

Fisheries sector: the recovery of the Community eels stocks, development of a Community action plan

2005/2032(INI) - 15/11/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Albert Jan MAAT(EPP-ED, NL) on the development of a Community Action Plan for the recovery of European eels . (Please see the summary of 04/10/2002.) Parliament called on the Commission to ask the Member States as soon as possible to draw up national management plans, which should comprise the following elements :

-technical measures to be taken where obstacles exist in waterways, in order to optimise the migration - i. e. upstream colonisation and downstream movement towards the sea - of eels;

-gathering of data on, monitoring of and, if appropriate, limits, where justified by historic and scientific data, on fishing effort by both professional and recreational fishermen by means of temporary bans on fishing and/or limits on catch capacity, with due regard for national differences in types of fishing and for credible self-regulation;

-increasing restocking with glass eels and fattened farmed eels in the managed areas in European inland waters

-ensuring that eel farming is not so extensive as to disturb the viability of wild eel fisheries, either by depriving them of glass eels which naturally replenish stocks or by failing to ensure escapement of mature silver eels for natural spawning;

-measures relating to the management of cormorant populations to reduce eel mortality.

Furthermore, Parliament asked the Commission to:

-investigate any obstacles in the oceans to the natural migration of eels to the Sargasso Sea ;

-carry out research into the health of eels and the obstacles which such external factors as PCBs and fish diseases may present to successful migration and breeding;

-carry out research into the biogeographical distribution of stocks of this species of eel;

-carry out research into pollution as a factor in assessing possible causes of mortality among eel stocks in freshwater waterways;

-investigate the scope for supporting the process of change, inter alia by means of access to the European Fisheries Fund;

-adjust the policy on catches and exports of eel in such a way that enough glass eels are available for natural migration and enough glass eels are available at a reasonable price for restocking of natural eel habitats in accordance with sustainable fisheries management in Europe;

-propose measures to manage fishing and marketing and to monitor the quantities of glass eels offered for sale by means of a system of documentation of catches, in order to combat illegal fishing more effectively, this being responsible for a substantial reduction in young and adult eel stocks.

Finally, Parliament asked the Commission to insert in the fisheries budget a separate entry for cofinancing of the restructuring of inland fisheries in Europe and to mitigate the impact of a change of policy in the glass eel sector.