

Fisheries resources: recovery of Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks

2003/0318(CNS) - 20/12/2005 - Final act

PURPOSE : to establish measures for the recovery of the Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks in the Cantabrian Sea and Western Iberian peninsula and amending Regulation 850/98/EC for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Council Regulation 2166/2005/EC.

PURPOSE : to recall, the Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks in ICES Divisions VIIIc and IXa have been subjected to levels of mortality by fishing which have eroded the quantities of mature individuals in the sea to the extent that these stocks may not be able to replenish themselves by reproduction, and as result are threatened with collapse. Measures should be taken to establish multi-annual plans for the recovery of these stocks. The objective of the plans should be to rebuild these stocks to safe biological limits within 10 years. This is the aim of this Regulation.

More specifically, the recovery plan shall aim to rebuild the stocks concerned to within safe biological limits, in keeping with ICES information. This shall mean:

- as regards the Southern hake stock, reaching a spawning stock biomass of 35000 tonnes during two consecutive years, according to the available scientific reports, or increasing the quantities of mature individuals within a period of 10 years so that values are reached equal to or higher than 35000 tonnes. This figure shall be adjusted in the light of new scientific data from the STECF;
- as regards the Norway lobster stocks, rebuilding the stocks to within safe biological limits within a period of 10 years.

More specifically, the Regulation provides for the introduction of annual total allowable catches (TACs) for Southern hake and Norway lobster as well as the limitation of the fishing effort-measured as the sum, in any calendar year, of the products across all relevant vessels of their installed engine power measured in kw and their number of days fishing – in specified areas of the Cantabrian Sea and Western Iberian Peninsula. As regards setting the total allowable catches (TACs) , each year, the Council shall decide by qualified majority on the basis of a proposal from the Commission on a TAC for the following year for the stocks concerned.

Furthermore, amending Regulation 850/98/EC, the Regulation establishes geographically and temporarily limited (1 June to 31 August and 1 May to 31 August respectively) prohibitions of fishing with gears targeting Norway lobster - notably creels as well as bottom trawls or similar towed nets operating in contact with the bottom of the sea.

The Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council setting out the conclusions relating to the application of the recovery plan for the stocks concerned, including available socioeconomic data linked to the plan. This report shall be submitted by 17 January 2010.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 17 January 2006.