integrate environmental protection

2002/2175(COS) - 20/11/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Dominique SOUCHET (IND, F) on the integration of environmental protection requirements in the CFP. (Please refer to the document dated 21/10/02.) The most important environmental protection requirement is a rigorous and effective precautionary approach to fisheries management, one which ensures that fish stocks, both commercial and non-commercial, and other marine species are not reduced to levels below which their functioning in the marine ecosystem is impaired. Parliament acknowledged the research carried out also by fishermen, coastal local authorities and marine scientists with a view to improving the protection of the marine environment, of commercial and non-commercial species. Funding should be made available for such research on a selective basis. The Commission must draw up an action plan to improve the system of stock evaluation by integrating into it the practical knowledge of fishermen, as well as checks on landings. It must also place the interdisciplinary nature of the sciences (including economics and social sciences) at the heart of formulating scientific opinions. The issue of fishing pressure on resources must not be tackled in a global and uniform manner, since it requires an approach which takes account both of the characteristics specific to each fishing zone and of the specific features of the various fish species, particularly their life-cycle. Parliament called for urgent measures to achieve a sustainable balance between exploitation and living aquatic resources, including both commercial and non-commercial species, on a zone-by-zone and species-by-species basis, and the habitats on which they depend. The Commission is also asked to assess the impact of global warming upon fish stocks in EU waters and the location of the main species fished by Community fisheries, on the basis of migration and the development of certain characteristics of the food chain, in particular in phytoplankton-rich areas.