Review of certain access restrictions in the Common Fisheries Policy, Shetland Box and Plaice Box

2005/2190(INI) - 14/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Catherine **STIHLER** (PES, UK) in response to the Commission's review of certain access restrictions in the Common Fisheries Policy, namely the Shetland Box and the Plaice Box in the North Sea. Parliament welcomed the decision of the Commission to maintain the Shetland Box for a further three years while further evaluations of the Box are undertaken as a first step towards ensuring that the fishing communities in that region are protected by a fisheries regime which will safeguard their future as a sustainable industry.

It noted that the NSRAC recommended that the Shetland Box be continued pending further evaluation. Parliament considered that, should the proposed further evaluations of the Shetland Box take longer than the three-year period currently anticipated, the current regulation should remain in force, in line with the STECF advice.

It also noted with alarm the finding of the Commission's expert working group established to assess the effectiveness of the Shetland and Plaice Boxes that, in general, stocks of commercial interest in the Shetland Box are outside the safe biological limits, save as regards haddock and saithe. Parliament called on the Commission to make a quantitative evaluation of the likely effects of any changes to the Shetland Box.

Parliament called on the Commission to conduct its review of the Plaice Box in the light of future flatfish management, including the plaice recovery plan. It noted that the expert working group highlighted the socio-economic importance of the Boxes, and further noted that the expert working group considered that one of the objectives of the Shetland Box is to provide protection for fisheries-dependent communities in the north of Scotland.